

AA18CR34

AS (2018) CR 34

2018 ORDINARY SESSION

(Fourth part)

REPORT

Thirty-fourth sitting

Thursday 11 October at 10 a.m.

In this report:

1. Speeches in English are reported in full.
2. Speeches in other languages are reported using the interpretation and are marked with an asterisk
3. The text of the amendments is available at the document centre and on the Assembly's website. Only oral amendments or oral sub-amendments are reproduced in the report of debates.
4. Speeches in German and Italian are reproduced in full in a separate document.
5. Corrections should be handed in at Room 1059A not later than 24 hours after the report has been circulated.

The contents page for this sitting is given at the end of the report.

(Ms Maury Pasquier, President of the Assembly, took the Chair at 10.05 a.m.)

The PRESIDENT* – The sitting is open.

1. Nuclear safety and security in Europe

The PRESIDENT* – The first item of business this morning is the debate on the report from Ms Emine Nur Günay titled “Nuclear safety and security in Europe”, Document 14622, presented by Mr Stefan Schennach on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development.

I remind members that we decided on Monday morning that there is a three-minute limit on speeches in this debate.

I call Mr Schennach. You have 13 minutes in total, which you may divide between presentation of the report and reply to the debate.

Mr SCHENNACH (*Austria*)* – This is the second time this week that I have the pleasure, as committee chair, to present a report on behalf of my committee. I have not penned the report but, as chair, I support all the reports emanating from our committee. Ms Günay was the rapporteur but, following the last meeting of the committee and the virtually unanimous adoption of an amendment to the report, she said she felt that it was no longer her report and stood down as rapporteur. That notwithstanding, I thank her very much indeed for her work.

I want to level a criticism at the door of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which refused to work with the Council of Europe on the report. That is unprecedented and difficult to understand. I will not rest until we organise a meeting, even if it means tabling a motion against the IAEA. As an international Organisation, we cannot accept that it refused to enter dialogue with us. That is not right politically.

In her report, Ms Günay has not sided with the pro or anti-nuclear camp. I am different in that respect. I come from Austria, where some years ago there was a referendum on whether a nuclear plant that was under construction should be put into operation. The people decided that that plant should never become operational. Twenty years on, that provision has found its way into the constitution.

Erwin Chargaff was born in Bukovina in 1905 and died in New York in 2002. He was a fantastic scientist and one of the leading biochemistry experts – it is thanks to him that we have DNA analysis. He wrote that two scientific discoveries had marked his life: the splitting of the atom and the discovery of DNA and inherited characteristics. He said that both discoveries are about nuclei – of the human cell and of the atom – and that humanity stands on the brink in both respects, facing our own demise. Chargaff, as I say, wrote that in his publication. We should remind ourselves of that. There has been considerable progress in gene technologies and atomic technologies, but at the same time, we look into the abyss.

We have seen what happened recently with the referendum in Italy putting the issue of nuclear technologies to public opinion: do we want to build nuclear power stations? Italy said no, Luxembourg and Lithuania likewise. There is public opposition to nuclear power plants. We are talking, to a large extent, about a technology that is outside any form of public control or public scrutiny, yet one that for hundreds of years is going to have an impact on the generations yet to be born as a result of nuclear radiation.

In 2022, if I correctly recall, the nuclear opt-out in Germany will become operational. The report talks about building a nuclear power plant in Belarus that is close to the Lithuanian border. The map of nuclear power plants and reactors throughout Europe – we have enough of them, after all, in some 17 countries – shows that there are some 180, virtually all situated very close to a border with a neighbouring country. We need some kind of mechanism for dialogue put in place. Following the disastrous catastrophes of Three Mile Island, Fukushima and Chernobyl, we all know how dangerous this technology is. Nobody knows what the situation is with the ultimate storage of spent fuel. We are seeing things spinning out of control.

In my own country, we had caesium found in fruit, for example – and Chernobyl is far away. Caesium clouds know no national borders. Capitals or metropolitan areas close to nuclear power plants are presented with particular risks. The capital close to the power plant to be built in Belarus is Vilnius. That is unacceptable. The refrigeration process at Ostravets uses water that then flows towards the city of Vilnius. We are exacerbating the risks. Of the power stations that exist today, a whole fleet – most of them – are situated in Europe, and many are very old indeed. We need to ask ourselves what we can do to ensure that they are safer, or how we can move away from this rather dangerous technology in general.

The International Atomic Energy Agency is trying to establish a link between climate change and the sustainability of nuclear energy – but this has nothing to do with climate change. This is the work of a lobbying agency. An amendment has been tabled that would go in that direction, and I have robustly rejected it. The best way of combating climate change is energy efficiency. We must turn towards renewables rather than investing more in nuclear technology, because we do not control the dangers that go hand in hand with that technology. We should not forget that this is a radiating legacy that we are leaving to generations to come. We have to bear responsibility for that, and not just in the short term.

The PRESIDENT* – Thank you, Mr Schennach. You have five minutes and 10 seconds to respond to the comments that are made.

I call Mr Hunko.

Mr HUNKO (*Germany, Spokesperson for the Group of the Unified European Left*)* – Thank you, Mr Schennach. I also thank Ms Günay, the rapporteur, for her work. The Group of the Unified European Left supports this report. It is limited to security aspects of atomic energy and issues of cross-border co-operation and transparency, and does not go any further. It puts questions of principle about how one should deal with nuclear energy. These are very important issues, and that is why we support the report.

Mr Schennach, you pointed out that in many countries of Europe where there have been referendums, such as Lithuania, Luxembourg, Italy and Austria, the population has turned it down. That should be noted. It is particularly difficult for those countries if a nuclear power plant is built close to their borders in a neighbouring country. That is obviously the case in Lithuania, where a plant has been built on the other side of the border in Belarus. This is an issue of cross-border co-operation. That is allotted a lot of space in the report.

I come from a border region myself – Aachen in Germany, close to the borders with Belgium and the Netherlands. We are close to a very old atomic plant, Tihange, where there are three different reactors. For many years now, there have been very lively discussions about this. My town, Aachen, but also Maastricht on the Dutch side, together with many other municipalities and cities, has brought action against the continuing use of the Tihange plant, which is ageing and susceptible to problems. There was even the formation of a human chain of more than 70 km that went from Aachen across to Maastricht, Liège and Tihange. Fifty thousand people formed that human chain to send a signal that this old atomic plant should be decommissioned.

The question of cross-border co-operation and transparency is hugely important. In such cases, the population close to the border in the other state should be entitled to express their voice. That is very important. Almost all nuclear plants in Europe are built close to borders, not in the centre of their respective countries. We need much more co-operation so that we can move towards sustainable sources of energy without nuclear power.

Mr HAMZAYEV (*Azerbaijan, Spokesperson for the Free Democrats Group*) – The world has already tasted the vast destruction caused by two atom bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki back in 1945. Thousands of innocent people lost their lives and several thousands were seriously wounded. The diseases and deformities that developed in human beings who were directly or indirectly affected by the radiation lasted several decades after the event. The relatively recent Fukushima and Chernobyl accidents further suggest that the ramifications and consequences can be severely damaging, and this contributes to the importance of this issue for Europe.

At the same time, energy is very important. That is why we should try to build more secure nuclear power plants by using the most up-to-date and advanced technology, and constantly monitor it. Over the past few years, the world community has only focused its attention on nuclear talks with giant countries, while neglecting other potential nuclear threats. For instance, some of the most dangerous and outdated nuclear threats, not only for neighbouring countries but the whole European continent, come from smaller countries.

I also think that those smaller and older plants are hardly deserving of less attention from the international community than the larger scope of the issue. Given that we live in an extremely dynamic world, developing stations that correspond to safety standards is unavoidable. That is why the Turkish power plant built in Akkuyu should be given credit for following modern technology standards. We must stop the operation of outdated nuclear power plants because they are the greatest threat to the world.

To take up the discussion about nuclear safety in Europe, using outdated technology and not following safety procedures during the operation of nuclear power plants poses serious environmental problems. It causes radioactive pollution of water basins and trans-regional rivers. All these processes create extra, unnecessary incentives for conflicts and misunderstandings between our nations. Any country that has nuclear weapons and is engaged in smuggling radioactive materials threatens international security.

All in all, indispensable measures have to be taken to solve the problem of nuclear safety and therefore the well-being of Europe. Let's keep Europe a democratic, fruitful and safe place to live.

Mr PODERYS (*Lithuania, Spokesperson for the Group of the European People's Party*) – On behalf of the EPP/CD political group, I thank the rapporteur for her tremendous work. It is of utmost importance that the Parliamentary Assembly adopts this report on nuclear safety and security in Europe. The question is not only about specific cases or countries having nuclear power plants, but about all of us. In an accident, radioactivity has no borders. The rapporteur gives impressive statistics: 184 nuclear power plants are operating in Europe and in addition 15 new plants are under construction. We have deep concern about the old plants, which are already a headache for us, and we still do not pay enough attention to the unsafe construction of new ones.

I am from Lithuania. Just 40 kilometres from our capital city Vilnius, Belarus and the Russian company Rosatom has started the construction of the new Ostrovet's nuclear power plant. From the beginning, they have breached numerous international conventions on nuclear safety. That fact was officially confirmed by international organisations. Up to now, Belarus has ignored requests to eliminate violations of international conventions and to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the construction site. Lithuanians are very much concerned that the place in which the nuclear plant is being built is dangerous and not suitable.

Let me draw your attention to the fact that recently, nuclear regulators from European countries carried out stress tests. They revealed that during the development of the Ostrovet's plant, Belarus did not take into account the lessons learned from the Fukushima disaster. The Belarus nuclear project is a problem for all of us. In a nuclear accident, the consequences would affect all of Europe. That is why we should use all the available tools to ensure the security of our people.

In conclusion, the draft resolution is well balanced. It points out the problems of nuclear power plant safety in Europe and gives a set of serious recommendations, so I strongly invite you to vote for the report and not to accept the amendments that would weaken the resolution.

Ms OHLSSON (*Sweden, Spokesperson for the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group*) – As we can see from this excellent report, nuclear safety and security is a dynamic process that requires the continuous adaptation of existing, often highly complex frameworks, based on experience, research and developments in society. Nuclear safety and security concerns have been on the rise in Europe ever since Chernobyl in 1986 and Fukushima in 2011, as well as recent terrorist attacks. Even earlier than that, we had a discussion in Sweden, because of the referendum we held in 1980 on whether we would have nuclear power or not.

The key challenge from a political angle is to provide adequate information to the public without undermining security and to achieve a democratic consensus over the strategic orientations and the level of nuclear safety and security we want. We should therefore aim for greater transparency and improved communication around the nuclear energy challenge. We should pay particular attention to questions relating to the transport of radioactive substances, including both fuel and waste, practices that affect control of the human factor and the sky-high costs of securing the nuclear facilities, as well as our vast experience.

Many of Europe's nuclear facilities are rapidly aging, making the probability of serious incidents and accidents higher. Accordingly, the draft resolution makes a series of recommendations in general and regarding the new nuclear plant in Belarus and the power plant under construction in Turkey. Due to recent terrorist attacks in France and Belgium, greater attention is being paid to the security of nuclear infrastructure, given that nearly all the nuclear plants currently in operation were designed and built in an era when security concerns were of a different nature. Because the consequences of a nuclear accident can be so widespread and serious, the European public needs reassurance that the authorities in charge of nuclear safety and security are protecting the population effectively.

We also welcome the efforts of the competent international organisations towards the continuous strengthening of reference standards for nuclear safety and security through technical, regulatory and legal frameworks. Greater harmonisation of those standards to upgrade the overall nuclear safety and security

levels across Europe is necessary and should involve all States, including those that are phasing out nuclear energy and those that are building new nuclear facilities. We must co-operate more, not less.

