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Standing Committee

Declaration

On the #RoadToReykjavik: towards a 4th Summit which meets Europeans' expectations

adopted by the Standing Committee at its meeting on 25 November 2022

The Parliamentary Assembly, meeting today in Reykjavik as Standing Committee, welcomes the Committee of Ministers' decision to hold a 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in May 2023.

Faced with the brutality of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, Heads of State and Government should reiterate that rules-based multilateralism is the pivot of the international order, and firmly reject unilateral actions based on the use of force.

They should stand in solidarity with Ukrainians, who are facing unbearable suffering and paying the price of this aggression with their lives. They should give a clear political message in support of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including by backing a comprehensive system to ensure that the Russian Federation be held accountable for violating international law and for the damage it has caused.

At a juncture in its history and with a war raging on its territory, Europe needs to reaffirm, loudly, clearly and at the highest political level, its unabated and unanimous attachment to its most fundamental ambition: to strive for peace and prosperity for all in Europe by protecting and promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The core mission of the Council of Europe must continue to be Europe's compass.

The 4th Summit should lay the ground for a forward-looking renewal of the Council of Europe, which should be given greater political and financial means to contribute to realising peace, stability and prosperity for the benefit of all Europeans against the pressure and interference by authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

A renewed Council of Europe should have the capacity to be a pioneer in human rights protection, setting standards in emerging areas of concern (such as artificial intelligence). It should take leadership in the area of climate change, as a healthy environment is the precondition for durable and sustainable peace and prosperity while continuing its pioneer work in the area of gender equality and in the fight against violence against women. It should be able to address the backsliding of democracy and rising inequalities, reinvigorate citizens' trust in democratic institutions and contribute to the continent's democratic security. By ensuring that execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in all member States is a priority, Council of Europe Heads of State and Government should safeguard and strengthen the Convention system, which has a direct and tangible impact on the lives of all Europeans.

The Council of Europe emerging from the 4th Summit should better respond to citizens' expectations in terms of openness, transparency and active engagement. It should also be a cornerstone of the European multilateral architecture, with greater political clout and impact on its member States; greater capacity to project its values and standards beyond its membership; and a deeper strategic partnership with the European Union, also in light of its prospective accession to the European Convention on Human Rights.

On the #RoadToReykjavik, welcoming the climate of co-operation and dialogue with the Committee of Ministers, the Secretary General and other Council of Europe bodies, the Assembly stands ready to assume its responsibilities as a statutory organ of the Organisation, providing meaningful input to the Summit and contributing to its success, including through its report on "A fourth Summit for a renewed, improved and reinforced Council of Europe" to be debated in January 2023.