

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 16th June 2005

20 to 24 June 2005

Monday 20

- Media and terrorism
- Joint debate on the Millennium Development Goals

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- Statements by the Speakers of the Pakistan National Assembly and Philippines Congress, representing the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace
- Contribution of the EBRD to economic development in central and eastern Europe, statement by the Bank's President Jean Lemierre
- Address by Bosnia and Herzegovina Prime Minister Adnan Terzic
- Current affairs debate on the situation in the Republics of Central Asia
- Situation in the Middle East
- Current situation in Kosovo
- Disappearance and murder of a great number of women and girls in Mexico

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- Honouring of obligations and commitments by the Russian Federation
- Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Assembly presented by Portuguese Foreign Minister Diogo Freitas do Amaral
- Joint debate on the functioning of democratic institutions in Azerbaijan and follow-up to Resolution 1359 (2004) on political prisoners in Azerbaijan

Thursday 23

- Urgent debate on follow-up to the Third Summit, and statement by Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis
- Urgent debate on the constitutional reform process in Armenia
- Address by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer
- Democratic oversight of the security sector in member states

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- Abolition of restrictions on the right to vote
- Improving the response to mental health needs in Europe

**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**



207

Socialist Group (SOC)



186

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



95

Liberal, Democratic and Reformers' Group (LDR)



78

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
Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

51 seats

Rules of Procedure and Immunities

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



Monday 20 June 2005

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-7.30 p.m.)

◆ Opening of the third part of the 2005 Ordinary Session

Parliamentary Assembly President René van der Linden will open the third 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) and will deal with any changes in the membership of committees. The Assembly will also consider any requests for urgent or current affairs debates. It will then adopt its order of business¹ (Rule 25.7 of the Rules of Procedure). Finally, the Assembly will adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee held in Lisbon on 6 June 2005.

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

Rapporteur: Marcel Glesener (Luxembourg, EPP/CD)

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

◆ Media and terrorism

Doc. 10557

Report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Rapporteur: Josef Jařab (Czech Republic, LDR)

Freedom of information is vital to democratic societies faced with terrorism. Yet it is precisely media reporting on terrorist acts and threats which can multiply public fear, paradoxically serving terrorist aims – particularly since terrorists have become increasingly sophisticated at manipulating the media. Even in these extreme circumstances, the Culture Committee believes, the public's right to know must be carefully preserved: the fight against terrorism should never be used to as an excuse to restrict press freedom. Only a fully-informed public debate can shape appropriate political responses to terrorism and its causes.

But it will be up to media professionals to strike the difficult balance between informing and merely sensationalising: the committee calls on journalists to "avoid a race for sensational news and images which plays into the hands of terrorists" and to refuse to disseminate shocking pictures or images of terrorist acts which violate the dignity of victims or their families.

For their part, governments should prevent the dissemination of illegal terrorist messages and images on the web and prohibit "hate speech" wherever it occurs. In preparation for this report, the committee held a hearing with former Iraq hostages Georges Malbrunot and Vit Pohanka, as well as journalists from Al-Jazeera, the BBC, the *Chechen Society* newspaper and *El Pais*.

Contact in the secretariat: Rüdiger Dossow, tel. 2859.

1. The order of business as contained in this document, which has been updated to reflect modifications to be proposed to the Bureau at its meeting on Monday 20 June 2005, is therefore subject to amendment by the Assembly at the opening of the session.

◆ **Joint debate**

The environment and the Millennium Development Goals

Doc. 10566

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

Rapporteur: John Dupraz (Switzerland, LDR)

In 2001 the nations of the world agreed eight ambitious "goals" to reduce poverty, improve human health and education and promote environmental sustainability by 2015. Nearly five years on, in September 2005, the UN will hold a summit to review progress. But the targets set in the seventh goal – which focuses on the environment and aims in particular to enshrine the key principle of sustainable development at all levels of decision-making – are far from being met, according to the Environment Committee.

There is still time to reduce human pressure on the natural resources of air, water and soil provided by nature, but this will require "radical changes in the way nature is treated" the committee warns, beginning with determined action to place the environmental dimension at the heart of government policy and international trade rules. Priorities remain clean and safe drinking water and basic sanitation for all, an improvement in the conditions of slum-dwellers and action to stem the haemorrhaging of environmental resources.

For its part, Europe must address the impact of its own production and consumption patterns on the rest of the world. Finally, the committee calls on the five Council of Europe member states in the G-8 group of wealthy nations to press for urgent action against climate change during the Scottish G-8 summit in July.

Contact in the secretariat: Carolina Lasen Diaz, tel. 3716.

The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals

Doc. 10565

Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development

Rapporteur: Klaus Werner Jonas (Germany, SOC)

It is now clear that the world community – including the Council of Europe area – lags seriously behind schedule if it is to achieve by 2015 the eight Millennium Development Goals it has set itself. The Bretton Woods Institutions – the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – are the essential tools for mobilising new resolve if these goals are still to be met, the Economic Affairs Committee believes.

These institutions must continue to work for debt relief for the poorest countries, linked to improved governance, and trade liberalisation for all. Above all, they must be supported in their effort to adapt to a new world reality so that they can fulfil their role as "advocates of change" in donor and recipient countries alike.

The role of the Assembly, together with other parliamentary bodies, is to keep governments and the institutions concerned properly focused on meeting the demanding targets they have set themselves. The rapporteur ends his report by quoting Nelson Mandela: "While poverty exists, we are not free."

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

Tuesday 21 June 2005

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Statements by the Speaker of the Pakistan National Assembly Chaudhry Amir Hussain and the Speaker of the Philippines Congress José de Venecia, representing the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace**

The Speaker of the Pakistan National Assembly Chaudhry Amir Hussain, President of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace (AAPP), and the Chair of its Advisory Council, the Speaker of the Philippines Congress José de Venecia, will each address the Assembly. They will be part of a thirty-member delegation attending the session, including the Speakers of the Cambodian and Thai National Assemblies and the Vice-Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chinese National People's Congress.

The Association was established in 1999 to promote peace and strengthen human rights and democracy in Asia, and today brings together 40 parliamentary delegations. It has met at five annual General Assemblies to date (Dhaka in 1999, Phnom Penh in 2001, Beijing and Chongqing in 2002, Manila in 2003 and Islamabad in 2004).

At a meeting in Manila in April 2005 – attended by PACE President René van der Linden – the Association's Senior Advisory Council approved a proposal to create, within five years, an Asian Parliamentary Assembly on the model of PACE. Addressing the Council on that occasion, Mr van der Linden expressed the hope that PACE could conclude a formal co-operation agreement with a future Asian Parliamentary Assembly as it did recently with the newly-created Pan-African Parliament.

◆ **Contribution of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to economic development in central and eastern Europe**

Doc. 10571

Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development

Rapporteur: Liudmila Pirozhnikova (Russia, EDG)

This report – prepared for the Parliamentary Assembly in its role as a parliamentary forum for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – reviews the Bank's performance and key activities in 2004 in its 27 countries of operations, stretching from central Europe to central Asia. It welcomes the Bank's contribution to what is at present a record number of investment projects in these regions, not least Russia, which remains the Bank's largest country of operation.

The Economic Affairs Committee notes the EBRD's finding that – despite initial hardships – the opening of markets and steady structural reform yield positive results over time. Economic growth in the transition countries covered by the Bank, it points out, is strikingly higher than the world average, albeit with important regional differences. The committee encourages the Bank to strengthen its involvement in central Asia, welcomes its emphasis on small business development in Russia and commends its participation in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, which is vital to the economic integration of the region.

Statement by EBRD President Jean Lemierre

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

◆ **Address by Bosnia and Herzegovina Prime Minister Adnan Terzic**

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

Tuesday 21 June 2005

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-8.30 p.m.)

