

Press Release

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Council of Europe to host Summer University for Democracy

Strasbourg, 14.06.2007 – Over 600 participants from Schools of political studies in 15 European countries will gather in Strasbourg from 2 to 6 July for the second Summer University for Democracy, organised by the Council of Europe.

Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis will open the Summer University, whose theme is "Projects for Europe," on Monday 2 July at 9:30 a.m. and Serbian President Boris Tadic is expected to give an opening lecture. Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg, Parliamentary Assembly Vice President Göran Lindblad and Philippe Richert, Vice-Chairman of the French Senate, count among speakers at the opening.

The five-day session (2-6 July) will include a series of themed conferences and workshops to be conducted by leading international personalities such as George Soros, Chairman of the Open Society Foundation; and Ivan Vejvoda, Executive Director of the Balkan Trust for Democracy.

Belarus opposition leader Alexandre Milinkevich will participate in the closing session on Friday 6 July alongside Strasbourg Mayor Fabienne Keller, as well as Oliver Dulic, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia. A final declaration will be adopted at the end of the ceremony.

A special round table on Thursday 5 July will examine the question **50 years after the Treaties of Rome: where is the European project ?** Invited participants include Jean-Dominique Giuliani, president of the Robert Schuman Foundation; Daniel Tarschys, former Secretary General of the Council of Europe; Adrian Severin, European MEP; Deputy Prime Minister Gabriela Konevska-Trajkovska of "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and minister in charge of European affairs.

The four plenary sessions and thematic conferences are **open to the press**, as opposed to the workshops.

A press briefing will be given by Jean-Louis Laurens, Council of Europe political affairs Director General, on Tuesday 19 June at 11 a.m. (room 17, ground floor of the Palais de l'Europe, behind the news kiosk near the ATM machine).

NOTE FOR EDITORS

The first Council of Europe-backed school of political studies was founded in Moscow in 1992 to train the next generation of decision makers in politics, economics, society and culture. At present 15 such schools exist in Russia, Georgia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Kosovo/UNMIK, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," Serbia, Croatia, Romania, Armenia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Montenegro. For the second straight year, a delegation from Belarus is participating.

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A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 47 member states.

Since their establishment, each of the political studies schools has participated in an annual closing seminar in Strasbourg, essentially focusing on the Strasbourg-based European institutions. In 2006, in order to increase the visibility of the programme and forge stronger ties among participants from the various schools, closing seminars were merged into a single large event – the Summer University for Democracy – which took place from 10 to 14 July, organised in partnership with the European Public Administration Pole (PEAP).

The event brings together participants from political studies schools (500 in 2006, 600 in 2007) to allow for study based on common questions and create bilateral and regional opportunities for dialogue. It also affords participants the opportunity to hear from international and European leaders and meet numerous experts from Europe and elsewhere. Each Summer University holds a particular theme. In 2006 it was Challenges to Democracy, in 2007 the future of the European Project.