

The Session

**Secretariat of the
Parliamentary
Assembly,
Communication Unit**

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The Session is the information bulletin for plenary sessions of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly. It is published four times a year in the two official languages of the Organisation and is also available on the Assembly's website.



Thursday 21st April 2005

25 to 29 April 2005

Monday 25

- The rights of children in institutions: follow-up to Recommendation 1601 (2003) of the Parliamentary Assembly

Tuesday 26

- Lawfulness of detentions by the United States in Guantánamo Bay
- Address by Serbia and Montenegro President Svetozar Marovic
- Joint debate: Europe's growing energy vulnerability and energy systems and the environment, statement by the Executive Director of the International Energy Agency Claude Mandil
- Iran's nuclear programme: need for international response

Wednesday 27

- Election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Latvia
- Assistance to patients at end of life
- Address by the Prime Minister of Luxembourg and President of the Council of the European Union Jean-Claude Juncker
- Discrimination against women in the workforce and the workplace
- Discrimination against women and girls in sport
- Migration and integration: a challenge and an opportunity for Europe

Thursday 28

- Possible urgent debate
- Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Assembly presented by Polish Foreign Minister Adam Daniel Rotfeld
- Possible current affairs debate
- Protection and assistance for separated children seeking asylum

Friday 29

- Referendums: towards good practices in Europe
- Sea pollution

**The order of business shown here may be altered by
the Assembly at the opening of the session**

The 46

The Council of Europe brings together 46 democracies including 21 central and eastern European countries. Today, the Organisation has almost completed its enlargement but continues to increase its monitoring to ensure that all its members respect the obligations and commitments they entered into when they joined.



Member states: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

The Parliamentary Assembly

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 630 members (315 representatives and 315 substitutes) from the national parliaments of the 46 member states of the Council of Europe.

Countries that have joined the Council of Europe since November 1990: Hungary (1990), Poland (1991), Bulgaria (1992), Estonia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Romania (1993), Latvia, Albania, Moldova, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Ukraine (1995), the Russian Federation, Croatia (1996), Georgia (1999), Armenia, Azerbaijan (2001), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2002), Serbia and Montenegro (2003) and Monaco (2004).

Applications for membership: Belarus (12 March 1993). The Special Guest status of the Belarus parliament was suspended on 13 January 1997.

The parliaments of Canada (1997), Israel (1957) and Mexico (1999) hold observer status with the Assembly.

The political groups



208

Socialist Group (SOC)



184

Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD)



96

Liberal, Democratic and Reformers' Group (LDR)



77

European Democratic Group (EDG)



34

Group of the Unified European Left (UEL)

The Assembly committees

83 seats

Political Affairs
 Legal Affairs and Human Rights
 Economic Affairs and Development
 Social, Health and Family Affairs
 Migration, Refugees and Population
 Culture, Science and Education
 Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

Honouring of obligations and commitments by member states of the Council of Europe (Monitoring)

51 seats

Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
 Rules of Procedure and Immunities



Monday 25 April 2005

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-6 p.m.)

◆ **Opening of the second part of the 2005 Ordinary Session**

Parliamentary Assembly President René van der Linden will open the second part of the 2005 Ordinary Session. The Assembly will begin by examining the credentials of any new members notified by national delegations (Rules 6 and 59 of the Rules of Procedure), will elect a Vice-President of the Assembly with respect to Russia, and will deal with any changes in the membership of committees.

The Assembly will also consider any requests for urgent or current affairs debates and will then adopt its order of business¹ (Rule 25.7 of the Rules of Procedure). At time of going to press, two requests for urgent debates had been received, one on "freedom of the press and the working conditions of journalists in conflict zones" and one on "the constitutional reform process in Armenia". The Group of the Unified European Left has also submitted a request for a current affairs debate – which involves no draft text for adoption by the Assembly – on "the European constitutional treaty".

Finally, the Assembly will adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee held in Paris on 18 March 2005.

◆ **Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee**

Rapporteur: Serhiy Holovaty (Ukraine, LDR)

The progress report covers the discussions held and decisions reached by the Bureau and the Standing Committee since the last part-session.

1. The order of business as contained in this document, updated to reflect modifications to be proposed to the Bureau at its meeting on Monday 25 April 2005, is therefore subject to amendment by the Assembly on the first day of the part-session.

♦ **The rights of children in institutions: follow-up to Recommendation 1601 (2003) of the Parliamentary Assembly**

Doc. 10452

Report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Michael Hancock (United Kingdom, LDR)

In a 2003 resolution, the Assembly called for action to improve the lot of children abandoned in institutions, especially those in central and eastern Europe. In this follow-up report, the Social Affairs Committee declares that things are improving – partly thanks to loans from the Council of Europe Development Bank – but says the situation in post-communist democracies, where money is short and attitudes take time to change, is still particularly disturbing.

