

Press Release

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Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights begins official visit to Germany

Strasbourg, 09.10.2006 - Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, today begins a two-week official visit to Germany. He will meet with the Vice-Chancellor Franz Müntefering, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the Federal Minister of Justice, Brigitte Zypries, the Federal Minister of the Interior, Wolfgang Schäuble, and the Federal Minister for Health, Ulla Schmidt. The Commissioner is visiting Germany for the first time to draw up a comprehensive human rights report in the country. His final assessment will be made public in spring 2007. Since 1950 Germany is a member of the Council of Europe.

Mr Hammarberg will also hold consultations in Karlsruhe with the Presidents of the Federal Constitutional Court, Prof. Dr Hans-Jürgen Papier and the President to the Federal Court of Justice, Prof. Dr. Günter Hirsch. He will also meet members of the national parliament, the Mayor of Berlin and several ministers in Saxony and Bavaria. During his assessment visit, the Commissioner will also meet leading representatives of civil society, and will visit accommodation and detention centres for asylum-seekers, a mental health care facility and a shelter for women who have been trafficked or were victims of violence.

On **Friday 20 October 2006**, the Human Rights Commissioner and Prof. Dr. Herta Däubler-Gmelin, Chairperson of the Bundestag Commission on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid and Member of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, will hold **a press conference in Berlin** (time and place to be confirmed later).

The Commissioner is an independent non-judicial institution and plays a preventive role in promoting awareness of and respect for human rights in 46 Council of Europe member states. Thomas Hammarberg from Sweden is the second Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights—and has held the post since 1 April, 2006.

For further information, please visit www.coe.int/t/commissioner

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