Mr HOWELL (*United Kingdom, Spokesperson for the European Conservatives Group*) – I start by declaring an interest: I am a great supporter of nuclear energy. In the last few weeks, we have heard from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that climate change may be heading for a global temperature increase of 3%, instead of the 1.5% that we were heading for previously. It is possible to accept that figure without also embracing the IPCC's bias against nuclear energy. I agree with the British Government, who set out in their national policy statement that nuclear power has an important role to play alongside other low carbon technologies, and that it plays an important role in diversifying and decarbonising our sources of electricity. Declining nuclear capacity raises serious concerns about our ability to mitigate the effects of climate change.

This report looks specifically at two nuclear reactors: one in Belarus and one in Turkey. It tries to take these as examples to make bigger points, but I fear that it gets lost in arguments over the geographical contexts for both of these reactors and of the individual ways in which they are being implemented. Moreover, in preparing this report, a way should have been found of partnering with the IAEA, perhaps by changing the report's emphasis. I am conscious that the IAEA has already pointed out the need for skilled people to help in decommissioning and commissioning. It has also pointed to the need for a strong safety record.

On this point, I would have liked the report to have included more on cyber-security and the threats of a cyber-attack that could be carried out on a nuclear plant, and it could have commented on where those cyber-attacks are likely to come from. On security, it is worth noting that the level of radiation exposure from Fukushima in Japan was the same as the global average background level.

It is the role of government to set an approach on nuclear power. In the United Kingdom, the government produces national planning statements, which are the subject of consultation, and there is also a role for local people during the planning hearings, before the planning inspectorate. It is not true to say, then, that individuals are not included in the consultation.

Overall, I think that the report is a missed opportunity – a missed opportunity to partner with the IAEA, to add a genuinely European dimension to nuclear power, to cover cyber-security, to develop a system for maintaining nuclear energy safely and to ensure that the Council of Europe plays an important role in this in the future.

Ms RODRÍGUEZ HERNÁNDEZ (*Spain, Spokesperson for the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe*)* – I think there has been some misunderstanding about the amendments, as the ALDE group supports this crucial report. It is important that we talk about nuclear security in all our countries.

This report is not about energy policy, but a series of security recommendations. We are still feeling the effects of the Chernobyl accident, and then there was the catastrophic international disaster at Fukushima, which warned us about security concerns. Fortunately, the international security standards are now being respected. Each country is responsible for its own plants, but we are all responsible for the security of all the citizens of our countries and the continent. That is why we are here. As the report says, we must pay attention to obsolete plants too. We cannot extend the lifetime of a plant without rigorous security measures. On dismantling, too, we have to develop security processes.

As the report mentions, the location of plants is important. It is crazy to build on a site that is prone to earthquakes or even where there is the slightest possibility of tremors. It affects not only the region but all the surrounding regions. We must work on plans to evacuate citizens and to inform citizens of regions with nuclear plants, and those plans must be transparent. There is a great lack of transparency around nuclear. If citizens are not informed, it will be difficult to face the challenges before us.

Nuclear security raises several challenges. We must increase security in our plants to meet the threat of terrorism, which the report mentions. On climate change, I am talking not about nuclear or no nuclear – perhaps the rapporteur misunderstood me – but about the impact that climate change can have on the security and safety of our plants. The lack of water at Fukushima, for example, affected the refrigeration of reactors. Increases in temperature, too, can make refrigeration more difficult. These things must be taken into account by security plans for our nuclear plants. It is a matter not of nuclear or no nuclear but of the potential impacts on security and safety of our plants. There could be natural disasters, and then we will have to repair them.

On waste, we try to be green, but this problem could take generations to solve. Overall, we have to depoliticise all the organs that control nuclear security. Where politicians have an influence over the security technicians, are we to protect political interests, too, when we try to protect citizens? I thank the rapporteur for the report, which we support.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Ms Rodríguez Hernández. Mr Schennach, do you wish to respond now?

Mr SCHENNACH (*Austria*) – No.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Schennach. In that case we will proceed with the list of speakers.

I call Mr Masiulis.

Mr MASIULIS (*Lithuania*)* – I am a physicist and have studied nuclear physics. I would not like to live near a nuclear power plant. Would you? We should not use people as guinea pigs. In Lithuania, we had planned a new plant – a Japanese manufacturer was supposed to build it – but then we held a referendum, and the people said no. We had an old nuclear plant, too, which produced more than 60% of our energy, but it was decommissioned.

Lukashenko is building a new nuclear power plant just 40 km from Vilnius, on the river that flows through our capital, and he is doing so without adhering to international commitments. Does he not have a duty to keep to them? In the 21st century, rules should apply. Mr Schennach is right that most nuclear power plants are close to a border. Why not build them elsewhere – close to your own capital, for instance, in the woods or on a hill? Why does Lukashenko not build it close to his own capital, rather than close to our border? Why does he not ask the geologists, who say that there are many tectonic problems at the site? We are given no answer. We make counter proposals, but we get no answer. We need an answer. He should show responsibility when building such a plant.

For those reasons, I consider this to be a particularly important report. If anything goes wrong with the plant, it will harm not just Lithuania, but a large part of Europe, because radioactive particles know no borders. We are right at the beginning of our work. Mr Schennach, we need to continue and go into greater depth, as the current international obligations are insufficient. We are not just talking about Lithuania either; similar problems exist everywhere, and yet we have failed to discuss this matter sufficiently. I ask the Chamber to support the report.

Mr BUTKEVIČIUS (*Lithuania*) – Let me thank the rapporteur for this well-drafted resolution. Ensuring nuclear security is an issue relevant to us all. It is related to the level of security in Europe that we will pass on to our children. We know too well that a nuclear accident could lead to grave and irreparable consequences.

Colleagues, allow me to express the concerns of the people of Lithuania about the nuclear power plant that is being constructed in neighbouring Belarus. A project that fails to meet modern nuclear safety standards is being developed only 20 km from the border of the European Union, and 50 km from the capital city of an European Union State. How is this possible after the Fukushima accident? How is this possible after the Chernobyl disaster, the radioactive cloud from which contaminated up to three quarters of Europe, stretching from Sweden to Greece?

We are troubled by the fact that a fire broke out on the site of the Astravyets nuclear power plant during some tests this spring. It is even more disturbing that neither the relevant national institutions, nor the public in Lithuania, were informed about this incident. Is this approach to security and publicity acceptable in Europe? Unfortunately, that was not the first serious incident on the site. The Parliamentary Assembly took its position on the Astravyets issue in 2017. It adopted a resolution on the situation in Belarus, where, *inter alia*, Belarus is urged to stop the construction of the unsafe nuclear power plant. So let us be consistent. We must not compromise on the safety and security of European countries and their people. The Lithuanian delegation strongly invites you to support the resolution.

Mr ROCA (*Spain*)* – Without doubt, energy is one of the fundamental elements in building our welfare states and our prosperous societies. A State has to provide for its citizens; quite apart from food, housing, transport, education and health, it is obvious that energy is essential. Energy has great value for our societies and we must be able to combine certain parameters. One is safety; the other is compliance, without any doubt, with our climate commitments.

We know the threat posed by climate change and the new forms of migration that we are witnessing and will witness, which we must learn to manage very soon. Hence, we must bear all our sources of energy in mind, renewable and clean; they must all allow us to respect the climate and think about climate change and the effects it will have for us. The same goes for reliability of supply, because it is important that enterprises are able to rely on effective, high-quality energy. There is also the competitive factor. The costs to enterprises and households must be acceptable and none should be left behind. It is clear that, once we have met those requirements, energy is essential.

When we talk about nuclear energy, we are talking about international safety. There are no borders. I am from a province with 800,000 inhabitants. We have three nuclear reactors. Obviously, all relevant checks are conducted, and in the 30 or 40 years since they were installed, the moment of greatest radioactivity measured was during the Chernobyl accident, thousands of kilometres from my province. Nuclear energy is something that affects us all and something we should all be interested in. We must be aware, because sadly nuclear incidents know no borders.

Therefore, we must guarantee that nuclear energy is safe. Most active plants in Europe meet the necessary requirements, and we are aware of the very specific threats posed. Today, given the rise of international terrorism, the threats have changed and we must guarantee that safety for our nuclear plants and nuclear facilities – thinking also about nuclear medicine, for example – is updated and equal to the new threats and dangers posed by global terrorism. Providing safety and security and ensuring that the cost of this form of energy is not excessive and that we can provide affordable energy to households and enterprises that is also clean, if we can do it, will also ensure that our society and citizens have even greater prosperity.

Mr VOVK (*Ukraine*) – I thank the rapporteur for their work on this report. However, as a former nuclear physicist and international negotiator on nuclear security, I believe that the title of the report is strongly misleading. In fact, the nuclear security issue is usually considered as having to do primarily with the specific topic of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and preventing nuclear terrorism. For instance, there have been four global nuclear security summits, the last in 2016 in Washington, DC, which dealt with preventing nuclear arms proliferation and reducing the threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism around the world. The European Parliament resolution of October 2016 on nuclear security also focused on those specific issues.

If we are to speak seriously on nuclear security in Europe, we should remember the historical experience of defusing Ukraine's nuclear arsenal and the lessons that we should learn from it. When the Soviet Union collapsed, Ukraine inherited the world's third largest nuclear arsenal, including about 2 000 strategic nuclear warheads – an arsenal two and a half times bigger than those of the United Kingdom, France and China combined. In 1994, Ukraine, along with the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation, signed the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Aware of the existential Russian threat, Ukraine only agreed to give up its nuclear arms in exchange for guarantees of its security and territorial integrity, given by the major nuclear powers. Thus, we point out that the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine undermines the entire global nuclear non-proliferation regime and prompts other States that are vulnerable to outside dangers to view nuclear weapons as a legitimate way of deterrence against aggression. I emphasise that the core issue of the Budapest Memorandum was nuclear non-proliferation, which is the most serious issue for Europe's and the world's nuclear security. What signal does that send to Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and others? If the international community, including the Council of Europe, does not stand firmly by the Budapest Memorandum, it will fully discredit the idea of security guarantees in defusing nuclear proliferation cases.

There is a draft law in the Ukrainian Parliament at the moment to restore Ukraine's right to hold nuclear weapons. Delivering on the commitments of the Budapest Memorandum is the main challenge for nuclear security in Europe. Unfortunately, the report completely neglects to address that challenge, and I cannot support it.

Mr SEKULIĆ (*Montenegro*) – I thank the rapporteur for focusing our attention on this topic, which is of great importance to all our countries, whether they have nuclear plants or not. My country, Montenegro, has no nuclear installations or nuclear fuel on its territory. Legal provisions currently in force prohibit the construction of nuclear installations, and our policies and strategic documents for the period until 2030 do not envisage the construction of nuclear power plants or nuclear installations.

By being party to almost all international legal instruments in the field of nuclear safety and security, Montenegro reaffirms its strong commitment to further strengthen its national safety and security framework, and to support and contribute to the strengthening of the global nuclear safety, security and liability regime. That is in the best interest of all countries, whether or not they possess nuclear installations, since we have long recognised the risk of a nuclear accident causing damage across borders.

Montenegro fully supports the principle that countries with nuclear programmes, or those that are developing nuclear programmes, provide adequate information to the public without undermining security, and achieve a democratic consensus about the strategic direction, including the level of nuclear safety and security. That means that we should all work together to achieve greater transparency and communication in all nuclear energy challenges.

Ms KYRIAKIDES (*Cyprus*) – I thank Mr Schennach for undertaking this report, and Ms Günay for her hard work. The draft resolution we have before us touches on a very important issue, which is of paramount concern to millions of citizens in Europe and beyond. Tragic nuclear accidents such as that at Chernobyl 32 years ago have made us all realise that nuclear safety cannot and should never be compromised.

As a result of that accident, there has been a substantial increase in many countries, including my own, of incidences of, for example, thyroid cancer. We should not ignore the legitimate anxiety and concern of millions of European citizens regarding the operation of nuclear plants and the construction of new ones. The general safety and well-being of our citizens should always be at the top of our priorities.

