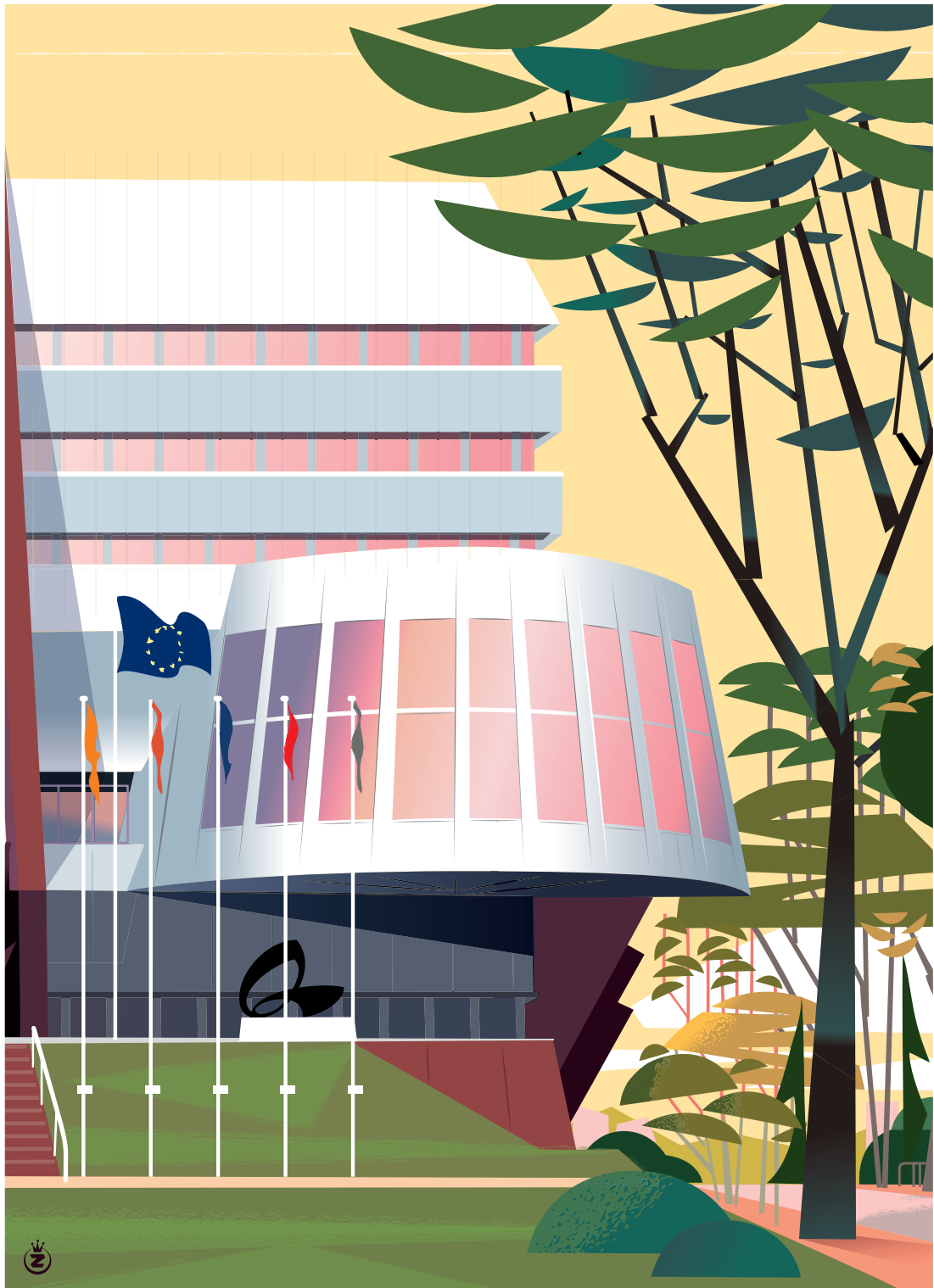




**FRENCH
PRESIDENCY**
of the
Committee of
Ministers of
the Council
of Europe

**17 May
27 November
2019**





CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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PRÉSIDENCE FRANÇAISE
FRENCH PRESIDENCY

2019 MAI - NOVEMBRE
MAY - NOVEMBER
Conseil de l'Europe
Council of Europe

As the Council of Europe celebrates its 70th anniversary, I would like to pay tribute to its exceptional contribution towards building Greater Europe.

The Council of Europe has achieved significant progress in human rights, the rule of law and democracy on our continent. The European Court of Human Rights guarantees these achievements and rigorously provides a legal protection to more than 800 million people.

