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

MINUTES

Strasbourg

CONTENTS

	Page
Minutes of the Opening and the First, Second and Third Sitzings held on Friday 10 October 1997 at the Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg (SUM(97)PV1)	1
Minutes of the Fourth and Fifth Sitzings held on Saturday 11 October 1997 at the Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg (SUM(97)PV2)	77

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Programme	113
Appendix 2	List of Heads of State, Heads of Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Ministers and State Secretaries	115
Appendix 3	Final Declaration and Action Plan	127
Appendix 4	Written Communications from the States enjoying observer status with the Council of Europe	135
Appendix 5	Message from the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation to participants in the Summit of Council of Europe member States	139

MINUTES
of the Opening and the First, Second and Third sittings
held on Friday 10 October 1997
at the Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg

OPENING CEREMONY

The sitting was opened at 10.42 a.m. by Mr Jacques CHIRAC, President of the French Republic, who made the following statement:

"It is a great honour and a great joy to welcome you here in Strasbourg, a European capital which has so often been hurt by History and which today embodies our will to build a peaceful Europe.

In Vienna, four years ago, our Organisation began to enlarge itself by opening itself up to what was still the "other Europe". Since then, eight new members have joined us, notably Russia and Ukraine.

Since its foundation, nearly half a century ago, our Organisation has grown from 10 to 40 Member States, representing now 700 million men and women. Other European nations, who have been good enough to be with us today, have applied for membership and will, I hope, be joining soon.

I also extend a cordial greeting to our four observers.

Nor do I forget, lastly, all that our work owes to our Parliamentary Assembly, the representatives of the regional and local authorities, and to the Non-Governmental Organisations who bring to us their competence, their dynamism and their generosity.

This second Summit first of all bears witness to the increasing role played by the Council of Europe: as a symbol of the recovered unity of our continent, it is the essential instrument for anchoring democracy and the promotion of Human Rights in the whole of Europe.

Free, henceforth, of the confrontations and suspicions of yesterday, our whole European family is gathering around common values: respect for the human person, the sacred and inviolable nature of the dignity of man, the rule of law. These are values that the Council of Europe has never ceased to put forward. Immediately after the end of World War II, it established the foundations of a democratic Europe. Then, developing and completing its major achievement, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, the Council of Europe has drawn up 160 Conventions and instruments for the protection of the human person, which are so many benchmarks.

In our new Europe, what should henceforth be the missions and the means of the Council of Europe?

First, democracy must fully take root. A few days ago, in Saint Petersburg, I called upon the young Russians, representing the first generation of their country to be reaching adulthood in a free society, and with them all the youth of Europe, never to cease defending and furthering democracy. To show vigilance, because nothing is ever assured once and for all. To bear in mind that democracy, as President Vaclav HAVEL put it so well, "is never an accomplished task, it is a road without end". In short, to be the guardians of this so delicate and so necessary flame.

This is one of the essential missions of our Organisation: to teach young European citizenship and democracy, to give them the love of justice and freedom, to instil in them respect for the other and the sense of responsibility. It is there, in education, that lies the beginning of everything!

Then one must fight exclusion, intolerance, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism. The Plan of Action adopted at the Vienna Summit has borne fruit. The European Commission against racism and intolerance, which we decided to set up, has become the instrument of effective and concerted action embracing the whole of Europe. We must increase its powers still further, and give more scope to its initiatives.

But our Summit must be the occasion to go further, to give a new impetus to our Organisation and to assign new ambitions to it.

Such is the purpose of the texts put before us. And in particular the Plan of Action, which contains 19 concrete measures that the Council of Europe will be called upon to implement in the next few years, preferably by 1999, the year of the 50th anniversary of the foundation.

I shall not dwell on this programme, which will be the object of broad debate during our Summit. I should however like to mention a few points which deserve particular attention.

- First, the new Court of Human Rights. It will be in permanent session, and the citizens of all our States will be able to bring matters before it directly. Through such a considerable strengthening of existing provisions, the new Court will be a body without its equivalent in the world for the international protection of human rights.

- Next, problems of scientific ethics. The Council of Europe will in particular be given the task of drawing up speedily a text prohibiting human cloning.

- The social dimension, of course, with the accession, during this Summit, of more States to our revised Social Charter which enshrines fundamental social rights and in particular trade union freedom. The protection of childhood, after the Stockholm meeting, will be a priority for our action. Employment also, through the interventions of the Social Development Fund.

- And also the fight against the evils of our times. Organised crime, terrorism, drugs and corruption undermine the very foundations of our societies. Together, with our Organisation, we must wage this battle on the scale of the whole continent.

- Lastly, the new information technologies. The Council must see to it that this revolution in modes of communication does not attack the dignity of the human person, and that it contributes to the promotion of human rights and preserves our cultural diversity.

In closing, I should also like to raise a subject which is close to my – to all our – hearts: that of antipersonnel mines. I call upon all the States represented here in this place to sign, in Ottawa in December, the Treaty totally forbidding antipersonnel mines which was concluded last month in Oslo.

Ladies and Gentlemen, those are our ambitions for this Summit. We want a Europe in which our nations live in peace, united around the same values. A Europe in which democracy, justice, tolerance prevail everywhere. A Europe brought together by the same idea of man, demanding, generous, based on solidarity. Let us join forces, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the service of such a Europe!"

Mr TARSCHYS, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, made the following statement:

"Today, the 10th of October 1997, would have been the 95th birthday of my mother.

Her generation of Europeans lived through two world wars, recessions and depressions, the spread of totalitarian regimes and the division of our continent into two separate worlds.

Our generation of Europeans has experienced the Cold war, but we have also put an end to it.

At long last, we are all united in a democratic Europe that shares the same faith in individual freedom and human dignity.

But as we prepare to enter the 21st century, we are also faced with formidable challenges.

Not long ago, we all lived under a Damoclean sword that threatened our very survival: the menace of a massive confrontation between two powerful military machines.

That big threat is no longer there. But instead we are confronted with many small threats stemming not from the concentration of military power but from its disintegration, not from one great cleavage of our continent into two hostile camps but from a multitude of small fractures eroding the cohesion of our societies.

Poverty still haunts us.

Europeans live in fear of crime.

Corruption gnaws at the legitimacy of our governments.

Quite recently, we have seen demagogues turning latent ethnic frictions into civil wars and outright massacres.

No wonder, then, that there is a new sense of anxiety in Europe, an anxiety that our new-found unity has not been able to dispel: and its impact is very pernicious.

Insecurity breeds a climate of fear and suspicion. Insecurity deters the bold initiatives and the creative investments we need so urgently to fight poverty, unemployment and social exclusion.

In Vienna, four years ago, we defined the four cornerstones of our common European home as pluralist democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and a common cultural heritage enriched by its diversity. And we set out to build "democratic security" in Europe on the basis of these core values.

The setbacks since Vienna – in Albania, in Bosnia, in Chechnya – make it evident that this task is more crucial than ever, but also far more difficult than most of us imagined four years ago.

Today, leaders of 40 member States and four candidate countries meet in Strasbourg to lay down guidelines for the future.

We do this in a common understanding of the special assets of the Council of Europe. Let me dwell on five.

First of all, its scope: the Council of Europe now covers all of democratic Europe and is therefore an appropriate basis for those forms of co-operation that should not be confined to limited parts of our continent.

Secondly, its outreach: this Organisation is based on a unique form of interaction between governments, parliamentarians, representatives of local and regional authorities, experts and non-governmental organisations. This gives leverage and impact.

Thirdly, its role as a standard-setter and creator of a common legal space in Europe, which has grown through the 165 conventions that have been elaborated over the last half-century.

Fourthly, its capacity for innovation: the Council of Europe is adaptable to the changing concerns of Europeans. After 1989, it was quick to respond to the needs of the emerging democracies. It was able to mobilise experience and expertise to support their transformation. In this way, it has become a European forum of mutual learning and policy development.

And fifthly, its role as the supreme European authority in matters pertaining to human rights: next year – and for the first time in European history – 800 million Europeans will have a full-time Court of Human Rights with jurisdiction spanning the whole continent.

With its enlargement all but completed, the Council of Europe has now a great potential to contribute effectively to the pursuit of European stability. There is wide agreement on this potential – but are we prepared to use it?

We all know that public resources are scarce. But it is all a matter of priorities. The most serious deficit is in foresight and determination.

Foresight is required to engage in targeted programmes to prevent conflicts instead of facing the human tragedies and bearing the tenfold and hundredfold costs when violence has erupted.

Determination is required to stop wasting money on yesterday's risks while those of today and tomorrow are left more or less unattended. Nowhere is this more evident than in security policy, where our public thinking has moved far ahead while much of our public spending remains stubbornly stuck on the prevention of wars that will not come.

The draft Declaration before you starts with a firm commitment to intensify co-operation between all European democracies. Few things can be more important.

Co-operation is needed to weed out suspicion and to build confidence among Europeans.

Co-operation is needed to solve problems that have outgrown the nation State and can no longer be tackled by each single country in isolation.

And co-operation is needed to turn this conflict-ridden continent into an area of lasting peace, in the spirit of Immanuel Kant and so many other great minds who have provided us with the building-blocks for the construction of our common European home.

History has given us a unique opportunity to join forces, and in the Council of Europe we have created a unique tool to promote the cohesion of our continent. So let us now use this tool, to the benefit of all Europeans."

Mrs FISCHER, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, made the following statement:

"I am naturally very pleased to be here to pass on the greetings of the Parliamentary Assembly. We would extend special thanks to our hosts, President Jacques Chirac and the city of Strasbourg. Thank you all for attending today. Your presence demonstrates your personal commitment to the Council of Europe.

Our aim is peace and security in a united Europe. Europe is an imposing construction, but it needs a solid foundation. This foundation is provided by democracy and human rights in a pluralist society governed by the rule of law. These are the principles defended by the Council of Europe.

Our meeting today is somewhat like a European "family reunion", because the Council of Europe is a pan-European association in which 40 member States are currently defending common values. Four further States which would like to join our family are also represented here. This does not apply to Belarus, for reasons of which we are well aware.

Another absentee is the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, where the general situation is very disturbing.

The Strasbourg Summit is an opportunity for giving fresh top-level impetus to the Council of Europe.

This means that it follows directly on from the Vienna Summit, where the Heads of State and Government mandated the Council of Europe to provide the political structure in which the European States can work together on an equal footing towards democratic security. However, we now need new, clear guidelines for the future. This was one of the reasons why the Parliamentary Assembly suggested organising a second Summit, and why we are expecting concrete decisions from it.

What is the Assembly's main preoccupation?

First of all:

The enlargement of the Council of Europe has made it the defender of human and civil rights in the whole of Europe. Its main strength comes from its legislative authority in the field of human rights and democracy. This profile must be preserved and intensified. The new Single Court is a milestone, and a whole series of comprehensive conventions protecting human rights and minorities, social rights and human dignity have been devised.

The next step is to ensure that the member States keep their word and transpose the Council of Europe's principles into their legislation.

Secondly:

Unfortunately our Organisation's principles are not always universally respected. That is a matter of common knowledge. There are constant violations of human rights in our member States, and even torture and executions. The separation of powers continues to be infringed, the press is muzzled, minorities are oppressed, freedom of religion is flouted and opposition parties are the subject of undemocratic attacks. We cannot just sweep such facts under the carpet in order to retain "family harmony". Families must be able to speak the truth, and the truth sometimes hurts. This is our approach in the Parliamentary Assembly, and it should also be possible at this Summit.

An essential means of implementing the Council of Europe's principles and thus preserving its credibility and authority is the monitoring process, to which all member States are subject. No country can be allowed "static membership" of the Council of Europe: all members must continue to develop and honour their commitments. Monitoring provides the relevant critical dialogue to that end.

The Assembly has made great progress in the area of monitoring. However, we must aspire to even greater effectiveness, and sometimes greater clarity. The Council of Europe has very strict limits which cannot be overstepped with impunity. In fact, I get the feeling that we need to make good certain shortcomings in this crucial area of international relations. The participants at this Summit must move the monitoring process forward by undertaking formally and personally to co-operate actively in the process, in both the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly.

Thirdly:

In the past the Council of Europe was known as the "club of the western democracies". Nowadays we have members which have yet to construct and strengthen their democratic institutions. We must ensure compliance with our principles not only by threatening possible sanctions but also by providing practical assistance. This means decisively reinforcing the co-operation programmes, including those shared with the European Union.

Fourthly:

All organisations operating in Europe must be considered as equal partners. No single body can claim sole responsibility for co-ordination. The respective executive committees must decide on the practicalities of co-operation through consultation procedures. Greater use should be made of the experience and possibilities of the Council of Europe for such co-operation, particularly that with the European Union and OSCE. For the past eight years the Council has been conducting the preliminary political and legal work in the new member States which is vital for their subsequent admission to the EU. Would it not be sensible to fall back on the Council of Europe's experience and the outcome of its monitoring procedures in the European Union's discussions on enlargement?

In fifth place:

The Council of Europe must provide responses to the urgent problems of modern societies.

Top of the agenda is the protection and promotion of social rights. Much greater use should be made of the possibilities of the highly efficient Social Development Fund in the social field.

Another very important issue is the security of the citizen and therefore the fight against crime.

We must also deal with public concern in the fields of biomedicine and information technology.

We must firmly reject xenophobia, racism and intolerance of persons holding different opinions.

Greater attention must be paid to protecting the individual, particularly children and young people, as the most vulnerable members of our societies.

This also applies to equal participation by men and women in political, social and economic life. Perhaps more than one woman will be able to speak at the next Summit.

In sixth place:

The current conditions and challenges facing the Council of Europe require a corresponding degree of structural reform. This is one of the resolutions adopted at the Vienna Summit which has unfortunately not yet been implemented. In a situation where fixed costs remain high, the enlargement of the Council of Europe and the increasing numbers of new tasks cannot be catered for unless additional resources are made available.

I consider that it is more than high time the Assembly was granted the most obvious of all parliamentary rights, namely the right to control its own budget. In recent years the Parliamentary Assembly has proved to be the real driving force behind the Council of Europe. The Assembly demands the right to give an opinion on new draft conventions, on a mandatory basis and not optionally, as has been the case hitherto.

Now that the Committee of Ministers has 40 member States, we need to introduce ongoing political dialogue on topical issues. The relevant procedures must be expedited so that we can act quickly in crisis situations.

I would appeal to the Heads of State and Government of our member States to sustain their commitment to the Council of Europe and set the course for our future development. I would ask you, as our highest democratically elected representatives, to make full use of the Council of Europe, because the whole of Europe, united around law and democracy, is our shared destiny. In pursuing this goal you can rely on our support as parliamentarians."

FIRST SESSION

(Presidency : Mr Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic)

Mr KOHL, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, made the following statement:

"I am very pleased that we are meeting here today in Strasbourg. As the seat of important European institutions, this city is a unique symbol of the grand vision of a united and peaceful Europe.

I thank you, Mr Chairman, and the French Government for the invitation to today's gathering and above all for your hospitality.

Special thanks also, Madam President, to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe which was instrumental in bringing about this Summit.

The Heads of State and Government of forty member States of the Council of Europe are gathered here today in Strasbourg with colleagues from four countries that are applicants for membership. When we last met in Vienna four years ago, the Council of Europe numbered only thirty-two members. The difference underlines the great attraction of the Council of Europe and of the idea of Europe's spiritual and cultural unity it embodies.

With the early and consistent admission of the fledgling democracies of central, eastern and south-eastern Europe the Council has made an important contribution to European integration.

At our first Summit in Vienna we took a number of far-reaching decisions. This meeting, too, will generate important momentum:

One example is the forthcoming establishment of the permanent Court of Human Rights - an enormously important step towards further improvement of human rights protection in Europe.

Who would have thought such a thing possible ten years ago? And yet it happened.

Let me also mention the Council of Europe's initiatives to combat racism and xenophobia and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities which is due to come into force shortly.

The possibilities at our disposal must now be used effectively. We must make the texts of the conventions come to life in order that human rights and democracy may be permanently secured as fundamental principles of coexistence in Europe. In doing so, we should continue to co-ordinate as closely as possible with the European Union and the OSCE. Only by working together can we meet the challenges of the day.

Events in Albania in recent months and what we have experienced in the former Yugoslavia show that joint commitment to human rights and stability in Europe is more necessary than ever.

I take this opportunity of calling upon the successor states of the former Yugoslavia in particular to protect every person's right to enter his own country in safety. Refugees and displaced persons have a right to return to a place of their choice in their home country.

In recent months, the Council of Europe has drawn up an additional protocol to the Biomedicine Convention which strictly prohibits the cloning of human beings. I welcome this initiative. It is above all an ethical challenge and responsibility facing us.

Scientific research, human rights and basic ethical standards are inseparable. For us Germans, this is a particular responsibility against the background of the nazi regime's barbaric deeds. We therefore take the issue of signing the Biomedicine Convention very seriously. I hope you will appreciate, however, that my Government cannot take a final decision until the relevant associations and parliamentary bodies have been consulted.

After this gathering, Germany will take over the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. In that capacity, we wish and intend to support the Council of Europe's efforts to help the new member States in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe to develop their pluralistic, democratic structures. This is what we promised the people there during the years of communist dictatorship, and that pledge is one we must honour now despite our own problems.

With its tradition in the field of human rights protection and judicial co-operation, the Council of Europe has a key part to play in this sphere. Its successful work on the development of pan-European legal provisions and standards constitutes a firm foundation of democratic Europe.

Europe's cultural heritage ties us all together. It is a good thing that the Council of Europe strives in particular to strengthen the cultural dimension of European unification. Europe's cultural wealth finds expression in the variety of its languages, with German being one of the most widely used. I therefore welcome the Council of Europe's recent decisions enabling greater use of the German language.

Peace and freedom, democracy and social stability can only be secured in the long term in a united Europe through intensive co-operation and untiring commitment.

In two years' time, the Council of Europe will be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. Since its inception, it has played a major role in furthering European construction. Today, after the end of the East-West conflict and on the eve of a new century, a new millennium, its contribution to building the common European house is more important than ever.

Let us all work resolutely together to achieve that aim. At the end of a century that has seen so much misery and suffering, it is a beacon of hope for the next generation. With this in mind, let us live up to our duty."

Mr STEPHANOPOULOS, President of the Republic of Greece, made the following statement:

"It is a great pleasure for me, on behalf of my country, to offer my warmest congratulations to all those who have worked towards achieving the aims of the Council of Europe in the past forty-eight years.

With its institutions and activities the Council has helped safeguard and strengthen democratic regimes throughout Europe. One highlight was obviously the Summit of Heads of State and Government in Vienna in October 1993, which not only redefined the Council of Europe's role by adapting it to the new realities, but also created the Democratic Security concept, stressing multi-party parliamentary democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

My country has been working that out to ensure respect for and guaranteeing the efficacy and credibility of the Council of Europe's institutions. It has even endeavoured to intensify the promotion of the Council's aims.

I would like to single out the European Convention on Human Rights for a very special mention. This text is extremely important and I can state that it has exerted an enormous influence on our national legislation. The entry into force of the 11th Protocol setting up a single European Court of Human Rights will give new impetus and new substance to this institution, which is a primordial reference point for the convergence of national legislation in the Council's member States.

Greece is convinced that respect for the principles set out in the European Convention on Human Rights is a decisive contribution to reinforcing democratic principles throughout Europe, and the country is doing its utmost to comply properly with this instrument.

The proposed office of Human Rights Commissioner will help promote the concept of human rights even further. The Commissioner's role will be complementary to but separate from that of the Court, and will therefore in no way obstruct it. In other words, his or her mandate will resemble with that of an ombudsman, an office which was recently introduced in Greece.

Great emphasis must be placed on the procedure for monitoring the honouring of obligations and commitments entered into by member States, using the dual mechanism of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly.

In this connection, I must point out that my country is convinced of the need for identical criteria in monitoring the honouring of commitments by all member States. Substantive issues must be monitored in accordance with the requirement of equal treatment of all member States, without exception.

Greece is greatly concerned about combating racism and xenophobia, considering it as one of the major priorities. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), set up under a decision taken at the first Summit of Heads of State and Government in October 1993, is certainly one of the prime bodies pursuing this lofty aim.

Moreover, the imminent entry into force of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which my country has just signed, will constitute major progress in protecting minority groups in Europe and will contribute to stability and peace on our continent.

The recent enlargement of the Council to virtually the whole of Europe has made it the most important pan-European organisation, whose principles now hold sway from the Atlantic to the Urals. This Summit is a fresh opportunity to intensify the Council's activities even further, with a view to defending democracy and human rights and strengthening social cohesion.

The signature of the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine last April in the Spanish city of Oviedo took place at a particularly crucial turning point in human history. The Council is duty-bound to use all available means to discourage such practices as the cloning of human beings. I would recommend producing a document explaining the Council's absolute aversion to such practices. This might take the form of an Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine to which not only all the Council member States, but also as many countries as possible worldwide, could be invited to accede.

The Council of Europe's main goals must also include protecting the citizen from organised crime and drug use, as well as measures to discourage the exploitation of children. Cardinal importance must therefore be attached to the European Social Charter and the will of member States to implement it and harmonise their legislation with its principles and rules.

Greece has shown great tolerance towards clandestine immigrants entering its territory in search of the means of subsistence because it knows of the situation in some of its neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, the Council must endeavour to repatriate such persons and reintegrate them into their own societies.

Another important body is the Council of Europe's Social Development Fund. The success of the Fund's operations confirms its prominent position in the Council's overall efforts to improve social cohesion. Greece is wholly in favour of further developing the Fund by reinforcing its operational capacity.

My country is prepared to help boost the Council of Europe's action to safeguard the multicultural identity of Europe. In particular, my country will fully back any effort to conserve historic and cultural monuments, because if we are to preserve this multicultural identity it is vital that we protect the specific cultural heritage of each European nation.

In conclusion, it might be said that the mainspring of all the Council of Europe's specific activities is the combination of the concepts of justice, the rule of law and respect for international law. The Council is a model for all the peoples of Europe who comply with these principles and can therefore legitimately repeat Pericles' famous assertion "χρώμεθα γὰρ πολιτεία οὐ ζηλοῦσιν τοὺς τῶν πέλλας νόμους" ("We enjoy a constitution which does not follow the customs of our neighbours; we are rather an example to them than they to us")."

Mr HORN, Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary, made the following statement:

"I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of the French Republic and personally to President Jacques Chirac for hosting this meeting. I would also like to express my thanks for the excellent organisation which has been done so far.

We believe it is of symbolic importance that the headquarters of the Council of Europe is in the French Republic, in a country which has done so much for the achievement and completion of liberty, democracy and human rights.

I would like to emphasise that Central and Eastern Europe, including Hungary, owes a lot to the Council of Europe. We are saying this, aware of the fact that we Hungarians, have been co-operating closely with the Council of Europe for exactly the last 10 years and we were the first country from the region to be admitted as full member.

The Council of Europe has helped a great deal, mainly by assisting us to provide the institutional and legal preconditions for democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights. Without the participation and the effective help of the Council of Europe, these processes would have taken place at a much slower pace, over a longer period of time and with much greater difficulties. We are especially appreciative towards the Council of Europe because it has one particularity which is that it is the only comprehensive and exclusively European organisation to which the countries of Central and Eastern Europe belong as full members. It is of extreme importance in unifying Europe that the Council of Europe proves that European problems can be solved, can be dealt with, in a European manner. We are of the view that everything that the Council of Europe has committed itself to, mainly by continuing on the path of implementing its basic principles, in its determination to help answer the great social challenges, this Organisation, with its activities, has made a great contribution to the creation and enhancement of stability in Europe. Everything that is happening and that the Council of Europe envisages constitutes a good preparation for all the countries still outside Euro-Atlantic integration, to complete this process. We are of the view that there is no alternative to this Organisation.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Hungary, I confirm that we fully accept the draft Final Declaration and the draft Action Plan of the Summit meeting. Furthermore, I declare on behalf of the Hungarian Government that we consider these documents as binding upon us and we will implement them. We believe this is all the more necessary, that we have to do it aware of the fact that our commitments are being inspired by the spirit of European unification. We think that there is a need for common determination and decision to further develop the activities and structures of the Council of Europe now comprising 40 countries.

Our view is that the respect for a nation, for a country, is in fact determined by the full respect for human rights of its citizens, by assuring the rights of national and ethnic minorities. There is one guiding principle behind that for all of us, which is particularly important in Central and Eastern Europe: compliance with European norms. I note with satisfaction that there are hardly any countries in Central and Eastern Europe left where the process of implementing European standards has not yet started. This is a great step forward. We therefore welcome the decisions of the Council of Europe to establish a single Court and the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights as well as the strengthening of the monitoring system relating to the functioning of democracy.

I consider it of great importance to underline also, in connection with the Council of Europe, that in Central and Eastern Europe there is no reason to elevate alleged or real grievances of the past to the level of everyday politics. There is a need for historical reconciliation among nations and States in our region and we must endeavour to eliminate and remove destructive nationalism from the political scene. This is one of the great challenges to Central and Eastern Europe. European integration, I believe, cannot be successful without humanism advocated by the Council of Europe, the implementation of minority rights, without the strengthening of national, and cultural identity. This is a key element as Chancellor Kohl has already pointed out.

We also welcome the fact that the Council of Europe wishes to enhance the fight against threats endangering citizens' security, such as organised crime, corruption and others. We are of the view that all that we have done so far is insufficient yet will not suffice for long years to come. Nothing the community of European nations, the Council of Europe and other European organisations have done so far can be regarded as complete.

And finally, in Central and Eastern Europe, the key question of social progress is how we can carry on the economic and social transformation. This is the greatest challenge for us in Central and Eastern Europe. We will have to prove, because we still have to do this, that democracy and prosperity are terminologies linked to each other. For without democracy it is not possible to create real prosperity. This is our conviction and it is in this spirit, dear guests, I wish that this Summit meeting may be another important stage in completing our ever increasing role in Europe."

Mr ODDSSON, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland, made the following statement:

"The events that took place in Europe less than a decade ago radically transformed the political landscape in the continent. If we fail to seize this magnificent opportunity to consolidate democracy throughout the continent, generations to come will be astonished and shocked at our performance.

Democracy has never had such possibilities for transforming global affairs. Underlying democracy is the vision that freedom and tolerance are the best ways towards peace and prosperity, and that disputes can be resolved by peaceful means. The foreign policies of democratic States are and must be in the spirit of these principles.

Democratic norms and procedures are the firmest safeguard we have against aggression and hostility. Democracy presents policies for universal discussion, and they need to be supported by the public and by the democratic institutions. No policy can be maintained in the long run if it does not fulfil these conditions.

States with deep-rooted democratic traditions do not engage in hostilities with other democratic nations. Democracy has never been as widespread as it is now after these great events in Europe. We should not, however, forget that this is by no means the first time in history that a fundamental change has been hoped for in international relations, towards lasting peace. In the past, people have vested their hopes in the impact that trade, technology, international agencies and democratic evolution could have in this direction; hopes which unfortunately did not materialise.

In various parts of Europe, democracy is still fragile, and human rights and the rule of law are not on a firm footing. Even though democracy cannot be secured except by the respective nations themselves, factors such as external security and economic prosperity have a great bearing on its evolution. Other States and international organisations can have a decisive impact on achieving such conditions.

Although the activities of the Council of Europe are not as visible as those of various other international organisations, because it is not directly involved with security, the Council nonetheless has an extremely important role to play. Its work is directly aimed at strengthening the development of democracy in the continent, and thereby helps to establish qualitative change in relations between States through democratic security. As the European institution which concentrates on building up democracy and human rights, the Council of Europe must be strengthened. It enjoys unique status as an organisation which lays down principles that States must abide by in order to be fully accepted into the community of free European nations.

At the same time, the Council of Europe has special possibilities for making sure that its members honour their obligations. This is one of its most important tasks, and we must applaud the extent to which the Council has developed effective monitoring mechanisms. A great step forwards has also been made with the establishment of a single Court of Human Rights, and the Government of Iceland wholeheartedly supports the proposal for appointing a Commissioner for Human Rights as well as other parts of the Action Plan.

In this way we are adapting the Council of Europe even further to new conditions and strengthening its potential to take advantage of an historic opportunity.

I thank the President and Government of France for hosting this meeting and for the hospitality they have shown us.”

Mr BLAIR, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, made the following statement:

"The Council of Europe was set up nearly fifty years ago as a reminder to all Governments that they have a duty to protect their citizens' rights and freedoms. It was part of a growing movement towards post-War reconciliation.

The end of the Cold War has allowed democracy to spread across the continent.

Let us not forget what an astonishing transformation this is, and how the work of this Council, and other bodies like the CSCE, has been so triumphantly vindicated.

Having been in Moscow at the beginning of this week, I am particularly delighted that Russia is now a member and that Boris Yeltsin - a champion of democracy in his own country - is here with us.

The Council can now operate as it was always meant to - setting standards across Europe. It has provided a yardstick for the former Communist countries as they develop modern, pluralistic, free and open societies. It has helped to reduce tensions between communities and has demonstrated how the rights of ethnic minorities should be protected.

The Council must continue its help and encouragement to those countries present here as observers. I hope they will meet the Council's standards and become full members as soon as possible. Ten years ago, to be frank, people might have scoffed at the suggestion that one day membership of the Council would be so highly prized across Europe. But it is now seen as final confirmation of a country's democratic vocation.

Despite this enormous progress, we cannot be complacent. Individuals' rights are still abused in Europe. The Council has not been so successful that it no longer has a role. Our task is to make it more effective.

When individuals' rights have been abused, they should not have to wait years before they can obtain redress. We must streamline the Council's procedures and ensure that judgements are reached more quickly. This means pressing on with the establishment of the permanent Single Court of Human Rights. And it means ensuring the Court has the best possible judges, chosen on the basis of merit rather than politics. People will only have confidence in the Court, if it is seen as fair and responsive to their grievances and concerns.