This important report points to the secrecy surrounding the operation of nuclear facilities and the lack of public consultation prior to the construction of nuclear plants. Colleagues have mentioned the Turkish power plant being built in Akkuyu in the southern area of Turkey by the Russian Federation, which it is said does not pose any danger to citizens. Among other things, a 2017 European Parliament resolution called on the Turkish Government to halt its plan for the construction of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant, as the proposed site is in an area prone to earthquakes. I heard Mr Masiulis speak earlier; none of us would want to live within 85 km of a nuclear power plant built in an earthquake-prone region, and that is what we in Cyprus would be. Unfortunately, the building of that plant is going ahead without Turkey consulting neighbouring countries as stipulated in the international Convention on Nuclear Safety.

The health and safety of our citizens cannot be jeopardised, for political or other reasons, and that is why we have a stronger draft resolution after our very fruitful discussion on amendments in Lisbon. I believe that has led to an important report that I ask you all to support today. I ask you not to weaken it. During the last two days, in discussions in this Assembly on various issues that touch on why we are here, we have said that we cannot lower the bar where issues of health, safety and the rights of the citizens of the countries we are here to represent are concerned. I ask you to support the resolution as it stands.

Mr REISS (*France*)* – I start by thanking Mr Schennach for the report and by congratulating Ms Günay for her very detailed work on this fundamental issue, the issue of nuclear safety and security in Europe.

Risks of terrorist attacks on nuclear power plants or accident risks because of seismic problems are real causes of concern for our society. As a result, we must be extremely vigilant, particularly when it comes to reactors that are no longer in operation. The fact that a reactor is not operating certainly does not mean that it no longer poses a threat. It still includes radioactive material. Decommissioning such a reactor is very challenging, both technically and financially. The closure of obsolete power plants is something that is easy to decide to do, but the actual dismantling is very complicated and the technical feasibility is not always guaranteed. There are various generations of reactors and, depending on which generation a reactor comes from, it may be virtually impossible to decommission it today. For instance, the decommissioning of the gas-cooled natural uranium graphite reactors in France has been postponed until around 2100.

The cost of decommissioning can be extremely high. There is not only the question of technical decommissioning, but also that of site recovery, as well as the socio-economic consequences for the region concerned. The closure of the Fessenheim power plant in Alsace will have an impact on thousands of direct and sub-contractor jobs; when those workers find different jobs elsewhere, there can be a real social cost for their families.

Radioactive waste management and provisions to deal with spent fuel are particularly challenging in terms of safety. Transport of spent fuel happens on a routine basis and is predictable, but is clearly very vulnerable. The slightest accident could be a disaster for any region in which such an accident took place.

Waste storage is another very delicate question. Generally speaking, in the past in France we put waste into giant basins, and there are now about 110 reactor cores in four great basins, like large swimming pools – but we will reach saturation point by 2030, so waste storage must be reconsidered. We have to consider underground storage, for which there are plans and projects, but there are also questions about the safety and security of the site proposed, particularly in terms of groundwater pollution.

The issue of waste disposal in France and throughout Europe gives rise to many questions. For example, waste is sent to reprocessing plants in Siberia, 7000 km away, by road, rail and boat. Clearly, there are many risks. Nevertheless, we must recognise that nuclear energy remains crucial to the functioning of our economies today. We have to consider how to drastically reduce the amount of radioactive waste we produce, which includes developing alternative renewable energies that are compatible with our efforts to combat climate change. I support this excellent report.

Mr MOLLAZADE (*Azerbaijan*) – The Fukushima tragedy was a wake-up call for the world. It showed that even a country with advanced technology had no answer to nature and its earthquakes. It reminded us of the Chernobyl tragedy, about which the criminal Soviet regime did not inform people. I remember seeing thousands of children on the streets of Kiev, standing under nuclear rain, on 1 May. That great tragedy touched people not only in Ukraine and Belarus; we had this information from Sweden. The absence of public awareness created new problems, even for doctors who tried to treat Chernobyl firefighters. There was a huge amount of radiation. It is a pity that this very important report has no masterplan for what to do about power stations such as Chernobyl.

I draw members' attention to a dangerous station situated very close to south-eastern Europe. The Metsamor station in Armenia is similar to Chernobyl, but it is located in a dangerous seismic zone. It is like an atomic bomb, and I believe that Mr Schennach should include it in his report. If there is another earthquake in Armenia, Metsamor station will completely poison a huge region, including south-eastern Europe.

Perhaps we should consider new types of nuclear power stations, because many countries in Europe have energy problems, but all Chernobyl-type stations should be closed immediately. The European Union made such a decision and allocated money to the Government of Armenia to close Metsamor station. The money disappeared and the station still operates. Even former Armenian Prime Minister Bagratyan said that the station gave them the opportunity to develop a dirty a-bomb, which they would be ready to use in a war against Azerbaijan.

Specialists' co-operation with Iran is a new danger. Old Soviet-type stations all around the world should be closed. They are a threat to Europe and we have to pay more attention to those types of stations and to Turkey and Belarus. Chernobyl was a wake-up call about the great danger to human beings. I draw Mr Schennach's attention to the Metsamor bomb in our region.

(Mr Jonas Gunnarsson, Vice-President of the Assembly, took the Chair in place of Ms Maury Pasquier.)

Mr EFSTATHIOU (*Cyprus*) – First, I thank the rapporteur and Mr Schennach for their excellent presentation. I fully support the report.

Nuclear decommissioning in Europe and the gradual shift from nuclear energy to renewable sources are not irrelevant to the tragic experience of Chernobyl and Fukushima, precisely because of the inherent risks associated with nuclear power. Undoubtedly, the disastrous accidents of the past, as well as waste management and security concerns, which have the potential to wipe out all life as we know it, warrant our full attention and concern.

In the 1950s, the need to control and minimise the risk associated with the use of nuclear energy inspired the European pioneers of the time to establish not only the European Economic Community and the European Coal and Steel Community, but Euratom. There must be international co-operation on controlling nuclear energy. Public and international consultation is of utmost importance. In fact, there should be a binding obligation on the part of the government concerned to secure prior agreement before any definitive decision is taken to build a new power plant. The fact that the public are now more informed is paramount. It is not legitimate for governments to push through a new nuclear plant if society at large and the physics are against such a project. Environmental concerns, as well as public health issues, are now at the forefront of citizens' minds. Transparency, accountability and the protection of human life should prevail over all other concerns.

The report rightly focuses on Ostrovets, which has put Lithuania and Belarus at odds with each other, but that is not the only case. Unfortunately, power plants are being built in the back yard of the countries concerned, but also in their neighbours' front yard. That is why I agree with my colleague Stella Kyriakides for raising the issue of Akkuyu, which should also merit our attention. The nuclear plant is being built in the earthquake-prone area of the south coast of Turkey, with Russian knowledge, technology and expertise. Akkuyu is less than 45 miles from Cyprus, which is almost the same distance as that between Ostrovets and Lithuania. That is why Turkey should abide with the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the European Parliament Resolution that explicitly asks it to consult its neighbours – Greece and Cyprus – precisely because the problem is not only limited to Turkey, but extends to and affects its immediate neighbours.

It is time for this Assembly to apply the same rules concerning reference standards, co-operation with neighbouring countries, nuclear security and nuclear waste management to all countries, irrespective of political considerations. The health and survival of our very planet and societies must come first.

Mr ZINGERIS (*Lithuania*) – I ask colleagues to support the rapporteur's excellent report and all of the amendments, which were so carefully discussed and approved in committee.

Just one week ago, the Chamber of the European Parliament, on 4 October, adopted a majority resolution stating that it, "Remains concerned about the construction of a nuclear power plant in Ostrovets; notes the report on stress tests and recommendations published on 3 July 2018 and demands that stress test recommendations be implemented as a condition for any further advancement in European Union-Belarus co-operation, in particular for the signing of the European Union-Belarus Partnership Priorities". That is a condition of future relations between Belarus and the European Union.

From my point of view, this is about geopolitical revenge. The distance between the nuclear power plant and our capital, Vilnius, is similar to that between Charles de Gaulle airport and Paris and between Heathrow and London. The water flowing immediately down to Vilnius represents an existential danger for our capital. Given that the station's construction has been stopped twice by major construction failures, and the incredible history of such power plants in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere, I ask members to take the issue seriously. I was deeply touched that the Cyprus delegation mentioned the Russian-Turkish nuclear plant in the occupied part of Cyprus.

I ask you to not allow nuclear power plants to be used for geopolitical purposes, especially after Mr Lukashenko made threats against my country that goods and trucks will be turned away from Lithuania if we do not stop talking about the terrible danger facing our nation. Thank you for your solidarity. I am proud to say that we will reject Mr Lukashenko's blackmail and continue to speak with you to try to avert tragedy.

Ms GAFAROVA (*Azerbaijan*) – The issues discussed in the report are very important. Today, nuclear power plants generate about a third of all electricity in the European Union. At the same time, nuclear safety and security concerns have been on the rise in Europe ever since the Chernobyl and Fukushima accidents. There have also been recent terrorist attacks. In the report, the rapporteur has rightly mentioned that many of Europe's nuclear facilities are rapidly ageing. Even when the facilities are properly maintained, the overall condition of the reactors is gradually deteriorating, increasing the probability of serious incidents and accidents.

The oldest nuclear power plant in Europe is Metsamor, which was built in 1970 in Armenia in the time of the Soviets. After the devastating 1988 earthquake in Spitak, it was closed, but in 1995, despite international protests, operations resumed. Moreover, the second reactor was also launched. That decision was strongly condemned by most of the international community and in particular by the neighbouring countries of Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan. It was the first time in history that a shuttered nuclear facility had been restarted.

The existence of the outdated Metsamor nuclear power plant in Armenia raises serious concerns. The European Union regards the plant as unsafe and considers that the "swift closure and decommissioning of the MNPP remains a key objective for the European Union and the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan, as this power plant cannot be upgraded to meet internationally recognised nuclear safety standards." Unfortunately, there is nothing about Metsamor in the report – not a single word. Why? The report mentions the power plants that are in the process of being built in Turkey and Belarus, but there is nothing about the Metsamor power plant when we know very well that it is dangerous not only for the region, but for all of Europe.

It is a fact that nuclear terrorism has become a very serious risk in the 21st century. Terrorists could target nuclear power plants in an attempt to cause a major release of radioactive substances into the environment and surrounding communities. I believe that we all have sufficient reason to feel anxious about that. Azerbaijan shares the concern of the international community on the increasing nuclear threats and risks, especially taking into consideration that Metsamor is very close to our borders.

I would like to remind you that some years ago the former prime minister of Armenia, members of parliament and other officials of Armenia declared that Armenia has a nuclear weapon – a so-called dirty bomb. That statement must be thoroughly examined by the appropriate international organisations. Armenia's nuclear threat and blackmail must be stopped.

Mr DZHEMILIEV (*Ukraine*)* – The report “Nuclear safety and security in Europe” focuses on nuclear safety in terms of new complications that appear to be arising in the nuclear power stations that we have – around 200 of them – throughout Europe. This report, which has been prepared by Ms Günay, gives us a clear picture of the situation, and we should support it, its contents and the associated draft resolution and recommendation.

However, I want to touch on a slightly different aspect of nuclear safety and security that is important not only for Europe, but for all of us on this planet. I know that you were all listening to what my colleague Mr Vovk said. He pointed out that, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine ended up with more than 2 000 nuclear warheads. Those warheads could cover a distance of thousands of kilometres. We actually ended up being the third largest nuclear power in the world because of that. On the Crimean peninsula, which is now under the control of the Russian Federation, there was a secret military base close to Feodosia. Recently, we have managed to find out a little more about exactly what is in that base. For many years, it was totally secret and confidential. Anyone who came out and provided any information about it was subject to very severe sanctions.

