MEDIA INFORMATION

The Council of Europe in Strasbourg initiates youth camp for conflict resolution

From 1st to 6th of July, Europa-Park will be the location for a youth camp, initiated by the Council of Europe in order to find peaceful solutions to conflicts. Some 40 young people, aged between 16 and 20, Israelis and Palestinians from Jerusalem as well as Albanians and Serbs from Kosovo (mainly Mitrovica and Pristina), will take part.

The aims of the meeting are to break down prejudices and stereotypes among the young persons, to raise the young people's awareness for cultural and social differences and similarities, to encourage dialogue and to enable the participants to develop their own projects.

Already last year the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Walter Schwimmer, has initiated a series of activities, involving young people from conflict areas in and around Europe, in order to get new ideas in the field of conflict resolution.

The results of the youth camp will be presented at a **press conference on Monday, July 5th at 10.30 am at Europa-Park**. Also Walter Schwimmer and Roland Mack, managing director of Europa-Park and Council of Europe Goodwill Ambassador for Families since April 2003, will be present.

More information is available at: www.coe.int/de

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Background

The idea:

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Conference-building measures, possibilities for conflict prevention as well as precise suggestions regarding the conciliation of different political attitudes are the aims of a series of activities, including young people from conflict areas in and around Europe, which has been started by the Council of Europe in the previous year.

The first event of this initiative has been a seminar in spring 2003, which received a lot of attention. Young people from different conflict areas were invited to find solutions for the problems of the respective other area.

This initiative forms the basis of the youth camp for conflict resolution at Europa-Park - whose managing director Roland Mack also is Council of Europe Goodwill Ambassador for Families.

The project "youth camp for conflict resolution?:

From July 1st to 6th 2004, 40 young people aged between 16 and 20 years from Israel, Palestine, Albania and Serbia, will visit Europa-Park. Each group will be accompanied by two team-trainers.

The concept includes the realization of a series of activities (such as role-playing, workshops,?) in Germany's biggest theme park.

The main aims are:

- To break down prejudices and stereotypes among the young persons
- To raise the young people's awareness for cultural and social differences and similarities of the different regions
- To discuss the different political attitudes and points of view, from which the conflicts can be seen
- To advance equal dialogue as the only possibility to solve political and social conflicts
- Last but not least, the participants are to come up with their own "project for the future?

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