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08 January 2013

## Human rights and foreign policy

**Reply to Recommendation<sup>1</sup>:** Recommendation 2004 (2012)  
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has taken note of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2004 (2012) on “Human rights and foreign policy” and of the relevant resolution in which the Assembly calls on member States to take a number of steps to give prominence in their foreign policy to standards concerning human rights, democracy and rule of law. It has brought the recommendation to the attention of the member States’ governments so that they might take inspiration from it as required.
2. The Committee agrees with the Assembly that the furtherance of democracy and human rights should form an integral part of member States’ foreign policy, both bilaterally and multilaterally, while noting that it rests with each State to structure its foreign policy as it sees fit. It welcomes the initiatives already taken by several member States and the European Union, for example through the creation of Human Rights Ambassadors. It encourages all member States to develop such initiatives, building on the Council of Europe instruments and standards and promoting them where appropriate.
3. The Committee recalls in this context that the promotion of democracy, human rights and rule of law – as core values of the Council of Europe – is an integral part of the Council of Europe policy towards neighbouring regions.
4. The Committee shares the Assembly’s view that the European External Action Service represents an opportunity to enhance the link between human rights and foreign policy.

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1. Adopted at the 1158th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (12 December 2012).