The committee calls for maximum priority to be given to de-institutionalising children and closing or renovating insanitary and dilapidated childrens' homes, but points out that welfare measures and benefits will be necessary too. The aim is not to "empty institutions at all costs", however, since some children will always need institutional care.

The committee calls on European governments to monitor the rights of children in institutions, work on alternatives to institutionalisation and – above all – continue to make money available for this vital work.

Contact in the secretariat: Christine Meunier, tel. 2123.

Tuesday 26 April 2005

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Lawfulness of detentions by the United States in Guantánamo Bay**

Doc. 10497

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Kevin McNamara (United Kingdom, SOC)

The Assembly was outraged by the September 11th 2001 attacks in the US, the horror of which has not been dimmed by the passage of time, and fully endorses America's determination to prevent terrorist crimes and punish terrorists – but only if it fully respects human rights and the rule of law. The US Government – long a champion of human rights throughout the world – has betrayed its own highest principles in the zeal with which it has attempted to pursue the "war on terror", the committee believes, illustrated most starkly by the way it has treated detainees at Guantánamo Bay.

The committee considers that international human rights and humanitarian law apply in Guantánamo, despite US assertions to the contrary. By those standards, many detainees have been subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment – often as a direct result of official policy authorised at the very highest levels of government – and for some this has amounted to systematic torture. Other violations have included a lack of judicial oversight of detentions and the absence of fair trials.

These violations should cease immediately, the committee says, and all detainees should either be charged and tried by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal or released without delay. Council of Europe member states, for their part, should have nothing to do with this system, refusing to extradite terrorist suspects liable to be detained at Guantánamo or to provide incriminating evidence unless for proceedings before a regularly constituted court. Finally, member states whose citizens have been returned from Guantánamo should treat them according to the usual provisions of criminal law, with the presumption of liberty on their arrival, and ensure that their rights and interests are properly protected.

Contact in the secretariat: David Milner, tel. 5327.

◆ **Address by Svetozar Marovic, President of Serbia and Montenegro**

Following his address, the President will answer questions from parliamentarians.

Tuesday 26 April 2005

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-7.15 p.m.)

◆ Joint debate

Europe's growing energy vulnerability

Doc. 10458

Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development

Rapporteur: Radu-Mircea Berceanu (Romania, SOC)

As populations rise and economies develop, there is growing global competition for dwindling primary energy resources. Europe has additionally taken on ambitious, and welcome, environmental commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. The net result is that Europe is becoming increasingly dependent on the importation of fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas and coal – a matter for concern, according to the Economic Affairs Committee.

Nuclear energy has polarised opinion, but public fears could be reduced by reinforced safety standards and the use of new technologies, at least until the “vast amounts of clean and safe energy” promised by thermonuclear fusion come on stream. While continuing to research these future technologies, European governments should try to make progress on a range of fronts by increasing energy efficiency overall, modernising existing coal-fired plants and switching to alternative sources such as biofuels where they can. Finally, energy prices should better reflect the real cost of energy to society, enabling fairer competition between different sources of energy.

Contact in the secretariat: Kjell Torbiörn, tel. 2120.

Energy systems and the environment

Doc. 10486

Report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

Rapporteur: Bill Etherington (United Kingdom, SOC)

As worldwide concern on air pollution and climate change increase, it is time for governments to start shaping policies based on a sound comparison of the environmental impacts of the three main energy production systems – fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas), nuclear power and renewable energy (which includes biomass, geothermal, hydropower, solar, wind, tidal and wave energy).

In the view of the Environment Committee, the last of these three may offer, in the long run, a viable alternative to conventional systems but in the meantime there are practical policies European governments could put in place now to improve the environmental impact of all three. The overall aim should be a gradual reduction in fossil fuels and a shift to renewable energy, while pressing ahead with research into the management of nuclear waste, safer power stations and – in the longer term – the possibilities of nuclear fusion.

To help the process, environmental costs should be made part of energy pricing, especially as regards fuel in the transport sector, tax breaks given to environmentally-friendly energy investments and ordinary citizens made aware of the environmental impact of their day-to-day choices.

Statement by Claude Mandil, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency

Contact in the secretariat: Bogdan Torcatoriu, tel. 3282.

◆ **Iran's nuclear programme: need for international response**

Doc. 10496

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Abdülkadir Ateş (Turkey, SOC)

Iran has acknowledged that, for almost twenty years, it was developing a secret nuclear programme which violated its commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, raising suspicion that the programme had a military purpose.

Against this background, the Political Affairs Committee believes the international community should not tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran, which would substantially increase the risk of destabilisation in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. At the same time it should guarantee to address Iran's legitimate security concerns and help it develop a strictly peaceful nuclear programme.

