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Council of Europe Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government meet in the Netherlands

"Good local and regional governance in turbulent times: the challenge of change"

Date: 16-17 November 2009

Location: Utrecht, the *Royal Dutch Jaarbeurs*, the Netherlands/Railway Museum Utrecht

Organised by the Council of Europe, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Description: Signs of a recovery from the global crisis are emerging but the effects will continue to be felt for a long time: local and regional authorities are in the forefront of dealing with the impact and efforts to find a way out of the crisis. This situation will be the focal point of the discussions among the Ministers. Representatives from other Council of Europe bodies and observers will also be able to take part in the discussions.

Other subjects on the agenda are transfrontier co-operation and follow-up to the report by Ms Mari Kiviniemi, Minister of Public Administration and Local Government of Finland, on how to enhance the work of the Council of Europe in the field of local and regional democracy.

The conference will adopt the Utrecht Declaration covering the topics mentioned above as well as the Utrecht Agenda on the challenges and responses by the member states and the Council of Europe over the period 2010-2013, in the sphere of local and regional governance.

Two new Council of Europe treaties will be opened for signature on the occasion of the 16th session: the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the Right to Participate in the Affairs of a Local Authority and Protocol No. 3 to the Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning Euroregional Co-operation Groupings.

The conference will start with a video message of Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Opening statements will be made by Ms Guusje Ter Horst, Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations Mr Frans Timmermans, European Affairs Minister of the Netherlands, representatives of the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, Congress, the Queen's Commissioner in the Province of Utrecht and the Mayor of the City of Utrecht. **Journalists are welcome to the opening session** (Monday 16 November, 9 am) as well as at the ceremony for signature of the two protocols in the Railway Museum (Monday 16 November 7.30 pm).

A press conference will take place on Monday 16 November, 19h50, at the conference venue.

Additional information

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