

Press Release

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Education of Roma children and youth: Council of Europe conference in Bratislava

Strasbourg, 04.04.2008 – "**Education and training of Roma children and youth: the way forward**" is the theme of a conference to be held by the Council of Europe and the Slovak Chairmanship of the Council's Committee of Ministers in Bratislava on 8 and 9 April (City Hotel, Seberiniho street).

The conference, which coincides with *International Roma Day* (8 April), will involve an exchange of experience and an assessment of practices in terms of adapting educational approaches to the needs of Roma and Travellers' communities. It will also provide a platform for debating the compatibility of existing or planned policies and practices with Council of Europe policies, on the one hand, and with national and international human rights law and anti-discrimination provisions on the other. The conference is expected to produce a publication to help define "*the way ahead*" in this field.

The conference will be opened at 9.30am on 8 April by Dušan Caplovič, the Slovak Vice-Prime Minister responsible for European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities, and Jan Kubis, the Slovak Minister for Foreign Affairs and current Chairman of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. Representatives of the Council of Europe and the Presidencies of the EU and OSCE will make presentations at the opening session.

The main participants and speakers of the conference will be governmental and non-governmental representatives from the 49 parties to the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe that have adopted national policies for Roma, or those which are in the process of doing so, as well as representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organisations.

The conference will not be open to the press (apart from 5-10 minutes of the opening ceremony). A press conference will be held from 10.30 to 10.50am on 8 April at the conference venue.

For further information see the Council of Europe website on the "Education of Roma children in Europe", www.coe.int/education/roma.

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