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**SPEECH**

**By**

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Mr Chairman, Mr Secretary General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greetings from Strasbourg,  
Greetings from the Council of Europe  
and from our Secretary General Mr Terry Davis.

Since its inception, the Council of Europe has based its role on the conviction that unless there is respect for fundamental rights and the rule of law, there can be no stability, no peace, no progress, **and no security**.

**Europe is thus defined as a vast area of democratic security**, where all countries are committed to pluralist and parliamentary democracy, the indivisibility and universality of human rights, the rule of law and a common cultural heritage enriched by its diversity.

Today, having 47 member states, the central mission of the Council of Europe is to:

- promote common fundamental values
- build a more humane and inclusive Europe
- and
- strengthen the **security of European citizens**

This is translated into 5 major lines of action:

- 1) Protect and promote human rights
- 2) Ensure the rule of law
- 3) Enhance democracy and good governance
- 4) Foster social cohesion
- 5) Promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue

We have a clear mission in the field of democratic security. But we cannot fulfil it alone. No task in the field of security could be performed fully by any international organisation or state in isolation. Modern threats and challenges are global, and we need to join our efforts with our partner organisations, such as the OSCE and many others which are also represented today in this room.

In this respect we commend the work of the Council of Europe - OSCE Coordination Group.

Welcoming progress achieved during last three years in the four priority areas, namely

action against terrorism,  
the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities,  
combating trafficking in human beings  
and promoting tolerance and non-discrimination,

we continue to intensify our efforts in identifying opportunities for joint action and organising joint events.

In matters with particular importance for security, such as action against terrorism we went even beyond our bilateral cooperation by organising a Tripartite meeting held in Vienna on 14 February 2007 between the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. This meeting concluded that efforts should be stepped up, within the respective mandates of our organisations, to **prevent and combat terrorism**, thus contributing to the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Bearing in mind the differences between our two organisations regarding their membership, mandates and working methods, the Council of Europe is determined to develop collaboration further in the direction of joint actions contributing to each other's efforts in addressing all forms of the increased threats and new challenges to human security.

One such future directions of cooperation is enhancing the already established co-operation in promoting tolerance and non-discrimination by emphasis on joint activities in the fields of youth and intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

Mr Chairman

Before concluding, please allow me briefly to share with you some ideas about the contribution of the Council of Europe to the security in Europe of today and in the future.

The Council of Europe has its comparative advantages and added value as the **guardian of human rights, democracy and rule of law in Europe** by using, in particular, its multifaceted institutional set up, representing all relevant actors in a democratic society. This institutional set up provides a unique European forum for dialogue at all levels, including parliamentary, local, regional and civil society dimensions.

The Council of Europe approach towards conflict prevention, reduction of tension and increased security for all in Europe through legal instruments and policies for international cooperation, social cohesion, management of cultural diversity and

education for democratic citizenship, is complemented by the variety of instruments such as standard-setting, monitoring and assistance (policy development and advice, awareness-raising, capacity-building).

Let us use all these tools and dimensions at our disposal and join efforts in working towards making Europe a safe and secure place for future generations.