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Democracy and human rights in the foreign policy of Council of Europe member states: search for a joint approach

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Silver MEIKAR and other members of the Assembly

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

The Council of Europe has long-standing experience in promoting the highest standards in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in its member states. In addition, in recent years, the development and consolidation of such standards outside the Council of Europe area has become an increasingly important concern for the Organisation. Behind this engagement lies the conviction that human rights, democracy and the rule of law are universal values.

Unfortunately, Council of Europe member states do not always seek to project these values in their dealings with those countries whose governments act in blatant disregard of fundamental democratic and human rights principles. In fact, by encouraging investments and business, allowing the sale of weapons, closing an eye to foreign asset controls, or refraining from criticism, Council of Europe member states sometimes provide indirect support to non-democratic governments, thus helping them remain in power. Examples include Myanmar/Burma, Iran, North Korea, Sudan and many other countries outside Europe.

It is understandable and even inevitable that geopolitical and economic interests strongly affect the conduct of foreign relations; however, the promotion of democracy and human rights should also occupy an important place in the concerns of Council of Europe member states, in line with the Organisation's approach.

As the political body of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly should make a strong call on member states to ensure consistency between the democratic and human rights principles that they have vowed to respect and the conduct of their relations with countries which violate them. In this context, the Assembly should propose that Council of Europe member states resort to a common and coordinated approach towards non-democratic states.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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