We also need to respond to the new challenges that confront us. Human cloning is a classic example. Until very recently it was the stuff of science fiction fantasies. Now it is an all too real possibility. I therefore particularly welcome the measures to ban human cloning in the Council's Plan of Action. Respect for human rights cannot be static. We must develop new instruments to deal with new problems.

At the same time, we all need to look at our own countries and see what more we can do.

One of our first acts as a new Labour Government was to pledge to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into our domestic law. We are making progress in fulfilling this pledge. I can tell you that we intend to publish a White Paper on this in the week beginning 20 October, and to publish the Bill soon afterwards.

It was the Labour Government under Clement Attlee that promoted the Convention immediately after the Second World War. It was a Labour Government that announced in 1965 that the United Kingdom had decided to accept the right of individuals to petition the Human Rights Commission and the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court. And I am proud that it is the Labour Government I lead which will incorporate the Convention into the United Kingdom's domestic law.

I want the British people to be able to secure their human rights at home from their own judges. They should not have to go through the lengthy and often expensive process of appealing direct to the Commission and Court here in Strasbourg. I also want British judges to make their own distinctive contribution to the development of human rights in Europe.

Incorporation, I have to confess, is a case of Britain catching up with its partners in Europe. I hope we can also lead the way. The new Labour Government is committed to a major decentralisation and devolution of power across the United Kingdom, as well as to a Freedom of Information Act. I believe that by bringing decision-making closer to the people, we will be better able to protect their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Remote, centralised Governments, cut off from their citizens, are much more likely to infringe these rights than local administrations responsive to people's needs. And, as we devolve power and protect people's rights, we also help them to develop their sense of citizenship and to meet the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

The Council of Europe has room for congratulations and scope for improvement. We must take every opportunity to make it more effective and to ensure that it has the means to respond to new challenges. At the same time, we should all consider afresh, and fundamentally, how we govern ourselves and redouble our efforts to protect the rights and freedoms of our citizens."

Mr PRODI, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy, made the following statement:

"I would first of all like to thank you and the French Government for having chosen to hold the second Council of Europe Summit in this magnificent city, which symbolises the process of European integration and construction.

Four years have elapsed since the first Summit in October 1993, four years during which the process of enlargement of the Organisation has been virtually completed.

In this year of major, nay crucial decisions for European and Euro-Atlantic organisations, the Council of Europe can take pride in its work as the paramount forum taking in the new democracies.

The Council of Europe, the oldest of the institutions which have grown up out of the European idea and the first to have provided a wide-ranging framework for intergovernmental co-operation, has managed to assert its own particular perception of the situation, which is in-keeping with that of another pan-European organisation, the OSCE. All appropriate steps must therefore be taken to co-ordinate the work with the OCSE, respecting each body's history, structural organisation and operational role. The very harmonious relations which prevail between both Secretaries General is in fact a matter for immense satisfaction.

Within the new European institutional landscape, the Council of Europe, which has demonstrated its ability to function as a "specialised agency" for supporting pluralistic democracy, must continue to concentrate on promoting human rights and the rule of law throughout Europe.

The Strasbourg Organisation must shoulder these onerous responsibilities not only by reinforcing its human rights protection system but also by extending and deepening the panoply of European legislation safeguarding such rights. By the same token, we must continue to help consolidate democratic institutions in both member and applicant States; for example, we helped one of Italy's neighbours, Albania out of its state of emergency. We must continue to effectively support this country's efforts to achieve complete democratisation.

Among the Council of Europe's highly qualified bodies I would like to single out the Venice Commission for Democracy through Law, whose Chairman I am pleased to say is with us today.

I am also extremely pleased that the Protocol restructuring the human rights protection machinery set up by the Rome Convention has come into force. The new single Court will enable the supranational system in Strasbourg to cope with the constant increase in numbers of applications, which is due in particular to the geographical enlargement of its jurisdiction. Not all the provisions of the Protocol are exactly as the Italian Government and Parliament would have wished, but Italians are unanimous on one point: the restructuring process could wait no longer, and the Protocol, for all its imperfections, is a significant step towards improving the operation of the judicial machinery. We must therefore welcome its adoption.

The Council of Europe should also use all the means at its disposal to ensure the universal abolition of the death penalty, the eradication of the scourge of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, the elimination of all forms of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance, and genuine equal opportunities between men and women.

If we are to continue improving democratic stability and security in Europe, we must intensify our action in defence of human rights and the rule of law with measures to promote social cohesion and protect the weaker groups in society. Such action should be aimed at preserving human dignity, which is threatened by social exclusion. Where financing is concerned, we expect great things of the Social Development Fund, whose Chairman I am pleased to see here today. On the legal front, we are privileged to have the revised European Social Charter which is shortly to come into force.

In my view, democratic stability and security in Europe are threatened not only by social exclusion but also by the growing phenomena of corruption, organised crime, drug addiction and the exploitation of children. We must combat these problems by means of vigorous co-ordinated action. Where respect for the law and human rights is concerned, forceful measures are also needed against the scourge of terrorism, which is still rampant in Europe.

Our shared heritage of conceptual and moral ideas is based on specific identities which we must determinedly protect and promote. This is illustrated provided by the immense linguistic diversity of our continent. Some languages, such as Italian, are more widely spoken and are therefore used as official or working languages, while others are less so; yet they all contribute to this diversity and must therefore be protected.

This Organisation has another very specific asset which must be exploited, namely its influence in national parliaments, local government bodies, universities and the community at large. Let me again stress my support for a strong Parliamentary Assembly and Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

With the backing and help of all its component bodies the Council of Europe will continue to shoulder its responsibilities, disseminating and confirming the "success story" which it has been writing for almost fifty years now and which we all hope will continue and intensify in the future."

Mr ULMANIS, President of the Republic of Latvia, made the following statement:

"We meet at a time when Europe is approaching the turn of the century and the 50th anniversary of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe is among those organisations which contribute to making Europe a continent of predictable policies, where conflict is impossible. The Council of Europe constantly emphasises the central role of human rights and consolidation of democratic values in all countries.

It was noted four years ago at the Council of Europe Summit in Vienna that Europe must become a wide area of democratic security, to be supported by four pillars - parliamentary democracy, human rights, the rule of law and a common cultural heritage. Latvia has learned much in each of these fields and has gained valuable ideas through co-operation with the Council of Europe. Allow me to mention three main conclusions which, I think, will retain their importance for Europe into the next century. I believe they are important when we speak about a harmonious and cohesive society.

My first conclusion is linked to culture. We often take the wealth and diversity of European cultural heritage for granted. Its true strength and importance was revealed in the collapse of the Soviet system.

Latvia is a small country and we are a small nation. Throughout our long history we have preserved our cultural traditions and the Latvian language, which is one of Europe's oldest. This is a remarkable fact, given that Latvia's political history has long been shaped by large foreign empires.

The Latvian culture has always co-existed with another tradition in our country. The presence of European culture in our region is as strong today as it has been in the past. In the capital, Riga, one can see the historic cultural cross-section of Latvia in its full diversity. There are medieval churches built in the North German style, houses of Hanseatic merchants, houses built in the style of National Romanticism and Art Nouveau. Unfortunately, the school of the Soviet architecture has also left its imprint on the city. Riga is truly a city of European heritage, a mirror for inter-action of European cultures.

We need to acknowledge our cultural heritage in order to consolidate a harmonious society in Latvia.

My second conclusion concerns national identity and the rights of national minorities.

Latvia highly values the Council of Europe as the oldest Organisation on the continent, with the clear aim of supporting democratic development. A vast store of legal experience is the strength of the Organisation, offering a framework for national legislation. The vital educational activities of the Council of Europe encourage respect for the spirit of the law.

I am glad that Latvia ratified the European Convention on Human Rights this year. We shall continue to join other Conventions and Charters elaborated by the Council of Europe. Human rights and the rights of national minorities are of special importance for us, because we have recovered them after the period of Soviet denial of such rights.

The modernisation process in Latvia is a blend of policies. We attach importance to Latvian national identity and the consolidation of a nation-state. Equal importance and priority is given to the protection and promotion of the rights of national minorities. These are mutually complementary processes which any harmonious and united society in Europe needs.

Society in Latvia is developing without any ethnic or other conflict. It is essential to keep both of these policies in balance and to provide society with a future where every member feels included. The rights of national minorities and other democratic values will be fully protected alongside and in balance with values that consolidate our national identity. I believe it is an exciting challenge for the Council of Europe to develop a perspective which combines both these policies.

My third conclusion refers to democracy. Democracy means decision making and implementation of reforms by the authority of the nation and in the interests of the nation. However, it has been evident for several years both in the older and the newer European democracies, including Latvia, that people often find it difficult to identify themselves with planned reforms and laws. We understand that thorough reforms are needed all over Europe, but are we always ready to accept them at an emotional level?

A year ago in the Parliamentary Assembly I declared a President's moratorium on executions in Latvia. The moratorium is still in force. A lively discussion for and against capital punishment began in Latvia as a result.

I feel that today the word 'democracy' provokes much greater emotions in Europe than in the past. Therefore it is even more important that the necessary decisions and reforms be made understandable and acceptable to the entire population.

Since we regained our independence, Western experts have discussed democracy with us in rational terms, sometimes neglecting the more emotive aspects. This can create a one-sided, incomplete understanding of democracy. A harmonious and united society must understand the necessary changes and be emotionally prepared to accept them. I believe that the Council of Europe has a significant role to play in ensuring a balanced approach to democratic development across Europe.

The role of the Council of Europe will grow in all its fields of activity. It is our common challenge to retain and develop the pivotal role of the Council of Europe in the protection of human rights and legal standards in Europe.

Latvia, like other countries which have restored democracy, has already accumulated significant experience. This experience should be noted when we consider the future model of the Council of Europe, thus enabling it to evaluate the achievements of the newer democracies and also the challenges that Europe will face in the years to come."

Mr FRICK, Head of Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, made the following statement:

"I should first like to thank you, Mr President, and the French Government for the excellent preparation of this Summit and the warm reception given to us here in Strasbourg.

The Council of Europe has been based since 1949 in Strasbourg, a city which at the time symbolised the need for reconciliation between France and Germany. Strasbourg has retained that symbolic status to this day. The reconciliation and reconstruction of Europe after 1945 was a major undertaking, and the Council of Europe's contribution in that area has been of lasting political significance. As the Council's host city, Strasbourg has extended its symbolic power to the whole of Europe.

I should also like to stress the Council of Europe's major achievements in the harmonisation of member states' legal systems. That is undoubtedly one of its great strengths. This harmonisation of legal systems is founded on the three pillars of genuine democracy, the rule of law and human rights. A fourth pillar has been added since the Vienna Summit, namely the protection of minorities, which is an important prerequisite for the stability of our continent. This has led over the years to the emergence of a "common *ordre public* of the free democracies of Europe with collective safeguards", which has also pervaded national law.

Mr President, whatever criticisms may be levelled at it, there is one major argument in favour of this Second Summit. It is a welcome opportunity for taking stock of things and seeing which decisions of the First Summit in Vienna have been implemented and which have not. It is very important for us to stress this continuity in relation to the First Summit in Vienna. Four years ago in Vienna we were right in the middle of the enlargement process. The enlargement of the Council of Europe to take in the countries of central and eastern Europe has been largely completed. The initial experiences now require overall assessment and, where appropriate, consolidation.

The Council of Europe has expanded very quickly: the number of member states rose from 23 to 40 over a period of only six years. In this connection, comments have been heard from various quarters to the effect that the Council of Europe has lowered its standards in the course of the enlargement process and that states have been accepted as new members even though they do not fulfil all the requirements.

At the same time, the list of membership conditions has grown longer. This has made it necessary to introduce a procedure for verifying that the commitments entered into upon

accession are actually honoured. The monitoring process has become one of the Council of Europe's essential tasks, and this process embraces all the member states, both old and new. The monitoring process is also very closely linked with various activities to help the newly admitted members. Monitoring and assistance are two sides of the same coin, as the Secretary General aptly remarked.

Four years ago, a very ambitious goal was set for the enlargement of the Council of Europe, namely to build a Europe that would at last achieve unity on the basis of common values. Adherence to this heritage of common values, based on the pillars which have already been mentioned, is important not only for the Council of Europe, but also for the entire process of European integration. If this process were to be viewed in purely economic and technocratic terms, there would be a danger of losing sight of the European ethic which serves as the basis for our activities. The Council of Europe is and remains the guarantee that this ethic will continue to be upheld.

In this connection we welcome the work on the Bioethics Convention and the planned additional protocol prohibiting the cloning of human beings. If Europe is regarded as a community of values, even small countries such as Liechtenstein are called upon to play their part. When fundamental values of the community are seriously challenged, a clear commitment is necessary. In this context, it is precisely the smaller countries which could never be accused of pursuing hidden interests and which are called upon to combat lawlessness, unscrupulousness and violence. In this connection, we should also like to express our support for the proposal in the Action Plan concerning the responsibilities of citizens, as rights and duties, rights and responsibilities, must stand in a balanced relationship to one another.

We have read with interest the draft Final Declaration and Action Plan which have been submitted to us and should like to comment briefly on a number of points. Our comments follow on logically from those already made at the last session of the Committee of Ministers in May 1997:

1. We are in favour of the establishment of a Single Court of Human Rights operating on a permanent basis, as already decided upon in principle in Vienna; Liechtenstein ratified Protocol No.11 on 14 November 1995.
2. We welcome the creation of the office of Commissioner for Human Rights.
3. Other important topics which, in our view, require very careful consideration are social cohesion, the fight against corruption, drugs, organised crime, terrorism, and the fight against racism, intolerance and xenophobia.

The protection of children must remain an important theme. Efforts still need to be made to achieve equality of opportunity between men and women.

After this Second Summit has come to an end, it will be our responsibility to ensure that the decisions reached here in Strasbourg are put into practice. Every member state is called upon to participate in that effort. I can assure you that the Principality of Liechtenstein is fully prepared to make an appropriate contribution, as has been done hitherto.

Liechtenstein will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of its accession to the Council of Europe next year. We see this anniversary as an obligation to bring the oldest European organisation even closer to our population and, here in Strasbourg, to reaffirm our attachment to the aims and values pursued by the Council of Europe."

Mr BRAZAUSKAS, President of the Republic of Lithuania, made the following statement:

"It gives me true satisfaction that the Council of Europe, the worthy forum of the States for a fruitful, all-level discussion on a broad range of issues, has provided Heads of State and Government with another opportunity for dialogue today. The fact that since the first Summit in Vienna in 1993, the Council of Europe has considerably enlarged and currently embraces almost the whole of the European continent, enhances the significance of our Summit.

We live in Europe at a particularly dynamic time. Freed from the fetters of totalitarian regimes, young democratic states, committed to extensive political and economic reforms, rapidly integrate into the European political, economic and security structures.

Lithuania is also preparing for the oncoming changes. Lithuania's integration into the EU takes the core place within the framework of internal political and economic development, and is a key priority of our foreign policy.

In striving for this goal, we are reorganising the judicial system and public administration structures and developing regional policy. Local authorities are being granted more extensive rights; major changes are taking place in industry, agriculture and the energy sector; the pace of privatisation of large undertakings is being accelerated.

Positive changes are noticeable in the economy. Gross domestic product increased by 4.2 per cent last year and a still bigger growth of GDP is expected this year. The inflation rate which stood at 8.7 per cent over the last twelve months has fallen considerably compared to 1996. Unemployment is also decreasing. At present it does not exceed 6 per cent. These facts and the trends of development in our country allow me to state that Lithuania is actively preparing for participation in the processes of European integration.

The reinforcement of relations among the neighbouring States and the development of cross-border co-operation are among the key areas dealt with by the Council of Europe within the framework of European integration. Along with others, those issues were discussed at the international Vilnius Conference *Coexistence of Nations and Good Neighbourly Relations: the Guarantee of Security and Stability in Europe* which took place in Vilnius a month ago.

The Vilnius Conference was organised on the initiative of the Presidents of Lithuania and Poland. It was attended by 10 Heads of State from central and eastern Europe, President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of the Russian Federation.

The Conference centred on a wide range of issues, of which the major ones were neighbourly interstate relations and their influence on European integration and the development of

democracy, security and stability in our continent. Another subject which also received considerable attention was the role of non-governmental organisations in consolidating a qualitatively new relationship between the States and the people.

I take this opportunity to thank President Leni Fischer of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and Chairman Niels Helveg Petersen of the OSCE for attending and contributing to the Conference.

The Second Summit of the Council of Europe should highlight the key areas to be addressed by our Organisation. It should also provide the road map for the 50th anniversary and the next millennium.

Plans for building 21st century Europe are hardly feasible in the absence of universal respect for and protection of human rights and freedoms. Lithuania welcomes the essential reform of the Council of Europe's mechanism for the protection of human rights, and on the same occasion expresses its deep satisfaction at the last ratification of the 11th Protocol, enabling the launch of the new single Court.

The new Europe, to the creation of which we are committed, is inconceivable without the presence of tolerance and respect for nations and their rights, the plurality of attitudes and religions. Along with legal instruments, Lithuania therefore undertakes the education of its citizens in the field of human rights. A couple of weeks ago, the work of a famous lawyer, Vincent Berger, entitled *Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights* was published in the Lithuanian language.

Lithuania is among the first States to have signed the European Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine. We also support the adoption of additional protocols to the Convention, in particular the protocol prohibiting all genetic engineering aimed at the cloning of the human individual. Lithuania is ready to participate actively in the drafting of the said legal instruments.

Corruption and organised crime have no regard for national frontiers, bring human losses and tangible damage to the economies of the weaker, less developed States. Combating corruption and organised crime must be undertaken on all fronts. This task requires pooling and co-ordination of the efforts of not only individual States, but also of international organisations.

We therefore welcome the initiative to draft a new framework convention against corruption. Establishment of a monitoring body for implementation of the common standards in this field is, in my opinion, another proposal worth consideration.

While talking about 21st century Europe, we should not forget its rich material and spiritual cultural heritage and its enhancement. This subject is of particular importance to those States like Lithuania which, in the course of this century, have re-established their statehood for the second time.

Preservation and protection of national cultures, therefore, is of exceptional importance to us. Lithuania supports the enhancement of the European heritage and launching of the campaign *Europe, a common cultural heritage*.

To conclude, I would like to thank the President and the Government of France for organising the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe during its presidency. It is my belief that the exchange of views and opinions on the future of our continent will heighten still further the perception of 21st century Europe."

Mr JUNCKER, Prime Minister of Luxembourg, made the following statement:

"I too would like to thank you for your initiative in organising this second Council of Europe Summit.

The European family is now virtually complete. I earnestly hope that the countries still missing will soon be among us. In the interests of peace and security in Europe the democratic values which unite us be extended continent-wide.

We are assembled today in the Council of Europe Chamber which is home to both the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament: the Europe of the Fifteen and the Europe of the Forty converge here in Strasbourg.

While the Council of Europe has already virtually completed its enlargement, the European Union is preparing to welcome more new members in. This long and exacting process will demand major efforts at adaptation from both the Union and the applicant countries. The European Council will be taking the decisions on enlargement in Luxembourg in December.

All the countries applying for membership of the European Union are already Council of Europe member States. Both organisations share the aim of creating a pan-European area of peace and prosperity.

The Union is inspired by the same fundamental values as the Council of Europe. The criteria for enlargement include stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. Therefore, the two organisations would do well to join forces in helping the applicant countries achieve these aims.

The implementation of joint programmes in the field of democratisation illustrates this will to assist all European countries in reinforcing their democratic institutions.

One of the Council of Europe's primary objectives is to promote the rule of law, pluralist democracy and respect for human rights. I would add another priority, namely supporting for the development of a diversified civil society by encouraging the formation of responsible NGOs to enable citizens to play an active role in society.

The Council of Europe is a prime forum in which Europeans can come together promote common rules based on shared values. Strasbourg is the place to build a humanistic Europe.

The documents which we will be adopting at the end of the conference set out the Organisation's priority tasks for the next few years. The Council of Europe's recognised expertise in all the relevant fields of action is widely acknowledged, providing an appropriate framework for dealing with problems which only admit of a pan-European solution.

The Council of Europe has shown its adaptability by swiftly integrating the new democracies in central and eastern Europe. It must now redefine its activities if it is to succeed in the new work created by its enlargement.

Throughout the ages, the nations which have risen against totalitarian regimes have done so in the name of certain fundamental values of our civilisation. They have aspired to freedom, democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. The Council of Europe's determination to defend these principles must not falter, because its strength lies in the solidity of the ideas which it upholds.

On their accession to the Organisation, some of our newer members had not yet completed their legislative reforms, that is to say their laws were not yet fully in line with the Council of Europe's standards and criteria. We must help them achieve this aim by stepping up the co-operation programmes which are bolstering the democratisation process.

All our member States have undertaken to adopt and implement the Council of Europe's achievements in terms of democracy, including its most important norms and conventions such as the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocol on the abolition of the death penalty, the Convention for the Prevention of Torture and many other instruments besides.

The Organisation must ensure that all its member States, old or new, respect its fundamental principles. The procedure for monitoring commitments must be implemented in a spirit of constructive dialogue, but without indulgence. In some cases it might be in the interests of democracy and peace for the Council of Europe bodies to speak out about situations which are incompatible with its standards. Such problems have to be identified clearly if they are to be remedied. It might arguably be useful in some cases to demonstrate the political importance which the Organisation attaches to respect for democracy by sending an assessment mission, led by the Secretary General, to continue the dialogue with the national authorities, followed by a report to the Committee of Ministers.

The protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms is the field in which the Council of Europe excels. The Organisation's enlargement made it necessary to strengthen the machinery for supervising the European Convention on Human Rights. I welcome the forthcoming establishment of the new single Court, and I back the Finnish idea of establishing an office of Human Rights Commissioner in order to complement the judicial mechanism and put a human face on human rights protection in Europe.

The Council of Europe must help extend human rights into new fields by improving the protection of all groups in society, particularly the weakest and most vulnerable.

I am thinking in particular of its role in combating racism and xenophobia and its action in the field of equality between men and women. There can be no genuine democracy without balanced representation of women in all the activities of society.

New types of rights must also be formulated in order to cope with developments in technology and science. In this connection I welcome the Council of Europe's efforts to completely prohibit the cloning of human beings.

In my view, because social rights are an integral part of human rights, fresh priority should be given to the Council of Europe's social activities. Implementing co-operation programmes and exchanging information and experience could help harmonise social legislation in all our countries. Co-operation with the European Union is essential here.

All our countries are facing economic difficulties. Unemployment, ever greater inequality and the resultant social exclusion endanger human rights and undermine human dignity. The Council of Europe has the requisite instruments to reinforce social cohesion in Europe and protect the special social model which Europeans have devised.

The main instrument in this field is the European Social Charter, which is the social counterpart of the European Convention on Human Rights. It must be ratified by as many countries as possible, because if they adopt a set of minimum social standards, this will be a bonus for the citizens of Europe and help reinforce social cohesion among our countries.

We must also strengthen and fully exploit the Council of Europe's financial instrument, the Social Development Fund. It should be used to help achieve the Council of Europe's social aims.

Lastly, I would like to mention the Council of Europe's vital role in cultural co-operation.

Europe has enormous cultural diversity. Its heritage is invaluable, and we must preserve it for future generations. The Council of Europe provides the framework for devising the cultural policies for Greater Europe.

One specific challenge in the 21st century will be to develop the new information technologies with respect for cultural diversity and the Council of Europe's standards.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that the optimum way for the Council of Europe to affirm its place and role among the other organisations working in Europe, particularly the European Union and OSCE, is to further develop the fields in which it excels and consolidate its specific achievements.

The recent crises in a number of European States have shown that the international community must co-ordinate its action. The Council of Europe contributed to the efforts to re-establish democratic institutions in these countries, that is to say Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Belarus.

The Council has a vital role to play in consolidating democratic institutions in Europe.

The Council of Europe's competence, its in-depth reflection on the problems facing society, its ability to innovate in many fields relevant to human dignity, and its pan-European dimension are its main assets. They are the jewel in this Organisation's crown.

Mr SANT, Prime Minister of Malta, made the following statement:

“Malta looks upon this Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe as an important landmark in the fifty years of the Council's efforts and determination to give humankind valid reasons for living despite oppression, social injustice, exploitation and misuse of natural resources, deterioration and destruction of the environment, as well as discriminatory practices in international trade.

This Summit is an opportunity for an exercise in soul searching, taking stock of the Council's past achievements and failures. It is a time for drawing up policies and plans aimed at strengthening democratic stability and security in their wider contexts.

Through the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, through its efforts to root firmly pluralistic democracy, the Council of Europe has played a decisive and indelible role in the attainment of democratic values, stability and security in Europe.

Our achievements in this regard must be sustained through the upgrading of legal structures and the institutions of the Council, which will enhance and advance a stronger Europe based on peace, democracy and justice.

Malta joins other member States of the Council of Europe in reiterating its commitment to the fundamental values of the organisation. As we approach the third millennium and the 50th anniversary of our Organisation, the Final Declaration and Action Plan which we are invited to adopt and which Malta strongly supports, goes a long way to give all member States of the Council of Europe, an effective and meaningful political framework which recognises the human dimension as the only means of securing freedom, prosperity and security.

In this context, we welcome and support:

- the establishment of a common European legal area and the introduction of a Single and Permanent Court of Human Rights under Protocol 11;

- the initiative by Finland to create the post of a Commissioner or an Ombudsman for Human Rights and his proposed functions;
- the process of reform in the monitoring exercise carried out by the Committee of Ministers;
- the right to life and the abolishment of the death penalty;
- the participation of women on an equal footing with men in the democratic processes and in the social and economic development of our societies;
- the call for a Pan-European co-operation programme to tackle in an interdisciplinary manner the grave risk to democratic stability being created as a result of unemployment;
- the much-needed interaction between economic and social rights and civil and political rights;
- the promotion of democracy and stability by strengthening the principle of subsidiarity and attributing an important role to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe in monitoring constructively the situation of local democracy; and finally
- the protection of national minorities through the proper observance of human rights and through special measures in the field of education, media and culture.

The Council of Europe's past and future contributions in these and other fields could and can contribute in a proactive manner towards the development of co-operative measures in order to combat emerging challenges of a social and economic nature.

We therefore feel that the Council of Europe's legal instruments should be updated and adjusted to the present realities in order to intensify the struggle against corruption, organised crime, illegal drug trafficking, money laundering and arms proliferation. Likewise, the Pompidou Group should be strengthened, with all member States of the Council of Europe becoming parties to the Partial Agreement.

In the cultural and educational fields, Malta believes that member States should redouble their efforts to establish intercultural democracy based on the recognition of cultural identity as a constituent element of human dignity and of cultural communities as a determining factor of democratic cohesion. The preservation and the development of a common cultural heritage, enriched by its diversity, ought to be a basic commitment for members States. Concrete action should be undertaken with long-term implications interacting and enhancing the activities of the Cultural Heritage Committee's programme.

It is precisely on this political framework that Malta's foreign policy is built. Dictated mainly by our geographic realities, by our commercial relations as they have developed throughout the years, and by the political situation prevailing in the Mediterranean region and internationally, our foreign policy is based on the values of democratic governance, on the upholding of fundamental human rights, on the promotion of peaceful means for the settlement of disputes and on a policy which opposes military aggression and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

It is a policy that bases itself on the widest co-operation possible, with as many countries as possible, seeking to create those conditions and measures which will eliminate the huge gap which exists between poor and rich nations, as well as between the developed and affluent countries of the north and the developing and impoverished countries of the south.

As a Euro-Mediterranean country, Malta has a special interest and responsibility in promoting the Mediterranean dimension in the Council of Europe's activities, particularly in strengthening security and co-operation in the Mediterranean – which is inextricably linked to security and co-operation in Europe.

The particular political problems in the Mediterranean region lead to a degree of tension which is accentuated by problems of a non-military nature including demographic imbalances, illegal migration, terrorism, illegal trafficking in arms and drugs, widening economic and social disparities and degradation of our natural environment.

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership launched in Barcelona in 1995 is aimed at creating the right environment for tackling these and other problems to ensure that the Mediterranean becomes an area of exchange and dialogue, guaranteeing peace, stability, and the well-being of all the States engaged in the partnership.

Malta strongly believes that the Euro-Mediterranean process should also contribute towards the intensification of initiatives and more fruitful co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Co-operation in the Mediterranean Basin and the North-South Centre, through its Trans-Med Programme, should provide complementarity to the initiatives of the European Union in the Mediterranean.

It must be recalled that the Vienna Summit of the Council declared that: “The deepening of co-operation to take account of the new European situation should in no way divert us from our responsibilities regarding North-South interdependence and stability”.

In the spirit and letter of the Vienna Summit, Malta would like to see a stronger involvement of the Council of Europe in matters relating to the Mediterranean, with European countries playing a more prominent and intensive role. Unfortunately, four years after the Vienna Summit, democracy and social cohesion are still far from being achieved, still facing insurmountable threats and obstacles in a rapidly changing world.

In pursuing a policy seeking the closest possible relations with the European Union, Malta will at the same time cultivate an active Mediterranean policy to establish regional co-operation, stability and security.

Through its status of neutrality, Malta is ready to play an effective role both as a forum and as an intermediary of dialogue, co-operation and understanding between Europe and all our Mediterranean neighbours. By pursuing this policy of neutrality, Malta can make the best possible contribution to the stability, prosperity and security of the Mediterranean, thereby enhancing and developing the Euro-Mediterranean process and ultimately contributing towards the strengthening of democratic stability and security in Europe.

Democratic stability should be one of the primary goals of the Council of Europe and should be strengthened as a pre-condition for a prosperous and democratically secure Europe. The foundations of democratic stability have to be strengthened not merely by declarations of intent, but by determined and co-ordinated action involving both the Governments and the citizens of Europe. Malta is ready to play its part towards this end.”