Ukraine, voluntarily and in accordance with what it considered to be its overriding principles, decided to renounce its nuclear weapons when it became an independent country. Ukraine declared itself a nuclear-free zone, and the nuclear warheads that I referred to were sent back to the Russian Federation. In Ukraine, the Russian Federation provided our Russian nuclear power plants with fuel. Part of that whole agreement was a guarantee that our territorial integrity would be respected. That was in the early 1990s, and we all know what has happened since then and how the situation has evolved.

I am sure you know that in February 2014, there was a difficult situation in Ukraine, and part of Ukraine was invaded. Parts of its territory were seized, including the Crimean peninsula and parts of Eastern Ukraine. We are talking about an area being occupied that is more or less equivalent to the size of the Netherlands. You know what happened. You know that the international community adopted many resolutions, including here at the Parliamentary Assembly, as well as in the United Nations and the OSCE.

There was a lot of talk, but five years later, what has happened? The occupation continues and we still see gross violations of human rights. We still see people being killed. We still see people being expelled from the territory in which they should live. We see indigenous peoples being forced out, and we also see a massive inflow of people from the Russian Federation into those territories. We know that many military crimes have been committed in the areas under occupation.

You also know what happened here just the other day, when we were supposed to have a vote about changing our rules and procedure, and the idea was simply to allow the Russian Federation to return to the Parliamentary Assembly with all ensuing rights. We know what happened.

I am telling you all this because I want to emphasise the fact that from virtually the first day of occupation in Crimea, there was a particularly difficult situation, and we saw the nuclear plant in Crimea taken over by Russian forces. By August 2014 – that was the year that the Russian Federation entered Crimea – there was clearly a change in how they were operating that nuclear power plant. In accordance with all international standards, it is part of Ukraine. As I have emphasised, Ukraine is supposed to be a nuclear-free zone in terms of weapons, and there is now a lot of questioning of exactly what is going on in that nuclear power plant. We need to find out exactly what is happening there today. That needs to be investigated.

Mr YENEROĞLU (*Turkey*) – I would like to clarify what my colleague Mr Zingeris said. There is no occupied part of Cyprus. There is the Turkish republic of Cyprus. Turkish forces are deployed on the island in accordance with international legal rights to keep peace and stability.

The starting point of the report was a motion tabled by a Lithuanian colleague over concerns stemming from the construction of a nuclear power plant in Belarus. A second motion was merged with the first and the current scope of the report was formed. That is the only reason that a special sub-part is assigned to the Ostrovets case in the report.

During the most recent social affairs committee meeting in Lisbon, Ms Kyriakides proposed an amendment adding an inaccurate and unjust paragraph to the draft resolution. It was, regrettably, political in nature and far from scientific. There exists no rationale for singling out Akkuyu among the 15 newly constructed nuclear power plants when none of them, or of the 82 NPPs older than 35 years, is even mentioned. Ms Kyriakides purports that Akkuyu is situated 85 km from southern Cyprus and is in very close proximity to other neighbouring countries. Based on the International Atomic Energy Agency's approach, there are zones defined within 5 km, between 15 and 31 km, within 100 km and within 300 km. The Western European Nuclear Regulators Association also classifies zones by 5 km, 20 km and 100 km radiuses. Akkuyu is situated in the third zone of 100 km according to the IAEA, and in the second zone according to WENRA. It is unfair to single Akkuyu out in that manner when it is neither more dangerous nor closer to densely populated areas than other NPPs in Europe.

The threat of proximity exists in Europe. Therefore, in all territories with nuclear installations, local and national authorities should be involved in emergency management planning, while European nations should improve communication and co-operation about nuclear safety and security. That is clearly and repeatedly mentioned in the report.

Singling out Akkuyu in the draft resolution when it was not even considered in the explanatory part of the report is unacceptable and damages the report's coherence.

Ms TRISSE (*France*)* – I thank Mr Schennach, the chair of the committee, for the presentation of the report. Today's debate is in direct relation to the recent conclusions of an investigatory committee of the French National Assembly, which published its report on the subject on 28 June.

Nuclear energy, even with fewer greenhouse effect emissions, is still a polluting energy in the long term and presents a risk for the environment and population. From Chernobyl to Fukushima, all the incidents have shown that consequences ignore frontiers; they concern many countries. As outlined in the report, 184 reactors in 17 countries operate on the European continent. In France, 58 of them on 19 sites provide about 75% of our national electricity. My country is first in the world in the proportion of operational nuclear reactors per inhabitant. Far from diminishing, the nuclear branch is modernising. Fifteen reactors are being constructed in Europe. The existing ones are undeniably ageing, but half the active reactors on the European continent are more than 35 years old; the figure is 35% in France.

Faced with the safety risks through geostrategic threats or terrorists, and the ageing of installations that were designed to last 40 years initially, we should not turn our eyes away. We have to examine the elements to be taken into account in the long term, because nuclear plants will not disappear overnight.

Account has to be taken of what is at stake. The transnational dimension of the subject calls for better European co-ordination, and I entirely agree with the draft resolution. It calls for a closer association of parliaments to monitor nuclear plants, and we need more transparency. That is a point of convergence with the conclusions of the French National Assembly. Collectively, we should incite our respective governments to engage in the transition towards renewable energies. Reducing the importance of nuclear energy will allow us to diminish risks, and we owe that to future generations.

Mr GATTOLIN (*France*)* – First, I congratulate Mr Schennach, who had to step in and act as the rapporteur, on the report, which is a timely and relevant piece of work. A great deal has been said but we should recall that, when we look at a map of nuclear installations throughout the world, we see three high-density zones: the United States, Japan and our continent. We have 184 active reactors, so we are top of the list. There is a particular feature of Europe in geopolitical terms: we are fragmented into many different countries. To some extent, that explains the importance of the position of nuclear power plants and why they tend to be close to borders. All member States of the Council of Europe are close to a nuclear power plant across borders and, if we look at the effects of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, we can see that all of us would suffer the consequences of any serious accident.

Our energy policies fall within national competence. Each country is sovereign to decide on its own energy policies, which is a problem. We need genuine international co-operation, at any rate among the members of the Council of Europe. It has to be very robust. That is the case when it comes to deciding

where to locate power plants and to ensure that they operate safely and securely. If we do not do that, we run a serious risk.

Earthquake risks have changed. The Fessenheim nuclear plant in France is near the borders with Germany and Switzerland. When built in 1971, it was in an area considered not to pose any earthquake risk. However, as time has gone by, France has changed its approach to assessing the matter and we now recognise that there is an earthquake risk there that we did not know about then; we were not technically able to know it at the time. Terrorism has evolved too. When building a nuclear power plant, we now have to recognise that, for 25% to 30% of the year, one of the reactors might not operate so three or four reactors on one site are needed to ensure power at all times. That clearly enhances the danger posed by any terrorist attack. Let us hope that there is never such an attack, but there is a high risk. Alongside that, we have a significant risk related to climate change. We saw it in France a number of years ago when water levels rose because of a serious weather incident, which endangered the Blayais power plant.

All those things are important, and they all have to be borne in mind. Co-operation is crucial, and it is essential that we have an independent nuclear safety authority at a national level. In France, for many years, the people in charge of our nuclear industry were manufacturers in that industry. Some 105 power stations were built without public consultation, which can no longer happen. France now has a nuclear authority that is very independent. It is able to give information to the State and to private bodies involved in the sector, and its information is vital.

The French nuclear authority also has a vital role on reaction time – the amount of time that passes between the beginning of an incident and its being officially announced to the public. That question of time management in the event of an accident is a key element of our approach.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Gattolin. That concludes the list of speakers. However, we have some time left over, and I know Mr Huseynov wants to take the floor. If anyone else wishes to speak, they should please indicate it to me.

Mr HUSEYNOV (*Azerbaijan*) – Although some countries regard themselves as great and powerful, we are all vulnerable. We have reached a point where no country can stand alone in the face of global problems such as terrorism, drugs and nuclear safety.

Nuclear safety is key to global security. The world has made 250 commitments on nuclear safety. Although three-quarters of those commitments have already been fulfilled, more than 60 are still waiting for a solution. If the international community works together, the notion of being a big or small State is secondary. In some cases seemingly small countries can facilitate nuclear smuggling meaning the whole world faces serious dangers. It is also undeniable that great States are attempting to turn smaller States into outposts so as to create a foothold in achieving their goals.

Azerbaijan is not big, but it is located at the intersection of geostrategic interests, so it is important in that respect. By implementing an independent policy and preventing the influence of foreign States, Azerbaijan is an important partner in the international community's large-scale activities for nuclear safety. It is no coincidence that that was highlighted at the April 2016 nuclear security summit, held in Washington and attended by more than 50 countries. The United States President highlighted that sensitive reality, which demands extreme caution: "There are certain countries that can be potential transit stations for smuggling nuclear materials. We are working with such countries within the co-operation on border control and nuclear detection. Azerbaijan is a very important partner in this process because of its location." Those are not simple words but an important and accurate assessment. It has been acknowledged that a country that possesses a theoretical source of danger has shown itself to be a reliable partner by serving the common cause with dignity.

There are some areas of serious concern in the South Caucasus region that need to be emphasised. Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding Azerbaijani districts, which have been under Armenian occupation for the past 26 to 27 years, are beyond any international control. There is drug trafficking, there are terrorist training camps, and nuclear waste from Armenia and third countries has been buried in that "black strip". Those are harsh and bitter truths with plenty of evidence.

Armenia possesses a more fearsome threat, however, that promises terrible disasters for the nuclear safety of the South Caucasus region, the Middle East and Europe. The Metsamor nuclear power plant, built using old Soviet technology in 1976, completed its life long ago and is in constant danger of an accident. Metsamor is located in a seismically active zone in which earth movements occur frequently. Nevertheless, Armenia has stated that it will be using the nuclear power plant, which carries the threat of death for both

Armenia and its neighbours, until 2026. Particular attention should be paid to Armenia, which appears to be a major threat to the nuclear security of Europe. Urgent measures should be taken to neutralise these threats.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Huseynov. There is room for one more, but no one wants the floor. I call Mr Schennach to reply. You have a bit over five minutes.

Mr SCHENNACH (*Austria*) – If you give me one minute more, I could go deeper in my answers.

I thank all those who have spoken. Mr Kiliç, would you be so nice as to tell Ms Günay of all the compliments she has received for the report? I will tell her in the committee.

I am sorry to the Azeri delegation, but they have been selective in their reading of the report, because Metsamor is included. Ms Gafarova said the report contains not one word on Metsamor, but there are five or six lines on page 9. Have a look. On the same level as Metsamor are Tihange and Kozloduy. Every dangerous nuclear power plant should be closed today, not tomorrow and not next week.

Ms Ohlsson touched on the fairy tales of nuclear energy. Everyone tells us that nuclear energy is clean and cheap, but both cannot be true. If it is clean, it is not cheap. All the costs are distributed to the citizens of a country or region. In the moment you can have a lot of money – this is a big business – because a company is not responsible for the costs in 100 years. Society is responsible for the costs in 100 years, and not the company that makes the profit now.

Mr Sekulić, thanks for your comments. I congratulate Montenegro, but do not destroy the dialogue on other non-nuclear projects. Not every project is okay.

Mr Howell, I do not know whether you were here at the beginning, but I clearly informed the Assembly that the International Atomic Energy Agency was not willing to co-operate with the rapporteur. You said that we did not co-operate, but we asked the IAEA on several occasions to co-operate with us, and it ignored and rejected our requests. That is another story. You criticise us, but we criticise the IAEA, which perhaps is not used to working together with a democratic parliamentary body.

There is technological discrimination in the world. The industrial complex tries to build new nuclear power plants in countries with little democracy. I was chair of the Union for the Mediterranean for eight years, and I fought against the plan to build a nuclear power plant in Aqaba, which is on the border of four countries: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Egypt. I told the king of Jordan that building a nuclear power plant there is a crime against humanity and the world. Only the military industrial complex would profit, not the people of those countries.

Mr Vovk from Ukraine knows that not one country that signed the Budapest memorandum ratified it. When those who signed the memorandum ratify it, we can talk about it.

