

Media Advisory

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30.04.2010

Thorbjørn Jagland participates in St Gallen Conference on "Democracy and Decentralisation - Strengthening democratic institutions through participation"

Date: 3 - 4 May 2010, 1.30 pm

Place: University of St. Gallen, Executive Campus (*Weiterbildungszentrum*), Holzstrasse 15b, 9010 St. Gallen

Organised by: the Swiss chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in partnership with the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe and the University of St. Gallen and its International Students' Committee.

Description: conference and workshops where government representatives, members of parliament, local and regional elected representatives, civil society representatives, academics and students from the Council of Europe's member countries will meet to discuss ways of strengthening democratic institutions and fostering a citizen-based democracy.

Following a plenary session on the afternoon of Monday 3 May, the morning of the second day of the conference, Tuesday 4 May, will be devoted to four workshops on the following topics:

- subsidiarity: legal principle or political slogan?
- decentralisation in multiethnic states
- resource management and financial autonomy
- democracy through local and regional referendums

Josef Keller, President of the Canton of St Gallen, and Professor Ernst Mohr, Rector of the University of St Gallen, will open the conference. Roberto Balzaretti, Secretary General of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs will make the welcome speech on behalf of the Swiss chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers.

Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, will deliver a speech at the inaugural session of the Conference.

Ian Micallef, Acting President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Andreas Gross, member of the Presidential Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly, Jean-Marie Heydt, President of the Conference of INGOs and Giovanni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission, will also address the inaugural session.

36 university students from 36 Council of Europe countries, who have presented pertinent essays on the conference theme will also participate in the conference. At the end of the Conference, two of them will be awarded prizes for their essay.

The conference is open to the press. Additional information available at www.decentralisation2010.ch (username: inscription ; password: 20stgallen10).

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