Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2641 (2026)[1]

Threats against the international order: the case of Greenland

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Recent threats by the United States of America against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark, a member State of the Council of Europe, have brought into ever sharper relief the fundamental challenges confronting the international order. Rising global competition and the return of power politics are increasingly undermining the principles of international law, multilateral co-operation and respect for established norms.

2. A growing trend of contestation of the rules-based international order had already been decisively accelerated by the Russian Federation in its resort to the use of force to attempt to alter internationally recognised borders. The unprovoked full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine has reinforced the urgency of defending a legal and institutional order based on shared rules rather than on pure power competition, and of ensuring that multilateral frameworks remain credible, effective and coherent.

3. In this increasingly contested environment, recent public statements suggesting the acquisition, control or transfer of territory challenge established international norms. Even when framed as hypothetical or strategic, such statements risk undermining respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and contribute to a climate in which pressure and transactional logic are normalised, including among partners.

4. In response to these developments, the Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the strong resolve and united response of European States in support of Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark. The Assembly has repeatedly underscored this need for greater unity among European States, for deeper dialogue with partners and for a renewed commitment to international law, so that multilateral platforms can deliver effective results in addressing shared challenges, with action grounded in the common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

5. The transatlantic relationship has long constituted a key pillar of this action, which has enabled an unprecedented degree of political, economic, cultural and institutional integration, including deeply interconnected markets and shared security arrangements. These deep links between Europe and the United States have also generated mutual dependencies, which are sustainable only on the basis of trust, predictability and respect for commonly agreed rules and values.

6. Through this co-operation, collective responses to shared threats have been possible, thereby contributing to peace, prosperity, the promotion of democratic values and the development of universal human rights standards. The direction of this relationship has far-reaching implications for global affairs, including addressing the war of aggression against Ukraine, the tensions in the Middle East, an increasingly competitive global trade system, growing geopolitical rivalries in a multipolar world, the climate crisis and the governance of new technologies.

7. The Assembly cautions that the achievements of multilateral co-operation are placed at risk when common rules and norms governing relations between States shift towards narratives or actions based on coercion, pressure or transactional calculation. Such practices weaken mutual trust and erode the normative

1. *Assembly debate* on 29 January 2026 (7th sitting) (see Doc. 16334, report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Bertrand Bouyx). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 29 January 2026 (7th sitting).

foundations of long-standing international co-operation. In response to these risks, the Assembly welcomes the Council of Europe's ongoing work on a New Democratic Pact for Europe, which underlines that democratic resilience, public trust and security are inseparable and must be addressed together.

8. The Assembly notes with concern that recent threats against Greenland represent a concrete manifestation of these wider pressures on the international order and on trust-based co-operation among partners.

9. The strategic importance of Greenland has increased markedly in a context of intensifying global power competition. Evolving security dynamics in the Arctic and growing interest in natural resources and transport routes have heightened geopolitical attention to this territory. The Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine has profoundly disrupted established patterns of co-operation in the Arctic, including within the Arctic Council, accelerating mistrust and competition and weakening long-standing mechanisms of dialogue and restraint.

10. The Assembly recalls that, in accordance with the constitutional framework of the Kingdom of Denmark, Greenland is an integral part of the Danish Realm and enjoys a status of autonomy. It further recalls that the sovereignty of Denmark over Greenland, accompanied by extensive Greenlandic self-government, is a matter of settled international law. Denmark, bound by the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1) and by the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), bears international responsibility for ensuring compliance with these obligations throughout its territory. Greenland falls within the scope of these obligations and benefits from the Council of Europe's standards in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, in accordance with the applicable constitutional arrangements.

11. Any use or threat of force against the territory of a State would constitute a direct violation of the legal and moral norms that govern the peaceful coexistence of States, and in particular of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations that relate to sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs of States. These principles apply equally to autonomous and self-governing territories forming part of a State, which may not be treated as objects of negotiation, acquisition or strategic transaction.

12. The Assembly stresses that it is exclusively for the people of Greenland and the people of Denmark to decide on matters concerning their future and their mutual relations, in full respect of applicable constitutional and legal frameworks. The right of peoples to self-determination is a central principle of the international legal order and must be exercised freely, without external pressure or interference, and in conditions that ensure democratic legitimacy and legal certainty.

13. The Assembly recognises and welcomes efforts to clarify positions and to seek shared solutions through political dialogue. In this context, the agreement of a framework for a future deal regarding Greenland between the President of the United States, Donald Trump, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary General, Mark Rutte, represents an important basis for advancing dialogue between allies to enhance security in the Arctic region. The Assembly remains committed to constructive engagement and co-operation firmly anchored in respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and established legal frameworks.

14. In the light of the above considerations, the Assembly, as regards threats to the international order:

14.1. reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the principles of international law as the essential foundation of peace, security and stability in Europe and beyond;

14.2. underlines that international relations grounded in trust and respect for agreed rules are the foundation of stability, collective security and prosperity, and that the use of economic, political or security dependencies as instruments of coercion risks eroding trust and destabilising the international order;

14.3. calls for constructive engagement between partners and allies to address shared challenges and uphold the principles that underpin enduring international co-operation, including the continued support of Ukraine in defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity;

14.4. encourages member and observer States of the Council of Europe to strengthen co-operation within relevant multilateral forums, both regionally and globally, with a view to reinforcing democratic resilience, upholding international law and addressing shared challenges in a manner grounded in the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law;

14.5. reiterates the valuable contribution of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) in assisting numerous States to adopt constitutional and legislative reforms that uphold the values of the Council of Europe, and regrets the decision of the United States of America to withdraw from this advisory body, thereby depriving it of an important source of expertise and experience;

14.6. welcomes the focus of the Council of Europe on reinforcing democratic security, including through the work to establish a New Democratic Pact for Europe, and calls for strengthened democratic governance to enhance resilience in the face of geopolitical pressure and growing militarisation in Europe.

15. As regards Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark, the Assembly:

15.1. reiterates that Greenland is an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark and that any decisions concerning its future status or its relations within the kingdom may be taken only by the people of Greenland and the people of Denmark;

15.2. calls on member States of the Council of Europe to support efforts to strengthen Arctic security by providing stronger political engagement, funding and dedicated co-ordination to the democratic security and institutions of Greenland and Denmark;

15.3. calls for continued focus on strengthening responses to disinformation, hybrid threats and possible foreign interference in Council of Europe member States.

16. As regards its own work, the Assembly:

16.1. reaffirms its commitment to parliamentary dialogue, both in the European space and with partners beyond it, as a means of exchange on matters of common concern and in the promotion of the principles of parliamentary democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

16.2. should continue to explore the development of its transatlantic dialogue, as well as seek avenues to deepen its already well-established relations with its observer delegations from Canada and Mexico.