The Council of Europe has played a key role in bringing peoples closer together, ensuring peace and unity in Europe. It has worked to create a common legal space and to promote a shared culture among all Europeans.

Nevertheless, human rights violations are still too frequent, whether they concern threats to freedom of expression and the safety of journalists, racist or anti-Semitic violence, discrimination or gender inequality.

Attempts to undermine multilateralism and human rights are on the rise. Internal dissensions within the Council of Europe have an impact on the context within which the organization operates. In this context, we need to remain mobilized, clearly reaffirm our shared values, and strengthen the ties that bind us, taking pride in our achievements.

Changes in our societies must be taken into consideration. Progress in digital technology, artificial intelligence and medicine opens up new possibilities but also gives rise to unprecedented challenges, which we must address from the perspective of protecting rights. The Council of Europe must continue to play a pioneering role, as it always has done.

Our shared organization is more essential than ever and must therefore remain faithful to the goal established in 1949 by the founding fathers: to achieve a closer relationship between members in order to safeguard and promote the ideals and principles that form our common heritage, and to support progress.

France will work towards this goal during its Presidency of the Committee of Ministers.

Emmanuel Macron

President of the French Republic



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Priorities of France's Presidency

France wants to take the opportunity offered by its Presidency of the Committee of Ministers to help build tomorrow's Council of Europe. Since being founded, the organization has continually reinvented itself, overcome obstacles, conquered new rights for all, enhanced cooperation between States, and brought Europeans closer together. France wants the Council of Europe to be proud of its history (commemoration of the first meeting of the Committee of Ministers) and firmly focused on the future. This is an essential step in ensuring Europeans support the organization. France's goal is therefore to strengthen the Council of Europe's main acquis, established after 70 years of achievements and progress, and to accompany societal change through unity and innovation. This goal will be reflected in three priorities.

1 Preserving and enhancing the Council of Europe's human rights achievements

The European Convention on Human Rights system must be promoted and strengthened. To do so, we need to build on the different changes that have taken place over the past 10 years. New tools should enhance dialogue between judges, which is essential to the system's daily work (**conference of the heads of the Supreme Courts of the Council of Europe member states**).

Defending the rights of Europeans means defending the rights of the most vulnerable, especially the children. We must constantly strive to be more ambitious in protecting against violence and discrimination, and in including children. Protecting the vulnerable also means defending social rights. The European system for the protection of social rights is one of the Council of Europe's most important acquis, and France is committed to strengthening it (**seminar on the protection of social rights**).

Lastly, the abolition of the death penalty has been a major achievement by the

Council of Europe, which France will promote in conjunction with the city of Strasbourg (**conference on the death penalty**).

2 Working towards a Europe that unites and brings us closer, and promoting equality and living together

The fight for peaceful and unified societies is dependent on the fight for gender equality. For this reason, violence against women will be a key theme underlying France's Presidency (**Women's Rights at the Crossroads conference, conference on the role of police in fighting violence against women**). France's goal is for as many States as possible – within the Council of Europe and beyond – to join the Istanbul Convention, which is the most advanced and comprehensive tool in this field.

This fight also involves tackling all forms of racism, anti-Semitism and intolerance. All hate speech and discrimination, whether based on gender, origin, beliefs, sexual orientation or otherwise, must be resolutely targeted (**conference on the**

fight against racism and discrimination, celebration of the 25th anniversary of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, seminar on hate speech and homophobic and transphobic violence, meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM)).

Living together is not only an issue within societies; it is also an issue between societies. We must work tirelessly to build a sense of shared belonging while bringing Europeans closer together, regardless of their country of origin. The way history is taught is therefore of central importance: France wants to study the possibilities to create an observatory for history teaching in Europe (**conference on the teaching of history, meeting of Education Ministers**). To bring our peoples closer together, we must also promote a shared European culture, which the Council of Europe supports through heritage and film (**celebration of the 30th anniversary of Eurimages**). In addition, the Council of Europe carries out lesser known but equally important activities for citizens' health. It ensures the quality of medicines in Europe (**conference on the 10th edition of European Pharmacopeia**).

3 Adapt the Council of Europe by responding to new challenges facing human rights and the rule of law

Today, the main issues facing human rights and the rule of law are digital technology and artificial intelligence, which create both opportunities and challenges. These evolutions are affecting the way the legal system works and its interactions with

legal subjects (**conference of Ministers of Justice**).

They are transforming the relationship between democracy and information (**2019 edition of the World Forum for Democracy**). Part of the digital challenge is protecting users: safeguarding their data (**conference on the globalization of Convention 108**) and fighting cybercrime (**Octopus Conference**). The issues of digital technology and artificial intelligence affect all of the Council of Europe's fields of action. For this reason, they will be a cross-cutting theme at most events organized by the French Presidency (events on children's rights, fighting racism and intolerance, etc.).

