

Press Release

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Council of Europe conference on medical liability

Strasbourg, 07.05.2008 – In the light of ever-increasing legal disputes over healthcare, the Council of Europe is holding a conference on medical liability in Strasbourg on 2 and 3 June in order to set European standards in this area.

The number of complaints has risen significantly over the past 20 years, causing patients to lose confidence in the medical profession and increasing pressure on the courts. The subsequent increase in the cost of insurance premiums for health professionals and hospitals now risks undermining health systems.

Given these developments, the Council of Europe is aiming to identify good practice in the sphere of medical liability in its member states, as well as alternative methods of resolving disputes.

The conference will be divided into four main sessions:

- an overview of medical liability in Europe;
- the legal approach to medical liability (nosocomial infections and errors in ante-natal diagnosis will be the subject of more detailed discussions);
- alternative methods of resolving medical disputes, and mediation;
- the role and responsibility of the public and private sectors in financing compensation.

Conference participants will also consider the causes of medical accidents (with a view to better prevention, bringing about an improvement in the quality of care) and the financial consequences. Members of the medical and legal professions, insurers, representatives of patients' and consumers' associations and representatives of civil society will take part in the discussions.

The conference will be **open to the press** (Room 1, 2nd floor, Palais de l'Europe) and will culminate in the **adoption of conclusions**.

It is being organised by three Council of Europe committees: the European Health Committee, the Steering Committee on Bioethics and the European Committee on Legal Co-operation.

For more information see www.coe.int/medical-liability.

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