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REPORT

Seventh sitting

Thursday 24 January 2019 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.

I have received a request from Ms Åsebol to make a personal statement.

Ms ÅSEBOL (*Sweden*) – Thank you for giving me this opportunity to declare that I made a mistake yesterday when we voted on discrimination in access to employment. I voted no, and I am so sorry for that. It was a mistake, as I was supposed to vote yes, of course, because I am against discrimination.

The PRESIDENT* – Thank you. We have taken note of that.

**1. Urgent debate:
The escalation of tensions around the Sea of Azov
and the Kerch Strait and threats to European security**

The PRESIDENT* – The next item of business this morning is a debate under urgent procedure on “The escalation of tensions around the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait and threats to European security”, Document 14811, presented by Mr Andreas Nick on behalf of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy.

I remind the Assembly that at Monday morning’s sitting it was agreed that speaking time in all debates today be limited to three minutes.

In order to finish by 12 noon, I will interrupt the list of speakers at about 11.50 a.m. to allow time for the reply and the vote.

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

Mr NICK (*Germany*) – I thank my colleagues on the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy for entrusting this critical report to me and I extend my warm thanks to the staff of the secretariat of the Committee and my own staff for their assistance in preparing this important report in a short period of time this week.

While tensions in the Sea of Azov have been simmering since the Russian Federation illegally annexed the Crimean Peninsula in March 2014, the November incident has sparked concern about further military escalation between the Russian Federation and Ukraine ahead of the Ukrainian elections in 2019. Considering that it is not the role of the Assembly to decide on the specific legal status surrounding the incident on 25 November 2018, in a situation in which the two sides concerned disagree about almost everything, the action I propose in the draft resolution is primarily political and guided by the principled position our Assembly has taken on numerous occasions in favour of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

Given the nature of a debate under the urgent procedure and the fact that the Assembly has, since 2014, adopted numerous detailed reports on the illegal annexation of Crimea, the military conflict in the Donbass region and other infringements of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation and its supposed allies, the report has deliberately abstained from dealing with those subjects in detail, but it refers to those reports to reaffirm the Assembly’s unchanged positions in that regard.

My immediate, most urgent and utmost concern is about the 24 detained Ukrainian servicemen who should be immediately released by the Russian Federation and, pending their release, be granted medical, legal and/or consular assistance as appropriate and in accordance with international humanitarian law as laid down in the Geneva Convention. Yesterday in Strasbourg I had the chance to meet two of the relatives of those detained and it made a huge impression on me. International bodies that have competencies in the field, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, should visit the Ukrainian servicemen in prison, and the Assembly should support any diplomatic action taken by Council of Europe member States aimed at their release.

Specific recommendations are addressed to the Russian Federation concerning the fundamental issues of ensuring freedom of passage through the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait in accordance with the relevant treaty and any other mutually agreed procedures, of refraining from violence in the case of differing

opinions about alleged border violations, and of respecting the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Considering that both the Russian Federation and Ukraine, when acceding to the Council of Europe, committed themselves to solving their conflicts peacefully, I propose that we call on both of them to respect the treaty on the use of the Sea of Azov and Kerch Strait, and the agreed regulations for navigation through the canal, and to refrain from any further steps that might escalate the conflict and threaten security in the wider region. Efforts made through diplomatic channels and legal procedures by both sides should be supported.

I propose in paragraph 8 of the draft resolution that the Assembly takes a position on a number of principled matters, supports initiatives taken by other international actors aimed at the de-escalation of the situation and urges Council of Europe member States to do everything in their power to avoid further escalation of violence with potentially dangerous consequences for security in the wider region.

The PRESIDENT* – Thank you, rapporteur. You will have nine minutes for your answers to questions following the general debate.

Mr HOWELL (*United Kingdom, Spokesperson for the European Conservatives Group*) – On reading this report, I rather got the feeling that the rapporteur had tried too hard to be too diplomatic in his handling of the issue. For example, the calls for both sides to observe the treaty around the Sea of Azov cannot hide the fact that this is another example of Russian aggression in Ukraine. True, the report goes on to call for the release of Ukrainian servicemen and upholds the integrity of Ukraine's sovereignty, but I am worried that this may apparently give succour to the views I heard coming out of organisations such as the OSCE that both sides in this conflict are to blame. They are not. This is naked Russian aggression.

Although the report concentrates on the capture, injury and deportation of Ukrainian servicemen and how they are to be handled, it also mentions the Crimea bridge that the Russian Federation has built. This is important. It is illegal. It breaches Ukrainian sovereignty. This is a particularly dangerous development, which we need to condemn. Personally, I would have made more of this.

All of those reasons were why the United Kingdom Minister in charge of defence made a visit to the Ukraine before Christmas and why we sent a naval vessel to the area. It was meant to send a very clear signal to the Russian Federation that we will stand by Ukraine, rather than it being an act of further provocation. We intend to send other royal navy ships to provide a more constant British presence. To our Ukrainian friends, I say that we will support you. I hope that they take that.

Nevertheless, I do not want to be too critical of the report. It does call for the immediate release of the servicemen. It does call for free passage through the area and for an end to violence. But one thing that has to end is the searching of Ukrainian and international ships in the area. The Russian Federation is engaging in economic warfare in this area to strengthen its control of the Crimea and the Black Sea. We must not let the Sea of Azov become the central battleground for this battle and we must support Ukraine.

Mr BECHT (*France, Spokesperson for the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe*)* – This morning's debate on addressing the tensions around the Sea of Asov is very important, because it is a key dimension of a conflict between two of our members, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. I would like to remind you that an international maritime law was adopted on 10 December 1982 in Montego Bay. The convention provides for peaceful passage for all vessels, regardless of nationality, in territorial waters up to 12 miles from the coast, provided they pose no threat to peace. That is the case for straits as well.

What has been happening in the Sea of Azov? It neighbours the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and it is linked to the Black Sea by the Kerch Strait. Mariupol and Berdiansk, two Ukrainian cities, are located on the strait and they are very important for trade, particularly steel and grain produced in Ukraine. There are longstanding tensions around the control of the strait, but the annexation of Crimea in 2012 led to the Russian Federation declaring both parts of the strait as its territorial waters, thereby limiting access for ships.

The boarding of three Ukrainian navy vessels by the Russian navy, which we are talking about today, occurred in Ukrainian territorial waters just before the strait. In other words, it was a clear provocation with peaceful passage being prevented. Nevertheless, all international organisations – the Council of Europe, United Nations and so on – refuse to recognise the annexation of Crimea, which, according to international law, is still part of Ukraine. Beyond the question of whether the behaviour of the Ukrainian vessels could be described as offensive to justify boarding them and the detention of their crews, this incident above all raises

the question of Ukrainian sovereignty over the Sea of Azov. The Russian State now de facto controls access via the strait.

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe group calls for de-escalation, and the release of both the sailors and the vessels. We call on the Russian Federation to take pacification measures in the strait in order to guarantee access for Ukraine to its ports in line with international law and in line with the international agreements that both countries have signed. We call on both the Russian Federation and Ukraine to do their utmost to find a peaceful solution to the current conflict, in particular by addressing the question of Crimea, if necessary by submitting the case to the International Court of Justice.

Regardless of what happens, the member States of the Council of Europe are duty bound to pursue peace and order. This is why we support the resolution proposed today by the rapporteur.

Mr OVERBEEK (*Netherlands, Spokesperson for the Group of the Unified European Left*) – The incident in the region of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait on 25 November 2018 constitutes a serious escalation of the ongoing conflict between two member States of our Organisation, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. It is of the utmost importance that this new conflict is resolved peacefully as soon as possible and is not used to permanently intensify the wider conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine even further.

We are grateful to the rapporteur for putting before us a wise and balanced report, and a resolution that calls on the states in question to do exactly that. The report states the facts that are undisputed, informs us about the background, and shows clearly the different and competing claims from both sides with respect to disputed facts.

The facts are that the Russian coastguards opened fire on two Ukrainian naval vessels, and rammed a Ukrainian tugboat, as the ships attempted to enter the Kerch Strait on their way to Mariupol. That act contravened the obligation under the Statute of the Council of Europe on peaceful conflict resolution.

Access to the internal Sea of Azov is governed by a bilateral treaty between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The Ukrainian side claimed that the provisions of the treaty were followed to the letter. The Russian side has claimed the exact opposite. Conclusive evidence one way or another has not been produced, nor is there certainty about the exact location of the incident. The rapporteur has wisely refrained from attempting to decide who is speaking the truth. He had neither the mandate nor the means to investigate the facts in detail.

Both sides have taken steps after the incident that have tended to escalate the conflict further. The Russian Federation has captured the 24 Ukrainian servicemen and imprisoned them on criminal charges. Ukraine imposed martial law in 10 regions for a period of 30 days and called for NATO to send ships into the Sea of Azov.

Fortunately for all of us, I think, NATO, like other international organisations, has called for restraint and de-escalation. That, honourable colleagues, is precisely what this Assembly should also do. The resolution we are debating today calls for the immediate release of the Ukrainian servicemen by the Russian Federation. It calls on both the Russian Federation and Ukraine to respect the bilateral treaty on the use of the Azov Sea and the Kerch Strait, and to employ legal and diplomatic means to resolve any disagreements.

The Group of the Unified European Left finds that approach to be wise. We welcome the resolution and we will support it wholeheartedly.

Ms GROZDANOVA (*Bulgaria, Spokesperson for the Group of the European People's Party*) – On behalf of the Group of the European People's Party, I congratulate the rapporteur, Mr Nick, and the Secretariat of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, on the promptly prepared report and the draft resolution, which our group will back firmly.

Last November, I had the opportunity to visit Ukraine on a mission in my capacity as one of the two rapporteurs for the Monitoring Committee. Our Assembly has always unambiguously reiterated its support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The attack on Ukrainian vessels by Russian forces in the Kerch Strait is a direct clash between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. It is affecting European security as a whole and has caused a significant deterioration of the situation in and around the Black Sea. That act of aggressive behaviour by a member State of the Council of Europe – the Russian Federation – is not only unacceptable but constitutes a clear violation of international law and the bilateral agreements signed and ratified by the Russian Federation and Ukraine in 2003 and 2004.

I call for the immediate release of all the Ukrainian servicemen, who should be granted the necessary legal and consular assistance. The Russian authorities should provide three wounded Ukrainian servicemen with appropriate medical care without further delay. Our position is that the Kerch Strait must remain open for the free navigation of all types of Ukrainian and Russian ships, and all merchant ships of third States.

To delay passage through the Kerch Strait by three to six days because of a selective search of all non-Russian ships is totally unacceptable. It clearly violates maritime law – especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to which the Russian Federation and Ukraine have been party for 20 years. I call upon all Council of Europe member States, as members of our common European family, to contribute as much as they can to calm the tensions in that area and prevent further escalations of the conflict. On behalf of the EPP, I call on the Russian authorities to respect their international and bilateral pacts.

Ms De SUTTER (*Belgium, Spokesperson for the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group*) – I congratulate the rapporteur on the very clear, balanced report. We are all committed to the values of the Council of Europe, and we all pursue peace based on justice and international co-operation, which is vital for the preservation of human society and civilisation, as paragraph 4 of the resolution correctly points out. We all agree that retaliation, provocation and escalation are not solutions and will not solve the conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation in the illegally annexed Crimea.

No one in the Crimean Peninsula or the wider region benefits from this further escalation of tensions in the Sea of Azov. No one benefits from the violence, the use of military force and the imprisonment of 24 sailors, three of whom have been wounded. No one benefits from the disagreement about the exact location of the incident and the legal status of the naval ships and their crews, and the disrespect of maritime law, the treaty on the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait, and the agreed regulations for navigation through the canal.

However, the tensions persist. The selective search of ships is still impeding navigation and the free passage of shipping. That is not acceptable. The internationally recognised borders in Russian-annexed Crimea are still under pressure, and violence against civilians is still used. That does not make our work at the Council of Europe easier. Council of Europe member States, the European Union, NATO and the United Nations should stand firm and maintain the international pressure on the authorities of the Russian Federation and Ukraine. We should uphold our values, reinforce the protection of citizens and safeguard European security. It is of the utmost importance that international standards, including the resolutions agreed by this Assembly that the report mentions, are respected.

We need a special monitoring mission, as the European Parliament proposed, to cover the area of tensions. I support the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which should be admitted into the prisons in which the sailors are being kept.

Given the annexation of Crimea, no one in the region will benefit from a further escalation of tensions in the Sea of Azov. We need a de-escalation of tensions. The Russian Federation must guarantee the free passage of shipping and immediately release the 24 Ukrainian crew members it has arrested and imprisoned. It is up to us as member States to maintain the international pressure. It is in our power to avoid a further escalation of violence, which would have potentially dangerous consequences for security in the wider region.

The PRESIDENT* – We have heard all the speakers on behalf of the political groups. Mr Nick, would you like to speak at this stage?

Mr NICK (*Germany*) – No.

The PRESIDENT* – Distinguished colleagues, I draw your attention to the fact that there is a revised edition of the amendments, because there was one technical error in the document labelled “Final”. If we vote on the amendments, please note that you need before you the copy with “Revised” at the top.

Ms GERASHCHENKO (*Ukraine*)* – Last week, the Ukrainian sailors appeared before a court in Moscow. No families, diplomats or journalists were at the trial, and nor was the Ukrainian human rights ombudsman. Ms Moskalkova, the Russian human rights supremo, did not put in an appearance. Moreover, she arranged a meeting with her Ukrainian opposite number but ran away an hour earlier, claiming that she had an urgent appointment.

The Ukrainian sailors declared that they are prisoners of war under the Third Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war. Ukraine calls on the Russian Federation to deal with the sailors according

to their status and to give representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross access to them. The Russian Federation has violated at least five articles of the European Convention on Human Rights. Ukraine calls on its European partners to introduce new sanctions – the so-called Azov sanctions package – against the Russian Federation and the Russians who participated in this provocation.

Ukraine also demands the immediate release of the 24 prisoners of war unilaterally, without conditions or exchanges. It declares that it is prepared to hand over to the Russian Federation 25 Russians found guilty in Ukrainian territory in return for the release of political prisoners held by the Russian Federation, including Oleg Sentsov and others. Last year, as the representative of the Ukrainian party in the Minsk Group negotiations, I sent 13 official letters to the Russian Federation aimed at securing an exchange of prisoners. The Foreign Ministry of Ukraine also sent notes to the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, but no response was received to any of those initiatives. The Russian Federation is not only blocking the process of freeing prisoners, but seizing and imprisoning new Ukrainian citizens. The list of political prisoners includes those 24 sailors and 70 other Ukrainians.

In Minsk, Ukraine continues to raise the issue of deploying the permanent OSCE observation mission in Kerch. The Russians do not accept that. The Azov region and Crimea are both Ukrainian territory. Given that the OSCE's mandate covers the whole of the Ukrainian territory, its job is to observe the security situation in that region. Ukraine calls upon its colleagues in the Assembly to visit Mariupol and experience daily life in that frontline city. Ukraine asks its European partners to increase the pressure on the Kremlin through the use of sanctions, and to introduce the new Azov sanctions package.

Mr BLAHA (*Slovak Republic*) – I have only four short remarks. First, I find it absurd to have a debate on the Russian Federation without ensuring full membership for Russian Federation members. This is not what democratic debate looks like; this is what a lynch mob looks like. I have demanded repeatedly that all rights are returned to the Russian Federation because, as a democrat, I am interested in the opinion of the accused party.

Secondly, I had the honour of speaking with the former Foreign Minister of Ukraine and the current leader of the Socialist Party of Ukraine about the case of the Kerch Strait. He confirmed to me that it was a clear provocation by Petro Poroshenko, the President of Ukraine, to obtain a pretext to delay the presidential election in which he has virtually no chance of succeeding.

Thirdly, I find it ridiculous that we are talking about the Russian Federation but not about the fact that elections are approaching in Ukraine in which about 3 million Ukrainians residing in the Russian Federation will be denied their right to vote. According to the principles of the Council of Europe, it is inadmissible to deny citizens living abroad their basic political rights. Instead of this chronic Russophobia, let us consider whether Ukraine adheres to democratic rules.

Fourthly, as an antifascist and proud patriot, I observe with horror that a law that celebrates the Banderites was adopted in Ukraine. They were fascist criminals who massacred people in the territory of Poland and Slovakia, my home country. That is something that the Council of Europe should strongly condemn.

Mr BEREZA (*Ukraine*)* – I want to move away from the emotional words of our colleague Mr Blaha, especially since, as we can see, this is not a question of democratic principles. Those who support the Russian Federation rather than democratic principles base their feelings on emotions and use that as their justification.

A Russian armada is shooting at Ukrainian ships in neutral waters – I repeat, in neutral waters. How can we talk about democratic principles and claim that this is a lynching of the Russian Federation? Obviously what democracy means in Slovakia is different from what it means in the rest of the continent. That happens, of course, or perhaps just one representative of Slovakia feels like that.

Four years ago exactly, Russian weapons were used to fire on the Ukrainian city of Mariupol. That same city is now being blockaded by the Russian Federation to ensure that its ports cannot be used, and that the Sea of Azov cannot be used. Is that not the lowest depth to which a country can sink? No, not at all. The country can then go on to attack Ukrainian ships in neutral waters, shooting at them, seizing prisoners of war – Ukrainian sailors – and organising a show trial that has nothing to do with democracy, justice or the law.

We now know that the Russian Federation wants to take these Ukrainian sailors and remove them from the Matrosskaya Tishina prison to the Lefortovo prison. Some of them are injured or wounded, and they do not want to allow them any medical attention or access to lawyers. This is a way of exerting pressure on the individual sailors and is totally inhumane.