SECOND SESSION

(Presidency : Mr Václav HAVEL, President of the Czech Republic)

Mr LUCINSCHI, President of the Republic of Moldova, made the following statement:

" I would like to begin by extending to our hosts the traditional words of thanks for the excellent conditions surrounding this Summit. Might I take this rare opportunity to express my immense admiration not only for the participants at today's event, but also for our predecessors who attended the London meeting on 5 May 1949. On that memorable day the representatives of nine countries reaffirmed their attachment to the spiritual and moral values of the European nations and proclaimed the need for an organisation embracing all the European States.

This event marked the inception of the Council of Europe, which now has 40 full member States, each with its own economy, traditions, culture and history. The Organisation's expansion bears witness to the exceptional role it plays. With the disappearance of the totalitarian regimes from the countries of central and eastern Europe the Council has been conducting a massive operation to integrate these States into the single European democratic area. The Council of Europe has proved to be the international organisation most able to initiate dialogue with the new democracies springing up on the map of Europe. I must say I am proud that my country, the Republic of Moldova, was the first of the newly independent States to become a full member of the Council of Europe, on 13 July 1995.

Once we acceded we signed and ratified the European Convention on Human Rights and other important documents designed to help consolidate relations between individuals and States, although we cannot claim to be satisfied with the standard of such relations.

I think that this problem is often caused by lack of mutual knowledge. The Council of Europe could and should, in my view, contribute to European spiritual integration by establishing a single information area. Obviously, developing efficient inter-State co-operation in the field of spiritual integration requires time and major investment, but we can none the less start work on it already. Knowing the power of the media, I feel that they could be making a much greater contribution to moral and cultural rapprochement among our States.

In discussing European spirituality as a factor in general integration we must overlook the problems of today's and tomorrow's youth. After all, Europe belongs to our children as well as ourselves. They will have to live in it later on. And their lives will largely depend on the atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding which we are striving to create on the European continent. We look to a future Europe spiritually integrated within its geographical boundaries, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural mountains.

I would accordingly like to propose a European programme which might, for instance, be entitled "Young Europe", and be implemented under the auspices of the Council of Europe in co-operation with the European Union. The programme would be aimed at promoting an atmosphere of spiritual rapprochement among young people from all over Europe, which would encourage the spiritual and general integration of our continent.

We are approaching the end of the century and the millennium; a great deal of stocktaking is being and will be done. The Council of Europe's fiftieth anniversary is also an opportunity for reviewing the work done so far. I think even greater achievements are possible before the year 2000 if we work efficiently together and fully honour the commitments entered into. The Republic of Moldova is engaging in tireless efforts to this end, and hopes that all the other Council of Europe member States will adopt the same attitude. I would like to stress that some of the commitments are not only towards the Organisation but also towards other Council members. As you know, one area of the Republic of Moldova is still disputed. We are hoping that the States and organisation which have undertaken to act as guarantors, and I mean the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the OSCE, will use their best endeavours to help settle this problem. In the same connection, we trust that President Boris Yeltsin's firm undertaking to honour the Russian commitments vis-à-vis the Council of Europe to withdraw military weapons and troops from this area will be a major step towards final settlement of the conflict.

We note with satisfaction that, despite all the difficulties, we are managing to build up new democratic societies, drawing extensively on the experience and support of the older European democracies. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the governments and people of the Council of Europe member countries, whose support is still prominent in the transition process towards a democratic society."

Mr NYRUP RASMUSSEN, Prime Minister of Denmark, made the following statement:

"I am proud of having the honour to speak during your chairmanship at this second Summit. Because you are right, President Havel, that four years ago I was among those who proposed this second Summit.

I am proud of it because it is now that we try to remind each other about all the natural things, all the self-evident things. But the danger is that we take them as natural, which they are not.

Yet we have occasion to celebrate, but also to reflect. In the eight years that have passed since the Berlin wall was torn down, the Council of Europe has nearly doubled its membership from 23 in 1989 to 40 today, comprising almost all the European countries. – 700 million people are represented in this Second Summit.

We know that many of them are in situations where human rights are not respected, that more of them are in situations as minorities where human rights are not respected, that what we say here and what we decide here are not followed up in real terms in all our member countries.

I think it is fair to say, because we have to be honest, that we have a lot to do still, to realise what we are talking about.

To become a member and to stay a member, a Government must choose the democratic way. Yet membership of the Council of Europe is not only membership once and for all. Membership of the Council of Europe is an obligation and we know that it is also a place to be educated.

I think it is fair to say that we have changed policy during the last ten years. Earlier we said you could be a member the day when you fulfil all the obligations. Today, we say you can be a member if you formally fulfil all the obligations and we hope that we can educate you so that you in real terms also do the same.

Therefore I think that the importance of the Council of Europe is double. Firstly that we push ourselves all the time to decide upon new progress as far as formal rules are concerned to protect human beings, to fight for human rights. But the real content of the daily lives of the 700 million ordinary people's day is the most important thing and we have to fight for it all the time.

There are few privileges but many responsibilities. The Council of Europe sets the standards by which democratic societies must abide, provides the yardsticks by which they are judged. Members of the Council of Europe should be role models for others to follow.

Really, the Council of Europe is about something very simple and universal: it is about human decency.

President Havel, I often reflect about the speeches you made in your capital. I can see ordinary people are listening to what you say. I think that it is important that we try to speak about fundamental things, human rights, universal principles about human decency.

I see today's meeting as a strong manifestation of a new Europe.

- A Europe undivided – and, for the first time, united in its commitment to democracy and respect for human rights
- A Europe united in voicing its commitment to decency
- A Europe united in pledging a better future for its citizens.

However, as I indicated before, we ought not to let words cloud a non-perfect reality. Let me mention a few of them.

Firstly, some European countries are still absent from our midst. It is my sincere hope that soon the day will come when it is possible to welcome also Belarus and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of course on condition that they fulfil all conditions that we regard as natural.

Second, we must not forget that pledging is but a first step. We too are judged by our deeds, and not by our words.

Rights and obligations apply to new members as well as for old. There is no room for second division in the Council of Europe; there is only one division and that is no compromise.

Thirdly, fundamentals and fundamentally Council of Europe conventions remain to be ratified by some member States. This is not satisfactory. It is our responsibility as Heads of State and Government – and as we agreed in Vienna in 1993 – to ensure that member States honour the commitments they have accepted.

I urge those member States who have not yet done so, to join the Human Rights Convention and its implementation machinery in full. This would indeed be a worthy contribution to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

We must preserve and expand the truly major achievement of the Council of Europe, that is: making respect for human rights an integrated part of the daily lives of people living in Europe.

An impressive network of legally-binding conventions governs our obligations towards our citizens. The eradication of torture, abuse, discrimination and exclusion remains the finest goal of this organisation. It is our commitment to decency.

May I also add another criticism, because we have to be honest, not least at a second Summit.

I think that we lack resources in this Organisation. I think that when we make new demands to the Council of Europe, we have to realise that we have to create new resources. Total resources to the Council of Europe are too scarce to fulfil all its obligations. There I would just like to underline that we all here also have an obligation to realise what we are talking about.

When I look at the resources allocated to give advice, to make experiences and to contribute to new democracies in the construction of their democratic functions and institutions, I may say that we do not, in the Council of Europe, have enough. We have, if we decide so, but for the moment the allocation of resources does not correspond to the needs of the new democracies.

We need to develop the system for overseeing the human rights situation in our countries. I welcome the new system for monitoring compliance with our commitments as members of the Council of Europe. Obviously, this procedure has not yet found its final form. But it must not turn into an empty ritual. Procedure cannot substitute for political courage to ask and to answer even very difficult questions on human rights.

We must also use this Summit to focus on what remains to be done. On the challenges to be faced by Europe in the years to come.

We must not forget that the main challenges have important educational and cultural dimensions. The understanding of democratic values and the value of cultural diversity are fundamental elements in the promotion of peaceful co-existence and co-operation in Europe.

A lot of walls have been torn down during the last decade. Let us replace the walls with a foundation of mutual respect and a house with room for everybody.

We must teach our children that our diversity, our common and our individual cultural heritage are a gift to us all. For that reason I am pleased to note that the role of education in the understanding of democratic values is clearly reflected in the Declaration and Action Plan from this Summit.

We commend the vocation of the Council of Europe to contribute with other European and transatlantic organisations, to mutually reinforcing efforts in support of stability and security in Europe.

The intensified co-operation between the EU, the OSCE and Council of Europe is a major contribution to creating the co-operative model for European security. The co-operation has not least proven itself in addressing the crisis in Albania and in handling the post-conflict situation in Bosnia-and-Herzegovina.

We must also further unite our forces when promoting democratisation and addressing cases of non-compliance with common values and commitments. To this end, and in a time when other important institutions are adapting themselves to the new developments, flexibility is also essential on the part of the Council of Europe.

Denmark endorses all parts of the draft Declaration and the Plan of Action to be adopted at this Summit. It is another important step forward. Denmark especially welcomes:

- the improved institutions for protecting human rights, including the establishment of a single Court,
- the renewed call for abolition of the death penalty,
- the agreed norms for protection of minorities and
- the promotion of social cohesion.

Finally, I would like to note the political and symbolic significance that the Summit is being held with the active participation of 40 Member States. Forty is many. Forty is representing 700 million people.

I propose that we take stock of our mutual endeavours at a new Summit – perhaps in four years time from now with new resources realised."

Mr JAGLAND, Prime Minister of Norway, made the following statement:

“At the outset, I should like to pay tribute to you, Mr President. The offer by the French government to host the Second Summit of the Council of Europe was both timely and welcome. Let me also say that we attach the greatest importance to the participation of the Russian Federation at the highest level.

I noted with pleasure that President Chirac in his opening statement urged all countries to sign the Convention on banning all anti-personnel mines. As he was speaking, the Nobel Institute in Oslo announced that this year's award of the Nobel Peace Prize is given to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the campaign's co-ordinator Jody Williams. We welcome the decision by the Nobel Committee which reflects the broad popular support for our efforts to put an end to the human suffering caused by the use of anti-personnel mines. The Peace Prize will be an incentive to those countries that have not yet joined the process to come to Ottawa in December and sign the Convention that was successfully negotiated in Oslo.

This Summit gives us the opportunity to define the role, tasks and priorities of an enlarged Council of Europe.

We note with satisfaction that the draft Final Declaration and Action Plan define concrete measures to strengthen the work in key areas of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights represents the cornerstone of the work of the Council of Europe. With the new Single Court for Human Rights being established on 1 November 1998, a major step forward has been taken in our work to uphold and implement this convention. We must now ensure that the Court is given adequate resources to meet the expected increase in the number of cases. Norway also supports the proposal made by Finland to establish a position of Commissioner for Human Rights.

At the first Summit of the Council of Europe in Vienna in 1993, the Netherlands and Norway proposed to introduce a new system of monitoring the compliance with commitments accepted by the member States. This system is now an integral part of the work of the Council. But we should be even more ambitious and the monitoring system must be further developed.

At the same time the practical assistance to human rights projects in member States should be intensified in order to strengthen the members' ability to comply with their obligations. The Council of Europe's close and reinforced co-operation with the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe is important in this context.

Mr Chairman, in this connection permit me to draw attention to the case of Russian citizen Alexander Nikitin, an issue which has attracted considerable international concern. Let me just say that we trust that this case will be handled in full conformity with the fundamental principles of the rule of law and the obligations to which the members of this Council have committed themselves.

Phenomena like extreme nationalism and xenophobia are rooted in prejudices and ignorance. One way of combating these evils is to let young people travel abroad and meet each other on an individual level. We have therefore proposed that a new exchange programme for young

people from all European countries is initiated and we are pleased that it has been incorporated in the draft Action Plan of the Summit. Norway has already pledged the contribution of five million French francs over a five-year period for this project. This is sufficient to get the exchange programme started. I hereby urge other member States to offer voluntary contributions as well.

One of the most acute international problems is the worsening situation for an increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers. The Final Declaration of this Summit stresses the importance of a common and balanced approach to questions relating to these persons. However, our ultimate objective should be to elaborate a European convention on refugees and asylum seekers.

During the last years, Europe has been reminded of shocking incidents of child abuse. The fact that such atrocities can happen in our midst in every corner of Europe has been an eye-opener to all of us. The member States of the Council of Europe should intensify their co-operation in order to protect and promote the interests of children. We support the adoption of a programme under the auspices of the Council of Europe to this end.

Norway welcomes the observer role in the Council of Europe of Canada, Japan and the United States. They can all make useful contributions to the work of the organisation.

As we are approaching a new century, we should join forces and use this organisation to build a Europe based on social as well as individual tolerance and responsibility. In order to achieve this, we must relentlessly promote the ideas and values that this organisation is built upon, as well as make sure that its structures and activities are positioned to meet tomorrow's challenges."

Mr KWAŚNIEWSKI, President of the Republic of Poland, made the following statement:

"I would like to begin by thanking the President of France, Mr Jacques Chirac, for undertaking to host the Second Council of Europe Summit. Strasbourg - a border town of long and rich historical traditions, a symbol of French-German reconciliation and at the same time the seat of our Organisation - seems a very appropriate venue for the meeting of Heads of State and Government from almost all countries of the continent. Without doubt, old Strasbourg is one of the towns that epitomise most fully the spirit of Europe.

The Council of Europe, on the other hand, is an institution that best symbolises the contemporary meaning of European identity. Democracy, human rights, the rule of law - all these are very fundamental values which the Council endeavours to safeguard. The canon of political and legal standards, together with the mechanisms for their implementation, which have been developed here, in Strasbourg, continue to be seen as exemplary by many a nation, also in other parts of the globe.

People in Poland remember very well that the Council of Europe was the first Western organisation that ventured, at a very early stage, to open itself up to the emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. Soon it will be six years since Poland became a full member of the Organisation. Our active involvement in the activities of this longest-lived institution of European integration is conducive to the modernisation of the country and helps bring closer Poland's membership in other Euro-Atlantic structures. The various programmes

of technical assistance offered by the Council and the opportunity to draw on the rich body of convention-related legislation helps create the legal infrastructure for the economic and political integration of Poland with the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance.

We do not, however, regard the Council of Europe as an "anteroom" that opens the passage towards the more restricted-access inner chambers. We conceive of membership in the Council as of great value in itself.

Since the momentous events of 1989, my country has travelled a long way. Democracy in Poland continues to grow stronger and more mature. This was attested, among other events, by the September parliamentary elections. The electioneering preceding the polling was conducted in a measured and restrained manner. In ten days the Sejm and the Senate will gather for their first sessions of the new term. The political composition of both the chambers is more balanced than in the previous parliament and the political scene is much more lucid. The bi-polar configuration with a relatively strong centre should make for a positive stability of the system.

In this connection, it should perhaps be mentioned that the previous parliament, as the first one since 1989, survived the full four years of its term.

In a few days, the new Constitution, enacted early this year - and adopted in a nation-wide referendum - will become law. It fully complies with European standards, among them the Council of Europe conventions. It was drafted through a judicious compromise between the major political forces. I believe that this "understanding over divisions" portends well for the future - determining that the new Constitution will become a solid foundation of a democratic, rule-of-law state.

Over the last two years, many positive changes have been made to Polish legislation. The newly enacted legislation includes, among others, several new codes: labour, civil, penal and customs. The governmental administrative centre has been reformed. Civilian control over the armed forces and parliamentary control over the special services have been introduced. Neither are we neglecting the pivotally important work on social legislation. I have recently signed bills that provide a general framework for the setting up of a new old-age pension system.

Poland has already ratified over 50 Council of Europe conventions and protocols - in that respect we are a clear leader among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Several months ago, I put my signature to the document ratifying the European Social Charter. In this way, Poland has become a party - as the first country of our subregion - of that very significant convention. The social guarantees provided for in the Charter must be permanently rooted in our legislation and social policy. The improving condition of the Polish economy should facilitate the process.

The Council of Europe has already affirmed its place in the new European architecture but it continues to face ever-new challenges. At this point I would like to confine myself to highlighting just a few problems of special significance.

One of the fundamental issues is that of improving enforcement of implementation of obligations undertaken by the member States. In that respect much positive influence should ensue from the setting up of the single Court of Human Rights. Poland has already ratified

Protocol No. 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights that reforms the relevant control mechanism. Serious consideration should be given to the suggestion recently made to establish an office of Commissioner for Human Rights. The institution might help monitor better the maintenance of democratic standards and the protection of human rights in all the member States. We must bear in mind that the main strength and authority of the Council of Europe derives from its unwavering defence of values and norms which constitute the kernel of European identity and which play a decisive role in bringing unity to our continent.

The role of the Council of Europe is not, however, confined to the simple supervision of the observance of human rights and other norms of democratic and legal conduct. In compliance with the notion of democratic security expounded four years ago during the previous Council Summit in Vienna, our Organisation continues to expand its involvement in actions aimed at eliminating non-military threats to European security. And since the social, economic and cultural sources of instability are gaining in importance, it seems appropriate that the Council should continue to broaden the scope of its activities in this domain. Fighting against organised crime, combating racism, intolerance and xenophobia, providing education for democratic citizenship, containing social exclusion, preventing illegal immigration - these are but some fields of co-operation deserving of the Council's ever-greater attention.

All this entails the need for even better co-operation and a very clear-cut "division of labour" between the Council of Europe and other European and transatlantic organisations. A positive example of such joint effort is the successful co-operation between the Council and the OSCE as well as other international organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which served to implement the Dayton peace agreements. Organisations operating in other parts of Europe should likewise co-ordinate their efforts and support each other so as to make the best possible use of their comparative advantages.

From the point of view of European integration, it is essential that the Council of Europe co-operates very closely with the European Union. Poland acknowledges with great satisfaction the development of aid programmes jointly promoted by both Organisations and addressed to the needs of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. For our part, we declare in this connection our willingness to share to an ever-greater degree with other countries of the subregion our experience in transforming the political system and the economy.

Poland is in favour of accelerating the process of the continent's integration. At the same time, we are conscious that a united Europe can only be built on the solid foundation of shared values. The supreme mission of the Council of Europe is to engage in efforts aimed at propagating and reinforcing these very important universal values.

The emblem of both the Council of Europe and the European Union - twelve golden stars on a blue background - resembles the dial of a clock. It seems to me that people who often look at the symbol must have an enhanced perception of the passage of time. Attuned to the rhythm and the pace of the changes taking place on the continent, they are loath to postpone important decisions or tolerate unnecessary delays. This is an attitude that needs to be shared by all who are engaged in the great task of building our common, united, prosperous Europe."

Mr GUTERRES, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Portugal, made the following statement:

The Council of Europe - which in two years' time will be celebrating its 50th anniversary - is the oldest European organisation. Its creation was based on a set of principles and values which, in their essence, are still valid: human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law.

The mere fact that 40 Heads of State and Government are meeting today, here in Strasbourg, on the basis of those principles, demonstrates that those principles are not only alive and well but have also become pan-European. This is encouraging. Nonetheless, it was not enough simply to knock down a wall: it was, and still is, necessary to build a home where we can all live together and where life is worth living, a life of freedom and dignity for all Europeans.

In carrying out the immense task of European construction, we must guarantee social cohesion and promote citizen participation in the practice of democracy and full commitment to its values. In these areas the Council of Europe's contribution as a place for discussion, a clearing-house of information, a vehicle for projects, a promoter of laws and an administrator of justice will remain very valuable.

It is also an exemplary forum in terms of cultural life, education for citizenship, protection of the shared heritage, respecting the diversity and the memory of each community. These aspects are the secret of its future.

The history of Portugal is a concatenation of encounters between different cultures, a pilgrimage over many centuries, a series of virtually haphazard events. However, our history has always been characterised by a desire to live together, a certain blend of humility, ambition and dignity, living on in the different cultures united by a language now spoken by nearly 200 million people. In other words, we already know what cultural diversity means, the links that live and are strengthened as a result. That is why we firmly support the message of encouragement contained in the Final Declaration of this Summit for understanding between North and South and support for and promotion of initiatives enhancing mutual respect and solidarity among peoples.

We cannot forget how the Council of Europe helped our country to set up democratic bodies immediately after the fall of the dictatorship in 1974. The co-operation programmes implemented then were to some extent the precursors of those now being run in the new member states. We are therefore well placed to continue to back them. Democratic stability in each individual European state is a guarantee for the stability of the whole continent.

Of the Council of Europe's many aims, I attach particular importance to the following:

- ensuring that the member States honour their commitments increasingly strictly. This will call for greater political courage and more fairness, always in a constructive spirit of mutual assistance in the use of the machinery created by the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers;

- strengthening the legal arrangements for defending every aspect of human rights.

In these circumstances, I welcome the creation of the new single Court in accordance with Protocol No.11 to the European Convention on Human Rights and the possible creation of the post of Commissioner to inform citizens and promote compliance with Council of Europe standards in this field.

The breakneck speed of technological progress is presenting us with new challenges. This can lead not only to genuine progress, ie with positive effects on the quality of human life and the dignity of each individual, but also to risks of abuse. In this area the Council of Europe will be given particularly wide powers and greater responsibilities, possibly even that of defining the guidelines for a European policy on this issue. The application of the new information technologies to culture and education can be an enormous step forward, but only if progress is balanced and respects human rights and freedom of expression. Progress in the area of biomedicine must also be wisely regulated.

That is why we welcome the decision taken at the Summit to confirm the ban on the cloning of human beings. Adoption of the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Biomedicine and Human Rights, signed this year in Oviedo by many States, including Portugal, should be concluded as soon as possible.

Still in the area of human rights, I should like to highlight the Portuguese contribution in various international fora to the abolition of the death penalty. Portugal was a pioneer in this field and we shall continue to defend life since we believe that states cannot legitimately assume the right to kill in the name of the law. We therefore welcome the call made at this Summit for the universal abolition of the death penalty and the maintenance, in the meantime, of existing moratoria in those States which have not yet been able to sign and ratify Protocol No.6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

We support moves to end all practices of torture and inhuman treatment, which are intolerable attacks on human dignity; we shall continue to back any measures taken against racism, xenophobia and intolerance, scourges which prevail to a greater or lesser extent in our societies; the same goes for the fight against drugs trafficking, organised crime, corruption, money laundering - all of which in a way stem from the phenomena of exclusion and the painful increase in poverty, which we should also be using our ideals and actions to prevent.

Signing up to the revised European Social Charter and improving and strengthening legislation are potentially decisive contributions to the social cohesion to which we all aspire and which is the foundation of democracy itself.

We should increase our efforts to give women an active role in our society, in true equality with men, by creating conditions for genuine parity.

Furthermore, we must do our utmost to protect children at risk or victimised by exploitation. We must amend and tighten much of the existing legislation in this area to fend off new risks and fight against monstrous attacks on children and young people.

Portugal has steadfastly pursued a policy of defending and promoting human rights.

At the Intergovernmental Conference we called for a Charter of Rights to be drafted and implemented, insisting that it include a clause enabling the European Union to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights. We also advocate reinforced co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union and greatly improve links between them, not only in the area of protecting human rights and strengthening democracy but also in the cultural and educational fields, where the objectives are identical and the shared political determination to achieve justice and social cohesion is ever increasing.

In our view, by including binding provisions on fundamental rights, the recent Amsterdam Treaty gave the European project a new dimension.

But it also sent out a clear signal that the model which we are imposing on ourselves is the right one for consolidating a stable and secure framework of international relations.

Our ideal for Europe is not one of a restricted circle of privileged members, a club for the most fortunate. The Europe that we want is one of a civilisation which renews itself without losing sight of the best aspects of its past. The Europe that we want goes beyond the confines of its own continent - nearly all of it represented here today - because the humanistic values which we want to see triumph are universal and, by their very nature, do not sanction exclusion of any kind."

Mr CONSTANTINESCU, President of the Republic of Romania, made the following statement:

"Romania's accession to the Council of Europe four years ago was an expression of the deep changes that took place after the fall of totalitarianism, both within Romania, but also at the global level.

Romania owes much to the Council of Europe, for the Council has contributed much to the successful and democratic transformation of Romanian society and of Romanian institutions.

What would be a brief review of Romania's contribution to the great family of European nations?

First of all, it is a question of our building a stable democratic system, the political settlement of inter-ethnic disputes and the guarantee of human rights. These achievements have been obtained through a complex process, which included difficulties and even confrontation. In such a sense, the Romanian experience can be seen as a contribution to the political culture of tomorrow's Europe. The realities of Romania today align us to the new Europe, and from this perspective, it is with interest that we follow the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which, now that it has come into force, will have to be accompanied by practical measures of a nature to upgrade confidence throughout the continent.

At present, my country is carrying out a comprehensive process of economic reform which, however, often carries high social costs.

But the social costs of economic reform should not endanger social stability and the dignity of the individual.

This is why we intend to ratify, as soon as possible, the European Social Charter. In the very same sense, we welcome the action carried out by the Council of Europe through the Social Development Fund and we express our gratitude for the assistance awarded by the Council of Europe in implementing the project entitled "The Children of Romania".

In terms of our regional policy, the efforts we have more recently deployed in this area have led to regional stability, based on the relations of good understanding which Romania harbours with all of its neighbours. Moreover, we have conceived a model of bilateral and trilateral co-operation, which serves as a significant factor of regional stability, by building a network of agreements and programmes of co-operation, such as those we have in place with Poland and Ukraine, with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, with Turkey and Bulgaria, but also with Bulgaria and Greece or with Hungary and Austria.

This picture could not be complete if I were not to mention a component which we find to be essential, both for successful domestic reform as well as for a working economy and administration. It is also a significant subject for regional and international co-operation. I am referring here to the fight against corruption and organised crime.

Of particular concern throughout the world, this aspect is ever more important in the restored democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, where the inherent risks of a rapid and radical economic reform are accompanied by the difficult reconstruction of state institutions, the authority and drive of which could be seriously destabilised due to corruption. In the end, the setting up of parallel power structures could carry the risk of depriving the State of its fundamental responsibilities.

By drafting a new Law against corruption, we are now in a position to better ensure a co-ordinated and effective incrimination of actions of corruption. Furthermore, the new Law on the Organisation of the Justice System is an expression of our determination to ensure an independent status for institutions and persons called upon to prevent, conduct an enquiry on and sanction such offences.

We are also studying the best modalities of limiting the immunity of members of Parliament and civil servants, in what concerns enquiries and sanctions regarding corruption offences, since it is most clear that the prevention of such offences must address those who are exercising a public mandate.

In the case of all these issues, European norms would be essential, since the difficulties in combating corruption are of such a nature that we need the authority of the Council of Europe and the consensus of all member States in order to ensure the efficiency and dynamism of this process.

We express our interest in drafting a Framework Convention on this issue, as well as a deontological code for public agents and other legal instruments, so as to open the way

towards improving national legislation, but also towards international co-operation in this field.

Romania has included the fight against corruption, drug and weapon trafficking, money laundering and terrorism as an important dimension of our regional agreements.

We have already signed such agreements in June of this year with Ukraine and Moldova and in October with Turkey and Bulgaria.

We believe that these initiatives will be able to prove their efficiency, not only for the signatory States, but also for Europe as a whole. Beyond a doubt, the existing European instruments, such as the European Convention on Money Laundering, are certainly of use. But these should serve as a starting point towards a systematic and comprehensive approach to this complex and dangerous phenomenon.

I have tried to briefly outline Romania's experience in the period of transition. But I believe that the goal of this Conference should be more than just noting reviews and evaluations.

The Council of Europe was born 50 years ago, when, at the end of the Second World War, it brought together the victorious and the defeated countries of Western Europe. Beginning with 1990, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the same Council of Europe tried to bring together the countries of Western Europe and the former communist States of Central and Eastern Europe.

We can say that today, in 1997, here in Strasbourg, the Council of Europe comes forward as a truly pan-European organisation.

The specificity of the Council of Europe, as an international organisation, is the ambition of all its members to be united in their commitment to observe a set of fundamental values which define pluralist democracy, the rule of law and the system of human rights. In the first stage of its existence, the Council of Europe ensured the passing from military confrontation to democratic security. The 1993 Summit in Vienna focused on the issue of transition from communist totalitarianism to democracy, from centralised command economy to market economy, from closed and controlled societies to open and free societies.

Where do we find ourselves now? What is the main challenge that the Council of Europe will have to face today?

Practically speaking, with their accession to the Council of Europe, we can say that all European member States today have accomplished their systematic reform, ensuring the legislative and institutional basis of the democratic system and of market economy. Transition has therefore been concluded and we can say that we now find ourselves in a new stage, one that we have called *post-transition*.

The post-transition stage may raise new and just as difficult challenges, which we will have to face together.

Can existing laws and institutions ensure the irreversibility of democracy? Is the existing market economy sufficient to ensure the prosperity which leads to social stability? Is the civil society mature enough to protect itself from a new outbreak of inter-ethnic or inter-

religious conflict or from a revival of totalitarianism? Is the new security architecture free from the danger of new dividing lines as a source of potential conflict?

In order for post-transition to represent a lasting development, we must make sure that, at the political level, we build a powerful civil society. That, at the administrative level, we have real decentralisation and a functioning principle of solidarity. That, at the economic level, there is a prosperous sector of small and middle sized enterprises. And that, at the social level, there is a predominant middle class.

The Council of Europe should be the privileged forum for debate and for finding solutions to these challenges.

Free from complexes of inferiority or superiority, as well as from the obsession of judging exclusively on the basis of negative examples, we can carry out a true dialogue. A dialogue based not on some teaching others, but on learning from each other."

Mr YELTSIN, President of the Russian Federation, made the following statement:

"This is the first time that I address you from this lofty rostrum as leader of Russia which has become a full member of the Council of Europe.

Here in the Palace of Europe, where the leaders of most countries of the continent have come together, I represent 150 million Russian people. For me this is a high honour and great responsibility.

It was almost a year and a half ago that Russia joined this authoritative Organisation of European democracies.

That was made possible by positive changes both in the Russian Federation and throughout Europe.

The triumph of democracy in Russia and our country's entry into the Council of Europe significantly expanded the "territory of freedom". Today it stretches over twelve time zones.

