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Future of the European Court of Human Rights: Council of Europe Colloquy in San Marino

Strasbourg, 20.03.2007 – The future development of the European Court of Human Rights will be the focus of a colloquy held at the Conference Centre in San Marino on 22 and 23 March by the San Marino Chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers.

The colloquy will be the first opportunity for a broad and open exchange of views at a high technical level on the various measures recommended in the report by the Group of Wise Persons (*). In a relatively informal setting, the various partners concerned – including representatives of the governments, the Court, the Parliamentary Assembly and civil society – will discuss the range of proposals aimed at improving the long-term effectiveness of the European Convention on Human Rights and steps taken by member states to deal with the influx of applications.

The meeting will be opened at 9 a.m. on Thursday 22 March by Fiorenzo Stolfi, Minister of Foreign and Political Affairs of the Republic of San Marino and Chair of the Committee of Ministers, and Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

The 130 or so participants will include Gil Carlos Rodriguez-Iglesias, Chair of the Group of Wise Persons, Jean-Paul Costa, President of the Court of Human Rights, Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc, member of the Parliamentary Assembly, Wilhelmina Thomassen, judge at the Supreme Court of the Netherlands, and Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights.

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, will sum up the discussions at 11.45 a.m. on Friday 23 March.

The San Marino colloquy will pave the way for a broader discussion at European level and national debates in the member countries.

The Committee of Ministers will resume discussion of the issue at its May 2007 session prior to mapping out the contours of a sustainable reform that will enable the system to function smoothly.

**The colloquy is open to the press.
Press briefings may be announced on the spot.**

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(*) The Group of Wise Persons was set up by the Committee of Ministers after the Council of Europe's 3rd Summit (Warsaw, May 2005) to discuss the long-term effectiveness of the supervisory machinery of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Under the chairmanship of Gil Carlos Rodriguez-Iglesias, the Group drew up proposals for coping with the spiralling number of applications (89 000 cases pending before the Court at the end of September 2006).

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