

Press Release

Council of Europe Press Division

Ref: 271a06

Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 60

Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 39 11

pressunit@coe.int

internet: www.coe.int/press



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Council of Europe Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Family Affairs: Building a family-friendly Europe for children

Strasbourg, 11.05.2006 – A conference on “Changes in Parenting: Children Today, Parents Tomorrow” will take place at European ministerial level in Lisbon on Tuesday 16 and Wednesday 17 May. The discussions will focus on new family patterns in a changing European society, positive parenting (1) and non-violent upbringing.

The conference, bringing together Ministers from the Council of Europe's 46 member states responsible for Family Affairs, will identify supportive measures to help families remain the core unit of our societies, and will discuss responsible parenthood and how to increase involvement of men in family life. The conference will also contribute to the Council of Europe's ongoing campaign to construct a family-friendly Europe for and with children, launched in Monaco last month.

The opening speeches on Tuesday 16 May will be given by the Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio and the hosting Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity of Portugal, José António Vieira da Silva.

The opening session will be followed by three workshops which will focus on the following topics: “Family policies in the light of demographic changes in Europe and Different Patterns for Family Life”, “Supporting Parenting in the Best Interests of the Child” and “Reconciling Working and Family Life”. European experts in Social Sciences will introduce the relevant topics and communicate their latest findings, followed by interventions of the Ministers and debates.

Since 1949 the Council of Europe is the guardian of human rights, the safeguard for democracy and the rule of law on the European continent. Under its core convention, the European Convention for Human Rights, the Council of Europe considers the upbringing of children in a non-violent environment as a human rights issue. Important legal instruments in this field are the Council of Europe Social Charter and the UN-convention on the Rights of the Child.

The conference is open to the press.

A **press conference** with the Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General and the Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity of Portugal will take place on **Tuesday, 16 May, 10.30 a.m.**, Hotel Altis, Rua Castilho, 11, 1269-072 Lisboa. Interpretation in English, French and Portuguese.

Please find the programme, speeches, background material and updated information in real time on our **website**: <http://www.coe.int/Family-Lisbon>

(1) promoting development of positive parent-child relationships and optimising the child's developmental potential

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A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 46 member states.

Press contact :

Anna Kehl, Council of Europe Press Division ; Mobile: + 33 6 89 99 50 42 ; E-mail: anna.kehl@coe.int

Accreditation :

Deolinda Correia, Ministério do Trabalho e da Solidariedade Social

Tel: + 351 21 351 31 86, Mobile: + 351 96 214 06 47, E-mail: deolinda.correia@gaeri.mtss.gov.pt

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