We are now poised to begin building together a new, greater Europe, free from division lines:

- a Europe where no State would impose its will on others;
- a Europe where big and small countries are equal partners united by common democratic principles.

It is this Greater Europe that could nowadays become a powerful community of nations incomparable in terms of its potential with any other region of the world and capable of ensuring its own security.

Greater Europe would draw upon the diverse experiences of cultural, national and historical legacies of all European peoples.

The road to Greater Europe is long and difficult. But travelling down this road is in the best interest of all Europeans. Russia is also making its own contribution to this end.

We have already made significant progress in practical co-operation with the main bodies of the Council of Europe.

Russia is actively involved in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly, intergovernmental committees and working bodies of the Council.

Republics, regions and oblasts (provinces) within Russia show huge interest in the activities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

Our country's integration into the community of European democracies proceeds in a very dynamic fashion. And what matters here is not just the rate of this process, but its qualitative substance.

It took us only a few years to cover the road from a totalitarian state to a market economy open to the world, a country with free elections and an independent press.

Our country is becoming a part of a system of democratic security on the continent.

We shall do our best to make the principles of democracy a norm of life for Russia's citizens.

Standards of freedom should be the same for all people of Russia wherever they live and whatever their ethnic origin. They should be the same for all nations irrespective of the size of their population.

Our country takes an active part in settling regional conflicts.

With our active assistance armed confrontations were defused in Nagorno-Karabakh and Transdnestrria, in Tadjikistan and Abkhazia. Since joining the Council of Europe, Russia has been strengthening co-operation with law-enforcement agencies of other countries, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

We have launched a fundamental reform to resolutely consolidate the judiciary, strengthen law and order in the country, protect it from State bureaucracy corruption and from organised crime.

Russia has introduced a moratorium on capital punishment and we are strictly complying with this undertaking.

I know that the European public opinion was shocked by public executions in Chechnya. Russia's leadership is taking all necessary measures to contain such manifestations of mediaeval barbarity.

As President of Russia, I shall actively contribute to the ratification of the fundamental conventions we signed in the process of entering the Council of Europe.

I confirm that Russia will fulfil with all the commitments undertaken in the Council of Europe.

It will do so in spite of the fact that in Europe and elsewhere there are forces seeking to isolate Russia, to put it in a position of inequality, forces which refuse to understand that Europe without Russia is not Europe at all.

What I have in mind here is the "double standard" practice, mutual mistrust, discrimination of Russian manufacturers and restrictions that are still applied occasionally when issuing visas to Russian nationals.

Neither can our country put up with the fact that in Europe today hundreds of thousands of people are deprived of citizenship, including our fellow countrymen. I hope that this issue will be settled.

I am speaking about these problems from the rostrum of the Council of Europe because this very forum, faster than any other one, gets rid of "cold war" notions.

We count upon the European community to continue treating with understanding the young Russian democracy, as well as our efforts to protect the rights of our fellow citizens and compatriots.

The main mission of the Council of Europe is to strengthen the humanitarian component of security on our continent.

Our efforts should focus upon the individual and his or her safety and security in all the dimensions, ranging from the healthy environment to the right to receive education in one's mother tongue. This task should be accomplished not selectively, but in a comprehensive way on a continent-wide scale.

What we should do is not look for differences, but on the contrary, build upon all those things that bring us closer together. First of all, we ought to strengthen the legal and standard-setting activities of the Council of Europe.

We need to have an effective human rights implementation system and "partnership for democracy" on an all-European scale.

It is necessary to establish mechanisms of pre-emptive legal and humanitarian diplomacy through the Council of Europe.

It is important to fine-tune interaction between the Council of Europe and other European institutions, above all the OSCE.

Everyone will benefit if we succeed in achieving co-ordination among European organisations.

Meeting the challenges faced by Europe also requires reliable personnel, first of all, in the field of law and interstate co-operation.

I propose developing under the auspices of the Council of Europe a common European personnel training program for Europe in the 21st century.

We pin our hopes on the young generation of politicians.

They are the ones who will have to continue our cause and to build upon democratic traditions observed today by the vast majority of European countries.

Our continent has completely changed over the past decade. Now we share common tasks and a common cause. On the eve of the 21st century they should all be enshrined in a Charter of European Security.

In 1999, at the close of the 20th century, our forum will mark its 50th anniversary.

I am convinced that the Council of Europe has every chance to enter the next century revitalised and looking ahead to the future.

Our common goal is the well-being of every European and of the whole of Europe.

Let us work together in the name of this noble goal!"

Mr MAZZA, Captain Regent of San Marino, made the following statement:

“The Regency wishes to express its most sincere gratitude to the French Authorities for having proposed and hosted this second Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, which will provide new impetus and vigour to this Organisation whose objectives also include the enhancement of a common European identity resting upon the values and principles affirmed and advocated by the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe, which will soon celebrate its 50th anniversary, is expected to be vigorous and dynamic, capable of playing, today and in the future, its unique role in Europe with determination and resolve: a leading and driving role for any State.

Thanks to its long-standing and consolidated experience in the field of human rights protection, legal and cultural co-operation, social and environmental policies, the Council of Europe will be a benchmark for all European peoples and Governments facing the challenges of the third millennium.

This is the reason why our Organisation will intensify its present function as “watchdog” of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. In this respect, reviewing fulfilment with the commitments taken by member States is essential. In spite of economic, social and cultural differences and despite diverse historical and legal backgrounds, all Countries are called upon to fulfil their commitments and abide by the Organisation’s principles.

Human rights protection is and shall remain a priority for the Council of Europe as foremost promoter of the fundamental rights of all human beings without discrimination as to sex, economic and social conditions, religion or race. Particular attention shall be paid to those who, for various reasons, are unable to defend themselves.

In this regard, we wish to stress the extreme importance of the Oviedo Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, providing for the protection of the human embryo from any form of exploitation and experimentation: a commitment which no European State is allowed to ignore. Science in general and medical science in particular must constantly be at the service of mankind and never exclude ethical considerations.

An important task to be fulfilled in the near future is to render the existing mechanisms of human rights protection more effective and efficient and, most of all, to bring them as close as possible to all population groups in our societies. We shall promote a better understanding of the so-called "Strasbourg system" and facilitate access to procedures for all those who believe their rights have been violated.

Promoting Europe’s public awareness as regards human rights issues, encouraging compliance with the relevant rules of the Council of Europe and monitoring countries with critical situations will be the main responsibility of a Commissioner for Human Rights, of which we urge the prompt institution. Following the example of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, who has played a significant role over the last few years, the Commissioner for Human Rights may become a point of reference for all European citizens.

The Captains Regent hope that the Council of Europe, on the threshold of the third millennium, increases its efforts in accomplishing the demanding task of human rights protection. The forthcoming entry into force of Protocol N° 11 to the European Convention on Human Rights, substantially amending its mechanisms in order to respond better to current needs, will certainly lead to greater effectiveness of the Strasbourg system.

Of course the tasks and challenges facing our Organisation are not restricted to the field of human rights, though everything related to the human person remains undoubtedly at the top of the agenda.

Today, it is all the more essential that close intergovernmental collaboration in the legal sector be further strengthened by the Council of Europe, especially in the light of rampant transnational organised crime, terrorism and drug trafficking affecting all our Countries in different ways.

A main concern is linked to the spreading of crimes against children, ranging from labour to sexual abuse, which is even more degrading. It is indisputable that condemnation alone cannot bring an end to the scourge. Children are being deprived of their childhood through violence or deception and their future lives are severely compromised, and national and supranational policies encompassing the prevention of child labour and prosecution of those responsible, are essential.

In this regard, for example, the Organisation, within the framework of already existing international initiatives, could analyse critical situations, study the relevant domestic legislation and international legal instruments in order to submit recommendations and put forward concrete action plans to member States.

In order to combat effectively the plague of drug abuse, the key solution, both culturally and politically, is prevention, which actually means education, promotion of self-awareness, valorisation of human beings and their resources, confidence in the people's capacity to live their lives in a positive and productive way.

Hence, to cope with the problems affecting younger generations, a wise prevention policy is imperative, that is to say a policy aimed at the effective protection of the family, as the family is the educating community, where love, mutual respect and solidarity are first taught and learnt.

The value of life is always the highest priority, which is why San Marino wishes to emphasise the need to sign and to bring into force the Treaty for the total abolition of antipersonnel landmines.

We shall not dwell upon the numerous activities carried out with resolve and success. However, we wish to express our satisfaction at the excellent work being done by the Organisation in the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance. Witness the European Youth Campaign against Racism, which has made the population, especially the younger generations, more aware of the alarming proportions of this ubiquitous phenomenon.

Let the motto of the Campaign "All equal – All different" be a good omen for all our States. Let "equality in diversity" prevail in a Europe of the XXIst century where all States rely on mutual understanding and respect, tolerance and peaceful coexistence and share those democratic principles which the Council of Europe will always advocate and safeguard."

Mr AZNAR LÓPEZ, President of the Government of Spain, made the following statement:

" For Spaniards of my generation the Council of Europe is both a dream and an example. The work accomplished in Strasbourg was a beacon for Spain's attempts to establish democratic State recognising and guaranteeing the fundamental freedoms; this is why my country's accession to the Council almost twenty years ago was the realisation of a dream along the road to full participation in the European institutions.

Today's event, so appropriately hosted by the French President, is attended not only by Spaniards but by all the many other European nations which are endeavouring to make up for lost time in attaining the goal of European coexistence. At this second Summit we are determined to promote a better future for us all.

The historic background to the first Summit in Vienna in 1993 assigned the Council of Europe a clear political objective: of welcome in the new European democracies. We must establish the mechanisms to facilitate their political integration and co-operate actively with them in the legal field. Furthermore, the need has emerged for a social and economic policy capable of averting any threats to democratic values and guarantee stability for all.

Today, at the threshold of the twenty-first century, Europeans must face up to unprecedented situations capable of jeopardising our plans construct a pluralist and democratic Europe.

The Council is the optimum forum for overcoming such difficulties.

Respect for human rights in a pluralist democracy is the cornerstone of our political systems, and the Strasbourg Summit can help significantly reinforce the protection of such rights. As in all times of change, tensions are mounting in our society. We are galvanised here today by the determination to find ways of preventing such uncertainties from degenerating into crises.

It is important that we preserve the tolerance and openness specific to our culture. Our greatest current concerns are to combat racism, protect the victims of unfair persecution and promote the social integration of the most vulnerable members of our society.

The new technologies and progress in science are also creating new fields in which human rights must be protected.

Genetic engineering is one of these fields, and the Council of Europe has pioneered the efforts to ensure that this technique is used solely for beneficial purposes. We should remember that in Oviedo last April the Convention on Biomedicine and Human Rights was opened for signature. Nevertheless, the magnitude of the issue of scientific progress will necessitate further instruments, including a text expressly prohibiting the cloning of human beings.

The Council of Europe must initiate structural reforms to adapt to the wide-ranging, multifarious realities of forty member States and seek to establish a language system similar to that of other international organisations working in Europe that have given due consideration to the importance of languages with global influence. This will enable the Council of Europe to publicise its work beyond the borders of our continent and establish our shared values as examples outside Europe.

It is also important to establish priority aims relevant to society's worst problems. This is the only way to secure effective participation by all members in the relevant activities and make concrete progress.

The Council of Europe is the institution that guarantees the rights of the individual and the democratic values underpinning our system. In order to promote these values we must demonstrate to our citizens that we can echo their concerns and close rank with them against phenomena which threaten the rule of law and are part of their everyday preoccupations.

Day after day, terrorism takes its toll of innocent victims, and in my view it is the worst of these scourges. It is quite simply the negation of the very foundations of democracy. I feel that we must do our utmost to eradicate this evil. I also think that the insanity of those who can only resort to violence and blackmail against freedoms and rights necessitates steadfast condemnation, demonstrating that the law-based State can take all sort of action against such crimes, while still respecting human rights, since respect for these rights is our overriding concern.

This Organisation must act as a leader, a role which it cannot shirk, because if it did, our citizens would never understand and in the last analysis, we could never forgive ourselves either.

However, this is not the only form of crime posing a threat to our system. The spread of organised crime is a cancer which we take very seriously as a government, because it undermines the very structure of our societies. Moreover, the crimes of trafficking in minors or drug dealing prey mercilessly on the weaker members of society and young people, who will form next century's society.

Corruption is a further assault on the foundations of pluralist society. It so erodes citizens' trust in the institutions to the point of disaffection from the national democracy. Corruption carries the virus of apathy, and an apathetic democracy is a vulnerable democracy.

The expansion and the magnitude of such problems necessitate a determined and co-ordinated pan-European reaction, ranging from day-to-day prevention to the creation of a legal framework within which to combat all aspects of these phenomena.

Lastly, we must do our utmost to protect the environment and the cultural heritage, so that we can hand them down intact, or even improved, to future generations.

All these subjects contribute to the importance of our Summit and are embodied in the terms of reference which we have assigned our Ministers.

One-and-a-half years ago the Spanish people placed their trust in a new Government. I would like to declare here today that we too are guided by the principles on which the Council bases its action, namely the supremacy of democracy, respect for human rights and identification with the European cultural heritage. I aspire to a pluralist, generous society in Spain. I am hoping to serve my countrymen by reinforcing the structure of freedoms and safeguards established in our 1978 Constitution and the laws elaborating upon it.

I earnestly desire to see my country assume its proper place in the political and economic life of our continent: a prestigious position, esteem and recognition, directly linked to our history, culture, our young people and the democratic impetus which inspires them.

The Council of Europe's work has been and still is a vital reference point in pursuing these aims.

That is why my Government unreservedly supports the Organisation's efforts, reflected in the programme of this Summit, to establish an open, democratic and exemplary Europe on the foundations to which we all aspire."

Mr KOVÁČ, President of the Slovak Republic, made the following statement:

"Tomorrow we shall adopt the Final Declaration and Action Plan which define our future steps in a fundamental way. Both documents are a response to the enlargement of Council of Europe membership, to the new problems we encounter as well as to the need to strengthen the stability of the Continent on the basis of common values. I am of the opinion that both documents are a worthy picture of our joint resolve to achieve the goals of the Council of Europe.

One of the great minds of our century – Friedrich August Hayek said: "Ordinary people can participate in public affairs only if they concern the world which is familiar to them. This, however, requires them to learn to apply responsibility in affairs they know, under circumstances in which their behaviour is controlled by the concrete knowledge of fellow citizens and their needs and not by theoretical knowledge about distant people. If the scale of political acts becomes so extensive that the knowledge necessary for their accomplishment is available almost exclusively to bureaucracy then the creative stimuli of individuals must weaken."

Therefore I am deeply convinced that the Final Declaration and Action Plan have a potential to address the citizens of our countries, to serve their needs and to facilitate our joint materialisation of the values and goals which the creators of the Council of Europe have formulated and which we jointly share. In my opinion, this is one of the fundamental messages of this meeting.

The Slovak Republic, which has ratified the 11th Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms among the first member States of the Council of Europe, welcomes the completion of its ratification process and is convinced that the new Court will be an answer to the challenges of the future. In this context I would like to appreciate the proposal to establish the institution of Human Rights Commissioner. However, in my opinion, in order to provide for the necessary compatibility with the systematic scheme for human rights protection it is necessary to analyse thoroughly the need for a Human Rights Commissioner, especially in a close link with the experience acquired by the new Court.

I also believe that strengthening our mutual dialogue in the Committee of Ministers regarding the fulfilment of the commitments of member States will contribute to the solution of our

common problems and I understand organising of seminars as fora for experience exchange to be a logical practical assistance to member States.

The Slovak Republic is against any attempt to artificially create genetically identical human beings and considers the adoption of an additional protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine an imperative for preserving human identity and dignity.

The Slovak Republic's opinion is that social cohesion also presumes an active government which, in co-operation with other partners, supports its strengthening. The measures taken by the Government of the Slovak Republic therefore aim at the ratification of the European Social Charter and The European Code of Social Security in 1998. From the Council of Europe we expect that the new social strategy which we will ask to be prepared by the Committee of Ministers will create the necessary space for the social cohesion of our societies. We also hope that our experience with the building of tripartite-based social institutions will become one of the sources of inspiration for the member States.

Combating corruption and organised crime and strengthening international co-operation in this field is considered extremely important. It is only international co-operation that can give systematic guarantees to citizens and protect their rights. We think that the conclusion of the current re-codification work on the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure in the Slovak Republic will contribute to the strengthening of these guarantees. We perceive the establishment of effective prevention mechanisms for drug addiction and related phenomena, and also the protection of children to be inseparable parts of our responsibility for the destiny of future generations and we perceive the preservation of our common cultural and natural wealth and support of educational programmes on the rights and duties of citizens in a democratic society in the same way.

It is, obviously, not possible that the Final Declaration and Action Plan be an exhaustive enumeration of our activities. However, they are a decisive platform of our priorities. A platform in our relationship with our governments and, first of all, a platform for the sake of our citizens in our respective countries. I would like to emphasise this in particular. I believe that other delegations can agree with me in saying that the beneficiaries of the ideas and measures stipulated in the texts of the Final Declaration and Action Plan will, first of all, be our citizens.

In concluding, I would like to appreciate the role of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Ms. L. Fischer, whose proposal to organise our Summit has become reality today. I would also like to thank all those who helped to organise it and congratulate the President of the French Republic, His Excellency Jacques Chirac, for the excellent organisation of the Summit and for facilitating the necessary synergy in the Committee of Ministers under the Presidency of the French Republic.”

Mr DRNOVŠEK, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, made the following statement:

"Speaking on behalf of Slovenia, let me first of all thank the President and the Government of the French Republic for their hospitality and for their excellent organisation of this second Summit. This is an outstanding opportunity for perfecting the ideas and intentions which we expressed four years ago at the first Summit in Vienna.

The conclusions of the first Summit were largely centred on the Council of Europe's enlargement to the countries of central and eastern Europe. This second event must concentrate on consolidating the fundamental values in all member countries. We must therefore redefine the Council of Europe's place in the new architecture of European stability.

Over the last few years we have witnessed radical changes in Europe, thanks, inter alia, to the Council of Europe. By running its assistance programmes to help the new member countries fulfil the Council's criteria, we have made significant progress, and in some cases have even managed to make up for a time-lag of several decades. Unfortunately we are still facing trials and tribulations, such as the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council of Europe must devise the means of establishing democracy and democratic stability in these regions.

Obviously, the process of European integration is not only a political and economic matter. And it will happen at different paces in different countries. It is precisely this multi-track, multi-speed process which gives the Council of Europe sufficient leeway to ensure that its fundamental principles are more effectively implemented.

The Council of Europe must continue to intensify its role as a pan-European forum. This will enable us to remedy the persisting discrepancies in the field of safeguarding and promoting human rights, reinforcing the rule of law and parliamentary democracy and seeking joint solutions to social problems.

The member countries are currently faced with such phenomena as corruption, organised crime and drugs, unpredictable migratory flows, exploitation of children, social exclusion, the problems of quality of life and protecting the cultural and natural heritage, and ethical problems related to cloning and the new information technologies, to name but a few. It is undoubtedly easier to cope with these issues if we co-operate closely with the other European organisations, especially the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations (UN).

If the few European States which are still outside the Council of Europe were to join the forty current members, this would help enlarge the field of democratic stability and strengthen democracy in Europe. Even more, the Council must also increase public awareness of solidarity and interdependence above and beyond the boundaries of Europe. This is a matter notably for the North-South Centre, of which Slovenia is also a member.

Slovenia was the first country to ratify the 11th Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights. I am particularly pleased that the ratification procedure has now been completed. The time has come to establish the single European Court of Human Rights. We are also hoping that the future Human Rights Commissioner will play a prominent role in this field.

Prompted by its specific history, Slovenia has constantly emphasised the rights of national minorities. We consider that the European Convention for the Protection of National Minorities must be systematically implemented. We are also prepared to help devise new collective and individual non-discriminatory provisions for indigenous national minorities.

It is precisely in the social field that Europe differs from the other continents. Growing prosperity must be matched by a reduction in social exclusion. If this is to happen the Council of Europe needs a new social cohesion strategy. In my view, the Social Development Fund must step up its specific activities and intensify its status as the Council of Europe's financial instrument and so contribute to the success of the joint social policy.

Slovenia is very much alive to its moral and legal obligations within the Council of Europe. Our primary concern must be to ensure that all Council of Europe member States honour and implement their commitments.

This will optimise our response to the challenges facing our society. It is the only way for us to attain our common objective: a more democratic and tolerant future Europe."

THIRD SESSION

(Presidency : Mr Lennart MERI, President of the Republic of Estonia)

Mr PERSSON, Prime Minister of Sweden, made the following statement:

"On this solemn occasion, leaders of almost all the nations of our continent have come together to manifest our unwavering commitment to Europe's shared values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Forty-four Heads of State and Government are joined by representatives of vital European organisations: the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OSCE.

I would like to thank the President of the French Republic for taking this initiative and hosting this Summit, symbolising the finest of European aspirations. I also want to express our gratitude for the thorough preparations made by the secretariat and the Secretary General, my compatriot Daniel Tarschys.

Threats to our security do not stem from military activities alone, but also from political oppression, social and economic injustices and cultural misperceptions. The establishment of democratic rule is crucial in preventing violent conflicts. It is rightly believed that

democratic societies are not likely to start wars. By fostering democratic rule, and promoting cultural diversity and social cohesion, the Council of Europe makes an indispensable contribution to the security of the citizens of our continent.

Today, almost 50 years after its establishment, the Council of Europe is in a period of important change. The rapid enlargement has confronted us with new challenges and significant tasks for the Council.

But the Council of Europe is not changing in isolation – the whole of Europe is undergoing transformation. The European Union is in the process of opening its doors to the States of Central and Eastern Europe. Its enlargement is an important element in building a truly united Europe.

In addition, new forms of co-operation have emerged in our area. Around the Baltic Sea, nations are making joint efforts to combat new threats to security, such as organised crime and corruption. Cross-border co-operation also aims at protecting the environment. Sweden considers this work to be an invaluable method of fostering stability and prosperity around the Baltic Sea and an important complement to co-operation within the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OSCE. What we are seeing is the creation of networks of co-operation, which indeed equal networks of security.

One reason for our gathering here today is to discuss the role of the Council of Europe in the new Europe that is emerging.

The main task of the Council of Europe in the years ahead should be to strengthen pluralist democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, in all member States. We must provide the Organisation with sufficient means to accomplish this objective. Both old and new member States must comply with commitments. There is no room for compromise or dilution of basic values.

Next year, the new European Court of Human Rights will take up its functions. It is my sincere hope that the new Court will mean a substantial improvement of the existing supervisory system in the enlarged Council of Europe. A Commissioner for Human Rights would play an important role by acting as a non-judicial complement to the new Court.

By putting support of democracy and human rights in new member States at the centre of its attention, the Council of Europe brings a decisive contribution to achieving a security order that includes all of Europe. It helps candidates for membership in the European Union to meet the criteria concerning democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It offers a forum for member States which are not included in the enlargement process.

Not only does the Council of Europe assist in conflict prevention, but it facilitates reconciliation and reconstructing of societies. The training of police forces, judges, and prison staff in Bosnia-and-Herzegovina and Albania are good examples of how the Council of Europe can play a role in post-conflict rehabilitation.

Children stand for hope and future. Their rights must be fully respected. Actions to safeguard the best interest and the protection of the child should be a priority for the Council of Europe. We should ensure that all children and minors grow up under favourable and secure conditions. I am very satisfied that this important issue is highlighted in the Plan of Action from this Summit.

A splendid opportunity has been given to us, an opportunity to shape and determine the future of our continent. By extending the fundamental principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law to the whole of Europe, democratic security and prosperity can be achieved for the benefit of all our citizens. The Council of Europe has made substantial progress to this end. But a great deal of hard work remains in order to achieve life in dignity for all.

We must all join forces to make this vision a reality."

Mr KOLLER, President of the Swiss Confederation, Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police, made the following statement:

"The Council of Europe is on the verge of realising its founders' ideal of uniting all the European States on the basis of the principles and values of pluralist democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

But its work is far from over.

We were all overjoyed when the European family was reunited. We noted with profound satisfaction the decisive role played by the Council of Europe in reintegrating the countries of central and eastern Europe into our community of free, democratic, social and law-based States. Europe is once again a source of hope and the expression of an extraordinary shared cultural tradition.

Today, therefore, we must shoulder the new responsibilities which the enlargement of our Organisation has conferred on us. From now on the Council of Europe must shift the emphasis on to integrating the new member countries into the European family, a process to which our governments must contribute with understanding and determination. However, the Council must at the same time ensure that the high standards which it has been establishing for almost half a century are not only maintained but also enhanced.

To this end it is vital to step up our co-operation programmes in order to consolidate this immense European area of democratic stability and security in which we placed such great hopes in Vienna in October 1993.

It is also essential to ensure that all the commitments entered into by member States are honoured, by establishing a demonstrably operational monitoring system.

If today's Summit is an opportunity to consider the Council of Europe's future mission, the first step is to assert that the Organisation must be confirmed in its essential function as the guarantor of the fundamental values.

Human dignity is undoubtedly the foremost among these values. All else is subordinate to this value: human rights and the fundamental freedoms, which every individual possesses inherently and inalienably. The same applies to the law-based State, which enables individuals to coexist peaceably and, in accordance with the principle of the rule of law, prohibits arbitrary rule by the authorities; pluralist democracy, which reflects the freely expressed will of the people; economic freedom, which encourages prosperity; and social justice, which protects the weaker and less privileged members of society.

This brief overview takes us back to our Organisation's roots, the very foundations upon which the Council of Europe has grown up. However, that is not enough. It is our duty to renew these fundamental pillars of the Council every day.

This is why, in the name of human dignity, we must make a formal commitment as of today to oppose any cloning of the human being, enshrining this undertaking in an Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine.

I also think our Summit should give new impetus to the Council of Europe's present and future action against extreme poverty and destitution.

Respect for human dignity also requires us to find the proper response to the issues of migratory flows and asylum-seekers. Although we must of course solve the thorny problems of securing a comprehensive joint approach based on solidarity, we must also endeavour to apportion refugees fairly among the potential host countries.

In my view, the Council of Europe is the place for comprehensive reflection on the problems of migration throughout Europe. We must consider whether the existing international instruments such as the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees are suited to our current difficulties or whether fresh agreements might not be needed at the European level, in order to obviate any outbidding tactics in the measures which States unfortunately have to take to ward off flows of refugees.

Respect for human rights will be ensured throughout the European Area by the new permanent Court. It will become our Organisation's fundamental, central institution.

If the Court is to operate effectively it must be given the necessary resources to deal with the additional work which the Council of Europe's enlargement cannot fail to produce. If priorities are established, as indeed they must be, in earmarking the Organisation's resources, the Court must head the list.

Not only the rule of law but also prosperity and democratic security in Europe are currently under threat from organised crime, particularly when it is linked to corruption. We must therefore launch a single-minded campaign against these scourges, adopting efficacious legal instruments and ensuring that their implementation is monitored.

The Council of Europe is the ideal governmental organisation for energetically publicising the past gains in the field of cultural co-operation and confirming the importance of education, including training in democratic citizenship and cultural diversity, for the benefit of future generations.

We want to make our democratic institutions more accessible to the citizen. The Council of Europe is very important in this respect, thanks to its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. We hope that it will be able to continue to work effectively.

Recent events in the Balkans have reminded us that the destructive forces of aggressive nationalism, totalitarian ideologies, as well as racism and xenophobia, are constant threats to democracy, human rights and the rule of law throughout the continent.

In order to deal with these threats, the Council of Europe and the other international organisations, particularly the European Union and OSCE, must reinforce their specific contributions in a spirit of co-operation and complementarity.

In view of the challenges which we must take up in today's Europe, our populations would be bewildered if the international organisations were to engage in competition. We must therefore exploit our opportunities for interaction and avoid duplication.

For instance, where action against racism, intolerance and anti-Semitism is concerned, I think that we should be reinforcing the supervisory and guiding functions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, while at the same time intensifying co-operation with the European Union.

Similarly, by providing experts in the fields of human rights and legal co-operation, our Organisation could also help reinforce OSCE's preventive action.

As requested by the Parliamentary Assembly, I would express the hope, Mr President, that this Summit will help clarify the Council of Europe's role and place in the European institutional landscape.

Mr President, let me extend my warm thanks to the President of the French Republic, Mr Chirac, for summoning us all to this second Summit in the headquarters of our Organisation in Strasbourg, with a view to in-depth discussions on the Council's future.

The Vienna Summit in 1993 imparted a new impetus to the Council of Europe and not only gave it the requisite confidence to take up the challenges of its enlargement but also strengthened its role.

The Final Declaration and Plan of Action which we will be adopting at the end of proceedings will confirm our Organisation in its mission of promoting the rule of law, pluralist democracy and human rights, thus helping to restore a genuine European culture and preserve our common values, beyond the present century."

Mr GLIGOROV, President of the Republic, made the following statement:

"Allow me first of all, to express my appreciation to the host country, the French Republic, which has carried out the responsible task of preparing and organising this most important meeting of the Council of Europe in an exceptionally successful manner.

The Vienna Summit gave an impulse to the need to hold periodical summits of this kind in the Council of Europe. Today, four years after the First Summit, we can take pride in the realisation of a turning point in the 50th year existence of the Council of Europe - its enlargement to almost the whole European continent.

The establishment and development of a pan-European and democratic space imposes yet another, even more responsible task upon all of us. This is why I feel that the importance of this Summit will lie in defining the upcoming tasks in the newly established circumstances, in founding and implementing the new basic values in the right direction and in accordance with the changes that have occurred.

The very fact of membership in the Council of Europe is binding in itself. It applies not only to the newly-accepted members, which should without doubt conform speedily to the standards, values, and objectives, but also to everyone else. At the threshold of the 21st century, Europe and all her peoples and societies are undergoing a process of rapid change. The tide of democratic transformations in most parts of Europe, symbolically initiated with the downfall of the Berlin Wall, is still flowing. Many new political, economic and social dilemmas and challenges have been raised. The process of remedying the consequences of the bloody confrontations in the Balkans is still proceeding at a slow pace. At the same time, many countries, among which my own, strive towards a true, and not just a geographic, affiliation to the common European home. The Council of Europe undoubtedly has a place and a role in speeding up these processes.

