



COUNCIL OF EUROPE NEWS



PACE calls for prohibition and penalisation of gender-based human rights violations

PACE invited the member states to adapt their national legislation in order to prohibit and penalise forced marriages, female genital mutilation and any other gender-based violations of human rights, encouraging them to prosecute abductions, illegal confinements and forced returns of women or girls to their countries of origin. According to the parliamentarians, cultural or religious relativism cannot be invoked to justify these acts.

"It is a matter of the member states' responsibility that they should do their utmost to guard against and combat these anachronistic, inhuman practices both nationally and internationally," said Antigoni Papadopoulou (Cyprus, ALDE), rapporteur for the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. "British legislation on forced marriages is exemplary in this respect, in that it provides a means of stopping potential victims from being taken out of the country against their will and of compelling the family to disclose the whereabouts of a member considered to be in danger," she added, commending the courage of a victim of Bangladeshi origin who gave her personal testimony today on the sidelines of the session.

In a recommendation to the Committee of Ministers, the PACE reiterated its request for the Council of Europe to draft a convention to combat the most serious and widespread forms of violence against women, including forced marriages.



British Irish Rights Watch the first winner of the Assembly's Human Rights Prize

The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) decided to award its Human Rights Prize to British Irish Rights Watch, a non-governmental organisation which since 1990 has been monitoring the human rights dimension of the Northern Ireland conflict and, more recently, the peace process.

In March a panel including leading figures from the world of human rights¹ chose British Irish Rights Watch from among fourteen individuals and NGOs nominated for the prize and praised its "courageous and outstanding work in monitoring and bringing to light human rights abuses, and its fight against impunity in Northern Ireland". It also commended the NGO's "vigilance" in ensuring that measures taken to combat terrorism were compatible with international human rights standards.

The PACE Human Rights Prize, which honours "outstanding civil society action in the defence of human rights in Europe", consists of 10 000 euros, a medal and a diploma. It will be awarded at a ceremony in Strasbourg on 24 June 2009, to coincide with a special debate on "the state of human rights in Europe: the need to eradicate impunity".

Nominations for the second edition of the prize, proposed by at least five sponsors, must reach the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly by 30 September 2009. They must provide details of the nominee's activities in defence of human rights and specify why they can be considered to be outstanding.

British Irish Rights Watch website
<http://www.birw.org/>

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

"INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN YOUTH WORK"

Training courses with Arabic, Russian or Turkish language option for the partners of the Youth Sector

Training courses with English language option for local Arab, Russian and Turkish NGOs

Call for applications

The call for applications for the DYS Intercultural Training Courses 2009 has now been launched on our Internet site www.coe.int/youth.

This year we are proposing 3 courses : Arabic, Russian and Turkish

Applications should be made through a nominating organisation to the following email address: youth.language@coe.int

All the details pertaining to the programme and the application procedure can be found on the internet site at the following address:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/default_en.asp

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

New call for proposals VP/2009/004: Support to national activities aiming at the identification of good practices in combating discrimination and promoting equality

The call for proposals (VP/2009/004) addressed to national authorities and financed under the PROGRESS programme (non-discrimination strand) has been published by the Commission at :

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=630&langId=en&callId=199&furtherCalls=yes>

with a deadline for submitting proposals on **25/05/2009**.

Proposals should present activities which tackle at least one of the following 5 grounds of discrimination: race and ethnic origin, disability, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation and the objectives of this call are to support national authorities of PROGRESS participating countries in:

- Better implementing their legislation on non-discrimination adopted following Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC;
- developing their national policy to combat discrimination and promote equality beyond legislation;
- fostering the dissemination of information on EU and national policy and legislation in the anti discrimination field as required by articles respectively 10 and 12 of the above-mentioned directives;
- identifying best practices which could be transferable to other participating countries