For its part, Iran should open all its sites to international inspection to convince the world of its good faith and voluntarily end its enrichment and reprocessing activities in return for economic incentives. In the long term, the UN General Assembly's proposal for a "nuclear-weapons-free zone" in the region could help to ensure peace. Meanwhile, the Assembly should resolve to help promote democratic values and an open society in Iran through parliamentary dialogue.

Contact in the secretariat: Pavel Chevtchenko, tel. 3835.

Following the sitting, parliamentarians are invited to attend the award ceremony for the 2005 Council of Europe Museum Prize, which takes place at 7.30 p.m. in the Palais Rohan in Strasbourg city centre. The winner of the 2005 award is the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Wednesday 27 April 2005

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Latvia**

Doc. 10489. Voting takes place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the area behind the presidential rostrum.

According to the European Convention on Human Rights, judges are elected by the Parliamentary Assembly from a list of three candidates nominated by the High Contracting Party concerned. To assist it in making its decision, the Assembly has asked its sub-committee on the election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights to make confidential recommendations based on personal interviews with all the candidates and assessments of their CVs. The document containing these recommendations is made available exclusively to members of the Assembly. An absolute majority of votes cast is required in the first round of voting. If this is not achieved, a second round of voting will take place on Thursday 28th April from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., for which a relative majority of votes will be sufficient.

◆ **Assistance to patients at end of life**

Doc. 10455

Report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Dick Marty (Switzerland, LDR)

The Council of Europe's vocation is "to protect the dignity of all human beings and the rights which stem therefrom", which means – in the unwavering belief of the Social Affairs Committee – that it is forbidden to cause someone's death deliberately. Nevertheless, the Assembly cannot ignore the fact that two Council of Europe member states – the Netherlands and Belgium – have adopted euthanasia laws and that opinion polls show majorities in several countries are in favour of euthanasia, at least in a limited number of very special cases. Furthermore, studies show that euthanasia takes place, in some countries, without regulation and in spite of formal prohibition.

The issue is a highly delicate one, and the committee believes that the approach to the problem cannot be the same for all countries. The aim should be "to implement a genuine policy of assistance to patients at the end of life which does not cause them to want to die". This should include more palliative treatment – which may, in pursuing the primary aim of relieving a patient's suffering, shorten his or her life – and home care, as well as the development of codes of medical ethics which avoid the over-zealous prolongation of life. To reduce euthanasia in secret or in a legal vacuum, the rights of patients should be clearly established – to decline treatment, if they so wish, or to express their wishes when they are no longer able to, through "living wills". The responsibilities of medical staff should be clearly defined too, and their decisions and actions should be clearly traceable.

Finally, while recognising the diversity of cultural and religious sensitivities in member states, European governments should nonetheless analyse objectively and in depth the experience of the Dutch and Belgian laws, as well as the bills on the subject currently being discussed in other countries, and promote public discussion on this sensitive issue.

Contact in the secretariat: Agnès Nollinger, tel. 2288.

Wednesday 27 April 2005

Afternoon (3 p.m.-7.30 p.m.)

◆ **Address by Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg and President of the Council of the European Union**

Following his address, the Prime Minister will answer questions from parliamentarians.

◆ **Discrimination against women in the workforce and the workplace**

Doc. 10484

Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Anna Čurdová (Czech Republic, SOC)

Despite laws outlawing discrimination in the workplace, research shows that women in Europe still find it harder to find appropriate jobs, are paid less than men for work of equal value and are routinely passed over for promotion, according to the Equality Committee. This is in part because women pay a "gender penalty" as actual or potential mothers – many employers wrongly fear the cost and hassle that motherhood may entail – but also because of misguided perceptions of women's abilities, commitment and leadership style.

As well as being unfair to individuals, such discrimination is bad for the economy since women will generate less tax revenue and consume higher social benefits. Governments need to give real teeth to their anti-discrimination laws, the committee believes, laying down a positive duty to promote equality and setting targets to increase women in the labour force and narrow the gender "wage gap". Finally, through awareness-raising campaigns, they need to stamp out gender stereotypes and alter preconceptions about the traditional division of roles in society.

Contact in the secretariat: Tanja Kleinsorge, tel. 2906.

◆ **Discrimination against women and girls in sport**

Doc. 10483

Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Manuela Aguiar (Portugal, EPP/CD)

Sportswomen in Europe have less back-up and support than their male counterparts, receive less in sponsorship funding and bonuses and have a lower media profile. They can also be the subject of crude media stereotyping, in the worst cases reduced to the status of a sex object or – as the rapporteur points out – conforming to the old cliché of the sportswoman as "stocky, masculine, ugly and, in particular, lesbian". A further obstacle is the lack of women in sport's ruling bodies. In the view of the Equality Committee, all this amounts to discrimination, which is contrary to basic Council of Europe principles.

European governments should come up with a "European strategy for women and sport", according to the committee, which would work towards equal treatment for women in terms of pay, prize-money and bonuses, encourage girls to take part in school sport and seek to prioritise gender in sports funding. There should also be measures to increase women's representation on sport's ruling bodies and improve the image of sportswomen in the media.

Contact in the secretariat: Sylvie Affholder, tel. 3551.

◆ **Migration and integration: a challenge and an opportunity for Europe**

Doc. 10453

Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

Rapporteur: Jean-Guy Branger (France, EPP/CD)

People on the move can be a positive thing, according to the Migration Committee. And since Europe is both an area of relative prosperity and traditionally a place of refuge, it will continue to be attractive to both asylum seekers and migrants – bringing with them willing hands, sharp brains and the richness of their own cultures.

The challenge for European governments is to integrate immigrants successfully and ensure they are treated fairly, while at the same time robustly combating trafficking and terrorism. Reducing poverty and promoting human rights in countries of origin remains the best way to reduce migration and asylum in the long term, says the committee, but in the meantime European governments should also accept a number of immigrants on the basis of objective selection according to the host country's labour needs and welfare capacity.

For their part, immigrants must respect the basic values and laws of European societies. They should be provided with free courses on their rights and responsibilities, while host societies should be given clear and accurate information about the cultures, traditions and aims of migrants. And to accomplish all this, the committee points out yet again, a comprehensive European-wide "migration strategy" is the answer.

Contact in the secretariat: Mark Neville, tel. 2341.

Thursday 28 April 2005

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Latvia (possible second round)**

Doc. 10489. Voting takes place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the area behind the presidential rostrum.

Under the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, a second round of voting takes place only if an absolute majority of votes cast is not achieved in the first round. A relative majority is sufficient in the second round.

◆ **Possible urgent debate**

At time of going to press, two requests for urgent debates had been received: one on "the freedom of the press and the working conditions of journalists in conflict zones" and one on "the constitutional reform process in Armenia". The Assembly will decide whether to hold urgent debates on either or both of these items when it adopts its order of business on the first day of the part-session (see item above).

Thursday 28 April 2005

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-6.30 p.m.)

◆ **Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly presented by Adam Daniel Rotfeld, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland and Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers**

Following his presentation, Mr Rotfeld will answer members' questions, which must be tabled at the latest by 3.30 p.m. on Tuesday 26 April.

◆ **Possible current affairs debate**

One request for a current affairs debate has been submitted, by the Group of the Unified European Left, on "the European constitutional treaty". The Assembly will decide on this request when it adopts its order of business on the first day of the part-session (see item above). No draft text is presented for a current affairs debate, and no vote is taken by the Assembly.

◆ **Protection and assistance for separated children seeking asylum**

Doc. 10477

Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

Rapporteur: Ed van Thijn (Netherlands, SOC)

Separated children seeking asylum make up approximately four per cent of asylum applications in Europe, rising to ten per cent in some member states. Already vulnerable because of their age and perhaps the horrors from which they are fleeing, these children must in addition make the difficult journey to a new country without the support of parents or legal guardians. Despite the protection of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which all Council of Europe member states are party, some of these children are placed in detention inappropriate to their age, and many do not benefit from the prompt appointment of a legal guardian to defend their interests, according to the Migration Committee. The Council of Europe should aim to put right these and other worrying gaps in the protection of separated children through a comprehensive recommendation to European governments.

Contact in the secretariat: Mark Neville, tel. 2341.

The Joint Committee, which is the organ of co-ordination between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly, meets at 6.30 p.m. or at the end of the sitting in Room 9. Items on the draft agenda include preparations for the Third Summit, the Organisation's budget for 2006 and Council of Europe conventions under preparation. The Joint Committee is composed of a representative of each member government and a corresponding number of Assembly members, made up of Bureau members plus one representative from each national delegation not represented on the Bureau.

Friday 29 April 2005

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Referendums: towards good practices in Europe**

Doc. 10498

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Mikko Elo (Finland, SOC)

Referendums in Council of Europe member states have increased in number in recent years as a result of constitutional changes in eastern Europe since the late eighties and, above all, the process of European integration. There are thought to have been no fewer than 250 of them since 1960, excluding Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Yet, while referendums can reinforce the democratic legitimacy of political decisions and stimulate citizens' involvement in politics, they can also be misused to undermine parliaments or to circumvent the rule of law, the Political Affairs Committee notes.

