

HUMAN RIGHTS,  
DEMOCRACY  
AND THE RULE OF LAW

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

DROITS DE L'HOMME,  
DÉMOCRATIE  
ET ÉTAT DE DROIT

UNITED AROUND OUR VALUES

## The Council of Europe after the Reykjavik Summit: Challenges and Opportunities

Presentation  
July 2023

Patrick Penninckx  
Head of Information Society Department



# Russia's war in Ukraine

---

Running up for  
the Summit







# Degrading environment

---

Running up for  
the Summit



# Digital Revolution

Running up for  
the Summit





# Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe

---

- Reykjavík, Iceland  
16-17 May 2023



**REYKJAVÍK** | **SOMMET DE**  
**SUMMIT** | **REYKJAVÍK**  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe



# Historic Summits of the Council of Europe

## May 2023, Reykjavík, Iceland

- ✓ Establish a Register of damage caused by the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine
- ✓ Tackle emerging challenges in the area of technology and the environment

## May 2005, Warsaw, Poland

- ✓ Safeguard and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law

## 1997, Strasbourg, France

- ✓ Establish the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner

## 1993, Vienna, Austria

- ✓ Policy of openness and enlargement following the fall of the Berlin Wall
- ✓ Reform of the European Convention on Human Rights to make it more effective





**COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
SUMMIT**

**Reykjavik, 16-17 May 2023**

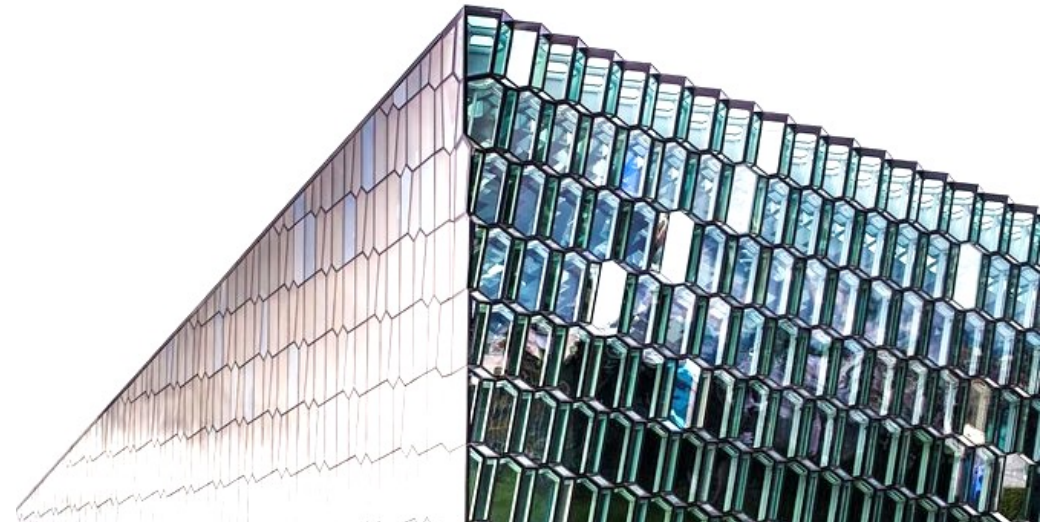
United  
around our  
values



**REYKJAVÍK** | **SOMMET DE**  
**SUMMIT** | **REYKJAVÍK**  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Reykjavík Declaration

- United for Ukraine and accountability
- United around our values
- United to meet current and future challenges
- United in our vision for the Council of Europe
- The Europe we want







# Strengthening Democracy



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe



# Strengthening Democracy



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Support for Ukraine

“We will support Ukraine’s reconstruction efforts, including through financing and implementing the Council of Europe’s **Action Plan for Ukraine** “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction”, and commit to using all means available within the Council, including through the **Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)**.”



# Strengthening Democracy



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Co-operation with Russian and Belarussian civil society

“We will in particular pursue the work of the Contact Group on co-operation with Belarusian democratic forces and civil society, and will find ways to strengthen co-operation with Russian and Belarussian **human rights defenders, democratic forces, free media** and independent civil society.”

