

Press Release

Directorate of Communication

Ref: 099a10

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

Council of Europe must rise to challenges of a multicultural Europe

Strasbourg, 08.02.2010 - On the first day of his official visit to Turkey, Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland met with the President of Turkey, Abdullah Gül to discuss democratic institutions and human rights in Turkey and within the 47 member states of the Council of Europe.

In Istanbul, President Gül and Secretary General Jagland expressed their firm commitment to strengthening the fight against racism, xenophobia and islamophobia in Europe. "We must uphold our fundamental values and avoid new dividing lines within our societies", the Secretary General said.

During the meeting President Gül also underlined the importance of giving new energy to the Council of Europe's role as the only European organisation to encompass almost the entire continent on the basis of shared values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. He said that there is a pressing need for the Organisation to speak with a single, clear voice and to become more visible to ordinary people in Europe.

Secretary General Jagland expressed his determination to obtain a rapid accession of the European Union to the European Convention of Human Rights and his intention to continue his work with EU leaders to that end. Accession will mark a significant step towards creating a single European legal space to protect common human rights standards.

Expressing his appreciation of the important reforms undertaken by Turkey in recent years that have made society more open and democratic, Jagland raised outstanding issues related to Constitutional reform and to the banning of political parties. President Gül replied that Turkey continues to witness certain shortcomings in standards pertaining to human rights, but that there is general agreement in society to continue reform and, in particular, to pave the way for a new Constitution that restricts the banning of political parties.

The Secretary General's official visit continues Monday and Tuesday. He will meet with Prime Minister Erdoğan, the Turkish Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Justice, and with non-governmental organisations.

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.