A united, democratic and prosperous Europe is a pivotal objective of the activities of the Council. It is thus the most appropriate forum to provide all members with the opportunity to present their specific views, to feel responsibility and to participate in the resolution of European problems. The Republic of Macedonia is ready with its own experiences of leading a peaceful policy of good-neighbourliness and broad co-operation, with a European option and orientation for democratic development and respect of human rights, including the protection of the rights of national minorities, to participate in the realisation of the objectives and tasks of the Council. The Council of Europe should remain the safeguard of human dignity. The issues raised in this field should be resolved under the European Convention on Human Rights. In this regard, the Republic of Macedonia has, for its part, taken very concrete initiatives. Furthermore, I join with the speakers who have welcomed the establishment of the new European Court of Human Rights.

Minority issues and inter-ethnic relations seen in their historic and social totality are acute problems in Europe. We are regretful witnesses of vehement manifestations of nationalism, inter-ethnic hatred and senseless ethnic cleansing through wars and crimes. The Council of Europe must constantly devote its attention and engagement to such problems and events. We welcome the fact that these issues, identified in Vienna as key issues, are finding proper answers in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities which will shortly be coming into force.

At one time, the Republic of Macedonia proposed that a comprehensive comparative analysis be conducted of the national minorities in the Balkans region. From this rostrum I would like to call on the Council of Europe to engage in the preparation of such a study. Clear depiction of this problem can contribute to putting things in the right perspective, to eliminating prejudices and stereotypes, as well as to transforming this issue into a link for co-operation among countries and peoples.

The Council of Europe, as the oldest Organisation of the Continent, has a respectable place and role in the integration processes in Europe. Hence, in the coming period we expect that it will take more courageous steps in permanently advancing the spheres in which the Council has achieved and is achieving substantial results, especially in creating a sole European legal system. In this way, conditions will be created with a shared will for changing the approach to settling some problems and for finding a mechanism for preventive action.

As individuals, peoples and States we carry the burden of the problems of the past. However, we carry an even greater responsibility for the future, for future generations. I would like to express my hopes that the Final Declaration that will be adopted and the measures for its realisation contained in the Plan of Action will be a sound basis and a precise articulation of the role that the Council of Europe should assume on the threshold of the 21st century. I am confident you share my deep conviction that this will be the century of a united Europe."

Mr YILMAZ, Prime Minister of Turkey, made the following statement:

"I would like to present our sincere thanks and appreciation to our host, President Chirac, and the Government of France for the excellent organisation of this Second Summit meeting.

The 20th century is about to come to a close. This may very well be the last Summit meeting of the Council of Europe in this century which is marked with major economic, social, scientific and technological achievements as well as immense human sufferings. Europe has been the centre stage of all the greatest tragedies of the century.

However, Europe also means hope and high expectations on the eve of the third millennium – hope and expectations for a Europe where all the people live in peace, security and prosperity, where democracy, rule of law and respect for the rights of the individuals prevail.

If hope is to triumph, the end of the 20th century should usher in a new beginning in this direction and we all should join forces for our common purposes.

If we succeed in creating:

- a Europe which does not set up new divisions during the process of integration;
- a Europe which does not base its identity on religious or ethnic grounds;
- a Europe which can take co-operative and effective action against common threats like terrorism, drugs and crime;
- a Europe where people are not forced to live on the margins of society and are protected by social cohesion mechanisms;
- a Europe where democracy in all countries is in continuous progress;
- a Europe of conciliation, co-operation, solidarity and tolerance;

Then, in the next century, our continent can be a common space of peace, progress, democracy and prosperity.

The Council of Europe has a vital, determining role to play in the realisation of such a Europe. It includes almost all-European countries, pending the full membership of some others for the completion of enlargement. It has the mechanisms to fulfil its task in the new architecture of Europe. What we need is to muster the political will to make full use of its potential. This Summit meeting provides us with the opportunity to take necessary steps in this direction.

In the field of human rights, the entry into force of Protocol n° 11 and establishment of the single Court of human rights are land-mark reforms which underline the vocation of the Council of Europe to create a pan-European common legal space.

We firmly believe that our efforts to strengthen the human rights mechanisms cannot be effective or credible if we do not display the same determination in combating racism or terrorism.

In the Vienna Summit, we established a committee of experts to fight against racism. However, racism in Europe has continued to rise and a political dimension is added to its cultural dimension. We need to strengthen the monitoring capacity of the Committee of Ministers. We should also elaborate common legal norms to guide the governments. It is difficult to explain to European public opinion why the Council of Europe, which has established legal norms almost in every field, has failed to do so in terms of racism. In this respect, I should like to recall the framework convention proposed by Turkey.

In terrorism too, the Council of Europe should undertake responsibility for intensifying European co-operation in the fight against this scourge. To this end, an international conference on terrorism would serve to examine ways and means for an effective co-operation. Decisions taken in Paris in 1996 on terrorism certainly provide an important guideline in this respect. For the success of such efforts, it is imperative that member countries do not tolerate or incite terrorist movements against each other.

Another area in which our Organisation has once taken the leading role but later failed to be effective is the situation of migrant workers and immigrant communities in Europe. They are integral parts of our societies, and, if treated fairly, could be an important element in maintaining the overall stability of our continent.

Europe also needs concerted action in respect of social cohesion. The Council of Europe can become the European focal point in the social field. We should draw up a new strategy for social cohesion. This would require a new structure. With this in mind, we have proposed the establishment of a centre for social cohesion.

What will be the role of the Council of Europe in the European architecture in the 21st century? I do not think that there is a single answer to this question. The reason for this is that the role of the Council of Europe is increasingly defined *vis-à-vis* the European Union. This is a wrong approach. The Council of Europe is neither a waiting room for European Union membership, nor the human rights office of the European Union, nor just an organisation for those European countries which are not members of the European Union.

The Council of Europe should be defined and evaluated on its own merits, based on the principles and objectives enshrined in its Statute. It fulfils an indispensable task; it is the vanguard of our value system. It also provides the most comprehensive framework of co-operation in Europe. We should use its potential in full, to achieve greater unity between its member States.

We hope that this Summit will be instrumental in strengthening the distinct identity of the Council of Europe.

Co-operation with other European organisations, particularly with the European Union and the OSCE, is also essential in the construction of a new Europe. Such co-operation should be done in a pragmatic manner, taking into account each institution's different mandate, working methods and geographical character.

Turkey as one of the oldest members of the Council of Europe will continue to exert every effort to contribute to the fulfilment of its objectives and ideals. We hope that this Summit will be an important milestone on the road to a Europe, united and free, to a Europe of democracy for all. We shall continue to place our assets at the service of the realisation of this goal."

Mr KUCHMA, President of the Republic of Ukraine, made the following statement:

“First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the leadership of the Council of Europe and the French Republic for the convocation and wonderful organisation of this really historic Summit. It should logically complete an important stage in our joint efforts: defining optimum ways for shaping the prospects of the united Europe, together with similar fora, the OSCE, EU, and NATO.

The forthcoming period requires active dialogue and considered decisions in the framework of all European institutions and the Council of Europe in particular.

Looking at the path followed by the Organisation during recent years, we cannot but emphasise substantial achievements which are the background of its second Summit.

The Council of Europe has contributed greatly to overcoming practically the political split of the continent, and to the unification of European States on the basis of universally recognised democratic values, having accepted new democracies.

It has become a truly pan-European Organisation, having almost doubled the number of its members; and it has considerably enhanced its authority and extended the bounds of its influence.

This Summit should outline a new strategy to ensure successful implementation of tasks of the next stage in European construction, taking into account recent radical changes in Europe.

In this connection, I would like to point out that we approve in principle the Final Declaration and the Action Plan of the Council of Europe to be endorsed by the Summit.

We believe that the decision to establish a single Human Rights Court and the post of a Commissioner on human rights, strengthening the supervision of the member States' meeting their commitments, focusing on overcoming such socially dangerous phenomena as organised crime, corruption and terrorism, as well as other measures proposed in the documents will substantially improve the activities of the Organisation, making it meet the demands of the time.

At the same time, let me express some other ideas concerning our vision of the prospects of the Council of Europe.

First, it is in the interest of Ukraine - and, I believe, other European countries - if the Organisation, as the only pan-European institution giving its member States equal opportunities for involvement in European matters, could be more active in the political sphere, more influential in settling the problems of its members, could contribute to preventing and eliminating conflicts on the continent.

This standpoint results from the fact that the present threat to international stability and security is mostly caused not by intergovernmental relations, but by the matters relevant to

the activities of the Council of Europe. I mean in particular violation of human rights and liberties, national and inter-ethnic conflicts, imperfect national legal systems, social instability.

Proceeding from all that, Ukraine proposes to broaden the range of responsibilities and to increase the role of the Council of Europe indispensable to the European security architecture. Thus we think it expedient to grant it the status of a sort of legislative body in the system of European institutions.

In our view, the Council of Europe has everything necessary for that: structures, legal instruments and about half a century of experience of integration activities.

Secondly, proceeding from the indivisibility of the present day security, establishment of efficient multilevel mechanisms of co-operation between the leading European institutions becomes especially important. That is why we welcome the extended collaboration of the Council of Europe with the EU, OSCE and NATO.

I am certain that further deepening of constructive dialogue between these organisations will meet the interests of all European nations, promote peaceful and stable development of the continent.

I would like to stress that this co-operation is gaining importance in the context of involving the potential of the Council of Europe in the process of the EU enlargement. Entering the EU has been declared the foreign policy priority of Ukraine and other Central and Eastern European countries.

Thirdly, we hope that resolutions of this forum will be an important source of support and assistance to new European democracies, Ukraine in particular, in their profound and comprehensive democratic transformations.

To our mind, the Central and Eastern European sector covering young democracies should be defined as a priority in the strategy of the Council of Europe we are discussing today.

Democratic, social and economic reforms and consolidation of norms and standards of the Council of Europe in these countries are decisive for shaping Europe and thus require the special attention of the Organisation and respective changes in its activities.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau said more than two centuries ago, in the Age of Enlightenment: "To establish the European Republic for only one day is enough for it to exist forever, for everyone would see by experience and practice his or her advantage in common well-being."

I hope that this Summit, further joint efforts of the member States of the Organisation and all European institutions will contribute to the consistent and steadfast approach of this day, long-awaited by the peoples of the continent.”

Mr AHERN, Prime Minister of Ireland, made the following statement:

"I would like to pay tribute to President Chirac and the French Government for their timely initiative in bringing us together, and affording us this opportunity to assess the progress made by the Council of Europe, and to plan for its future.

I would also like to express my appreciation to President Chirac for hosting this Second Summit of the Council of Europe in the beautiful city of Strasbourg, a city with which my country has had associations for more than a thousand years. Irish monks had the wisdom to establish themselves here and, in its cultural and educational activities, the Council of Europe might be said to be still carrying on their work.

The first Council of Europe Summit in Vienna four years ago was focused on the new challenges of enlargement, to include almost all of our Continent.

We had to ask ourselves then, how our fundamental values of individual freedom, political liberty, and the rule of law, would not only be maintained, but would flourish in the new circumstances.

The Vienna Summit mapped out a transitional programme of action. The time has now come for a new and definitive political agenda to set this unique pan-European organisation on its way, towards its fiftieth anniversary.

The Council of Europe has always been a very hard-working Organisation, with the important mission – in the Secretary General's apt phrase: "to strengthen European security by civilian means".

This means promoting the observance of human rights, producing legal instruments, and encouraging intergovernmental co-operation. These activities help to establish and maintain the stability of our Continent, the hope of enduring peace, and the well-being of our citizens.

As both the Declaration and Action Plan which we are adopting at this Summit make absolutely clear, many challenges still face this Organisation.

The pivotal role which the Commission and the Court of Human Rights have played is one of the greatest testimonies to the vision of the signatories of the European Convention on Human Rights. We have now acknowledged, that because of the dramatic growth in the number of Contracting Parties to the Convention, and the ever-increasing numbers of applications, changes are needed to enable these institutions to cope with the heavy demands being made upon them.

In giving the new, permanent Court of Human Rights pride of place in the Action Plan, we are emphasising the importance we attach to the success of this new endeavour, in the protection of human rights in the new Europe.

It is our earnest hope that the new, permanent Court will be in place in time to mark the 50th anniversary of the Council of Europe. Among the innovations which will distinguish the new institution, is the mandatory right of individual petition. This is a development of which we can be proud, and I am pleased to note here, that Ireland was the first to champion this right, at the opening of the Convention for signature in 1949.

In the field of social and economic rights, the Declaration and Action Plan set out the consistent efforts of the Council of Europe to ensure the recognition of such rights at national and regional level, and to press for more effective measures of implementation. In doing so, the Council rightly recognises that social and economic inequality between nations, and within nations, can be as potent a factor of instability as denial of other categories of rights.

I warmly welcome the fact that the Declaration and Action Plan addresses the increasing menace of drug abuse, particularly among our youth. The abuse and trafficking of drugs is a scourge which has the potential to inflict untold damage on the fabric of society, on our democratic institutions, and above all on the well-being of our children and future generations.

We are confronted daily by the horrors of drug abuse, which bring personal degradation for the addicts, disease and violence. Through organised crime and corruption, it permeates the economy, and through money laundering, it undermines legitimate economic structures and also distorts the world trading system. It has been estimated by the Lisbon-based European Monitoring Centre on Drug Addiction, that the illegal profits from drug trafficking amount to \$300 billion dollars annually.

Ireland believes that more needs to be done at international level, if this problem is to be effectively addressed. This is why Ireland made the fight against drugs a central theme of its Presidency of the European Union last year. And this is why Ireland will give its full support to efforts in this Council, and in other international fora, to counter drug-trafficking and money-laundering.

Anti-supply measures by our law enforcement agencies are not sufficient on their own. Increasingly, Governments recognise the need for education and for demand-reduction policies of a comprehensive nature.

So, as we attempt to find methods to deal with this complex problem, we must acknowledge our responsibilities at national, regional and international levels. In accepting these responsibilities, corresponding action must be taken. We cannot permit our societies to be destroyed by the dangerous drugs trade, and we must not allow our children's futures to be destroyed by the evil of drug addiction.

The welfare of our children is another priority of the Programme of Action, one very much shared by my Government. The inhuman treatment and exploitation of children world-wide must be brought to an end. We must recognise the right of the child to be shielded from harmful acts or practices, the right to be protected from commercial or sexual exploitation – such as child labour or child prostitution – and the right to be protected from physical or mental abuse.

That is why we welcomed the Council of Europe's initiative in drafting the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights, which was opened for signature on 25 January last year, and was signed by Ireland on the same day. This highly valuable enforcement mechanism will complement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For our part, my Government has committed itself, as a priority, to a full review of our child welfare and child protection services. Among a number of significant legislative measures which we will be bringing forward, is a comprehensive Juvenile Justice Bill, and a Bill introducing measures to combat the commercial and sexual exploitation of children – particularly child pornography.

When our predecessors established this organisation, they gave it the formidable task of bringing together like-minded nations, for the purpose of laying the necessary foundations of a democratic, peaceful and prosperous Europe. This task was undertaken on the principle of securing and protecting the rights and welfare of the individual. At the first Summit of the Council of Europe in Vienna in October, 1993, the Heads of State and Government set out new political aims, among them the reinforcement of the economic, political and cultural foundations of security. It was acknowledged that the foundation-stone of this is confidence and trust between peoples and nations.

In this spirit, and in partnership, the Irish and British Governments have been engaged in a quest for peace in Northern Ireland. Our efforts have been encouraged by our involvement in the shaping of the new Europe, to which this Organisation has contributed so much. On this significant day in the European calendar, it gives me the deepest satisfaction to tell our partners that All-Party talks, aimed at mapping out the future of a peaceful and agreed Ireland are under way. These talks will seek to reshape the Three-Strand relations which are central to the solution we are pursuing, relations between the two communities in Northern Ireland, relations between the Northern and Southern parts of our island, and relations between Ireland and Britain.

Both the Irish and British Governments, and those involved in the talks process, are determined to see this process through to an honourable and comprehensive agreement, which will bring lasting peace.

I know that you will wish us well in this endeavour.

The Declaration and Action Plan which we are adopting at this Summit also deal with issues of core concern to this Organisation, including the fight against racism, the protection of national minorities, inter-racial stereotyping and equality of opportunities between men and women.

For the Council of Europe to continue to fulfil the vision of its founders, it is not sufficient to content ourselves with setting standards, we must also ensure that we monitor ourselves, and uphold the highest possible standards. It is my hope that the initiatives and measures which we are undertaking here today, will ensure that we progress from standard-setting to widespread enforcement, and so to the fullest enjoyment by the citizens of Europe of all their rights.

If, when we meet again for the Third Council of Europe Summit, we can point to significant progress having been made in the areas I have outlined today – as well as terms of the other important commitments we are making at this meeting – then we will have played our positive role for the people of Europe. They deserve no less."

Mr HAEGI, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe, made the following statement:

"At your first Summit in Vienna in 1993 you established the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. On behalf of the very many European elected representatives working close to the inhabitants of your municipalities, towns and regions I would extend our heartfelt thanks to you. In setting up this body you consolidated the institutional structures of the Council of Europe, which now has three levers for action: the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, with its two Chambers.

In setting up the Congress you were acknowledging that the municipalities and regions were the genuine foundations of our democracy and that they had a part to play in the construction of European democracy. Local and regional authorities have even become your best assistants in grasping the problems of our epoch, as experienced on a daily basis by our population, and also in implementing the decisions taken by States and international institutions.

It is no mean task to apportion powers among international organisations such as the Council of Europe and the European Union, and the States, regions and municipalities. The Congress is only too aware of this fact, which is why it launched a large-scale drive to classify responsibilities drawing on the subsidiarity principle. The action has involved drafting, firstly, the European Charter of Local Self-Government and secondly, the European Charter of Regional Self-Government, which stipulate the rights and duties of both these political levels.

There is still a long way to go. Only twenty-six States have so far ratified the first Charter. The second one is being considered by the Committee of Ministers. I would like to ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to support this text so that it will become one of the Council of Europe's key conventions.

A tree is judged by the quality of its fruit, and so the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe made the pragmatic undertaking to participate in the construction of this new Greater Europe, which, with Russia, has taken on a Euro-Asian dimension in geographical and cultural items. This is why, for instance, our Organisation has helped organise and supervise elections in many regions, sometimes under very difficult conditions, as in the Balkans. Our Congress has set up Local Democracy Embassies, in close co-operation with the European Union and various west European municipalities and regions. Eight Embassies are so far operational, endeavouring to provide assistance for women and men anxious to rebuild their democratic institutions and help re-establish civil society. The usefulness of such action has been universally recognised, and would be worth expanding. It is a pragmatic, down-to-earth venture. We meet with people in the field and try to motivate them to help cope with the most pressing day-to-day needs. With your support we are hoping to continue and intensify this activity wherever innocent civilian populations have for too long been abandoned to intense suffering at the hands of war criminals, and wherever peace is still fragile.

With this concern for efficacy still in mind, the Congress has set up an East-West Economic Forum of the Regions of Europe. A Foundation for the Economy and Sustainable Development of the Regions of Europe has also been established. It is responsible for strengthening direct links and economic partnerships between the regions, because as we all know, there can be no lasting democracy without economic progress.

The Congress supports transfrontier co-operation, notably by encouraging the creation of Euro-regions along the borders of central and eastern European countries. A conference is to be held on the subject in one of these new Euro-regions.

We welcome the forthcoming entry into force of the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages, which became possible when a fifth country, Switzerland, ratified the text. The idea for the Convention actually originated in our Congress.

However, let me stress that the Congress sometimes feels that the funds allocated to it do not match the major role which, you will agree, it should be playing for European citizens. We regional ministers or mayors are always prepared to find the time to carry out our tasks. We never get discouraged, but we often have the impression that the encouragement we receive in this regard is not backed with sufficient funding.

The members of the Congress are well aware that democratic construction cannot be improvised, that it requires determination and patience, and that it is inevitably exposed to the odd setback. This is why we are endeavouring, as I have just explained, to increase our support for national, local and regional authorities by committing a large proportion of our resources. However, we should not allow our natural tendency to be understanding and co-operative to make us too easygoing, forgetting the fundamental values which we are required to defend. We know that some countries still fail to comply with all the requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights. We were right to admit them to the Council of Europe. However, their accession is only positive if it expedites the democratic process. Our role in the Congress is to support the smooth functioning of the municipalities, departments and regions, with their emphasis on the community, and ensure that elected representatives can exercise their powers properly. Many problems have been registered in this area, including arbitrary dismissals and judicial decisions which, at least at first sight, seem completely disproportionate. Several such cases have been settled thanks to the open, co-operative and fair attitude adopted by some governments. Other cases are still pending and obviously cause concern.

As it has demonstrated on numerous occasions, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe is absolutely determined to defend the legitimacy and security of local and regional authorities. We would ask you, respectfully but forcefully, to ensure that the governments of these new democracies which have joined the Council honour their commitments in terms of compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights. Fortunately most of them are doing so.

Lastly, I would also inform you that we are prepared to participate actively, with the support of the local and regional authorities' associations (the Assembly of European Regions and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions) in the Council of Europe's activities in the new fields which you will be adopting and in which we are already active, such as combating social exclusion, educating citizens in democracy, promoting citizen security and protecting the heritage. The local and regional communities are vital liaison centres for central government in all these areas. By involving local and regional councillors in the projects relating to Greater Europe you will be stressing your determination to give it a more human dimension.

Denis de Rougemont had a more appealing vision of a romantic, humanistic Europe. I hope we will not disappoint those who are still waiting for that Europe."

Mr SANTER, President of the European Commission, made the following statement:

"We are gathered here today for the meeting of Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the Council of Europe, at the behest of the President of the French Republic. This is the culmination of the project formulated by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly. My opening words will therefore be to thank all these eminent persons for continuing along the road opened up in Vienna in October 1993.

A political Declaration and a Plan of Action will be adopted at the end of proceedings. The European Commission fully backs these texts and will ensure that they are implemented in the fields for which it is responsible.

This will give the European Union Heads of State and Government present today in Strasbourg an initial opportunity to exemplify the decisions taken in Dublin in December 1996. That meeting recognised the Council of Europe's essential role in defending human rights and pluralist democracy. The European Council had already recommended optimising the Council of Europe's powers and mechanisms in these fields, naturally in co-operation with other international institutions.

The aims of the Strasbourg Summit tally perfectly with those pursued by the European Union, especially under the new Treaty signed in Amsterdam on 2 October last. Democracy and human rights, social cohesion, citizen security, democratic values and cultural diversity: these are subjects of enormous interest to the Union which are particularly well suited to intensive inter-institutional co-operation. I am thinking in particular of social affairs, employment, protection of young people from drug addiction, democratisation and cultural policy.

The Plan of Action which will guide the Council of Europe's work in the coming years is therefore highly promising. Co-operation is already well under way with the European Commission in certain fields. For instance, in connection with the campaign against racism and xenophobia, the current negotiations with the Council of Europe Secretariat will in the near future, I hope, lead to practical co-operation with the European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia.

In fact, the activities of the Council of Europe and the European Union are genuinely complementary. The European Commission is particularly alive to the political and financial need to prevent duplication. Thanks to the re-establishment of written correspondence between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in November 1996, the European Community can now make a greater contribution to the funding of certain Council of Europe programmes. Moreover, I note an increase in our financial support for programmes directed at the Council of Europe's new member states and applicant countries.

This should come as no surprise because the process of enlarging the Council of Europe has been continuing ever since the Vienna Summit, with the accession of eight further countries. For

some of them the membership of this Organisation is an important step along the road to democratisation, which must be continued and deepened. This shows the great value of the dialogue which has been established in Strasbourg on questions of democracy between the old democracies and the countries which are learning the new rules of the game.

In this spirit, therefore, I would like to pay a special tribute to the Council of Europe's vigilance in monitoring the honouring of commitments entered into and in assisting the new and future member States, particularly in the legal and judicial fields.

As you know, the European Union is also pursuing a grand design to reconcile and integrate the democratic nations of Europe. Its future enlargement to new democracies has already been decided.

Europe will therefore continue to evolve, and I hope that the next Summit will take place against the background of a more democratic and solidarity-based continent even better represented here in Strasbourg, promoting the principles successfully defended by the Council of Europe."

Mr HELVEG PETERSEN, Foreign Minister of Denmark, Chairman-in-Office of the Organisation on Security and Co-operation in Europe, made the following statement:

"The end of divided Europe and the end of totalitarian rule has opened co-operative structures to new members from Central and Eastern Europe. The principles of democracy, rule of law, human rights and market economy are taking root in the whole of Europe. The OSCE and the Council of Europe are important vehicles for this development.

The changes are confronting us with new risks and challenges to our security. Political abuse of ethnicity and nationalism has led to civil armed conflict in the very heart of Europe. Other challenges stem from social consequences of economic reform, organised crime and drug trafficking or from the environmental damage from years of uncontrolled industrial outlet.

Two features are common to the new challenges facing us:

Firstly, they reflect the very real difficulties of implementing the principles of freedom and democracy.

Secondly, they have a multi-faceted nature. No single organisation can address them in full. We are faced with an imperative to co-operate.

The main goal of the integration processes in Europe is to promote overall European security in the face of the new challenges. NATO, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the OSCE have in various ways opened up for a broader co-operation.

It has been argued that the new challenges make it necessary to readdress the principles that have guided us - to adjust them to the changing European reality within a new Charter for European Security.

I believe we should consider a new Charter. We are indeed committed to do so by the OSCE Summit at Lisbon as part of the work on a European Security Model for the 21st Century. It should strengthen the processes of co-operation and integration in Europe.

We must at the same time take great caution not to lose ground already gained. It may be difficult to implement the principles that guide us. But that is no reason to weaken them. Rather, we must do all we can to further their implementation. This requires addressing the security concerns of states in a more comprehensive way.

Therefore, a main objective of the work on the Security Model is to develop a Platform - a co-operative network - that allows us to make best use of the individual advantages of organisations. Such a Platform for Co-operative Security should include organisations on an equal footing. It should build on respect for democracy and human rights. It should reflect respect for the sovereign right of any OSCE participating State to belong or not to belong to international security arrangements.

There should be transparency about developments within the organisation. Membership should be based on voluntary commitment to the mandate and activities of the organisation.

The OSCE and the Council of Europe are natural partners within such a co-operative Framework. We share the same aim: to ensure compliance with the principles and commitments upon which a secure, stable and democratic Europe can be built.

But we are not the same. We each have our own strength. Our efforts complement each other. The framework of the OSCE is of a political nature. The OSCE is able to react quickly and flexibly to crisis situations. The Council of Europe has a legal framework, well suited to deal with individual rights and to promote institutional development.

We can co-operate in monitoring of human rights and rights of person belonging to national minorities. We can work actively together in the fields of institution building, political reform and the holding of democratic elections. In this, we must involve our organisations at all levels - including the Parliamentary Assemblies.

Such co-operation has already been put to practice. This year the close co-operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Albania was imperative for the results achieved. In Bosnia local elections have provided the institutions needed to continue the peace process. In Albania a comprehensive international presence was established. Through combined efforts elections were held. This paved the way for a process of reform and reconciliation.

There is scope for further co-operation. We have continuously expressed concern over developments in Belarus and in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Belarussian Government has now accepted the OSCE offer of assistance through an OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group. I welcome this. It is a first small step towards improving an increasingly dire situation. I call on the government in Belgrade to declare its willingness to co-operate on enhancing democratic reform. In both cases, also the Council of Europe has a natural role to play in.

Developing a Security Model for the 21st Century is not a theoretical exercise. It means dealing with the realities in Europe.

A changing Europe calls for our full engagement. Only we can ensure that change is not only change, but change for the better. For change to be peaceful, co-operation at all levels is needed.

Strengthening the already close ties between the OSCE and the Council of Europe - and between the other European and Euro-Atlantic organisations - is a major contribution towards this end."

The session ended at 6.10 pm.

MINUTES
of the Fourth and Fifth Sitzings
held on Saturday 11 October 1997
at the Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg

The session commenced at 9.35 am.

FOURTH SESSION
(Presidency : Mr Glafcos CLERIDES, President of the Republic of Cyprus)

Monseigneur TAURAN, Secretary for Relations with the States - Holy-See, made the following statement:

"I am particularly pleased to convey to you, and to this eminent Assembly, the cordial greetings of Pope John Paul II who has also asked me to encourage you, the representatives of virtually all of the peoples of Europe, in your discussions.

I do not need to remind you of the solicitude and interest with which successive Popes and the Holy See have followed the activities of the Council of Europe. The signing of the European Cultural Convention in 1962 and of the Social Development Fund in 1973 are but two examples. The Holy See has also been an observer on various Steering Committees and several Committees of Experts, following a decision adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1976. The presence of a special envoy who participates daily in your meetings is sufficient proof in itself that the Holy See shares the beliefs of the founding States which, in 1949, established this Organisation on the basis of "the spiritual and moral values which are the common heritage of their peoples and the true source of individual freedom, political liberty and the rule of law", as is stated in the introduction to the Statute of the Council of Europe.

These values are, without any doubt whatsoever, based on the overriding belief shared by all of us: that respect for human dignity must be the underlying principle on which all social and political systems are founded.

This is why the Holy See fully endorses the endeavours of member States to constantly improve the protection of the right to life and the inviolability of the person, through the widespread abolition of the death penalty, the increased protection of children and the prohibition of human cloning. In this connection, the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine and the four additional protocols are obviously of particular interest to the Holy See, which believes in the right to life, from the moment of conception right up to moment of natural death, and rejects the idea of "human genetic material" that can be indiscriminately used for all manner of experiments.

