

Press Release

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Stockholm to host international conference on Romani women's rights

Strasbourg, 28.11.2007 – Tackling the main challenges that Romani women and their communities face today will be the focus of an international conference in Stockholm on 3 and 4 December.

The conference, entitled "Amare glasura ashunde - Our voice heard", will discuss trafficking in human beings, including trafficking in children, domestic violence and practices harming Romani women's reproductive health, such as forced sterilisation and early marriages.

It will also focus on personal experiences in overcoming disadvantages and discuss progress made in access to health care for Romani communities since the first such conference in 2003.

The conference will bring together women representing various Romani women networks in Europe, experts and policy makers from the Council of Europe member states who will try to find ways to improve the social condition of their communities. An indigenous woman from Panama will deliver testimonial about forced sterilization, a practice which many indigenous people have suffered from.

The speakers at the opening session will include Nyamko Sabuni, Swedish Minister for Integration and Gender Equality, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Council of Europe Deputy General Secretary, Constantinos Manolopoulos, Acting Interim Director of European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and Soraya Post, International Romani Women's Network President. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, will deliver a speech in the afternoon of the conference's first day.

Organised at the request of the Romani Women's Networks, the event is a joint initiative of the Council of Europe, the Swedish Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

A **press conference** is planned for **3 December at 9.15 am** (Lejondals Castle, Lejondals Slott AB 197 91 BRO).

For more information on the conference, please visit:

http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/themes/roms/agenda1_en.asp

<http://www.coe.int/romatravellers>

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