

Press Release

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Spring session of the Congress: highlights include the campaign against domestic violence and a debate on street children

Strasbourg, 19.03.2007 – The spring session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities will be held in Strasbourg on 27 and 28 March.

Among the main issues to be addressed will be the Congress's participation in the Council of Europe campaigns against domestic violence and building a Europe for and with children.

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, will take part in a debate on street children. Fabienne Keller, Mayor of Strasbourg and Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, will give speeches on domestic violence, and a photo exhibition on the subject will be opened on Tuesday 27 March at 12.15 p.m., followed by a reception. Valerio Prignachi, Chair of the Congress Committee on Social Cohesion, and Chris Green, President of the NGO "White Ribbon Campaign", will take part in the debate on domestic violence.

The session, organised by the Congress Social Cohesion Committee, will include debates on the preparation of social cohesion indicators, access for persons with disabilities to public facilities and buildings, intergenerational co-operation and participatory democracy, the growth of extreme poverty in European cities, freedom of expression and association for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals, e-health and democracy in the regions. Eminent personalities, such as Martin Hirsch, President of the Emmaüs France, and Jean-Luc Romero, Councillor of the Ile de France Region, will participate in these debates.

Lastly, the members of the Congress will discuss the preparation of the forthcoming Forum for the Future of Democracy, to be held in Stockholm/Sigtuna from 13 to 15 June 2007, and developments in the area of transfrontier co-operation in Europe with Martin Guillermo Ramirez, Secretary General of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).

Reports on observation missions in Gagauzia (Moldova) for the election of the Bashkan (Governor) on 13 and 17 December 2006 and on the local elections in Albania on 18 February 2007 will be presented for adoption.

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It brings together 315 full and 315 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities. President of the Congress Halvdan Skard (Norway, SOC), President of the Chamber of Regions: Yavuz Milden (EPP/CD, Turkey), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Ian Micallef (Malta, EPP/CD). Political Groups : Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG).