

## 75 years after the Hague Congress, let's strengthen the Council of Europe !

On 16 and 17 May 2023, the Council of Europe's Summit of Heads of State and Government will be held in Reykjavik, Iceland. This is the fourth summit in the history of the institution, and it takes place at a time when war has returned to the European continent following the Russian aggression against Ukraine. In order to face this aggression, Europeans are showing great solidarity with the Ukrainians.

Europe is above all a project of values. That is why the Council of Europe has historically been entrusted with the task of preserving democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in order to guarantee peace.

Following the 1948 Hague Congress, the founding congress of the European Movement, the Council of Europe now needs the support of its member states to better carry out its essential tasks. This historic summit must push all stakeholders to increase their commitment to the Council of Europe and its founding convention, both in terms of values and budgetary contribution.

This Summit is also a historic opportunity to reform the Council of Europe and respond to the challenges of the 21st century. We, the representatives of the European Movement<sup>1</sup>, the pioneer organisation of the European construction at the origin of the Council of Europe and gathering the organisations of European civil society, suggest to :

- Intensify the Council of Europe's actions to **prevent and resolve conflicts and support the affected populations on our continent**. This includes the creation of a special tribunal within the Council of Europe to try war crimes and crimes against humanity from the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, the creation of a registry to receive and investigate complaints from Ukrainians and others with a view to an international trial, and the establishment of a war reparations mechanism to support reconstruction in regions touched by destruction caused by wars and conflicts ;
- **Strengthen the links between the Council of Europe and the European Union**. To bring to a successful conclusion the negotiations for the **accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as to the European Social Charter**, by consolidating the Turin Process, in order to fully consider social rights as an essential part of democracy and fundamental rights. The European Union must step up its collaboration with the Council of Europe, particularly in order to accompany the candidate countries ;
- **Use the political momentum of the European Political Community**, whose next summit will be held in Chisinau, Moldova on 1 June 2023, and then in October in Seville, Spain, to recall the Council of Europe's assets as a crucible for the rule of

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<sup>1</sup> The European Movement contributed to the deliberations of the Summit with [a series of recommendations](#), collected after consultation with its network.

law, democracy and fundamental rights in Europe and to define the link between the European Political Community and the Council of Europe in order to coordinate their programme of work and their actions and to ensure the necessary synergy between them ;

- **To adapt the functioning of the Council of Europe in order to make it more democratic, especially regarding its** interaction with civil society. The role of the Parliamentary Assembly must be enhanced and it must be given the right of initiative. In addition, the link between European civil society and the institution must be revitalised by mobilising the representation of local and regional authorities, by promoting local and participatory democracy and by giving the citizens of the Council of Europe member states the possibility of referring a specific question to the Committee of Ministers by creating a citizens' initiative procedure.

Thanks to the Reykjavik Summit, let us reaffirm that Europe is a project of values, unity and peace !

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Signatories:

Francisco Aldecoa Luzarraga, President of the European Movement - Spain  
Pier-Virgilio Dastoli, President of the European Movement - Italy  
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Noelle O'Connell, President of the European Movement - Ireland  
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Among the other signatories, members of the European Movement :

- Frédérique Berrod, professor of European law at the University of Strasbourg and the College of Europe
- Olivier Breton, editorial director of the journal Confrontations Europe
- Emilie Chevalier, lecturer in public law at the University of Limoges
- Michel Derdevet, President of Confrontations Europe, Think Tank
- François Lafond, specialist in international relations and the Western Balkans
- Henri Oberdorff, professor emeritus at the University of Grenoble Alpes
- Sylvaine Poillot Peruzzetto, professor of private law and criminal sciences at the University of Toulouse Capitole
- François-Xavier Priollaude, Mayor of Louviers and Vice President of the Normandy Region, France
- Denis Simonneau, President of EuropaNova, think tank
- Béatrice Thiriet, composer
- Catherine Trautmann, former minister, former member of the European Parliament, former mayor of Strasbourg

- Claude Vivier-Le-Got, president of the European Federation of Schools