

# Press Release

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## Thomas Hammarberg elected new Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

Strasbourg, 05.10.2005 – Thomas Hammarberg, currently Secretary General of the Olof Palme International Centre in Sweden and a former Secretary General of Amnesty International, was today elected as Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights by the Organisation's Parliamentary Assembly (PACE).

Mr Hammarberg received 104 of the votes cast in the second round of the election, which took place during the Parliamentary Assembly's Autumn plenary session in Strasbourg. Marek Antoni Nowicki (Poland) received 93 votes and Marc Verwilghen (Belgium) received 33 votes.

PACE President René van der Linden declared Mr Hammarberg elected for a non-renewable term of office of six years starting on 1 January 2006 and hoped he would be able to take up his office as soon as possible. He paid tribute to the excellent quality of all three candidates and extended his warmest congratulations to the new Commissioner. "Mr Hammarberg will play one of the most important roles in the Council of Europe's human rights protection system. The Assembly looks forward to continuing the close and fruitful working relations it has enjoyed with his predecessor, Alvaro Gil-Robles, to whose outstanding work it pays tribute."

Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, also congratulated Mr Hammarberg on his election and thanked Mr Gil-Robles for his outstanding work. "The Commissioner for Human Rights makes an essential contribution to the work of the Council of Europe, confirming our organisation as the political, legal and moral authority on human rights in Europe," he said.

Mr Hammarberg has previously served as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Human Rights in Cambodia and as an adviser to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. He is also a former Secretary General of Swedish Save the Children.

The Office of Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights is an independent, non-judicial institution within the Council of Europe whose task is to promote human rights awareness, support national human rights structures, identify shortcomings in human rights law and practice and promote the full enjoyment of human rights in all 46 of the Council of Europe's member states.

The Commissioner undertakes regular visits to member states for dialogue with governments and civil society and prepares reports on subjects falling within his mandate.

[Website of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights](http://www.coe.int/t/Committee/Commissioner/Commissioner_Human_Rights.asp)

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 315 members from the national parliaments of the 46 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Bruno Haller.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).