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The Reykjavik Summit of the Council of Europe: United around values in the face of extraordinary challenges

Report¹

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

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¹ Reference to committee: Doc. 15533, Reference 4650 of 31 May 2022.

A. Draft recommendation²

1. Europe is facing an extraordinary challenge. The Russian Federation's large-scale, protracted and brutal aggression against Ukraine is an affront to all the principles the Council of Europe stands for and to the foundations of the European multilateral architecture which has been built to avoid repeating the atrocities of the Second World War.
2. The return of a large-scale war of aggression in Europe highlights that the solidity and resilience of European democracies, their respect for human rights and their adherence to the rule of law are the best guarantees for each other's prosperity, security and peaceful future. In this defining moment of European history, Council of Europe member States, at the highest political level, should reaffirm their unity around common values and their unfaltering commitment to multilateralism based on international law.
3. The Assembly, therefore, hails the decision of the Committee of Ministers to convene the fourth Summit of Council of Europe Heads of State and Government in Reykjavik on 16-17 May 2023. It commends the endeavours by the Irish and the Icelandic presidencies of the Committee of Ministers to achieve this result and expresses great appreciation for the role of the Secretary General, including her initiative, at the invitation of the Committee of Ministers, to set up a High-Level Reflection Group. The Assembly welcomes the report of the High-Level Reflection Group as a significant contribution to the effort of reflection which is currently under way to prepare the Summit and supports its general thrust and main proposals.
4. While Ukraine and Ukrainians are the direct victims of the illegal, unjustified and unjustifiable aggression by the Russian Federation, its repercussions are felt worldwide. Europeans have started to pay the price of the war through higher living costs and an impending economic recession which will affect their lives as they emerge from the first waves of the Covid-19 pandemic. This may contribute to further eroding trust in political systems and institutions, reinforcing the downward trend of the past few years.
5. How to bridge the gap between people's expectations and public delivery is a further test for European democracies. People are calling for their rights to be protected, including against abuses by their own authorities. They demand a healthy environment and action against climate change. They want technology to improve the quality of their lives without controlling them. People demand to have a greater say in political decision-making and participate in the democratic processes, beyond elections. They understandably expect politics and public institutions to be free from corruption. They care deeply for justice, greater equality and inclusion, and better socio-economic prospects for themselves and future generations.
6. The fourth Summit should have the ambition to set out a forward-looking agenda for the Council of Europe, putting people's interests, concerns and expectations back to the forefront of the mission of the Organisation.
7. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers prepare a Political Declaration and an Action Plan to be endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe during the forthcoming Summit, with a view to providing a new strategic vision, a fresh political impetus and new responses in the face of the present extraordinary challenges.
8. United around values, the Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States should:
 - 8.1. affirm their unwavering support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and stand in solidarity with Ukraine and Ukrainians;
 - 8.2. condemn the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine as a serious violation of international law and a threat to international peace and security;
 - 8.3. take a comprehensive approach to the issue of accountability of the Russian Federation in relation to the aggression against Ukraine, and in particular:
 - 8.3.1. give political support to the initiative to set up an ad hoc international criminal tribunal to investigate and prosecute the crime of aggression committed by the political and military leadership of the Russian Federation;

² Draft recommendation adopted unanimously by the Committee on 13 December 2022.

8.3.2. support the work of international courts having a mandate to investigate and prosecute genocide, war crimes, international humanitarian law violations and crimes against humanity committed in the context of the aggression;

8.3.3. support the setting up of a comprehensive international compensation mechanism, including a register of the damage caused by the Russian aggression;

8.4. reaffirm that the pursuit of peace based upon justice and international co-operation is a vital precondition for the preservation of human society and civilisation;

8.5. confirm their commitment to rules-based multilateralism as the pivot of the international order;

8.6. reiterate their mutual engagement to make it possible for Europe to be a vast area of democratic security, echoing the words of the Vienna Declaration which concluded the first Summit of Head of State and Government of Council of Europe member States in 1993.

9. The fourth Summit should ensure that the Council of Europe steps up its support to Ukraine, immediately and after the end of the war of aggression. Well-functioning democratic institutions, respect for the rule of law and compliance with democratic standards together with stronger European integration are the best guarantee for the democratic security of Ukraine and Europe, and are as essential as the reconstruction effort. Steps should be taken to increase the profile and visibility of the Council of Europe's substantial assistance to and co-operation with Ukraine, as well as to ensure enhanced co-ordination and co-operation with other relevant international organisations, through the establishment of a Special Co-ordinator, under the authority of the Secretary General.

10. It should also demand that the Russian Federation withdraw from the territories of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine which are illegally under its control; reiterate the applicability of the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe human rights treaties in these territories; encourage the Council of Europe to maintain contacts with civil society, non-governmental organisations, human rights defenders and independent journalists on the ground and to support other international human rights mechanisms which are accessible to people in these areas, including under the aegis of the OSCE and the United Nations.

11. Reaffirming the role of the Council of Europe as the leading intergovernmental organisation in Europe for all matters relating to human rights, democracy and the rule of law, the Heads of State and Government should reiterate its pan-European vocation and its nature as a community of values, which can be a beacon for anybody who promotes or aspires to human rights, democracy and the rule of law, wherever they are. In this context, the Summit should express support for a policy of openness towards Belarusian and Russian individuals, groups and organisations who unequivocally uphold Council of Europe values and principles.

12. The Summit should further develop the Council of Europe role as a political community by enhancing the political dimension of its work and ensuring an efficient articulation of functions and responsibilities with other institutions of the multilateral architecture. In this regard, it should aim to upgrade the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union, in line with Assembly Resolution 2430 (2022) "Beyond the Lisbon treaty: strengthening the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union", by:

12.1. giving a decisive push for finalising the negotiations for EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights;

12.2. inviting the European Union to join other Council of Europe instruments, including the Revised European Social Charter, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and the partial and enlarged agreement establishing the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO);

12.3. enhancing political dialogue and co-operation, especially in the area of the rule of law;

12.4. calling on the European Union to envisage a structured role for the Council of Europe in the context of the EU enlargement process;

12.5. laying the ground for a revision of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union.

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13. The Summit should acknowledge the Council of Europe's contribution to global governance and encourage the Organisation to project its values and standards beyond its membership, strengthening co-operation with interested States and organisations, whether in its geographical neighbourhood or its political proximity. It should seek to profile the Council of Europe as a closer partner for the United Nations, its agencies and mechanisms with a view to supporting global governance, rules-based multilateralism and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

14. While democracy, human rights and the rule of law should remain its main objectives and areas of expertise, the Council of Europe should be renewed, strengthened and given new means to have an impact and stay ahead of developments, keeping up with societal change and citizens' demands.

15. As regards human rights, Heads of State and Government should commit to safeguarding and further strengthening the Convention system, including by:

- 15.1. reaffirming the binding nature of the Court's judgments and decisions on interim measures and their primacy over those of national jurisdictions;
- 15.2. further strengthening the execution of judgments by introducing a procedure for enhanced political dialogue in cases of non-compliance;
- 15.3. acknowledging and promoting the role of national parliaments, national human rights institutions and civil society organisations in monitoring compliance with the Convention and the Court's judgments.

