



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

Weekly Media Report of developments related to the Council of Europe

2 - 8 April 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.

Secretary General / Polish Constitutional Crisis

[Council of Europe says Poland risks lawsuit over court reform](#)

04/04/16 – Reuters / International

The paralysis in Poland's constitutional court puts Warsaw at risk of a lawsuit in the European Court of Human Rights, the head of the rights body the Council of Europe said on Monday.

Poland's eurosceptic Law and Justice (PiS) party has faced growing pressure from the EU, the United States and other bodies since it swept to power in the bloc's largest eastern member state in October and increased controls on media and other institutions.

The conservatives have enacted a law increasing the number of judges required to make rulings on the Constitutional Tribunal and changing the order in which cases are heard.

Critics say the changes have made it difficult for judges to review new legislation, let alone challenge it, and the court itself has struck them down as unconstitutional. The government has refused to recognize that ruling, effectively putting it in legal limbo.



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"The concern is that if the constitutional crisis continues a ... complaint or application to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg may arrive," the Council of Europe's secretary general, Thorbjørn Jagland, told reporters in Warsaw.

[Council of Europe chief urges Poland to resolve constitutional crisis](#)

04/04/16 – Deutsche Welle / Germany

If its constitutional crisis continues much longer, Poland risks lawsuits in the European Court of Human Rights. With this in mind, the Council of Europe Secretary General has urged Polish lawmakers to end the crisis.

Thorbjørn Jagland said he was concerned that the European Court of Human Rights may soon have to start receiving complaints from individuals in Poland that the country's constitutional tribunal would normally hear, but - because it is unable to sit for political reasons - would have to go to the Strasbourg-based court instead.

"And it is unprepared to handle them," he said.

"The concern is that if the constitutional crisis continues a new complaint or application to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg may arrive, given that the Polish judiciary has been weakened by the constitutional crisis," Jagland told reporters on a two-day visit to Warsaw starting Monday.

"This could be problematic because the court, based in Strasbourg, is already overburdened," he added.

Jagland called on Poland's parliament to resolve the crisis, which he said has paralyzed the constitutional court and hurt the rule of law.

Secretary General / Jewish Cemeteries

[Thorbjørn Jagland OP-ED: Protect the thousands of burial sites across Central and Eastern Europe](#)

08/04/16 - The Jerusalem Post / Israel

In the Jewish faith, burial sites are even more sacred than synagogues. Not just cemeteries, but also the mass graves created during the Second World War. These are the "houses of the living" where souls remain unbreakably linked to their former bodies, awaiting the resurrection.

Yet, across Europe, countless such sites have fallen into disarray. The causes are mixed: desecration and grave robbing, yes, but also poor management, short-sighted town planning and a lack of funds. Many have become overgrown. Some have been sold off, only to end up as hotel complexes and leisure parks. Few have benefited from clear local guardians. The loss of Jewish cemeteries on European soil is a problem. And not just for historians or the descendants of the deceased, but for all those who value tolerant and inclusive societies.



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The Council of Europe – the continent’s human rights watchdog – will therefore lend its support to an ambitious project, run by the ESJF European Jewish Cemeteries Initiative and funded, in part, by the German government, to protect the thousands of burial sites across Central and Eastern Europe. Tomorrow [9 April], I will join Yossi Beilin, a former Israeli minister and long-time peace advocate, in the Polish town of Frampol. Here the sizeable Jewish population perished under German occupation.

Secretary General / Nagorno-Karabakh

[Jagland urges to stop totally unnecessary bloodshed](#)

02/04/16 – A1Plus / Armenia

Statement by Council of Europe of Secretary General Jagland:

“I am dismayed and deeply concerned by the escalation of hostilities at the contact line in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. The Council of Europe urges both sides to stop this totally unnecessary bloodshed which leads nowhere except to further violence and loss of lives including of many civilians. I urge the parties to protect the right to life as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and return to the ceasefire and resume peaceful negotiations. This is a humanitarian imperative”

[Secretary General of the CE called on to cease fire and resume negotiations](#)

02/04/16 – APA / Azerbaijan

Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland called on the parties of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to cease fire and resume negotiations, APA reports quoting RIA Novosti.

Thorbjorn Jagland deeply concerned by the escalation of tension at the contact line in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone: “The Council of Europe urges both sides to stop this totally unnecessary bloodshed which leads nowhere except to further violence and loss of lives including of many civilians”.

Pace President / Nagorno-Karabakh

[PACE president calls on Azerbaijan, Armenia to resume negotiations](#)

03/04/16 – AzVision / Azerbaijan

PACE President Pedro Agramunt expressed concern over the escalation of violence in Nagorno-Karabakh.

“I’m deeply worried at the escalation of violence in Nagorno-Karabakh. I call on sides to observe the cease-fire and resume negotiations,” he tweeted on Apr. 3



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[PACE President urges NKR conflicting parties to resume peace talks](#)

03/04/16 – Armenpress / Armenia

President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Pedro Agramunt called on the Nagorno Karabakh conflicting sides to respect the ceasefire and resume negotiations. As "Armenpress" reports, Agramunt expressed deep concern over the violence and escalation in the Nagorno Karabakh contact line.

Sofia Conference / Strategy for the Rights of the Child

[Children want social justice and an end to violence – we must listen to them](#)

03/04/16 – NewEurope / International

What do children want? Businesses spend billions of euros every year on publicity campaigns trying to convince us that children want the latest toys, games, junk food and branded clothing. But when we ask children directly, a completely different picture emerges.

The Council of Europe is about to publish an overview of children's opinions and priorities – based on more than 100 studies from across Europe – which reveals that children focus, first and foremost, on fundamental needs, not passing fads and desires. They want social justice and an end to violence, bullying and discrimination. Education is a priority, as well as families having enough money for food, housing and health care. Children want to be consulted, taken seriously and to influence their own care, budgetary decisions and the provision of facilities.

[Officials took part in Council of Europe conference in Bulgaria capital \(ROUNDUP\)](#)

06/04/16 – FOCUS – Bulgaria

President of the Republic of Bulgaria Rosen Plevneliev opened a high-level conference of the Council of Europe, which will present the new Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), the press centre of the President's Office announced.

The forum set the start of the implementation of the strategy, which was adopted on March 2, 2016 during the Bulgarian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers. This is the third strategy for the rights of the children under the "Let's build a Europe with and for children" programme.

The two-day forum is hosted by the Bulgarian State Agency for Child Protection and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

The forum will continue until April 6. There will be nine themed sessions, as the participants will have the chance to learn and discuss the latest developments in the severest challenges covered by the Strategy.



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The intended priority areas covered during this new strategy period are as follows: equal opportunities for all children; participation of all children; a life free from violence for all children; child-friendly justice for all children; rights of the child in the digital environment.

The list of high-ranking officials, who will attend the forum, also includes: President of Malta Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni; Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister for Demographic and Social Policies and Minister of Labour and Social Policy Ivaylo Kalfin; Minister of Foreign Affairs Daniel Mitov; other ministers and experts in social policies and children's rights.

Congress

[Delegation of CoE to visit to monitor local authorities issues](#)

02/04/16 – Cyprus Mail / Cyprus

A delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CoE), will conduct a monitoring visit to Cyprus from Tuesday to Thursday.

The rapporteurs Bernd Vöhringer and Randi Mondorf will assess the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in the country.

Cyprus signed the Charter in August 1986 and ratified it in May 1988. The Charter commits member states to guarantee the political, administrative and financial autonomy of local authorities.

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