

**OSCE 2010 Review Conference**

**Warsaw, 30 September – 8 October 2010**

**Working Session 3: Fundamental Freedoms II**

**Contribution of the Council of Europe**

**NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS AND THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN  
THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

**The role of civil society**

At its 1006th meeting on 10 October 2007, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted its Recommendation (2007)14 on the legal status of non-governmental organisations in Europe. On 23 November 2007, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted its Recommendation 1820 (2007) “Co-operation between the Assembly and the Conference of INGOs”. In their respective recommendations, the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly invited to “encourage those member states, which have not yet done so, to ratify the European Convention on the recognition of the legal personality of international non-governmental organisations (ETS No. 124), opened for signature in 1986”.

In accordance with its task of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of standards, the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) carried out an evaluation of the implementation of Recommendation (2007)14 by the member states. In addition, it pursues its work of promotion of the European Convention on the recognition of the legal personality of international non-governmental organisations (ETS No. 124), opened for signature in 1986, with a view to increasing NGO participation in Council of Europe member states, thus contributing to fulfilling the Warsaw Action Plan, Chapter I, item 3, paragraph 5.

***Support for civil society and non-judicial human rights***

Under the Council of Europe various cooperation programmes, 37 activities in 2009 sought to increase the ability of civil society and Ombudsmen/national human rights institutions to lobby for the inclusion of human rights in national policies and to advocate the effective protection of human rights and there were 40 of them planned in 2010, of

which some were specifically designed to improve the capacity of civil society structures to apply European human rights standards.

Civil society representatives were trained on how to present their concerns to the authorities using arguments based on the ECHR substantive and procedural provisions. Particularly successful co-operation in this area was developed throughout 2009 with the UNHCR. Joint activities took place in Armenia, Georgia and the Russian Federation (Northern Caucasus). There were activities planned to take place in Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece and, possibly, other member states in 2010

see: [www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation)