

## *Young Liberals' vision for the future of the Council of Europe*

Resolution proposed by the LYMEC Bureau and LYMEC seminar in Moldova 2008

### The LYMEC Congress

#### Whereas:

- The Council of Europe, founded in 1949, is the oldest organisation working for European integration. It is an international organisation with legal personality recognised under public international law and has observer status with the United Nations.
- The main areas of work of the Council of Europe include the protection of democracy, rule of law and human rights, and the promotion of cultural cooperation and diversity, education, youth exchanges and fair sport.
- The Council of Europe gathers 47 European Member States, whereas the European Union now counts 27 Member States and 3 candidate countries. With the exception of Belarus, Kosovo and the Vatican, all European states have now acceded to the Council of Europe.
- Jean-Claude Juncker delivered a report in April 2006 on the relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union at the request of the Heads of State and Government
- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the EU and the Council of Europe on 10-11 May 2007, reinforcing cooperation between the two institutions on culture and education as well as on the international enforcement of justice and human rights.
- The European Court of Human Rights is the jewel of the Council of Europe, since every citizen can appeal to it when its basic and fundamental rights have been abused
- The EU is due to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights when the Lisbon Treaty will be ratified by all its Member States.
- There is a substantial overlap between the competences and geographical scope of the Council of Europe and European Union, notably in the context of the growing significance of the EU's Neighbourhood policy and recent EU enlargements.
- The Council of Europe is facing decreasing political relevance for EU Member States in the context of the EU's continuous enlargement
- [EU's neighbours, notably in the south of the Mediterranean and Western Asia, would largely benefit from the experience accumulated by the Council of Europe over the past 60 years in the field of human rights (European Convention on Human Rights).]

#### Concludes:

- Since the EU enlargement process is due to last and will not cover the whole European continent in the near future, the Council of Europe should remain the main and most important institution for the protection of democracy, rule of law and human rights, and the promotion of intercultural dialogue and fair sport on the European continent.

- The EU bodies should recognise the Council of Europe as the reference source for human rights and intercultural dialogue in Europe.
- The EU should take all the necessary legal steps in order to adhere to the European Convention on Human Rights as soon as possible, which inter alia passes by the swift ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by all its Member States
- The hierarchy in legal system resulting from EU adhesion to the ECHR should be transparent for all EU citizens
- [The Council of Europe should consider the possibility of opening adhesion to the European Convention on Human Rights to non-European EU neighbours such as Southern Mediterranean countries]

Asks the LYMEC Bureau and its Member Organisations to:

- Raise political awareness about the significance of the Council of Europe as the reference institution for human rights and intercultural dialogue, and work together with the relevant bodies of the Council of Europe to help achieving this aim
- Issue a statement at the occasion of the Council of Europe's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May 2009