16. With a view to responding to widespread and pressing public demands for governments to tackle climate change and prioritise long-term environmental sustainability over immediate economic concerns, climate change should be a separate item on the agenda of the Summit, allowing Heads of State and Government to:

- 16.1. take the lead as Council of Europe to establish environmental protection as a right while reiterating the commitment to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature increase, in line with the Paris Agreement;
- 16.2. support the drafting a Council of Europe legally binding framework to guarantee the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, in line with Assembly Resolution 2396 (2022) "Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe", unanimously adopted by the Assembly;
- 16.3. ask for the creation of a Council of Europe Committee acting as a platform to share information, promote best practice and provide legal advice on environmental protection and the fight against climate change.

17. Heads of State and Government should acknowledge and give a new impulse to the pioneering role of the Council of Europe in human rights protection and to its capacity to set legal standards, promote best practice and support domestic reform efforts in emerging areas of concern, including new generation rights. They should back the Council of Europe work in the areas of artificial intelligence, data protection, gender equality and protection against gender-based violence and discrimination.

18. Greater emphasis on social rights, which form an indivisible part of human rights, would enable the Council of Europe to address one of the main root causes of the backsliding of democracy, a worrying trend which has been witnessed in recent years. To tackle this phenomenon, the Summit should also support an expansion of the Council of Europe's activities aimed at enhancing citizens' trust in democratic processes and public institutions, namely as regards:

- 18.1. strengthening good governance and the respect of the rule of law;
- 18.2. enhancing the quality and professionalism of the public administration;
- 18.3. strengthening the independence of the judiciary;
- 18.4. fighting against corruption;
- 18.5. reinforcing local democracy;

- 18.6. expanding opportunities for civil participation and deliberative democracy in public decision-making;
 - 18.7. ensuring the integrity of the electoral processes.
19. Furthermore, in order to strengthen the coherence, impact and visibility of the Organisation's activities in the area of democracy, the Summit should:
- 19.1. ask for the elaboration of a Democracy Checklist identifying the essential criteria which govern a well-functioning democracy, to be used by member and other States as a reference document;
 - 19.2. envisage the establishment of a Council of Europe Commissioner for Democracy as an independent body elected by the Assembly, entrusted with means and capacity for engaging systematically in a permanent dialogue with member States, providing early warning and rapid reaction, as well as offering relevant assistance, in close co-operation with key parts of the Secretariat and its institutions, to help strengthen the democratic model throughout all of Europe.
20. The Summit should ensure that the Council of Europe puts people at the centre by:
- 20.1. mainstreaming a youth perspective in all its activities;
 - 20.2. creating new channels for civil society, non-governmental organisations and national human rights institutions to provide meaningful input into the work of the Organisation, especially in its dimensions of standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation;
 - 20.3. adopting more open and transparent working methods;
 - 20.4. introducing a communication policy which effectively conveys the aims, objectives and impact of the Council of Europe to the wider public.
21. With a view to ensuring that the Council of Europe can count on the financial resources to effectively carry out its mission, the Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States should:
- 21.1. make a political commitment to increase the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe, in real terms;
 - 21.2. ask the Committee of Ministers to review the scales of the contributions from member States with a view to raising the minimum contribution and ensuring greater fairness in the way in which member States finance the Organisation;
 - 21.3. invite the Committee of Ministers to explore the possibility of the EU contributing to the Council of Europe ordinary budget, in light of the strategic partnership between the two Organisations.
22. The Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General, within their respective competences, to translate the political guidance of the Summit into appropriate implementing measures and administrative reforms.
23. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers closely associate it to the process of reflection and preparation leading up to the Summit and to its follow-up, in continuation of the climate of dialogue and co-operation with the Committee of Ministers, the Secretary General and the other Council of Europe bodies and institutions.
24. On its part, the Assembly resolves to continue to support the process and commits to taking into account the political guidance of the Summit in its work.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Fiona O'Loughlin, Rapporteur

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1. Introduction

1. When the Council of Europe was established in 1949, protecting human rights and rejecting totalitarianism had a profound meaning for Europeans, who were healing from the suffering, poverty and destruction provoked by the Second World War. People and governments alike called for peace, prosperity, democracy and human rights. The Council of Europe was a response to these forceful public demands.

2. Throughout its long history, the Council of Europe has been shaped by political developments on the European continent and the need to respond to public expectations. In 1989, the Berlin Wall, the symbol of political division in Europe, came down. People took to the streets to demand unity, freedoms and rights. Their calls were responded to. In 1993, coming together in their first Council of Europe Summit, European Heads of State and Government gave the Council of Europe a new mission: creating a shared pan-European space where democracy, human rights and the rule of law can thrive, for the benefit of all Europeans finally united under one roof: the common European home.

3. Subsequent Summits were held in 1997, after a round of enlargement which led to six new members, including the Russian Federation, joining the Council of Europe, and in 2005, in the wake of a string of terrorist attacks which posed a serious security threat and had a huge emotional impact on Europeans.

4. In 2022, Europe is at a crossroad in its history once again. The unfolding Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine is an affront to all the principles that the Council of Europe stands for. This war, the defining challenge for the European architecture which has been built on the ashes of the Second World War, is not the only test that Europe is facing.

5. The divide between people's demands and public delivery is wide. People call for their rights to be protected, including against abuses by their own authorities. They want security against threats. They demand a healthy environment and action against climate change. They want technology to improve the quality of their lives without controlling them. People desire a greater say in political decision-making and participate in the democratic processes not just through elections. They understandably expect politics and public institutions to be free from corruption. They care deeply for justice, greater equality and inclusion, and better socio-economic prospects for themselves and future generations.

6. The fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government is an opportunity to take a strong stand in the face of a defining challenge, respond to people's calls and put their interests, concerns and expectations back to the forefront of the mission of the Council of Europe.

2. Europe at a crossroad

7. Confronted with a large-scale and protracted war of aggression, Europe is at a crossroad. While Ukrainians suffer brutal violence, all Europeans have started to pay the price of the war: higher energy costs, shortages of food and other basic products, and the impact of the economic recession are engulfing their everyday lives. The consequences of the Russian Federation's aggression are hitting European societies hard as they emerge from the first waves of the Covid-19 pandemic. Instability may further erode trust in democracy and public institutions, reinforcing the downward trend of the past few years.

8. Not only is this aggression causing immense suffering and destruction, but it has also shaken multilateralism. Cloaked with the protection of holding the veto in the United Nations Security Council, the Russian Federation threatens peace and security, menaces recourse to nuclear weapons and calls for the creation of a new world order.

9. 26 years after joining, the Russian Federation has been expelled from the Council of Europe, an unprecedented step which speaks volumes of the gravity of the international law violations it is responsible for.³ The OSCE is seriously hampered in its work because of the impossibility of reaching consensus on important decisions. A deep rift between its Participating States in terms of what they expect from the organisation clearly emerged in the 29th Ministerial Council held in Łódź on 1 and 2 December 2022.⁴ At the same time, the attraction of membership of the European Union has grown, with Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova formally expressing their wish to join. The EU has also been able to introduce sanctions of unprecedented magnitude against the Russian Federation and some key Russian individuals and adopt a vast package of measures to support Ukraine.

