

Welkomstwoord door de Ondervoorzitter van de Tweede Kamer, Tom van der Lee

ter gelegenheid van de Standing Committee van de Parlementaire Assemblee van de Raad van Europa (PACE) in Den Haag

2 maart 2023, 16.45 uur

Auditorium, Vredespaleis

Mr President, Tiny Kox,

Distinguished members of the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,

Dear Colleagues,

As my colleague Mr. Bruijn also mentioned, I would like to welcome you here in The Hague, in the governmental capital of the Netherlands, on this remarkable location of the Peace Palace, on behalf of the House of Representatives of the Netherlands, the Tweede Kamer or the Second Chamber of the States-General.

It is a pleasure for our Parliament to receive you in The Hague, to let you discuss the fundamental issues of Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of law. Issues which we easily take for granted, especially in our country where we live in peace and freedom.

I have seen your interesting program, with earlier this afternoon The Special Event to commemorate 75 years of the Congress of Europe.

You discussed and will exchange views about the future, the Road to Reykjavik, in this challenging time of having a war in one of the Member States of the Council of Europe. And you will adopt several reports.

The work of the Assembly is not always visible or valued in the Netherlands. As a member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, I greatly appreciate your work.

Special word of thanks to the Parliamentary Assembly on the work on the downing of the flight of MH17 in 2014. Last year your Assembly adopted a report on this subject which is of great importance to the people in the Netherlands.

To conclude, 75 years ago the founding fathers of the Council of Europe came together here in the Netherlands in the wake of World War Two with the goal to up to uphold Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.

I am proud to welcome you all here today to discuss these fundamental issues.

I wish you very fruitful days of listening, talking and meeting each other and an enjoyable time in The Hague.