# Strengthening Democracy



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Civil society outreach

“We also call for a review and further reinforcement of the Organisation’s outreach to, and meaningful **engagement with, civil society organisations** and national human rights institutions.”



# Strengthening Democracy



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Presence on the ground

“We further recognise the important role of the Organisation’s co-operation dimension, including its field offices, in providing targeted support to beneficiaries on the ground and commit to further **strengthening the work of the Organisation in the field**, in co-operation with the countries concerned.”

# Strengthening Democracy



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Lighthouse for democracy

“We commit to delivering on them to promote, protect and strengthen democracy throughout our member States and to engage in regular, **high-level dialogue with member States and partners** on the above-mentioned principles.

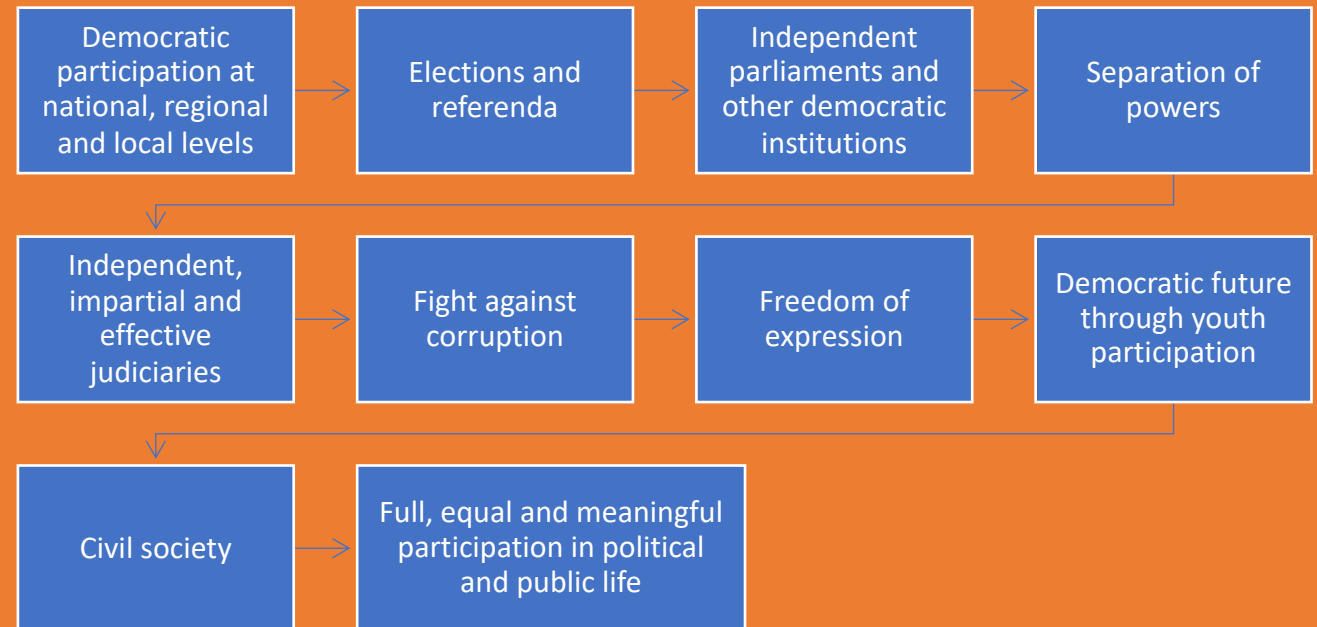
The **World Forum for Democracy**, organised every year in Strasbourg, provides one opportunity for such an exchange.”



# Reykjavik Principles for Democracy



**REYKJAVÍK** | **SOMMET DE**  
**SUMMIT** | **REYKJAVÍK**  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe



# Enhancing Legal Cooperation

---



**REYKJAVÍK** | **SOMMET DE**  
**SUMMIT** | **REYKJAVÍK**  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe



# Enhancing Legal Cooperation



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Register of damage in Ukraine

“We acknowledge that the **Register** is intended to constitute the first component of a future international **comprehensive compensation mechanism** and express willingness to engage with the international community in further developing such a mechanism to be established by a separate international instrument, which may include a **claims commission** and **compensation fund**, while emphasising the obligation for the Russian Federation to pay for the damages caused by this war of aggression.”



