

Press Release

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The situation in Kosovo and children's rights in PACE's winter session agenda

Strasbourg, 16.01.2007 – A debate on the current situation in Kosovo on Wednesday 24 January, with the participation of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on the future status process for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, is one of the highlights of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) Winter Session (Strasbourg, 22-26 January 2007).

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I is due to address the Assembly on Monday 22 January, as a contribution to intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, one of the priorities of PACE President René van der Linden. Also invited to address the Assembly are the Prime Ministers of Belgium, Guy Verhofstadt, and Greece, Kostas Karamanlis.

Princess Caroline of Hanover, President of the World Association of Children's Friends, and the Executive Director of UNICEF Ann Veneman will intervene, on Tuesday 23 January, in the debate on combating violence against children and other forms of child exploitation and abuse, as part of the three-year Council of Europe campaign "Building a Europe for and with children".

Other highlights on the agenda include debates on:

- The peril of using energy supply as an instrument of political pressure
- Fair trial issues in criminal cases concerning espionage or divulging state secrets
- Sexual assaults linked to 'date-rape drugs'
- HIV/AIDS, and more specifically the situation of children, including AIDS orphans, as well as women and girls
- Monitoring reports on Albania and Armenia

Requests for urgent debates have been submitted on:

- Threats to the lives and freedom of expression of journalists
- Current tensions between Russia and Georgia

There is also a request for a current affairs debate on "Effectively combating violence in everyday life".

On the sidelines of the session, the parliamentary delegations of Armenia and Azerbaijan are due to attend a joint meeting to discuss the implementation of Assembly Resolution 1416 (2005) on the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference (Thursday 25 January, 2 p.m., not open to the press).

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The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 315 members from the national parliaments of the 46 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).

Monday 22 January (11.30 am)

- Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and opening speech by the President
- Address by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I
- Communication from Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, on the state of the Council of Europe
- [Sexual assaults linked to “date-rape drugs”](#)

Tuesday 23 January

- Child victims: stamping out all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse
 - Statement by Ann M. Veneman, Executive Director of UNICEF
 - Statement by Princess Caroline of Hanover, President of the World Association of Children's Friends (AMADE)
- Address by Guy Verhofstadt, Prime Minister of Belgium
- Peril of using energy supply as an instrument of political pressure
- Honouring of obligations and commitments by Armenia

Wednesday 24 January

- [Current situation in Kosovo](#)
 - Statement by Martti Ahtisaari, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the future status process for Kosovo
- Address by Kostas Karamanlis, Prime Minister of Greece
- Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly presented by Fiorenzo Stolfi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of San Marino, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers
- Agriculture and illegal employment in Europe
- [The situation of migrant workers in temporary employment agencies](#)

Thursday 25 January

- Possible urgent debate
- The Precautionary Principle and responsible risk management
- [HIV/AIDS in Europe](#)
- [A future for HIV/AIDS children and AIDS orphans](#)
- [The spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic to women and girls in Europe](#)
 - Statement by Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
- Honouring of obligations and commitments by Albania

Friday 26 January

- [Fair trial issues in criminal cases concerning espionage or divulging state secrets](#)
- [Towards responsible food consumption](#)

Practical information

PACE President René van der Linden will give a press conference on **Monday 22 January at 10 a.m.** in Room 1. Other press conferences will be announced on the spot.

See the Assembly's website, <http://assembly.coe.int>, for further details. Additional information may also be found on the Council of Europe web portal, <http://www.coe.int/PASession>

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