Another major challenge to establishing and consolidating the rule of law is corruption. Fighting corruption is a key issue in our democracies, as it affects the trust citizens place in institutions. The French Presidency will address this issue generally (**conference on the fight against corruption**) and specifically, with respect to sport (**meeting on fighting corruption in sport**).

Bioethics is another important contemporary issue where European States will gain from sharing their experiences and views. France wishes to highlight the role of public debate in developing consensual conclusions and rising above tensions (**seminar of the Committee on Bioethics**).



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COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS



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List of the Presidency's main events

17 May

Start of the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, handover at the Ministerial meeting in Helsinki

23-24 May (Strasbourg)

At the Crossroads of Women's Rights: strengthening international cooperation to eliminate gaps between legal frameworks and their implementation

4 June (Strasbourg)

Seminar of the Committee on Bioethics, focusing on public debate

11-14 June (Toulouse)

Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM)

12-14 June (Strasbourg)

Conference on the globalization of Convention 108

17 June (Strasbourg)

Conference on fighting corruption in Europe and celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)

20 June (Strasbourg)

Workshop on terrorism victims (on the margins of the meeting of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH))

19-20 June (Strasbourg)

Conference on the 10th edition of European Pharmacopoeia

1st July (Paris)

Meeting on fighting corruption in sport

4-5 July (Strasbourg)

Conference HELP

8-12 July (Strasbourg)

Enter! Youth Week

12-13 September (Paris)

Conference of the heads of the Supreme Courts of the Council of Europe member states

18 September (Strasbourg)

Commemoration of the first Committee of Ministers meeting

19 September (Strasbourg)

Seminar on the protection of social rights

24-25 September (Strasbourg)

Conference of high-level representatives of Interior Ministers on the role of police in fighting domestic violence

26-27 September (Paris)

Conference on fighting racism and discrimination and celebration of the 25th anniversary of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), seminar on hate speech and homophobic and transphobic violence

10 October (Strasbourg)

Conference on fighting the death penalty

14-15 October (Strasbourg)

Conference of Ministers of Justice on digital challenges for justice

17 October (Strasbourg)

Celebration of the 30th anniversary of Eurimages

28-29 October (Strasbourg)

Venice Commission intercultural workshop on high councils of magistrates and judicial independence

6-8 November (Strasbourg)

The 2019 World Forum for Democracy, focusing on information and democracy

13-14 November

Conference on children's rights

14 November (Paris)

Conference on human rights in the digital age, organized by the French National Assembly and Senate

19 November (Paris)

Conference on the teaching of history in Europe

20-22 November (Strasbourg)

Octopus Conference on cybercrime

25 or 26 November (Paris)

Meeting of Education Ministers

27 November (Strasbourg)

End of the French Presidency – handover to the Georgian Chairmanship

For information on other events organized in France and abroad, please visit: fdip.fr/FR_CoE

France and the Council of Europe: past and present

The French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers in 2019 is an opportunity to celebrate and strengthen the ties forged between France and the Council of Europe over the past 70 years.

France has a unique and historic relationship with the Council of Europe. On 5 May 1949, France signed the Treaty of London, becoming one of the Council of Europe's founding members, along with nine other States (Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom). Robert Schuman, one of the founding fathers of European integration, helped create the organization, as France's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Other French figures also contributed to its history, including Catherine Lalumière, Secretary General from 1989 to 1994, who played a decisive role in welcoming Eastern European countries to the Council of Europe.

France is the Council of Europe's host country. The organization has its headquarters in Strasbourg, at the Palais de l'Europe, a building designed by French architect Henry Bernard and inaugurated in 1977. The European Court of Human Rights is also based in Strasbourg, at the Palais des droits de l'homme.

French has been one of the Council of Europe's official languages, along with English, since the organization was founded.

France is one of the five main contributors of the Council of Europe. In 2019, it contributed €38.5 million to the organization, in addition to voluntary contributions to specific programs.

France has one of the largest delegations at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, with 18 representatives.

France has always been very involved in the organization's work. It has ratified 139 texts, making it one of the Member States to have ratified the most.

After ratifying the European Convention on Human Rights in 1974 and recognizing the individual right to appeal in 1981, France has continually adapted its laws in line with the Court's requirements. Thus, it ensures compliance with the Convention at the national level, and ensures the Court's judgments are swiftly and comprehensively enforced. France fully supports the Convention system. It recently ratified Protocol 16 – which allows the highest courts of Member States to ask the Court for advisory opinions – ensuring the text entered into force.