We require the Parliamentary Assembly to remind the Russian Federation of the Third Geneva Convention, on the treatment of prisoners of war, because these Ukrainian sailors seized by a Russian military warship are prisoners of war – or perhaps it was an act of piracy. If so, the Parliamentary Assembly should state that clearly. These are attacks in neutral waters and efforts to blockade the Sea of Azov; and let us remember MH17, a Boeing shot down by a Russian Buk rocket system. If we forgive the Russian Federation all that and do not respond with a resolution demanding that they free the prisoners of war, and if we do not do so now, the Russian Federation will continue in the same vein with this criminal activity. The Russian Federation will go on committing crimes against democracy and humanity.

Mr FASSINO (*Italy*)* – I thank Mr Nick and strongly support the position adopted in the report, including the draft resolution. We obviously face a highly serious situation that has fuelled tension between Ukraine and the Russian Federation and made any possibility of an understanding even more complicated and distant.

As I say, I agree very much with the draft resolution and everything that has been said so far. It is essential that the political prisoners are treated in a way that fully respects international treaties, including those of the Council of Europe. We must also fight to ensure that the prisoners are released as quickly as possible while, at the same time, providing guarantees of free movement in the Sea of Azov. That is all important. However, I think we should go beyond that in our debate.

The agreement underpinning navigation in the Sea of Azov dates from 2003. It is now 2019 and, over the past 16 years, the situation between Ukraine and the Russian Federation has greatly deteriorated. The first article of the agreement states that the regulation of navigation in the Sea of Azov must be based on an agreement between the two parties. Since those two parties are now involved in open conflict, there is no longer such basic agreement.

We should be aware that this episode means that we have to have a more sensitive approach to policy in this area. We most certainly do not want progressive escalation. We want the gradual implementation of the Minsk Agreement and we need gradually to move towards a solution while encouraging the de-escalation that is essential in such a situation.

The task of the Council of Europe is on the one hand to firmly condemn what happened in the Sea of Azov and to call on the Russian Federation to implement the treaty and release the prisoners. On the other hand, we must all start a political initiative to enable us to reset relations between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Events in the Sea of Azov demonstrate how important the Russian Federation's presence in this Organisation is. Every time something like this happens, we cannot speak out against the Russian Federation while pretending, at the same time, that it is a close partner. We have to be entirely consistent with the principles of the Assembly. We have to be clear in our condemnation of what the Russian Federation has done and, at the same time, we must maintain avenues through which we can maintain contact with the Russian Federation so as to address such difficult situations.

Mr LOPUSHANSKYI (*Ukraine*)* – According to international legal experts, the Russian Federation's seizure of Ukrainian naval vessels is illegal. In the past, the Russian Federation attempted to create pretexts for its illegal actions, by which I mean the referendum in Ukraine at the time of the annexation of Crimea or its support of separatists in Eastern Ukraine, aimed at the creation of a destabilising frozen conflict. In this case, the Russian Federation is openly acknowledging its actions. This might mean that the Russian Federation has taken its campaign to a new level, which threatens peace and security in the wider region and might even develop into full-scale war.

The Kremlin is beating new records in its campaign against Ukraine and this is an attempt to reinforce its dominant position in the region to demonstrate that Europe, NATO, the United States and Ukraine are weak, and to continue the process of destabilisation in Eastern Ukraine with the intention of annexing this region and, perhaps, all of Ukraine. Hypothetically, even if all Kremlin statements about the incidents were true – they are not – the Russian Federation's actions would still constitute a violation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a treaty ratified by both the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Analysis of the recent conflict in the Sea of Azov shows its connection to the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine. The blockage of the Kerch Strait makes the Sea of Azov a Russian lake; the Russian navy can use it while Ukrainian naval forces cannot. I point to Article 32 of that United Nations treaty, which provides that warships have sovereign immunity, even in another State's territorial waters. States cannot seize a foreign warship in any circumstances but can expel one from its territorial waters.

The violation of international law and the brazenness of the Russian Federation's actions are an open flouting of international norms and constitute a continued infringement of the sovereignty of Ukraine. We must

make it clear that the seizure of Ukrainian ships, just like the Russian war against Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, are acts of war.

We once again demand that the Russian Federation immediately releases the Ukrainian sailors and ensures that they are granted the necessary medical, legal and consular assistance. We also call on the Russian Federation to ensure freedom of passage in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. We hope that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe will adopt the draft resolution and all the important amendments submitted by the Ukrainian delegation, so that the resolution reflects all that I have mentioned.

Mr YEMETS (*Ukraine*) – I thank the rapporteur for his work. Since the beginning of the open military aggression against Ukraine with the occupation of Crimean peninsula in 2014, the Russian Federation has closed the Sea of Azov to Ukraine, blocking Ukraine's major port city of Mariupol.

Two months ago, the Russian Federation committed another act of aggression against Ukraine. Again in violation of international law, it openly attacked and captured three Ukrainian military ships and their crew when they were trying to reach Mariupol. The Russian ships first rammed the Ukrainian ships and then ushered them into international waters, where they opened fire on the Ukrainian ships, injuring six crew members.

According to the third Geneva Convention, the captured Ukrainian soldiers were supposed to be treated as prisoners of war. Instead, the Russian Federation, in its usual manner of violating international law and common decency, simply declared them criminals. That is unacceptable. Their capture fully falls under the articles of the Geneva Convention. It also causes great concern that, according to his attorney, one of the injured soldiers did not get appropriate treatment. After two months, he still has fragments inside him, and his hand is swollen.

This all shows that the Russian Federation cares very little about international law, and that the current sanctions are not enough to persuade it to drop its aggressive behaviour. I urge the Assembly to increase the pressure on the Russian Federation and its leaders, to save our captured soldiers and ensure the sovereignty of the Ukrainian State.

Mr THÓRARINSSON (*Iceland*) – I want to draw attention to an historic event – that took place in Ukraine just couple of days ago that could affect European security. History was made when the Ukrainian Church became independent from the Russian Church, bringing to an end hundreds of years of Russian control over Ukrainian Church affairs.

It is well known that, after annexing Crimea, the Russian Federation used its dominance over the Church to justify the violation of Ukrainian sovereignty. Moscow has used the Russian Orthodox Church as an instrument of State power in its conflict with Ukraine. The Church and religion have become tools in the Russian Federation's hybrid war, assisting militants and spreading a message of hatred and division. The war in Ukraine has killed more than 10 500 people. Meanwhile, Moscow priests have reportedly blessed separatist fighters and refused to perform funerals for fallen Ukrainian Government soldiers.

The independence of the Church in Ukraine should be welcomed, but the management of the transition is critical. There is a need to transfer authority over many Church assets, which will provoke conflict. The process must be handled with transparency and according to the law. The Ukrainian authorities and the international community must be on alert. This significant societal change could lead to an escalation of violence. We have seen similar things too many times in history. This is the fifth winter of the conflict, and Moscow has warned that the independence of the Ukrainian Church will move it into new and dangerous territory.

The fear of attacks on Churches has become high. The Church's division could escalate tensions elsewhere, notably among Orthodox congregations and countries in the Balkans. In countries already subject to Russian aggression, such as Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, Church leadership, the government and the people could be divided. Church division could add a dangerous element.

The international community has a key role in determining how this unfolds and must act to ensure that the worst-case scenarios do not come to pass, such as a new conflict across eastern Europe. It is vital that the Council of Europe keeps a close eye on the Russian Federation's reaction to this religious dimension of the protracted conflict.

Mr CHRISTIANSSON (*Sweden*) – This is my maiden speech in the Council of Europe. It is a great honour to be here.

Our political party, the Sweden Democrats, strongly condemns the Russian invasion of Crimea. When central principles of international law are violated, our Assembly has a duty to react, as it is this morning, to its honour. The recent escalation of tensions between Ukraine and the Russian Federation around the Sea of Azov, and what went before it, constitutes such a case, and blame for it must be laid entirely at the Russian Federation's door.

Under a 2004 treaty between the two countries, which is still in force and was signed by President Putin, the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait are defined as shared territorial waters for navigation. The unprovoked firing on three Ukrainian vessels by the Russian navy in those waters last November was a clear breach of that treaty and therefore a violation of international law. The Russian Federation's preceding annexation of Ukrainian Crimea in 2014 was also a breach of international law, as are the continuing military incursions by Russian-supported forces in Eastern Ukraine. Every country must respect the territorial integrity of others.

A third international principle has been broken by the Russian Federation: not engaging in actions that jeopardise international peace. However, the Black Sea region, with central Asia, the Bosphorus, the Mediterranean Sea and the volatile Middle East nearby, is a powder keg of regional tension of the first order. A resolution of the Sea of Azov controversy therefore becomes all the more urgent, and the main responsibility for action lies with the Russian side.

I conclude by regretting the absence of our Russian Assembly colleagues. Had they been here, we could have had a useful dialogue on these matters and perhaps contributed to a better understanding between the two countries primarily concerned. Many people are suffering in the region. I pray for peace.

Mr KOX (*Netherlands*) – I thank our rapporteur, Andreas Nick, for his balanced report on this delicate issue. I am happy that we were able to change the original title of the debate, which in my opinion was far too aggressive, to a factual title. I applaud the rapporteur for doing what I think a report and resolution should do: describing what has happened and proposing what could happen in order to overcome the problems. Too often we in this Assembly are busy creating problems when we should be coming up with solutions to them, as the Finnish Minister said earlier this week.