◆ **Current affairs debate: situation in the Republics of Central Asia**

A request for a current affairs debate on this subject, submitted by the Socialist Group, was approved by the Bureau at its meeting in Lisbon on 6 June 2005. The Assembly will make the final decision 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.

◆ **Situation in the Middle East**

Doc. 10570

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Mikhail Margelov (Russia, EDG)

Opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Kevin McNamara (United Kingdom, SOC)

Several months after the election of Mahmoud Abbas to the presidency of the Palestinian Authority, the chance for a peaceful solution in the Middle East remains open, according to the Political Affairs Committee. There has been no spectacular breakthrough, but the cease-fire remains in force and Israeli and Palestinian security forces continue to co-operate.

Israel's disengagement plan is to be welcomed, but should be followed by withdrawal from other areas in line with the Roadmap. It also needs to revise its position on the wall – given the ruling of the International Court of Justice – and immediately stop construction of illegal settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

The Palestinian Authority should increase efforts to disarm terrorist groups, hold accountable perpetrators of violent acts against Israelis and make sure the coming parliamentary elections are free and fair. If this last point is fulfilled, the Assembly could consider granting observer status to the Palestinian Legislative Council. Finally, PACE's proposal for a UN-run fund to finance resettlement should be given a higher priority.

Contact in the secretariat: Agnieszka Nachilo, tel. 2905.

◆ **Current situation in Kosovo**

Doc. 10572

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Marianne Tritz (Germany, SOC)

The present undecided status of Kosovo casts uncertainty over the whole region, according to the Political Affairs Committee, but the positions of the parties concerned are polarised and no indication of a compromise is in sight. Concessions from both sides will be needed for the establishment of a genuine dialogue between them. The Council of Europe could offer to facilitate that dialogue, as well as making available its expertise in possible constitutional arrangements and in local self-government.

But whatever Kosovo's status, it must be a place safe for all those who live in it, where Council of Europe standards – especially human rights standards – are enforced. Even if a final status is agreed, the process of consolidation is likely to last for years, and the long-term objective of establishing a climate of trust between people of different ethnic groups will need the full attention of the international community.

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

◆ **Disappearance and murder of a great number of women and girls in Mexico**

Doc. 10551

Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold (Switzerland, SOC)

Since 1993 hundreds of women and girls – estimated at between 350 and 500, although the figure is disputed – have been brutally murdered in the northern Mexican border state of Chihuahua, around the town of Ciudad Juárez. Most were poor and aged between 13 and 30, many were sexually abused before they were killed and their bodies dumped in the desert.

What distinguishes these crimes from murders of women committed every day all over the world is that "these women were killed *because they were women*", according to the Equality Committee – the result of a climate of generalised violence in the region giving rise to the attitude that "women are expendable and can be routinely used, abused and discarded".

After initial botched investigations and attempts to pervert the course of justice, the Mexican authorities – at all levels – are now making considerable efforts to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice, the committee believes, and to tackle their underlying causes by reducing the culture of impunity and violence against women in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua.

But more needs to be done: the committee calls on Mexico to consider putting the crime of "femicide" on the statute books – an idea which could usefully be taken up in Europe, too – and to complete envisaged constitutional reforms which would allow federal prosecution of these crimes, if necessary. For its part, the Council of Europe should do all it can to help this observer state by training Mexican prosecutors and police, offering legal expertise and funding a forensic laboratory in Ciudad Juárez.

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

Wednesday 22 June 2005

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Honouring of obligations and commitments by the Russian Federation**

Doc. 10568

Report of the Monitoring Committee

Co-rapporteurs: David Atkinson (United Kingdom, EDG) and Rudolf Bindig (Germany, SOC)

With the exception of a new code of criminal procedure, substantially fewer prisoners, and some border agreements with neighbouring countries, Russia has made "very little progress" in the last three years in honouring its Council of Europe commitments, according to the Monitoring Committee.