The Council of Europe, as the guardian of democracy, should now take the lead in codifying guidelines to ensure that referendums complement, rather than undermine, representative democracy. Such guidelines could spell out who can initiate referendums and in what circumstances, proposing their use at different levels of government, and might also cover questions such as campaign funding, voting rights for legal immigrants and e-voting as well as ways of promoting a pluralist media discussion and informing the public on the issue being put to the vote.

Contact in the secretariat: Sonia Sirtori, tel. 2370.

◆ **Sea pollution**

Doc. 10485

Report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

Rapporteur: Guy Lengagne (France, SOC)

The lessons of the disasters involving the *Erika* in 1999 and the *Prestige* in 2002, which left substantial oil pollution along the coasts of Brittany and Galicia, have not been fully learned, according to the Environment Committee. Local action plans are still not adequate to cope with disasters on this scale, and the level of compensation offered by the oil industry and governments – though now totalling approximately a billion dollars – is still not enough to cover the full costs of putting them right.

Meanwhile, measures proposed by the European Commission and other bodies to reduce the risk of accidental pollution have not been fully implemented, leaving Europe – and particularly its semi-enclosed seas – facing "grave dangers", in the committee's view. Governments should take steps to improve the training of seafarers, since 80 per cent of marine accidents are caused by human error, upgrade port facilities and boost coastguard surveillance. The International Maritime Organisation should have greater powers to police states' compliance with maritime regulations and the new European Maritime Safety Agency should be given the resources it needs to protect Europe's coastlines.

Contact in the secretariat: Bodgan Torcatoriu, tel. 3282.

◆ **Closure of the second part of the 2005 Ordinary Session**

Practical information

1. Meetings of committees and political groups

The list of meetings held by the committees and the other organs of the Assembly (Bureau, political groups, etc.) appears in the notice paper (*bulletin*) published before each sitting.

Unless a committee decides otherwise, committee meetings are not public.

Monday and Wednesday mornings are reserved for political group meetings.

2. Languages

The official languages of the Assembly are English and French. German, Italian and Russian are working languages. Speeches made in plenary session in any of these five languages are interpreted simultaneously into the other official and working languages. Members may, however, speak in languages other than English, French, German, Italian and Russian, provided that their delegation arranges for interpretation into one of the official or working languages. During sittings this is generally the case for Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese and Greek.

3. Assembly documents

The following documents are available in French and English at the document counter (on the first floor, to the right of the top of the main staircase, near lift No. IV).

Official documents

The main official documents are:

Reports: All items on the agenda are debated on the basis of a report by one of the Assembly's committees (with the exception of current affairs debates, elections, appointments, statements by guest speakers and communications from and questions to the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe).

Committee reports comprise one or more draft texts for adoption (recommendations, opinions, resolutions) and an explanatory memorandum prepared by the rapporteur. Only draft texts can be amended and adopted by the Assembly.

Amendments: Amendments to draft texts must be tabled in keeping with the relevant rules of procedure, particularly Rule 34 (see section 4 below). They are distributed at the document counter. They must be signed by at least five Representatives or Substitutes, unless they are being submitted on behalf of a committee seized for report or opinion.

Order of business: For each part-session the Bureau prepares a draft order of business listing the sittings at which the agenda items will be examined. **The draft order of business** is made available to members of the Assembly two weeks before the opening of the part-session. The Assembly is required to adopt the draft order of business (Rule 25.7 of the Rules of Procedure). A member may

propose an amendment to the draft order of business drawn up by the Bureau. The adoption of such a motion requires a majority of the votes cast (Rule 25.8). Once adopted, the order of business can be altered only by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

Once it has been approved by the Assembly at the first sitting of the part-session, the order of business is published (Rule 25) and made available to the members at the document counter.

Minutes of proceedings: Generally, after each sitting of the Assembly, the **minutes of proceedings** are produced. They list the Assembly's decisions and record speakers' names, the results of votes on texts and amendments, and points of order raised. At the start of the sitting the President submits the minutes of proceedings of earlier sittings to the Assembly for approval. If the minutes of proceedings are objected to, their approval may be postponed to the following sitting, at which the President may put to the Assembly any necessary modification (see Rule 29 of the Rules of Procedure).

Report of debates: A **provisional report of debates** is issued after each sitting. The French version of the provisional report (pink pages) contains the full text of all speeches made in French and a summary in French of speeches made in other languages. The English version (yellow pages) contains the full text of speeches in English and summaries in English of speeches in other languages. Speeches in German or Italian are also reported verbatim in a separate publication (green pages). Speakers may make corrections to the provisional report of debates within 24 hours of publication.

Representatives and Substitutes who were entered on the list of speakers and present in the Chamber but were unable to speak because of lack of time may hand in their typewritten texts for inclusion in the report of debates. They should do so within 24 hours of the end of the debate concerned at the Table Office (Room 1083).

Adopted texts: The texts adopted by the Assembly are also published after each sitting, separately in English (yellow pages) and French (pink pages).

