

Press Release

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Council of Europe seminar in Cyprus to promote landmark Convention against human trafficking

Strasbourg, 08.02.2007 – On 15-16 February in Nicosia (Cyprus), the 46-member Council of Europe is holding its sixth regional seminar to fight human trafficking and to promote the signature and ratification of its *Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings* ([CETS No. 197](#)). To date, Albania, Austria, Moldova and Romania have ratified and 30 other states have signed the Convention.

It is not easy to obtain exact figures, but rough United Nations estimates indicate that between 700,000 to 2 million women alone are illegally trafficked each year. The figure is higher when one adds other forms of trafficking, including illicit organ trafficking and children. The annual market in human trafficking is estimated at \$32US billion.

Organised by the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the Cypriot Ministry of Interior, the regional conference – **open to the press at the Hilton Park Nicosia, (Griva Dighenis Avenue)** – will focus on all three aspects of the Convention: "Prevention, Protection and Prosecution."

Up to 150 seminar participants – including Council of Europe speakers, national officials with expertise in human rights and criminal law and NGO representatives from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine – will examine methods of stopping this modern form of slavery.

The following conference speakers: Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Cyprus Interior Minister Neoklis Sylikiotis, Cyprus Chief of Police Charalambos Koulentis and Eva Biaudet, Special Representative on Combating Trafficking, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, will hold a press briefing at the Hilton Park Nicosia, Griva Dighenis Avenue, just after the opening of the seminar, from 10:30 to 11 am.

Other regional seminars – so far held in Bucharest, Riga, Rome, Oslo and Athens – examine how national policies can fit into the Convention. Another series of seminars will focus on specific aspects of the Convention, such as a meeting in Berlin in April 2007, which will focus on victim protection.

Further information on: <http://www.coe.int/trafficking>

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