

Media Advisory

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Strasbourg, 05.06.2009

The Council of Europe opens an Information Point in the Belarusian capital – *Update*

Date: Monday 8 June 2009

Place: Minsk (Belarus)

Description: The Information Point, which is intended to inform Belarusians about Council of Europe activities and convey European values and standards, particularly in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, will be housed in the Institute of Journalism at the Belarusian State University.

It will be opened by Sergei Martynov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Samuel Žbogar, the current Chair of the Committee of Ministers and Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General, Andrea Rigoni, PACE rapporteur on Belarus and Sergei Ablameiko, President of the Belarusian State University.

The Information Point will be charged with organising Council of Europe activities and events in Belarus and hence establishing closer co-operation with the local and national authorities and civil society. It will also be responsible for promoting the Council of Europe's awareness-raising campaigns, particularly those against trafficking in human beings, against discrimination and intolerance and for the abolition of the death penalty.

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On 26 May 2009, the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe backed the idea of restoring the Belarusian Parliament's special guest status, which has been suspended since 1997, with the aim of engaging in "a political dialogue with the authorities" while supporting "the strengthening of democratic forces and civil society in the country". The Assembly is due to adopt a position on this question at its next part-session (Strasbourg, 22-26 June).

Practical information:

- A **press conference** is scheduled for **Monday 8 June at 4.20 p.m. at the national press centre in Minsk (5, Oktyabrskaya street)**.
- Journalists are asked to submit their **requests for accreditation** to Alexei Tsybulko, Deputy Director of the press centre (by e-mail to info@bpc.by or by telephone on +375 17 227 79 16), with a copy to Ihar Horski at the Council of Europe Information Point (e-mail: horski@bsu.by).

Press contacts:

In Minsk:

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