

Press Release

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British Irish Rights Watch the first winner of the Assembly's Human Rights Prize

Strasbourg, 27.04.2009 – The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) today decided to award its Human Rights Prize to British Irish Rights Watch, a non-governmental organisation which since 1990 has been monitoring the human rights dimension of the Northern Ireland conflict and, more recently, the peace process.

In March a panel including leading figures from the world of human rights¹ chose British Irish Rights Watch from among fourteen individuals and NGOs nominated for the prize and praised its "courageous and outstanding work in monitoring and bringing to light human rights abuses, and its fight against impunity in Northern Ireland". It also commended the NGO's "vigilance" in ensuring that measures taken to combat terrorism were compatible with international human rights standards.

The PACE Human Rights Prize, which honours "outstanding civil society action in the defence of human rights in Europe", consists of 10 000 euros, a medal and a diploma. It will be awarded at a ceremony in Strasbourg on 24 June 2009, to coincide with a special debate on "the state of human rights in Europe: the need to eradicate impunity".

Nominations for the second edition of the prize, proposed by at least five sponsors, must reach the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly by 30 September 2009. They must provide details of the nominee's activities in defence of human rights and specify why they can be considered to be outstanding.

[British Irish Rights Watch website](#)
[Human Rights Prize website](#)

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¹ Lluís Maria de Puig, President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly; Herta Däubler-Gmelin, Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights; Serhiy Holovaty, Chairperson of the Monitoring Committee; Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International; Pieter van Dijk, member of the Netherlands Council of State and former judge at the European Court of Human Rights; Marek Nowicki, human rights lawyer and former International Ombudsperson in Kosovo; Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold, President of the Association "Peace Women Across the Globe" and former member of the Swiss Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly.