

Press Release

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Council of Europe and European Union: even closer partnership after the meeting Jagland-Barroso

Brussels, 19.10.2009 - Newly elected Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, on his first external visit since his election, today met Jose Manuel Durao Barroso, President of the European Commission. Their meeting paved the way towards even closer relations between the two organisations, following the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) signed in May 2007.

"The European Union is the Council of Europe's most important institutional partner at both political and technical levels. We are working together in order to strengthen the European common legal space, and to build a coherent system of fundamental rights' protection, focusing on our benchmarks for human rights, the rule of law, and democracy in the entire European continent" - declared Thorbjørn Jagland.

Possible accession of the European Union to the European Convention of Human Rights, as foreseen in the Memorandum of Understanding, could open new opportunities in relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union.

In the morning, the Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland delivered a [speech](#) at the EU Ministerial Conference "Towards Global EU Action against Trafficking in Human Beings". The fight against Trafficking in Human Beings is one of the top priorities of the Council of Europe. The [Council of Europe Convention](#) is the first European treaty in this field, and the only international agreement which includes comprehensive protection of the human rights of the victims as an integral part of the fight against this criminal activity. The Convention is open for accession by non-member States.

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