



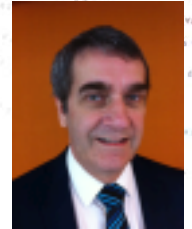
Dear praying friends in Europe –

In 1 Tim 2:1-2 Paul says:

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

It is not always easy to give thanks for those in authority who can seem far removed from our own reality and whose policies may not agree with our views. Nor is it easy to put ourselves in their place to understand the pressures of making decisions, often urgently.

If we take time to learn about our institutions, it may help us understand their responsibilities and competencies and to pray with more clarity. In each institution there are Christians, who seek to serve in a godly way. Pressure on them can be huge, especially in this so-called "post-Christian" era. Let's give thanks for them and pray for their influence on colleagues who don't know Jesus.



Ian Jeal

Council of Europe (CoE)

Often when we speak about Europe and its institutions we only consider the European Union and its 28 (soon to be 27) nations. In July 2016, a special Canopy prayer letter explained the different institutions which make up the EU. However if we want to pray for all those in authority over our continent we should also look at the Council of Europe (CoE).

Let's start by dispelling the first misconception; the CoE is not a part of the EU. It is a separate institution made up of 47 nations, including Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey (only Belarus is excluded). The institution's headquarters are in Strasbourg, France and its parliamentary assembly is made up of delegations of members from national parliaments, often from both upper and lower Houses of Parliament in each member state.

The CoE was one of the first attempts at the reconstruction of Europe after the war in 1949. So what does the CoE do and what is its responsible for? One of its primary roles after the war was to promote democracy throughout the continent. Obviously this role was extremely important during the years of the Cold War but even since the fall of the Berlin Wall it has played an important role in supporting and encouraging new democracies. Another important aspect of its work is the oversight of

the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which is also in Strasbourg.

Each member country of the CoE is a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights, which is a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It is through the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) that the Court draws its guidance in forming judgements. The work of the PACE is to produce reports on subjects as diverse as non-discrimination, protection of children's rights, election observation and upholding freedom of expression, amongst others. The ECHR is the place where individuals and organisations can go when they have exhausted their own national legal systems but believe that their human rights have been ignored or violated. To find out more look at www.coe.int where you can learn more about the CoE and also the names of your nation's delegates to the PACE.

Prayer:

- Let us give thanks for this Europe-wide forum of the Council of Europe, for its inclusive agenda in working to promote democracy and reconciliation.
- Pray too for those Christian NGOs who seek to advise members of the parliamentary assembly on Christian values and to help them scrutinise upcoming legislation.

Please also pray for

- the future way of the European Union after the recent speech of President Juncker.
- the peace of the world (USA-North Korea).