



## Recommendation 1303 (1996)<sup>1</sup>

# Proposal for a second summit of heads of state and government of the Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly recalls the major developments which have taken place since the Vienna Summit (8- 9 October 1993): expanding membership of the Council of Europe to cover the entire continent, in particular the accession of Russia; rapid globalisation of exchanges through the spread of telecommunications, to the point of placing strains on the cohesion of European societies; the ongoing revision of the institutions of the European Union.
2. The Council of Europe faces great challenges today which require fresh thinking on resources and long-term goals for the role it should play in promoting a model of society for Europe in the twentyfirst century.
3. Summit meetings of heads of state and government are the sole means of renewing the political impetus of international institutions.
4. The Assembly requests that a second Council of Europe summit be held in Strasbourg in the second half of 1997.
5. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers include the following items in the draft declaration for consideration by heads of state and government:
  - 5.1. clear definition and decision at the highest political level of the place and role of the Council of Europe in Europe's institutional landscape;
  - 5.2. review of actions undertaken since the Vienna Summit: protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities; Plan of Action against Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Intolerance; reform of the European Court of Human Rights; political dialogue;
  - 5.3. a stronger political role for the Council of Europe, in particular through:
    - a. increased emphasis on political monitoring of obligations and commitments;
    - b. reform of the 1949 Statute to give a stronger role to the Committee of Ministers (to be renamed "Council of Ministers") and to the Secretary General, and to guarantee the budgetary autonomy of the Parliamentary Assembly; and
    - c. stronger co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union on the basis of proposals already made by the Parliamentary Assembly;
  - 5.4. development of the "partnership for democracy" by expanding co-operation and assistance programmes;
  - 5.5. ever firmer establishment of a European "legal area", for drawing up minimum standards for civil society, for drafting new instruments to respond to progress in computerisation and medical science, and for harmonising environmental standards throughout Europe;

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1. Assembly debate on 24 September 1996 (26th Sitting) (see [Doc. 7637](#), report by the Political Affairs Committee; rapporteurs: MM. Martínez and Seitlinger). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 September 1996 (26th Sitting).



5.6. implementation of new initiatives to promote a model for European society: a. encouragement of the ratification of the European Social Charter and its protocols, as well as of the revised European Social Charter, and of the implementation of social rights, in particular as regards employment, the guaranteeing of social welfare systems, the struggle against poverty and exclusion, and professional training for young people;

- a. incentives to partnership between the state and the various economic and social agents;
- b. drawing up of legal instruments to address the challenges arising from new developments in information technology, such as the Internet, as well as from the increased influence and responsibility of electronic media;
- c. drawing up of a European public service charter, with standards guaranteeing citizens equal and free access to basic public services: education, health, transport, telecommunications;
- d. drawing up of a European convention on the civil service, establishing standards relating to ethics and job security;
- e. setting up, in liaison with the European Union, of a special programme for youth training in Europe, designed to enhance the adaptability of education systems;
- f. expansion of support programmes for democratic reform, notably by providing expert advice in the institutional, educational and social fields;
- g. strengthening of the Organisation's analytical and predictive role (fonction prospective) in the field of legal norms and social trends, prompted by and with the participation of the Parliamentary Assembly, and with contributions from qualified personalities - economists, philosophers and sociologists renowned for their work on the new patterns of social life likely to emerge in the next century;

5.7. new budgetary means permitting the Council of Europe to address these goals in the new context set by its expanded membership, in order that heads of state and government at summit meetings should recognise that proposals for policies and programmes, especially those which affect the role of the Parliamentary Assembly, are only of symbolic value unless additional finance is made available.