

CM/Inf(2007)44 23 October 2007¹

25th Quadripartite meeting between the Council of Europe and the European Union (Strasbourg, 23 October 2007)

1. The 25th Quadripartite meeting between the Council of Europe and the European Union was held in Strasbourg on 23 October 2007 at the invitation of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union.
2. It was attended, on the European Union side, by Mr Manuel Lobo Antunes, Secretary of State for European Affairs of Portugal, President of the Council of the European Union and Mrs Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Member of the European Commission, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, and on the Council of Europe side, by Mr Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and Mr Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.
3. A full list of participants is set out in Appendix 1, and the Concluding Statement adopted at the end of the meeting is set out in Appendix 2.
4. The following items were included in the agenda:
 - 1) General theme: Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union

Introductory remarks by the participants
 - 2) Specific topics for examination:
 - a) Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union regarding the promotion of democracy
 - Pre-electoral assistance
 - Forum for the Future of Democracy
 - Belarus
 - b) Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union within the framework of the European Union Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)
 - Presentation of the new orientations of the ENP
 - Promotion of regional co-operation

¹ This document has been classified restricted at the date of issue. Unless the Committee of Ministers decides otherwise, it will be declassified according to the rules set up in Resolution Res(2001)6 on access to Council of Europe documents.

Appendix 1**List of participants****Council of Europe Delegation****Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers**

Mr Vuk JEREMIĆ	Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
Mrs Sladjana PRICA	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Serbia to the Council of Europe, Chairperson of the Ministers' Deputies
Mr Feodor STARČEVIĆ	Ambassador, General Director of Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia
Mr Dejan ŠAHOVIĆ	Ambassador, Director, Directorate of OSCE and Council of Europe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia
Mr Damjan KRNJEVIC MISKOVIĆ	Advisor in the Private Office of the Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia
Ms Aleksandra RADOSAVLJEVIĆ	Advisor in the Private Office of the Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia
Mr Igor VUCINIC	Deputy to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Serbia to the Council of Europe
Ms Ivana MILOVANOVIĆ	Deputy to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Serbia to the Council of Europe

Ministers' Deputies

Mr Daryal BATIBAY	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the Council of Europe, Chairman of the Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT)
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Secretariat General

Mr Terry DAVIS	Secretary General
Mrs Maud DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO	Deputy Secretary General
Mr Jean-Louis LAURENS	Director General of Democracy and Political Affairs
Mrs Mireille PAULUS	Secretary to the Committee of Ministers ad interim
Mr Jiri VOGL	Director ad interim, Directorate of External Relations
Mr Christophe POIREL	Deputy to the Secretary to the Committee of Ministers
Mrs Verena TAYLOR	Director of the Council of Europe's Liaison Office with the European Union
Mr Ivan KOEDJIKOV	Deputy Director, Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General
Mrs Ulrika FLODIN-JANSON	Administrative officer, Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers

European Union Delegation**Presidency of the Council**

Mr Manuel LOBO ANTUNES
Mr Américo MADEIRA BÁRBARA

Mr João PATRÍCIO

Mr Francisco ALEGRE DUARTE

Mr Manuel LOPES ALEIXO

Mr João MOURA

Secretary of State for European Affairs of Portugal
Permanent Representative of Portugal to the Council of Europe
Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal to the Council of Europe
Advisor in the Office of the Secretary of State for European Affairs of Portugal
Advisor in the Office of the Secretary of State for European Affairs of Portugal
Expert in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal

General Secretariat of the Council

Mr Leo SCHULTE NORDHOLT
Ms Baiba ALEKSEJUKA

DG E VI, Desk Officer OSCE and Council of Europe
DG E VI, Desk Officer OSCE and Council of Europe

European Commission

Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER

Ms Luisella PAVAN-WOOLFE

Mr Gilbert DUBOIS
Mr Richard KUEHNEL
Mr Jérôme LEGRAND

Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy
Ambassador, Representative to the Council of Europe, DG RELEX
Head of Unit OSCE and Council of Europe, DG RELEX
Cabinet of Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner
Desk Officer for the relations with the Council of Europe, DG RELEX

Appendix 2

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The 25th Quadripartite Meeting between the European Union and the Council of Europe was held in Strasbourg on 23 October 2007 at the invitation of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It was the first meeting since the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union in May 2007.