As the previous speaker said, it is a pity that we do not have Russian MPs here to do debate this with us, because that would enrich the debate. However, let us hope that in the near future the Russian Federation will be wise enough to send its delegation to this Assembly, because this is where we should debate together how to overcome these problems.

I would also urge our friends from the Ukrainian delegation not to use this sad incident to escalate tensions in the area. We cannot afford that. This Assembly should do our utmost to de-escalate what is happening there, because this is not a geopolitical game. In the end, it is the citizens of Ukraine who would be affected by the consequences of any further escalation of conflicts in the area.

I hope the Assembly will endorse the report and the resolution produced by our rapporteur. It contains a lot of wisdom and urges both member States, Ukraine and the Russian Federation, to abide by their obligations as member States of this Assembly and partners in the treaty on the Sea of Azov that they agreed. International law, that treaty and our Statute give us the means to overcome problems. I hope that both member States will use those means, and I urge them to do so, instead of escalating every problem, because in the end it is the citizens of Ukraine who will pay the price, and we should do our utmost to avoid that.

Mr ARIEV (*Ukraine*) – I thank the rapporteur for his work.

Last November, the Russian Federation resorted to open military aggression against Ukraine in international waters in the Black Sea, shelling Ukrainian navy vessels that were trying to pass through the Kerch Strait on the way to the Ukrainian port of Mariupol on the Sea of Azov, in full accordance with the bilateral agreements of 2003 and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Concealing themselves under other flags, as they do in Donbass, Russian armoured forces attacked Ukrainian forces. The crew of three Ukrainian navy vessels and the vessels themselves were captured by the Russian Federation and forcibly moved to the port of Kerch in annexed Crimea.

Such an event could be classified in two ways: as piracy or as military conflict. The case for describing it as maritime piracy falls because, according to the legal definition, piracy is committed for private ends by the crew or passengers of a private ship. Therefore, what took place was maritime military conflict. Logically, all the captured sailors from the crew should be regarded as prisoners of war.

I would like to acquaint you with an important quotation from a statement by the Ukrainian ombudsman, Lyudmyla Denisova, who has asked me to read it out: According to the Third Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, 24 Ukrainian seafarers have the status of prisoners of war. This is recognised by most civilized countries of the world. Despite this, in January 2019 all the sailors had their period of detention extended by 3 months. One of the main issues remains the state of the wounded sailors. Neither I nor lawyers have yet received any official medical records about the wounds sustained, what treatment was carried out, and how the men feel.

The Ukrainian ombudsman emphasises that, by its action, the Russian Federation has violated the norms of the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war. I appeal to the President of the Assembly and the members taking part in the winter part-session to apply pressure on the Russian authorities to comply with international humanitarian law and facilitate the release of these Ukrainian prisoners of war without delay, in line with the fundamental principles enshrined in the Geneva convention.

Dear colleagues, two relatives of these captured servicemen are in the gallery of the Hemicycle today awaiting your decision and others are watching this debate on TV, hoping for justice from your side. They need your voice to compel the Russian authorities to release these Ukrainians. They need you to recognise these servicemen as prisoners of war. Eventually, they will need your support in the face of the sorrow visited upon their homes. We all need the international community to do its utmost to stop the spread of Putin's aggression.

Finally, one of the earlier speakers called on both sides to stop this war. It is correct that all we need is peace, but there is one important difference. If the Russian Federation stops fighting, there will be no war; if Ukraine stops fighting, there will be no Ukraine – different tasks and different achievements, as you can see. I would like you to give your support in our struggle for freedom and independence.

Mr GOLUB (*Ukraine*)* – On 25 November 2018, the Russian Federation committed an open act of aggression by attacking Ukrainian ships in the Kerch Strait and illegally apprehending 24 Ukrainian sailors. On 15 and 16 of January, a Moscow court extended the detention of the sailors until 24 April. In doing so, the Russian Federation has demonstrated its typical cynicism. It has refused to release the Ukrainian sailors and is in clear violation of international law. Moscow continues to deny the Ukrainian sailors the status of prisoners of war, which they should be granted under the Geneva Convention of 1949 relating to the treatment of prisoners of war.

After the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Kremlin decided also to annex the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. The illegal building of a bridge over the Kerch Strait is abundant proof of this. For incomprehensible reasons, Moscow has taken the cynical decision to declare the Kerch Strait as part of its own domestic waters. It is not difficult to understand the purpose of these tactics. The aim is to prevent vessels from travelling to the Ukrainian ports of Berdyansk and Mariupol, as part of the Russian Federation's hybrid war against Ukraine, and to try to take control of the Azov Sea waters.

We have to unite our efforts. That is the only way that we can overcome this aggressive dictatorship and sideline those who have such contempt for western democracy. Ukraine proposes to its international partners that we adopt a new package of international sanctions in response to the Russian Federation's aggression in the Sea of Azov. We are in a position to act on the Russian Federation's economy. The acts carried out by the Russian Federation are unacceptable. Ukraine now needs practical support and assistance to enable it to respond adequately to the aggressor. I am sure that the Russian Federation will only escalate its threats, but it is not only Ukraine that is affected. The situation in the Kerch Strait has once again confirmed a simple but undeniable truth. In today's world, nobody can trust the Russian Federation's promises. No country can sign agreements with the Kremlin because these agreements have no value. Let us not forget that. Let us start pulling together, because together we will always be stronger in our desire to hamper the efforts of the aggressor and liar to undermine our rights to life and freedom of opinion.

Mr GONCHARENKO (*Ukraine*) – I thank Mr Nick, the rapporteur, and the secretariat of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy for their work on this resolution.

Today we are having an unusual sitting of our Assembly. It is unusual because millions of Ukrainians are watching it live, and it is clear why. The attack on the Ukrainian warships was an attack on the whole of Ukraine and every Ukrainian. Now, thousands of people in my country wear one of these yellow bracelets. On mine is the name of a Ukrainian serviceman, Officer Vasily Soroka from Balta in the Odessa region, whose father spent the last two days here in the Assembly, talking to you about what has happened. Just for a second, put yourself in his shoes. Imagine what it must be like for him to see his son wounded, attacked, shot, captured and put on trial for absolutely nothing.

Ukrainian warships were making their way from the Ukrainian port of Odessa to the Ukrainian port of Mariupol and needed to pass through the Kerch Strait. Among your documents, you will find a 2003 treaty between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on co-operation in the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. Article 2, which you can find yourselves, states that merchant vessels and warships, as well as other state vessels flying the flag of the Russian Federation or Ukraine, operated for non-commercial purposes, shall enjoy free passage in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. I emphasise “free passage”. What has the Russian Federation done with this treaty? It has done what it does with all the treaties of the Russian Federation: it just neglected it.

Now I ask a question that is important not only for Ukraine but for the whole world: do you want to live in a world where treaties mean nothing, where United Nations statute means nothing, and where obligations mean nothing? Today we have only two options. First, there are words we sometimes hear about “a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing”. Secondly, there are other words I want to quote: “We shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender”. The first words are those of Chamberlain; the second are those of Winston Churchill. It is your decision which ones to follow. Ukraine has made its decision. We are fighting for our independence and common values. We ask you to follow us and to help us in this fight, for the whole world.

Lord ANDERSON (*United Kingdom*) – I endorse the report. I see in Ukraine a new democracy, with all the economic and political problems of a new democracy. However, I also see that, as a new democracy, it has that yearning for stability, which is increasingly thwarted by the policies of the Russian Federation. The steps can be clearly seen. In 2014 there was the annexation of Crimea after a series of lies and salami tactics, and the maltreatment of the Crimean Tatars. Then came the illegal building of the bridge from Crimea to the Russian Federation’s own territory, which prevented large vessels reaching the industrial ports. Then, of course, Ukrainian vessels were fired on and prisoners taken from them. It is as though the Russian Federation is attempting to throttle the Ukrainian economy, particularly by cutting off access to its major industrial ports. Latterly, the Russian Federation held fake elections in Donbass, which it seeks to destabilise. The Russian Federation is engaged in a form of economic warfare against the nascent democracy of Ukraine

This can also be seen in other contexts, such as the invasion of Georgia in 2008. The West did nothing and a frozen conflict has resulted. We also think of the shooting down of the Malaysian airliner, the poisoning of Mr Skripal by GRU agents in Salisbury, cyber-warfare and the destabilising of various Western elections.

The question arises: how do we respond? This morning there have been calls for restraint but that does not take us very far. Clearly, the Russian Federation must pay a price. I concede that sanctions are a blunt instrument but they have had some effect on the Russian economy. Some call for the suspension of work on Nord Stream 2, one aim of which is to bypass the territory of Ukraine. Equally, I concede that it is easier to impose sanctions than to withdraw them, but now we see the serious danger of sanctions unravelling, following comments from the Italians, the Hungarians and even, alas, President Trump.

How, then, do we respond to the needs and aspirations of Ukraine? Even if full membership of the European Union and NATO are currently out of the question, we should seek to deepen our relationship with Ukraine. My country is doing just that. Step by step, the Russian Federation is increasing the pressure. Within the Council of Europe, we must use every instrument we have, including the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Convention against Torture, to send a clear message to the Russian Federation that it must pay a price – economic and political – for its policies of aggression.

