

**SECOND SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
(Strasbourg, 10 – 11 October 1997)**

FINAL DECLARATION AND ACTION PLAN

The Heads of State and Government of the 40 member States of the Council of Europe, meeting in Strasbourg on 10 and 11 October 1997 for the Second Summit, adopted, on 11 October 1997, the Declaration and Action Plan as appended to the present document.



**Strasbourg
1997**

Deuxième Sommet
du Conseil de l'Europe
10 - 11 octobre

Second Summit
of the Council of Europe
October, 10th - 11th

Strasbourg, 11 October 1997

FINAL DECLARATION

We, Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Council of Europe, meeting in Strasbourg on 10 and 11 October 1997 for our Organisation's Second Summit,

Convinced that the far-reaching changes in Europe and the great challenges to our societies require intensified co-operation between all European democracies,

Encouraged by the significant enlargement of our Organisation which has created the basis for a wider area of democratic security in our continent,

Having reviewed the developments since our First Summit held in Vienna in 1993, as well as the implementation of our decisions concerning the establishment of a single European Court of Human Rights; the protection of national minorities; and the fight against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance,

Welcoming the achievements of the Council of Europe in preparing candidate countries for membership and ensuring their full integration into the wider European family, and underlining the contribution of the Parliamentary Assembly, as well as that of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, to supporting democratic development in member States,

- solemnly reaffirm our attachment to the **fundamental principles of the Council of Europe** - pluralist democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law - and the commitment of our governments to comply fully with the requirements and meet the responsibilities arising from membership of our Organisation,
- underline the essential **standard-setting role** of the Council of Europe in the field of human rights and its contribution to the development of international law through European Conventions, and affirm our determination to ensure full implementation of these standards and conventions, particularly by strengthening the co-operation programmes for the consolidation of democracy in Europe,

- confirm our goal of achieving a greater unity between our member States, with a view to building a **freer, more tolerant and just European society** based on common values, such as freedom of expression and information, cultural diversity and the equal dignity of all human beings,
- decide consequently to give new impetus to those activities of the Council of Europe aimed at supporting member States in their efforts to respond to the **changes in society** on the threshold of a new century,
- give our full support to the Council of Europe with a view to intensifying its contribution to **cohesion, stability and security in Europe**, and welcome the development of its co-operation with other European and transatlantic organisations, in particular the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe,

and, on this basis, declare the following:

CONVINCED THAT THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE STRENGTHENING OF PLURALIST DEMOCRACY BOTH CONTRIBUTE TO STABILITY IN EUROPE:

- decide to reinforce the **protection of human rights** by ensuring that our institutions are capable of effectively defending the rights of individuals throughout Europe,
- call for the **universal abolition of the death penalty** and insist on the maintenance, in the meantime, of existing moratoria on executions in Europe,
- express our determination to reinforce the means to prevent and combat **torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**,
- call for the intensification of the fight against **racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance**,
- stress the importance of a more balanced representation of men and women in all sectors of society, including political life, and call for continued progress with a view to achieving effective **equality of opportunities between men and women**,
- assert our determination to step up co-operation in respect of the protection of all persons belonging to **national minorities**,
- acknowledge the fundamental role of the institutions of **local democracy** in the preservation of stability in Europe,
- decide to continue active support for **democratic development** in all member States and to increase our efforts to promote an area of common legal standards throughout Europe;

RECOGNISING THAT SOCIAL COHESION IS ONE OF THE FOREMOST NEEDS OF THE WIDER EUROPE AND SHOULD BE PURSUED AS AN ESSENTIAL COMPLEMENT TO THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY:

- decide to promote and make full use of the instruments which are a reference and a means of action for States and for the social partners, in particular the **European Social Charter** in the legal field and the **Social Development Fund** in the financial field,
- agree to review our **legislation in the social field** with a view to combating all forms of exclusion and ensuring better protection for the weakest members of society,
- stress the importance of a common and balanced approach, based on international solidarity, to questions relating to **refugees and asylum seekers**, and in this regard recall the obligation for the State of origin to readmit these persons to its territory, in accordance with international law,
- recall the protection due to **victims of conflicts**, as well as the importance of the respect for humanitarian international law and the knowledge of its rules at national level, in particular among the armed forces and the police,
- affirm our determination to protect the rights of lawfully residing **migrant workers** and to facilitate their integration in the societies in which they live;

