

# Press Release

## Council of Europe Press Division

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### Action against trafficking in human beings: the Council of Europe focuses on criminal and procedural measures

Strasbourg, 25.09.2007 – The Council of Europe and the French Ministry of Justice are jointly organising an international seminar on criminal and procedural measures to combat trafficking in human beings, to be held in Paris on 27 and 28 September at 14 rue des Cévennes, 15<sup>th</sup> arrondissement (Michelet Site of the Ministry of Justice).

The seminar, which is **open to the press**, will begin at 9.30 am on Thursday 27 September with speeches by Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Pierre Boussaroque, Diplomatic Adviser of the Justice Minister.

A hundred or so experts and representatives of the Council of Europe, governments and non-governmental organisations in the countries concerned will share their practices and experience.

The discussions will focus on:

- measures in the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and other Council of Europe action by the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Commissioner for Human Rights to combat this phenomenon;
- measures and action taken at national level in France, Albania, Romania, Turkey, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Moldova, Hungary and Italy

with the emphasis on the protection of the victims of trafficking, who may not be considered merely as instruments for prosecuting traffickers but are at the very heart of action to combat this problem.

Measures to protect and promote the rights of victims range from psychological and practical help, security and protection to a recovery and reflection period or repatriation, and include provision for not punishing victims who have been forced to take part in illicit activities.

The Paris meeting is the ninth information and awareness seminar organised in the context of the Council of Europe Campaign to combat trafficking in human beings. This one is designed to foster the broadest possible ratification of the Council of Europe convention (\*).

For further information, see the website [www.coe.int/trafficking](http://www.coe.int/trafficking)

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(\*) To date, 36 states have signed the convention and nine of them have ratified it (Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Georgia, Moldova, Romania and Slovakia). It will come into force after the 10th ratification.

According to United Nations estimates, 700,000 to 2 million women are victims of trafficking every year, including trafficking in organs and children.

**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.**