10. In the light of these epochal events, holding a Summit of Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States – only the fourth in the history of the Organisation – is a political imperative and a highly symbolic gesture which cannot be delayed any longer.

3. Ambitions of the fourth Summit

11. The fourth Summit should be ambitious. Its historical importance should be comparable to that of the Vienna Summit which, in 1993, formulated the mission for the Council of Europe to become a common home for all Europeans, a pan-European area sharing the same values and legal standards.

12. Thirty years later, the ambition of the fourth Summit should be twofold: reaffirming unity around values and commitments and setting out a forward-looking vision for the Council of Europe in the new historic context.

13. The Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States should reaffirm that the pursuit of peace based upon justice and international co-operation is a vital precondition for the preservation of human society and civilisation,⁵ and that rules-based multilateralism is the pivot of the international order.

14. They should also reaffirm the role of the Council of Europe as the leading intergovernmental organisation in Europe for all matters relating to human rights, democracy and the rule of law; and redefine the mandate, role and tools for a renewed, reinforced and strengthened Council of Europe, capable of tackling current and future challenges.

15. The outcome of the Summit should correspond to the level of the gathering. As on similar occasions in the past, the Heads of State and Government should solemnly agree on a Political Declaration with an attached Action Plan. The latter should not be confused with the strategic or programmatic documents which are regularly prepared by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe based on proposals by the Secretary General. Similarly, the Action Plan should not be expected to cover all the breadth of the activities carried out by the Council of Europe but one should not infer that activities not covered are lacking in importance.

16. Gatherings at the level of Heads of State and Government are, for the Council of Europe, exceptional events, aimed at providing a new vision, a new impetus and new responses in the face of exceptional challenges. The Political Declaration and the ensuing Action Plan should focus on delivering these focused results.

³ Assembly [Opinion 300 \(2022\)](#); [Committee of Ministers' decision](#).

⁴ [29th OSCE Ministerial Council | OSCE](#).

⁵ Preamble of the [Statute of the Council of Europe](#), paragraph 2.

4. Focus on the three pillars

17. The Summit should confirm the focus of the Organisation on its three pillars: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It should, however, also ensure that the Council of Europe can have a greater impact in these core areas, as in this new page of European history in which peace cannot be taken for granted, each member State's compliance with democracy, human rights and the rule of law standards is the best guarantee of security for other States and their citizens. The Summit should reiterate the mutual engagement of Council of Europe member States to make it possible for Europe to be a vast area of democratic security, echoing the words of the Vienna Declaration.⁶

5. Human rights

Objective 1: Safeguarding and strengthening the Convention system

18. The European Convention on Human Rights is the first instrument in the world aimed at giving effect to certain rights laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and making them binding. Its ratification is an obligation for all Council of Europe member States. To date, it represents the most advanced supranational system for the protection of human rights worldwide, giving individuals the right to take a case before an international court. It applies to anybody within the jurisdiction of a member State, irrespective of their nationality.

19. As the main international achievement in the area of human rights protection, having a direct and tangible impact on the lives of all Europeans, the European Convention of Human Rights and the Convention system should be safeguarded and strengthened.

20. One of the main challenges which has been observed in the past few years is that the effectiveness of the protection system based on the Convention is threatened by attempts to undermine the authority of the European Court of Human Rights.⁷ In addition, although the number of pending cases has fallen considerably between 2011 and 2021, the execution of judgments of the Court continues to face a number of problems, ranging from the lack of political will to implement some of these judgments, to difficulties with the implementation of inter-State cases or individual cases displaying inter-State features.⁸

21. The Summit should:

- reaffirm member States' commitment to the centrality of the Convention system;
- reaffirm the binding nature of the Court's judgments and decisions on interim measures;
- reaffirm the pre-eminence of the Court's judgments and decisions over those of national jurisdictions, and that in case of a conflict between the Convention and the Court's case-law and the national legal framework, including at the constitutional level, member States should give priority to a Convention compliant solution;
- recall the relevance of the infringement proceedings under Article 46 of the Convention, as amended by Protocol No.14;
- further strengthen the execution of judgments by introducing a procedure for enhanced political dialogue when there is a lack of political will by the State concerned to implement key judgments. The Parliamentary Assembly should play a role in the context of this procedure, together with the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General;
- acknowledge and promote the role of national parliaments,⁹ national human rights institutions and civil society organisations in monitoring compliance with the Convention and the Court's judgments.

Objective 2: EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights

22. As far back as 2007, the Lisbon Treaty stipulated the obligation of the European Union to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights. An initial agreement was reached in 2013, but the EU Court of Justice found certain aspects of it to be incompatible with EU law. Negotiations on EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights resumed in 2020 and continue to progress within the 46+1 group.

⁶ [Vienna declaration](#), First Summit, 1993.

⁷ [Longer-term future of the ECHR System \(coe.int\)](#).

⁸ [Resolution 2358 \(2021\)](#) and [Recommendation 2193 \(2021\)](#) "The implementation of the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights".

⁹ [Resolution 2358 \(2021\)](#) "The implementation of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights", para. 10.

23. EU accession must be an absolute priority. It will help guarantee coherence and consistency between EU law and Convention standards and lead to a single legal space in which also the EU Institutions are subjected to the European Convention on Human Rights, to the benefit of the Council of Europe, the European Union, all member States and their citizens. It will also lead to each organisation having a stake in the other's effectiveness.

24. Depending on the stage that the negotiations will have reached by the time of the Summit, the Heads of State and Government should either welcome their success and take decisions necessary for the next stages of the process, or give a decisive push for finalising the negotiations as quickly as possible. The possibility for the European Union to join other Council of Europe instruments, such as the Revised European Social Charter, should also be explored ahead of the Summit.

Objective 3: Ensuring the Council of Europe's pioneering role in human rights protection

25. Since its foundation, the Council of Europe has been a pioneer in human rights protection, setting standards to fill major legal gaps, including through the drafting of conventions which were visionary at the time of their adoption. These conventions have had a tangible impact on the lives of many people in Europe, for instance in the areas of the prevention of torture, trafficking, the protection of children from sexual violence or the protection of women against gender-based and domestic violence.

26. The capacity of the Organisation to develop legal instruments in emerging areas of concern must be preserved and promoted. Europe can rightly be praised for being a human rights forerunner worldwide thanks to its foresight in elaborating legal norms. It should continue along these lines, because societies are evolving rapidly, and a human rights protection system which does not keep up with developments becomes quickly obsolete and unfit for purpose. Thus, the Council of Europe should embark on addressing new generations of human rights.

27. Strengthening the Organisation's capacity to elaborate new legal norms should not be seen as an alternative to the evolution of the case-law of the Convention, as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights, which is also an important way in which the Council of Europe contributes to human rights development.

