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## Defending the *acquis* of the Council of Europe: preserving 65 years of successful intergovernmental co-operation

**Reply to Recommendation<sup>1</sup>:** Recommendation 2114 (2017)  
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has given very careful consideration to Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2113 \(2017\)](#) and [Recommendation 2114 \(2017\)](#), which raise political issues of the greatest importance for the future of the Council of Europe. It welcomes the Parliamentary Assembly's initiative in reviewing the strategic lines of approach to be followed for the Organisation's action in view of the many challenges that currently exist at pan-European level regarding the Council of Europe's principles and values. It also welcomes the Assembly's desire to defend and promote these values, a goal which it fully shares. Like the Assembly, it is particularly concerned here to preserve and develop the Organisation's unique *acquis* in terms of conventions.

2. With regard to the initiative, launched by the Sofia Declaration, of the possible holding of a new Council of Europe Summit, the Committee of Ministers shares the Assembly's concern to "preserve and further strengthen the pan-European project in a Europe which has changed profoundly since the last Summit", but believes that it is vital, before a corresponding decision is taken, to ensure that the political conditions exist for the member States, as stated in [Recommendation 2113 \(2017\)](#), to reaffirm at such a Summit "... at the highest political level, their commitment to the ideal of European unity and the common values and principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law upheld by the Organisation" and take key political decisions in this respect. If, in due course, the Committee of Ministers were to decide to hold a new Summit, it would also consider the proposals made by the Assembly in its two recommendations regarding both the content and the arrangements for the preparation of such a Summit.

3. With regard to the call made in [Recommendation 2113 \(2017\)](#) to consider the proposal "to engage in a procedure aimed at harmonising jointly the rules governing participation, representation and responsibilities of member States in both statutory organs, while fully respecting the autonomy of these bodies", the Committee of Ministers would refer to the discussion held on the subject at the Joint Committee meeting on 14 October 2017. In the meantime, the Committee of Ministers held a further exchange of views on the same subject with Mr Michele Nicoletti, as Assembly rapporteur on the recommendation, at its meeting on 13 December 2017. The Committee of Ministers has taken note that the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly agreed shortly thereafter, at its meeting on 15 December 2017, to set up an Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau, whose task is "to reflect on, and if possible prepare, proposals aimed at harmonising the rules governing participation and representation of member States in both statutory organs, while fully respecting the autonomy of the two bodies" as well as "to prepare proposals as regards the role and mission of the Parliamentary Assembly as a statutory organ of the Council of Europe and a pan-European forum for interparliamentary dialogue which aims at having an impact in all Council of Europe member States." The Committee of Ministers will follow the relevant discussions with interest, with a view to considering for its part, where appropriate, the follow-up to be given to them once they have been concluded.

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1. Joint reply to Recommendations [2113 \(2017\)](#) and [2114 \(2017\)](#), adopted at the 1304th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (17 January 2018).

