

# Press Release

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## For a friendly-family policy against population decline: 46 Council of Europe Family Ministers adopt political declaration

Lisbon, 17.05.2006 – The 46 Council of Europe Ministers for family affairs today unanimously adopted a political declaration at the end of the two-day conference "Changes in Parenting: Children Today, Parents Tomorrow" in Lisbon. They expressed their satisfaction with the decision of the Council of Europe heads of state and government in May 2005 to give priority to the rights of the child and the eradication of all forms of violence against children. They committed themselves to pursue a common European policy in the field of family affairs and the rights of the child within the framework of the Council of Europe.

The 46 Council of Europe Ministers for family affairs further :

- shared the opinion that family-friendly measures of a sustainable family policy could be a **response to the threat of population decline**;
- suggest that governments should respond to their own socio-demographic changes by adapting their legislation. In some member states there is still some policy and legal vacuum, when it comes to the consequences of the spread of new family forms like lone-parenting or duties towards children in reconstituted families;
- Drew attention to the fact that improving job security, particularly for young people, and increasing their participation in the labour market should create supportive conditions for having children and thus should also be considered as a factor for safeguarding the demographic future;
- consider that **parenting**, though linked to family intimacy, should be designated as a domain of public policy. Measures should be adopted for supporting parenting and creating the conditions necessary for positive parenting. Positive parenting is defined as parental behaviour that is nurturing, empowering and provides a structure or set of boundaries making the full development of the child possible;
- recognised that employment and family policy are closely linked to each other. Labour markets and family policies should take into consideration the preferences of people for **reconciling work and parenthood**.
- consider that public authorities should further improve policies to reconcile family and working life. These should include integrated, accessible and affordable measures and the social and economic acceptance of women in the labour market and the role of men in family life;
- Stress the importance of **facilitating the involvement of parents and children** in and through public policy, considering with respect their views and experiences;

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A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 46 member states.

- **request the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to pursue its valuable function** in the field of family affairs and take into careful consideration the work of the Organisation in the field of positive parenting and in particular the draft recommendation to member states on this topic, which is being drafted and should be submitted to the Committee of Ministers in 2006.
- Suggest the next session of the ministerial conference to be held in 2009 to take stock of the development in this field, discuss key elements and prospects for the future.

[Full text – Final Communiqué and Political Declaration](#)

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