Mr VAREIKIS (*Lithuania*) – I shall speak about this topic from a different point of view. Many people here and members of parliament are strongly against domestic violence. Over many years I have seen here posters of wounded women and everybody signing papers that say “I am against domestic violence. No tolerance of domestic violence”. Let us imagine that at home one man is killing another man and wounding another. The police come and write their report: “There was a small escalation of tensions surrounding the fireside”. What would you think about that? You will probably say, “No, no, it is a crime, not a ‘small escalation of tensions’”.

Some 30 years ago, the Soviet Union invented the term “our common European home”. We were very happy to accept the idea of a common European home. Let us imagine now that in our common European home one member is killing another and terrorising other members. What would we say? “A small tension surrounds our room”? It is not a small tension or an escalation of tensions; it is more serious.

Some years ago, when I spoke here about Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Crimea, I called the Russian sickness geopolitical kleptomania. Many people smiled and some joked, but they told me that they

agreed: this was geopolitical kleptomania. What is the diagnosis now, when one person in our common home is killing another? It is not a simple escalation; it is more serious. Think about it.

Mr ZINGERIS (*Lithuania*) – On Tuesday, my friend and colleague Andreas Nick, in the discussion of a Magnitsky law, stated truthfully that it should be based purely on the requirements of international law. I agree. Looking at this situation purely from the perspective of international law, all international law agreements have been violated by the Russian aggression against Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.

I have been coming here since 1993. I remember that, in 1996, the Assembly voted in favour of conditions for the Russian Federation joining the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. One condition was that the Russian Federation should withdraw its 14th Army from the Republic of Moldova. Where is the Russian 14th Army now? It is still in Republic of Moldova, in the Dniester region. Another condition was to compensate for the deportation to the gulags in Siberia of the Baltic people who were occupied illegally under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. No compensation has been paid.

We can go from point to point on this issue, but we should all stop calling the Russian aggression against Ukraine “the conflict in Ukraine”. It is not that; the Russian Federation is trying to stop Ukraine taking the European path. After the association agreement and the Vilnius conference, when Yanukovich said no to the European Union association agreement, whereas the Ukrainian people said yes, Ukraine was punished. It was punished not only with the annexation and occupation of Crimea and its eastern region, but through the Russian Federation’s struggle to describe Ukraine as a “failed State”. Over the past five years, Ukraine has been journeying back to Europe and it has been successful. I congratulate it on its success in coming back to Europe and especially on the European Union association agreement. I congratulate Ukraine on having a diverse delegation to this Parliamentary Assembly, with different opinions on domestic issues. We have the same feeling when we see our Ukrainian friends as we did in the beginning with the Russian delegation, when it contained Russian democrats such as Serguei Kovalev. Now, we are dealing only with people from United Russia and there are no diverse opinions. We should therefore defend Ukraine and condemn the Russian Federation for a violation of international law.

Mr LIASHKO (*Ukraine*)* – I urge members of this Assembly to condemn the Russian Federation’s aggression in the Azov Sea, and its capture of the ships and 24 servicemen. Many of you here wish us to reach an agreement, but you can now see that half of Europe is burning under the influence of the Russian Federation. We can see this in Abkhazia, Ossetia, Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh. The policy of appeasement never stops the aggressor – only strength can do that. Our unity is our strength. For 70 years, the Council of Europe has been doing its work, following the terrible war; these structures were formed in order to avoid future wars.

What do we see today? One member of this Organisation has invaded part of the territory of another member and the Russian Federation openly seizes our ships. The Russian Federation fails to stick to any agreements and it tries our servicemen as criminal offenders. We are now looking for arguments in favour of seeking some kind of dialogue. What kind of dialogue can we have with this aggressor? What dialogue can there be between the aggressor and the victim? There is hypocrisy in this resolution. There is no acknowledgement that our servicemen are real prisoners of war. We should not look for any justification of this aggression, as international treaties have been violated; weakness and looking for futile opportunities results from such an approach. We should stop the aggressor, but by appeasing the aggressor instead we expose our weakness and our inability to stop them. In Mariupol, 31 people were killed four years ago, after shelling by Russian troops. Was anybody held responsible for that? No one was held responsible, and this leads to an escalation of aggression and to new crimes.

We should stop the Russian Federation. We should defend Europe. We should renew the unity of Europe and we should defend Ukraine, because today we Ukrainians are fighting for our freedom and for yours. When we demonstrate to the whole world that violations of international law and murders have taken place, there should be punishment for that, as happened at the Nuremberg trials, where we tried Hitler’s crimes. I urge you now to take steps that would help to free Ukrainians, our fellow countrymen, and help to stop the aggression. Putin can be stopped only by strength, and we should be strong and united in order to stop the aggressor.

Lord BALFE (*United Kingdom*) – Let me begin by congratulating the rapporteur, whose report is a bit more balanced than much of this debate has been. I have said in this Chamber before that you can change your history but you cannot change your geography, and the fact of the matter is that Ukraine is next to the Russian Federation and it is probably going to stay there.

The second point I wish to make is that I have been struck throughout my life by the fact that, in order to justify military expenditure, armies always need enemies. The current enemy is the Russian Federation, but in due course it will move on to be China, because China is far more of a threat to the solidity of Europe than the Russian Federation. Until then, I must counsel people: there may be lots of noise, but there is absolutely no will for military action. There is no will for that whatsoever in the United Kingdom or among any of the people I have spoken to in Europe, so, at some point, dialogue has to take place. Interestingly, Mr Blaha, Mr Christiansson and Mr Kox all regretted the absence of the Russian Federation from this Chamber, and I join them in that, because unless we can talk to people, we are going to get nowhere at all. I accept that what the Russians did was probably illegal and certainly unwise. I would support people on the need for the International Committee of the Red Cross to have access to the prisoners, but beyond that I think that we need to negotiate.

We also need to face the fact that, if we do not negotiate, we have a frozen conflict. Not only that, but if we do not get the Russians to a conference table, they will carry on pushing the envelope, because they are trying to create a new Monroe doctrine. If we look at the history of the Russian Federation, going back to its loss, in effect, in the military action against Poland in the 1920s, we see that Russian foreign policy has been conducted on the basis of a having a cordon sanitaire around the Russian Federation. The Russians feel that that was lost in the Yeltsin years and they are now trying, by fair means or foul, to recreate it. My view is that it is in our interests to de-escalate this tension and not to pile on new sanctions, because the existing ones are not working. My son has been in Moscow studying, so I know that Putin is popular. We may not like it, but the more we do to harm him, the more his popularity increases. We have heard Winston Churchill quoted this morning, but let me remind you that his popularity grew the more the bombs dropped on London. So let's get real about this, and accept the fact that we need dialogue and not constant conflict.

Mr SOBOLEV (*Ukraine*) – First, Madam President, thank you for your quick reaction when, on 26 November, you gave a clear response to this conflict using your strong voice as President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The response must be about solving this for the people of our countries and for peace throughout Europe and doing everything we can to stop the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

I thank you, Mr Nick, because only a rapporteur who is a citizen of a country that lived for 45 years divided by walls can understand us Ukrainians. Not only are we living with division, but we are now in a war where the biggest country in Europe, the Russian Federation, is against Ukraine. I want to thank everybody here, because four years ago the starting point for each report of this kind was “conflict inside Ukraine” and “Ukrainian conflict”, whereas now when we open this report we see the main definition: “Russian aggression against Ukraine.” The main point that we need to understand is that it is not a conflict within Ukraine, but Russian aggression against Ukraine.

I thank the rapporteur for giving us all the arguments of the Russian Federation, which are, in Mr Putin's terms, that everything has happened in an internal sea and an internal pass of the Russian Federation. If the Kerch Strait is an internal pass of the Russian Federation, that is one more way that the Russian Federation has violated the resolutions that we have passed in the last four years.

When Russian aggression against the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine started, we all said, in this Chamber, that it would lead to illegal weapons trading, illegal kidnapping and illegal drug trafficking. As we have seen from the events of the last three days in the same area, two tankers, belonging to the Russian Federation, were used to provide an illegal gas supply for Syria. We have seen what is now happening in that area. All those tankers are blowing up and we have fires in the international sea pass. I thank you for the report and we totally support it.

Mr KANDELAKI (*Georgia*) – I start by responding to Lord Balfe. Dear colleague, nobody is asking for military action against the Russian Federation. We are talking about ensuring that steps are not taken that would invite further trouble or that would invite the Russian Federation to carry out more aggression and kill more people in Council of Europe member States' territories. It is my strong belief that allowing Russian members of the Assembly – it is another question whether they represent a democratically elected parliament – back without fulfilling the conditions that the Assembly laid before them would constitute such an invitation.

I am very unhappy and angry when people, such as me, who criticise Russian actions are accused of Russophobia – a term that we have heard in the Chamber today. No; we are the pro-Russian members of the Assembly. We are pro-Russian because we believe that a democratic, free and European Russian Federation – the kind of Russia that respects its neighbours and engages in mutually beneficial relations with them – is possible. Those of you who defend the Kremlin and its actions, and not the Russian people, are doing the Russian people a disservice. They deserve to elect a government freely, to have better lives free of corruption, and to have an independent judiciary and the rule of law. Colleagues should think about that.

