

Press Release

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New monitoring body for trafficking in human beings to be discussed at Council of Europe conference in Strasbourg

Strasbourg, 31.10.2007 – Next year, the Council of Europe will set up the Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), an independent human rights monitoring mechanism. This quasi-judicial body will monitor the implementation of the Council's convention on human trafficking.

The composition and working methods of GRETA will be the subject of a high-level conference involving Council of Europe member states, observer countries, other international organisations (OSCE, United Nations and the European Commission) and NGOs (Anti-Slavery International and Amnesty International) in Strasbourg on 8-9 November.

The Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings ([CETS n° 197](#)) will enter into force on 1 February 2008, following its tenth ratification earlier this month. Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Georgia, Moldova, Romania and Slovakia have now ratified the convention, which has been signed by a further 27 countries.

Next week's conference, which will take place at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg, is **open to the press**. It will be opened by Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, at 9.30.

Notes

- Trafficking in human beings is a worldwide phenomenon often linked to organised crime. It is a modern form of slavery, in which human beings are treated as a commodity for sexual exploitation or forced labour. According to the International Labour Organisation, up to 2.45 million people throughout the world are victims of human trafficking every year. The illicit profits of this trade amount to 33 billion dollars annually, making it the third most profitable criminal activity after illegal drugs and arms trafficking.
- The 27 member states which have signed but not yet ratified the convention are Andorra, Armenia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

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