

Press Release

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European high-level conference on the implementation of the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015

Strasbourg, 18.09.2007 – Implementation of the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 will top the agenda at a European high-level conference to be held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 20 and 21 September.

The conference, jointly organised by the Council of Europe Directorate General for Social Cohesion and the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity of the Republic of Croatia, will be attended by over 150 governmental and non-governmental experts on disability issues.

"The objective of the Action Plan is a shift from patient to citizen in our approach to people with disabilities. It has the potential to improve the quality of life of many disabled people in Europe" said Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

"It is the right moment for all of us to move from policy to practice in order to improve the inclusion and active participation of people with disabilities in society, and to ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination," she added.

The European High Level Conference on the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015: National Implementation – from Policy to Practice is a step forward at a time when a great number of European countries are signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Member states will use this opportunity to exchange good practice and ideas in order to advance in the national reform processes.

Panel sessions of the conference will cover topics such as implementation of the Action Plan into national strategies and national legislation, also focusing on forms of development of regional and international co-operation as well as the interaction of NGOs with state institutions and local governments.

The conference will also highlight examples of good practices of social protection for people with disabilities in the Council of Europe' participating member states.

The conference will adopt a Declaration including practical recommendations which will be made available after the conference at www.coe.int/soc-sp

The Council of Europe "[Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation in society of people with disabilities : improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015](#)" was launched at the European Disability Conference in St Petersburg, Russia on 21- 22 September 2006.

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