

Action Plan of the Council of Europe's Second Summit (Strasbourg, 10 and 11 October 1997)

Caption: At the Council of Europe's second Summit, held on 10 and 11 October 1997 in Strasbourg, the Heads of State or Government of the organisation's member States draw up an Action Plan annexed to the Final Declaration which seeks to define the main tasks for the Council of Europe in the coming years, particularly in the run-up to its 50th anniversary.

Source: Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 10-11 October 1997). Action Plan. [ON-LINE]. [Strasbourg]: Council of Europe, [18.11.2003]. Available on <http://cm.coe.int/sessions/97summit2/x3plan.htm>.

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Action Plan of the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 10 and 11 October 1997)

The Heads of State and Government, meeting in Strasbourg on 10 and 11 October 1997, have outlined an **Action Plan** to strengthen **democratic stability** in the member States, and have accordingly defined four main areas where there is scope for immediate advances and practical measures, together with a fifth field concerning structural reforms.

I. Democracy and Human Rights

1. Single Court of Human Rights: the Heads of State and Government welcome the ratification of Protocol No. 11 to the European Convention on Human Rights by all contracting parties, making it possible to establish the new single Court of Human Rights, and instruct the Committee of Ministers to take the necessary steps to set it up on 1 November 1998.

2. Commissioner for Human Rights: the Heads of State and Government welcome the proposal to create an office of Commissioner for Human Rights to promote respect for human rights in the member States and instruct the Committee of Ministers to study arrangements for its implementation, while respecting the competences of the single Court.

3. Compliance with member States' commitments: the Heads of State and Government resolve to ensure that the commitments accepted by the member States are effectively honoured, on the basis of a confidential, constructive, non-discriminatory dialogue carried on within the Committee of Ministers and taking into account the monitoring procedures of the Parliamentary Assembly; they reiterate their determination to work together to solve the problems faced by member States and consider that this monitoring process must be supported, where necessary, by practical assistance from the Council of Europe.

4. Prohibition of the cloning of human beings: the Heads of State and Government undertake to prohibit all use of cloning techniques aimed at creating genetically identical human beings and instruct to this end the Committee of Ministers to adopt an additional protocol to the Oviedo Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine as soon as possible.

5. Combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance: the Heads of State and Government welcome the action taken in this field by the Council of Europe since the Vienna Summit and resolve to intensify, for this purpose, the activities of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, while stressing the importance of close co-operation with the European Union.

6. Protection of national minorities: the Heads of State and Government, taking into account the imminent entry into force of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, resolve to complement the Council of Europe's standard-setting achievements in this field through practical initiatives, such as confidence-building measures and enhanced co-operation, involving both governments and civil society.

II. Social Cohesion

1. Promotion of social rights: the Heads of State and Government undertake to promote social standards as embodied in the Social Charter and in other Council of Europe instruments, and call for the widest possible adherence to these instruments; they resolve to improve the exchange of good practice and information between member States and to intensify their co-operation in this field.

2. New strategy for social cohesion: the Heads of State and Government instruct the Committee of Ministers to define a social strategy to respond to the challenges in society and to carry out the appropriate structural reforms within the Council of Europe, including the setting up of a specialised unit for monitoring, comparing and handling issues linked to social cohesion.

3. Programme for children: the Heads of State and Government encourage the adoption of a programme to promote the interests of children, in partnership with the international and non-governmental organisations concerned.

4. Social Development Fund: the Heads of State and Government decide to reinforce the activities of the Social Development Fund, invite it to participate actively in the Council of Europe's action for social cohesion, and urge it to increase its investment effort in the social field and in job creation.

III. Security of Citizens

1. Combating terrorism: the Heads of State and Government call for the adoption of further measures to prevent terrorism and to strengthen international co-operation in combating terrorism, in accordance with the relevant provisions of international law, including international standards on human rights, and in the light of the recommendations adopted at the ministerial conference on terrorism held in Paris on 30 July 1996; they note with interest the forthcoming holding of a parliamentary conference to study the phenomenon of terrorism in democratic society.

2. Fighting corruption and organised crime: In order to promote co-operation between member States in the fight against corruption, including its links with organised crime and money-laundering, the Heads of State and Government instruct the Committee of Ministers:

- to adopt, before the end of the year, guiding principles which are to be applied in the development of domestic legislation and practice;
- to secure the rapid completion of international legal instruments pursuant to the Council of Europe's Programme of Action against Corruption;
- to establish without delay an appropriate and efficient mechanism for monitoring observance of the guiding principles and implementation of the said international legal instruments.

They call on all States to ratify the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime.

3. Prevention of drug abuse: the Heads of State and Government decide to strengthen their co-operation, through the Pompidou Group, with a view to tackling the problems relating to the use and trafficking of illicit drugs; they note with approval the new work programme of the Group and welcome in particular those activities designed to prevent drug abuse among young people and to facilitate the reintegration of drug addicts and users into society.

4. Protection of children: the Heads of State and Government decide to review national legislation with the aim of ensuring common standards for the protection of children suffering from or at risk of inhuman treatment; they agree to extend their co-operation, within the Council of Europe, with a view to preventing all forms of exploitation of children, including through the production, sale, marketing and possession of pornographic material involving children.

IV. Democratic Values and Cultural Diversity

1. Education for democratic citizenship: the Heads of State and Government decide to launch an initiative for education for democratic citizenship with a view to promoting citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society, activating existing networks, and including a new youth exchange programme.

2. Enhancement of the European heritage: the Heads of State and Government decide to launch a campaign in 1999 on the theme "Europe, a common heritage", respecting cultural diversity, based on existing or prospective partnerships between government, educational and cultural institutions, and industry.

3. New information technologies: the Heads of State and Government resolve to develop a European policy for the application of the new information technologies, with a view to ensuring respect for human rights and cultural diversity, fostering freedom of expression and information and maximising the educational and cultural potential of these technologies; they invite the Council of Europe to seek, in this respect, suitable partnership arrangements.

V. Structures and Working Methods

1. Structural reform: the Heads of State and Government, looking ahead to the 50th Anniversary of the Council of Europe in 1999, instruct the Committee of Ministers to carry out the structural reforms needed to adapt the Organisation to its new tasks and its enlarged membership and to improve its decision-making process.

2. Implementation of the Action Plan: the Heads of State and Government instruct the Committee of Ministers to take the appropriate steps to ensure that this Action Plan is speedily implemented by the various Council of Europe bodies, in co-operation with European and other international organisations.