As regards civil and political rights, Europe has, since the recent Vienna Summit in 1993, undertaken to increase its work in favour of minorities and, in the field of economic and social rights, it revised the European Social Charter in 1996. These are initiatives which show that our political leaders acknowledge that the concept of the rights of the individual must also be extended to include the ethical principle of solidarity.

It can therefore be said that the Council of Europe has, from many points of view, become "Europe's conscience". It has often played a pioneering role not only in the protection of human rights throughout the world but also *vis-à-vis* other European institutions. It has been of considerable assistance to many a country in becoming a pluralist democracy where each citizen contributes to society, in strengthening the rights of human beings with their many legitimate aspirations, in establishing the rule of law so as to prevent the group from dominating the individual. All of this has led to the emergence of a genuine "common European heritage".

The religious families rooted in this continent - and at all events the Catholic Church - are deeply committed to achieving this aim. These religions firmly believe that the unity of Europe is not based only on geographical, historical, economic and political factors but also on its cultural heritage which "consists of natural resources and human achievements, of material assets as well as spiritual and religious values, knowledge and beliefs" as the European Ministers responsible for culture so appropriately stated in Berlin in 1984.

Because politics will never replace ethics, believers will continue to untiringly remind us of the transcendence of human beings and their true liberty, by promoting unconditional respect for human life, by defending the family, that teaches us the principles of fidelity, security and love, and by combating the exclusion of the most vulnerable members of society who are all too often left by the wayside.

We must help one another to progress in our increasingly vigilant and well-ordered discussion on these subjects concerning our future which, as one of the great luminaries of this country, Saint-Exupéry, once said, "is no more than the present put into order." It is not so much a question of anticipating it than allowing it to come about!"

Mr MEIDANI, President of the Republic of Albania, made the following statement:

"First of all allow me, like the preceding speakers, to say how well this important meeting has been organised and at the same time to express my warmest thanks to the organisers and the French government in particular for their remarkable hospitality. I would also like to say how pleased I am to participate in the meetings of this Second Summit of the Council of Europe which is actually the first for Albania as a member of the Council of Europe.

It would be difficult for me to continue without first briefly explaining what has happened and is now happening in Albania.

The uprising of the population in the spring of this year, which subsequently degenerated into unprecedented chaos with heavy human and material losses in many domains, shows that the democratic construction of our country, which the people fervently desire, cannot be founded on half-hearted values and will allow no exceptions. The almost total collapse of the State proved that the transition to democracy and to a free society is a difficult and long process that may result in failure if the rules of the democratic game are not obeyed and if the newly established institutions do not ensure that they are. This has been an important lesson for the entire ruling class of my country.

The June 1997 elections marked a turning point in Albanian history and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the countries and international organisations which, thanks to their assistance and presence in the country, helped in various ways to put it on the road to progress. There was considerable international solidarity in coming to the rescue of a member of this community and we owe you the deepest gratitude: the Council of Europe's contribution was invaluable.

After only two months of government, a new type of domestic political relations is beginning to prevail in parliamentary and institutional spheres; this has not been achieved without some difficulty but it has my full support.

I believe that it is time for Albania's politicians to understand that everyone must contribute to the establishment of democracy, not only the government but also the opposition and I will be firm in my efforts, within the limits of my constitutional powers, to help establish a society based on the rule of law where fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rights of minorities are respected.

I intend to take all necessary measures and to do all that I can to assist the process of national reconciliation, which is so important for the democratic future of our country, and to facilitate the drafting and adoption of the Constitution; this process has only just begun and is fundamental for the future of our country and our society. This is, of course, no easy task in a country which has no long-standing democratic background and which, economically, is still the poorest country in Europe. Nevertheless we are now on the right track and are prepared to combine our efforts with all those who have generously offered us their support. As I am addressing an audience which is able to discern all the subtleties of the sudden acceleration of the pace of change in Europe, I also ask you to help speed up the Albanian pace of change, in Albania, in Kosovo and wherever Albanians have put down their roots.

The significant enlargement of our Organisation over the past few years has obviously widened the area of democratic security in Europe. This has also helped the Organisation to establish a new method of working which corresponds to the requirements of reform in the different post-communist societies. It is not difficult to perceive the very positive impact that the Organisation and its heritage have had on many aspects of human activity and on the development of society by establishing an ever closer relationship between the State and its citizens, with due regard to human rights, efforts to combat exclusion, intolerance, xenophobia and racism.

We, the members of the biggest pan-European organisation, are gathered here today to define more clearly how, together, we can strengthen democracy in member-States, consolidate the rule of law, safeguard and promote human rights, equality between women and men and social cohesion and enhance our common European heritage, while at the same time respecting cultural diversity. We welcome the prospect of the establishment of the new single European Court of Human Rights next year, for this important change will constitute a fresh victory in the field of human rights which ought to be the only "ideology" existing in our society. In this connection, we have undertaken to set up an ombudsman's office in Tirana. I am also pleased to say that the Albanian Government has recently undertaken, in conjunction with other institutions, to establish official co-operation with NGOs with a view to entering into an open dialogue on questions of common interest.

The Action Plan we are about to adopt is ambitious and both reflects the priorities and indicates the road to future progress. Its implementation will require the participation of all member States. It will also require close co-operation between the individual bodies of the Council of Europe and between the Council itself and the OSCE or the European Union. The example of societies with a long-standing democratic tradition shows that democracy is a long process and that it cannot be established and become effective until the appropriate economic and social conditions are achieved. That is why it is so important that we combine our efforts and work together to achieve the greatest possible democratic harmonisation".

Mr FORNÉ MOLNÉ, Head of the Government of Andorra, made the following statement:

"This is the first time that the Principality of Andorra has been represented at a Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, as during the previous Summit our country was in the process of completing the steps required to become a member of this venerable Organisation. I am pleased that this Summit is taking place just four years after the one held in Vienna as this obliges us to take stock of this intense, productive and fascinating period.

The European context has been radically altered, not only geographically but also politically, economically and socially. The historic moments we have witnessed over this period are the tangible proof of European societies' energy and their ability to adapt.

The Council of Europe has fostered this development and the Principality of Andorra, as I already had the opportunity to state before the Parliamentary Assembly a year ago, has both witnessed and contributed to these changes.

The Council of Europe has set up a wide network of advice and expertise in the fields of social, constitutional, public and private law, so as to provide a legal framework for a new European society based on greater freedom and tolerance.

Since its foundation after the Second World War, the Council of Europe has gradually taken shape around the rule of law with the firm intention of removing any temptation among the European nations to wage war on one another.

The rule of law is the fundamental aim that the Organisation must pursue with a view to providing the assistance required by societies in the process of reconstruction and by those seeking fresh ideas and new standards which will allow them to continue to serve their citizens.

Law is the main source of the Council of Europe's vitality and the principal reason for its international recognition. The current challenge is to give moral and legal force to the commitments which the various Conventions entail. A country such as the Principality of Andorra, with its centuries-long tradition of peace, fully endorses the primacy of law over arms. It is therefore an honour to be able to accept the invitation extended to us yesterday by our Co-prince, Mr Jacques CHIRAC, and to say that the Principality of Andorra will sign the Declaration for a total ban on anti-personnel mines, though we hope that one day their will be no further "mental" or any other kind of reservation with regard to their abolition.

All of the preceding speakers have taken stock of the wide-ranging achievements now within the reach of Europeans. There is no point in my repeating this exercise. However, there is one question that I feel must be raised: can we be sure that the undeniable improvement in living conditions and human rights are clearly perceived by our citizens?

Each of us must make a clear analysis of the situation in his or her country to ensure that those who give us the democratic mandate to represent them understand what it means to belong to the European continent, to the Europe which is the cradle of democracy and human rights.

For when we return home, we will continue to receive pictures of the wrong done to the civil population by the blind terrorism of fanatics. The daily savage massacres in Algeria for example leave the most powerful leaders indifferent, while a few days ago young students, full of hope and confidence were humiliated and murdered on a coach simply because they were students. These fanatics terrorise the women in their circle who were in the vanguard of the fight for equality. All of this is taking place not far away; indeed we are separated from this violence by no more than a 13-kilometre stretch of sea. Is that enough to ignore it? Do we really have a clear conscience?

The cradle of democracy and human rights. Yes, indeed, but what is happening not far from the borders of our fortunate communities? Can we afford to allow the gap to widen between those who can ensure their human rights are respected and those who cannot even enjoy the most fundamental rights: the right to live in peace and the right of children to aspire to a life of dignity and to education.

By historical chance, Andorra's institutions have evolved in such a way as to allow a fluid relationship between the authorities and the citizens and this results in a permanent dialogue which is very beneficial to democracy.

Now that the new forms of decentralised State are gaining in importance in Andorra, we can state that in a territory which is smaller than a province or a *département*, there are seven local authorities with largely independent means. The number of voters is similar to that formerly found in the ancient Greek "polis". Political debate takes place in the street and wherever two or more people gather and is expressed in the most uninhibited manner and in our language, the language that our ancestors have spoken for centuries.

Over the past two days we have heard speakers in this forum talk of the importance of languages which are used throughout the world and it is logical that this should be so. However, while the most widespread languages were at first limited to very small areas. All of the languages which make up the great European cultural patchwork must continue to be defended because the history of mankind is not limited to this century or to the next but will doubtless last several thousand years. And if a language like Catalan has survived and prospered for almost a thousand years, the number of persons who speak it cannot be the only criterion for judging its importance.

The new technologies open the way to instant, universal sharing of ideas, knowledge, education and work wherever we are and give humanity the means of expanding its intellectual horizons on an unprecedented scale. Today more than ever we must ensure that no door - technological, physical, mental or national - is closed against those who are rightly proud of being small and of running their national affairs on a human scale, or those who live in small States like ours where we share the opportunity to work with all those for whom we make room and for whom we have made room for many decades now. We have never been so self-centred as to cut ourselves off from the outside world and we have shared and widely distributed that increasingly precious asset, work, with those from neighbouring countries who have increased Andorra's population sixfold in the space of barely fifty years.

This Organisation can continue to be a forum for debate which we Europeans use, with the best of intentions, to compare experiences and express ourselves, in the grandest terms, on high-flown principles which are often difficult to put into practice or we can, on the contrary, demonstrate our real capacity to create a Europe which is prepared to defend our most fundamental values and rights throughout the planet and not simply within our frontiers.

However, this requires much audacity and a firm determination to take action and perhaps after this Second Summit and in the light of the Action Plan we adopt, the Council of Europe will indeed be able to gain fresh momentum.

Let us therefore hope that we will have the imagination required to use that momentum to escape the inertia that comes of routine in all large administrations. We are aware of the intense effort of co-operation and real determination that this requires of the Governments of the member-States. It will not be easy because we Europeans like to go by the book and take a sceptical view of agility and flexibility, but these are qualities we must believe in if we are to defend our human values and ideals throughout the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us do our best to give the Council of Europe that fresh momentum."

Mr KLESTIL, Federal President of the Republic of Austria, made the following statement:

"I thank the President of the French Republic for the invitation to Strasbourg and for the judicious arrangements made for this second Council of Europe Summit.

Austria, having hosted the first Summit four years ago in Vienna, is most gratified by the progress made since then in substantially fulfilling the mandate issued on that occasion.

For the first time there is a binding agreement on the protection of national minorities, soon to come into force. I regard this as an historic achievement of the Council of Europe, one which - above all in the new member States - will contribute significantly to the peaceful construction of Europe.

The realisation of a single European Court of Human Rights, to be the supreme judicial authority securing the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms for 800 million Europeans, represents the culmination of decades of endeavours by the Council of Europe on this crucial issue.

A further impressive success, as I see it, is the work of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance created at the Vienna Summit. I hope that this body, in conjunction with the Monitoring Centre of the European Union established in Vienna, will bring about the right conditions for giving all Europeans a sense of security and well-being, irrespective of origin and religious or political convictions.

Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, furtherance of democracy and consolidation of rule of law, following the momentous changes which have occurred in Europe, remain an essential task of the highest priority for the Council of Europe. This concerns the spiritual values which form the common heritage of our peoples.

Austria has consistently devoted its best energies and firm conviction to the advancement of this goal. It was a mission that motivated the two Council of Europe Secretaries General from Austria just as much as Austria's representatives in the Parliamentary Assembly, and has now triumphed outstandingly as the democratic conscience of Europe.

By accepting new members from Central and Eastern Europe, especially Russia, the Council of Europe has attained a truly pan-European dimension. This rapid expansion is certainly the greatest challenge in its history. What is at stake here is final victory over the division of Europe, and the creation of an area of common conceptions of rights and values that effectively embraces the whole continent.

We have strenuous labours ahead of us if we are to succeed in genuinely bringing all the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe up to this standard, as well as removing the last remaining white spots from the Council of Europe map.

Special attention must be paid to the right of refugees and exiles from former Yugoslavia to be able to return to their homelands.

This Summit meeting, Mr Chairman, comes at a time of reflection for all major European institutions as to their future assignments and co-operation in an undivided new Europe. Consequently, we must all ask ourselves which distinctive and essential place is to be taken by the Council of Europe in this prospective structure.

I consider that today there are two main functions in particular which befit the Council of Europe and correspond to its aims and its broad membership.

As always, it continues to be the ideal forum for uniting all European States in a community of nations which identifies itself with Europe's great democratic attainments and spiritual and cultural values, and collectively watches over their preservation. For us, the Council of Europe is and remains the guardian of European civilisation.

Moreover, it is the most eminently qualified institution to concern itself with the important ethical problems which arise from the turbulent development in the fields of science and research, economy and society. I want to mention, for instance, the difficult questions relating to genetic engineering, the protection of European cultural diversity, the enhancement of freedom, the responsibility of the media, and the strengthening of social cohesion in our countries.

Austria supports the proposed Plan of Action of this Summit and will actively co-operate in its implementation. We do so in the firm belief that now and for future generations the Council of Europe will be indispensable to the peoples of Europe as the mainstay of stability, democratic security and respect for human rights."

Mr DEHAENE, Prime Minister of Belgium, made the following statement:

"First of all, I would like to present my warmest thanks to the President of the Republic of France and the French Government both for the hospitality we have received and for the organisation of this Summit.

It was indeed a useful exercise to examine the progress made in the four years following the Vienna Summit and to decide what our Organisation should do in the coming years to consolidate democracy throughout our continent and to ensure that there is ever stricter respect for the primacy of the rule of law.

The establishment of the new permanent Court of Human Rights is a historical event and an important step towards a form of European constitutional court which will soon cover the largest legal area in the world.

I would like to pay tribute to the initiative taken by Finland in proposing the establishment, within the Council of Europe, of a post of Commissioner for Human Rights. Belgium endorses this proposal and asks that the Committee of Ministers be instructed to examine this possibility in the light of the functioning of the new single court.

The adoption of guidelines for combating corruption will be one of the important outcomes of this meeting. The role of the Council of Europe is to complete as quickly as possible an enlarged partial agreement providing a flexible and efficient mechanism for monitoring the effective implementation of these commitments and of other instruments which will be drawn up with a view to combating corruption. Belgium considers that the forthcoming completion of

a convention on co-operation in combating crime and corruption will constitute the keystone for a multidisciplinary approach to this problem.

In this connection, and with a view to combating serious crime in general, my country considers it essential that the Committee of Ministers take the steps required to ensure that existing European Conventions on judicial co-operation in combating crime are adapted to the need to combat certain modern forms of crime, such as organised crime and crime related to new information technologies.

Belgium also considers two other areas to be of prime importance, i.e. the protection of children and the campaign against racism and intolerance.

Let us first take a look at the problem of the protection of children. Many initiatives have been taken over the last few years at numerous international fora to make the sexual exploitation of children a crime and to lay down binding rules for the prohibition of child labour. Belgium itself instigated several of these initiatives and this is one of the reasons why my country asks that the Council of Europe be given a clear mandate in this respect.

Although it is obvious that a multidisciplinary approach should be taken to the problem of protecting children, I believe that at present the priority must be to strengthen the law and step up international co-operation in all areas relevant to the protection of childhood. It was, moreover, as part of the follow-up to the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm last year, that my country submitted proposals to the Committee of Ministers. The three main objectives of these proposals are: to re-assess the legislation of member-States with a view to establishing common standards for the protection of children; to reinforce national laws for the protection of children, mainly with a view to preventing crimes against children; and finally to foster judicial co-operation between member States in order to combat criminal networks that exploit children more effectively.

I firmly believe that the Council of Europe, in conjunction with other international organisations, should rapidly be able to present the member States with the concrete results of its work and then, adopting a multidisciplinary approach, go on to study the social measures, family policies and other measures which might usefully supplement the criminal policy already outlined.

I would like to appeal to the Council to take a more vigorous approach than in the past to the problem of combating racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance.

Combating xenophobia and racism has long been one of the Council of Europe's prime concerns and despite the very valuable contribution made by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Belgium considers that our Organisation should set its aims far higher than in the past and strive to achieve these aims much more rapidly. Should we not, for example, draw operational conclusions from the various reports submitted by member-States with a view to incorporating them in a legal instrument? It is in my opinion obvious that it is possible, in many of the areas of the campaign against racism and xenophobia, to co-operate more closely with the European Union and that such co-operation must benefit all the member-States of our Organisation.

Finally, I would like to address the most critical issue of all, i.e. social cohesion. I say critical because lack of social cohesion may well result in divisions in Europe, between East and West or between North and South, and this is something we obviously do not want. I cannot help but note that for a large number of reasons, including unemployment, social conflicts are emerging in Europe which may result in increasing social inequality and, above all, in growing social deprivation.

This social fragmentation may, in the long run, jeopardise the cohesion of society and reinforce extremist or totalitarian currents of thought and actions. The Council of Europe's work in the field of social cohesion is therefore of prime concern for Belgium.

Although I fervently hope that the Social Charter and the revised Social Charter will be signed and ratified by the largest possible number of member-States, I am of the opinion that, given the challenges facing the European continent, such ratifications are no more than a first step in the right direction.

The Amsterdam Treaty should mark a turning point for the European Union in its action in the social field. A procedure for co-ordinating employment policies has been worked out and will be implemented at the forthcoming extraordinary European Council on employment. Moreover, the social Protocol is not only included in the Treaty but a number of points have also been reinforced, firstly by a clear reference to the European Charter of Turin and then by extension to the campaign against exclusion.

Following the example of the European Union's reinforced action, the Council of Europe should set up its own political body able to define the areas in which intergovernmental co-operation could be developed and, in due time, provide the necessary impetus for this. It seems to me that there are innumerable fields in which such co-operation could be developed, e.g. child labour and the protection of children, the campaign against social exclusion and so many others to which the Parliamentary Assembly has already referred.

I would have liked to talk about other themes but I do not have time to do so in the limited speaking time I am allowed.

Belgium believes that the Council of Europe and its Assembly still have a very important role to play and that there are still many tasks to be completed which should add to the progress made by our Organisation. I trust that the Summit will have helped to define these tasks.

Belgium, which has always been at the forefront of efforts to ban anti-personnel mines, is very gratified by the award of the Nobel Prize and trusts that this will prompt all of the Council of Europe's member-States to sign the Ottawa total ban treaty."

Mr STOYANOV, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, made the following statement:

"I would like to start off by thanking President Chirac for the invitation to participate in the Second Summit of the Council of Europe.

It is a remarkable and significant fact that nearly the whole of Europe is present here for the first time in the history of the oldest Organisation in the continent. Indeed, the Council of Europe has lived up to its name, demonstrating its European universality through this Summit today.

Four years ago the First Summit in Vienna defined this Organisation's tasks in the new context by the notion of "democratic security". Today, we can declare with satisfaction that the Council of Europe has been fulfilling its mandate successfully. But we are also aware of the need to make further progress.

Our Summit has the ambitious task of defining the strategy of the European culture of democracy for the 21st Century. This is a much more demanding and broader objective because the process of "reforming the mind" requires more time and determination than political and economic reforms. This is what we in the post-communist States have learned the hard way.

Bulgaria was among the first Eastern European countries to join the Council of Europe. Today I can definitely claim that we have proved our identity as a member of the family of European democracies.

Now we are determined to carry through the reforms whose logical extension will be our country's full integration in the European Union and NATO. This is our deeply motivated and final choice of a civilisation model.

We have been trying to compensate for the historical deficit of trust in the Balkan region by outliving the inherited stereotypes, by activating bilateral and multilateral co-operation and building new forms of regional security.

My visits to Athens and Ankara, the trilateral summit of the Presidents of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the meeting of defence Ministers of the countries of South-eastern Europe held in my country last week, together with the forthcoming meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Bulgaria, Romania and Greece in Sinai, testify to a new type of relations beginning to prevail in our region.

After the collapse of the communist regime, Bulgaria focused its attention on the sustainable and irreversible development of democracy and the protection of human rights. We have succeeded in establishing stability and tolerance in inter-ethnic and religious relations in society.

Today representatives of minority groups participate actively at all levels of government, including as members of parliament. Last Thursday I signed for Bulgaria the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. I did so without hesitation and with the clear awareness that Bulgaria's legal set-up in this area has already attained the standards of the Convention.

In the past few years, like other countries from Central and Eastern Europe, Bulgaria has been faced with severe social challenges. Raising the population's living standards and effectively combating organised crime and corruption have become a priority task for the Executive of Bulgaria. Regrettably, the integration of the criminal world is proceeding faster than European integration. We are convinced that the only way to succeed is through joint

actions, since these negative phenomena are posing a direct threat to security and prosperity in the whole of Europe, not just in the new democracies.

We believe in the need to foster a public awareness of the unity and indivisibility of the citizen's rights and responsibilities. Opposing the two or ignoring either element is the root of the most dangerous diseases of democratic society such as: corruption, organised crime, money laundering, even terrorism and drug trafficking. We feel that there should be an effective instrument within the Council of Europe, resting on the interface between ethics and law and designed to promote the unity of citizens' rights and responsibilities. Until the lifting of the iron curtain we in Eastern Europe lived in societies where we had mainly obligations. Now we must fight the illusion that we have only rights and no obligations.

This is how the eminent Bulgarian constitutionalist Stefen Belamezov advised the Bulgarian citizens more than 60 years ago: "Do not forget, dear citizen, my deep respect, even love for your rights and freedoms. Remember, that they have been gained with great efforts, struggles and suffering and they belong to you! And no one can take them away from you. But then, you must exercise them. Otherwise, after every limitation or infringement of your rights by the rulers or through negligence you will be losing something that cannot be seen or consumed because it is not property, not a job; yet, it is everything: it is the awareness that you are a free person and a competent citizen."

Another important task for the Council of Europe is to encourage cultural polycentrism while respecting the common cultural heritage of Europe. This is where our Organisation could create reliable mechanisms for the protection of the cultural monuments of any European State. It could create safeguards against their desecration, despoliation and the illegal traffic of cultural objects, especially from the East to the West.

Today we all – politicians, intellectuals and the citizens of our continent – share a common responsibility for building together the political and cultural architecture of united Europe.

The architect of Europe must have, and cherish in his mind and heart, a vision for the future. Because, as one prominent Bulgarian writer and architect put it: "the mystery of the future is more powerful than the secret of the past."

Mr TUDJMAN, President of the Republic of Croatia, made the following statement:

"I take particular pleasure in addressing the Council of Europe, on the occasion of this Summit, as the first Head of the independent and democratic Croatian State.

This gives me the opportunity to dwell, if only briefly, on Croatia and the Croatian people, in order to remind you that the Croatian people is one of the oldest West European peoples.

Without any exaggeration, indeed with pride, I can claim that the Croatian people has made a substantial contribution to the defence and development of Western European civilisation. It would be inappropriate, therefore, to say that Croatia has yet to come nearer to Europe.

History has kept records of Croatian rulers, and their relations with the Roman Pope, the supreme international authority of that time, since the 7th century. Croatia gained its first international recognition in 879. It became a kingdom in 925, and national dynasties ruled the country until the 12th century. In its later history Croatia was part of various state unions, in

which the Croatian people nevertheless preserved its individually, and constituents of statehood, even if in a limited form.

Croatia also preserved the attributes of a separate kingdom within the Habsburg Monarchy, which integrated substantial parts of Europe for centuries.

This is confirmed by the well-known exclamation of the Croatian Ban Erdödy (or Vice-Roy) – *Regnum regno non praescribit leges!* (Kingdom to a kingdom laws does not prescribe) – at the session of the joint Parliament held in Buda in 1790. This is obviously an issue questioned in all present-day integration systems.

The history of Croatia's Dubrovnik Republic especially bears witness to the fact that Croatia has always been both a Central European and a Mediterranean country.

Renaissance culture and art also flourished in all other Croatian cities on the Adriatic coast. In its modern history, Croatia always developed in a spiritual atmosphere of humanism and universalism.

During the Second World War, the strongest antifascist movement developed in Yugoslavia, (with its political and military centre in Croatia), under the leadership of Croats – J. Broz Tito, I. Ribar and A. Hebrang.

The continuous crisis of both monarchist and socialist Yugoslavia was caused, first and foremost, by civilisational differences between the peoples, from which it was forcibly constructed and maintained after the First and Second World Wars. The situation deteriorated sharply after the disappearance of Tito from the political scene. The crisis climaxed in the days of the collapse of the communist system, and of such multinational States in Europe as Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

On behalf of the new democratic government in Croatia, established after the first multi-party elections in 1990, I personally proposed a resolution of the Yugoslav crisis through the restructuring of the State community on consistently confederal foundations.

The proposal was rejected.

Croatia, and subsequently Bosnia and Herzegovina, were subject to the Greater Serbian aggression of the Yugocommunist army, and the armed rebellion of the Serbian population.

Having suffered tremendous human and material losses, Croatia emerged as the victor from the war which had been imposed upon it.

In spite of the circumstances, and consequences of the war, Croatia's democratic government has pursued a transformation of social and economic life from socialist to the free market and private enterprise system.

Croatia is now developing as a modern country, whose foundations incorporate all the positive historical traditions of the Croatian people, as well as of the modern democratic world.

The Croatian Constitution guarantees to all citizens the protection of human and minority rights, in accordance with the highest international standards, and ethnic minority rights at a level that is even higher than that applied in many European countries.

As a Central European and Mediterranean country, Croatia borders on the Balkans, where three civilisations intermingle and challenge one another. Aware of its geopolitical position and of its historical experience, Croatia wishes to be an active and constructive factor in the establishment of peace and stability in this region.

Croatia is committed to normal relations, and co-operation, with all countries in the region, especially in projects of common interest, but it seeks integration only with those Western and Central European countries with which it belongs geopolitically and culturally.

If we can agree that the circumstances of the war - though they were not caused by Croatia - were the reason for the delayed admission of Croatia to European institutions, there should nevertheless be no doubt about Croatia's natural belonging to the community of States and peoples of the same cultural sphere.

In only a year, since its admission to the Council of Europe, Croatia has made indisputable progress in complying with the commitments it has undertaken, including the ratification of almost all conventions. Of course, we are aware of the fact that much is still to be accomplished. However, the Croatian people are frustrated about the one-sided and biased presentation of conditions and circumstances in democratic Croatia.

Through our continuously active and constructive policy, and by our latest steps, we have confirmed our commitment to the strengthening of the peace process, and full democratic development in national life. The Croatian Government has adopted a Programme on the return of displaced persons, the establishment of confidence-building measures for coexistence with the Serbian minority, and the overall normalisation of life in the regions affected by the war.

Croatia is the only party which is actively co-operating with the Hague Tribunal. Croatia is the most active in the implementation of the Dayton and Washington Accords, in order to achieve a definitive resolution of the Bosnian crisis.

As a democratic country, Croatia wishes to take active part in the building of European society, based on respect for national singularities and cultural diversity, and on democracy and social cohesion, as prerequisites for a dignified life for all people, and for peace among nations and States - in accordance with the principles upheld by the Council of Europe, and the United Nations Charter."

FIFTH SESSION

(Presidency : Mr Martti AHTISAARI, President of the Republic of Finland)

Mr CLERIDES, President of the Republic of Cyprus, made the following statement:

"At the outset I would like to congratulate the French Government for the excellent organisation of the Summit and to thank the people of Strasbourg for their warm hospitality. We are gathering in Strasbourg at the seat of this august Organisation, which symbolises not only the greater European family reunited, but also the principal values and hopes to which the whole of humanity aspires.

The Council of Europe, the oldest European Organisation, is always at the forefront of action in upholding human rights, consolidating democratic societies and promoting the rule of law. The uniqueness of this Organisation is due to its accomplishments in defending in practice these values and to the fact that it is endowed with the necessary tools to respond to new challenges facing our societies on the threshold of the 21st century.

The Final Declaration and the decisions we are invited to adopt reflect in their clarity our resolve to enhance the effectiveness of the Council of Europe and to increase its proximity and accessibility to the citizen.

For this purpose, the forthcoming establishment of the new single European Court of Human Rights will further improve the present high quality of human rights protection. The increased visibility of the single Court will render the *acquis* of the Council of Europe a tangible reference to all actors in our societies, something which will certainly foster deeper democratic development. It is fundamental to the credibility of the entire human rights system developed by the Council of Europe that our citizens have confidence in it. Namely that their rights and freedoms are guaranteed by a supra-national judicial body, offering them the appropriate remedies, in case national systems failed to do so. They must be assured that there exists a third instance in Strasbourg where their rights will prevail.

It is important to increase the awareness of our citizens with respect to the possibilities offered by the new Court or other supervisory organs of the Council of Europe in their pursuit of justice. The success of the new Court in fulfilling its purpose depends on the ability of the Organisation to make it widely known to our citizens. It is essential for the individual to know the rights stemming from the Convention of Human Rights and become familiar with the means at his disposal offered by the machinery of the Council of Europe so as to act upon them.

The organ of the Council of Europe best suited to undertake this informative task will be the new Commissioner for Human Rights. We join our voice to all those distinguished speakers in supporting the immediate creation of this institution, whose other functions will include assisting member States in identifying and remedying shortcomings in their legislation as well as in their compliance with human rights standards. The Commissioner will also deal with individual grievances in cases where no other organ of the Council of Europe has competence in this respect.

