

Press Release

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Commissioner Hammarberg visits Kosovo* to assess the situation of forced returnees

Strasbourg, 10.02.2010 - Several European governments are forcibly returning to Kosovo persons who have found shelter in their countries. To assess the situation, Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, visits Kosovo from 11 to 13 February.

According to UN statistics more than 2 500 persons have been returned from European countries during 2009, mainly from Austria, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland.

Among them are some Roma, who have ended up in the lead-contaminated camps of Češmin Lug and Osterode in northern Mitrovica, where inhabitants have already suffered serious illnesses. The Commissioner will visit these two camps that he already in his [report](#) of July 2009 recommended to be closed. He also urged that adequate housing be offered to all families affected, together with courses of decontamination treatment.

A **press conference** is due to take place on **Friday 12 at 11.30 a.m.** in the press conference room at the premises of the OSCE in Pristina.

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* "All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo."