

Declaration of the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the cooperation between the Council of Europe and the European Union

Since the establishment of the Council of Europe 60 years ago, Europe has changed dramatically. The historical role of the Council of Europe in shaping the landscape of European democracy, human rights and the rule of law is incontestable.

The activities of the European Union and the Council of Europe have been strongly and increasingly interlinked especially in the course of the last two decades. The Council of Europe's contribution to the development of democracy after the fall of communism is widely acknowledged. It is therefore important that both organisations continue to play a prominent role to promote greater unity between the European states through respect for the shared values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

In this respect, the European Union welcomes the new impetus given to the cooperation and political dialogue with the Council of Europe since the signature in 2007 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organizations, which was inspired by the Juncker Report.

Examples of successful implementation of mutual commitments contained in the MoU have resulted in greater awareness of the partnership and confirmed the role of the Council of Europe as the benchmark for human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Europe. This can help to respond to the new challenges to democratic stability and security and to build a Europe without dividing lines.

The increased practice of both formal and informal consultations between EU officials and senior representatives of the CoE, including its Commissioner for Human Rights, has contributed to the strengthening of political dialogue.

Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the Council of Europe

53, allée de la Robertsau – 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: +33 3 90 00 79 80. Fax: +33 3 88 37 33 62
E-mail: rptcheque@wanadoo.fr , Web: www.mzv.cz/strasbourg

The European Union is eagerly looking forward to the perspectives arising from the new dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy: the Eastern Partnership. This initiative launched at the recent Prague Summit (7 May 2009) aims at strengthening good governance and democratic stability, increasing prosperity and bringing benefits to the citizens of all the participating countries. In facing this challenge, the contribution of the Council of Europe, especially to the multilateral framework of the initiative, will be highly valuable.

The EU encourages the further development, strengthening and improved visibility in relations between the two organisations in the areas of common interest particularly regarding the core issues of the Council of Europe. More specifically the European Union would welcome further enhancement of cooperation in the field of democratic stability, in particular by reinforcing effective democratic governance at national, regional and local levels, including the civil society. The EU appreciates recent cooperation initiatives in the area of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity, which contribute to the promotion of the core values of the organization.

The EU acknowledges that its accession in due course to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms will further enhance coherence in human rights protection in Europe.

The EU strongly believes that the trend of the increase of cooperation with the Council of Europe launched by the signature of the MoU will be maintained.

Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the Council of Europe

53, allée de la Robertsau – 67000 Strasbourg
Tel: +33 3 90 00 79 80. Fax: +33 3 88 37 33 62
E-mail: rptcheque@wanadoo.fr , Web: www.mzv.cz/strasbourg