Our deliberations today also provide a response to the primary concerns regarding the credibility of the political supervision assigned to the Committee of Ministers as regards compliance by member States. We are striving to make the Committee of Ministers more intrusive in its examination of the performance of each and every member State. We expect it to become result-oriented by designing programmes of assistance to the States concerned in order to improve their standards in the respect of human rights.

The survival of the Organisation depends on how influential it is in assisting governments to change policies and practices in order to conform to the standards set by the Council of Europe. This does not waive the responsibility of each individual State to honour its commitments and abide by the decisions of the Council. As this very moment, gross violations of human rights and freedoms, which are a disgrace to our civilisation, are being committed in some member States.

The Council must act promptly in condemning such situations and act swiftly in providing assistance to redress them.

The benefits of membership of our Organisation are clearly distinct compared to other international structures. It boils down to making these democratic ideals a daily reference to the citizen. It is a grass-roots approach aiming at the achievement of the core values of the Council of Europe by all actors in our societies. The decisions of this Summit also address such issues that affect the everyday life of the individual. We commit our Governments and instruct the organs of the Council of Europe to tackle problems like racism, social exclusion, corruption and organised crime, drug abuse, child maltreatment and exploitation.

Our decisions aim at alleviating grave social problems and strengthening social cohesion. The Social Development Fund, with its expertise accumulated over the years, is called upon to enhance its social vocation and thus contribute in the successful implementation of these decisions.

The effectiveness of the policies and decisions we are adopting today requires the input of the Parliamentary Assembly - the origin of important initiatives. Their success at local level depends primarily on the untiring activities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. We pay tribute and pledge our support to the constant efforts by the Congress to consolidate local democracy and to improve the quality of life in urban areas.

In conclusion, in fulfilling its tasks the Council of Europe should continue to work together with the European Union and the OSCE whose co-operation provides a solid complementarity.

Undoubtedly the Council of Europe plays an essential role in building strong unbreakable links that hold together our greater European family. We should not forget that the protection of our common European heritage and the respect of cultural diversity are the pillars of our common European future."

Mr HAVEL, President of the Czech Republic, made the following statement:

"At the close of this eventful century we shall commemorate, among other things, the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Council of Europe. It is not my intention to review the

Council's work here, or to pass judgment on it. I just want to share with you the Czech Republic's perception of this Organisation, and to tell you how my country sees its place within the Council and its tasks as a Council member today. Following the end of the Cold War, many international organisations are undergoing substantial changes. Those whose roles and structures were better-suited to the patterns of the divided Europe and the bipolar world seemed to be somewhat unprepared for the new tasks and challenges.

The Council of Europe was certainly not one of these; and yet, the Council also had to tackle the question of its new identity. At the beginning of this decade, it became clear that thorough codification of the protection of human rights within the Council's system of treaties could effectively promote human rights protection, in both legislation and everyday life, in the new or reborn democracies of central and eastern Europe as well. It was certainly appropriate that the terms of admission into the Council were formulated as a task, with the requirements clearly specified and the applicants' performance fairly easily verifiable. The willingness of the applicant nations to attain membership in the Council of Europe thus brought numerous improvements that advanced human rights and democracy in those countries' domestic legislation. Since its establishment, the Council of Europe has been a guardian of the values underlying post-war, democratic Europe. It has also helped shape those values, regarding their creation, recognition and protection as an interactive process, with the aim to introduce ever-higher standards, even in those areas that were not always in the focus of public interest, such as the rights of national minorities, environment protection or spectators' violence in the course of sporting events. Consistent application of the shared values and principles has to be demanded of both the Council members and the nations aspiring for membership.

In the course of its history, the Council of Europe has become an inseparable component and a driving force of the European integration process in the spheres of human rights, promotion and protection of democracy, the rule of law, culture, and education. Although its institutions are not directly linked to those of the European Union, the profound interconnection is obvious. It is therefore not surprising that the States of central and eastern Europe, that had rid themselves of communist rule, mostly see the Council of Europe as an important landmark on their journey into the other European integration structures. My country is no exception in this regard. Building democracy and the rule of law in the past period - more than seven years long - now - would have been much more difficult had it not been for the treaties system of the Council of Europe to provide guidance, and for the Council of Europe monitoring to hold up to us a much-needed mirror and to help identify shortcomings. Sometimes criticism met with rejection or irritation in the countries concerned; as a rule, however, it has eventually proved beneficial and inspiring in the long run. This is true of the Czech Republic, too.

We see the Council of Europe as an anchor of values - unique and irreplaceable - that is closely linked with the broader European integration processes. This anchor helps us to cultivate public awareness of the innermost meaning of the changes going on in our society. Without this awareness of the underlying values, our integration into the economic and security institutions of democratic Europe would lack a "European spirit" and be reduced merely to a technical function. None of the fundamental documents of the Council of Europe have, as yet, been implemented completely. Time and again, the evil phantoms of the past reappear, in seemingly fresher and more attractive forms, while always representing the same things: intolerance; xenophobia; racial hatred; an absence of elementary human solidarity; and disregard for our mutual connectedness and mutual dependence.

One of the principal themes of this meeting has been the question of social cohesion in our time. I beg you all: Let us not limit our quest for it to seeking effective mechanisms, important as they are! Let us seek also its inspiring sources! The human race has always been held together by sharing some hope - by looking ahead and upward. We must not pass on to the future generations an egoistic Europe, deaf and blind to the needs of others; a Europe entrenched in a fortress mentality, and suffering from neglected social problems - in a word, a Europe irreversibly plunging into an abyss. I trust that the better traditions of Europe's thinking and conduct contain enough antibodies against this gloomy vision. Let us propagate this auspicious European heritage."

Mr KOK, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, made the following statement:

"I should like to express our gratitude and congratulations to our French hosts for their initiative in organising this Second Summit.

With only a few exceptions, Europe sits united in this historic conference room, heart of Europe's democracy. Many speakers have pointed to the changes that our continent has gone through in recent years. The process of political, economic and societal change will continue, if not accelerate, into the next century.

This Conference forces us to reflect upon the future of the European architecture and on the role of the Council of Europe in particular. I think that the Action Plan and the Final Declaration - which we will accept during this Second Summit - indicate the proper direction to take.

The structure of co-operation will be the focus of my intervention. Post-war Europe witnessed the emergence of various organisations geared to intergovernmental co-operation or integration. Their originator is the Council of Europe. The European Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe appeared later, each at their own moment in history and each with their own characteristics and capabilities. History determined their "*raison d'être*" and their sense of purpose:

1989 marked the beginning of political change. The consequences are not completely reflected in the actual multilateral structure of Europe. All organisations have developed as separate entities, with clearly defined responsibilities. Now they are exposed to similar challenges. They all face the double task of enlarging without losing their "*acquis*". And more and more they are confronted with the same issues.

They are jointly responsible for the development of a democratic, safe and prosperous Europe, taking best advantage of their respective capacities and qualities. Europe is best served when its various organisations share duties, prevent double work and create synergy in their actions, notably in relation to new member States. Already in 1989 we created the so-called Quadripartite meetings between the Council of Europe and the European Union. We also developed agreements to make sure that overlap of activities was avoided and we started common activities. Assistance programmes of the Council of Europe for the new member States, co-financed by the EU are proof of the synergy between the two organisations. We should seriously enter into a discussion about a future structure of European co-operation in which the valuable work of the Council of Europe and the OSCE are closely linked.

Differences of membership should lead to collective creativity and ingenuity to work towards closer co-operation. Mission and methods of the organisations offer promising opportunities for joint efforts. The OSCE is concentrating on early warning. In particular, the High Commissioner on National Minorities addresses potential conflicts before they come out into the open. One of the other comparable advantages of OSCE is in the operational field, in the implementation of international norms and standards, by sending missions, by monitoring and by policing.

The Council of Europe on the other hand has unrivalled expertise in the harmonisation of law and juridification of international norms and standards. The unique work of the supranational European Court for Human Rights safeguards respect for human rights in the member countries. The Council also offers a platform for debate and standard-setting with regard to new ideas and concerns in our societies. Many of these directly concern the lives and convictions of our citizens.

Both Organisations are active in monitoring situations in individual member countries. The permanent missions of the OSCE do excellent work, sometimes in conjunction with the Council of Europe. The monitoring system of the Committee of Ministers of the Council, initiated by Norway and The Netherlands, becomes more effective. The new monitoring mechanism of the Parliamentary Assembly forms a valuable improvement.

In many other ways co-operation could lead to improved results – to the benefit of both the organisations and Europe itself. I therefore propose to set into motion a joint analysis of the Council of Europe and the OSCE to develop common ideas on their future in Europe. But co-operation with other organisations is not our only concern. We also have to ensure that the Council of Europe maintains its credibility. Compliance with treaty obligations is essential in this respect.

It is a reason for concern that many of the treaties and conventions concluded within the framework of the Council of Europe have been ratified by only a small number of member States. Broader accession to the "*acquis*" of the Council of Europe could speed up harmonisation of legislation in the various member States. In order to encourage this, I propose that monitoring should in future also include member States' "scores" in terms of ratification of treaties and conventions.

Better publicity of the work of the Council and education will make the citizens of Europe more aware of the rights and freedoms that can be derived from the conventions, and in this way promote the further development of democracy. It is worth considering whether a Council of Europe Yearbook – containing easily accessible information on its many activities – might be a useful way of achieving broader public recognition.

The Council of Europe is still living up to its reputation as a guardian of human rights and democracy. Why do we need it, precisely?

- For a just distribution of prosperity and well-being within the European home.
- To protect the quality of our democratic system.

- For the compliance with commitments in the field of human rights and the rule of law, and
- For the preservation of our cultural heritage.

We all have a duty to invest fully in the future of Europe."

Mr MERI, President of the Republic of Estonia, made the following statement:

"Four years ago Estonia participated in the inaugural Council of Europe Summit in Vienna. Then she was a newcomer to European co-operation.

Today Estonia is actively participating in all activities pursued within the Organisation. We are happy to say that Estonia not only benefits from the accomplishments and achievements of the Council, but also contributes to its activities in a positive and constructive spirit.

Estonia's history has been turbulent, marked by hopes raised and hopes shattered. Now that our independence has been restored, our principal ambition is to obtain for our country, for our people, for our identity, the security of which we were deprived in the past.

We strive for political security inside our borders by providing for all the best possible conditions for a meaningful and harmonious existence, for fraternity, tolerance, and mutual understanding. We have, with the help of the Council, strengthened our democratic institutions and passed vital legislation in conformity with the Council's norms and values. In addition, we have ratified a number of European Conventions, which support Estonia's political security. These include the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in November of last year and the ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in January of this year. These ratifications reflect our commitment to strengthening pluralist democracy in Estonia and our belief that we thereby contribute to European stability in general.

We strive for economic security and sincerely welcome the European Commission's recommendation that negotiations with a view to our membership of the European Union should begin in early 1998. You may rest convinced that we shall do our utmost to live up to expectations and we have already begun the necessary adaptation of our economic and legal structures. For Estonia, this perspective of joining the Union in the near future is recognition of what we have achieved already, a stimulus for continuing and indeed, a tremendous and hopefully rewarding challenge for us all.

We strive for military security through contacts with the appropriate international organisations, with the OSCE and through the Partnership for Peace initiative. Through these organisations we have actively participated in the redefinition and restructuring of European and Euro-Atlantic security structures. We consider the outcome of the Madrid Summit to be a positive step forward. Clearly, Alliance partners have shown that they will follow the example set by the Council of Europe and enlarge in a manner that is fully transparent, so that no European country will feel that its fate has been decided for it behind closed doors. It is only through closer multilateral co-operation that we can manage security when the challenges faced often pay no heed to lines on a map. We value the support and assistance given by our neighbours and partners to our efforts in this field.

We strive for democratic security and that is why we endorse fully the Action Plan, which we shall adopt later this morning. We shall actively contribute to its implementation in the years to come, and I would like to take a moment now to highlight some of the areas of particular interest to Estonia. We welcome a positive and constructive outcome to the Council's ongoing work relating to refugees and asylum seekers. We are interested in coming to practical solutions to the challenges posed by organised crime, drug traffic and abuse. Finally, we welcome co-operative efforts to ameliorate the painful social costs, which have come in the wake of post-socialist transition in Estonia.

It is from initiatives such as these, initiatives that deal with the everyday problems of our citizens, that the Council of Europe derives its effectiveness. We feel that the Action Plan, because it presents a coherent outline to improve the awareness and welfare of the citizen democracy, is an important step towards maximising the Council's capabilities.

The complexities of the modern era can be daunting for a relatively young and small democratic country such as our own. Transition needs to be secured and fostered. Even so, Estonians have decided that their country should be representative of the highest international standards. A high official of the European Union recently noted that, "as a member of the Council of Europe and of the OSCE, Estonia has shown that the size of a State is less important than its readiness to make a constructive contribution for the common good."

In the future Estonia shall most certainly join other international organisations. We shall participate in other forms of co-operation, have other priorities and other objectives, but the Council of Europe will remain historically connected with our regained sovereignty and our re-found international identity. For this Estonia remains grateful."

Mr AHTISAARI, President of the Republic of Finland, made the following statement:

"May I first – like my colleagues who have spoken before me – thank France and President Chirac for inviting us to Strasbourg to hold the second-ever Summit of the Council of Europe. To convene this meeting now is most timely. The year 1997 may well go down in history as the year of the summits. But all these summits have had their important place and role in forging the new Europe which we have seen taking shape during the last eight years.

The Amsterdam and Luxembourg Summits pave the way for deeper and broader European co-operation within the framework of the European Union. The NATO Summit decisions in Madrid laid the foundations for a new kind of European security co-operation and institutions, such as the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

The goal of our Summit is to strengthen democratic stability in Europe by promoting human rights and pluralist democracy throughout the Council of Europe area of common values.

As I have the privilege to be the last speaker from the current member countries of the Council of Europe, it might be apposite to attempt to sum up what I think are the main points raised during the Summit.

Almost exactly four years ago in Vienna, the Heads of State or Government of the member countries stated that the Council of Europe was "the pre-eminent political institution capable of welcoming on an equal footing and in permanent structures the democracies of Europe, as soon as they had brought their institutions and legal systems in line with the basic principles of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights". In line with this undertaking the Council has since welcomed eight new member countries. All of us hope that the observer countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Georgia (who will speak after me) – will soon bring their institutions and legislation in harmony with the Council requirements so that they, too, would be able to join our ranks.

Moreover, it was underlined during the Vienna Summit that the member countries were "resolved to ensure full compliance with the commitments accepted by all member States within the Council of Europe". This joint pledge brought about the development of the monitoring systems both within the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers.

Full compliance with the obligations of membership is the top priority of the Council of Europe. The *raison d'être* of the monitoring procedures is that they must lead to concrete results on the ground. This is a challenge which all of us should welcome, not as a burden but as an opportunity. Monitoring is a way to develop co-operation to support member countries in their efforts to reform their legal systems and institutions so that they comply with the requirements of the Council of Europe.

We all share the view that the European Court for Human Rights is the centrepiece in developing human rights and their protection. The enlargement of the Council of Europe has created a new situation which calls for new solutions. This is what I had in mind when in January 1996 I made the proposal to create within the Council of Europe the new post of a Commissioner for Human Rights.

A year and a half later I am just as convinced that the time has come to create the Commissioner for Human Rights to meet the expectations of individuals and to give the human rights system of the Council of Europe added credibility and a human face. The Commissioner for Human Rights would enhance the possibilities for the individual to assert his or her rights, an aspect which sometimes is forgotten when development of institutions is discussed. The Commissioner would also be a part of the monitoring system of the Council of Europe, strengthening the fulfilment of our undertakings within the framework of the Human Rights Convention.

I share the view that the importance of non-discrimination and the protection of minorities cannot be overrated. Violations of minority rights breed resentment, instability and even violent conflict, as we have seen throughout European history. Europe is a place where different linguistic and ethnic groups meet and mingle. This kaleidoscope of minorities is a richness not a threat, and should be a cause of pride for all of us.

The Council of Europe has a unique role to play in furthering minority rights. Four years ago in Vienna, the decision was taken to draft a Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Finland ratified the Convention on 3 October as the twelfth member country and thus the Convention will enter into force at the beginning of February next year. Unfortunately, the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages which was already drafted before the Vienna Summit, has not yet entered into force.

We have the instruments. What we must now do is to put them into force and live up to them. The first thing to do is for all members of the Council of Europe to ratify these instruments. I urge my colleagues to urge their Parliaments to act, and act soon.

All our societies face serious challenges. Budget constraints have compelled our governments to modify or even drastically cut their social safety nets; unemployment still plagues many member countries, certainly it does in my own country. The sense of growing inequality can undermine the legitimacy of democratic institutions.

There is hence a special need to develop strategies of common responsibility. The Human Dignity and Social Exclusion Research Project, the final conference of which will be hosted by Finland in the spring of 1998, should point the way towards practical steps that would make a real difference in the daily lives of our peoples.

All those who spoke before me showed great confidence in what the Council can and should do. Consequently we are in a few minutes time going to adopt a Declaration and an Action Plan in which the tasks given to the Council are considerable. But are we also prepared to give the Council the necessary financial means to fulfil these tasks in our common quest for a juster, more inclusive and more caring Europe?

When Finland took over the Chairmanship of the Council about a year ago, Foreign Minister Halonen expressed her strong belief in the need for additional resources for the Council. Her appeal is, unfortunately, just as timely today as it was a year ago.

On the basis of what has been said by my colleagues in the course of these two days I want to highlight the message of this Summit, as it is stated in the Final Declaration which we are soon going to adopt: the 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 the membership. In this spirit we will continue our work towards the 21st century and in this spirit we want to welcome, when they are ready, the applicant countries who will now have the opportunity to address the Summit."

Mr TER-PETROSSIAN, President of the Republic of Armenia, made the following statement:

"First of all I would like to thank the President of the Republic of France, Mr Jacques CHIRAC, for having taken the initiative of holding this Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg; we are grateful to the French authorities for their warm welcome and the organisation of this meeting which, in our opinion, marks a further important stage in the reunification of the European family.

The participation of countries of the Community of Independent States in this Summit, as full members of the Council of Europe, proves that the idea of a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals", to which Général de Gaulle attached such great importance, is gradually taking form; my presence here, like that of my colleagues from Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, also bears witness to this.

This is also proof that Europe, after having put an end to its divisions by rejecting totalitarianism, can only be reunited in a community founded on certain values, i.e. the values of democracy and humanism that we all share.

This also provides proof of the manifold character of Europe; the pillar of common values must not conceal the diversity of our cultural contributions which must continue to be one of the Council of Europe's most valuable assets.

The presence of Armenia in this forum is important for more than one reason.

First of all it signifies the re-establishment of a link which had been broken by the years of suffering and deprivation of freedom that have marked the history of Armenians throughout this century. Everyone knows to what extent the great moments of Armenian history are also those that have marked the future of Europe and that in the most decisive hours Armenia has always espoused the moral and intellectual values that have forged the European identity.

We should also see this as a declaration of political determination; Armenia wishes to occupy its rightful place in the new European architecture; its inclusion in the new European structures continues to be high on our agenda.

This choice is reflected in our close partnership with the European Union which should not, a priori, exclude any possibility of institutional evolution. I wish to take this opportunity to state clearly that Armenia's European vocation should lead her, in the long run, to become a member of the European Union - provided, of course, that she meets the required conditions.

This choice has also been demonstrated by the steps we have taken since 1991 to draw closer to the Council of Europe. The membership procedure has already commenced and we fervently hope that Armenia will become a full member of the Organisation within the next few months.

Armenia is, more than ever, committed to reforms which aim to develop democracy and establish the rule of law - the forthcoming abolition of the death penalty in Armenia is, in this respect, of symbolic value - and the Armenian National Assembly has embarked upon a whole series of reforms which will lead to the establishment of a new judicial system. We are fully aware of the importance of the role played by the Council of Europe in helping us to implement these reforms and to ensure that domestic legislation complies with European legal standards.

We fully endorse the objectives of this Summit in the fields of democracy and human rights, in particular the role of civil society, the functioning of free and independent media, equality between women and men in society, respect for minorities and the acknowledgement of their specific characteristics; I take the liberty of reminding you that Armenia recently signed the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities.

These are fields to which the Armenian authorities have given their constant attention.

We also attach great importance to measures designed to make the new generations more receptive to problems of human rights; I am convinced that the teaching of the history of our peoples can have a decisive impact in forming our consciences.

Finally I am glad to see the machinery for the protection of human rights reinforced by the constitution of a single European court and the creation of a post of Commissioner for Human Rights.

If the consolidation of achievements in the fields of democracy and human rights are to remain the priority of the Council of Europe, it is also important for the Organisation to adjust to the new situation in Europe and to take account of the major problems encountered by our societies so as to firmly establish democratic stability on the European continent at the dawn of the 21st century.

I, for my part, would like to draw attention to the development of phenomena such as exclusion and corruption.

Exclusion is not confined to countries which are experiencing difficulties in the transition to a market economy.

The growing social rift threatens the equilibrium of our societies and is also capable, in countries like Armenia, of disrupting the reform process.

The preservation of social cohesion is therefore a question of prime importance. Each of our States is, of course, responsible for dealing with its own domestic situation; however, I believe that we must also try to find joint solutions to this problem and this is why I am most satisfied to see that it has been listed in the Action Plan as one of the Organisation's priorities.

The problem of corruption also concerns all our countries.

The countries of the former Soviet Union have unfortunately had to shoulder the legacy of a system which encouraged such practices in order to ensure its own survival; this phenomenon then fed not only on the economic difficulties of the transition period but also on the shortcomings, if not the failure, of existing legal provisions.

The Armenian Government is now striving to overcome this problem and I am very pleased to see that efforts are being co-ordinated to stem the tide of what could become a real scourge for our societies.

To conclude, I would like to say how much we have appreciated the attention paid by the Council of Europe, and in particular the Parliamentary Assembly, to the conflicts in our region.

Now that the negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE are entering an active phase, I wish to deliver to you a message of hope and peace. I am convinced that we can now make progress towards a peaceful settlement of this conflict. This requires above all consideration for the security requirements of Nagorno Karabakh.

This, of course, means that direct negotiations must be entered into between the authorities of Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh, which as everyone knows requires the mutual acceptance of the necessary compromises. This new situation means that each party must face up to its responsibilities.

I, for my part, trust in the virtues of dialogue and I believe in the future of our region, free from conflict and trusting in the spirit of co-operation."

Mr ALIYEV, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, made the following statement:

"I cordially greet the participants in the Second Summit of the Council of Europe. I am deeply satisfied that for the first time, an independent Republic of Azerbaijan takes part in this representative international forum dedicated to the discussion of important common European problems on the eve of the new millennium.

Great positive changes have happened on our planet - the end of the cold war, the fall of the iron curtain, have unified Europe and promoted the integration of new States which have chosen the way of democracy into the European structures.

An important role in these processes is played by the Council of Europe and we highly value its contribution to the strengthening of peace and stability, conformity with the principles of pluralist democracy and common human values in all of the European continent.

Being an integral part of Europe, Azerbaijan has been developing close relations with Europe throughout its history.

Since gaining independence, the Republic of Azerbaijan travelled a complicated and dramatic road. The difficulties of the transitional period, internal political instability, a plague of illegal armed groups, attempted coups d'Etat, the social-economic crisis, the devastating sequence of neighbouring Armenia's aggression, created a situation of anarchy, chaos and mass violations of human rights, threatening the existence of Azerbaijani state.

At the price of great efforts, we have in a short time stabilised the situation in the country and started the implementation of drastic political and economic changes aimed at the construction of a secular, law-governed State with a market economy.

The first free, multi-party democratic elections to the Parliament of the Republic have been held. Through a nation-wide referendum, the Constitution of independent Azerbaijan, granting all necessary human freedoms and rights, was adopted.

Tens of political parties, hundreds of independent mass-media, freedom of speech and conscious, favourable conditions for the development of national minorities, etc. - all of these bear witness to the formation of a democratic society in our country.

The liberalisation of the economy, the minimisation of inflation, the wide attraction of foreign investments, the successful realisation of the privatisation programme, including land ownership, have meant that the economy of Azerbaijan has overcome a long-lasting decline, and real growth of output and improvement of the standards of living of our citizens have started.

Of course we continue to experience objective difficulties with the transitional period; the hard heritage of the 70 years under totalitarian rule still has its effect. But the successful implementation of democratic reforms and the firm support of these reforms by the overwhelming majority of citizens of our Republic witness that independence and democracy in Azerbaijan are irreversible.

The biggest problem for us still remains the consequence of the Republic of Armenia's military aggression, as a result of which twenty percent of the Azerbaijani territories have been occupied and more than one million of Azerbaijanis have become refugees and live under unbearable conditions in tented camps.

We greatly appreciate the efforts of OSCE aimed at just settlement of Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. The December 1996 Lisbon Summit of OSCE adopted an extremely important decision on this issue. The principles of Lisbon are: recognition of territorial integrity of both Armenia and Azerbaijan, the granting of a high degree of self-rule to Nagorno Karabakh within the state of Azerbaijan, and security guarantees to the whole population of Nagorno Karabakh.

We highly value the Resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe dated 22 April 1997, which also supported the territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani State and the Lisbon Summit principles on the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. These documents have laid a good foundation for achieving peace on the basis of common international law norms.

In May of 1994, we signed a cease-fire agreement and we are aiming to preserve it until the final settlement of the conflict.

We support the recent proposals of the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the OSCE (Russia, USA and France) on settlement of the conflict in two stages: the first: to withdraw Armenian armed formations from six occupied Azerbaijani regions, to provide the return of Azerbaijani refugees to their permanent dwelling places and to restore all communications destroyed as a result of the war; the second: to settle the issue of the status of Nagorno Karabakh at the same time as the liberation of Lachin and Shusha regions.

I reiterate today once again that we remain committed to peaceful settlement of this conflict, we want firm and long-lasting peace with Armenia. Despite the severe damage inflicted on Azerbaijan by the aggression, we want to restore good neighbourly relations and co-operation between our countries, prosperity and flourishing of our people and peace and stability in our region.

In June 1996, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe granted special guest status to Azerbaijan. We are also a State Party to the European Cultural Convention and participate in the Open partial Agreement on prevention, defence and organisation of the assistance in case of major natural and technological disasters.

On 13 June 1996, I appealed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to admit the Republic of Azerbaijan as a full member of the Council. I have expressed our readiness to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights and have asked the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to accelerate negotiations with the Government of Azerbaijan on this issue.

We are actively co-operating with the institutions of the Council of Europe and we are taking part in all its ventures and we create all opportunities for delegations of the Council of Europe to work in Azerbaijan.

We pin great hopes on the assistance of the Council of Europe in the development of democratic transformations in our country. We hope that Azerbaijan will very soon be a full member of the Council of Europe. For our part, we will do everything to measure up to the high standards of modern European democracy.

Our Summit sums up the results of a turbulent and dramatic 20th century, and sets out tasks and prospects of the next century. As before, the New Europe, unified in the ideals of freedom, democracy and humanity, will play an important role in the progress and prosperity of all humanity.

I am convinced that the Republic of Azerbaijan, having enormous natural resources and a rich cultural and intellectual potentiality, will make its deserved contribution to this positive process."

Mr IZETBEGOVIĆ, President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, made the following statement:

"In my own name and in the name of the member of the Presidency, Mr Kresimir Zubak, I wish to thank France and her President for their invitation to this important Summit and for their hospitality.

I would also immediately like to thank the French government and the French people for their substantial contribution to the establishment of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I do not agree with those who think that there is no more than an absence of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is indeed peace. It is of course a fragile peace but it is also gaining strength. We who have experienced all the horrors of war know the difference between war and peace and we do not have the right to be either impatient or dissatisfied.

Nor do we have the right to be pessimistic about the future. I believe that Bosnia and Herzegovina and the dramatic transition it is at present experiencing will, in the long run, have a positive effect on the democratic development of the country and the success of the Peace Agreement.

I would like to point out that our aim is to set up a democratic and secular State made up of two multi-ethnic entities. This aim has the backing of the majority of our citizens. I also believe I can say that this - Bosnia and Herzegovina's aim - is also your aim, the aim of united Europe.

In order to ensure the positive continuity of the process that is now under way, I believe it to be essential that the international forces remain in our country even beyond June 1998.

In the short time left to me I will try to describe the current situation in my country to you.

Civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not yet returned to normal. It is in the process of construction. To achieve this Bosnia and Herzegovina must face up to two fundamental problems: the consequences of the war and the legacy of a communist regime.

The last time stock was taken of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was on 30 May 1997 in Sintra.

The following progress has been made in respect of the undertakings entered into in Sintra:

- the appointment of ambassadors to the 28 most important representations in the world has been confirmed;
- the border crossing between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia has been partially established.

Thanks to the considerable assistance provided by the international police task force, significant progress has been made in reorganising a police force in the Federation in accordance with international standards. In the other entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina this process is taking place with considerable difficulty.

The integration of the telephone system has only been partially achieved. Despite the fact that large sums have been spent on this item, only 30 telephone lines have so far been established between the entities and when the work is finished we will have only 480 which is far less than what we had prior to the war: there were, for example, 1900 telephone lines between Sarajevo and Banja Luka before the war.

The Agency for air transport has been set up and an agreement has been reached regarding the opening of the civilian airports in Tuzla, Banja Luka and Mostar.

The arms surplus has been destroyed, in accordance with the agreement on subregional arms control known as the Vienna Protocol.

Diplomatic relations have not yet been established between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Yugoslavia. We have put forward our proposal and are awaiting a reply.

The problem of the State flag has not yet been resolved. Proposals have been made and we are waiting for the High Representative to make a proposal for a compromise.

Laws on citizenship and passports have been drawn up with the help of the High Representative. The Serbian representatives in the Council of Ministers refuse to accept the proposed compromise.

