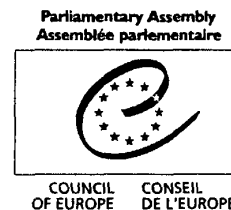


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REPORT

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ADDENDUM 1

Relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union

The following texts were submitted for inclusion in the official report by members who were present in the Chamber but were prevented by lack of time from delivering them.

Mr AVDIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – I thank Mr Juncker for his excellent report. Relations between the Council of Europe and European Union have a strategic interest for both institutions, especially for the Council of Europe which, by the logic of its mission should strengthen its position and influence on the parliamentary dimension of the European Union, on the countries in transition which remain committed to the accession in the European Union, and on the countries with totalitarian regimes where all the development of democratic standards, human rights and fundamental freedoms is blocked.

It is necessary to create new kind of relations with the European Union. We should establish parliamentary delegations to consider the flow of information and decisions and to harmonise efforts in establishing European standards. Resolutions and attitudes of the Council of Europe should have a greater influence on the European Union.

The strategy for the fight for human rights, against poverty and corruption, democratisation and European standardisation of the countries of Council of Europe member states, could be the starting points in the European Parliament, especially on youth issues, education, cultural co-operation and inter-cultural dialogue.

I come from Bosnia and Herzegovina which is in the process of fulfilling the obligations for signing the stabilisation and association agreement with the European Union. Our citizens have the strongest visa regime of Council of Europe member states. We have the acceptance of the monitoring team for facilitating the flow of people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, but that is simply not sufficient argument for the European Union institutions.

A greater influence of the Council of Europe asks for greater compatibility with an aim of higher level of cooperation with the European Union.

We have to develop new models of relationship between our organisation.

Thank you for your attention.

Mrs ÖZAL (Turkey) – First and foremost, I would like to extend my congratulations to Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker for his speech and the report he prepared on the relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union. I am confident that Mr. Juncker's report and his ideas announced today will be seen as a basis in the preparation process of the memorandum of understanding to be signed between the two organisations.

Why are the relations between Europe's oldest and most developed organisations so vital for us? Why is there a pressing need to put these relations in order? The answer is simple. The Council of Europe and the European Union are highly complementary in their areas of action and their experiences. Since the end of the cold war, both organisations are deploying efforts in similar areas such as promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Therefore, the urgent need for greater cohesion and unity in Europe in the context of a partnership is growing every day and that is why we are discussing this issue at length in this Parliamentary Assembly sitting.

While re-defining the new partnership between these two organisations, we should respect the differences in both organisations nature. Both the European Union and the Council of Europe are vital parts of the European architecture, each with its own vocation and its own particular added value. Therefore, we should value each organisation's prerogatives and areas of excellence separately in our efforts to draw the co-operation framework between the two organisations.

That is why, while outlining the important features of the relationship between the two institutions, we should keep it in mind that Europe is not limited to 25 or even 27 countries. It stretches far beyond and it is the Council of Europe with its 46 member countries, representing more than 800 million Europeans that personify a wider pan-European concept. The Council of Europe has unrivalled experience in the fields of its core activities: that is democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is the Council of Europe that sets the basic human rights standard with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. The Council of Europe has considerable activities in cultural and social fields.

Moreover, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is a unique forum with its representatives coming from 46 European states and this makes the Parliamentary Assembly a school of democracy and a model for the rest of the world.

We must take these strengths of the Council of Europe into account while drawing the framework for a future partnership. And, we should refrain from diminishing the strength of this already established and well functioning mechanism by creating parallel structures in different European organisations. The duplication of structures and activities not only weakens the institutions but is also a waste of money.

To conclude, I would like to underline once again that the Council of Europe is a unique institution with its own strengths. It has taken many years to form such an institution and therefore we should refrain from any hasty decisions to weaken this unique institution. That is why, we should be very careful while defining the future partnership between the two organisations.

Mr GREENWAY (United Kingdom) – I thank Mr Juncker for the courtesy of presenting his report to this Assembly and wish him well in his efforts to persuade his colleagues in the Council of Ministers to support his conclusions.

I want to see the European Union give greater recognition of the Assembly's role in furthering the cause of human rights across Europe. We may not have the power of co-decision granted to the European Parliament, but the power of our recommendations – unanimously adopted by members of all 46 countries – should not be underestimated. In recent months we have spoken with unanimity on some of the most challenging issues of our time: extraordinary rendition; asylum; the needs of displaced persons; human rights of irregular migrants. I want to see the European Union make better use of, show greater respect for and treat more urgently our recommendations and resolutions.

In this regard I support Mr Juncker's recommendation that the European Union should join the Council of Europe. This I feel sure would help to expedite the adoption of our recommendations or, at the very least, the speed of response from Ministers.

Mr Juncker mentioned resources. Yesterday, the new Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Hammarberg, told this Assembly he did not have sufficient resources to undertake his talks with the thoroughness he would wish, yet the European Union is moving on with its plan for Fundamental Rights Agency, a body which Mr Juncker agrees will not undermine the Council of Europe's pre-eminent role as the defender of human rights. I am concerned that there will none the less be duplication and that the money would be better spent supporting the Council of Europe. The Court of Human Rights also urgently needs more money. This should not be at the expense of the work of this Assembly.