The participants were, for the European Union:

- Mr Manuel Lobo Antunes, Secretary of State for European Affairs of Portugal, President of the Council of the European Union;
- Ms Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Member of the European Commission, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy;

and for the Council of Europe:

- Mr Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Chair of the Committee of Ministers;
- Mr Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

The participants reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the Memorandum of Understanding in order to enhance co-operation on topics of common interest, including through joint projects. They agreed to regularly review its implementation at the technical and political level. In this context, it was noted that the Memorandum of Understanding provides for the possibility to hold ad hoc consultations, including at a high political level. Participants agreed to consider holding such ad hoc consultations on subjects of political significance which would particularly benefit from joining forces.

Specific reference was made to the synergies to be developed between activities of the Council of Europe and those of the newly-established European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Participants looked forward to the entry into force of the agreement which is to provide a framework for this co-operation. Participants also reiterated that early accession by the European Union to the European Convention for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms would contribute greatly to coherence in the field of human rights in Europe.

Participants envisaged to increase during the coming months political dialogue between the institutions of the two organisations on an informal basis, both at the level of the Ministers' Deputies of the Council of Europe and that of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) of the Council of the European Union, as indicated in the Memorandum of Understanding.

In this context, the participants welcomed the joint meeting held between the ad hoc Committee of the Chairpersons of Political Groups of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament on 30 August in Brussels.

With a view to further facilitating co-operation, participants agreed to look into the possibility of preparing a Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement between the two organisations, which could complement the Memorandum of Understanding.

It was noted that the enhancement and strengthening of the presence of the Council of Europe and the European Union in Brussels and Strasbourg respectively would further facilitate contacts and co-operation between the two institutions.

a) Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union regarding the promotion of democracy

Both the European Union and the Council of Europe actively promote and support democracy at all levels of government and society, both in their member states and beyond.

The participants welcomed the important contribution of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission to promoting democracy and the rule of law and its close cooperation with the institutions of the European Union.

- **Pre-electoral assistance**

Taking into account that 2007 and 2008 are periods of major elections in a number of European countries, the participants agreed on the importance of ensuring that Europe is an area of free and fair elections. In this context they agreed on the usefulness of joint actions aimed at assisting countries in setting up and implementing a sound legal framework for elections, in ensuring free access to media with fair coverage during election campaigns as well as in raising awareness with a view to increasing voters' turnout during elections. They also recalled the proposed CoE-EU Joint Programme on Fair and Free elections in the South Caucasus and Moldova (2008-2009)

- **Forum for the Future of Democracy**

Participants expressed their support for the Forum's objective of promoting and strengthening democracy and good governance in all European states. They agreed to explore before the next session of the Forum (Spain, 2008) further ways to make the results of the Forum more specific and better disseminated, thereby helping to rekindle citizens' confidence in democracy.

- **Belarus**

The participants reiterated their commitment to cooperate in order to promote democracy and citizen's participation also in countries aspiring for membership of the Council of Europe.

They expressed their growing concern over the lack of progress on democratic reforms in Belarus. They noted that, even though a few political prisoners have been released slightly ahead of time, it is still impossible to see any substantial improvement in the fields of human rights, democracy and rule of law.

The participants expressed their unequivocal expectation and request that the wide range of legal and practical obstacles to activities of the opposition, NGOs and independent media, notably the restrictive rules on the registration of NGOs, should be removed.

The European Union and the Council of Europe reaffirmed their support to civil society in Belarus for the advancement of democracy. In this respect, the project of the newly-established Belarusian School of Political Studies should provide an opportunity for dialogue between various layers of society on all aspects of the functioning of an open and democratic system of government.

They agreed to support each other's activities in respect of the democratisation process.

b) Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union within the framework of the European Union Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

- ***Presentation of the new orientations of the ENP***

The participants confirmed that the ENP constitutes an important element for the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the beneficiary countries. Many areas covered by the ENP are particularly relevant as regards countries' specific commitments towards the Council of Europe. The participants agreed to develop synergies between ENP Action Plans and Council of Europe activities in relevant Council of Europe member states, including the principle of preparing new Joint Programmes and to explore all possibilities for planning, implementing and assessing these programmes together, involving also the countries concerned. This question should be studied as a priority matter by the Senior Officials, who should report back at the next Quadripartite meeting.

- ***Promotion of regional co-operation***

The participants agreed on the significance of regional co-operation as a tool for the promotion of the human rights, democracy and the rule of law, especially in areas of post-conflict situations and "frozen conflicts". They encouraged Council of Europe member states participating in the ENP to develop regional co-operation with the assistance of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

The recently established Regional Cooperation Council, which allows countries in the South-East of Europe to develop co-operation and democratisation processes and structures under their own responsibility, was pointed out as a positive example that could be transposed to the ENP context.