

## Final Declaration of the Council of Europe's Second Summit (Strasbourg, 10 and 11 October 1997)

**Caption:** On 10 and 11 October 1997, the Heads of State or Government of the member States of the Council of Europe, meeting in Strasbourg at the organisation's Second Summit, define their priorities following the enlargement of the Council of Europe to encompass 40 member States.

**Source:** Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 10-11 October 1997). Final Declaration. [ON-LINE]. [Strasbourg]: Council of Europe, [18.11.2003]. Available on <http://cm.coe.int/sessions/97summit2/x3.htm>.

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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/final\\_declaration\\_of\\_the\\_council\\_of\\_europe\\_s\\_second\\_summit\\_strasbourg\\_10\\_and\\_11\\_october\\_1997-en-819016cb-ebd4-4cc5-a4a9-1bb8a5cc0fd8.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/final_declaration_of_the_council_of_europe_s_second_summit_strasbourg_10_and_11_october_1997-en-819016cb-ebd4-4cc5-a4a9-1bb8a5cc0fd8.html)

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## Final Declaration of the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 10 and 11 October 1997)

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 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.