

*Council of Europe*  
*The Secretary General*



Strasbourg, 5 June 2008

Dear Commissioner

Thank you for your letter of 14 May about the situation in Tibet.

The protection and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law are the core values of the Council of Europe, and our Organisation is recognised as "the Europe-wide source of reference" in these fields.

However, the Council of Europe's membership and its geographical scope of action is indeed focused on Europe. Consequently, the Committee of Ministers has not addressed issues relating to the situation in Tibet. As the Committee of Ministers stated in its reply to Recommendation 1753 (2006) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe : "Whilst acknowledging the importance of external relations for the Council of Europe, and of the contribution by the Organisation to the enhancement of universal values outside of Europe, the Committee of Ministers is nevertheless convinced that priority must be placed on the European dimension of the Organisation's mission."

Nevertheless, the Council of Europe will continue to follow closely all the developments related to the protection and promotion of human rights, democracy and rule of law and will stand up for the defence of these values within its geographical scope, as in the case, for example, of Belarus.

Yours sincerely

Right Hon Terry Davis

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