

## Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions NEWSLETTER ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

No. 7, December 2004

Editor: Henrik Alberius OP, JP-Sweden



In this issue:

- Introduction
- Inter-religious Dialogue
- Third summit of the CoE
- Social Cohesion
- Migration
- Trafficking
- Call on Experts to the CoE
- Practical Proposals and Contacts

### Introduction

The General Assembly of the Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions (JPE) in Sarajevo in the end of September this year decided to redefine the mandate of the "JPE core-group" having worked at the Council of Europe (CoE) for the past years.

By tying the representation at the CoE directly to the Presidency of the JPE and its executive committee the idea is to activate and re-launch the work.

Together with the president and the ExCo the JPE-representative to the CoE will identify a number of areas in which the advocacy-work will be carried out. The positions and policies in these areas

will also be laid out by the president and the ExCo. The JPE-representative will then report back to the president and the ExCo.

The areas of work mentioned so far are Social Cohesion, Migration, Trafficking, Great Poverty, Human Rights, Inter-religious Dialogue, and Detention-camps. These will be decided on and mapped out at upcoming meetings with the ExCo.

By redefining the advocacy-work at the CoE the JPE enables its representative to be active in the debates and joint-actions by the NGO's at the CoE. It also opens up for quicker reactions to calls for action with only one call to make for consultation with the Presidency. Furthermore it will enable the representative to work in alliance with other organisations present at other institutions, such as the EU and the UN.

At the same time it is important to point out, that this redesigning of the work of the JPE at the CoE in no way does away with its original intention. The JPE-representative to the CoE still needs plenty of contact with the national JP-commissions, and is waiting for them to give him work to do on their behalf at the Council.

As the JPE-representative to the CoE for the coming year the General Assembly in Sarajevo elected Henrik Alberius of the Swedish JP-commission. *See below how to contact him.*

## Inter-religious Dialogue

The areas of education and culture are growing rapidly in importance thanks to the priorities of the new Secretary General of the CoE Terry Davis. This was the message of the Director General of the General Directorate of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth, and Sport (DGIV) **Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni** as she visited the October-session of the NGO's in Strasbourg. In turn this implies the protection of the diversity of cultures in Europe, and the dialogue between the cultures and religions. She said that it is the responsibility of DGIV to be the motor for managing this diversity.

That is why the DGIV is working on an inter-cultural pedagogy, which implies education as well as dialogue in a long perspective. This education is inter-cultural as well as inter-religious. The end is to arrive at a mutual respect for one another.

In a follow-up meeting between **Ms Ólöf Ólafsdóttir**, Head of Department of DGIV, and the JPE-representative this mobilisation in the CoE was confirmed. Ms Ólafsdóttir said that it is the right of the CoE to promote dialogue in these important areas. The CoE therefore will try to introduce inter-cultural dialogue as part of the 2005 Year of Citizenship.

The main thrusts of the CoE will be to promote good-practices, but also to produce teacher-training material.

Ms Ólafsdóttir also praised the Norwegian government, which while chairing the Committee of Ministers earlier this year introduced the inter-religious aspect in the inter-cultural dialogue.

Learn more on:

[www.coe.int/T/E/Com/files/CM\\_Chair-sessions/chair/norway/default.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/files/CM_Chair-sessions/chair/norway/default.asp)

Also the **Commissioner for Human Rights** of the CoE **Mr Alvaro Gil-Robles** has been active in the area of the inter-religious dimension of education. In May this year he assembled a conference in Malta on *Religion and Education: The Promotion of Tolerance through the Education of Religious Facts*.

The conference held that our societies are currently being undermined by a lack of cultural awareness particularly prevalent amongst the younger generations of Europe, with immediate and unwelcome social consequences. In effect, religious institutions have ceased to transmit their religious cultures to new generations, with the increased secularisation having resulted in the collapse of the traditional passing on of this knowledge. The transmission of the sacred and the cultural has, however, long been linked. We have witnessed, as a result, a decline in our general culture awareness.

The need to clearly show the universal values and wisdom inherent in each religion was also emphasized. The fulfilment of this task should provide a common ground for dialogue between

different religions, respecting, and in harmony with, human rights.

To this end, it was suggested that a working group be established to examine how an international **Institute for co-operation in the field the education of religions in schools** might best be established and what its mandate might be. The Commissioner for Human Rights was encouraged to promote this initiative and accepted this task. The central role of the Council of Europe in this area of great importance to the respect for human rights in Europe was emphasized.

Learn more on:

[www.coe.int/T/E/Commissioner\\_H.R/Communication\\_Unit/Documents/By\\_year/2004/index.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Commissioner_H.R/Communication_Unit/Documents/By_year/2004/index.asp#TopOfPage)

Background papers Document CommDH(2004)8, and the conclusions Document CommDH(2004)9.

## The Third Summit of the CoE

The member countries of the CoE agreed last summer to hold a summit of Heads of State and Government on the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2005 in Warsaw, at the invitation of the Polish government. Poland currently chairs the Committee of Ministers of the CoE.

This summit will be the third organised by the CoE. The first took place in Vienna 1993 following the fall of communism and the development of new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. The second summit, held in Strasbourg in 1997, gave a new impetus to human rights protection, including the decision to set up a Human Rights Commissioner by the CoE.