I thank Mr Gattolin, Ms Trisse and Mr Reiss for their positive words. I am happy that you are in favour of the report.

Mr Yeneroğlu spoke about different distances, but I have an example for him. Chernobyl is 1 200 km or 1 300 km from Austria, and we still have problems from the accident, which happened a long time ago. The small distance that Mr Yeneroğlu mentioned in relation to the caesium cloud is no distance at all.

We said that nuclear power stations are often close to borders. In addition, they are often in seismically critical regions – I do not know why. Two examples are Krško in Croatia and Temelín in the Czech Republic, but there are others. If Mr Yeneroğlu and Turkey want to play Russian roulette, they should build the nuclear power plant. The whole of Turkey is seismically unstable. Turkey is at the top of the list of countries that have had earthquakes in the past 20 years.

There is a process to work towards agreement between the Czech Republic and Austria regarding the Temelín nuclear plant. Mr Vovk is a nuclear physics expert and knows that there have been 100 level 1 accidents. He will understand why we are very worried, with Vienna only 60 km away. People living in the area were given pills so that caesium cannot enter their cells, which makes me very worried.

The PRESIDENT – That concludes the list of speakers.

Does the vice-chairperson of the committee wish to speak? That is not the case.

The debate is closed.

Mr YENEROĞLU (*Turkey*) – On a point of order, Mr President. I would like to respond to Mr Schennach because he mentioned me by name.

The PRESIDENT – That is not possible. The responsibility of the rapporteur is to respond to you, and he has done so. The debate is closed.

The Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development has presented a draft resolution to which 10 amendments have been tabled. They will be taken in the order in which they appear in the Compendium. I remind you that speeches on amendments are limited to 30 seconds.

I understand that the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development that Amendment 2 to the draft resolution, which was unanimously approved by the Committee, should be declared as agreed by the Assembly. Is that so?

Mr LEITE RAMOS (*Portugal*)* – Yes.

The PRESIDENT – Does anyone object? That is not the case.

Amendment 2 is adopted.

The remaining amendments will be taken individually in the order in which they appear in the Compendium. I remind you that speeches on amendments are limited to 30 seconds.

We come to Amendment 9, which has a sub-amendment. I call Mr Hunko to support the amendment. You have 30 seconds.

Mr HUNKO (*Germany*)* – There are nuclear power plants in only 17 of the 47 member States of the Council of Europe. We cannot therefore say that Europe is “highly dependent” on nuclear energy. That is the case for some countries, but not for Europe as a whole, which is why we suggest a more neutral form of words so we say that “several States” in Europe are producing nuclear energy. It is not a value judgment.

The PRESIDENT – We come to the sub-amendment, tabled by Mr Leite Ramos. I call Mr Leite Ramos to support the sub-amendment.

Mr HUNKO (*Germany*)* – I might suggest a change to my amendment. Saying that “many” States in Europe are producing nuclear energy would be more appropriate than saying “several” States.

The PRESIDENT – Are you speaking on behalf of the committee on the sub-amendment, or is Mr Leite Ramos going to speak on behalf of the committee?

Mr LEITE RAMOS (*Portugal*)* – The sub-amendment is almost a formality, as described by Mr Hunko. The committee approved the sub-amendment by a large majority, and approves Amendment 9 as amended. Mr Hunko was the proponent of the sub-amendment.

The PRESIDENT – Does anyone wish to speak against the sub-amendment? That is not the case. Mr Hunko is in favour of the sub-amendment.

The vote is open.

The sub-amendment is adopted.

Does anyone wish to speak against the amendment, as amended? That is not the case.

What is the opinion of the committee?

Mr LEITE RAMOS (*Portugal*)* – In favour by a large majority.

The PRESIDENT – The vote is open.

Amendment 9, as amended, is adopted.

We come to Amendment 10, which has a sub-amendment. I call Mr Hunko to support the amendment.

Mr HUNKO (*Germany*) * – Here we are talking about the situation of old power plants situated in border regions. In the debate, there has been much mention of Tihange, a Belgian nuclear power plant bordering on Germany, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. That is why I feel that we should actually refer to it by name. Old power plants in neighbouring regions, such as Tihange, are a particular problem. We have talked about more modern power plants as well, but I think this example deserves a mention.

The PRESIDENT – We now come to the sub-amendment, tabled by Mr Leite Ramos. I call Mr Leite Ramos to support the sub-amendment.

Mr LEITE RAMOS (*Portugal*)* – The committee proposed that we delete the following words: “such as...Tihange, close to Germany and the Netherlands.”

The PRESIDENT – Does anyone wish to speak against the sub-amendment?

I call Mr Hunko.

Mr HUNKO (*Germany*)* – Do we or do we not want to refer to specific examples when talking about old nuclear power plants? Tihange is important with regard to the controversy that has raged in recent months. That is why I would very much be in favour of referring to it by name in the text, and that is why I reject the sub-amendment.

The PRESIDENT – I shall now put the sub-amendment to the vote.

The vote is open.

The sub-amendment is adopted.

Does anyone wish to speak against Amendment 10, as amended? That is not the case.

What is the opinion of the committee?

Mr LEITE RAMOS (*Portugal*)* – The committee is in favour.

The PRESIDENT – The vote is open.

Amendment 10, as amended, is adopted.

I call Mr Batrincea to support Amendment 6. He is not here. Does anyone else wish to move Amendment 6? That is not the case, so Amendment 6 is not moved.

I call Mr Batrincea to support Amendment 7. He is not here, as we know. Does anyone else wish to move the amendment? That is not the case, so Amendment 7 is not moved.

I call Mr Yeneroğlu to support Amendment 8.

Mr YENEROĞLU (*Turkey*) – The amendment would delete paragraph 8. That paragraph contradicts the report as it singles out the Akkuyu nuclear power plant in Turkey in an unjust and biased manner. Removing it will ensure that the report is objective and appropriate. I also remind you that we have just rejected the specific mentioning of places.

The PRESIDENT – Does anyone wish to speak against the amendment?

I call Mr Schennach.

Mr SCHENNACH (*Austria*) – In committee, this paragraph was near unanimously put into the resolution. We discussed it very intensely in the last meeting in Lisbon. This has a real effect. We made this enlargement of the report with paragraph 8, and I ask you all to keep it in.

The PRESIDENT – What is the opinion of the committee?

Mr LEITE RAMOS (*Portugal*)* – The committee rejected the amendment by a large majority.

The PRESIDENT – I remind you that if this amendment is adopted, Amendment 5 will fall.

The vote is open.

Amendment 8 is rejected.

I call Mr Yeneroğlu to support Amendment 5.

Mr YENEROĞLU (*Turkey*) – The Akkuyu nuclear power station is not included in the main part of the report. Therefore, the reference in the draft resolution to the other 15 reactors under construction is inappropriate and unacceptable. This reference undermines the coherence of the report.

The PRESIDENT – Does anyone wish to speak against the amendment?

I call Ms Kyriakides.

Ms KYRIAKIDES (*Cyprus*) – In fact, I will let Mr Schennach speak on my behalf because the committee was in full agreement about not removing this paragraph.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Schennach.

Mr SCHENNACH (*Austria*) – Again, I said in committee that I am for this version of the report. These amendments try to make paragraph 8 smaller or irrelevant.

The PRESIDENT – What is the opinion of the committee?

Mr LEITE RAMOS (*Portugal*)* – The amendment was rejected by a large majority.

The PRESIDENT – The vote is open.

Amendment 5 is rejected.

I call Ms Rodríguez Hernández to support Amendment 1.

Ms RODRÍGUEZ HERNÁNDEZ (*Spain*)* – As I said, it is not a question of talking about nuclear policies but rather nuclear security. The Paris accord is a matter of nuclear security, not a political matter. I think the rapporteur has this clearly in mind.

The PRESIDENT – Does any wish to speak against the amendment?

I call Mr Schennach.

Mr SCHENNACH (*Austria*) – I am strictly against this amendment because the connection between the Paris agreement on climate change and nuclear power is a fairytale. The amendment is against the spirit of this report. I see Mr Kiral looking at me. This is a fairytale of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is a lobbying agency. Come on – they are very happy to read this amendment.

The PRESIDENT – What is the opinion of the committee?

Mr LEITE RAMOS (*Portugal*)* – Against.

The PRESIDENT – The vote is open.

Amendment 1 is rejected.

I call Ms Rodríguez Hernández to support Amendment 3.

Ms RODRÍGUEZ HERNÁNDEZ (*Spain*)* – As we have seen, climate change could cause a natural disaster or there could be effects with regard to security in a plant. There are all these possible effects that stem from climate change, with impact this could have on the security of nuclear plants in terms of increasing

temperature, nuclear disasters and so forth. We talk about maximum security – well, maximum is never enough. We do not want to have to pay for this later due to not having taken it into account.

The PRESIDENT – Does anyone wish to speak against the amendment?

I call Mr Schennach.

Mr SCHENNACH (*Austria*)* – The content of the amendment is not the content of this report. I have a feeling that it goes closely back to the former amendment. I ask you to really understand that I am against this, but we have a chance to address it. As I told you before, I will propose a motion regarding nuclear power stations along the borders. Then we will have to look into what you suggest, but it has nothing to do with this report.

The PRESIDENT – What is the opinion of the committee?

Mr LEITE RAMOS (*Portugal*)* – The amendment was rejected by a large majority.

The PRESIDENT – The vote is open.

Amendment 3 is rejected.

I call Ms Rodríguez Hernández to support Amendment 4.

Ms RODRÍGUEZ HERNÁNDEZ (*Spain*)* – We think that transparency in nuclear safety is indispensable. We have talked about the need to de-politicise the bodies that deal with the security of our plants, so that we avoid any interference. As for the other amendments, I hope that we are not being charged with saying that any lobby exists. When we are talking about security, we need all the elements so that security can be more effective.

The PRESIDENT – Does anyone wish to speak against the amendment? That is not the case.

What is the opinion of the committee?

Mr LEITE RAMOS (*Portugal*)* – In favour by a large majority.

The PRESIDENT – The vote is open.

Amendment 4 is adopted.

We will now proceed to vote on the draft resolution contained in Document 14622, as amended. A simple majority is required.

The vote is open.

The draft resolution in Document 14622, as amended, is adopted, with 99 votes for, 18 against and 8 abstentions.

Congratulations.

(Ms Maury Pasquier, President of the Assembly, took the Chair in place of Mr Jonas Gunnarsson.)

The PRESIDENT* – Colleagues, before we continue with our agenda, I remind you that under Rules 20.1 and 22 of the Assembly, it is the responsibility of the President of the Assembly to maintain order and customary parliamentary practice, and to ensure that debates are conducted in a civil and disciplined manner while respecting the rules and practices governing our work. In that regard, I appeal to members to adopt courteous, polite and respectful behaviour. That applies to us all – one toward the other – and with regard to persons taking the floor to address the Assembly. The tone employed in and the inappropriate nature of a number of contributions to the debate this week has gone beyond what is deemed acceptable in this Chamber. In the course of the debate, I have had to call to order a number of our members. Furthermore, a number of incidents have occurred around the Chamber. There have been allegations of attacks on members of the Assembly and there has been provocation in relation to journalists, with members singing at the top of their voices – none of which contributes to creating a positive atmosphere or portraying

the image of this Organisation as the house of democracy. I invite all members to show respect towards our Assembly and its Rules of Procedure.

2. Question time: Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

The next item on the agenda is questions to Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe. I welcome you to the Chamber, Secretary General. The debates this week have underscored the importance of dialogue and co-operation between the statutory bodies of the Council of Europe and its high representatives, which is why I consider our discussion today as an opportunity to engage in a constructive debate on the political and institutional challenges facing this Organisation and on how we can take this Organisation forward.

The PRESIDENT – A number of members have expressed their desire to put questions to you. I remind colleagues that the questions should not exceed 30 seconds and that they should put a question, rather than make any statement.