The authorities have had to deal with serious problems which threaten the country – such as terrorism, corruption or the irregular privatisations which led to oligarchic control – but the solutions they come up with, even if adapted to Russia's realities, should still be in line with Council of Europe principles, the committee insists.

Reforms aimed at reinforcing "the vertical power", for example, have undermined the system of democratic checks and balances, while other changes have made it harder for new parties to enter parliament and the lack of media pluralism and impartiality makes free and fair elections impossible. The authorities should now "adjust the direction" of some of these reforms while significantly accelerating the pace of compliance with remaining commitments.

However the committee also points out that existing Council of Europe assistance programmes are insufficient to have a significant impact, given Russia's size and diversity. Priorities need to be redefined and European governments need to come up with significantly more money to help Russia meet its obligations to the Council of Europe, for the benefit of all its people.

Contact in the secretariat: Matjaz Gruden, tel. 2118.

◆ **Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly presented by Portuguese Foreign Minister Diogo Freitas do Amaral, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers**

Following his presentation, the Minister will answer members' questions, which must be tabled at the latest by 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday 21 June.

Wednesday 22 June 2005

Afternoon (3 p.m.-8 p.m.)

Ceremony to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Europe Prize

The Europe Prize, which is awarded every year by the Assembly's Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rewards local authorities for their active promotion of the European ideal (twinning, European events, exchange visits, etc). The 50th anniversary ceremony, which takes place in the Assembly chamber, will be opened by PACE President René van der Linden, followed by interventions from the Chair of the Sub-Committee on the Europe Prize Guy Lengagne, the Chair of the Association of Towns Awarded the Europe Prize Brigitte Russ-Scherer and Xosé Antonio Sanchez Bugallo, the Mayor of Santiago de Compostela, winner of the Europe Prize in 1985 and host of the main celebration on 1 July 2005. The Russian town of Kaliningrad was awarded the Europe Prize in 2005.

◆ **Joint debate**

Functioning of democratic institutions in Azerbaijan

Doc. 10569

Report of the Monitoring Committee

Co-rapporteurs: Andreas Gross (Switzerland, SOC) and Andres Herkel (Estonia, EPP/CD)

The parliamentary elections that will be held in Azerbaijan in November 2005 will be a decisive test for the democratic credibility of the country, according to the Monitoring Committee – especially as all previous ballots held since Azerbaijan's accession to the Council of Europe in 2001 have failed to meet basic democratic standards.

Since the 2003 presidential elections, marred by fraud and violence, stability in the country has been maintained at the expense of respect for basic human rights such as freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and the right to a fair trial, the committee says. In the present political climate, the electoral system, key state institutions or the judiciary might not be able to guarantee fair elections. Furthermore, the important revenues that will be generated through the operation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline might create temptations for some officials and politicians to bypass democracy.

The committee calls on the Azerbaijani authorities and opposition to publicly commit themselves to non-violence and respect for basic human rights. It encourages the first modest attempts at political dialogue between the ruling parties and the opposition and welcomes the creation of a public service television channel, but warns that the Assembly will be unable to ratify the credentials of a new parliamentary delegation if it were to represent a parliament resulting from an election that was not considered free and fair by the international community.

Contact in the secretariat: Bonnie Theophilova, tel. 3092.

Follow-up to Resolution 1359 (2004) on political prisoners in Azerbaijan

Doc. 10564

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Malcolm Bruce (United Kingdom, LDR)

When Azerbaijan joined the Council of Europe in 2001, the Parliamentary Assembly made it clear that holding political prisoners was incompatible with membership of the organisation and has repeatedly called for the release of persons considered to be political prisoners, including on humanitarian grounds. Five pardon decrees issued by President Ilham Aliyev since January 2004 have permitted the release of 52 political prisoners and 63 presumed political prisoners, including high-ranking opposition figures.