28. In this regard, it is impossible to remain deaf to widespread public demands for governments to tackle climate change and prioritise long-term environmental sustainability over immediate economic concerns. Once the tipping point of climate change is reached, one can hardly imagine how it will be possible to ensure peace, security and prosperity, without which democracy, human rights and the rule of law will become increasingly difficult to guarantee.

29. In response to an Assembly initiative asking that the Council of Europe adopt legally binding instruments to guarantee the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment,¹⁰ a feasibility study is currently being prepared under the remit of the Steering Committee on Human Rights (CDDH).

30. The Summit should show ambition and strategic vision for the future and give the political backing to drafting a binding legal framework along the lines recommended by the Assembly. It should also envisage a role for the Council of Europe as a platform to share information, promote best practice and give legal advice on environmental protection and the fight against climate change, supporting reform efforts at domestic level. With due account of the differences, the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) or the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) could provide an interesting model for such a new Council of Europe structure.

31. Whether in the area of human rights development, monitoring or implementation of existing standards, additional priority areas should include artificial intelligence, data protection, social rights, gender equality and protection against gender-based violence and discrimination.

¹⁰ [Resolution 2396 \(2021\)](#) and [Recommendation 2211 \(2021\)](#) "Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe".

6. Democracy

Objective 1: Countering democratic backsliding and addressing its root causes

32. The backsliding of democracy has been observed by a number of authoritative think-tanks and institutions, a tendency which has increased as a consequence of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.¹¹ Europe is no exception, as described by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in her reports on the state of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.¹²

33. The Summit should give an impetus to the Council of Europe's activities aimed at reversing this trend while addressing its root causes, amongst which prominently feature increasing inequalities and inadequate protection of social rights. The Council of Europe should be an ambassador of the indivisibility of human rights, reiterating that there should be no hierarchy between civil-political and socio-economic rights.

34. To counter democratic backsliding, particular attention should be paid to enhancing citizens' trust in democratic processes. To this end, the Council of Europe should invest greater efforts to strengthen good governance, enhance the quality and professionalism of the public administration and reinforce local democracy, as all these sectors play a decisive role in shaping people's trust in public authorities.

35. Furthermore, new mechanisms should be promoted to enhance civil participation in public decision-making. While innovative ways should be considered to engage citizens more directly in political processes, elections remain the backbone of democracy. The integrity of the electoral processes should be protected and enhanced in order to guarantee the legitimacy and credibility of representative institutions. Thus, the Summit should lead to a reorganisation of the Council of Europe's activities in the area of elections, with a view to enhancing their coherence and impact.

36. Council of Europe member States would benefit from having at their disposal a Democracy Checklist. On the basis of the European Convention on Human Rights, the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and the work of the Venice Commission and the European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG), the Council of Europe should take up the challenge to identify the essential criteria which govern a well-functioning democracy.¹³ Far from being aimed at scoring the member States' performance, this Democracy Checklist would be an attempt to overcome the absence of international legal instruments - clearly setting out the contours of a democratic system, and the red lines not to be crossed.

Objective 2: Enhancing early warning and rapid reaction

37. The ongoing large-scale war of aggression in the heart of Europe highlights the importance of the Council of Europe making better use of its bodies and mechanisms in providing early warning and to ensure greater flexibility and capacity for rapid reaction. This would apply in relation to negative trends in the areas of democracy, human rights and the rule of law which risk deteriorating further, sometimes with spill-over effects beyond national borders.

38. The Assembly has already launched a number of ideas to this end,¹⁴ which could be further refined in co-operation with the Committee of Ministers in the preparation of the Summit. Amongst them are:

- setting up a Democratic Resilience Initiative which, building on the work of bodies and mechanisms which already exist within the Council of Europe, will monitor democratic developments in member States and form the basis for early warning and enhanced political dialogue to help member States address situations of concern;
- enhancing the exchange of best practices in all areas relating to democracy and democratic governance;
- establishing a mechanism to monitor developments related to civil society, freedom of association, and civil participation and engagement in Council of Europe member States;

¹¹ [Democratic backsliding | International IDEA](#) (2018); IDEA, the [Global State of Democracy report](#), 2022; the Economist Intelligence Unit, [Democracy Index 2021](#). See also [Resolution 2437 \(2022\)](#) "Safeguarding and promoting genuine democracy in Europe".

¹² [Annual reports of the Secretary General](#).

¹³ This proposal is based on the recommendation made by the High-Level Reflection Group to produce a Democracy Index, page 16 of the [report](#).

¹⁴ [Recommendation 2235 \(2022\)](#) "Recent challenges to security in Europe: what role for the Council of Europe?".

- strengthening and expanding the Council of Europe's activities relating to confidence building measures and conflict prevention, including in its civil society and cross-border co-operation dimensions;
- strengthening the early warning/rapid reaction capacities of existing Council of Europe mechanisms.

39. The Council of Europe should learn from its recent experience, which has shown the limited effectiveness of existing procedures. Early warning based on objective and verifiable criteria should be coupled with the capacity to react promptly and effectively at political level so as to have an impact on member States before situations of concern reach such gravity as to amount to a serious violation of statutory obligations.

40. The pillar of democracy is clearly the one in which more innovation is necessary to spur a meaningful change of direction. One could also imagine the establishment of a Council of Europe Commissioner for Democracy as an independent body elected by the Assembly, entrusted with the means and capacity for engaging systematically in a permanent dialogue with member States, providing early warning and rapid reaction, as well as offering relevant assistance, in close co-operation with key parts of the Secretariat and its institutions, to help strengthen the democratic model throughout Europe.

Objective 3: Innovating democracy

41. Democracy is changing at a rapid pace. Digital technologies, for instance, have transformed citizens' engagement but also the provision of public services and the work of the public administration. Big strides in these areas have been taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and may remain a durable feature. Many Council of Europe member States have understood the societal change and have been gaining experience with mechanisms of online public consultation, e-governance and e-democracy. Some member States have also experimented with participatory and deliberative forms of democracy such as citizens' assemblies, townhall meetings, participatory budgets and referendums, just to name a few.

42. The Council of Europe should be able to keep up and even stay ahead of further developments. The Summit should spur the Council of Europe's role as a platform to share new practices in the area of democracy, to anticipate potential challenges and to harness the benefits of innovation.

7. Rule of law

43. The rule of law is a complex concept which is easier to describe than to define, as acknowledged by the European Commission for Democracy through Law.¹⁵ Its core elements include legal certainty, prevention of abuse/misuse of powers, equality before the law and non-discrimination, and access to justice. The rule of law is linked to the protection and the promotion of human rights and to democracy, providing an enabling environment for both.

44. The fourth Summit should reiterate that strengthening the independence of the judiciary and fighting against corruption should be key priorities for the Council of Europe. It should also recommend greater emphasis be given to good governance. The public administration is citizens' most direct interface with public institutions. Its efficiency, responsiveness, professionalism, ethical conduct, fairness and respect of the law are crucial in shaping trust in democracy.

8. Reconnecting with Europeans

45. The Council of Europe should be closer to citizens and more responsive to their expectations in terms of openness, transparency and active engagement.

46. Major societal changes have occurred in the past decades which demand greater access to public institutions, including international organisations. The Summit should kick start a reform of the Council of Europe's working methods in this direction, to ensure that the Organisation practices what it preaches. Possible measures include:

- a higher number of its meetings being publicly broadcast and a greater number of documents being made publicly available;
- establishing opportunities for holding public consultations on key issues;

¹⁵ CDL-AD(2016)007-e, [Rule of Law Checklist](#), adopted by the Venice Commission at its 106th Plenary Session (Venice, 11-12 March 2016).

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- creating new channels for civil society, non-governmental organisations and national human rights institutions to provide meaningful input into the work of the Organisation in its dimensions of standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation.

47. Openness would help the Council of Europe better communicate its aims and explain how it has an impact on the lives of people, while boosting its visibility. It is the responsibility of international organisations to help people understand their relevance.

48. The youth are the key target group in this effort to reconnect with people. The Summit should ask that a “youth perspective” be mainstreamed throughout the work of the Council of Europe and that their input be taken into account. This would contribute to enhancing knowledge of the values underpinning the Council of Europe amongst the young generation and help the Organisation develop a more inclusive, dynamic and forward-looking agenda.

9. The Council of Europe as a political community

49. The Council of Europe is not just the guardian of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and an Organisation with the technical expertise to draft legal standards. It is also a political community, as recalled in the Vienna Declaration of 1993. It could not be otherwise, as the Council of Europe is occupied with matters which are of the highest political importance for the preservation of peace and security in member States and Europe as a whole.

50. The fourth Summit should reiterate the role of the Council of Europe as a political community, and further develop its potential. This implies a two-pronged approach. As regards its own functioning, the Council of Europe should enhance the political dimension of its work, for instance by:

- setting up inter-institutional mechanisms of dialogue in order to enhance member States' compliance with membership obligations and Council of Europe standards. The so-called joint procedure in relation to breaches to Article 8 of the Council of Europe Statute is an example of such a mechanism.¹⁶ But the three organs involved in the dialogue – the Committee of Ministers, the Assembly and the Secretary General – should engage with member States with a view to enhancing compliance well before this extreme scenario. In addition, as mentioned earlier, procedures for enhanced political dialogue should be introduced in relation to the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and in the context of setting up early warning/rapid reaction mechanisms;
- ensuring that the presidencies at the helm of the Committee of Ministers can have a stronger political impact, for instance by co-ordinating their priorities over a given period;
- continuing to strengthen dialogue and concerted action between the statutory organs of the Organisation;
- aiming for one ministerial conference for each presidency of the Committee of Ministers, with the presence of ministers;
- holding regular Summits of Heads of State and Government, possibly in conjunction with the approval of the Organisation's 4-years Strategic Framework.

51. In addition, as political bodies representing European citizens, the Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities should play a greater role in engaging with the Council of Europe's overall activities and acting as multipliers of Council of Europe standards and values at national level. In this respect, it is important to underline that both the Assembly and the Congress include elected representatives from different political affiliations, including the opposition, which enables them to have a better insight into the situation in their countries and to reach out to a wider audience.

52. The two-pronged approach to enhance the Organisation's political clout also has an external dimension. A Summit of Heads of State and Government is the appropriate level to ensure that the role of the Council of Europe as a political community is taken into account in the European multilateral architecture and is not duplicated or undermined by other initiatives.

53. In this respect, serious thought should be given on how to articulate the scope and responsibilities of the Council of Europe with those of the European Political Community (EPC), which held its first meeting in Prague on 6 October 2022, and brought together 43 member States of the Council of Europe. In addition, the Council of Europe is a political community, and it deals with matters that are of vital importance for citizens,

¹⁶ [Complementary joint procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly in response to a serious violation by a member State of its statutory obligations.](#)

member States, Europe as a whole and global governance. It brings together 46 European States – including all EU member States – on an equal footing, as a family sharing the same values, principles and standards. It is premature to make recommendations at this stage, but the matter should continue to be observed and addressed in the decisions of the Summit.

10. The Council of Europe in the European multilateral architecture

54. Thanks to its conventions and standard-setting role as well as its whole machinery relying on political dialogue, monitoring and co-operation, the Council of Europe is the cornerstone of the rules-based multilateral order in Europe. It shares this role very closely with the European Union, with whom it has in common 27 member States, and which has legislative competence in a great number of areas.

55. The Summit should upgrade relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union, strengthening the strategic partnership between the two organisations based on their shared values and commitment to promoting peace, security and stability on the European continent and supporting multilateralism worldwide.

56. The process of European integration represents a factor of stability in Europe, especially in the light of the new historic context. A number of Council of Europe member States, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine, while at different stages in the procedure, have expressed their wish to join the European Union.

57. On the basis of a formal agreement with the European Union, a mechanism should be set up for the Council of Europe to play a more visible, structured, political and technical role to empower those member States wishing to join the European Union to make tangible and measurable progress towards meeting the necessary criteria, in line with Council of Europe values and standards.

58. At the same time, the Council of Europe should continue to play a decisive role in maintaining high standards of democracy, human rights and rule of law in all its member States, including those who are also members of the European Union, and this role should be acknowledged by the European Union.

59. The area of the rule of law is a good example: political dialogue between the two organisations should be strengthened and greater use of the Council of Europe's expertise, benchmarking and findings should be made in the context of the wide range of existing European Union mechanisms and tools regarding the rule of law. The possibility to delegate, on the basis of a formal agreement, some responsibilities to the Council of Europe should be explored, for instance in relation to the preparation of the Rule of Law report. The co-operation between the two organisations in this area should be more regular, formal, structured and visible, and based on deeper political dialogue.

60. The prospective accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights and the progress in EU enlargement will likely lead to a more tightly knit relation between the two organisations. This could also trigger a reflection on the eventual full-fledged accession of the European Union to the Council of Europe.

61. The fourth Summit should lay the ground for a revision of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union, along the lines indicated above. This text should confirm the role of the Council of Europe as the leading intergovernmental organisation in Europe for all matters relating to human rights, democracy and the rule of law, including as a political platform and a standard-setter.

62. The Assembly itself should seek to strengthen its partnership with the European Parliament. To this end, the way forward and possible concrete proposals are described in some recent texts and relevant reports of the Assembly, including [Resolution 2430 \(2022\)](#) "Beyond the Lisbon treaty: strengthening the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union" and [Resolution 2456 \(2022\)](#) "Supporting a European perspective for the Western Balkans".¹⁷

¹⁷ [Resolution 2430 \(2022\)](#) and [Recommendation 2226 \(2022\)](#) "Beyond the Lisbon treaty: strengthening the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union"; [Resolution 2456 \(2022\)](#) and [Recommendation 2237 \(2022\)](#) "Supporting a European perspective for the Western Balkans".

11. Projecting values and standards beyond Council of Europe membership

63. While the mission of the Council of Europe should remain geographically focused on Europe, the Summit should acknowledge the Council of Europe's contribution to global governance and encourage the Organisation to project its values and standards beyond its membership.

