

**Joint Declaration  
on cooperation and partnership  
between the Council of Europe  
and the European Commission**

**Déclaration conjointe  
sur la coopération et le partenariat  
entre le Conseil de l'Europe  
et la Commission européenne**

Following the exchange of letters between the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the President of the European Commission dated 16 June 1987 and the supplementary exchange of letters dated 5 November 1996, the European Commission and the Council of Europe have engaged in active cooperation in many areas including human rights, democratic institution-building, legal affairs, social and health matters, education and culture, heritage and the environment, local government and the protection of national minorities. The entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam offers fresh scope for extending cooperation further.

The Council of Europe and the European Community share the same values and pursue common aims with regard to the protection of democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. These common aims have led the Council of Europe and the European Commission in recent years to develop a number of joint programmes for cooperation with countries which have joined the Council of Europe since 1989, or have applied for membership. Experience has shown that, by combining forces in this way, we have enhanced the complementarity of our activities and ensured maximum benefit for the countries concerned.

With this Joint Declaration we confirm our determination to deepen our partnership and enhance our cooperation taking into account recent developments in our continent and the evolving priorities in our respective activities.

Henceforth we will endeavour to intensify our dialogue with a view to identifying those countries and objectives where joint action will add value to our respective activities. We will aim to jointly identify mid-term priorities for this cooperation while maintaining the necessary flexibility to respond to new developments. In our respective programming we will take due account of our cooperation. We will ensure that due prominence is given to the joint character of our common activities and to each partner's visibility in relation to the beneficiary countries and all interested parties.

We are convinced that the enhanced framework for our partnership hereby established will facilitate, guide and promote cooperation between the Council of Europe and the European Community and thereby contribute to democratic stability on our continent.

The framework and principles which we intend should guide our cooperation, are set out in the Appendix to this declaration.

Done at Strasbourg, on 3 April 2001

For the European Commission

*Signed : Chris Patten*

For the Council of Europe

*Signed : Walter Schwimmer*

## Appendix

### Objectives

Cooperation in the various fields of action of the Council of Europe and the European Community should include all areas of common concern where such cooperation would be to mutual advantage. It shall aim *inter alia* at strengthening democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the protection of national minorities. In particular the two organisations undertake to work closely together to maintain the high standards in these areas required by membership of the European Union and stand ready to assist countries applying for European Union membership in meeting such standards. Cooperation shall be extended to all areas where it is likely to bring added value to both sides and strengthen complementarity of action. This concerns certain aspects of social cohesion, as well as the development of cooperation on research and on ethical questions. Particular attention shall also be given to activities aimed at strengthening cultural cooperation in Europe in all its national and regional diversity, in the spirit of the provisions concerning the fostering of cooperation between the European Community and the Council of Europe in the field of education and culture in Article 149 and Article 151 respectively of the Treaty establishing the European Community.

### Regular dialogue

The Council of Europe Secretariat and the relevant Commission departments shall consult each other on questions of mutual interest relating to those objectives. The senior officials appointed on each side in pursuance of the exchange of letters of 16 June 1987 have a special role to play in this respect. They will see to it that the dialogue comprises all areas of mutual interest where cooperation is desirable.

In particular, an annual meeting will be the occasion for officials of the European Commission and the Council of Europe to draw up objectives, plan activities, monitor joint programmes and evaluate their implementation. It will be chaired in turn, in Strasbourg and Brussels, by the senior official of the European Commission or the Council of Europe designated under the 1987 exchange of letters. An annual progress report shall be drawn up for the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Officials from beneficiary countries may be invited to an exchange of views on matters relating to assistance programmes for the country concerned. The meeting of senior officials will also keep cooperation under review and may make proposals for further action whenever developments on either side render an extension of cooperation to new areas desirable. They will jointly examine concrete ways and means for this cooperation to develop, also on the ground, e.g. by means of joint missions or contacts between Council of Europe field offices and Commission Delegations and technical offices.

## **Planning**

The annual meeting will consider and adopt a list of objectives and programme their implementation, planning several years forward wherever possible. It will agree priorities for joint activities and consider what countries should be covered. As far as possible the indicative size of each party's contributions will be programmed several years ahead. As a rule the joint programmes will be co-financed. They will be framed in such a way that, within the general objectives agreed, specific activities can be added or adapted to meet new needs or take account of changes in circumstances.

Each party will take the above mid-term guidelines fully into account in its respective multi-annual sector or country programming procedures, proposing specific consultations as required.

## **Management and implementation of joint programmes**

For each joint programme the two sides shall in principle set up a technical working party which will provide a forum for discussing implementation and monitoring of activities. This consultative body will be composed of officials of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Representatives of the beneficiary country or groups of countries may also take part in its proceedings.

## **Evaluation**

The programmes shall be evaluated at regular intervals, according to procedures to be determined in each case by the senior officials. Reports on such evaluations shall be transmitted to the European Commission, the Council of Europe and, in principle, to the beneficiary countries.