



## COUNCIL OF EUROPE NEWS



### Council of Europe ministers call for family-friendly policy in the face of economic crisis

Vienna (Austria), 17.06.2009 – European ministers responsible for family affairs announced their intention to promote "family friendly societies and children's rights," following a two-day family policy conference.

In their final communiqué, the ministers noted as risks related to the current economic crisis, focusing on the lack of job security, expensive housing and difficult reconciliation between work and family life, as obstacles to having children.

In a recommendation to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, conference participants included the following proposed measures:

- Implementing Council of Europe standards related to family law and family policies, in particular concerning reconciliation of work and family life, rights of children without parental care, gender equality and adoption;
- Giving a high priority to the promotion of children's rights, by including it in all family policies;
- Reflecting on the rights and legal status of children brought up in various family settings;
- Promoting positive parenting and the abolition of corporal punishment of children.

Ministers also agreed on the importance of creating child and family-friendly environments through urban planning and employers. Particular consideration was given to assisting young people in their transition to work and family life through, for example, housing support and access to childcare facilities. Gender equality was also identified as a prerequisite to sustainable family policy. Ministers particularly encouraged equal sharing of parental and other family responsibilities between women and men.

The final communiqué can be read on the conference website:

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/youthfamily/MinisterialConf\\_June2009/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/youthfamily/MinisterialConf_June2009/default_en.asp)



### Protection of minorities in Serbia

On 25 June the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities published its 2nd Opinion on the protection of national minorities in Serbia, following this country's agreement to early publication.



### Protection of national minorities: Council of Europe publishes report on Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) published an Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina. The committee adopted this Opinion following a country visit in March 2008.

[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3\\_FCNMdocs/PDF\\_2nd\\_OP\\_BiH\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNMdocs/PDF_2nd_OP_BiH_en.pdf)

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION NEWS



### EU Communication: Youth – Investing and Empowering

The European Commission adopted the new EU strategy for youth policy for the coming decade. Entitled "Youth – Investing and Empowering", the new strategy is cross-sectoral, with both short- and long-term actions.

The actions involve key policy areas that affect Europe's young people, particularly youth education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, social inclusion, health and sport, civic participation, and volunteering. The new strategy also emphasises the importance of youth work and defines reinforced measures for a better implementation of youth policies at the EU level.

The strategy "Youth – Investing and Empowering" has the following goals:

- to create more opportunities for youth in education and employment,
- to improve access and full participation of all young people in society, and
- to foster solidarity between youth and society.

The full text of this Communication as well as further related information can be found on the European Commission Youth website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html)

## UNITED NEWS



### 20th of June International Refugee Day

At least 13.250 persons have died in their desperate attempt to find a safe shelter in Europe since 1993. Their names and their stories have been compiled by the UNITED secretariat under the so-called 'List of Deaths'. The experts say it is impossible to know the real number and it is likely to be three times higher

On the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Convention in 2001, the United Nations declared the 20th of June the International Refugee Day.

Every year on the 20th of June, UNITED for Intercultural Action - the largest pan European network against racism, fascism, nationalism and in support of refugees and migrants- celebrates the International Refugee Day.

Around this day, hundreds of organisations from Turkey to Finland speak out against this intolerable human cost of building 'Fortress Europe' to celebrate the International Refugee Day.

Under the common slogan 'Fortress Europe. Weakness Humanity' hundreds of activities and events take place all over the continent in order to highlight this issue and promote refugees' rights.

The main point of these acts is raising awareness about the human side of the refugee issue and preserving their dignity.