

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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10th QUADRIpartite MEETING
EUROPEAN UNION/COUNCIL OF EUROPE
(Brussels, 15 September 1997)

1. The 10th European Union/Council of Europe Quadripartite meeting was held in Brussels on 15 September 1997, at the invitation of the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The meeting was attended by:

- Mr J.F. POOS, President of the Council of the European Union and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg;
- Mr H. VAN DEN BROEK, member of the European Commission;
- Mr P. MOSCOVICI, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and Minister with responsibility for European Affairs of France, and
- Mr D. TARSCHYS, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

2. The participants took stock of the preparations for the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States to be held in Strasbourg on 10 and 11 October 1997. They emphasised the importance of the action plan which the Summit is expected to adopt for the strengthening of democratic security and stability in member States. The European Union representatives confirmed their willingness to examine to what extent the European Union could contribute to the implementation of the action plan, notably as regards its social aspects, protection of youth against drug addiction and assistance for democratisation. The participants emphasised the importance of promoting wider ratification of the European Social Charter. They also drew attention to possibilities for improving relations between the Social Development Fund of the Council of Europe and the European Union.
3. Participants also discussed the reinforcement of coordination between the Council of Europe and the European Union in situations of crisis. They expressed the hope that the Council of Europe Summit would further contribute to the objective of consolidating a network of mutually reinforcing institutions in Europe. They underlined that cooperation between organisations to ensure the most effective international response appeared more and more clearly as a key-element in crisis situations. The European Union and the Council of Europe have increased their coordination during recent crises in Europe. They examined the assistance provided to Albania with a view to enabling this country, inter alia, to live up to its commitments as a member State of the Council of Europe. The participants agreed that Albania provides a good example of bringing together the expertise and comparative advantages of relevant international organisations. The participants underlined the importance of the implementation by Albania of a concrete reform agenda for the continuation of international assistance. Furthermore they considered their respective contributions to the efforts to restore democratic institutions and to the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They welcomed the close cooperation between the European Union and the Council of Europe on Belarus, recalling in particular the presence of Council of Europe representatives and expertise in the European Union delegation which visited the country. They regretted that the "tripartite Group" set up to assist Belarus in elaborating a Constitution which would be in conformity with fundamental democratic principles had failed to produce results.

4. The participants held an exchange of views on the possibilities for deepening relations between the European Union and the Council of Europe when the Treaty of Amsterdam enters into force. They noted that the new Treaty, *inter alia*, paves the way for the enlargement of the European Union to include States which are already members of the Council of Europe. In this respect they underlined that the European Council in Luxembourg will take decisions on the enlargement process in the light of the opinions and other parts in the European Commission's Agenda 2000. They noted the importance for candidate countries to comply with the principles of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights. They underscored the significance of the Council of Europe's aims and activities in this regard.

 5. The participants examined in detail the strengthening of cooperation on assistance to countries of central and eastern Europe. They reviewed the situation as regards the projects being carried out jointly and the prospects of new joint programmes. In this context, they paid particular attention to their continued cooperation with regard to the Russian Federation, Ukraine and other New Independent States with a view to developing democratic structures and practices at all levels of society. They agreed to strengthen their joint efforts in the training of political leaders, administrative officials and main actors of civil society. The Council of Europe side stressed their wish to develop this cooperation further in order to reinforce democracy, protection of human rights and observance of the rule of law in those countries. The European Union representatives agreed that the European Commission and the Council of Europe should jointly examine the ways and means of strengthening relations in these areas.

 6. The participants emphasised the great importance that both the Council of Europe and the European Union attach to the fight against racism and xenophobia. They recalled the adoption on 2 June 1997 by the Council of the European Union of the Regulation establishing a European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia in Vienna. They encouraged close cooperation between the Centre and the Council of Europe, notably its European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI).
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