

Press Release

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Commissioner Hammarberg visits Italy to discuss human rights implications of the new security package

Strasbourg, 19.06.2008 – The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, will today begin a two-day visit to Rome where he will discuss human-rights concerns stemming from the security package adopted in May with leading representatives of the Italian Government. The Commissioner's agenda will mainly focus on the new government's policies on migration and the situation of Roma.

"I want to establish a dialogue with the new Berlusconi government," said Commissioner Hammarberg. "I have already met the minister in charge of European affairs in Strasbourg and had some correspondence with the government on policies towards migrants and the Roma communities. I am looking forward to a more concrete discussion," he added.

During the visit, his first to Italy, the Commissioner will also meet the President and the Secretary General of the National Association of Magistrates, the Head of the European Commission Representation to Italy and representatives of international organisations, civil society and Roma people.

"I have received a number of reports on the recent developments in Italy on the situation of migrants and the Roma minority and would therefore want to form my own impression of the situation," said the Commissioner.

On Friday 20 June the Commissioner will speak at the World Refugee Day event organised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Musei di San Salvatore in Lauro, Piazza San Salvatore in Lauro 15, Rome).

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The Commissioner for Human Rights is an independent, non-judicial institution within the Council of Europe, mandated to promote awareness of, and respect for, human rights in the 47 member States of the Organisation. Elected by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the present Commissioner, Mr Thomas Hammarberg, took up his function on 1 April 2006.

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