

Informal Ministerial Conference

10 December 2025

Conclusions

The participants in the Informal Ministerial Conference at the Council of Europe,

Reaffirming their deep and abiding commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights (“the Convention”) and the European Court of Human Rights (“the Court”), as hitherto affirmed in the 2023 Reykjavík Declaration of the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, in particular in Appendix IV, as well as in the high-level conferences on the Convention system – from which originated the 2018 Copenhagen Declaration, the 2015 Brussels Declaration, the 2012 Brighton Declaration, the 2011 Izmir Declaration, and the 2010 Interlaken Declaration;

Mindful of the need to preserve the integrity of the Convention system as the cornerstone of the protection of human rights in Europe and of the Convention’s central role in the maintenance and promotion of democratic security and peace throughout the Continent;

Reaffirming their strong commitment to respecting and maintaining the rule of law at national and international levels, including through respect for the independence, impartiality and authority of the Court, and reaffirming the importance of taking into account the case law of the Court in a way that gives full effect to the Convention, and the unconditional obligation on States to abide by the final judgments of the Court in any case to which they are parties;

Underlining the need to secure an effective, focused and balanced Convention system, allowing the Court to focus its efforts on identifying serious or widespread violations, systemic or structural problems, and important questions of interpretation and application of the Convention while preserving the right of individual application;

Reiterating the subsidiary nature of the supervisory mechanism established by the Convention and the primary role played by national authorities, namely governments, courts and parliaments, and their margin of appreciation in guaranteeing and protecting human rights at national level, as reinforced by the entry into force of Protocol No. 15 to the Convention;

Noting with concern the serious and complex challenges posed by irregular migration, such as instrumentalisation of migration, smuggling of migrants, trafficking in human beings and other criminal activities in this context;

Considering the challenges related to the expulsion and return of foreigners convicted of serious offences, while respecting human rights;

Recalling the fundamental responsibility of governments to ensure national security, public safety and the economic well-being of the country, as well as their sovereign right to protect their borders, whilst respecting without discrimination the core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and conscious of the financial challenges encountered by multilateral co-operation on migration issues;

Having regard, in this respect, to the concept note presented by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the meeting of the Ministers' Deputies on 7 October 2025 in Malta ([SG/Inf\(2025\)29](#));

Convinced of the need to pursue the political dialogue on this matter within the institutional framework of the Council of Europe,

Invite the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to:

- a) prepare a draft political declaration reaffirming the obligation to ensure the effective enjoyment of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Convention to everyone within the jurisdiction of member States in the context of the contemporary challenges posed both by irregular migration and by the situation of foreigners convicted of serious offences, taking duly into account in particular governments' fundamental responsibility to ensure national security and public safety;
- b) reiterate its support for the elaboration of a new recommendation on deterring and fighting the smuggling of migrants, with full respect for their human rights;
- c) consider how the Council of Europe, including through the possible creation of an inter-governmental committee, can best address pressing migration issues and related policies;
- d) encourage the Secretary General to engage in discussions at an international level relating to migration.