Recommendation 1753 (2006)

**External relations of the Council of Europe**

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly believes that a stronger involvement of the Council of Europe in the promotion, through its external relations, of the values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights outside its borders would contribute to the peace and stability of its member states and its external partners. It would also reconsolidate the relevance of the Council of Europe within the present European and global context.

2. The Assembly refers to Resolution 1506 (2006) on external relations of the Council of Europe, and invites the Committee of Ministers to give appropriate consideration to the ideas and proposals contained therein.

3. Accordingly, it calls on the Committee of Ministers to step up the external relations of the Council of Europe, giving priority to:

   3.1. strengthening existing partnerships, particularly with observer states, and seeking to establish new ones with countries sharing the same or similar democratic values;
   
   3.2. promoting European democratic values as part of a reinforced intercultural, interethnic and inter-religious dialogue with the Council of Europe’s neighbours, particularly in the Mediterranean Basin, the Middle East and central Asia, and helping certain neighbouring countries, particularly those participating in the European Union’s (EU) European Neighbourhood Policy, to move towards democracy through a policy based on co-operation;
   
   3.3. building a network of relations, a permanent and structured dialogue, as well as a specific modus operandi with organisations working to promote democratic principles.

4. The Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to:

   4.1. review, in consultation with representatives of the states concerned, the framework for co-operation with states enjoying observer status and to amend, if appropriate, Statutory Resolution (93) 26 on observer status so as to allow observers to be more involved in Council of Europe activities;
   
   4.2. consider, in addition to the observer status set forth by Statutory Resolution (93) 26, the establishment of a new status for non-member states that show an interest in dialogue and co-operation with the Council of Europe, but which are not yet in a position to guarantee full compliance with its principles;
   
   4.3. envisage the possibility of opening some of the Council of Europe’s instruments, institutions and mechanisms (including, on the one hand, the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) and the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ETS No. 126), and on the other, the machinery for the non-judicial protection of human rights such as the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights) to certain non-member states, depending on the status they enjoy.

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1. Assembly debate on 26 June 2006 (16th Sitting) (see Doc. 10956, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Severin). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 June 2006 (16th Sitting)
5. The Assembly furthermore asks the Committee of Ministers to:

5.1. continue building the strategic partnership with the European Union, with the prospect of the EU and the Council of Europe’s integration within a pan-European area of shared democratic values, on the basis of a meaningful and visionary memorandum of understanding which, inter alia, should:

5.1.1. delimit the competences of the two organisations;
5.1.2. define the necessary mechanisms of subsidiarity;
5.1.3. allow the EU access to the Council of Europe’s conventions, institutions and instruments (thus opening the way for EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights and the establishment of a single European jurisdiction in the field of fundamental rights);
5.1.4. establish a system of regular communication, consultation, co-ordination and co-operation between the two organisations;

5.2. develop close co-operation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) based on the identification of shared objectives and the assessment of comparative advantages within each organisation’s respective sphere of responsibility, where the Council of Europe would be primarily involved in providing assistance for law making, the building of democratic institutions, public democratic awareness and education, and, more generally, for democratic nation building, while the OSCE would concentrate on conflict prevention, crisis management and post-crisis rehabilitation;

5.3. intensify co-operation with the United Nations (UN) and its specialised agencies, so as to fully benefit from each other’s experience and expertise, with priority being given to promoting and defending universal values, achieving the Millennium Development Goals and contributing to peace- and democracy-building efforts;

5.4. enhance co-operation with other European, transatlantic and Euro-Asian organisations, where such relationships are based on shared values or may contribute to promoting the Council of Europe’s basic principles;

5.5. co-ordinate member states’ positions in various international forums, particularly the UN and the OSCE, on issues of concern for the Organisation, so as to secure a more effective and coherent defence of the Council of Europe’s stance;

5.6. envisage the possibility of establishing a Council of Europe presence in major international capitals, such as New York, Geneva and Vienna, in order to strengthen co-operation with the UN and the OSCE and enable the Council to make its achievements better known and ensure that these organisations take more account of them in their own activities.

6. The Assembly encourages the observer states to make full use of the opportunities offered by their status with the Council of Europe, and in particular to:

6.1. engage more actively in political dialogue, both on intergovernmental and parliamentary levels;
6.2. play a more active role in Council of Europe bodies and institutions which are open to their participation;
6.3. sign and ratify Council of Europe conventions open to non-member states;
6.4. contribute to promoting the values defended by the Council of Europe and its accomplishments.

7. The Assembly welcomes the setting up of the Ministers’ Deputies’ Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT), and looks forward to establishing a regular dialogue between this group and its relevant committees.