64. The Council of Europe should strengthen co-operation with interested States and organisations not only in its geographical neighbourhood but also in its political proximity, as already recommended by the Assembly.¹⁸ More robust co-operation with the United Nations, its agencies and mechanisms would also be instrumental to supporting global governance, rules-based multilateralism and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The recent visit of the Sub-Committee on External Relations to the United Nations Headquarters and the valuable exchanges with high level officials demonstrated the need to further promote the profile of the Council of Europe as a regional partner of the United Nations in all the areas in which it has an added value, including democratic security.

65. The Summit of Heads of State and Government should reiterate the pan-European vocation of the Council of Europe and its nature as a community of values, which can be a reference for anybody who aspires to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, wherever they are. In this sense, at the conditions already set out by the Assembly,¹⁹ the Council of Europe should maintain a policy of openness towards Belarusian and Russian civil society, especially towards those individuals, groups and organisations that are at risk of persecution from the authorities for upholding Council of Europe values and principles.

12. Supporting Ukraine

66. The fourth Summit would offer a platform for the Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States to reiterate their full support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine and vow not to recognise, *de jure* or *de facto*, the illegal annexation of Ukrainian territories by the Russian Federation.

67. The Summit should ensure that the Council of Europe continues to give its full support to Ukraine, immediately – as outlined in the Adjusted Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2022 adopted by the Committee of Ministers in Turin,²⁰ and after the end of the war of aggression. Sound democratic institutions, respect for the rule of law and compliance with democratic standards together with stronger European integration are the best guarantee for the democratic security of Ukraine and Europe.

68. Steps should be taken to increase the profile and visibility of the Council of Europe's substantial assistance to and co-operation with Ukraine, as well as to ensure enhanced co-ordination and co-operation with other relevant international organisations, through the establishment of a Special Co-ordinator, under the authority of the Secretary General. Member States should be encouraged to contribute financially to the Council of Europe's co-operation efforts in Ukraine and to the reconstruction of the country.

13. Accountability of the Russian Federation

69. Even if the Russian Federation has been expelled from the Council of Europe, the issue of its accountability should be central to the Summit as it is closely linked with the rule of law: the crimes committed by the Russian Federation, against a Council of Europe member State and its citizens, and in violation of international law, should not go unpunished.

70. The issue of accountability should be looked at in a comprehensive manner. Amongst other recommendations, the Assembly has called on member and observer States of the Council of Europe to set up an ad hoc international criminal tribunal to investigate and prosecute the crime of aggression committed by the political and military leadership of the Russian Federation.²¹ The fourth Summit should give its unequivocal political support to this initiative, which has a strong political significance.

¹⁸ [Resolution 2369 \(2021\)](#) "The Assembly's vision on the strategic priorities for the Council of Europe".

¹⁹ [Resolution 2433 \(2022\)](#) and [Recommendation 2228 \(2022\)](#) "Consequences of the Russian Federation's continued aggression against Ukraine: role and response of the Council of Europe".

²⁰ [Adjusted Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2022 adopted by the Committee of Ministers - News \(coe.int\)](#).

²¹ [Resolution 2436 \(2022\)](#) and [Recommendation 2231 \(2022\)](#) "The Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine: ensuring accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and other international crimes".

71. In addition, the Heads of State and Government should express their support for the work of international courts having a mandate to investigate and prosecute genocide, war crimes, international humanitarian law violations and crimes against humanity. They should also confirm the Council of Europe's availability to support Ukrainian prosecutors and any hybrid courts (with national and international judges) which may be established to investigate and prosecute such serious international crimes. The setting up of a register of the damage caused by the Russian aggression should be also supported. The Russian Federation should be held accountable for compensating the damage it has inflicted.

72. The fact that a European State has dared launch an all-out invasion against a neighbouring State, provoking the largest destruction since the Second World War, should lead to a broader reflection on accountability. While aggression is the crime of the crimes, bringing those responsible before justice is a rare event, and legal and political hurdles prevent the exercise of effective jurisdiction. The Council of Europe should lead the way in the reflection on how to promote the effective exercise of universal jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, whoever commits it.

14. Areas under the sovereignty of Council of Europe member States which are under the *de facto* control of the Russian Federation

73. While the Russian Federation can be held accountable for breaches of the European Convention on Human Rights it committed until 16 September 2022, it is no longer bound by the Convention after this date. As a result, millions of Europeans are deprived of the protection of the Convention because they are in territories which, although under the sovereignty of Council of Europe member States - Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova – are under *de facto* control of the Russian Federation. The same type of deprivation applies to the other treaties to which the Russian Federation is no longer bound as a result of its expulsion from the Council of Europe.

74. The Summit should demand that the Russian Federation withdraw from the territories of Council of Europe member States which are illegally under its control. At the same time, the Summit should support the work of international human rights mechanisms which are accessible to these Europeans, for instance under the aegis of the OSCE and the United Nations. The Council of Europe should ensure that judgments and decisions against the Russian Federation emanating from the European Court on Human Rights are used by these partner organisations in their work.

75. In the run-up to the Summit, the possibility of creating a Secretary General's Special Representative/focal point for these areas should be explored.²² In any case, contacts with civil society, non-governmental organisations, human rights defenders and journalists remain crucial to document the situation on the ground. Similarly, the Committee of Ministers should continue to regularly examine the matter.

15. Financial sustainability of the Council of Europe

76. The expulsion of the Russian Federation and its refusal to pay its outstanding dues have put the Council of Europe in a difficult budgetary situation, which many member States have promised to bridge in the short-term. Ensuring the financial sustainability of the Organisation, however, goes well beyond the short-term and the need to fill the budgetary gap left by the Russian Federation.

77. A renewed, improved and reinforced Council of Europe needs the financial resources to effectively carry out its mandate.²³ For reference, in 2021 the Council of Europe ordinary budget amounted to €258 million. Its total adjusted budget amounted to €521 million, mainly thanks to voluntary contributions/extra-budgetary resources. The European Union is the largest contributor to the Council of Europe's extra-budgetary resources through EU-Council of Europe Joint Programmes. This accounted for 57% of all extrabudgetary contributions and a total volume of €36.5 million in 2021.²⁴

78. While the steady increase in extrabudgetary resources in the past few years is to be welcomed and should continue to be pursued, the Heads of State and Government should make a political commitment to increase the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe, in real terms, as requested by the Assembly.²⁵ At the same time, the Summit should support the review the scales of the contributions from member States – which

²² This proposal has also been made by the High-Level Reflection Group in its [report](#).

²³ [Resolution 2369 \(2021\)](#) "The Assembly's vision on the strategic priorities for the Council of Europe", paragraph 28.

²⁴ [CM\(2022\)62-final](#) - Summary Report on co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union (May 2021 – May 2022).

²⁵ See [Opinion 298 \(2021\)](#) "Budgets and priorities of the Council of Europe for the period 2022-2025" (Rapporteur: Mr Tiny Kox, Netherlands, UEL), paragraph 8.

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were last fixed in 1994 – with a view to raising the minimum contribution and ensuring greater fairness in the way in which member States finance the Organisation.

