

Press Release

Directorate of Communication

Ref: 566a09

Tel. +33 3 88 41 25 60

Fax +33 3 88 41 39 11

Internet: www.coe.int

e-mail: pressunit@coe.int



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4th Summer University for Democracy closes in Strasbourg

Strasbourg, 10.07.2009 –Some 600 participants of the 4th Summer University for Democracy, that ended today, stressed that global challenges to democracy should be faced through advocating the rule of law and re-thinking the values that prevail in our world.

"The purpose of all public action should always be human beings. Responsibility and accountability must guide the new generation of leaders at local, as well as at national and international level," they said in a final declaration unanimously adopted at the closing ceremony.

The final declaration reaffirms participants' commitment to democratic values and principles such as the rule of law, good governance, protection of human rights, respect of identities and sovereignty, tolerance and human dignity.

"These values and principles became the cornerstone for the democracies that emerged in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and we hope that the peoples of Europe will continue to uphold them," it reads.

During the course of the week, the participants from 16 European countries and African continent discussed issues related to international finance, energy and environmental protection, corruption and terrorism, organised crime and others. They emphasised that strengthening of the rule of law is a basis for further political, economic, social and environmental development across the continent.

The event also celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the opening of the Iron Curtain and discussed whether the divisions have been overcome in Europe.

"How many walls separate us again, 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall?" asked Lilian Thuram, President of the Lilian Thuram Foundation - Education against Racism, speaking at the closing ceremony. "We must have the intelligence to get rid of the national and religious divisions, and be as men and women wanting to live together."

In his turn, the Secretary General Terry Davis, closing the Summer University, reminded the participants that "in a democracy, the most important thing is how you treat your opponent and how a politician treats the people who disagree."

"Remember that in politics, and just like in football, you play the ball and not the man," he said.

Other speakers at the closing ceremony included Erhard Busek, former Vice-Chancellor of Austria, former Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Laszlo Kovacs, European Commissioner for Taxation and Customs Union, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary and Catherine Trautmann, European parliament member.

The Fifth Anniversary Summer University for Democracy will be held in July 2010.

Special file: [The Schools of political studies](#)

Contacts:

Henriette Girard, Press Officer Tel. +33 (0) 3 88 41 21 41 , Henriette.Girard@coe.int

Ulvi Akhundlu, Press Officer Tel. +33 (0) 3 88 41 26 38, Ulvi.Akhundlu@coe.int