

**FOURTH SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

General debate

17 May 2023

Intervention by Mr Tiny Kox

President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Prime Minister

Minister

Secretary General

Heads of State and Government,

It is my honour to represent the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe here today.

Earlier this week the leaders of our 46 national delegations and 5 political groups met here in Reykjavik.

On their behalf I congratulate you all on this Reykjavik Summit.

It is the right moment, the right place and the right issues.

In 1949, the founders of the Council of Europe understood that maintaining peace would depend on the protection of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the member States.

Since then, almost all European states acceded and made the Council of Europe a truly pan-European area of democratic security.

By crossing Ukraine's borders on 24 February last year, the Russian Federation fundamentally challenged this post-war multilateral architecture of Europe.

Therefore, Russia was, rightfully and immediately, expelled from the Organisation, as unanimously requested by our Assembly.

Since then, restoring, strengthening and perhaps re-inventing European democratic security and rules-based multilateralism against aggressive unilateralism has become an existential challenge and the main reason to meet here today in Reykjavik.

Our Assembly appreciates that our input has been taken so seriously by you. We compliment you on the results.

1. with you, we fully support the creation of a comprehensive system to ensure the accountability of the Russian Federation, including an ad hoc tribunal for the crime of aggression, a Register of Damage and viable mechanism to ensure the return of abducted children back home as its cornerstone;
2. with you, we want the European Convention on Human Rights to be better safeguarded, the authority of our Court better protected and the execution of its judgements better guaranteed, and we want the European Union to accede to our Convention;
3. with you, we want to reverse the dangerous backsliding of democracy, by addressing its root causes and by formulating binding principles for democracy in all our member States;
4. and with you, we agree that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment must be recognized as a fundamental human right. The is the moment to act.

Dear All,

We are facing huge challenges. Let us show the courage to counter them.

Our citizens demand it, our citizens deserve it. Let us be the ones to do it.