79. According to the discussions held in the 46+1 group, following its accession to the European Convention of Human Rights, the European Union will pay a contribution to the Council of Europe's ordinary budget which, according to the latest calculations, may amount to 36% of the contribution of a big payer. This will be important in order to cover the additional costs relating to the functioning of the European Court of Human Rights.

80. Irrespective of this contribution, as already suggested by the Assembly, in the light of the strong strategic partnership between the two Organisations and hopefully its further reinforcement, the possibility for the European Union to make a non-earmarked contribution to the Council of Europe budget should be explored.²⁶

16. Conclusions

81. Europe is going through a time of uncertainty and reversals. Catastrophes such as climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic, a brutal war of aggression in the heart of the continent, and the risk of its further escalation, have heightened the sentiment of insecurity and vulnerability amongst the public.

82. While there is no easy fix, it is safe to say that values, standards and multilateralism are part of the solution. The solidity and the resilience of European democracies, their respect for human rights and their adherence to the rule of law are the best guarantees for each other's prosperity, security and peaceful future. The Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States, gathered at the Organisation's fourth Summit, should reaffirm their firmness and unity around values and their unfaltering commitment to multilateralism based on international law.

83. The Summit should reiterate full support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, call for financial support towards its reconstruction and demand that the Russian Federation be held accountable for violating international law and the damage it has caused. The fact that a European State has dared launch an all-out invasion against a neighbouring State, provoking the largest destruction that Europe has witnessed since the Second World War, should lead to a reflection on how to ensure effective jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, whoever commits it.

84. The Summit should make clear that, by strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the Council of Europe contributes not only to delivering better lives for Europeans but also to the maintenance of international peace and security, within the meaning of the Charter of the United Nations.

85. Like any other international organisation, the Council of Europe can only have the political clout, powers and impact which its member States are prepared to give it. It is crucial, therefore, to have a Summit at the highest political level which will upgrade the role of the Organisation; strengthen its political, financial, and technical means; and redefine its place and weight in the European multilateral architecture, including in relation to the European Union.

86. The Council of Europe resulting from the Summit should embrace a forward-looking vision. While its main objectives and areas of expertise should remain the same – democracy, human rights and the rule of law – it should be given greater means to have an impact and stay ahead of developments, keeping up with societal change and citizens' demands.

87. The political guidance of the Summit should be followed by implementing measures and an administrative reform aimed at making the Council of Europe more dynamic, effective, visible, transparent and actively engaging with citizens and civil society.

88. The Assembly should stand ready to continue to support the process leading to the Summit, be represented at the Summit, and contribute to its follow-up.

²⁶ [Resolution 2430 \(2022\)](#) "Beyond the Lisbon Treaty: strengthening the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union", paragraph 10.11.

Appendix I - Synoptic table – Fourth Summit summary proposals

PILLAR/AREAS	OBJECTIVES	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES
Human rights	Safeguarding and strengthening the Convention system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safeguarding the authority of the European Court of Human Rights - Strengthening the execution of judgements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing a mechanism for enhanced political dialogue for the execution of key judgements
	EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving a decisive push towards completing the negotiations/welcoming the conclusion of the negotiations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU accession to the ECHR
	Ensuring the Council of Europe's pioneering role in human rights protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening the capacity of the Council of Europe to develop legal instruments in emerging areas of concern - Strengthening the Council of Europe work in areas such as data protection, social rights, gender equality and protection against gender-based violence and discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council of Europe binding legal instrument setting out the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment - Council of Europe committee/platform to share information, promote good practice and support domestic reforms in the area of climate change and environmental protection - Council of Europe binding legal instrument on artificial intelligence
Democracy	Countering democratic backsliding and its root causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing citizens' trust in democratic processes - Strengthening democratic participation and improving good governance at all levels of government - Strengthening local democracy - Strengthening the integrity of the electoral process - Strengthening social rights and tackling inequalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritising these areas and rationalising activities with a view to maximising impact - Council of Europe Democracy Checklist
	Enhancing early warning and rapid reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and addressing negative trends which can impact democratic security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting up a Democratic Resilience Initiative which, building on the work of bodies and mechanisms which already exist within the Council of Europe, will monitor democratic developments in member States, and form the basis for early warning and enhanced political dialogue to help member States address situations of concern; - Enhancing the exchange of best practices in all areas relating to democracy and democratic governance; - Establishing a mechanism to monitor developments related to civil society, freedom of association, and civil participation and engagement in Council of Europe member States; - Strengthening and expanding the Council of Europe's activities relating to confidence building and conflict prevention, including in its civil society and cross-border co-operation dimensions; - Establishing a Council of Europe Commissioner for Democracy, as an independent body elected by the Assembly
	Innovating democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using technology to engage citizens and improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the public administration - Expanding opportunities for public consultation and deliberative/participatory democracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritising these areas and rationalising activities with a view to maximising impact
Rule of law	Strengthening the judiciary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating an enabling environment for democracy and human rights; - Enhancing citizens' trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritising these areas and rationalising activities with a view to maximising impact
	Fighting corruption		
	Strengthening good governance		
Reconnecting with Europeans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing relevance - Improving visibility - Maintaining the pan-European vocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working method reform ensuring greater transparency and accessibility; - Working method reform introducing avenues for public consultations; - Mainstreaming of the youth perspective in the work of the Council of Europe; - Support keeping communication channels open with Belarusian and Russian civil society upholding Council of Europe values

Enhancing the role of the Council of Europe as a political community		- Enhancing impact and follow-up	- Introduction of a number of political mechanisms within the Council of Europe to enhance impact and follow-up; - Greater engagement of the Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities as multipliers of Council of Europe values and standards; - Clear repartition of responsibilities with other multilateral initiatives
Support to multilateralism and external relations	Highlighting the contribution of the Council of Europe to the rules-based order in Europe Strengthening the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union Strengthening cooperation with the United Nations Openness to cooperation with interested non-member States and other international organisations	- Empowering member States wishing to join the European Union make tangible and measurable progress towards meeting the necessary criteria, in line with Council of Europe values and standards, - Enhancing dialogue and cooperation with the European Union on Rule of Law issues, - Projecting values and standards beyond membership	- Revising the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union
Supporting Ukraine			- Political support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine - Instruction to ensure the Council of Europe's continued support to Ukraine as a priority and setting up of a Special Coordinator - Engagement to support the Council of Europe's work in Ukraine - Engagement to support assistance to Ukraine and reconstruction
Accountability of the Russian Federation		- Taking a comprehensive approach to the issue of accountability	- Political support for the creation of an ad hoc tribunal to investigate and prosecute the Russian leadership's crime of aggression against Ukraine - Support for the register of damage caused by the Russian aggression - Political support to existing international jurisdictions - Council of Europe support to investigation and prosecution by Ukrainian or hybrid courts - Reflection on how to guarantee effective jurisdiction on the crime of aggression, avoiding loopholes
Areas under the de facto control of the Russian Federation		- Reiterating Council of Europe member States' sovereignty on these territories - Maximising access to human rights protection for those living in these areas	- Support to the work of relevant international human rights mechanisms - Possibility to create a Secretary General's Special Representative/focal point for these areas - Welcoming the collection of evidence by civil society, non-governmental organisations, human rights defenders and journalists
Ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council of Europe			- Making a political commitment to increase the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe, in real terms - Instructing the Committee of Ministers to review the scales of the contributions from member States with a view to raising the minimum contribution and ensuring greater fairness in the way in which member States finance the Organisation - Exploring the possibility of the EU contributing to the Council of Europe ordinary budget

APPENDIX II: Procedural aspects and Assembly reference texts

1. Origin of the report and ensuing procedure

1. This report originates from a motion for a recommendation on *A fourth Summit for a renewed, improved and reinforced Council of Europe*, adopted by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy during its meeting in Chania, Greece, on 16 and 17 May 2022.²⁷ The Bureau referred the motion to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy for report. Following a call for candidates, the Committee appointed me as Rapporteur on 23 June 2022.