# Enhancing Legal Cooperation



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Accountability for crimes

“We welcome **international efforts to hold to account** the political and military leadership of the Russian Federation for its war of aggression against Ukraine and the progress towards the establishment of a **special tribunal for the crime of aggression** as highlighted at the Summit of the Special Tribunal’s Core Group chaired by President Zelenskyy. The Council of Europe should participate, as appropriate, in relevant consultations and negotiations and provide concrete **expert and technical support** to the process.”

# Enhancing Legal Cooperation



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Accountability for crimes

“We commit to strengthening the work of the Council of Europe to support and promote national and international efforts, including the work of the **European Court of Human Rights**, the International Criminal Court, and of the International **Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine**. We call on all member States to ensure that perpetrators within their jurisdiction can be tried.”

# Enhancing Legal Cooperation



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Rule of law

“We will also ensure the diligent respect for the rule of law, benefitting every citizen and building a European legal community of shared values and dialogue between the jurisdictions of its member States, including by **raising the profile of, and strengthening the Venice Commission**, by for example giving more visibility and status to its Rule of Law Checklist and exploring ways the Organisation can better support the implementation of its recommendations.”



# Enhancing Legal Cooperation



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Standards in the digital era / AI

“ We acknowledge the positive impact and opportunities created by new and emerging digital technologies ... while recognising the need to **mitigate risks** of negative consequences of their use on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, including new forms of violence against women and vulnerable groups generated and amplified by modern technologies, and, in this context, ... we commit to ensuring a leading role for the Council of Europe in developing standards in the digital era to safeguard human rights online and offline, including by finalising, as a priority, the Council of Europe’s **Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence.**”

# Protecting Human Rights



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe



# Protecting Human Rights



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Convention system

“Recommitting to the Convention System as the cornerstone of the Council of Europe’s protection of human rights”

“We will continue supporting the Court’s efficient and timely response to pending applications and redouble our efforts for the full, **effective and rapid execution** of judgments, including through developing a more co-operative, inclusive and political approach based on dialogue”



# Protecting Human Rights



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Death penalty

“Moreover, the Council of Europe has played a crucial role to **ensure that Europe is a death penalty-free zone** and should pursue the fight against the reintroduction of the death penalty, and in favour of its **universal abolition**, in all places and in all circumstances. It has also ensured that the absolute **prohibition of torture** and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is upheld.”

# Protecting Human Rights



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Human rights defenders

“We reiterate the pan-European role of the Council of Europe and in this regard, we will step up and strengthen the Council of Europe’s engagement with democratic actors in Europe and its efforts to create an **enabling environment for human rights defenders.**”

## Protecting Human Rights



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Protection of journalists

“We welcome the Council of Europe’s prominent role in **international standard-setting** on freedom of expression and related issues such as **media freedom**, and **access to information** and combatting hate speech and disinformation, including the **instrumentalisation of history**, in particular in the light of the increasing impact of **digital technologies** on these issues.

We will continue our collective efforts for the **safety of journalists** and other media actors.”

# Protecting Human Rights



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Inclusive societies Discrimination

“We acknowledge the need to **ensure equality** and combat any kind of discrimination and the important role the Organisation plays in this regard. We therefore commit to strengthening work towards **inclusive societies** without marginalisation, exclusion, racism and intolerance. In this regard, we will use an intersectional approach in the work of the Council of Europe to **address the multiple discriminations** faced by people and groups in vulnerable and marginalised situations.”