The texts adopted by the Assembly are:

- Recommendations (proposals addressed by the Assembly to the Committee of Ministers, for implementation by that Committee or the governments);
- Opinions (addressed to the Committee of Ministers);
- Resolutions (embodying a decision by the Assembly on a question of substance which it is empowered to put into effect, a point of view for which it alone is responsible, or a question of form, transmission, execution or procedure);

The other official documents (Rule 22 of the Rules of Procedure) are:

- reports, communications, requests for an opinion or further consideration transmitted by the Committee of Ministers;
- questions addressed to the Committee of Ministers;
- communications from the Secretary General of the Council of Europe;
- reports of international organisations;
- written declarations.

Other documents

Before each sitting a **notice paper** is produced, setting out the orders of the day. It also contains other information relevant to the proceedings, including:

- time limits for tabling amendments;
- time limits for lists of speakers;
- procedural notices, for example concerning elections;
- information about meetings of committees and other Assembly bodies;
- information about changes in the membership of committees.

For each part-session the following lists are published:

- List of Representatives
- List of Substitutes
- List of national delegations
- List of the Secretariat officials, giving office locations and contact telephone numbers for the part-session.

A new edition of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly has been made available in a bilingual version (English/French) since the opening of the 2005 Session.

4. Tabling amendments

Members who wish to table amendments or sub-amendments to the draft texts before the Assembly should submit them to the Table Office (Room 1083). Amendments and sub-amendments must be **signed by at least five Representatives or Substitutes**, unless they have been submitted on behalf of the committee submitting the report or an opinion.

Under the provisions on the organisation of debates (page 88 and ff. of the Rules of Procedure), the **time limits for tabling amendments** are the following (where appropriate the Bureau may decide to change these limits, in particular for urgent debates):

- for debates on the afternoon of Monday 25 April: Monday 25 April at 12 noon;
- for debates on Tuesday 26 April: Monday 25 April at 4 p.m.;
- for all other debates (except urgent debates): 23 and a half hours before the opening of the sitting at which the debate is to begin.

Sub-amendments must be tabled at least two hours before the opening of the sitting at which the debate is to begin.

The procedure for tabling, examining and voting on amendments and sub-amendments is set out in Rule 34 of the Rules of Procedure.

5. Motions for resolutions and recommendations

Motions for resolutions and recommendations must be signed by ten or more Representatives or Substitutes from at least five national delegations (Rule 23.2). The President decides which motions are admissible.

Any motion considered admissible is printed and distributed as soon as possible. The Bureau then decides whether it should be referred to one or more committees, or forwarded to one or more committees for information, or that no further action should be taken. The Bureau's decision must then be ratified by the Assembly or the Standing Committee.

A document may be referred to only one committee for report but to any other committee for opinion (Rule 24.2). The opinion of the latter concerns the report of the former committee. The report concerned must therefore be made available to the committee whose opinion has been sought in good time for it to prepare its opinion. Committee opinions may be presented orally or in writing. An opinion presented in writing must contain a chapter at the beginning entitled "Conclusions of the committee" and an explanatory memorandum by the rapporteur (Rule 49.3 of the Rules of Procedure).

6. Written declarations

Written declarations may be tabled provided that they:

- do not exceed 200 words;
- are on subjects within the competence of the Council of Europe;
- are signed by at least twenty Representatives or Substitutes belonging to four national delegations and two political groups.

They are neither referred to a committee nor debated in the Assembly (Rule 53 of the Rules of Procedure).

Any representative or Substitute may add his signature to such a declaration, in which case the declaration will be distributed again two weeks after the end of the part-session, with the names of all the members who signed it.

A written declaration which has not received any new signatures before the opening of the following part-session is closed to further signature.

7. Opinions of the Assembly (to the Committee of Ministers)

According to the Statute of the Council of Europe, or to other texts of a statutory character, the Committee of Ministers seeks the Assembly's opinion on such matters as the accession of new member states, draft conventions or the Council of Europe's budget. These requests for opinions are debated in the Assembly, following which the Assembly votes on the opinion to be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers (Rule 57).

8. Changes in the membership of national delegations or committees

Members of the Assembly are appointed for the whole Ordinary Session. Following parliamentary elections, the national parliament concerned or other competent authority shall make appointments to the Assembly within six months of the elections (Rule 10.2 and 3).

Should any seat on a national delegation fall vacant in the course of a session as a result of death or resignation, the president of the national parliament concerned, or the Minister for Foreign Affairs, presents the credentials of the member who is to fill the vacant seat to the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, who submits them to the Assembly or the Standing Committee for ratification at the first sitting or meeting following their receipt (Rule 6.4).