Since the first summit the Council has doubled in size. It now has 46 member

countries and covers a Europe of around 800 million citizens. According to CoE's new Secretary General Terry Davis next year's summit needs to clearly define the organisation's future role.

Learn more on:

[www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/events/2005-Summit/default.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/events/2005-Summit/default.asp)

## Social Cohesion

The Committee of Ministers of the CoE has approved a revised Strategy for Social Cohesion, and it was launched last summer. The text has been drawn up by the European Committee of Social Cohesion (CDCS), and it defines social cohesion as follows:

*the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means.*

The main lines of the CoE's work in this field are according to the revised Strategy:

- promoting ratification of the CoE's legal instruments on social security and monitoring their implementation;
- drawing up of policy guidelines on access to social rights, covering in particular access to employment, access to social protection and access to housing;
- carrying out a series of activities on children, families and the elderly;
- assisting member states of Central and Eastern Europe in applying CoE guidelines in various areas of social policy;

- carrying out research and analytical work in support of the activities included in the Strategy.

The revised Strategy will be available in a number of translations. During the coming year the revised Strategy will be presented at a series of national seminars on social cohesion.

Learn more on:

[www.coe.int/T/E/Social\\_cohesion/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_cohesion/)

## Migration

A regional conference on *Migrants in the transit countries* was held in Istanbul in the end of September. In the opening speech the Deputy Secretary General of the CoE Mrs Maud De Boer-Buquicchio called on the safeguarding of the rights of migrants. *Time and space may be relative*, she said, *but human rights are not: they are absolute*. She noted that the question of migration is a global challenge that needs co-ordinated action. No single country can manage the migration question alone.

She welcomed the creation of the **Political Platform** by the CoE to be a forum for strategic policy making in the field of migration. She also mentioned the proposed **Migration Agency**, which is meant to institutionalise the regular dialogue and partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination. According to Mrs De Boer-Buquicchio solidarity is no option in the question of migration. It is an imperative.

Learn more on:

[www.coe.int/T/E/Social\\_Cohesion/Migration/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Migration/)

The Directorate General of Social Cohesion of the CoE and the North-South Centre in Lisbon held a workshop on the *role of local authorities in the migration process* in the beginning of December.

The workshop was part of a series on *Migration and Development*, which is part of the CoE's **Platform on Migration**. It examined the co-operation of local authorities and their contribution to co-development by creating partnerships between Africa and Europe.

For echoes of this workshop:

[www.coe.int/T/E/Social\\_Cohesion/Migration/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Migration/)

A considerable part of the activity undertaken under the authority of CoE's European Committee on Migration (CDMG) is currently devoted to the problems faced by *the children of migrants*. A special committee – **Committee of Experts on the Children of Migrants** (MG-EN) – has been established. Its first task will be to identify the issues that will require closer examination and analysis. It will focus areas such as school and education, family and upbringing, and cultural and religious identity.

Learn more on:

[www.coe.int/T/E/Social\\_Cohesion/Migration/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Migration/)

## Trafficking

The Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE has adopted a Recommendation on *zero tolerance for domestic slavery*. The adopted text recommends a number of

preventive, protective and repressive measures to the Committee of Ministers. Especially it recommends a charter of rights for domestic workers, and better regulation of the au-pair placement- and "mail-order bride"-industries.

Read the report to the Parliamentary Assembly on:

[http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Working\\_Docs/doc04/EDOC10144.htm](http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Working_Docs/doc04/EDOC10144.htm)

Read the adopted recommendation on:

<http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/AdoptedText/TA04/EREC1663.htm>

The work on putting a **Convention against trafficking in human beings** in place is drawing to an end. The Directorate General on Legal Affairs and Human Rights co-ordinates the work, which is expected to be finalised at the end of 2004. The hope is then to have it adopted by the Committee of Ministers in the beginning of 2005.

The 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of December the Committee on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CAHTEH) will meet in the Human Rights Building in Strasbourg to discuss some remaining issues. Among these issues are the preamble of the Convention, the non-punishment provision, the monitoring mechanism and the final clauses of the draft.

But the text of the draft is already available and open to be commented on by NGO's. The text - without the preamble - can be requested from the Secretariat of the CAHTEH on:

[DG2.trafficking@coe.int](mailto:DG2.trafficking@coe.int)

## Call on Experts to the CoE

The participatory status granted by the CoE to the NGO's recognised by it implies nothing else but participating in its activities. The CoE therefore calls on the NGOs to supply experts in all fields of work of the CoE.

The importance of Catholic organisations taking part in the process was underlined by the meeting of the International Catholic Organisations (ICO) prior to the NGO-session in October. What is asked for are experts and expertise from the field. To underline the reciprocity between the CoE and the NGOs conclusions of seminars, dossiers having been prepared on different issues, etcetera can also be sent to the CoE.

The ICO strongly encourages Catholic NGOs to be active and answer the call of the CoE.

## Practical Proposals and Contacts

This very important paragraph will let you easily get in contact with the JPE-representative to the CoE Henrik Alberius. It has become even more important after the change of our status at the CoE to become participatory.

Please send any questions, remarks, ideas, initiatives, and petitions for aid to:

Henrik Alberius

[henrik@dominikan.nu](mailto:henrik@dominikan.nu)

+46 (0)46 15 71 14