

# Press Release

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## New Council of Europe guidelines on child-friendly justice

Strasbourg, 17.11.2010 – The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has adopted new guidelines on child-friendly justice which give European governments guidance to enhance children's access to and treatment in justice, in any sphere – civil, administrative or criminal.

"The justice system cannot be blind to the fact that children have specific needs and rights. When children are involved in judicial proceedings, the scales of justice can only be balanced if the child's best interest is preserved and if they are given a proper chance to understand what is at stake and participate in the decisions concerning them," said Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General Maud de Boer-Buquicchio when she welcomed the adoption of the guidelines.

These guidelines are not only a declaration of principles, but aspire to be a practical guide for the implementation of internationally agreed and binding standards in both in-court and out-of-court proceedings.

"On the eve of the Universal Children's Day to be celebrated on 20 November, our message is simple: children's rights must be guaranteed, and this cannot be the case if justice is denied to children," said Mrs de Boer-Buquicchio. "Protecting and promoting children's rights has been and will continue to be a priority for the Council of Europe".

The guidelines are also responding to a demand by children themselves. The text benefited from the very concrete input of over 3,700 children from 25 countries. Their comments helped to shape provisions on the right to be heard and to receive information, to enjoy independent representation, as well as the right to access independent and effective complaints mechanisms.

[Link to the adopted guidelines](#)

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A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 47 member states.