The Legal Affairs Committee particularly welcomes the last of these, which it says is "a decisive step towards a solution to the problem" but regrets that, in spite of repeated requests, the Azerbaijani authorities have continued to arrest and convict hundreds of persons for clearly political reasons. It firmly condemns serious dysfunctions in the Azerbaijani judicial system, as well as the torture inflicted on political prisoners, and appeals for a speedy and permanent solution to the problem of political prisoners and presumed political prisoners.

Contact in the secretariat: Valérie Clamer, tel. 2106.

Thursday 23 June 2005

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Urgent debate: follow-up to the Third Summit**

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Luc Van den Brande (Belgium, EPP/CD)

On 16-17 May 2005, the heads of state and government of the Council of Europe gathered in Warsaw – only the third time they have come together in the 56-year history of the Organisation – to consider the challenges which Europe will face in the coming years, to position the Council in the European institutional landscape and to chart out the future of the Organisation. They adopted a final declaration and an action plan.

This will be the first opportunity for the Assembly to assess how far the proposals it put forward in January 2004 – for stronger monitoring, a reinforced Court of Human Rights, redefined relations with the EU, OSCE and UN and new priority areas of standard-setting, among many others – have been taken up by the Summit's participants, and to decide how the Assembly itself can best contribute to achieving the ambitious goals the Organisation has now set itself.

The Bureau approved a request for this urgent debate on this subject at its meeting in Lisbon on 6 June 2005 and referred it to the Political Affairs Committee for report. If this decision is ratified by the Assembly, the Political Affairs Committee is likely to approve its report during its meeting on Tuesday 21 June at 8.30 a.m. The deadline for tabling amendments would then be Wednesday 22 June at 10.30 a.m.

Statement by Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis

Contact in the secretariat: Agnieszka Nachilo, tel. 2905.

◆ **Urgent debate: constitutional reform process in Armenia**

Report of the Monitoring Committee

Oral opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

A request for an urgent debate on this subject, submitted by 25 members of the Assembly, was approved by the Bureau at its meeting in Lisbon on 6 June 2005 and referred to the Monitoring Committee for report and to the Legal Affairs Committee for oral opinion. If this decision is ratified by the Assembly, the Monitoring Committee is likely to approve its report during its meeting on Tuesday 21 June at 8.30 a.m. The deadline for tabling amendments would then be Wednesday 22 June at 3.30 p.m.

Thursday 23 June 2005

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-5.15 p.m.)

◆ **Address by the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Jaap de Hoop Scheffer**

Following his address, the NATO Secretary General will answer questions from parliamentarians.

◆ **Democratic oversight of the security sector in member states**

Doc. 10567

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Lluís Maria de Puig (Spain, SOC)

Faced with modern security threats such as international organised crime, international terrorism and arms proliferation, countries are looking afresh at the balance between security and freedom. The activities of the security sector – intelligence services, police, border guards and defence forces – must always be based in law and subject to democratic supervision, the essence of which should be carried out by parliaments, according to the Political Affairs Committee.

Intelligence services should always be overseen by a specialised parliamentary committee, and they should avoid “politicisation”. Police forces should be trained in human rights standards and should aim to be non-political, professional and transparent. Border guards, among other things, need living conditions which will protect them from corruption and organised crime. Armies should be deployed in accordance with the UN charter and international law, and should be subject to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

The Council of Europe should draw up guidelines for governments to ensure that the principle of democratic oversight of the security sector is adhered to.

Contact in the secretariat: Baris Perin, tel. 2111.

Celebration to mark the 50th anniversary of the first sitting of the Assembly of the Western European Union

The Paris-based Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly, which brings together around 400 parliamentarians from the national parliaments of 37 European countries, debates European security and defence matters. This ceremony, which marks the 50th anniversary of the first sitting, will be opened by WEU Assembly President Stef Goris and PACE President René van der Linden. There will also be interventions by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis, as well as the leaders of the WEU Assembly’s political groups.

