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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Self-determination and territorial integrity in the 21st century

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Thomas PRINGLE and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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The right to self-determination is recognised as an essential principle of international law. It is established in the United Nations Charter and associated Covenants. Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 states that "All peoples have the right of self-determination".

Self-determination movements are active across the Council of Europe region; they base their legitimacy on the broad support of the populations in their territories and their own internal democratic standards, including a rejection of violence.

Outside the decolonisation process, however, public international law does not recognise the right of peoples to self-determination, as self-determination conflicts with the fundamental principle of States' territorial integrity. International law enshrines the principle of territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders and any attempt at secession may be considered a disruption of international relations.

Two principles of public international law that cannot be easily reconciled: the right of peoples to self-determination and the principle of the territorial integrity of States.

The Parliamentary Assembly should examine the issue as research is highly desirable in order to provide guidance to involved or potentially involved national and regional parliaments and governments, to reduce the risk of misunderstandings and conflicts, and to provide sustainable solutions for the new challenges of this 21st century.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group