

Press Release

Directorate of Communication

Ref: 405a09

Tel. +33 3 88 41 25 60

Fax +33 3 88 41 39 11

Internet: www.coe.int

e-mail: pressunit@coe.int



47 member States

Albania
Andorra
Armenia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Moldova
Monaco
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russia
San Marino
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom

Statement by Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis on the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

Strasbourg, 21.05.2009 - "Very often, the most far-reaching and the most effective ideas are very simple. To make our world a better, friendlier and safer place through dialogue and greater understanding between peoples and cultures is one of them. Simple is not always easy, but important things in life rarely are.

Our experience tells us that intercultural dialogue does not happen by itself. It must be based on intercultural skills which must be promoted through family, school, religious communities and civil society organisations.

And intercultural dialogue cannot happen in a vacuum. It requires proper governance based on democracy and human rights. It also needs physical and virtual spaces to flourish.

There is no point in talking only to those people with whom you agree. Dialogue means talking and listening. The purpose is to search for common ground and look for ways to promote, together, respect for the human dignity of every individual.

Above all, intercultural dialogue must be specific. It is always good if people talk to each other, but intercultural dialogue should not be reduced to exchanges of benevolent platitudes at international seminars. The objective is to encourage dialogue between real people about real problems in real life. The make or break test of our activities is not the number of glossy brochures or international conferences they generate, but their impact on how people live and cope with their problems at home, at school, at work, on the street, in their local church, their local mosque or their local synagogue."

To receive our press releases by e-mail, contact: Council.of.Europe.Press@coe.int

A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 47 member states.