2. With a view to contributing to this report, at its meeting on 24 June 2022, the Bureau of the Assembly decided to set up an ad hoc Committee on the fourth Summit of Council of Europe Heads of State and Government.²⁸ The ad hoc Committee is chaired by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, and composed of the Chairpersons of the political groups, the Chairpersons of the Assembly's general committees, the Chairperson of the Icelandic delegation and myself.

3. I would like to thank the President and the Bureau of the Assembly for this initiative, which has allowed me to pursue an inclusive approach to the preparation of the report by taking into account a broader range of perspectives and inputs compared to an ordinary procedure. The ad hoc Committee met on three occasions: on 24 June in Strasbourg, 11 September in Paris and 24 November 2022 in Reykjavik.

4. In the preparation of this report I have been able to benefit from the work of the High-Level Reflection Group set up by the Secretary General and chaired by Ms Mary Robinson. At its meeting in Paris, the ad hoc Committee held a valuable exchange of views with Mr Evangelos Venizelos, Rapporteur of the Reflection Group. The report was finalised soon after and presented to the Ministers' Deputies. It is a very significant contribution to the effort of reflection which is currently under way and I agree with its thrust and main proposals. As my work continued after the publication of the report of the High-Level Reflection Group, I was able to build on the recommendations formulated therein and further refine some of them in the light of further discussions.

5. As Rapporteur of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, I have tried to include in my report most suggestions coming from my colleagues. I have also had the opportunity to debate some ideas with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, which I addressed during its plenary session on 25 October 2022. Co-operation with the Committee of Ministers has been particularly intense, in line with the good interinstitutional relations between the two statutory organs. I would like to thank, in particular, the Irish and Icelandic presidencies for the decisive role they played to push for the Summit. On 27 October 2022 I had an exchange of views with GT-SOM4 - 4th Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government, while its Chairperson, Ambassador Ragnhildur Arnljótsdóttir, addressed the ad hoc Committee of the Bureau on 24 November 2022.

6. My work has been supported also by the Standing Committee, which held a current affairs debate on the fourth Summit during its meeting in Dublin,²⁹ and then adopted a Declaration during its meeting in Reykjavik.³⁰

7. I have also received a number of additional contributions from individual members of the Assembly, national delegations, Council of Europe interlocutors and external stakeholders. Not all these contributions have been included in my recommendations. As I mentioned in the report, gatherings at the level of Heads of State and Government are, for the Council of Europe, exceptional events, aimed at providing a new vision, a new impetus and new responses in the face of exceptional challenges. Some of the input I received, however sound and interesting, can be implemented by the Assembly or the Committee of Ministers without warranting the endorsement by Heads of State and Government. It will be my responsibility to share these contributions with the relevant Council of Europe bodies, to ensure that they are taken into account

²⁷ [Doc. 15533](#).

²⁸ The terms of reference of the ad hoc Committee can be found in [AS/BUR 011](#).

²⁹ [AS/Per \(2022\) PV 01](#).

³⁰ [Statement](#).

2. Assembly's reference texts

Strengthening the role of the Council of Europe as a cornerstone of the European political architecture (Rapporteur: Ms Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Lithuania, EPP/CD). Adopted text: [Resolution 2473 \(2022\)](#)

Further escalation in the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine (Rapporteur: Mr Emanuelis Zingeris, Lithuania, EPP/CD). Adopted text: [Resolution 2463 \(2022\)](#)

Recent challenges to security in Europe: what role for the Council of Europe? (Rapporteur: Mr Bogdan Klich, Poland, EPP/CD). Adopted texts: [Resolution 2444 \(2022\)](#) and [Recommendation 2235 \(2022\)](#)

The Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine: ensuring accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and other international crimes (Rapporteur: Mr Aleksander Pocij, Poland, EPP/CD). Adopted texts: [Resolution 2436 \(2022\)](#) and [Recommendation 2231 \(2022\)](#)

Consequences of the Russian Federation's continued aggression against Ukraine: role and response of the Council of Europe (Rapporteur: Mr Frank Schwabe, Germany, SOC). Adopted texts: [Resolution 2433 \(2022\)](#) and [Recommendation 2228 \(2022\)](#)

Consequences of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine (Rapporteur: Ms Ingjerd Schou. Norway, EPP/CD). Adopted text: [Opinion 300 \(2022\)](#)

Beyond the Lisbon treaty: strengthening the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union (Rapporteur: Mr Titus Corlăţean, Romania, SOC). Adopted texts: [Resolution 2430 \(2022\)](#) and [Recommendation 2226 \(2022\)](#)

Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe (Rapporteur: Mr Simon Moutquin, Belgium, SOC). Adopted texts: [Resolution 2396 \(2021\)](#) and [Recommendation 2211 \(2021\)](#)

The Assembly's vision on the strategic priorities for the Council of Europe (Rapporteur: Mr Tiny Kox, Netherlands, UEL). Adopted texts: [Resolution 2369 \(2021\)](#) and [Recommendation 2199 \(2021\)](#)

Role and mission of the Parliamentary Assembly: main challenges for the future (Rapporteur: Mr Tiny Kox, Netherlands, UEL). Adopted texts: [Resolution 2277 \(2019\)](#) and [Recommendation 2153 \(2017\)](#)

Call for a Council of Europe Summit to reaffirm European unity and to defend and promote democratic security in Europe (Rapporteur: Mr Michele Nicoletti, Italy, SOC). Adopted texts: [Resolution 2186 \(2017\)](#) and [Recommendation 2113 \(2017\)](#)

Cooperation between the Council of Europe and the emerging democracies in the Arab World (Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Charles Gardetto, Monaco, EPP/CD). Adopted text: [Resolution 1831 \(2011\)](#)

Follow-up to the reform of the Council of Europe (Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Claude Mignon, France, EPP/CD). Adopted texts: [Resolution 1783 \(2011\)](#) and [Recommendation 1951 \(2011\)](#)

The future of the Council of Europe in the light of its 60 years of experience (Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Claude Mignon, France, EPP/CD). Adopted texts: [Resolution 1689 \(2009\)](#) and [Recommendation 1886 \(2009\)](#)