

FOREWORD BY THE
HONORARY PRESIDENT OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF
THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE,
MRS LENI FISCHER

At their second Summit meeting in October 1997 the Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States decided to continue their active support of democratic development in all member States and to increase their efforts to promote an area of common legal standards throughout Europe. The Heads of State and Government also underlined the essential standard-setting role of the Council of Europe in the field of human rights and its contribution to the development of international law through European conventions.

The collection of studies with the title "Law in greater Europe – Towards a common European legal area" intends to honour Heinrich Klebes who both as a distinguished international civil servant and as a scholar and analyst has made and continues to make an important contribution to the development of European co-operation in general and within the Council of Europe in particular.

Born in February 1928, Heinrich Klebes had his first European oriented professional appointment in 1956 in the International Relations and European Integration Divisions of the Federation of German Industries. He was also a consultant with the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities and the United Nations Centre on Transnational Co-operation. From 1963 till 1996 Heinrich Klebes held some of the major posts in the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe (Deputy Director of Political Affairs, Head of the Secretary General's Private Office, Secretary of the Committee of Ministers, and Clerk of the Parliamentary Assembly with the rank of Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe). The impact of his tenure at the helm of the Assembly's administration between 1986 and 1996 is still widely felt. He assisted many Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, committee chairpersons, and individual members and contributed significantly

to the Assembly's effectiveness. Heinrich Klebes helped a lot to smooth the way for the enlargement of the Council of Europe by strengthening the efforts of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe to comply fully with the standards of the Organisation. His great interest in European law is also witnessed by a recent article on the legal nature of the Council of Europe and particularly its Parliamentary Assembly. As Georg Ress, professor of law and judge at the European Court of Human Rights, rightly termed it, Heinrich Klebes is a great authority on the Council's legal structures.

Since his retirement from the Council of Europe in 1996, Heinrich Klebes continues to work for the furthering of European unity and democratic ideals, both as Chairman of the Governing Board of the International Institute of Human Rights and through writing and teaching. We also need in future his outstanding European talent and experience.