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 5. Items on the draft agenda include follow-up to the Third Summit and the Council’s budget for 2006. 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 24 June 2005

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Abolition of restrictions on the right to vote**

Doc. 10553

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Mehdi Eker (Turkey, EPP/CD)

Opinion of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Lord Tomlinson (United Kingdom, SOC)

The Legal Affairs Committee believes that the highest possible number of citizens should have the right to vote – without regard to their ethnic origin, place of residence, health, status as members of the military or criminal record.

All residents – regardless of nationality or ethnic origin – should be able to vote in local elections, since residents pay local taxes and are affected by local authority decisions. At national level the right to vote or stand in elections should generally be attached to nationality. The age limit for voting should not be higher than 18 and for standing as a candidate should be no higher than 25. Citizens living abroad should be able to vote in elections in their home country via absentee or consular voting.

Persons convicted of a criminal offence should not be barred from voting, unless for a crime committed against “the democratic process” such as election fraud or participation in a military putsch. Finally, steps should be taken to ensure that the votes of vulnerable groups – such as residents of nursing homes, prison inmates, soldiers and the disabled – are not influenced by helpers or superiors.

Contact in the secretariat: Günter Schirmer, tel. 2809.

◆ **Improving the response to mental health needs in Europe**

Doc. 10544

Report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Claude Evin (France, SOC)

In one out of every four families in Europe, at least one person suffers from a behavioural disorder, according to the WHO, and more than 30 million people suffer from severe depression. Yet only a small minority receive appropriate care – particularly in many eastern European countries, where mental health legislation does not yet meet European human rights standards, or remains unimplemented.

According to the Social Affairs Committee, European governments need to put more money into mental health services to ensure quicker and easier access for most people, and involve patients, their families and practitioners more. Care provided in the community – rather than in institutions – can often mean a better quality of life for patients, but only if sufficient resources are transferred to make it work.

The committee also encourages the use of multi-disciplinary care teams and a broad range of treatments – drug treatment is too often the main resort because there is a shortage of staff and facilities for more individualised psychiatric treatment – as well as independent oversight of decisions on involuntary admission to hospital or medical interventions. Finally, governments should work to reduce stigmatisation of those with mental health needs by raising public awareness.

Contact in the secretariat: Dana Karanjac, tel. 4877.

◆ **Closure of the third 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, including two updates.

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 20 June: Monday 20 June at 12 noon;
- for debates on Tuesday 21 June: Monday 20 June 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.

For Motions tabled during a Part-Session, the Bureau has decided that the Friday meeting of the Bureau at the end of that Part-Session will only consider those Motions which have been tabled by **12 noon on Tuesday of the Part-Session**. Motions received after that deadline are examined by the Bureau meeting after the Part-Session.

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 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 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.

Questions to invited guest speakers

For most invited guest speakers, the draft order of business indicates whether there is the possibility for members to ask questions. Where there is that possibility, members are encouraged to register their names with the Table Office as soon as the draft order of business is published and the name of the guest speaker appears. For guest speakers other than the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, members are invited to submit the subject of their question. For the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, the name of the member wishing to ask a question is only registered on the list if accompanied by the full written text of the question. The names of persons wishing to ask a question are published and listed in chronological order.

For the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, a precise deadline is specified in the draft order of business. The written questions for oral answer by the Chairperson are published in a Doc. of the Assembly. For the other guest speakers, there is no formal deadline as such as the questions are "spontaneous". However, members have an interest in registering their names as early as possible as there is usually not enough time to answer all questions.

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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Table Office

(speakers' lists, questions and amendments)

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Paul Evans, office 1083, tel. 4283
Robert Bertrand, office 1083, tel. 4283

Notification of substitutes
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Protocol

Director of Protocol
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Services

Internet access

Terminals with free broadband access are available in the lobby of the debating chamber and outside the 2nd floor meeting rooms. The Assembly's website and the Council of Europe portal, including other language portals, can be accessed here.

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, call 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.