Ms SCHOU (*Norway, Spokesperson for the Group of the European People's Party*) – Our valuable Organisation is experiencing demanding cross-pressures. We face several dilemmas in our efforts to maintain its strength, role and integrity. I believe that we all have the Council of Europe's best interests at heart in our efforts to solve the difficult situation that we are in, but political and juridical views differ widely. In my opinion, the last thing we need is a climate of conflict, especially between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. Rather, we need to secure arenas for dialogues and forge a spirit of co-operation. So, Secretary General, what can you do to contribute to this much-needed constructive atmosphere for co-operation between our two statutory bodies?

Mr Thorbjørn JAGLAND (*Secretary General of the Council of Europe*) – Thank you for the question. It is crucial, but before we become too pessimistic, we also need to recall that the European Convention system and the European Court are stronger than ever due to the reforms that we have made. First, on the Court, nine years ago the Court had 130 000 cases pending – it was not really a Court any longer. We did a lot of reforms in the Court, which brought it to safe ground. Then we decentralised the whole Secretariat. For instance, today we have 50 people on the ground in Ukraine and we have a huge presence in Georgia – all the States that need our assistance in order to help them to reform, so that not so many applications are coming to the Court. All this has helped to strengthen the European Convention system, and the Court is very strong today and can deal with the many challenges that we are facing, for instance, in Turkey.

There are threats to the European Convention, but we have faced them. For instance, when the constitutional court of the Russian Federation said that it should have the right to say that a judgment from the Court could not be implemented, we said that, from the very moment that this applies in the Russian Federation, the Russian Federation has to leave the Council of Europe. We said the same to the United Kingdom when it refused to implement the judgment giving the right to vote to some prisoners. If a member State says it will not implement a judgment, we say it has to leave. That did not happen, however, as the judgments were implemented. We applied Article 46.4 – the first time it had been applied in the history of the Council of Europe – against Azerbaijan because it kept someone in prison despite judgments of the Court, and that person is now out of prison. You will see, then, that the European Convention is working and is protecting people, which is what it is meant to do.

My contribution to the functioning of the system is to apply the Convention and the law and to use the articles in the Statute in order to implement the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. It is important that we have good co-operation between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. I am glad to say that I have a very good relationship with the President – any President – and the Secretary General of the Assembly. For instance, I invited the latter to my home during the summer vacation, and we spoke for many hours. He explained what was happening in the Assembly and the rules. I always take account of what he says about the rules. That is why I came to the conclusion I did in response to the Assembly's decision. I always take account of what the President and the Secretary General say, but I also have a special status in the Convention and in the Statute, which I apply when necessary, as in the case of Azerbaijan, for instance.

I can contribute, then, by expressing honestly my opinion on what the Convention and the Statute say. After that, the Committee of Ministers can hear from the Secretary General and you can hear from me my honest view. I can contribute by ensuring as good a relationship as possible and by upholding the Convention.

Mr SCHWABE (*Germany, Spokesperson for the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group*) – Thank you, Secretary General, for reminding us of our responsibilities, and I will see with whom I will spend my next vacation with.

It is necessary to build trust and to understand that we have a common obligation to think first about what we can change, not to blame others. How can we prevent a recurrence of the conflict this week – who can give legal advice, and so on – and what in your view will happen in the middle of next year if a country such as the Russian Federation does not contribute to the Organisation?

Mr JAGLAND – The last part of your question is of course crucial. I have to exercise my mandate and act according to the rules and the Statute but also take account of decisions here. I have listened to the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly expand upon the rules – for instance, about the credentials – and he has said time and again that if a member State does not submit its credentials in January, it is out for the whole year.

It is now a matter of fact – I do not agree with the Russian position, but I take it as a matter of fact because in politics you listen to what people say and do not try to interpret it in a way that suits you – that the Russian Federation will not be back in January. That is what I have heard from the Russian Federation. Even had you voted for the report with a two-thirds majority, they would not have come back under those conditions. I have transmitted this to the Committee of Ministers and the Bureau. I disagree with the Russian Federation. I think – this is not in the Statute, but it should be – that a member State not only has a right to submit its credentials to the Parliamentary Assembly but should have an obligation to do so. It cannot pick and choose which organs it will participate in. I said that it must pay – this is also an obligation – but as a matter of fact it will not come in January or pay for the whole year.

The budget, for which I am responsible, must take into account the fact that we will not have the Russian contribution next year. How the Committee of Ministers deals with this – there is Article 9 of the Statute – and how it deals with my budget proposal is up to the Committee of Ministers, but it is my duty to tell you how I see it. I have a particular responsibility in the Statute, but I also have a particular responsibility for the staff here. I cannot run an Organisation that cannot find money to pay salaries. Under Norwegian law – I am from Norway – it is unlawful to run a company based on money you do not have, and of course the Council of Europe needs to have money for salaries for the whole of next year and the year after. I must take full responsibility for the situation and tell the Committee of Ministers about it. That is how I see it. Some of you may dislike it, but I cannot run away from my responsibilities. It is of course up to the Committee of Ministers to respond to my opinion, but we are in the final stage of the budget process and cannot wait another week to deal with this.

Sir Roger GALE (*United Kingdom, Spokesperson for the European Conservatives Group*) – Further to that answer, Assembly Recommendation 2124 of 16 March of this year concerns the budgetary crisis precipitated by the failure of the Russian Federation to honour its financial obligations. The Secretary General is ultimately responsible and accountable for the budget. The Committee of Ministers' own deadline for responding to the Parliamentary Assembly is three months, yet tomorrow three of our part-sessions will have concluded since the Assembly adopted that resolution. Why has the Committee of Ministers, which the Secretary General attends almost every week, failed to respond?

Mr JAGLAND – Thank you for that question. You will have to ask the Committee of Ministers; the Chair of the Committee of Ministers was here yesterday, so one could ask the Minister herself about that. I think the Committee of Ministers have been awaiting what would happen here and what the prospects for next year and the coming years would be. I take my responsibility to tell the Committee of Ministers how I look upon it after what has happened, which will happen on Friday, and then the Committee of Ministers will have to respond. Again, I am obliged to take the responsibility under the Statute, and I will do it.

Mr Michael Aastrup JENSEN (*Denmark, Spokesperson for the ALDE Group*) – I have a question about the debate we have been having this entire week about the non-binding legal paper that you jointly drafted with the Chair of the Committee of Ministers. I think we can all agree that this paper has generated the worst climate for co-operation between the Committee of Ministers and us here in the Parliamentary Assembly. In light of that dire situation and lack of co-operation, will you as Secretary General today guarantee that this will not happen again without close co-operation, and we will make the decision jointly together, instead of this solo one that you and the Chair of the Committee of Ministers have made on a piece of paper like that?

Mr JAGLAND – Thank you for that question, Mr Jensen. The Chair of the Committee of Ministers, the Minister herself, replied to this question yesterday. She gave a thorough explanation of why the Chair of the Committee of Ministers wanted to have a legal analysis of this, and why I was asked to join that effort.

I have been a parliamentarian for many, many years. I have been in government. I was never upset about obtaining as much information as possible before I took a decision. It is the soul of Europe, so to speak – the enlightenment of Europe – that before you take a decision you need to know as much as possible. That does not mean that you have to accept what comes from here and there, but it means it is very important to take account of the information you are able to obtain. That comes from inside me, as a democratic man. I cannot say anything more, but I can promise you that I understand that there is a lot of feeling around this, and I will do my utmost to see to it that we do not get into such a situation again. Having said that, as a democratic man, I will always welcome information from anybody, even those who argue against me – actually, from those more than anybody else, because it is enlightening.

Ms ŞUPAC (*Republic of Moldova, Spokesperson for the UEL Group*) – Secretary General, in September of this year, seven Turkish citizens, teachers, were kidnapped in the Republic of Moldova and deported the same day to Turkey. Now they are in Turkish prisons. It does not seem a simple coincidence that that took place one and a half months before the official visit of Mr Erdoğan to the Republic of Moldova. What is your opinion of this cynical violation of human rights?

Mr JAGLAND – My answer to that question is what you indicate it should be. This is a very unfortunate development between two of our member States, and I appeal to both member States to avoid such things and to de-escalate this situation, rather than helping to escalate it.

Ms FILIPOVSKI (*Serbia, Spokesperson for the Free Democrats Group*) – As Secretary General of the Council of Europe, what are you planning to do about the serious disregard of the Council of Europe's legal opinion on the suspension of voting rights and violation of democratic principles by the Parliamentary Assembly?

Mr JAGLAND – I have followed this process in the Parliamentary Assembly for a long time. I explained earlier in this session how I look upon it and what will inevitably be the result of what happened here. I would also like to add that I regret this development very much, first because the European Convention was set up to protect people's rights. If the Russian Federation leaves, Russian citizens will not be able to apply to the European Court of Human Rights, which would be a huge setback for citizens of the Russian Federation. We will not be able to apply permanent monitoring bodies, such as the one overseeing conditions in the prisons in the Russian Federation, which has been so important.

I hope you are aware of the fact that, when the Russian Federation acceded to the Council of Europe, there were 1 million inmates in Stalin-style prisons in the Russian Federation. Because of the judgments of the Court of Human Rights, because so many inmates applied to the Court regarding the conditions in Russian prisons and those judgments were implemented by the Russian Federation, the situation for many has improved and the population in prisons in the Russian Federation has decreased considerably. I give only that example of how important the European Convention has been for that country, as well as for all the others.

I say frankly that I have to take account of what is happening. I listen to what is being said. What happened in the United Kingdom is that there was an intense campaign for years and years against the European Union, and then they had the Brexit referendum. Many thought, "Oh, it will not happen, but let's have it," and it happened. By the way, the First World War came about like that. A row of books have been written about why the First World War started. One of the most famous was called "The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914". Political leaders in Europe sleepwalked into the First World War. Now it is called the Great War, but there was nothing great about it. I will regret it very much if we sleepwalk into a situation where there is a new dividing line in Europe. I will regret it, but I will respect decisions taken by the statutory bodies of the Council of Europe. I explain how I see where we are now.

However, the member States are responsible for the European Convention. In the context of international treaties such as the Statute and the Convention, what are the member States? In that context, the member States are the government that drafted the European Convention and the Statute, and the parliament that ratified those international treaties. So the member States have the possibility to stop sleepwalking and avoid what I hear many say – that we do not want that development. They can take the lead and the governance of that. We have the ministerial meeting that coincides with the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe. It would be possible for the member States that are responsible for the Statute and

the Convention to draw up a new avenue in this case. That is my honest opinion. I have told you it before and I stand in front of you saying it once again.

The PRESIDENT* – Thank you, Secretary General. Do you agree that we now take questions three at a time, so that you can reply to three speakers at the same time? That would be a more efficient way of organising the debate.

Mr JAGLAND – I agree with that.

Mr HUSEYNOV (*Azerbaijan*) – Your noble appeals for the release of Dilgam Asgarova and Shahbaz Guliyev, who were taken hostage and illegally convicted by Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2014, were ignored by the former leadership of Armenia, which was consequently dismissed by its own people. What would your reply be to the demand and persistent request of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced people to raise again that issue about the release of Dilgam Asgarova and Shahbaz Guliyev from illegal arrest before the new leadership of Armenia, which has been declaring its commitment to democratic values?

Mr KIRAL (*Ukraine*) – The Second World War started because Europe was not strong enough and slept through the Nazi aggression and did not build up its capacity. I repeat my question from yesterday, and I expect a concrete answer. Are you ready to present a contingency plan for the existence of our institutions without Russian money, first, to the Bureau meeting in November and, secondly, to the Rules Committee on 10 December, so that we can start to prepare and not wait until June next year when the Russian Federation formally withdraws?

