



4 September 2018

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

I.

The relations between the Council of Europe and the United Nations are based on the Agreement between the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe and the Secretariat of the United Nations signed as early as 15 December 1951 and the [Arrangements on Co-operation and Liaison between the Secretariats of the Council of Europe and the United Nations \(Exchange of letters of 19 November 1971\)](#).

In its Resolution 44/6 of 17 October 1989, the General Assembly of the United Nations granted the Council of Europe a standing invitation to participate as an **observer** in its sessions and work.

Since 2000 (every second year since 2004), the General Assembly of the United Nations, within its debate on co-operation with regional and other organisations, adopts a Resolution on co-operation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. A draft of such a Resolution is prepared and adopted by the Committee of Ministers in Strasbourg. The CM Chair is then asked to table the draft with the UN in New York and to hold the necessary consultations towards its adoption by the UNGA, preferably without vote. The latest resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 21 November 2016 without a vote (doc. A/RES/71/17). Next draft Resolution will be on the agenda of the Committee of Ministers in 2018 for adoption by the UNGA in September-December 2018.

II.

The United Nations is a major partner for the Council of Europe and an ideal platform for global outreach. The universality of values shared by the member states of the Council of Europe constitutes the basis for co-operation. Due to its global nature, both in thematic and geographical terms, the UN constitutes an “across the board” partner for the Council of Europe.

For the UN, the Council of Europe is “*instrumental in advancing the principles of democracy and human rights in Europe. I commend the robust efforts of the Council to support citizens across the continent, and I thank you for your clear stance in support of human rights, particularly as the arrival of large numbers of refugees and migrants has brought to the fore instances of intolerance and xenophobia.*”¹.

¹ Letter of 2 December 2016 of UN SG Ban Ki-Moon to CoE SG.

The mutual interest in co-operation is reflected in regular contacts, consultations and dialogue between the Secretaries General (the latest in May 2017 in Strasbourg) and the Deputy Secretaries General and the UN Under-Secretaries General about current political or thematic issues.

The Council of Europe works closely with a large number of UN bodies, including the UNHCR², OHCHR³, UNICEF⁴, OCHA⁵, UNDP⁶, UNECE⁷, UNESCO⁸ and the World Bank.

The relations between both organisations are focused on, but not limited to human rights in a broad sense. Emphasis is given to co-operation with the Human Rights Council, in particular in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to which the Council of Europe contributes actively as regards the human rights situation in its member states.

The UN is also involved in promoting accession of Council of Europe non-member states to the Council of Europe conventions with a global vocation (for example, the Council of Europe Conventions on action against trafficking in human beings, on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, on cybercrime, etc) or supporting their implementation.

Since their opening, respectively in 2010 and 2011, the Council of Europe Offices in Geneva and Vienna, acting as Permanent Delegations to the UN Offices in both cities, strongly contributed to the enhancement of relations with the UN, as well as to the increased visibility of the Council of Europe amongst UN member states.

III.

Among the many recent examples of CoE-UN co-operation, the following could be mentioned as illustrating the multifaceted relations between the two organisations:

- Council of Europe contribution to the implementation of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**; amongst other activities, the Council of Europe participated on 1 and 2 March 2018 in Geneva in the Regional Forum organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region. Moreover, the Council of Europe has created a specific website devoted to its contribution to implementation of 2030 Agenda: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/un-agenda-2030/home> . This website is regularly updated;
- : Increased involvement of the Council of Europe in the **Universal Periodic Review**, in particular through the regular participation of its Permanent Observer to the United Nations Office at Geneva in the meetings of the Human Rights Council and through

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

⁴ United Nations Children's Fund

⁵ United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs

⁶ United Nations Development Programme

⁷ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

⁸ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

increased references to CoE texts in the latter's reports on Council of Europe member states;

- Increased cooperation in the field of **migration**, as shown in particular by the presence and statements of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe at the Side event on children and migratory flows (*UNICEF House*) on 18 September 2016 and at the UN-SG's High-level meeting on large movements of refugees and migrants (*UN Headquarters*) on 19 September 2016, in the framework of the High-level Segment of the 71st session of the General Assembly. Furthermore, in the framework of the follow-up to the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on Migration and Refugees has been involved in the preparatory process which has led to the zero drafts of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and will continue his engagement in the upcoming negotiation phase;
- Increased co-operation in the field of **human rights**, demonstrated by the signature on 26 September 2013 in New York by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of **the Joint Declaration on the reinforcement of co-operation between the Council of Europe Secretariat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**. The implementation of the Joint Declaration is illustrated, for example, by regularly holding (in Strasbourg and Geneva alternately) a CoE/OHCHR co-ordination meeting. Furthermore, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe maintains regular contacts, *inter alia*, with the OHCHR and met the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2017;
- Increased co-operation with the **Human Rights Council**, demonstrated in particular by the addresses of the consecutive Presidents of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Remigiusz Henczel (Poland 2013), Ambassador Baudelaire Ndong Ella (Gabon 2014), Ambassador Joachim Ruecker (Germany 2015), Ambassador Choi Kyonglim (Republic of Korea 2016) and Ambassador Vojislav Šuc (Slovenia 2018) to the annual exchanges of views of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe with experts from capitals on human rights and the United Nations;
- The Council of Europe's regular participation in the annual sessions of the **UN Commission on the Status of Women**, the organisation of side events on that occasion and the presentation of key note speeches confirm high-level, pragmatic and target-oriented relations with the UN Women;
- The interest shown by the Council of Europe in the **Inter-Agency Co-ordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT)**, followed by the granting of the ICAT Partner Status on 15 September 2017;
- Synergies developed in the **fight against terrorism**, underlined by the organisation in Strasbourg of a special meeting of the UN Security Council Counter Terrorism Committee (UN SC CTC) with international, regional and sub-regional organisations or by an address of the Secretary General to the meeting of the UN SC CTC on 19 June 2015; moreover the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) and the Council of Europe worked closely on the development, negotiations and conclusion of the Council of Europe additional Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism. The Protocol was signed in Riga on 21 October 2015. The Council of Europe participates routinely in UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee's visits and took part in 2017 in the latter's special meeting with international, regional and subregional organisations on "International Judicial and Law Enforcement Co-operation in Counter-Terrorism Matters

pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2322 (2016) and Other Relevant Council Resolutions”;

- Increased co-operation in the field of **democracy**, demonstrated by the contribution to the UN efforts to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies or by regular UN participation in the Council of Europe World Forum for Democracy, starting with the keynote address by the UN SG at the opening of the first World Forum for Democracy in Strasbourg (October 2012);
- Increasing co-operation between the **Pompidou Group and UNODC**;
- The co-operation with **UNDP in the field of local and regional democracy**;
- Increased co-operation between the **Secretariat of the United Nations** and the **Secretariat of the Council of Europe**, demonstrated by regular exchanges of views and the development of best practices such as teleconferences between the Director of the Europe Division of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the Director of Political Affairs of the Council of Europe.