

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 (PACE). 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 22 June 2006

**The final order of
business will be
decided by the
Assembly at the
opening of the
session**

26 to 30 June 2006

Monday 26

- Opening statement by Parliamentary Assembly President René van der Linden
- Implementation of Resolution 1480 (2006) on the challenge of credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Azerbaijan
- External relations of the Council of Europe

Tuesday 27

- Election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Finland, Monaco and Switzerland
- Alleged secret detentions and unlawful inter-state transfers of detainees involving Council of Europe member states, statements by the European Commission Vice-President responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security Franco Frattini and European Parliament rapporteur Giovanni Claudio Fava
- The contribution of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to economic development in central and eastern Europe, statement by EBRD President Jean Lemierre
- The human rights of irregular migrants, statement by Moroccan Minister-Delegate for Moroccans living abroad Nouzha Chekrouni

Wednesday 28

- Statement by the President of the Council of the Russian Federation Sergey Mironov
- Freedom of expression and respect for religious belief, address by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
- Joint debate on the follow-up to the Third Summit:
 - Implementation of the decisions of the Third Summit
 - Migration, refugees and population in the context of the Third Summit
 - Priorities for cultural co-operation
 - Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women, statement by UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women Yakin Ertürk
- Position of the Parliamentary Assembly as regards the Council of Europe member and observer states which have not abolished the death penalty

Thursday 29

- Possible urgent debate
- Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Assembly presented by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko
- Progress of the Assembly's monitoring procedure (May 2005-June 2006)

Friday 30

- Ratification of the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities by the member states of the Council of Europe
- Preventing forest fires
- Academic freedom and university autonomy

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, 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), Andorra (1994), 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), replaced by Serbia (2006), Monaco (2004).

Applications for membership: Montenegro (6 June 2006) and 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**



187

Socialist Group (SOC)



183

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



102

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)



86

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

51 seats

Rules of Procedure and Immunities



Monday 26 June 2006

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-7 p.m.)

◆ **Opening of the third part of the 2006 Ordinary Session**

Parliamentary Assembly President René van der Linden will open the third part of the 2006 Ordinary Session and will make an opening statement. The Assembly will begin by examining the credentials of any new members notified by national delegations and will deal with any changes in the membership of committees.

It will also consider any requests for urgent or current affairs debates and then adopt its order of business.¹ Finally, the Assembly will adopt the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee held in Moscow on 29 May 2006.

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

Rapporteur: Walter Schmied (Switzerland, ALDE)

The progress report covers the discussions held and decisions reached by the Bureau and the Standing Committee since the last part-session. Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco, EPP/CD) will also present an addendum on the Assembly's observation of the referendum on the State Status in the Republic of Montenegro (21 May 2006).

1. The draft order of business as contained in this document has been updated to reflect modifications to be proposed to the Bureau at its meeting at 8.30 a.m. on Monday 26 June 2006. However the final order of business will only be decided by the Assembly at the opening of the sitting at 3 p.m.

◆ **Implementation of Resolution 1480 (2006) on the challenge of credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Azerbaijan**

Doc. 10959

Report of the Monitoring Committee

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

At the opening of the last session, the credentials of the Azerbaijan delegation to the Assembly were challenged on substantial grounds in connection with the parliamentary elections of November 2005, which the Assembly said did not meet international standards.

Following a debate, the Assembly decided to ratify the credentials of Azerbaijan's twelve-member delegation, but said it wanted to see urgent progress in five areas needed "to restore confidence in the electoral, and more generally the democratic process" in Azerbaijan – including the conduct of the 13 May partial re-run of the elections – and that it would decide at the June session whether to reconsider this decision in the light of progress made. The Assembly wanted to see impartial and transparent investigations into the earlier electoral fraud, revision of the electoral laws in line with Council standards, respect for freedom of assembly and media pluralism.