The chairperson of a national delegation informs the President of the Assembly of any proposed change(s) in committee membership concerning that delegation's members. The President of the Assembly submits the proposed change(s) to the Assembly, the Standing Committee or, failing that, the Bureau for ratification (Rule 43.6).

9. Requests for debates under urgent procedure or current affairs debates

At the request of the Committee of Ministers, of the committee concerned, or of twenty or more Representatives or Substitutes, a debate may be held on an item which has not been placed on the Assembly's agenda. Requests for debates under urgent procedure must be addressed to the President of the Assembly. The President submits them to the Bureau, which makes a proposal to the Assembly. The adoption of urgent procedure requires a two-thirds majority of the votes cast (Rule 50).

At least twenty members, or one political group or national delegation may request a current affairs debate (Rule 52) on a subject which is not on the Assembly's agenda. The request must be made to the President of the Assembly at least a week before the start of the part-session. The Bureau decides whether or not to grant the request, subject to approval by the Assembly. A current affairs debate may not exceed one and a half hours. The debate shall be opened by one of the members who requested it, chosen by the Bureau. The first speaker has ten minutes speaking time, other speakers five. A current affairs debate does not give rise to a vote, though the Bureau of the Assembly may subsequently propose that the subject be referred to the appropriate committee for report.

10. Electronic voting, notification of Substitutes, list of speakers, and quorum

All votes in the Assembly, except elections, take place by electronic voting.

Voting cards

Voting cards issued to all members are simultaneously used for identification and voting.

Distribution of voting cards is ensured by the Protocol Service of the Council of Europe. In principle, this distribution is organised via secretaries of each national delegation. Members who do not have their card (in case a card has been lost or forgotten, or when the Parliamentary Assembly database does not contain the member's photo) should present themselves at the Protocol desk at the main entrance of the Palais de l'Europe in order to receive their card. Protocol staff, before delivering a new card, will invite the member to present his or her identification document. If a third and consecutive card is issued to the same member during the same calendar year for whatever reason, loss or otherwise, the national delegation will be required to pay the cost (6 euros per card).

Voting cards as distributed by the Protocol Service do not give an automatic right to vote. In order to enjoy such a right, the member's card has to be validated. This operation will be carried out by the Assembly Secretariat.

Notification of Substitutes

In principle all Representatives at the opening of the first sitting (on Monday, at 3.00 p.m.) have their cards validated, but not Substitutes unless the Secretariat of the Assembly is properly informed about substitutions. Therefore secretaries of national delegations have the duty to inform the Secretariat of the Assembly about all cases of substitution. If this is not done, Substitutes attending the sitting do not have speaking and voting rights.

Notice of substitutions has to be given before the opening of the sitting concerned (if possible by the previous day and at the latest before 8.30 a.m. for a morning sitting and before 1.00 p.m. for

an afternoon sitting). This notification, including the names of Substitutes, the names of Representatives to be substituted and the length of substitution, must be given in writing for each sitting to the Secretariat of the Assembly (Mrs Jocelyne Gibert, Room 1076, fax during session weeks 27 27, fax outside session weeks 37 95).

If the Substitute is replacing the Representative for one or more consecutive sittings, the substitution for each sitting must be notified. Substitutions are never carried automatically over to the following sitting.

When the correct notification has been given, Substitutes will have their voting cards validated. At the same time, cards of Representatives who are to be replaced by Substitutes will become invalid, preventing them from speaking in the debate and voting, including in elections.

Register of attendance

Members shall continue to sign the register of attendance before entering the Chamber for a sitting (Rules 11.2 and 39.1). A duly designated Substitute will find his or her name in the register next to the name of the Representative for whom he or she is substituting. If, in the register of attendance, no name is found next to the Representative's name, it means that no substitution was notified for the Representative for that particular sitting and therefore the Representative is authorised to speak in the debate and vote.

All members of the Assembly – Representatives and Substitutes as well as Observers – have access to the Chamber at any time of the sitting, regardless of their speaking and voting rights. Therefore, all Members, even those who are not authorised to speak in the debate or vote, are invited to sign the register of attendance if they attend the sitting.

Speakers' register

Members who wish to speak in a debate must enter their names on the list of speakers. They may do this by post in advance of the part-session, or in person during the part-session at the Table Office (Room 1083). The list is closed one hour before the scheduled end of the previous sitting, except in the case of the first sitting of a part-session when the deadline is two hours before the start of the sitting. It should be noted that in any one part-session members may enter their names on the list for a maximum of **five debates** but may take the floor **not more than three times** (this limit does not apply to members appointed as political group spokespersons or as rapporteurs). A substitute whose name has not been notified to the secretariat before a sitting cannot participate in the debate.

The order of speakers on the list for each debate is determined according to criteria set by the Bureau and can be found on pages 92 to 96 of the Rules of Procedure.

