



Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005)

Warsaw Declaration

We, Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe, gathered in Warsaw on 16-17 May 2005 for our Third Summit, bear witness to unprecedented pan-European unity. Further progress in building a Europe without dividing lines must continue to be based on the common values embodied in the Statute of the Council of Europe: democracy, human rights, the rule of law.

Since its Vienna (1993) and Strasbourg (1997) Summits, the Council has grown to encompass almost the whole continent. We welcome the valuable contribution which the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities have made to this achievement. We look forward to the day when Belarus is ready to join the Council of Europe.

60 years after the end of the Second World War, 30 years after the Helsinki Final Act, 25 years after the founding of "Solidarity" and 15 years after the fall of the Berlin wall, we pay tribute to all those who have made it possible to overcome painful divisions and enlarge our area of democratic security. Today, Europe is guided by a political philosophy of inclusion and complementarity and by a common commitment to multilateralism based on international law.

However, we remain concerned by unresolved conflicts that still affect certain parts of the continent, putting at risk the security, unity and democratic stability of member states and threatening the populations concerned. We shall work together for reconciliation and political solutions in conformity with the norms and principles of international law.

This Summit gives us the opportunity to renew our commitment to the common values and principles which are rooted in Europe's cultural, religious and humanistic heritage – a heritage both shared and rich in its diversity. It will also strengthen the Council of Europe's political mandate and enhance its contribution to common stability and security as Europe faces new challenges and threats which require concerted and effective responses.

We can now focus on these challenges and continue to build a united Europe, based on our common values and on shared interests, by strengthening cooperation and solidarity between member states. We will remain open to co-operation with Europe's neighbouring regions and the rest of the world.

1. The Council of Europe shall pursue its core objective of preserving and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. All its activities must contribute to this fundamental objective. We commit ourselves to developing those principles, with a view to ensuring their effective implementation by all member states. In propagating these values, we shall enhance the role of the Council of Europe as an effective mechanism of pan-European cooperation in all relevant fields. We are also determined to strengthen and streamline the Council of Europe's activities, structures and working methods still further, and to enhance transparency and efficiency, thus ensuring that it plays its due role in a changing Europe.

2. Taking into account the indispensable role of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the European Court of Human Rights in formulating, promoting and implementing human rights standards, it is essential to guarantee their effectiveness. We are therefore strongly committed in the short term to implement the comprehensive set of measures adopted at the 114th Session of the Committee of Ministers which address the Court's rapidly increasing case-load, including the speedy ratification and entry into force of Protocol 14 to the Convention. Furthermore we are setting up a Group of wise persons to draw up a comprehensive strategy to secure the effectiveness of the system in the longer term, taking into account the initial effects of Protocol 14 and the other decisions taken in May 2004.
3. We are convinced that effective democracy and good governance at all levels are essential for preventing conflicts, promoting stability, facilitating economic and social progress, and hence for creating sustainable communities where people want to live and work, now and in the future. This can only be achieved through the active involvement of citizens and civil society. Member states must therefore maintain and develop effective, transparent and accountable democratic institutions, responsive to the needs and aspirations of all. The time has come to intensify our work within the Council of Europe to this effect, in particular through the establishment of the Forum for the Future of Democracy.
4. We are committed to strengthening the rule of law throughout the continent, building on the standard setting potential of the Council of Europe and on its contribution to the development of international law. We stress the role of an independent and efficient judiciary in the member states in this respect. We will further develop legal cooperation within the Council of Europe with a view to better protecting our citizens and to realising on a continental scale the aims enshrined in its Statute.
5. We are resolved to ensure full compliance with our membership commitments within the Council of Europe. Political dialogue between member states, which are committed to promoting democratic debate and the rule of law, evaluation, sharing of best practices, assistance and monitoring - for which we renew our firm support - will be fully used for that purpose. We shall work for the widest possible acceptance of Council of Europe's conventions, promoting their implementation with a view to strengthening common standards in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.
6. We shall foster European identity and unity, based on shared fundamental values, respect for our common heritage and cultural diversity. We are resolved to ensure that our diversity becomes a source of mutual enrichment, *inter alia*, by fostering political, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. We will continue our work on national minorities, thus contributing to the development of democratic stability. In order to develop understanding and trust among Europeans, we will promote human contacts and exchange good practices regarding free movement of persons on the continent, with the aim of building a Europe without dividing lines.
7. We are determined to build cohesive societies by ensuring fair access to social rights, fighting exclusion and protecting vulnerable social groups. We acknowledge the importance of the European Social Charter in this area and support current efforts to increase its impact on the framing of our social policies. We are resolved to strengthen the cohesion of our societies in its social, educational, health and cultural dimensions.
8. We are determined to ensure security for our citizens in the full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and our other relevant international obligations. The Council of Europe will continue to play an active role in combating terrorism, which is a major threat to democratic societies and is unjustifiable under any circumstances and in any culture. It will also further develop its activities in combating corruption, organised crime – including money laundering and financial crime – trafficking in human beings, cybercrime, and the challenges attendant on scientific and technical progress. We shall promote measures consistent with our values to counter those threats.
9. We strongly condemn all forms of intolerance and discrimination, in particular those based on sex, race and religion, including antisemitism and islamophobia. We affirm our determination to further develop, within the Council of Europe, rules and effective machinery to prevent and eradicate them. We will also further implement equal opportunity policies in our member states and we will step up our efforts to achieve real equality between women and men in all spheres of our societies. We are committed to eradicating violence against women and children, including domestic violence.

10. We are determined to ensure complementarity of the Council of Europe and the other organisations involved in building a democratic and secure Europe:

- We are resolved to create a new framework for enhanced co-operation and interaction between the Council of Europe and the European Union in areas of common concern, in particular human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

We entrust our colleague, Jean-Claude Juncker, to prepare, in his personal capacity, a report on the relationship between the Council of Europe and the European Union, on the basis of the decisions taken at the Summit and taking into account the importance of the human dimension of European construction.

- We are also resolved to secure improved practical co-operation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE and welcome the prospect of enhanced synergy opened up by the joint declaration endorsed at this Summit.

- We express our commitment to fostering co-operation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations, and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Europe.

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To launch the Organisation on this new course, we adopt the attached Action Plan.

We commit our States to promoting the tasks and objectives reflected in the decisions of this Summit, both within the Council of Europe and in other international forums and organisations of which we are members.

As we conclude this Summit in Poland, we pay tribute to the memory of Pope John Paul II.

We call on Europeans everywhere to share the values which lie at the heart of the Council of Europe's mission – human rights, democracy and the rule of law – and to join us in turning Europe into a creative community, open to knowledge and to diverse cultures, a civic and cohesive community.