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Non-discrimination : a human right
Seminar marking the entry into force of Protocol No. 12
Strasbourg, 11 October 2005

Aim

The aim of the Seminar is to mark the occasion of the entry into force of Protocol No. 12 (1 April 2005) to the European Convention on Human Rights. Protocol No. 12 sets out a general prohibition of discrimination. The Seminar will examine the challenges raised by the Protocol's effective application with a view to promoting further ratifications.

Participants

The seminar will bring together government representatives of the 46 member States of the Council of Europe as well as representatives of observer States, judges of the European Court of Human Rights, members of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and of other Council of Europe bodies. Members of the Parliamentary Assembly, academic experts and representatives of civil society (including non-governmental organisations active in the fight against discrimination) and national human rights institutions, as well as representatives of other international organisations will also participate in the Seminar.

Procedure

The seminar will be brief and highly focused. Following welcoming remarks by the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the seminar will start with three introductory presentations on (i) the experience of the UN Human Rights Committee in applying the freestanding non-discrimination provision of Article 26 of the ICCPR, (ii) the existing case-law of the European Court of Human Rights under Article 14 of the ECHR and (iii) on Protocol No. 12 itself. Following these presentations, there will be two sessions. Each session will be addressed by a panel of three or four speakers, each of whom will give a short introductory speech, followed by discussions. Each panel will reflect the different views existing with regard to Protocol No. 12. The first session will consider the scope of application of Protocol No. 12, with a view to clarifying the obligations deriving from its provisions. The second session will examine the implications of a ratification of Protocol No. 12 for national authorities, particularly in the light of the experience of States having already ratified.

At the end of the Seminar, a summing-up of the debates will be made by the Chair. Following the Seminar, the Secretariat will prepare a brief report on the discussions that will have taken place, which will be made public. Particular emphasis will be put on practical steps to be taken in order to promote the ratification of Protocol No. 12.

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