

# Press Release

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## **Diversity and migration on the agenda of the 2006 Social Cohesion Forum of the Council of Europe**

Strasbourg, 06.11.2006 – "Achieving social cohesion in a multicultural Europe" as its theme, the 2006 Social Cohesion Forum will take place on 9 and 10 November at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. Some 40 speakers – including national and European parliamentarians, politicians, representatives of anti-discrimination bodies, migrant associations, human rights NGOs and trade unions, professionals, social workers and researchers – will focus on overcoming the limitations of today's so-called "integration" policies, particularly those which are purely unilateral, and see cultural differences as the main reason for the exclusion of migrants.

The Forum – the 6th since 2001 – is being organised by the Council of Europe's Directorate of Social Cohesion in partnership with the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Terry Davis, Council of Europe Secretary General and Alexander Orlov, Chairman of the Ministers' Deputies and Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Council of Europe will open the Forum on 9 November at 10.15 am. In the afternoon, Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg will introduce and chair the session devoted to migrant rights.

The meeting aims to encourage the development of more global and coherent policies to tackle the structural sources of inequality that migrants and their descendants are facing today – to give them a real political role, and take account of cultural differences in migrants' access to social rights and public services. One of the expected outcomes of the Forum, to be discussed in the final session, should be a commitment by all concerned actors to strengthen dialogue on a *fairer* multicultural Europe as part of their long-term social agenda. It is also hoped to reach further consensus on the idea that diversity, rights and well-being – both migrants' and non-migrants' – are not contradictory but interdependent.

The Forum will be held in the hemicycle of the Palais de l'Europe. Admission is free, and open to the public.

For further information, see [www.coe.int/socialcohesion/forum2006/](http://www.coe.int/socialcohesion/forum2006/)

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