Mr APOSTOL (*Republic of Moldova*) – Resolution 420 of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of 19 October 2017 on local democracy in the Republic of Moldova demands clarification of the conditions surrounding the suspension of the Mayor of Chişinău Dorin Chirtoaca, Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, stressing that the suspension was problematic in terms of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Which of the recommendations in Resolution 420 have so far been implemented, and what are the concrete results of the Monitoring Committee and other bodies of the Council of Europe in that case?

Mr JAGLAND – With regard to the prisoners held by Armenia, I have raised this issue and will continue to raise it time and again. It would also be a gesture from the Armenian side to deliver on this. I will continue to raise it.

On Mr Kiral's question, am I ready to present a plan for the existence of the Council of Europe without Russian money? That is what I have said so many times – it is not the first time today that I have said that I am ready to do that. That has been used to say that I am applying pressure. I am taking away the pressure by saying that we can present a budget without Russian money, and I will now do that, because the situation is clear. The Rules Committee, according to the rules, has the opportunity to ask me about that. It has never done that, but it can do, and I would come to the Rules Committee to explain how that can be done.

By doing that, we are taking away what I feel has been a difficulty in this Assembly. There has never been an economic pressure. I have explained many times that, if you want, we can go on without the Russian money. That has never been a pressure. Now that the situation is clear, I will go to the Committee of Ministers and explain how that can be done, but of course member States have to contribute to that process.

On the suspension of the Mayor in Chişinău, I am sorry that I cannot go into that issue now. I am of course aware of the situation, but I cannot go into all the issues that Mr Apostol raised.

Mr KANDELAKI (*Georgia*) – You are well aware that the independent investigation on the matter of corruption earlier this year was an extremely important event in the life of the Council of Europe. Many members here feel that one aspect of that investigation merits clarification. In the last part-session, former ambassador Mammadov said that he gave concrete information to you and the head of your private office on what was going on in 2011. You insisted that those meetings were only general and that Mr Mammadov was complaining about the corruption in his own country. Rule 13-27 requires that members of staff pass information on corruption or fraud to the Director of the Private Office. Those members, some of whom have written to you, feel that you should publish the records of those meetings, which Mr Mammadov says exist, and pass them to the Director of Internal Oversight.

Ms CHRISTOFFERSEN (*Norway*) – My question is also about the arrests of the Turkish teachers in the Republic of Moldova. The Human Rights Foundation and Amnesty International claim that that action is part of a larger international crackdown led by the Turkish Government against alleged followers of the Gülen movement. In Norway, Turkish people are scared and ask us for protection. What can the Council of Europe do to protect those people and other members of the Turkish diaspora in Europe?

Mr KILIÇ (*Turkey*) – In the light of the multitude of challenges that our Organisation is facing, reform of our Organisation should be high on our agenda. Given your dedication to reform our Organisation, will it be feasible to convene a new Council of Europe summit to advance the process of reform in 2019, when we will also be celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe?

Mr JAGLAND – First, I will respond to the question put my Mr Kandelaki, which I have answered at least twice before. We have a very important practice that I meet ambassadors regularly. We never take notes, but I always have someone with me from the private office; very often – almost always – the head of the private office accompanies me as a witness. The head of my private office was with me in all the meetings you mentioned. He was called on by the investigation commission, which you appointed as an independent commission, and he gave an explanation. The commission did not deem it necessary to call on me and it never did.

What is clear is that what it told us about what was going on in Azerbaijan was so shocking that it led to my first public communication, in a written article in *The Guardian* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, in 2014. It led, for the first time in my mandate, to the use of Article 52 of the Convention. As I have already told you, the Committee of Ministers had to apply Article 46.4 of the Convention for the first time in history.

While all that was going on, IBAC – the commission – told you that three of the group leaders in this Assembly and the President of the Assembly who you had elected only a few months before the report came out did what they could to undermine our efforts. That is the issue we face. I have told you about this before and I have told you about it now. If the commission had wanted to follow up on that, it could have done so, but it did not because it saw the answer of the head of my private office as exhaustive.

Ms Christoffersen asked what we can do about so-called supporters of Gülen in our member States. There is an obligation on member States to protect people living there. That is very important and I am pleased that most of our member States are doing so. They do not accept that just because someone had a connection to this network, they should be extradited to Turkey. As far as I know, that is not accepted by most member States. Ultimately, of course, one can apply to the European Court of Human Rights. That is where we are now.

On a possible summit, in the current situation there could be arguments to have one, but I do not think there is a big appetite, given how things are evolving. I think, however, that ministers and parliamentarians will be involved in the process leading up to the ministerial meeting in Helsinki. I will go to Helsinki in a few weeks and will meet its leadership, because it is going to take over the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. I will meet a very good old friend of mine, the President of Finland, who is a very wise man. Of course, I will try to discuss with the Finnish chairmanship what can be done – let's see. For now, that is my logic.

The PRESIDENT* – I do not see the Earl of Dundee in the Chamber, so I give the floor to Mr Ghiletschi.

Mr GHILETSCHI (*Republic of Moldova*) – Secretary General, about two years ago I brought to your attention an issue relating to obtaining the participatory status of an international non-governmental organisation that did not meet the criteria. It is accredited by the United Nations, but the Council of Europe has denied it participatory status, most recently on 6 July 2018, because it has a traditional view of marriage. That approach is discriminatory and undermines severely the plurality of opinion. How is that possible in the Council of Europe, which protects human rights, and what can be done about it?

Mr MURRAY (*United Kingdom*) – The budgetary issues of the Council of Europe are well documented, and I think that it has made the right decisions to date with regard to the Russian Federation. I have been trying to find the total remuneration package of the Secretary General. Could he tell us what his entire remuneration package was for this year, and what contribution will he make towards meeting the Council of Europe's budget next year?

Ms BRYNJÓLFSDÓTTIR (*Iceland*) – This summer the Constitutional Court of Bulgaria ruled that the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic

Violence – the Istanbul Convention – was unconstitutional. That is part of a concerning development in recent years regarding the attitude towards women’s rights. Member States have been undermining the Istanbul Convention and its main aim, which is to eliminate violence against women. The practice is so pronounced that I call it a backlash against women’s rights in some Council of Europe member States. I want to hear the Secretary General’s evaluation of that worrying development and what he believes he can do to encourage member States to respect the Istanbul convention and to fully implement it.

Mr JAGLAND – Mr Ghilechi asked about a particular NGO. I pay full respect to the bodies that decide on the issue and they are not in agreement with what you say.

In response to Mr Murray’s question, I will explain all this and I have explained it before, not in concrete figures, but I am ready to explain how we can run the shop without the money from one member State. We did it when Turkey reduced its contribution all of sudden overnight. That was very difficult. I have to face the realities. I have explained before that I would like another reality, but this is the reality we are facing now. I cannot give you any figures now, but as I have said the Rules Committee has a right to call on me to explain and I will do so.

Moving on to Ms Brynjólfsdóttir’s question, the Constitutional Court of Bulgaria has made a ruling. As I have said in this Chamber before, when asked what ideology I belong to – socialism, capitalism liberalism or whatever – I say that I am in favour of constitutionalism. That is why I defend the Statute of the Council of Europe and what is written there and in the Convention, and what is not written. I will continue to defend that. The Constitutional Court of Bulgaria has made a ruling. What I find unfortunate is that some other member countries misrepresent the Istanbul Convention, using the word “gender” in a completely wrong way. I am glad that the Croatian chairmanship and the prime minister stood up against a very harsh campaign against the Istanbul Convention. They won the vote in the parliament. I hope that others will do the same. Fortunately, many have ratified the Istanbul Convention, so things are very much under way. People should stop distorting what is said in the Convention. They should say what it is actually about, which is the protection of women against domestic violence. I think we can all agree on that. That is what the Convention is about, and nothing else.

Mr PISCO (*Portugal*) – Citizens detained in Hungarian prisons are experiencing the permanent violation of their most basic human rights. They are suffering inhuman and degrading treatment. Some of them have been detained on nonsense accusations. Among them are European and Portuguese citizens who are victims of absurdly excessive periods of pre-trial detention, of violence and institutional xenophobia, of arbitrary decisions and of negligence of their health. They lack effective support from the judiciary. Those things violate all the principles of human rights, European values and international conventions. Mr Secretary General, can the Council of Europe put more political pressure on the Hungarian authorities and organise fact-finding missions to the Hungarian prisons to help put an end to this intolerable situation?

Mr ORLANDO (*Italy*)* – Until a few months ago, I was a Minister for Justice in my country. In the course of the years that I had that role, I witnessed the actions of Secretary General Jagland and the Committee of Ministers. In my country, we introduced civil partnerships. We have heard about torture and other things. When people demand the expulsion of other countries, have they come to the right place? What initiatives can we take on national public opinion? What bilateral action can we take to relaunch the real role of the Council of Europe so that we do not give in to the idea that this Organisation is slowly changing its spots?

Mr JAGLAND –The first question came from Mr Pisco, and I thank him for making me aware of the situation. I cannot go further into it, because I have to look into it. Every time people around Europe make me aware of such situations, I always look into them carefully.

I am very grateful for what Mr Orlando said and the question he put, because Italy and the government he was in showed so clearly the importance and the strength of the European Convention in two fields. It was very concrete. First, there were many judgments from the Court on the lengthy procedures in Italian courts. Italy did not rank at the top of the list for judgments from the Court, but it was quite high up. Because of those judgments, the Italian Government took action. Secondly, because of the judgments from the Court on the situation in the prisons, the Italian Government took a leading role and set a good example for many others by reforming the penitentiary system and how it penalises people. It led to very good results, but it came about because of the rulings of the Court.

I have heard a lot of pessimistic things during this session, but please do not fall into that trap. We have a very strong Convention system. It is being applied and it makes a difference in our member States. The European Court is making a difference because of the reforms we made to the Court and how

the Secretariat in Strasbourg functions. We have decentralised things, and we have mobilised additional resources in a magnitude never seen in the history of the Council of Europe. We became strong on the ground in Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Moscow, and we were able to compete for resources from other member States. Also, we got additional resources from member States because of our actions. We are also able to compete on the ground for outside resources.

We have extra budgetary resources of €60 million on top of the ordinary budget because we decentralised our activities and became stronger to assist our member States. That made the Council of Europe much stronger, as did the reforms in the Court and the decentralisation of the Organisation, but then you come here and are so depressed. Be optimistic! Defend the Convention and the Court and say that they get results. It makes a difference for our citizens in member States. The Convention is not for the member States; it exists to protect citizens in the member States. Remember that, and go back home and defend it. Then, head for the ministerial meeting in Helsinki and try to find a way forward. That is my response, Mr Orlando. You did a lot when you were a minister. You implemented the Convention in Italy. That is how the system functions, and we must all continue to defend it.

Please go for lunch and be optimistic about the European Convention on Human Rights.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you very much, Mr Secretary General, for your time and your fighting positive spirit.

I call Lord Foulkes on a point of order.

Lord FOULKES (*United Kingdom*) – I have a point of order. I am a very reasonable man and I have been sitting here quietly, but the Secretary General is running away. He is afraid to answer questions.

The PRESIDENT* – Lord Foulkes, the Secretary General responds to questions. He has answered all the questions posed in the way that he deemed fit. It is not up to you to dictate to him how he should respond to questions.

3. Next public business

The PRESIDENT* – The Assembly will hold its next public sitting this afternoon at 3.30 p.m. with the agenda which was approved on Monday morning.

The sitting is closed.

(The sitting was closed at 1 p.m.)

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1. Nuclear safety and security in Europe

Presentation by Mr Schennach of the report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, Document 14622

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Draft resolution in Document 14622, as amended, adopted

2. Question time: Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Questions: Ms Schou, Mr Schwabe, Sir Roger Gale, Mr Michael Aastrup Jensen, Ms Şupac, Ms Filipovski, Mr Huseynov, Mr Kiral, Mr Apostol, Mr Kandelaki, Ms Christoffersen, Mr Kiliç, Mr Ghilechi, Mr Murray, Ms Brynjólfsdóttir, Mr Pisco, Mr Orlando

3. Next public business

Appendix / Annexe

Representatives or Substitutes who signed the register of attendance in accordance with Rule 12.2 of the Rules of Procedure. The names of members substituted follow (in brackets) the names of participating members.