I am also uneasy when I hear the term “de-escalate” and the phrase, “Both sides, please de-escalate.” A so-called de-escalation by Ukraine would mean stopping resistance, which, of course, is not an option. Ukraine cannot give up its sovereignty. It is important that the resolution proposed by Mr Nick – I thank him – refers to earlier resolutions of the Assembly, which create an important international legal basis for the restoration of Ukraine’s territorial integrity. Many of those resolutions clearly assess the Russian Federation’s occupation of Georgian territories too.

In conclusion, I also congratulate Ukraine on the independence of its Church. In 2008, when the Russian Federation invaded Georgia, many people regarded that as an anomaly, but after the Russian aggression against Ukraine, those voices have been muted. It is clear that the two events are part of the same problem and that Ukraine and Georgia should be playing as one team in the international arena. I regret that that is not the case. I call on my government to congratulate Ukraine on Church independence and autocephaly.

Mr KIRAL (*Ukraine*) – The international community must start taking seriously the situation on the eastern flanks of Europe. The Russian Federation has turned into a rogue state and continues to up-end the international rules-based order. The blatant attack on Ukrainian ships, which was not in accordance with the international laws – including the 2003 agreement on access to the Sea of Azov and passage of the Kerch Strait, which guarantee Ukraine and the Russian Federation free navigation in those waters – is yet more proof of the Clausewitz theory that the military are just another way to achieve political goals: very democratic.

The longer we deliberate about how to react or respond to the new crisis, the longer innocent people will suffer, as they did and still do in annexed Crimea or occupied Donbass, as the Russian Federation continues to test the degree of our tolerance of its crimes. We must speak up with the resolution and the report. I sincerely thank Mr Andreas Nick, the whole secretariat and members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy for their support of the sailors who were captured as a result of an open military attack and have been illegally detained in Moscow prisons, and who now await the Russian Tsar’s decision about their fate.

It is the uncertainty that kills, as any former prisoner would tell you. There are the constant ongoing delays in so-called court proceedings; the vagueness about their legal status; and a lack of clarity for the defence team about which line to take as the Russian Federation fails to recognise them as the prisoners of war that they undoubtedly are. The resolution, as well as any other motions and/or resolutions that we can all ask our national parliaments and governments to adopt, will make it clear to the Russian Federation that, whatever it does, that is the only way that the international community looks at things and that things will eventually be resolved, if not under the Russian domestic system, then in the international courts. That is similar to the way that the international community is now reacting to Maduro in Venezuela by depriving him of legitimacy.

We must also call on the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, to start doing her job intensively. The Ukrainian delegation not only supported her election, but invested the hopes of the Ukrainian people in her determination to help to decrease the suffering and release the hundreds of prisoners of war and political prisoners already in Russian prisons, as well as the 24 sailors, prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention, who were captured recently. We should call on the Commissioner to put together a team immediately, visit the Russian Federation, meet the Ukrainian sailors, talk to them and collect the evidence that will be critical in any further judicial proceedings under international law.

Let us be strong. Our resilience as an institution must not be undermined by any Russian move, whether blackmail, non-participation or sending propagandists to the Chamber today to try to weaken and divide us.

Mr HERKEL (*Estonia*) – I too thank Mr Nick for the report. The political message is clear – our commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine – as is our strong call to the Russian Federation to immediately release the Ukrainian sailors and refrain from further violence.

At the same time, as pointed out by Mr Howell at the beginning of the debate, and by various previous speakers, I would also like us to use even stronger terms. Yes, it was naked Russian aggression and it is a dangerous development to take control of Crimea and the Sea of Azov.

I also remind colleagues that, on 3 December, the Estonian Parliament, Riigikogu, adopted a statement in support of Ukraine in connection with the aggression in the Kerch Strait. And I think that “aggression” is the correct term to use in this case.

Lord Anderson spoke about economic sanctions, Nord Stream 2 and so on. Let us also recall that on Tuesday we adopted his report on the Magnitsky case. We also called on member States to impose targeted sanctions on individuals who are personally responsible for serious human rights violations.

Now is the right time and place to name and shame many Russian officials and politicians who violated not only international law, but the human rights of the Ukrainian sailors who are still in very dangerous conditions in Moscow. Let us speak about Mr Kulishov, who is deputy director of the FSB, and head of the Border Service. Let us speak about Mr Stankevich, the head of FSB's Crimea service. Let us speak about the many politicians who gave their positive words or agreement to this act of aggression.

Mr LOGVYNSKYI (*Ukraine*) – I thank the rapporteur for this report.

The fate of 24 innocent people is in the words and letters of this text. These young guys went to defend their homeland, knowing that their mission was to defend their country and European values – the Council of Europe's values. For a long time, we have been looking for a medicine for aggression and occupation of territories, and for something that will help to preserve peace. Maybe the solution is to call a spade a spade.

The Russian armed forces attacked the Ukrainian armed forces in our territory. According to the norms of international law, this is an act of aggression. This was done specifically so that we know that the Russian Federation will not fulfil any agreements, conventions or promises, and will endanger the whole world with war. That is why it is now important to show that we Europeans do not abandon our people when they are in trouble.

Our soldiers are not judged in military courts and they are not held in prisons for military prisoners; they are called criminals in order to publicly humiliate not just them, but all of us. I call on the Assembly to apply a medicine for this aggression, to be decisive and use honest words, and to establish strict sanctions mechanisms if our soldiers are not immediately released. We should also use the term "military prisoners" in this resolution; not everyone agrees to call them that, but I would honestly propose calling the Russian Federation a terrorist and our soldiers hostages, and using all the rules of criminal law for them. I ask for the release of all Ukrainian hostages in Russian prisons. Let our people go.

Mr von MARSCHALL (*Germany*)* – I thank Mr Nick for this balanced and sensitive text, which provides a lot of clarity. Mr Trudeau, of course, has referred to appeasement, but the responsibility for this incident lies very clearly with the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation is claiming the Kerch Strait for itself, but it has occupied Crimea. This is why I demand – and we should all collectively demand – that the Russian Federation releases the prisoners immediately to avoid any further escalation of the conflict.

I think I speak for most of us here when I say that we are fully convinced that we need to provide Ukraine with a way towards the community of values in Europe, and the legal international community. We should continue to condemn the constant destabilisation brought about by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, be it in Donbass or by preventing free navigation through the Kerch Strait, which is very important for the Ukrainian economy. To that extent, I support those who have been analysing the Russian Federation's attempts to destabilise Ukraine and to break international law, and who have been analysing matters beyond the situation in Ukraine. That is something that this community must make clear in the future.

I hope that Ukraine's path towards a values-based European State based on the rule of law makes progress, although there are still a lot of difficulties to surmount. Europe, and particularly the European Union, is supporting Ukraine very strongly in its path towards the rule of law and combating corruption, and is strongly against the Russian Federation's attempts to thwart that progress. I hope that we will support this path in the future.

Mr ŠEŠELJ (*Serbia*)* – In March 2014, the inhabitants of Crimea and Sevastopol took a sovereign decision. After sixty years, they decided to return to the motherland. This decision was taken in a democratic referendum with an 83% turnout; the people of Crimea were able to vote freely. From 2014 onwards, Crimea has been an integral part of the Russian Federation. The referendum in Crimea was a celebration of democracy that Europe can only dream of.

Mr GONCHARENKO (*Ukraine*) – On a point of order, Madam President.

The PRESIDENT* – Colleagues, I ask you to allow Mr Šešelj to speak. He has the right to express himself, and is not attacking any of you; he is respecting the rules and procedures of this Chamber, so he has the right to be heard.

Mr ŠEŠELJ (*Serbia*) – In the European Parliament elections, the turnout was 40% – half of that in the Crimea referendum. The President of the Russian Federation, Mr Putin, has the greatest legitimacy in Europe: the turnout was 70% and 75% voted for him.

Every country has the right to defend their territorial waters and to react to the violation of their territory. This provocative act in the Kerch Strait is part of the election campaign of the President of Ukraine. This is just a single border incident. Martial law was introduced in Ukraine because of this, yet it was not brought in when there was an uprising in the Donbass and when Crimea was returned to its motherland. That tells us that it is just about his election campaign. The resolution before us today, which you will probably adopt, will also be part of his election campaign. The Council of Europe should call for the de-escalation of the situation and for Ukraine to refrain from provocation. Crimea and Sevastopol are part of the Russian Federation, and that should be accepted by all.

The PRESIDENT* – That concludes the list of speakers and I call the rapporteur to reply. You have nine minutes, Mr Nick.

Mr NICK (*Germany*) – Let me first thank everyone who participated in this debate for their committed and engaged involvement in the situation and for their kind words on the draft report. Let me reiterate two points that I made at the beginning, because they were reflected in some of the contributions.

First, the committee deliberately understood the mandate of this report in a more narrow sense. We had to focus on the issue at hand, which was the escalation of tension in the Sea of Azov. We made broader reference to the situation of Ukraine with regard to previous resolutions that had been approved by this Assembly.