Speaking time is limited to a maximum of 8 minutes for committee rapporteurs and 3 minutes for rapporteurs for opinion. Other speakers on the list normally have a maximum of 5 minutes. At the start of each sitting the President announces the speaking arrangements.

Only authorised members – i.e. Representatives or their duly appointed Substitutes – may speak in debates or submit questions for oral reply to the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers or to guest speakers. The list of speakers is verified accordingly.

Electronic voting

While they are sitting in the Chamber, members are invited to keep their voting cards inserted in the voting terminals. However, when they leave, they should take their cards with them.

Voting cards should be inserted correctly into the terminals (the photo side of the member's card is facing the President's table; then the card is pushed down until a "click" is heard). A card correctly inserted is signalled by its number being displayed on a small screen in the voting terminal. Any malfunctioning or error message displayed on the voting terminal screen should be immediately reported to the Secretariat present in the Chamber.

The opening of a vote by the President is confirmed by a small green light on the voting terminal.

After the opening of a vote, members should vote by putting their hands into the small booth of the voting terminal and by pressing one of the three voting buttons (stickers which are on the top of voting terminals are put there only for information in order to indicate the positions of the "for", "abstention" and "against" buttons). The chosen vote is confirmed by a coloured light on the terminal: green ("for"), white ("abstention") or red ("against").

Rule 39.8 indicates that a member cannot modify his or her vote after the voting is closed.

Quorum

The Assembly may deliberate, decide the orders of the day, approve the minutes of proceedings, decide upon procedural motions, and agree to adjourn, whatever the number of Representatives present.

All votes other than votes by roll-call shall be valid whatever the number of members voting, unless, before the voting has begun, the President has been requested to ascertain whether there is a quorum. At least one sixth of the Representatives authorised to vote, belonging to at least five national delegations, must vote in favour of the request. To ascertain whether there is a quorum, the President invites Representatives to mark their presence in the Chamber using the electronic voting system.

The quorum is one third of the number of Representatives of the Assembly authorised to vote (Rule 41.3).

A vote by roll-call shall not be valid unless one third of the Representatives authorised to vote took part. The President may decide to ascertain whether there is a quorum before proceeding to a vote by roll-call.

In the absence of a quorum, the vote shall be postponed until the next sitting or, on a motion from the Chair, until a subsequent sitting.

Majorities required

A majority of two-thirds of the votes cast is required for the adoption of a draft recommendation or a draft opinion to the Committee of Ministers, for the adoption of urgent procedure, for an alteration to the order of business, for the setting up of a committee and for the fixing of the date for the opening or resumption of Ordinary Sessions. For the adoption of a draft resolution and for any other decision, a majority of the votes cast is required, in the case of a tie the question being rejected.

Mobile phones

Members are reminded that mobile phones must be switched off at all times in the Chamber and during committee meetings.

Directory

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(speakers' lists, questions and amendments)

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Protocol

Director of Protocol
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Services

Badges

Wearing badges is compulsory for admittance to the Chamber. Voting cards are used as ID badges. Contact the Protocol desk in the entrance hall.

Bars and restaurants

Parliamentarians' Bar: 1st floor, opposite the Chamber, open from 8.30 a.m. to the end of the sitting. Restaurant Bleu: ground floor, for official meals (tel. 3704 for reservations). Palais cafeteria: ground floor, open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Palais self-service: ground floor, lunch from 12 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Bank

Société Générale, in the entrance hall, open from 8.15 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., tel. 7060. A cash dispenser is located opposite the philatelic counter off the entrance hall.

Bus

Free shuttle service departing from Allée Spach, outside the Press Centre, to the railway station via downtown (and vice versa). Badges must be shown. Time schedules are available at the reception desk.

Bookshop

Librairie Klébér: In the entrance hall, open from 9.30 a.m. to 12.45 p.m. and from 1.30 p.m. to 5.45 p.m., tel. 3712.

Philatelic agency

Council of Europe stamps and, since 1949, philatelic envelopes commemorating every session of the Parliamentary Assembly, tel. 03 88 35 08 88.

Post office

La Poste: in the entrance hall, open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., tel. 3463.

Medical centre

Entrance hall, open from 8.30 a.m. to the end of the sitting, tel. 2442.

Newsagent

Just off the entrance hall, open from 7.30 a.m. to 7.00 p.m., tel. 3549.

City of Strasbourg information desk

The City of Strasbourg is represented at the reception desk in the entrance hall, providing lists of hotels, restaurants and local events, flight/train times etc, tel. 3838. For accommodation or transport, contact Euraccueil on 03 88 52 28 38.

Travel agent

Carlson Wagonlit: Palais, ground floor, near the Restaurant. Open from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 1.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m., tel. 3714.