Liste des représentants ou suppléants ayant signé le registre de présence, conformément à l'article 12.2 du Règlement. Le nom des personnes remplacées suit celui des Membres remplaçant, entre parenthèses.

ÅBERG, Boriana [Ms]
ALTUNYALDIZ, Ziya [Mr]
APOSTOL, Ion [Mr] (*GHIMPU, Mihai [Mr]*)
ARENT, Iwona [Ms]
AST, Marek [Mr] (*BAKUN, Wojciech [Mr]*)
BADEA, Viorel Riceard [M.] (*PLEȘOIANU, Liviu Ioan Adrian [Mr]*)
BADIA, José [M.]
BALIĆ, Marijana [Ms]
BARDELL, Hannah [Ms]
BARNETT, Doris [Ms]
BAYR, Petra [Ms] (*ESSL, Franz Leonhard [Mr]*)
BECHT, Olivier [M.]
BEREZA, Boryslav [Mr]
BERGAMINI, Deborah [Ms]
BERNACKI, Włodzimierz [Mr]
BĚRZINŠ, Andris [M.]
BEUS RICHEMBERGH, Goran [Mr]
BILDARRATZ, Jokin [Mr]
BOGDANOV, Krasimir [Mr]
BÖKE, Selin Sayek [Ms]
BRUYN, Piet De [Mr]
BRYNJÓLFSDÓTTIR, Rósa Björk [Ms]
BÜCHEL, Roland Rino [Mr] (*FIALA, Doris [Mme]*)
BUDNER, Margareta [Ms]
BURES, Doris [Ms]
BUSHATI, Ervin [Mr]
BUTKEVIČIUS, Algirdas [Mr]
CEPEDA, José [Mr]
CHRISTENSEN, Jette [Ms] (*MEHL, Emilie Enger [Ms]*)
CHRISTOFFERSEN, Lise [Ms]
CILEVIČS, Boriss [Mr] (*LAIZĀNE, Inese [Ms]*)
CORLĂȚEAN, Titus [Mr]
CRUCHTEN, Yves [M.]
D'AMBROSIO, Vanessa [Ms]
DAMYANOVA, Milena [Mme]
DZHEMILIEV, Mustafa [Mr]
EBERLE-STRUB, Susanne [Ms]
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EIDE, Espen Barth [Mr]
EMRE, Yunus [Mr]
ERDEM, Arzu [Ms] (*ÇETİN, Cemal [Mr]*)
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GAILLOT, Albane [Mme]
GALE, Roger [Sir]
GATTOLIN, André [M.] (*MAIRE, Jacques [M.]*)
GAVAN, Paul [Mr]
GERMANN, Hannes [Mr] (*HEER, Alfred [Mr]*)
GHILETCHI, Valeriu [Mr]
GILLAN, Cheryl [Dame]
GOGUADZE, Nino [Ms] (*PRUIDZE, Irina [Ms]*)
GOLUB, Vladyslav [Mr] (*GERASHCHENKO, Iryna [Mme]*)
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GONCHARENKO, Oleksii [Mr]
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GRAF, Martin [Mr]
GRIMOLDI, Paolo [Mr]
GRIN, Jean-Pierre [M.] (*LOMBARDI, Filippo [M.]*)
HAIDER, Roman [Mr]
HAJDUKOVIĆ, Domagoj [Mr]
HAJIYEV, Sabir [Mr]
HAMZAYEV, Nagif [Mr] (*AGHAYEVA, Ulviyye [Ms]*)
HEINRICH, Frank [Mr] (*VOGEL, Volkmar [Mr]*)
HEINRICH, Gabriela [Ms]
HONKONEN, Petri [Mr] (*KALMARI, Anne [Ms]*)
HOWELL, John [Mr]
HRISTOV, Plamen [Mr]
HUNKO, Andrej [Mr]
HUSEYNOV, Rafael [Mr]
IBRYAMOV, Dzheyhan [Mr] (*HAMID, Hamid [Mr]*)
JANSSON, Eva-Lena [Ms] (*GUNNARSSON, Jonas [Mr]*)
JENSEN, Michael Aastrup [Mr]
JENSEN, Mogens [Mr]
JONES, Susan Elan [Ms]
KANDELAKI, Giorgi [Mr] (*BAKRADZE, David [Mr]*)
KASIMATI, Nina [Ms]
KASSEGGER, Axel [Mr] (*AMON, Werner [Mr]*)
KATSARAVA, Sofio [Ms]
KAVVADIA, Ioanneta [Ms]
KILIÇ, Akif Çağatay [Mr]
KIRAL, Serhii [Mr] (*SOTNYK, Olena [Ms]*)
KIRILOV, Danail [Mr] (*GROZDANOVA, Dzhema [Ms]*)
KOBZA, Jiří [Mr] (*BENEŠIK, Ondřej [Mr]*)
KOÇ, Haluk [M.]
KOPŘIVA, František [Mr]
KOX, Tiny [Mr]
KYRIAKIDES, Stella [Ms]
LEITE RAMOS, Luís [M.]
LEŚNIAK, Józef [M.] (*MILEWSKI, Daniel [Mr]*)
LĪBIŅA-EGNERE, Inese [Ms]
LINK, Michael [Mr] (*JENSEN, Gyde [Ms]*)
LOGVYNSKYI, Georgii [Mr]
LOUHELAINEN, Anne [Ms] (*PELKONEN, Jaana Maarit [Ms]*)
MARKOVIĆ, Milica [Mme]
MARQUES, Duarte [Mr]
MASIULIS, Kęstutis [Mr] (*TAMAŠUNIENĖ, Rita [Ms]*)
MASSEY, Doreen [Baroness]
MAVROTAS, Georgios [Mr] (*ANAGNOSTOPOULOU, Athanasia [Ms]*)
MEIMARAKIS, Evangelos [Mr]
MERGEN, Martine [Mme] (*HETTO-GAASCH, Françoise [Mme]*)
MIKKO, Marianne [Ms]
MILADINOVIĆ, Stefana [Ms] (*OBRADOVIĆ, Žarko [Mr]*)
MOLLAZADE, Asim [Mr] (*SEYIDOV, Samad [Mr]*)
MONTILLA, José [Mr] (*GUTIÉRREZ, Antonio [Mr]*)

MUÑOZ, Esther [Ms] (*BARREIRO, José Manuel [Mr]*)
 MUNYAMA, Killion [Mr] (*POMASKA, Agnieszka [Ms]*)
 MURRAY, Ian [Mr]
 NENUTIL, Miroslav [Mr]
 OEHME, Ulrich [Mr] (*KLEINWAECHTER, Norbert [Mr]*)
 OHLSSON, Carina [Ms]
 ÓLASON, Bergþór [Mr]
 OOMEN-RUIJTEN, Ria [Ms]
 O'REILLY, Joseph [Mr]
 ORLANDO, Andrea [Mr]
 ORTLEB, Josephine [Ms] (*AMTSBERG, Luise [Ms]*)
 ÖZSOY, Hişyar [Mr]
 PACKALÉN, Tom [Mr]
 PALLARÉS, Judith [Ms] (*NAUDI ZAMORA, Víctor [M.]*)
 PASHAYEVA, Ganira [Ms]
 PAVIČEVIĆ, Sanja [Ms] (*ČATOVIĆ, Marija Maja [Ms]*)
 PISCO, Paulo [M.]
 POCIEJ, Aleksander [M.] (*KLICH, Bogdan [Mr]*)
 PODERYS, Virgilijus [Mr] (*VAREIKIS, Egidijus [Mr]*)
 PSYCHOGIOS, Georgios [Mr] (*TZAVARAS, Konstantinos [M.]*)
 RAMPI, Roberto [Mr]
 REISS, Frédéric [M.] (*ABAD, Damien [M.]*)
 RIBERAYGUA, Patricia [Mme]
 ROCA, Jordi [Mr] (*GARCÍA HERNÁNDEZ, José Ramón [Mr]*)
 RODRÍGUEZ HERNÁNDEZ, Melisa [Ms]
 ROJHAN GUSTAFSSON, Azadeh [Ms] (*KARLSSON, Niklas [Mr]*)
 RUSTAMYAN, Armen [M.]
 ŞAHİN, Ali [Mr]
 SANDBÆK, Ulla [Ms] (*KRARUP, Marie [Ms]*)
 SANTA ANA, María Concepción de [Ms]
 SCHÄFER, Axel [Mr]
 SCHENNACH, Stefan [Mr]
 SCHOU, Ingjerd [Ms]
 SCHWABE, Frank [Mr]
 SEKULIĆ, Predrag [Mr]
 SIDALI, Zeki Hakan [Mr]
 SOBOLEV, Serhiy [Mr]
 STIENEN, Petra [Ms]
 STIER, Davor Ivo [Mr]
 ŞUPAC, Inna [Ms]
 THIÉRY, Damien [M.]
 TOMIĆ, Aleksandra [Ms]
 TORNARE, Manuel [M.] (*FRIDEZ, Pierre-Alain [M.]*)
 TRISSE, Nicole [Mme]
 TÜRKEŞ, Yıldırım Tuğrul [Mr]
 VALENTA, Jiří [Mr] (*STANĚK, Pavel [Mr]*)
 VARVITSIOTIS, Miltiadis [Mr] (*BAKOYANNIS, Theodora [Ms]*)
 VEN, Mart van de [Mr]
 VOGT, Günter [Mr] (*WENAWESER, Christoph [Mr]*)
 VOVK, Viktor [Mr] (*LIASHKO, Oleh [Mr]*)
 WIECHEL, Markus [Mr] (*NISSINEN, Johan [Mr]*)
 XUCLÀ, Jordi [Mr] (*MATARÍ, Juan José [M.]*)
 YEMETS, Leonid [Mr]
 YENEROĞLU, Mustafa [Mr]

YILDIZ, Zeynep [Ms] (*GÜNAY, Emine Nur [Ms]*)
 ZINGERIS, Emanuelis [Mr]
 ZOHRABYAN, Naira [Mme]
 ZRINZO AZZOPARDI, Stefan [Mr] (*MALLIA, Emanuel [Mr]*)

Also signed the register / Ont également signé le registre

Representatives or Substitutes not authorised to vote / Représentants ou suppléants non autorisés à voter

AGHAYEVA, Ulviyye [Ms]
 BESELIA, Eka [Ms]
 CORREIA, Telmo [M.]
 DOUBLE, Steve [Mr]
 FOULKES, George [Lord]
 GOODWILL, Robert [Mr]
 GUNNARSSON, Jonas [Mr]
 HANANOV, Elshad [Mr]
 JANIK, Grzegorz [Mr]
 KATSIKIS, Konstantinos [Mr]
 LOUCAIDES, George [Mr]
 MAKHMUDYAN, Rustam [Mr]
 MARUKYAN, Edmon [Mr]
 RUSSELL, Simon [Lord]
 SEYIDOV, Samad [Mr]
 SHEPPARD, Tommy [Mr]

Observers / Observateurs

DAVIES, Don [Mr]
 GALVEZ, Rosa [Ms]
 HARDER, Rachael [Ms]
 SIMMS, Scott [Mr]
 WHALEN, Nick [Mr]

Partners for democracy / Partenaires pour la démocratie

ALQAWASMI, Sahar [Ms]
 AMRAOUI, Allal [M.]
 EL MOKRIE EL IDRISSE, Abouzaid [M.]
 LEBBAR, Abdesselam [M.]
 MUFLIH, Haya [Ms]
 SABELLA, Bernard [Mr]

Representatives of the Turkish Cypriot Community (In accordance to Resolution 1376 (2004) of the Parliamentary Assembly) / Représentants de la communauté chypriote turque (Conformément à la Résolution 1376 (2004) de l'Assemblée parlementaire)

CANDAN Armağan
 SANER Hamza Ersan