The second point, on the language we used, was made by several speakers. We deliberately decided to be clear in our messages but sober in our language, which I think is the appropriate way to handle such a delicate situation in this Chamber. Some of you have made reference to the fact that the situation is made a little more difficult because one party is not represented in this Chamber at the moment. That is not an issue for this report, but something that we have to address at a different time.

I explicitly reject two criticisms that were made. Mr Vareikis said that we downplay everything by talking about “small tensions”. I have checked the report again and the words “small tensions” do not appear. The language throughout the report is quite explicit about how seriously we take the situation and how we need to react appropriately. I also reject the initial criticism by Mr Howell that the report puts Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the same level. We deliberately and explicitly distinguished between them – for example, the points in paragraph 6 are exclusively and specifically directed at the Russian Federation, and the more general points in paragraph 7 refer to both parties in the conflict. The difference is clear.

In terms of language, we will have some debate on that when we come to the amendments, but we have tried to avoid speaking of war and, explicitly, the term “prisoner of war”, for several reasons. We did not want to contribute to the escalation of the situation, and I am also convinced that introducing that kind of language is not necessarily helping the humanitarian concern about the 24 servicemen captured by the Russian Federation. We may come back to this point, and add in some more references to international law, including the Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in the discussion of the amendments.

We did not understand our mandate as also covering issues such as the separation of the Ukrainian Church or any other additional points that were raised in this context, but I also strongly reject the description “appeasement” in the context of this report. If you look at the substance and language of the report, it is absolutely unjustified.

That covers my main comments, some of which we will come back to when we discuss the amendments and the sub-amendments. They were discussed in the committee this morning and approved with large majorities. I thank everyone for their participation and active involvement in this debate and, as far as it applies, for the kind comments on the preparation of the report by the committee, the secretariat and others who helped.

The PRESIDENT* – Thank you. Does the Chair of the committee wish to respond?

Ms OOMEN-RUIJTEN (*Netherlands*) – There is no need.

The PRESIDENT* – Thank you.

The Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy has presented a draft resolution to which three amendments have been tabled.

I understand that the Committee wishes to propose to the Assembly that Amendment 3 to the draft resolution, which was unanimously approved by the Committee, be declared as agreed by the Assembly.

Is that so?

Ms OOMEN-RUIJTEN (*Netherlands*) – Yes.

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

Amendment 3 is adopted.

We come to amendment 1, which is, In the draft resolution, paragraph 6.1, after the words “consular assistance”, insert the following words; “as prisoners of war in accordance with relevant provisions of international humanitarian law”. to which an oral sub-amendment has been tabled by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy.

I call Mr Goncharenko to support amendment 1. You have 30 seconds.

Mr GONCHARENKO (*Ukraine*) – We had a discussion in the Committee this morning with the Ukrainian delegation and other members of the Assembly. Thank you to everyone who supported this amendment. We decided to change paragraph 6.1. It states, “immediately release the Ukrainian servicemen and ensure they are granted the necessary medical, legal and/or consular assistance” and the amendment would add “as prisoners of war in accordance with relevant provisions of international humanitarian law”. After our discussion, we decided instead to add “in accordance with relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and all Geneva Conventions”.

The PRESIDENT* – I have been informed that the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy wishes to propose an oral sub-amendment, as follows:

In amendment 1, replace the words “as prisoners of war in accordance with relevant provisions of international humanitarian law” with the following words, “in accordance with relevant provisions of international humanitarian law such as the Geneva Conventions”.

In my opinion, the oral sub-amendment is in order under our rules.

However, do 10 or more members object to the oral sub-amendment being debated?

Fewer than 10 members object to the oral sub-amendment being debated.

Mr GONCHARENKO (*Ukraine*) – That is not the sub-amendment that was submitted.

The PRESIDENT* – The sub-amendment that was submitted to me was “in accordance with relevant provisions of international humanitarian law such as the Geneva Conventions”.

Does someone from the Committee wish to speak in support of the oral sub-amendment?

Mr NICK (*Germany*) – To confirm, the oral sub-amendment that was agreed by the committee is as you have presented it – “in accordance with relevant provisions of international humanitarian law such as the Geneva Conventions”.

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

What is the opinion of Mr Goncharenko?

Mr GONCHARENKO (*Ukraine*) – In favour.

The PRESIDENT* – What is the opinion of the committee?

Ms OOMEN-RUIJTEN (*Netherlands*) – In favour.

The PRESIDENT* – I will now put the oral sub-amendment to the vote.

The vote is open.

The oral sub-amendment is adopted.

We will now consider the main amendment, as amended.

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

What is the opinion of the committee on the amendment, as amended?

Ms OOMEN-RUIJTEN (*Netherlands*) – In favour.

The PRESIDENT* – I shall now put amendment 1, as amended, to the vote.

The vote is open.

Amendment 1, as amended, is adopted.

We come now to Amendment 2, which is, In the draft resolution, paragraph 6.2, replace the words: “any other mutually agreed procedures” with the following words: “the UN Law of the Sea Convention”.

I call Mr Goncharenko to support Amendment 2. You have 30 seconds.

Mr GONCHARENKO (*Ukraine*) – Amendment 2 relates to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It was supported by the committee.

The PRESIDENT* – I have been informed that the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy wishes to propose an oral sub-amendment, as follows:

In amendment 2, replace the words: “the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea” with the following words: “, and any other mutually agreed procedures, and to respect the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.”

In my opinion, the oral sub-amendment is in order under our rules.

However, do 10 or more members object to the oral sub-amendment being debated?

Fewer than 10 members object to the oral sub-amendment being debated. Does someone from the Committee wish to speak in support of the oral sub-amendment?

Mr NICK (*Germany*) – This was supported in our discussion in Committee this morning.

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

I call Mr Overbeek to speak against the oral sub-amendment.

Mr OVERBEEK (*Netherlands*) – The reference to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is misplaced, as paragraph 6.2 refers exclusively to the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. They are internal Ukrainian-Russian waters and access is governed by the existing bilateral treaty, not the United Nations Convention.

The PRESIDENT* – What is the opinion of Mr Goncharenko?

Mr GONCHARENKO (*Ukraine*) – We support the oral sub-amendment. We ask all of you to support it too, because the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is the fundamental document for the world on sea law. It would be strange not put it in the text of the resolution. I therefore ask everyone to support it.

The PRESIDENT* – What is the opinion of the Committee?

The Committee is in favour.

I will now put the oral sub-amendment to the vote.

The vote is open.

The oral sub-amendment is adopted.

We will now consider the main amendment, as amended.

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

What is the opinion of the Committee on the amendment, as amended?

Ms OOMEN-RUIJTEN (*Netherlands*) – The Committee is in favour.

The PRESIDENT* – I shall now put Amendment 2, as amended, to the vote.

The vote is open.

Amendment 2, as amended, is adopted.

The PRESIDENT* – We will now proceed to vote on the draft resolution contained in Document 14811, as amended.

The vote is open.

The draft resolution in Document 14811, as amended, is adopted, with 103 for, 3 against and 16 abstentions.

2. Next Public Business

The PRESIDENT* – To whom it may concern, the Joint Committee will be meeting at 12 noon in room five.

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 11.55 a.m.)

CONTENTS

1. Urgent debate: the escalation of tensions around the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait and threats to European security

Presentation by Mr Nick of the report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy in Document 14811

Speakers: Mr Howell, Mr Becht, Mr Overbeek, Ms Grozdanova, Ms De Sutter, Ms Gerashchenko, Mr Blaha, Mr Bereza, Mr Fassino, Mr Lopushanskyi, Mr Yemets, Mr Thórarinnsson, Mr Christiansson, Mr Kox, Mr Arieu, Mr Golub, Mr Goncharenko, Lord Anderson, Mr Vareikis, Mr Zingeris, Mr Liashko, Lord Balfe, Mr Sobolev, Mr Kandelaki, Mr Kiral, Mr Herkel, Mr Logvynski, Mr von Marschall and Mr Šešelj

