



Council of Europe

Note  
to Editors

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## **International conference to assess the impact of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities**

Strasbourg, 07.10.2008 – The Council of Europe will hold a conference on 9-10 October to assess the progress achieved in protecting the rights of national minorities ten years after the entry into force of the first binding international treaty on this subject: the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

The conference, held under the theme “Enhancing the impact of the Framework Convention: past experience, present achievements and future challenges”, will gather members and former members of the independent monitoring body of the convention (the Advisory Committee), academics, and representatives of national minorities, NGOs and international organisations.

The participants will analyse the impact of the monitoring work the Council of Europe has carried out in these years and in particular its impact on national legislation and policies. As of today, 39 member states have ratified the convention and eight have not.

The conference will be opened at 14.00 on 9 October by the Director General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe, Philippe Boillat, the Human Rights Commissioner, Thomas Hammarberg, the former president and member of the Advisory Committee, Rainer Hofmann, and its acting president, Alan Phillips. Morten Kjaerum, Director of the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, and Knut Vollebaek, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, will participate in the meeting.

The conference is **open to the press**. Plenary sessions will take place in room 9 of the Palais de l’Europe, the Council of Europe main building.

### **NGO meeting**

In the morning of 9 October (09.00-13.00) NGOs will meet to discuss the implementation of the convention. Coordinated by Minority Rights Group International, they will draft a declaration which will address actors involved in the protection of national minorities.

### **Photo exhibition**

On 9 October a photo exhibition will be launched in the lobby of the hemicycle of the Palais de l’Europe at 18.00. Through a journey in Vojvodina (Serbia), this exhibition entitled “National Minorities, Breath of Diversity, Breath of Europe”, intends to provide an insight into the life of national minorities.

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