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Standing Committee

Declaration

The Reykjavik Summit: a strong message of unity, common purpose and unwavering resolve to be followed up by action

adopted by the Standing Committee at its meeting on 26 May 2023

1. Meeting today in Riga as the Standing Committee, the Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the [Reykjavik Declaration “United around our values”](#) adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the 4th Council of Europe Summit (Reykjavik, 16 - 17 May 2023), as a strong message of unity, common purpose and unwavering resolve. The Declaration reflects the key concerns and proposals set out in Assembly [recommendation 2245 \(2023\) “The Reykjavik Summit of the Council of Europe – United around values in the face of extraordinary challenges”](#).
2. With the Reykjavik Declaration, the Heads of State and Government have provided a new direction for the Council of Europe in the years to come. As a statutory organ of the Council of Europe, the Assembly stands ready to translate the Summit vision into concrete results, through its parliamentary deliberations, its monitoring procedure, its inter-parliamentary co-operation activities and networks, and its interaction with the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General.
3. Standing with Ukraine for as long as it takes, the Assembly will spare no effort to support the reconstruction and democratic resilience of Ukraine, being convinced that well-functioning democratic institutions, respect for the rule of law and compliance with democratic standards together with stronger European integration are the best guarantees for the democratic security of Ukraine and Europe.
4. Recalling that there cannot be lasting peace without accountability, the Assembly welcomes the establishment of an [Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine](#), as a first component of a future international compensation mechanism, and encourages other countries to add their names to those of the 45 member and observer states, and the European Union, which have already joined it or declared their intention to do so.
5. At the same time, the Assembly will resolutely pursue its efforts to ensure that the political and military leadership of the Russian Federation is held to account for its war of aggression against Ukraine, supporting the urgent establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression and calling for the Council of Europe to be a part of relevant consultations and negotiations, providing its expert and technical support. It calls for justice for the victims of war crimes, human rights and humanitarian law violations and for the creation of viable mechanisms to ensure the return of abducted persons, including children, back home.
6. Following up the Reykjavik Declaration, the Assembly will strive to preserve the role of the Council of Europe as a beacon of human rights protection, by promoting compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights, protecting the authority of the Court, and ensuring the swift and satisfactory execution of its judgements; and by promoting the accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights without any further delay.

7. Welcoming the Reykjavík Process, and reaffirming once more its belief that the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a fundamental human right which should be enshrined in domestic and international law, the Assembly will contribute actively to the standard-setting work of the Council of Europe in the environmental field. It will also continue to support the Organisation's work to shape human rights protection in the digital age and to address other emerging societal challenges from a human rights perspective.
8. Convinced of the urgent need to prevent and resist democratic backsliding, the Assembly will continue to support member states in tackling its root causes, placing greater emphasis on promoting equality and protecting social rights. It will endorse, promote and further develop the Reykjavik Principles of Democracy. The Assembly will strengthen its initiatives to prevent and counter foreign interference with democratic processes, to enhance the integrity of elections, and to promote media freedom and freedom of expression. It will also step up its engagement with civil society and mainstream a youth perspective in its work, as well as continue promoting and protecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.
9. As the body representing the national parliaments of all member States, the Assembly stands ready to engage in the Council of Europe High-level Dialogue with member States and partners on the Reykjavik Principles of Democracy. It will also play its part beyond Council of Europe membership, strengthening relations with parliamentary bodies and other international organisations, further consolidating dialogue and co-operation with Belarusian democratic forces and civil society, and identifying channels and means to strengthen dialogue with Russian democratic forces and civil society who share Council of Europe values.
10. The Assembly calls on all its members, representing national parliaments of the 46 member States, to commit to ensuring that the Reykjavik Declaration finds its expression in action at the national level, through holding governments to account on the commitments made at the Summit, supporting the necessary legislative changes and ratifications, and ensuring and mobilizing the level of budgetary resources commensurate with the mandate and tasks given to the Organisation in Reykjavik.
11. Finally, the Assembly expresses its appreciation for the climate of constructive dialogue with which it co-operated with the Committee of Ministers, the Secretary General and other Council of Europe bodies in the lead-up to the Summit and looks forward to pursuing this approach in its follow-up, including through the Joint Committee. It also supports holding regular Summits of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe to provide overarching direction and political momentum to the Organisation.