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Declaration

Adopted by the Standing Committee on 27 November 2015¹

The Parliamentary Assembly, meeting in Sofia today, recalls the aim of the Council of Europe's founding fathers who, in the aftermath of the horror of the Second World War, established this Organisation in order to "achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage". As Article 3 of the Organisation's Statute expressly spells out, its members have to collaborate sincerely and effectively in the realisation of precisely this aim.

Paying tribute to the 40th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, the Assembly wishes to underline the important role its signature played in bringing to an end the Cold War. It recognises this agreement as a testament to what is possible when States make a concerted effort to set aside differences and strive for common understanding.

The Assembly is indeed convinced that the numerous political challenges Europe is facing today, both within and around its borders, call for a common response on the basis of shared principles and values, dialogue, trust and solidarity. In these critical moments, Council of Europe member States should focus on what unites them rather than what divides them, and avoid raising new walls and drawing dividing lines.

For this purpose and recognising the key role the Council of Europe can play in defending and promoting democratic security, the Parliamentary Assembly calls for a Summit of Heads of State and Government in order for the member States to reaffirm, at the highest political level, their commitment to the common values and principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law upheld by the Organisation.

¹ Submitted by Ms Dzhema Grozdanova (Bulgaria, EPP/CD), Chairperson of the Bulgarian Delegation.