Reference has also been made to the European Union neighbourhood policy. All the countries with which the European Union wants to strengthen relations are members here. It is vital that the European Union builds the Council of Europe into all its external relations policies and programmes. We here in the Council of Europe are best placed to monitor, assess and express an opinion on the standards of human rights in the emerging democracies of eastern Europe some of which are potential members of the European Union, but many are not.

Above all, with the Russian Federation about to assume the presidency of the Council of Europe, it is surely this institution which is best placed to ensure that relations between Russia and the countries of western Europe are strengthened.

Mr Juncker, the critical message we wish you to give to your colleagues in the European Union Council of Minister is: please make better use of this Assembly; respond more urgently to what we recommend with unanimity of all 46 member countries; help to provide the resources we need to enable the Commissioner, the Court and this Assembly to undertake the tasks your report has endorsed with such clarity.

Ms PASHAYEVA (Azerbaijan) – Intensification of co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union requires that each respect the other's resolutions.

According to resolution N 1416 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Armenia occupied 20 % of the territory of Azerbaijan. One million people now live as refugees and displaced persons. Hundreds of Azeri cemeteries and historical and cultural monuments were destroyed by Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent Azeri regions, including, even, in Armenia.

Unfortunately, many important facts were omitted from the recently passed European Parliament resolution, as though Armenian cemeteries in Nakhichevan had been destroyed. That is why we think that these two main organisations and institutions subordinated to them should conduct serious investigations while accepting decisions connected with some certain problems. Otherwise, suspicion can arise among member countries and their peoples.

We think it would be better if the Council of Europe and the European Union paid attention to each other's adopted documents when making decisions about their investigations.

Mr MOTA AMARAL (Portugal) – I join other speakers in complimenting to Prime Minister Juncker of Luxembourg for his most reasonable report on relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union.

I congratulate President van der Linden on his success in having such a high ranking group of European leaders present in our Parliamentary Assembly for the debate.

Prime Minister Juncker's report is just one first step. It needs reflection and dialogue. Chancellor Schüssel of Austria has pointed out most wisely that this report could not have been approved by any committee.

I welcome the proposal presented by Prime Minister Popescu-Tariceanu, of Romania, of a follow-up group to be established at the level of the Committee of Ministers and with the participation of the President of our Assembly.

I consider it absolutely premature to discuss now – and even more to approve – any memorandum of understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union.

The phase of reflection we now initiate requires the strong commitment of Governments of member countries of both institutions.

Foreign Ministers should not be almost systematically absent from ministerial meetings of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Otherwise the follow-up of the conclusions of the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government would not be effective.

The Council of Europe needs adequate financial resources, provided by the Governments of member countries. We should not risk the Council of Europe branding with the image of the poor man at the door of the European Union.

To conclude, I want to emphasise the parliamentary dimension of the dialogue between the Council of Europe and the European Union. National Parliaments should also to be involved in that dialogue, by means of involving the Conference of Speakers of the European Parliaments.

Mr SASI (Finland) – Mr Juncker has done an excellent job. With his enormous authority I am convinced that the proposals can be driven through.

I support rapid accession to the Human Rights Convention. It is not acceptable that the most important European human rights norms are not applied to the activities and legislation of the European Union. When the European Union becomes a party to the convention I expect the European Union to pay a fair share of the costs of the Human Rights Court. For the European Union it is important to allocate resources for human rights work correctly. The court is the best recipient.

I do not, however, support European Union membership of the Council of Europe. It would give some member countries double representation and a too dominant role. I prefer better co-operation between Member Parliaments from European Union member countries and between bodies who prepare legislation in areas where we have common activities.

Mrs HURSKAINEN (Finland) – The 10 founding members of the Council of Europe were convinced that European unity could be strengthened by making stronger European values and by creating a common legal space. The Council of Europe today has 46 members and is still carrying out its original objectives.

The aim of the European Union is to ensure political stability and economic prosperity in Europe. The report by Prime Minister Juncker focuses on the strengthening of relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union. The report underlines the fact that the role of the Council of Europe in the field of human rights and democracy should be strengthened and recognised. At the same time the European Union plans to set up a fundamental rights agency in Vienna and to expand its activities in human rights questions.

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament established a subcommittee on human rights only in 2004. Human rights issues must be given a higher profile in the Council of Europe which has longstanding experience and traditions in this field.

The European Parliament has a special role and position as a body of representatives elected in direct free elections. The Parliament is however mainly focused on other issues than human rights, which is a fairly new field of activity for the European Parliament.

It is important now to clarify the activities and organisation of the Council of Europe and the European Union. The present state of confusion is not beneficial for either organisation. We need a clear division of labour. This is the only way to ensure good results. There can never be too many defenders of human rights, but a duplication of activities and work is only a waste of resources and energy.