“We also stress the important role that the Council of Europe is playing to promote and protect the **rights of persons belonging to national minorities.**”



# Protecting the Environment



**REYKJAVÍK** | **SOMMET DE**  
**SUMMIT** | **REYKJAVÍK**  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe



# Protecting Human Rights



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## The Council of Europe and the environment

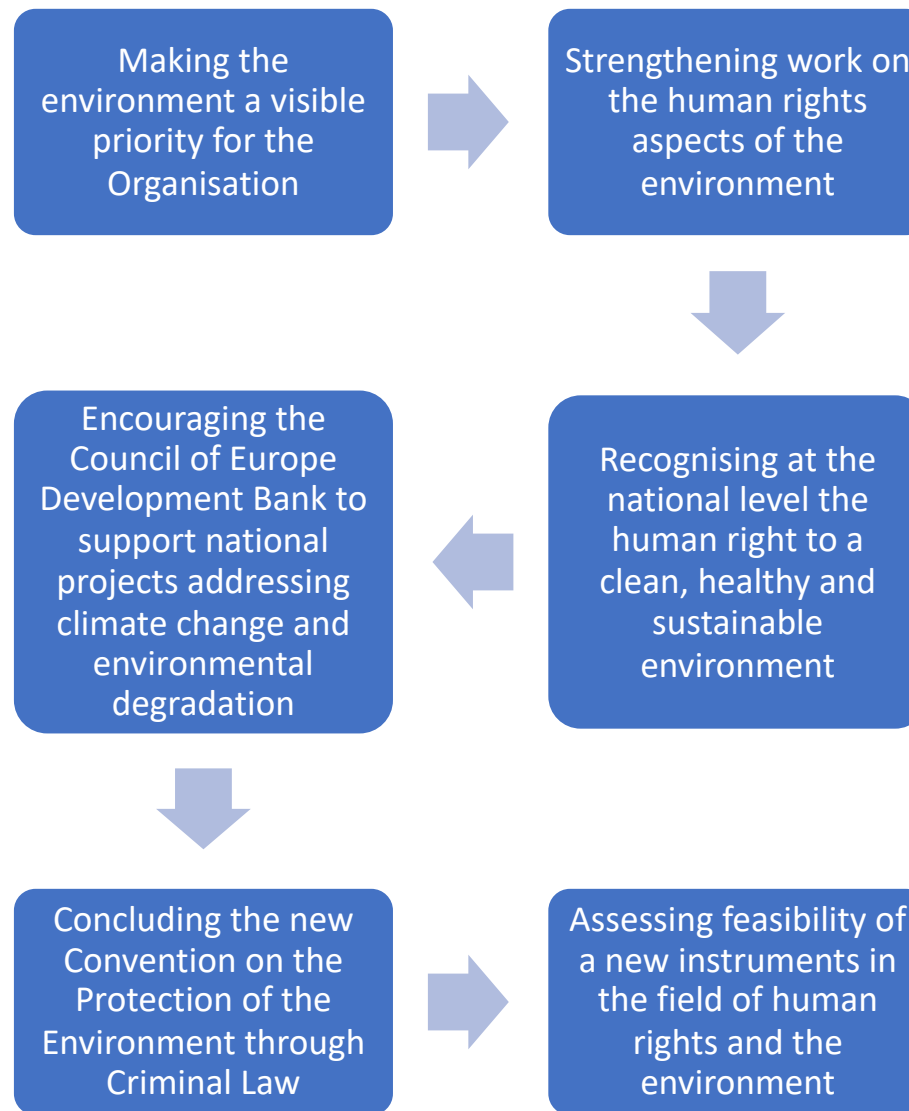
“We underline the urgency of additional efforts to **protect the environment**, as well as to counter the impact of the triple planetary crisis of **pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity** on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

We therefore commit to strengthening our work on the human rights aspects of the environment and **initiate the Reykjavík process** of focusing and strengthening the work of the Council of Europe in this field.”

# Launching the Reykjavík process



**REYKJAVÍK** | **SOMMET DE**  
**SUMMIT** | **REYKJAVÍK**  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe



# Addressing Social and Health Questions



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe





# Addressing Social and Health Questions



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Situation of the Children of Ukraine

“We call on the Russian Federation to immediately **release all civilians** forcibly transferred or unlawfully deported to the territory of the Russian Federation or to areas temporarily controlled or occupied by the Russian Federation, in particular children, and call on the **Council of Europe to take action** on the situation of the children of Ukraine.”

