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Netherlands: Commissioner Hammarberg to assess human rights situation

Strasbourg, 16.09.2008 – Policies affecting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, integration, children's rights and the fight against discrimination and intolerance are some of the main topics that the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, will assess during his four-day high-level official visit to the Netherlands starting on Sunday 21 September.

Mr Hammarberg's agenda will also cover a broader range of human rights issues including the functioning of the police and the judiciary as well as freedom of expression. Accompanied by three members of his Office, Commissioner Hammarberg will also visit a shelter for trafficked women, asylum seekers centres, a facility for young offenders and a psychiatric institution.

During the visit, the Commissioner will meet with members of the Dutch government including the Ministers of Justice, Mr Hirsch Ballin, Interior and Kingdom Relations, Ms Ter Horst, and Housing, Communities and Integration, Ms Vogelaar. He will also meet with Parliamentarians and representatives of civil society. Furthermore, meetings with the National Ombudsman and the Equal Treatment Commission are also part of the programme.

The visit is in accordance with the Commissioner's mandate to assess the implementation of human rights commitments by all Council of Europe's member States. An assessment report with relevant recommendations will be presented and published in early 2009.

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The Commissioner for Human Rights is an independent, non-judicial institution within the Council of Europe (CoE), mandated to promote awareness of, and respect for, human rights in the 47 member States of the CoE. Elected by the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE, the present Commissioner, Mr Thomas Hammarberg, took up his function on 1 April 2006. For further information regarding the Commissioner's activities, please visit www.commissioner.coe.int.

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