

Joint Declaration
19th High-level "2+2" meeting
Geneva, 5 March 2010

The 19th Council of Europe–OSCE High-level meeting was held in Geneva on 5 March 2010 at the invitation of Micheline Calmy-Rey, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, with the participation of Kanat Saudabayev, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Secretary of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Thorbjorn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe and Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, Secretary General of the OSCE.

Discussions centred on current and future co-operation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE, their respective priorities and co-operation in the field.

The participants reaffirmed their resolve to reinforce co-operation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE, on the basis of complementarity, while respecting the autonomy, nature, different membership and distinctive tasks of the two organisations. They underlined the importance of ensuring close coordination in order to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Having reviewed the results of the recent meetings of the Council of Europe - OSCE Coordination Group, they welcomed the strengthened co-operation and joint initiatives between the two organisations to promote tolerance and non-discrimination, in particular through legislative reviews, and expressed their appreciation for the close co-operation between the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights and the OSCE institutions and structures to promote and protect the human rights of Roma and Sinti. In this context the participants welcomed the OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination to be held on 29-30 June, 2010 in Astana.

Regarding the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, they encouraged the continuation of their co-operation in relation to monitoring activities, in particular through mutual consultations and regular exchanges of information.

The participants also endorsed the efforts under way to seek new ways of co-operation in the area of combating trafficking in human beings. They encouraged the enhanced exchange of information, while respecting distinctive tasks of the Council of Europe bodies active in this field (*Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings* (GRETA) and the *Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*) and of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The participants expressed their appreciation for the good co-operation in the fight against terrorism, notably in countering terrorist use of the Internet, the prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation that lead to terrorism.

The Coordination Group was invited to step up its efforts to identify specific issues where the two organisations could further complement each other's work in the above-mentioned areas.

The participants noted that particular consideration should be given to the ways of promoting synergies in the context of the ongoing OSCE Corfu process in which regard they noted the initiative of the OSCE Kazakh Chairmanship to convene this summer an informal Corfu-type Ministerial meeting in Almaty.

The participants also addressed a number of relevant issues for their co-operation in the geographical areas of their common interest. They underlined the need for strengthened co-operation and co-ordination between the two organisations in the field.

The participants recalled their shared common values and discussed their respective activities with regard to their support for free, fair and democratic elections, as well as the promotion of freedom of expression and association. They reiterated the readiness of both organisations to participate in the observation of election processes, with a view to further promoting the principles of transparency and accountability. They particularly welcomed the invitation of the Georgian government to observe the upcoming local elections and emphasized the common efforts of ODIHR and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in this regard. The participants shared the view that inviting observers to local elections is beneficial for the democratic process and encouraged other countries to do so.

The participants also discussed the recent visits of the Chairpersons of both organisations to Georgia. They highlighted the importance of the Geneva Discussions, as the only forum where all stakeholders are represented. They assessed positively the Council of Europe's contribution to the efforts of the OSCE, UN and EU Co-Chairs of the Geneva Discussions to address the consequences of the 2008 August conflict in Georgia. They particularly welcomed the actions undertaken by the Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe. They underlined the importance of international presence on the ground and of the unhindered access to the areas affected by the conflict with a view to strengthening security and stability, as well as to promoting humanitarian assistance and human rights.

The participants noted the readiness of the Council of Europe to continue to contribute to the creation of conditions for the peaceful settlement of protracted conflicts and their future implementation.

In conclusion of the meeting, the OSCE Kazakh Chairmanship invited the Council of Europe to contribute to the agenda of the OSCE Summit in 2010.