SHARING THE CONCERN OF CITIZENS ABOUT THE NEW DIMENSION OF THREATS TO THEIR SECURITY AND THE DANGERS WHICH THESE THREATS CONSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY:

- reassert our strong condemnation of **terrorism** and our determination to make full use of the existing machinery to combat all of its manifestations, while ensuring respect for legality and human rights,
- decide to seek common responses to the challenges posed by the growth in **corruption, organised crime and drug trafficking** throughout Europe,
- decide to intensify our co-operation aiming at strengthening the **legal protection of children**,
- affirm our determination to combat **violence against women** and all forms of sexual exploitation of women,
- support the efforts of the Council of Europe and of local, regional and national authorities to improve the **quality of life** in disadvantaged areas: urban and industrialised;

AWARE OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSION OF THE MAIN CHALLENGES TO BE FACED BY EUROPE IN THE FUTURE AS WELL AS OF THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN STRENGTHENING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND CONFIDENCE BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES:

- express our desire to develop **education for democratic citizenship** based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the participation of young people in civil society,
- reaffirm the importance we attach to the protection of our **European cultural and natural heritage** and to the promotion of awareness of this heritage,
- decide to seek common responses to the development of the **new information technologies**, based on the standards and values of the Council of Europe, while ensuring a proper balance between the right to information and respect for private life,
- recognise the role of **sport** in promoting social integration, particularly among young people,
- encourage **understanding between the citizens of the North and the South**, in particular through information and civic education for young people, as well as initiatives aimed at promoting mutual respect and solidarity among peoples.

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Having in mind the need to redefine our priorities and adapt the functions of our Organisation to the new European context, we have drawn up an **Action Plan**. This document, appended to the present **Declaration**, seeks to define the main tasks for the Council of Europe in the coming years, particularly in the period leading to its 50th Anniversary.



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ACTION PLAN

The Heads of State and Government, meeting in Strasbourg on 10 and 11 October 1997, have outlined an **Action Plan** to strengthen **democratic stability** in the member States, and have accordingly defined four main areas where there is scope for immediate advances and practical measures, together with a fifth field concerning structural reforms.

I. DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Single Court of Human Rights: the Heads of State and Government welcome the ratification of Protocol No. 11 to the European Convention on Human Rights by all contracting parties, making it possible to establish the new single Court of Human Rights, and instruct the Committee of Ministers to take the necessary steps to set it up on 1 November 1998.

2. Commissioner for Human Rights: the Heads of State and Government welcome the proposal to create an office of Commissioner for Human Rights to promote respect for human rights in the member States and instruct the Committee of Ministers to study arrangements for its implementation, while respecting the competences of the single Court.

3. Compliance with member States' commitments: the Heads of State and Government resolve to ensure that the commitments accepted by the member States are effectively honoured, on the basis of a confidential, constructive, non-discriminatory dialogue carried on within the Committee of Ministers and taking into account the monitoring procedures of the Parliamentary Assembly; they reiterate their determination to work together to solve the problems faced by member States and consider that this monitoring process must be supported, where necessary, by practical assistance from the Council of Europe.

4. Prohibition of the cloning of human beings: the Heads of State and Government undertake to prohibit all use of cloning techniques aimed at creating genetically identical human beings and instruct to this end the Committee of Ministers to adopt an additional protocol to the Oviedo Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine as soon as possible.

5. Combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance: the Heads of State and Government welcome the action taken in this field by the Council of Europe since the Vienna Summit and resolve to intensify, for this purpose, the activities of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, while stressing the importance of close co-operation with the European Union.

6. Protection of national minorities: the Heads of State and Government, taking into account the imminent entry into force of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, resolve to complement the Council of Europe's standard-setting achievements in this field through practical initiatives, such as confidence-building measures and enhanced co-operation, involving both governments and civil society.

