

# Press Release

## Council of Europe Press Division

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## Council of Europe Conference on disadvantaged neighbourhoods: what opportunities for children and young people?

Strasbourg, 26.01.2006 – The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Directorate of Youth and Sport, in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the French Ministry for Youth, Sport and Associative Life, are organising the European Conference on "Integrated childhood and youth policies in Europe – needs for disadvantaged neighbourhoods", which will take place in the Palais de l'Europe from 30 January to 1 February.

The Conference will bring together some 280 participants from 32 European countries and the United States of America, representing 123 cities. Government officials and experts, local and regional elected representatives, academicians, researchers, representatives of civil society and youth activists are among the participants of this Conference, which is a follow-up to the Congress on "Integrated strategies for children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods" that took place in Berlin in November 2004. (\*)

Over three days, five working panels will discuss possible approaches and action to give disadvantaged neighbourhoods renewed hope and a fresh start and to improve the future opportunities of children, young people and their parents whose life chances are reduced by the simple fact that they live in such areas of poverty, marginalisation and exclusion. The working panels will focus on the participation and involvement of young people in public life at the local level, cooperation of public services with NGOs and civil society, promotion of tolerance in communities, non-formal education and employment perspectives of disadvantaged young people, and the need for a new dialogue between youth research, youth policy and youth work.

The Conference will be opened on Monday 30 January at 2.00 pm by Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General Maud de Boer-Buquicchio and Mayor of Strasbourg Fabienne Keller, as well as by Dr Peter Fricke of the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, and by Valéry Genniges of the French Ministry for Youth, Sport and Associative Life. Mayor of Mulhouse Jean-Marie Bockel will introduce the working panels on Tuesday 31 January at 9.30 am. Yavuz Mildon, President of the Chamber of Regions of the Council of Europe Congress, will present the conclusions of the Conference on Wednesday 1 February at 12.30 pm.

On the occasion of the Conference, the Council of Europe Award "Young Active Citizens" will be presented to five winning youth projects from Germany, Croatia, Russia, Hungary and the United Kingdom. Instituted in 2002, this Award is aimed at promoting active participation of young people in society, especially at local and regional level. The award ceremony will take place in the Hemicycle of the Palais de l'Europe on 30 January at 3.30 pm.

**A press conference will be held on Monday 30 January at 4.15 pm in Room 1 of the Palais de l'Europe.**

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For more information: [www.coe.int/congress](http://www.coe.int/congress)

(\*) The Berlin Process evolved from a programme of the German Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.