



Council of Europe

Note
to Editors NEWS

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(English only)

Council of Europe conference supports democratic change in Belarus

Strasbourg, 19.11.2008 – A Council of Europe conference in Vilnius (Lithuania) on 21 November will encourage democratic change in Belarus in the aftermath of the 2008 parliamentary elections. The aim of the conference is for Belarusian civil society and the democratic forces in the country to learn the lessons of the last electoral campaign and assess the problems and obstacles that arose during the electoral process.

The participants in the meeting will discuss ways of reducing electoral fraud, upholding civil society and improving freedom of the media in order to give citizens the possibility to make a free and conscious choice.

The Committee of Ministers (the Council of Europe's decision-making body) expressed on several occasions the hope that Belarus, as an integral part of Europe and a country whose people have contributed to the common European heritage, will soon fulfil the conditions for becoming a fully-fledged member of the Organisation. The Council of Europe's doors remain open to new members whose authorities by its international commitments to democracy and co-operate on democratic reforms and the promotion of European values.

Notes:

- The **conference is open to the press** (Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Hall "Constitutional", Gedimino ave. 53, Vilnius)
- The event is jointly organised by the Conference of International non-governmental Organisations (INGOs) of the Council of Europe, the National Committee of United Democratic Forces of Belarus, the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, the Belarusian Association of Journalists, the Lithuanian Parliamentary Group "For Democratic Belarus" and the Civil Defence Fund of Lithuania.

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