II. SOCIAL COHESION

1. Promotion of social rights: the Heads of State and Government undertake to promote social standards as embodied in the Social Charter and in other Council of Europe instruments, and call for the widest possible adherence to these instruments; they resolve to improve the exchange of good practice and information between member States and to intensify their co-operation in this field.

2. New strategy for social cohesion: the Heads of State and Government instruct the Committee of Ministers to define a social strategy to respond to the challenges in society and to carry out the appropriate structural reforms within the Council of Europe, including the setting up of a specialised unit for monitoring, comparing and handling issues linked to social cohesion.

3. Programme for children: the Heads of State and Government encourage the adoption of a programme to promote the interests of children, in partnership with the international and non-governmental organisations concerned.

4. Social Development Fund: the Heads of State and Government decide to reinforce the activities of the Social Development Fund, invite it to participate actively in the Council of Europe's action for social cohesion, and urge it to increase its investment effort in the social field and in job creation.

III. SECURITY OF CITIZENS

1. **Combating terrorism:** the Heads of State and Government call for the adoption of further measures to prevent terrorism and to strengthen international co-operation in combating terrorism, in accordance with the relevant provisions of international law, including international standards on human rights, and in the light of the recommendations adopted at the ministerial conference on terrorism held in Paris on 30 July 1996; they note with interest the forthcoming holding of a parliamentary conference to study the phenomenon of terrorism in democratic society.

2. **Fighting corruption and organised crime:** in order to promote co-operation between member States in the fight against corruption, including its links with organised crime and money-laundering, the Heads of State and Government instruct the Committee of Ministers:

- to adopt, before the end of the year, guiding principles which are to be applied in the development of domestic legislation and practice;
- to secure the rapid completion of international legal instruments pursuant to the Council of Europe's Programme of Action against Corruption;
- to establish without delay an appropriate and efficient mechanism for monitoring observance of the guiding principles and implementation of the said international legal instruments.

They call on all States to ratify the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime.

3. **Prevention of drug abuse:** the Heads of State and Government decide to strengthen their co-operation, through the Pompidou Group, with a view to tackling the problems relating to the use and trafficking of illicit drugs ; they note with approval the new work programme of the Group and welcome in particular those activities designed to prevent drug abuse among young people and to facilitate the reintegration of drug addicts and users into society.

4. **Protection of children:** the Heads of State and Government decide to review national legislation with the aim of ensuring common standards for the protection of children suffering from or at risk of inhuman treatment; they agree to extend their co-operation, within the Council of Europe, with a view to preventing all forms of exploitation of children, including through the production, sale, marketing and possession of pornographic material involving children.

IV. DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- 1. Education for democratic citizenship:** the Heads of State and Government decide to launch an initiative for education for democratic citizenship with a view to promoting citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society, activating existing networks, and including a new youth exchange programme.

- 2. Enhancement of the European heritage:** the Heads of State and Government decide to launch a campaign in 1999 on the theme "Europe, a common heritage", respecting cultural diversity, based on existing or prospective partnerships between government, educational and cultural institutions, and industry.

- 3. New information technologies:** the Heads of State and Government resolve to develop a European policy for the application of the new information technologies, with a view to ensuring respect for human rights and cultural diversity, fostering freedom of expression and information and maximising the educational and cultural potential of these technologies; they invite the Council of Europe to seek, in this respect, suitable partnership arrangements.

V. STRUCTURES AND WORKING METHODS

- 1. Structural reform:** the Heads of State and Government, looking ahead to the 50th Anniversary of the Council of Europe in 1999, instruct the Committee of Ministers to carry out the structural reforms needed to adapt the Organisation to its new tasks and its enlarged membership and to improve its decision-making process.

- 2. Implementation of the Action Plan:** the Heads of State and Government instruct the Committee of Ministers to take the appropriate steps to ensure that this Action Plan is speedily implemented by the various Council of Europe bodies, in co-operation with European and other international organisations.