An important step has been taken with regard to bringing persons accused of war crimes before the International Court of Criminal Justice in the Hague. Croatia has to a large extent complied with this demand by handing over ten persons accused of such crimes, whereas Yugoslavia still refuses to do so.

Three laws on privatisation have been passed by one Chamber of the Parliament of the Federation. The other Chamber is expected to pass them before the end of the month.

Most of the population support the principle of independent media and the international community's demand that all associations and all political parties should have fair and free access to electronic media in all regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The freedom of the media throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the main prerequisite for reconciliation between individuals and between peoples and is also the precondition for lasting peace. The High Representative's idea of setting up an appropriate national committee might help to achieve this.

There is genuine support for co-operation with the High Representative, SFOR, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Human Rights Chamber and all the international organisations which wish to help Bosnia and Herzegovina to strengthen the peace process and reconstruct the country.

Most of the population are in favour of the complete implementation of the results of the municipal elections recently held in Bosnia and Herzegovina..

Anti-corruption measures also have their wholehearted support.

One important aspect of this corruption is the illegal import of goods, i.e. the non-payment of import. This problem cannot be solved without efficient controls at the borders and for this we need the co-operation of the international community.

Several institutions, including the Agency for monitoring and financial aid in conjunction with the World Bank, are responsible for monitoring the use of foreign contributions. We agree that it is necessary to have greater transparency with regard to the use of our own public revenue and the expert advice of Europe would be very welcome in this respect.

I would like to draw your attention to a very important problem in my country. There are 1700 minefields in Bosnia and Herzegovina which means that one quarter of the territory cannot be used. For this reason I give my wholehearted support to the total ban on the manufacture and use of antipersonnel mines. Bosnia and Herzegovina also subscribe to all international efforts to combat terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking.

Last but not least, I am pleased to see the bonds between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Europe growing stronger day by day. In this respect I would like to stress the importance of the Council

of Europe. Nowadays it would be difficult to imagine Europe without this international organisation, which will soon celebrate its 50th anniversary. It has considerable influence on democracy, the establishment of the rule of law and in the field of human rights and these are of fundamental importance for new democracies and new member-States. For this reason I sincerely hope that our country will soon have the honour of becoming a full member of the Council of Europe.

This year Bosnia and Herzegovina is chairing the Central European Initiative.

The European Convention on Human Rights is embodied in our Constitution.

In accordance with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Council of Europe has appointed 8 of the 14 members of the Chamber of Human Rights and the President of the European Court of Human Rights has appointed 3 of the 9 members of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the same number of members of the Commission for the restitution of property and the return of displaced persons and refugees.

Co-operation with Europe and the gradual integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina in all European institutions are the wishes of virtually all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, whatever their religion, their ethnic origins and their political beliefs."

Mr CHEVARDNADZE, President of the Republic of Georgia, made the following statement:

"By no means a stranger to Europe, Georgia has for centuries been cut off from it.

Her road to Europe has been one of martyrdom.

Here, in this historical centre of the European Reformation and Humanism with their philosophy of individual liberty, I can hardly keep from quoting my fellow-countryman, an outstanding philosopher: "To me, European culture is the maximal approximation to the concept of the purpose of man. And if the design of the universe is the humanisation of the individual, then Europe has come closest to the realisation of this ideal."

Four years ago, at the time the Vienna Declaration was adopted, we were infinitely removed from the above criterion.

I stood then on another podium, if one may use the word to describe a position on the battlefield, amid the fire of civil wars, internal conflicts and the terror of criminal political cliques, in other words, in the midst of a battle fought against yet another attempt to destroy Georgia's statehood.

Georgia did not lose that battle.

To her first-ever Summit of the Council of Europe, she has not come empty-handed. Serving her as the passport have been the free and fair elections of the President and the Parliament - a clear sign of having entered the phase of political stabilisation. Last year's ten percent GDP growth-rate which currently continues unchanged, coupled with the two percent inflation over the seven months of this year, point to the beginning of an economic revival. The traditional concern for the preservation of cultural identities of minorities, guarantees of their

development including the provision of education in seven languages, a series of laws safeguarding the protection of civil liberties are indicative of an evident trend toward the high European standards.

It would be no exaggeration to say that in a brief period of time a total transformation of the socio-political system has occurred..

Georgia is joining Europe carrying the load of a three-thousand-year-long, agonising experience of protecting her statehood, the anniversary of which we are soon planning to commemorate.

She is bringing along a tradition of ethnic, cultural, and religious tolerance, unhindered development of all creeds.

The temple of polyethnic brotherhood in Georgia stands intact despite multiple attempts to tear it down.

Equally intact remains our national identity, based on an immense cultural heritage which Georgians have defended and died for in battle.

We are reuniting with Europe, as an offshoot grafted into a life-giving stock, to contribute to the salvational mission of European culture and find within it our own salvation.

This problem is real. Cultures worldwide are threatened by a tidal wave of homogenisation. There is also a threat of man's dehumanisation. However, paradoxical it may sound, even after the end of the Cold War, the thin and fragile humus layer of civilisation is precariously exposed to the fallout from wars and strife. An immense cultural heritage is being consumed in the flames of contemporary conflicts and aggressions, as has already been the case in the Southeast of the continent, and also in my homeland. There are still no ultimate guarantees of freedom, sovereignty, personal immunity and even privacy of the individual, whose unprotected fragility was so tragically revealed in the untimely finale of the century's last Cinderella.

Only our collective ability to ensure the security of culture in a wider context of protecting democracy, human rights, national independence, and social harmony can stop the erosion of traditional European values.

As in the case of territorial integrity of the State, it is our duty to institutionalise the concept of the integrity of a single European cultural space and that of its national components.

A notable fact - our national programme for the preservation of cultural heritage is being funded by the World Bank. This can set the example for collaboration between financial institutions and the Council of Europe in a sphere which ought to be given the same priority as environmental protection.

In Georgia, we see the Council of Europe as having two interrelated roles. First, as the flagship in the process to restore to the lap of European civilisation those nations which have been wrenched away from it as a consequence of historical adversities. They need to be prepared spiritually and mentally for the subsequent full-fledged economic integration. In other words, this process may be viewed as a launch pad or a permit to join the community

wherein even the tiniest of us will never be left alone, forced to protect ourselves and our heritage from an external threat.

Second, as the leading institution of political thought on the continent, whose duty is to develop policies aimed at overcoming the anomalies that have emerged following the end of the Cold War, by means of applying sophisticated diplomacy and high tech surgery with regard to those who instigate turmoil and bloodshed in Europe.

New political realities have breathed life into the Great Silk Road that like a giant belt once tied together the vast Eurasian space from China and Japan to as far west as the Pyrenees, and crossed, among others, the littoral states of three seas - Mediterranean, Black and Caspian. Being currently revived in transport and communications projects, the modern Great Silk Road holds a great promise for the development of the above sub-regions. An innovative role of the Council of Europe could considerably encourage the rapprochement of the States of the three seas along the lines of subregional integration. And if, as they draw together economically, as well as in legal and political areas assisted all along by the Council of Europe, the ideal of institutionalising their relations ultimately emerges, Georgia would welcome it and do its best to facilitate the process.

That is our vision of the future of the Council of Europe, and the future of Georgia within it. This vision is fully in-keeping with the values fostered by this oldest and most highly regarded international organisation. Guided by these values, Georgia, which a few years ago hosted a UNESCO forum "For the Dialogue of Cultures" is prepared to host next year a high-level meeting of the member States with the agenda to include democratic development, market economy, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

I welcome the novelties that the present Summit offers in terms of institutions for the protection of human rights, the enhancement of principals of social justice, or combating some morbid excesses of development that pose a threat to our fundamental values.

Also hopefully, the principles and words declared here will not differ from the actual deeds. One cannot denounce violence and murder while at the same time providing protection for terrorists. If discrimination is totally unacceptable then all of us should foster equality not only in word, but also in deed. The mighty of this world ought to be fully aware that, as long as there are the rich and those hopelessly poor, no country can be genuinely happy.

Georgia has a special guest status in the Council of Europe. However honourable this title may be, neither the guest nor the host can feel comfortable once the guest has overstayed his welcome. For this reason, I would like to express hope that at the 1999 anniversary summit, Georgia will attend as a fully-fledged member of your great family.

In closing, let me offer special thanks to President Jacques Chirac for his initiative and genuinely fabulous hospitality. Sincere thanks to the leadership of the Council of Europe and each of you."

ADOPTION OF THE FINAL DECLARATION AND ACTION PLAN

The Chairman spoke as follows:

"Before I call to the rostrum the Prime Minister of France, may I ask if we can agree to adopt the main product of our two-day meeting, namely the Final Declaration and Action Plan?"

I think I can speak for all of us in thanking our Committee of Ministers which has done good work in preparing these drafts.

I see that we agree to adopt the Final Declaration and Action Plan."

18. Mr JOSPIN, Prime Minister of the Republic of France, made the following statement: "After the President of the French Republic, I have the honour of speaking before you today as Prime Minister of the host country. The meeting that is coming to a close will have been one of the major events of the year for Strasbourg, for France and for Europe.

On the eve of the 50th anniversary of our Organisation, it was necessary that this Assembly should give us the opportunity of redefining our broad goals, of renewing our commitment and of redoubling our efforts to move towards a Europe that is more democratic, more just, and constantly concerned with human dignity.

The fact that 40 Heads of State and Government were brought together in Strasbourg has also permitted hundreds of bilateral meetings, which were useful and important for our continent's diplomatic activity.

In keeping with the tradition of the Council of Europe, we have placed the protection of the individual at the heart of our approach, while adopting our Plan of Action. This plan, while placing its roots in the traditional fields of activity of the Organisation, today puts the emphasis on the world of labour and culture. The founding democracies of the Council of Europe, and those which have joined them more recently, will find there new opportunities that must be seized.

The greater Europe that we form embodies, in the eyes of the world, a certain form of civilisation based, in every field, on justice, democracy and human rights.

In the social field, in particular, the drawing up of a Social Charter in 1961, revised in 1996 in a direction more in keeping with the preoccupations of the workers and trade unions, was a significant step forward. More and more Governments have joined, or are in the process of joining, this revised Charter. This text is a foundation for guaranteeing the development of social rights and incites Governments to give themselves the means of having them respected.

Another instrument at our disposal, a financial one, is the Social Development Fund. It exists since the 50s, but its usefulness has been increased since it was re-oriented towards the new European democracies and towards the promotion of job-creating investments. The most important challenge we have to face, in these closing years of the 20th century, for the whole European continent, is unemployment, and unemployment of the young in particular. We intend to meet this challenge on the basis of national policies to start with, then of course with

the mechanisms the European Union offers to a certain number of us, but also thanks to the institutions set up by the Council of Europe.

There is a third dimension, to which no European can remain impervious: the linguistic and cultural dimension. The Council of Europe has a long tradition, in this respect, but more than ever, in these closing years of the 20th century, with increasing globalisation of trade and of the economy, Europe needs to assert its identity which is made of the diversity of its linguistic and cultural heritage. In this respect, regional languages and cultures deserve that we pay particular attention to them: we must preserve them and give them life.

Such an awareness goes hand in hand, on the eve of the third millennium, with the mastery of new information technologies which must respect the diversity of our languages and of our cultures, and contribute to the propagation of our common values: education, democracy and social progress.

In adopting your Plan of Action, you have also endorsed a series of initiatives which concern the fate of every man, every woman, in their daily life. In taking practical measures for strengthening national legislations and for improving co-operation among our Governments in the field of drug addiction, delinquency and terrorism, you have reacted, in the appropriate fashion and in due time, to the challenges that face us all, those in Government and citizens alike, in the societies in which we live. It is that dimension, that of the citizen, that must govern our action today.

That is the programme, vast and ambitious, that lies before you, the builders of the Europe of tomorrow. We want this Europe to develop in harmony with the European Union, which is destined to enlarge itself, but we also want to see it acting in symbiosis with the other European institutions, be they mainly political, economic or military. We want this Europe to protect the diversity of its populations, but especially to be open to the world, attentive to the conflicts which it must help to resolve, generous towards the countries it gives assistance to, desirous of being, in the international society of tomorrow, a factor of equilibrium and peace. Such is the wish my Government wishes to express, in thanking all the Governments of the countries which are our friends, members or future members, and the representatives of the international institutions concerned, for having taken part in this ceremony, which has brought together, here in Strasbourg, the whole of the European family."

The Chairman spoke as follows:

"May I warmly thank Prime Minister Jospin and the French Government, as well as President Chirac, for hosting this Second Summit meeting, to the success of which President Leni Fischer and Secretary General Daniel Tarschys also very significantly contributed, and which I now declare closed."

APPENDIX 1

**SECOND SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
(Strasbourg, 10-11 October 1997)**

Programme

THURSDAY 9 OCTOBER 1997

As from	8pm	Buffet-reception	Hôtel de Ville (Place Broglie)
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FRIDAY 10 OCTOBER 1997

9.30am -	10.20am	Arrival of Delegations	Palais de l'Europe
10.25am		Family photograph	Palais de l'Europe (Main Hall)
10.30am		Opening ceremony	Palais de l'Europe (Chamber of the Parliamentary Assembly)
11.00am		First sitting	Palais de l'Europe (Chamber of the Parliamentary Assembly)
1.15pm		Luncheon hosted by Mr Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, in honour of Heads of Delegation and Ministers for Foreign Affairs	Palais de l'Europe (Restaurant bleu)
1.15pm		Lunch for Permanent Representatives and members of delegations	Palais de l'Europe (Restaurant "Jardin" and Restaurant "Patio")
3pm		Second sitting	Palais de l'Europe (Chamber of the Parliamentary Assembly)
4.30pm		Third sitting	Palais de l'Europe (Chamber of the Parliamentary Assembly)
6pm		End of third sitting	Palais de l'Europe
8pm		Dinner hosted by Mr Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, in honour of Heads of Delegation and Ministers for Foreign Affairs	Palais des Rohan
8.30pm		Dinner for Permanent Representatives and members of delegations	Palais Universitaire (Place Brant)

SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER 1997

	9.30am	Fourth sitting	Palais de l'Europe (Chamber of the Parliamentary Assembly)
	10.30am	Fifth sitting	Palais de l'Europe (Chamber of the Parliamentary Assembly)
	11.50am	Adoption of the Final Declaration	Palais de l'Europe (Chamber of the Parliamentary Assembly)
	12 noon	End of Summit	Palais de l'Europe
	12.30pm	Press conference	Palais de la Musique et des Congrès
Approx.	12.30pm (at close of Summit)	Buffet-lunch offered by the Secretary General	Palais de l'Europe (Restaurant bleu)

APPENDIX 2

***SECOND SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
(Strasbourg, 10 and 11 October 1997)***

List of Heads of State, Heads of Government,
Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Ministers and State Secretaries

ALBANIA

Mr Rexhep	MEIDANI	President of the Republic
Mr Paskal	MILO	Minister for Foreign Affairs

ANDORRA

Mr Marc	FORNÉ MOLNÉ	Head of Government
Mr Albert	PINTAT SANTOLARIA	Minister for External Relations

AUSTRIA

Mr Thomas	KLESTIL	Federal President
Mrs Benita	FERRERO-WALDNER	State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

BELGIUM

Mr Jean-Luc	DEHAENE	Prime Minister
Mr Erik	DERYCKE	Minister for Foreign Affairs

BULGARIA

Mr Petar	STOYANOV	President of the Republic
Mrs Nadejda	MIHAYLOVA	Minister for Foreign Affairs

CROATIA

Mr Franjo	TUDJMAN	President of the Republic
Mr Mate	GRANIĆ	Minister for Foreign Affairs, Deputy Prime Minister

CYPRUS

Mr Glafcos	CLERIDES	President of the Republic
Mr Ioannis	KASOULIDES	Minister for Foreign Affairs

CZECH REPUBLIC

Mr Václav	HAVEL	President of the Republic
Mr Cyril	SVOBODA	Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

DENMARK

Mr Poul	NYRUP RASMUSSEN	Prime Minister
Mr Niels	HELVEG PETERSEN	Minister for Foreign Affairs

ESTONIA

Mr Lennart	MERI	President of the Republic
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FINLAND

Mr Martti	AHTISAARI	President of the Republic
Mrs Tarja	HALONEN	Minister for Foreign Affairs

FRANCE

Mr Jacques	CHIRAC	President of the Republic CHAIRMAN
Mr Lionel	JOSPIN	Prime Minister
Mrs Catherine	TRAUTMANN	Minister for Culture and Communication Spokesperson of the Government
Mr Pierre	MOSCOVICI	Minister responsible for European Affairs

GERMANY

Mr Helmut	KOHL	Federal Chancellor
Mr Helmut	SCHÄFER	Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

GREECE

Mr Constantinos	STEPHANOPOULOS	President of the Republic
Mr Giorgos	PAPANDREOU	Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs

HUNGARY

Mr Gyula	HORN	Prime Minister
Mr László	KOVÁCS	Minister for Foreign Affairs

ICELAND

Mr David	ODDSSON	Prime Minister
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IRELAND

Mr Bertie	AHERN	Prime Minister
Mrs Liz	O'DONNELL	Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs

ITALY

Mr Romano	PRODI	President of the Council of Ministers
Mr Piero Franco	FASSINO	State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

LATVIA

Mr Guntis	ULMANIS	President of the Republic
Mr Valdis	BIRKAVS	Minister for Foreign Affairs

LIECHTENSTEIN

Mr Mario	FRICK	Head of Government
Mrs Andrea	WILLI	Minister for Foreign Affairs

LITHUANIA

Mr Algirdas	BRAZAUSKAS	President of the Republic
Mr Algirdas	SAUDARGAS	Minister for Foreign Affairs

LUXEMBOURG

Mr Jean-Claude	JUNCKER	Prime Minister
Mr Jacques	POOS	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs

MALTA

Mr Alfred	SANT	Prime Minister
Mr George W.	VELLA	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Environment

MOLDOVA

Mr Petru	LUCINSCHI	President of the Republic
Mr Nicolae	TABACARU	Minister for Foreign Affairs

NETHERLANDS

Mr Wim	KOK	Prime Minister
Mr Hans	VAN MIERLO	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs

NORWAY

Mr Thorbjørn	JAGLAND	Prime Minister
Mr Bjørn Tore	GODAL	Minister for Foreign Affairs

POLAND

Mr Aleksander	KWAŚNIEWSKI	President of the Republic
Mr Dariusz	ROSATI	Minister for Foreign Affairs

PORTUGAL

Mr António	GUTERRES	Prime Minister
Mr Jaime	GAMA	Minister for Foreign Affairs

ROMANIA

Mr Emil	CONSTANTINESCU	President of the Republic
Mr Adrian	SEVERIN	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Alexandru	HERLEA	Minister in the Prime Minister's office, Head of the Department for European integration
Mr György	TOKAY	Minister in the Prime Minister's office responsible for national minorities

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr Boris	YELTSIN	President of the Federation
Mr Yevgeni	PRIMAKOV	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Nikolay	AFANASIEVSKI	Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SAN MARINO

Mr Luigi	MAZZA	Captain Regent
Mr Marino	ZANOTTI	Captain Regent

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Mr Michal	KOVÁČ	President of the Republic
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SLOVENIA

Mr Janez	DRNOVŠEK	Prime Minister
Mr Boris	FRLEC	Minister for Foreign Affairs

SPAIN

Mr José Maria	AZNAR LÓPEZ	President of Government
Mr Ramon	DE MIGUEL	State Secretary for European Affairs

SWEDEN

Mr Göran	PERSSON	Prime Minister
Mr Jan	ELIASSON	State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

SWITZERLAND

Mr Arnold	KOLLER	President of the Swiss Confederation, Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police
Mr Flavio	COTTI	Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

***« THE FORMER YUGOSLAV
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA »***

Mr Kiro	GLIGOROV	President of the Republic
Mr Blagoj	HANDZISKI	Minister for Foreign Affairs

TURKEY

Mr Mesut	YILMAZ	Prime Minister
Mr İsmail	CEM	Minister for Foreign Affairs

UKRAINE

Mr Leonid	KUCHMA	President of the Republic
Mr Anton	BUTEYKO	First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mrs Suzanna	STANIK	Minister of Justice

UNITED KINGDOM

Mr Tony	BLAIR	Prime Minister
Mr Tony	LLOYD	Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

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ARMENIA

Mr Lévon	TER-PETROSSIAN	President of the Republic
Mr Alexandre	ARZOUMANIAN	Minister for Foreign Affairs

AZERBAIJAN

Mr Heydar	ALIEV	President of the Republic
Mr Hassan	HASSANOV	Minister for Foreign Affairs

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Mr Alija	IZETBEGOVIC	President of the Presidency
Mr Kresimir	ZUBAK	Member of the Presidency
Mr Jadranko	PRLIC	Minister for Foreign Affairs

GEORGIA

Mr Edouard	CHEVARDNADZE	President of the Republic
Mr Irakli	MENAGARICHVILI	Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr Zaza	CHENGUELIA	Vice Minister of State, Deputy Prime Minister

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HOLY SEE

Monsignor Jean-Louis	TAURAN	Secretary for State Relations
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CANADA

Mr Richard	THOMPSON	Associate Deputy Minister, Legal Operations Sector, Department of Justice
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JAPAN

Mr Koichiro	MATSUURA	Ambassador to France
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr John H.F.	SHATTUCK	Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Employment
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Mr Jacques	SANTER	President
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Mr Hans	van den BROEK	Member of the Commission
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CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE OF THE OSCE

Mr Niels	HELVEG PETERSEN	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark
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PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Mrs Leni	FISCHER	President
Mr Hallgrim	BERG	Chairman, European Democratic Group
Lord Russell	JOHNSTON	Chairman, Liberal, Democratic and Reformers' Group
Mr Jaakko	LAAKSO	Chairman, Group of the Unified European Left
Mr Peter	SCHIEDER	Chairman, Socialist Group
Mr Walter	SCHWIMMER	Chairman, Group of the European People's Party
Mr Miguel Angel	MARTINEZ	Co-Rapporteur on the Second Summit
Mr Jean	SEITLINGER	Co-Rapporteur on the Second Summit

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CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE (CLRAE)

Mr Claude	HAEGI	President
Mr Josef	HOFMANN	President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the CLRAE
Mr Jean-Claude	VAN CAUWENBERGHE	President of the Chamber of Regions of the CLRAE

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EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr Rolv RYSSDAL President

EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr Stefan TRECHSEL President

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

Mr Giorgio RATTI President of the Governing Body

Mr Raphaël ALOMAR Governor

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***EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR
DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW***

Mr Antonio LA PERGOLA President

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LIAISON COMMITTEE OF NGOs

Mr Pierre ARMAND President

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Mr Daniel	TARSCHYS	Secretary General
Mr Hans-Christian	KRÜGER	Deputy Secretary General
Mr Bruno	HALLER	Clerk of the Parliamentary Assembly
Mr Hans-Peter	FURRER	Director of Political Affairs
Mr Leonard G.	DAVIES	Secretary to the Committee of Ministers

APPENDIX 3

**SECOND SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
(Strasbourg, 10-11 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.

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.

APPENDIX 4

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE STATES ENJOYING OBSERVER
STATUS WITH THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

**Communication from the Government of Canada
to the Chairman of the Council of Europe Second Summit**

Canada applauds the Second Council of Europe Summit, which brings together the Heads of State and Government of the forty member States. Their presence in Strasbourg is testimony to Europe's commitment to the fundamental values of the Council, for example, promoting the firm establishment of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Europe, and the fostering of a more tolerant, interdependent society based on freedom of expression and information, cultural diversity and equal dignity of all.

Canada has been an official observer since May 1996, and our Parliament has had official observer status in the Assembly since its June 1997 Session. We are delighted at how this new status allows us to expand our contributions to the important work of the Council. Canada's close links with the Council are longstanding. We have been active official observers in a number of committees, especially in the fields of culture, heritage, communication, education, human rights, the media, gender equality and legal affairs. Canada also participates regularly in numerous ministerial conferences on a variety of issues.

Canada welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Council of Europe Summit. Our goal is to demonstrate our shared interest in greater European unity, democratic development, promotion of human values in all member States, and to illustrate that our commitment to the revitalisation of transatlantic relations applies to the whole European continent.

Canada welcomes the strengthening of the Council's role in the field of human rights, democracy building and the promotion of the rule of law. The creation of the new single Court of Human Rights will strengthen the protection of human rights across Europe.

Canada is supportive of the Council's desire to see its functions adapt to changing times. Canada also hopes the Council will reassert its role as a forum for dialogue and the fostering of values and new ideas and give a new impetus to its valued co-operation with the European Union and the OSCE.

Canada again applauds the member States of the Council of Europe on the achievements of this Summit, and wishes the Council the best success in addressing the challenging agenda that it has set for itself.

**Message to the Second Summit of the Council of Europe
from His Excellency Mr Ryutaro HASHIMOTO,
Prime Minister of Japan**

I should like to express my heartfelt congratulations on the convening of the Second Summit of the Council of Europe. I am honoured that Japan is invited to the Summit as an observer.

The framework of international society has undergone tremendous changes since the end of the cold War and today the Council of Europe has expanded its membership by welcoming central and eastern European countries and it has become an international organisation with a crucial role to play for the future of the whole of Europe. Through its positive endeavours in upholding democracy and human rights, it has made great contributions in strengthening the peace and stability of Europe and, in turn, to the preservation of peace and prosperity of the world. Moreover, fundamental values such as democracy and human rights are becoming universal, and in this respect too, the Council of Europe has an increasingly important role to play.

Europe, through its deepening and enlargement of integration, is becoming a greater entity in the international society. Furthermore, as evidenced by the historic ASEM Summit held in 1996, dialogue between Europe and Asia is developing. Japan shares fundamental values with Europe in many areas, such as upholding democracy and human rights, where the Council of Europe is making so many contributions. Therefore, it is only natural that Japan is co-operating with Europe in developing new frameworks for the international society, and the need for such co-operation is becoming increasingly great. Based on this recognition, Japan has been making positive contributions for the peace and prosperity of Europe, as demonstrated in the case of former Yugoslavia.

In addition, it is becoming more important than ever for Japan and Europe to exchange its wisdom and experiences in addressing common issues, such as ageing society, as well as to strengthen co-operation between Japan and Europe in addressing global issues, such as environment, drugs and organised crime.

From this standpoint, it goes without saying that it is vital to strengthen the bonds of co-operation between Japan and the Council of Europe, which is deeply involved in European peace and prosperity and addressing global issues in Europe. Japan has made human and intellectual contributions, as well as financial contributions of approximately 1.7 million French francs, to the Council of Europe. I am grateful that the Council of Europe decided to grant Japan observer status in November 1996 in recognition of these contributions.

Japan is determined to continue to strengthen its co-operative relations with the Council of Europe as much as it can. I should be grateful if Japan's participation and opinion as observer will contribute in a meaningful way to the creative activities of the Council of Europe.

I sincerely hope for the success of this Summit and further progress of the Council of Europe.

**Letter from President Bill CLINTON to Mr Jacques CHIRAC,
President of the French Republic**

**THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON**

October 8, 1997

Dear Jacques:

I congratulate you on the occasion of the Second Council of Europe Summit, which your government has organized so successfully. By bringing together the Council of Europe's forty Heads of State and Government, this Summit demonstrates the solidarity of a Europe now united by democratic values and respect for universal principles of justice and equality.

The United States welcomes the strengthening of European institutions committed to the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has developed an impressive jurisprudence, and the Council's institutions have trained local officials and assisted European States in bringing their laws and practice into conformity with the highest human rights standards. We look forward to the establishment of a permanent, single Court, which will benefit all European citizens.

We also appreciate the Council of Europe's programs directed at law enforcement and governance issues, such as efforts to end drug smuggling and reduce corruption. To support this work, the United States Government has contributed \$200,000 to assist in anti-money laundering measures in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The United States' relationship with the Council of Europe has grown steadily since we were admitted as an observer in 1996. In particular, we have worked with the Council to help implement the Dayton and Washington Agreements in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Recognizing our strong collaboration on these critical issues, I am pleased today to announce a U.S. pledge of one million dollars to support Bosnia's Human Rights Commission. We look forward to expanding our dialogue with the Council on these and other areas of common concern.

I again congratulate both the Government of France and the member States of the Council of Europe on the success of this Summit, and I wish the Council continued success in its defense of our shared values.

Sincerely,

Bill CLINTON

His Excellency
Jacques Chirac
President of the French Republic
Paris

APPENDIX 5

**Message from the State Duma of the Federal Assembly
of the Russian Federation to participants
in the Summit of Council of Europe member states
Strasbourg
10 and 11 October 1997**

Noting the great importance of the meeting of Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States for consolidating European unity and assuring the triumph of democratic principles, the rule of law and respect for human rights and national minorities,

Considering that the Council of Europe should perform a major role in establishing a new system of democratic security and co-operation in Europe capable of guaranteeing Europe's stability, guarding against the emergence of new divisions in our continent and securing the progress and prosperity of the European States,

Advocating the development of European co-operation, the resolution of European problems through common efforts free from external pressure and on the basis of dialogue involving all the European States without exception and with due regard to their national and state identity, and opposing any attempt to isolate a given State,

Confirming its commitment to the fundamental principles and standards of the Council of Europe, as well as to the policy of establishing the rule of law in Russia; further considering it vitally important that all Council of Europe member states should honour their commitments,

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation:

- calls upon the participants in the meeting of Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member states to adopt practical and effective decisions in order to strengthen democracy, secure freedoms, human rights and living conditions in keeping with human dignity, create a common legal, humanitarian and cultural area and find solutions to our continent's most urgent problems, particularly as regards protection of the rights of national minorities and the rights of the child, social justice and prevention of crime and terrorism,
- declares its intention to continue with the reform of Russia's legal system and especially to give priority of consideration to the draft federal legislation on ratification of the fundamental instruments of the Council of Europe signed by Russia at its accession on 28 February 1996, first and foremost those concerning ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Protocols thereto, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Unanimously adopted by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on 8 October 1997.