# Addressing Social and Health Questions



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Rights of the Child

“... As we work to promote the rights of the child, we underline the importance of **education** to give children and young people the necessary references to grow up embracing our **democratic values** in culturally diverse societies and take an active part in the protection of our **cultural heritage**. ...”

# Addressing Social and Health Questions



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Social Rights

“Social justice is crucial for democratic stability and security and in this regard we reaffirm our full commitment to the protection and implementation of social rights as guaranteed by the European Social Charter system.

We will consider the organisation of a High-Level **Conference on the European Social Charter**, as a step to take further commitments under the Charter where possible.”

# Enhancing Legal Cooperation



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Migrants

“We recall the increasing challenges of migration and the necessity to **fight against trafficking and smuggling** of migrants. We commit to intensifying efforts to foster and improve international co-operation in this regard, while continuing to **protect the victims** and respect the human rights of migrants and refugees, as well as supporting frontline States, within the existing Council of Europe frameworks.”





**REYKJAVÍK  
SUMMIT**

Council of Europe

**SOMMET DE  
REYKJAVÍK**

Conseil de l'Europe



**Bettering Education,  
Culture, Youth and  
Environment**

# Bettering Education, Culture, Youth and Environment



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Youth participation

“We set the Council on a new path of increased transparency and co-operation with its stakeholders, with strengthened visibility and sufficient resources. This should include a youth perspective in the Organisation’s intergovernmental and other deliberations as **youth participation in decision-making** processes improves the effectiveness of public policies and strengthens democratic institutions through open dialogue....”

# Bettering Education, Culture, Youth and Environment



REYKJAVÍK | SOMMET DE  
SUMMIT | REYKJAVÍK  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

## Education

“As we work to promote the rights of the child, we underline the importance of education to give children and young people the necessary references to grow up embracing our **democratic values** in culturally diverse societies and take an active part in the protection of our **cultural heritage**. ...”



**REYKJAVÍK  
SUMMIT**

Council of Europe

**SOMMET DE  
REYKJAVÍK**

Conseil de l'Europe

Enhancing  
international  
cooperation



**REYKJAVÍK** | **SOMMET DE**  
**SUMMIT** | **REYKJAVÍK**  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

# External relations

---

“Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine has forced us to re-evaluate how we can best **respond to the challenges** facing us within Europe’s multilateral architecture and the **international rules-based order**. We therefore commit to strengthening the role of the Council of Europe in the evolving European multilateral architecture and in **global governance** by enhancing its external dimension, through its liaison offices and through a new engagement based on its core values with democracies in the world and its **southern neighborhood**.”





**REYKJAVÍK** | **SOMMET DE**  
**SUMMIT** | **REYKJAVÍK**  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

# Observer States

---

“We will in particular strengthen our dialogue with our **observer States**, with which the Council of Europe and its member States share a set of fundamental values and common principles.

We will also **promote increased ratification** of Council of Europe conventions that are open to non-member States through targeted universalisation campaigns, to advance compliance with the Organisation's ambitious standards beyond European borders.”



**REYKJAVÍK** | **SOMMET DE**  
**SUMMIT** | **REYKJAVÍK**  
Council of Europe | Conseil de l'Europe

# International Organisations

---

“We call for **more political dialogue** with other international organisations, including the UN and the OSCE, to strengthen the partnership between these organisations and the Council of Europe. We believe that further synergies are possible, notably when it comes to the implementation of the **UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, and underscore the need to avoid duplication of work and possibly competing standards.”



# Administrative Reform

“To achieve our objectives, we need a **modern Council of Europe** enabling us to meet current and future challenges as well as the expectations of future generations.

We will ensure that the Council of Europe, and especially the Court, is financially sustainable, and that the **Organisation is more agile**, resilient and results-oriented, including through adopting an integrated budget based on agreed strategic priorities, and we will continue the reform process to achieve **greater transparency, efficiency and effectiveness.**”

# 46 Member States

## Council of Europe



Map by Eurostat for publication. Designed by the Institute for European Studies, 2014. www.coe.int