

Press Release

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Council of Europe Belgrade seminar focuses on helping human trafficking victims

Strasbourg, 12.10.2007 – Recognising that trafficked persons are victims rather than illegal immigrants or criminals, and improving the standards of care, are the focus of a regional seminar opening in Belgrade on 18 October.

The seminar, which is **open to the press**, will begin at 9.30 with speeches by Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Dragan Jovic, Serbian Minister of the Interior.

Some 100 experts, representatives of the Council of Europe, governments and non-governmental organisations in the countries concerned, will discuss anti-trafficking experiences, lessons learned and new ways to co-operate during the two-day seminar.

The discussions will focus on:

- the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- measures taken at national level in Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Italy, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

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

The Belgrade event is the tenth information and awareness seminar organised in the context of the Council of Europe Campaign to combat trafficking in human beings. It is organised by the Council of Europe's Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs and the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade, in co-operation with the Serbian Ministry of the Interior.

For further information, see www.coe.int/trafficking

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