Reply: Mr Nick

Draft resolution in Document 14811, as amended, is adopted

2. 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]
 ANDERSON, Donald [Lord] (McCARTHY, Kerry [Ms])
 ANTTILA, Sirkka-Liisa [Ms]
 ARENT, Iwona [Ms]
 ARIEV, Volodymyr [Mr]
 AST, Marek [Mr] (BUDNER, Margareta [Ms])
 BADEA, Viorel Riceard [M.] (BRĂILOIU, Tit-Liviu [Mr])
 BADIA, José [M.]
 BALÁŽ, Radovan [Mr] (PAŠKA, Jaroslav [M.])
 BALFE, Richard [Lord] (DONALDSON, Jeffrey [Sir])
 BASTOS, Regina [Ms] (MARQUES, Duarte [Mr])
 BAYR, Petra [Ms] (BURES, Doris [Ms])
 BECHT, Olivier [M.]
 BEREZA, Boryslav [Mr] (IELENSKYI, Viktor [Mr])
 BERGAMINI, Deborah [Ms]
 BERNACKI, Włodzimierz [Mr]
 BERTI, Francesco [Mr] (DI MICCO, Fabio [Mr])
 BILLI, Simone [Mr]
 BLAHA, Ľuboš [Mr]
 BRGLEZ, Milan [Mr]
 BRUIJN-WEZEMAN, Reina de [Ms] (MAEIJER, Vicky [Ms])
 BRYNJÓLFSDÓTTIR, Rósa Björk [Ms]
 BUCCARELLA, Maurizio [Mr]
 BÜCHEL, Roland Rino [Mr] (LOMBARDI, Filippo [M.])
 BUSHATI, Ervin [Mr]
 BUTKEVIČIUS, Algirdas [Mr]
 CHRISTIANSSON, Alexander [Mr] (WIECHEL, Markus [Mr])
 CHUGOSHVILI, Tamar [Ms]
 COAKER, Vernon [Mr] (WILSON, Phil [Mr])
 COWEN, Barry [Mr]
 CUC, Alexandru Răzvan [Mr]
 DALLOZ, Marie-Christine [Mme]
 DE TEMMERMAN, Jennifer [Mme]
 ECCLES, Diana [Lady]
 EIDE, Espen Barth [Mr]
 EMRE, Yunus [Mr]
 ESSL, Franz Leonhard [Mr]
 ESTRELA, Edite [Mme]
 FASSINO, Piero [Mr] (MARINELLO, Gaspare Antonio [Mr])
 FIDANZA, Carlo [Mr]
 FITZGERALD, Frances [Ms] (GAVAN, Paul [Mr])
 FOULKES, George [Lord] (PRESCOTT, John [Mr])
 FOURNIER, Bernard [M.]
 FRESKO-ROLFO, Béatrice [Mme]
 FRIDEZ, Pierre-Alain [M.]
 GATTI, Marco [M.]
 GERASHCHENKO, Iryna [Mme]
 GERMANN, Hannes [Mr] (HEER, Alfred [Mr])
 GLASOVAC, Sabina [Ms] (BALIĆ, Marijana [Ms])
 GOGA, Pavol [M.] (KRESÁK, Peter [Mr])
 GOLUB, Vladyslav [Mr] (LABAZIUK, Serhiy [Mr])
 GONÇALVES, Carlos Alberto [M.]
 GONCHARENKO, Oleksii [Mr]
 GOUTTEFARDE, Fabien [M.]
 GRAF, Martin [Mr]
 GRIMOLDI, Paolo [Mr]
 GROZDANOVA, Dzhema [Ms]
 HAIDER, Roman [Mr]
 HAJDUKOVIĆ, Domagoj [Mr]
 HAMMARBERG, Thomas [Mr]
 HAMOUSOVÁ, Zdeňka [Ms]
 HASANOV, Elshad [Mr] (AGHAYEVA, Ulviyye [Ms])
 HERKEL, Andres [Mr] (TERIK, Tiit [Mr])
 HETTO-GAASCH, Françoise [Mme] (GRAAS, Gusty [M.])
 HONKONEN, Petri [Mr] (KALMARI, Anne [Ms])
 HOPKINS, Maura [Ms]
 HOWELL, John [Mr]
 HUNKO, Andrej [Mr]
 IGITYAN, Hovhannes [Mr]
 JENSEN, Gyde [Ms]
 KAMOWSKI, Catherine [Mme] (GAILLOT, Albane [Mme])
 KANDELAKI, Giorgi [Mr] (BAKRADZE, David [Mr])
 KILIĆ, Akif Čağatay [Mr]
 KIRAL, Serhii [Mr] (SOTNYK, Olena [Ms])
 KIRILOV, Danaïl [Mr] (DAMYANOVA, Milena [Mme])
 KOBZA, Jiří [Mr] (BENEŠIK, Ondřej [Mr])
 KOÇ, Haluk [M.]
 KOCİPER, Maša [Ms] (TOMIĆ, Violeta [Ms])
 KOPŘIVA, František [Mr]
 KORODI, Attila [Mr]
 KOVÁCS, Elvira [Ms]
 KOX, Tiny [Mr]
 KUHLE, Konstantin [Mr]
 LE NAY, Jacques [M.] (KERN, Claude [M.])
 LEŠNIAK, Józef [M.] (MILEWSKI, Daniel [Mr])
 LIASHKO, Oleh [Mr]
 LOGVYNSKYI, Georgii [Mr]
 LOPUSHANSKYI, Andrii [Mr] (DZHEMILIEV, Mustafa [Mr])
 LOUHELAINEN, Anne [Ms] (GUZENINA, Maria [Ms])
 MAELEN, Dirk Van der [Mr] (BLANCHART, Philippe [M.])
 MARSCHALL, Matern von [Mr]
 MARUKYAN, Edmon [Mr]
 MASIULIS, Kęstutis [Mr] (TAMAŠUNIENĖ, Rita [Ms])
 MASŁOWSKI, Maciej [Mr]
 MEHL, Emilie Enger [Ms]
 MEIMARAKIS, Evangelos [Mr]
 MENDES, Ana Catarina [Mme]
 MÜHLWERTH, Monika [Ms] (AMON, Werner [Mr])
 MÜLLER, Thomas [Mr]
 MUTSCH, Lydia [Mme]
 NĚMCOVÁ, Miroslava [Ms]
 NENUTIL, Miroslav [Mr]
 NICK, Andreas [Mr]
 OBRADOVIĆ, Marija [Ms]
 OBRADOVIĆ, Žarko [Mr]
 OEHME, Ulrich [Mr] (BERNHARD, Marc [Mr])
 OHLSSON, Carina [Ms]

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O'REILLY, Joseph [Mr]
ORLANDO, Andrea [Mr]
OSUCH, Jacek [Mr] (*MULARCZYK, Arkadiusz [Mr]*)
OVERBEEK, Henk [Mr] (*MULDER, Anne [Mr]*)
ÖZSOY, Hişyar [Mr]
PALLARÉS, Judith [Ms] (*NAUDI ZAMORA, Victor [M.]*)
PANTIĆ PILJA, Biljana [Ms]
PASHAYEVA, Ganira [Ms]
PAVIĆEVIĆ, Sanja [Ms] (*ČATOVIĆ, Marija Maja [Ms]*)
POCIEJ, Aleksander [M.] (*KLICH, Bogdan [Mr]*)
PREDA, Cezar Florin [M.]
PRUIDZE, Irina [Ms]
RAMPI, Roberto [Mr]
RIBERAYGUA, Patrícia [Mme]
RIZZOTTI, Maria [Ms] (*FLORIS, Emilio [Mr]*)
RUSSELL, Simon [Lord] (*GILLAN, Cheryl [Dame]*)
ŞAHİN, Ali [Mr]
SANDBÆK, Ulla [Ms]
SAYEK BÖKE, Selin [Ms]
SCHÄFER, Axel [Mr]
SCHENNACH, Stefan [Mr]
SCHWABE, Frank [Mr]
SEKULIĆ, Predrag [Mr]
ŠEŠELJ, Aleksandar [Mr]
SHARMA, Virendra [Mr]
SIDALI, Zeki Hakan [Mr]
SIRAKAYA, Zafer [Mr]
ŠIRCELJ, Andrej [Mr]
SOBOLEV, Serhiy [Mr]
STELLINI, David [Mr]
SUTTER, Petra De [Ms] (*DUMERY, Daphné [Ms]*)
TARCZYŃSKI, Dominik [Mr]
THIÉRY, Damien [M.]
THÓRARINSSON, Birgir [Mr] (*ÓLASON, Bergþór [Mr]*)
TOMIĆ, Aleksandra [Ms]
TORNARE, Manuel [M.] (*MAURY PASQUIER, Liliane [Mme]*)
VALENTA, Jiří [Mr] (*STANĚK, Pavel [Mr]*)
VAREIKIS, Egidijus [Mr]
VEN, Mart van de [Mr]
VOGEL, Volkmar [Mr]
WARBORN, Jörgen [Mr]
WASERMAN, Sylvain [M.]
WHITFIELD, Martin [Mr] (*JONES, Susan Elan [Ms]*)

WISELER, Claude [M.]
YAŞAR, Serap [Mme]
YEMETS, Leonid [Mr]
ZINGERIS, Emanuelis [Mr]
ZSIGMOND, Barna Pál [Mr]

Also signed the register / Ont également signé le registre

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

ÅSEBOL, Ann-Britt [Ms]
CORREIA, Telmo [M.]
FILIPOVSKI, Dubravka [Ms]
HAYRAPETYAN, Tatevik [Ms]
HOLEČEK, Petr [Mr]
IELENSKYI, Viktor [Mr]
JORDANA, Carles [Mr]
KATSIKIS, Konstantinos [Mr]
SPAUTZ, Marc [M.]
TRUSKOLASKI, Krzysztof [Mr]

Observers / Observateurs

DE LÉON VILLARD, Sasil [Ms]

Partners for democracy / Partenaires pour la démocratie

ALAZZAM, Riad [Mr]
ALQAISI, Nassar [Mr]
AMRAOUI, Allal [M.]
EL MOKRIE EL IDRISSE, Abouzaid [M.]
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