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## Euro-Mediterranean region: call for a Council of Europe strategy

**Reply to Recommendation<sup>1</sup>:** Recommendation 1919 (2010)  
Committee of Ministers

1. Reply from the Committee of Ministers adopted at the 1097th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (10 November 2010)
2. The Committee of Ministers has carefully considered Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1919 \(2010\)](#) and has brought it to the attention of the member states' governments. The Committee has also transmitted the recommendation to the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) for information and possible comments.
3. The Committee of Ministers recalls its reply to Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1753 \(2006\)](#) on the "External relations of the Council of Europe", adopted on 18 January 2007 at the 984th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, and in particular its paragraph 2, in which the Committee stated that "Whilst acknowledging the importance of external relations for the Council of Europe, and of the contribution by the Organisation to the enhancement of universal values outside of Europe, the Committee of Ministers is nevertheless convinced that priority must be placed on the European dimension of the Organisation's mission."
4. At the same time, the Committee of Ministers recalls that some projects are already conducted in co-operation with the European Union in order to develop contacts and co-operation with countries of the Mediterranean basin, in particular through Joint Programmes with the European Commission. Other projects for joint action are currently under preparation.
5. The Committee of Ministers is well aware of the positive co-operation between the North-South Centre and the European Union. It recalls that the European Commission and the European Parliament are already members of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre. The possibility for the Committee of Regions to also become member of the Executive Council will be considered in the context of the forthcoming discussion to take place within the Committee of Ministers on the possible revision of the statutory resolution of the North-South Centre.
6. The Committee of Ministers agrees about the importance of promoting accession to the relevant legal instruments of the Council of Europe by states of the Mediterranean basin which share the values of the Organisation, in order to extend the outreach of these instruments. In this respect, the Committee would like to recall its reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1825 (2008) on "Strengthening co-operation with the Maghreb countries", adopted on 21 January 2009, in which it stated that "non-member states' legal undertakings under Council of Europe treaties promote fruitful interaction between third states and member states, and should progressively lead to a wider scope for co-operation".
7. The vast majority of the Council of Europe treaties are open to non member states of the Council of Europe, including Mediterranean states. Some conventions, such as the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18), remain however only open to European non-member states of the Council of Europe. An overall

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review of the Council of Europe conventions is currently taking place as part of the reform of the Council of Europe engaged by the Secretary General and unanimously supported by the Committee of Ministers. The opening up of conventions to non European non-member states is being duly considered in this context.

8. Finally, the Committee of Ministers recalls that countries of the Mediterranean basin participate in some Council of Europe activities, for example within the framework of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the Co-operation Group to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs (Pompidou Group) and the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA).