



EUROPEAN UNION  
Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe

## **Weekly Media Report of developments related to the Council of Europe** 4 - 8 January 2016

The Weekly Media Report gives an overview of recent news in international media. Please note that the Report does not constitute a formal communication, does not represent the official position of the Delegation and does not commit the European Union in any way.

Ce rapport donne un aperçu de nouvelles récentes dans les médias internationaux. Ce rapport n'est pas une communication formelle, ne représente pas la position officielle de la Délégation et n'engage en aucun cas l'Union Européenne.

### **Venice Commission**

#### **[Juncker: 'We're not bashing Poland'](#)**

*07/01 – EUobserver / International*

European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker has indicated he will avoid confrontation with Poland over its constitutional and media shake-up. “Let’s not overdramatise. It’s an important issue. But we have to have friendly and good relations with Poland. Our approach is very constructive - We’re not bashing Poland,” he told press in Amsterdam on Thursday (7 January), at an event to mark the launch of the Dutch EU presidency. He noted Poland already agreed to one commission request - to seek an opinion from the Venice Commission, a constitutional panel in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.



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## ECHR

### [Strasbourg rights court orders Russia to pay opposition activist damages](#)

*05/01 – Reuters/ International*

The European Court of Human Rights has ordered Russia to pay damages to an opposition activist arrested at a 2012 Moscow protest that marked the high-point of demonstrations over the re-election of President Vladimir Putin. In a ruling published on its website on Tuesday, the court ordered Russia to pay 25,000 euros in damages and 7,000 euros in legal costs to Yevgeniy Frumkin. He had been imprisoned for 15 days over a demonstration on Bolotnaya Square on the eve of Putin's inauguration that alleged electoral violations. The Strasbourg court ruled that "the measures taken against (Frumkin) were grossly disproportionate to the aim pursued".

## SG

### [Thorbjørn Jagland: In 2016, terrorists will not destroy our democracies: only we can do that](#)

*04/01 – New Europe/ International*

Inter-jihadist rivalries can be a difficult thing to follow. But a crude distinction is sometimes drawn between Al Qaeda and Daesh. The former, it is said, has renounced the indiscriminate killings of its past, their leaders instead rebuking the self-named "Islamic State" for attacks in which Muslims are killed. During the assault on a Radisson Blu Hotel in Mali's capital Bamako last November, for which an Al Qaeda splinter group has claimed credit, international travellers were rounded up while hostages able to quote from the Koran were freed. By contrast, when Daesh hit Paris and Beirut a week earlier, suicide bombs and guns inflicted wholesale civilian slaughter.

## CommHR

### [Nils Muižnieks: Fighting violence against women must become Europe's priority](#)

*04/01 - New Europe / International*

From migration to the economic crisis and terrorism, European leaders have been busy searching for solutions to very challenging phenomena in 2015. Regrettably, the long-standing problem of violations of women's rights remained largely off the table. Yet, this is one of the most widespread human rights abuses which takes place every day in Europe. Gender-based violence is the most serious of the violations many women face. It is estimated that at least 12 women are killed by gender-related violence in Europe every day. At the beginning of December 2015, available statistics showed that domestic violence claimed the lives of over 250 women in Turkey, 113 in Italy, 48 in Spain, and 27 in Portugal, just to mention the few countries where reliable data are available.



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## Italy

### [Surrogacy is like sex crime - Italian minister Alfano](#)

*06/01 - BBC / International*

Surrogate parents should be treated like sex offenders and sent to prison, Italy's interior minister has said. Angelino Alfano's staunch opposition to surrogacy is part of a wider campaign by the minister against rights for gay and unmarried heterosexual couples. Surrogacy is "the most vile, illegal trade that man has invented," Alfano told Italy's *Avvenire* newspaper. Italy is the last major Western nation to deny same-sex couples rights on issues such as parenthood. It was condemned last year by the European Court of Human Rights for failing to legislate on the issue. Surrogacy is currently illegal in Italy, punishable by fines and up to two years in prison. Mr Alfano's suggestion that the practice be classed in the same bracket as sex offences would entail harsher punishments.

## Medicrime

### [The Medicrime Convention comes into force to combat counterfeiting](#)

*05/01 - Manufacturing Chemist/international*

The Council of Europe's Medicrime Convention, which aims to combat the counterfeiting of medical products and protect public health, came into force on 1 January. This Convention is the first legally binding international instrument making criminal offences of the counterfeiting, manufacture and supply of medical products marketed without authorisation or without complying with safety standards. It provides not only for criminal-law penalties, but also prevention and victim-protection measures. Open to all countries across the world, the Convention offers a framework for international co-operation and measures to improve co-ordination at national level. In particular, it provides for the setting up of contact points within national judicial systems, health systems, accredited medical laboratories, law enforcement and customs authorities to ensure the rapid exchange of information.

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