

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

DECLARATION

REGARDING INTOLERANCE — A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 14 May 1981
at its 68th Session)*

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe,

1. Convinced that tolerance and respect for the dignity and intrinsic equality of all human beings are the very basis of a democratic and pluralistic society ;
 2. Profoundly disturbed by the resurgence of various forms of intolerance ;
 3. Reaffirming its determination to safeguard the effective political democracy referred to in the Preamble to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ;
 4. Recalling that human rights and fundamental freedoms are the very foundation of justice and peace throughout the world ;
 5. Bearing in mind that the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms has successfully afforded effective international protection, without discrimination, to everyone within the jurisdiction of the Contracting States ;
 6. Recalling that, in accordance with the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and following the Committee of Ministers Resolution (68) 30 of 31 October 1968, on measures to be taken against incitement to racial, national and religious hatred, several member states have either adopted new legislation or reinforced existing legislation against acts inspired by racism ;
 7. Welcoming the adoption by the Consultative Assembly of Resolution 743 (1980) on "the need to combat resurgent fascist propaganda and its racist aspects" ;
 8. Considering that the best way of countering all forms of intolerance is to preserve and consolidate democratic institutions, to foster citizens' confidence in those institutions and to encourage them to take an active part in their operation ,
 9. Convinced of the vital part played by education and information in any action against intolerance, whose origin frequently lies in ignorance, source of incomprehension, hatred and even violence,
- I. Vigorously condemns all forms of intolerance, regardless of their origin, inspiration or aims, and the acts of violence to which they give rise, especially when human lives are at stake ;
 - II. Rejects all ideologies entailing contempt for the individual or a denial of the intrinsic equality of all human beings ;
 - III. Solemnly recalls its unswerving attachment to the principles of pluralistic democracy and respect for human rights, the cornerstone of membership of the Council of Europe, as well as to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the essential instrument in the effective exercise of these rights ;

IV. Decides :

i. to reinforce efforts, at national and international levels, and particularly in the framework of the Council of Europe, to prevent the spread of totalitarian and racist ideologies and to act effectively against all forms of intolerance ;

ii. to take, with this objective in mind, all appropriate measures and to implement a programme of activities including, in particular, the study of legal instruments applicable in the matter with a view to their reinforcement where appropriate ;

iii. to promote an awareness of the requirements of human rights and the ensuing responsibilities in a democratic society, and to this end, in addition to human rights education, to encourage the creation in schools, from the primary level upwards, of a climate of active understanding of and respect for the qualities and culture of others ;

V. Agrees that member states will make every effort so that the principles enounced above prevail within other international organisations ;

VI. Appeals to all institutions, movements and associations and to all political and social forces to contribute towards a sustained effort against the threat to democracy represented by intolerance.