

# Press Release

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## **"Police misbehaviour must be investigated by independent bodies"**

Strasbourg, 12.03.2009 – "An independent and effective police complaints system is of fundamental importance for a democratic and accountable police service" said today the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, in releasing an [opinion on investigating complaints against the police](#).

"Such complaints mechanisms could help enhance public trust and confidence in the police and ensure that there is no impunity for misconduct or ill-treatment" he said. "It is important that they comply with the five principles developed by the European Court of Human Rights, that is independence, adequacy, promptness, public scrutiny and victim involvement".

In addition, the Commissioner highlights that such independent bodies should have oversight of the police complaints system and share responsibility with law enforcement officials. "The expectation that criminal or disciplinary proceedings will be brought against police officers' misbehaviour is an important protection against impunity and essential for public confidence in the police complaints system. In addition, it can provide the police and the public with informed advice on how to improve the effectiveness of policing services and police community relations."

Opinions released by the Commissioner are aimed at advising governments, international organisations and other bodies dealing with human rights. They can be used by the media without prior consent, provided that the text is not modified and the original source is indicated in the following way: *"Also available at the Commissioner's website at [www.commissioner.coe.int](http://www.commissioner.coe.int)".*

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