In this report, the Monitoring Committee concludes that, although there was progress in the conduct of the 13 May re-run, most of the requirements set out in January have not yet been met. Despite some recent indications of the authorities' will to further reform the relevant legislation and practice, strong political will is still needed to ensure that the 2008 Presidential elections meet Council standards. However, considering that co-operation with Azerbaijan is essential for the consolidation of progress so far, the committee proposes not to reconsider, at this stage, the credentials of the Azerbaijan delegation, but to follow developments in the country closely, reporting back by spring 2007.

Contact in the secretariat: Despina Chatzivassiliou, tel. 3075.

◆ **External relations of the Council of Europe**

Doc. 10956

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Adrian Severin (Romania, SOC)

The Council of Europe has helped to reconcile centuries-old animosities in western Europe and contributed to the collapse of totalitarian regimes in both East and West Europe, enabling democratic values to triumph in every European state with the exception of Belarus. But democracy is not an exclusive privilege of Europeans, according to the Political Affairs Committee, and it is now time for the Council of Europe to think seriously about spreading its values – which its members consider are universal – beyond its borders.

As well as deepening existing links with the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East, ways must be found to institutionalise co-operation with Korea, South Africa, Argentina, Chile and Paraguay and establish links with Australia, New Zealand, India, Brazil and certain other Latin American countries, as well as entering into a dialogue with China.

One way to do this might be to create a new status for non-member states who wish to benefit from the Council of Europe's experience but are not yet in a position to fully espouse its principles. The European Convention on Human Rights could also be opened to non-member states, under certain conditions. For its part, the Assembly could allow non-European states to become Special Guests and enlarge the participation of Observer delegations in its work.

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

Tuesday 27 June 2006

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Finland, Monaco and Switzerland**

Docs. 10942, 10933

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 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 Wednesday 28 June from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., for which a relative majority of votes will be sufficient.

◆ **Alleged secret detentions and unlawful inter-state transfers of detainees involving Council of Europe member states**

Doc. 10957

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Dick Marty (Switzerland, ALDE)

Opinion of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Peter Schieder (Austria, SOC)

All 46 Council of Europe member states are bound by the European Convention on Human Rights, which bans torture and unacknowledged or secret detention. Yet, according to the Legal Affairs Committee, it is now clear that some member states have knowingly colluded with the United States in weaving a "spider's web" of disappearances, secret detentions and unlawful inter-state transfers of detainees, often encompassing countries notorious for their use of torture. Other European states have tolerated these operations or simply turned a blind eye.

Drawing on the testimony of victims of "extraordinary rendition", analysis of the logs of flights believed to have been operated by the CIA, as well as information received from intelligence services and other sources, the rapporteur uncovers a detailed global system of "rendition circuits". In one example, he shows how the renditions of Binyam Mohamed and Khaled El-Masri were carried out by the same CIA-operated aircraft in the course of the same twelve-day tour in January 2004.

Based on these elements – which the rapporteur describes not as "proof" in the sense required by a court of law, but as indications based on logical deduction from certain established facts – the committee demands that European countries urgently conduct in-depth inquiries to establish the whole truth and ensure that such human rights violations do not recur. They must also review the legal oversight of their intelligence services, and the actions of foreign services on their territory, and make sure that agreements with the United States conform to human rights norms. In the meantime, the Assembly should set up a sub-committee to follow up this affair.

Statement by the Franco Frattini, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security

Statement by Giovanni Claudio Fava, rapporteur of the European Parliament Temporary Committee on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners

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

Tuesday 27 June 2006

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-7 p.m.)

◆ **The contribution of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to economic development in central and eastern Europe**

Doc. 10950

Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development

Rapporteur: Bernard Schreiner (France, EPP/CD)

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 work during 2005 in its 27 countries of operations, stretching from central Europe to central Asia. It pays tribute to the EBRD's valuable – and growing – contribution to the region, where it remains the largest institutional investor, reflecting prudent risk management and the strong economic performance of its client countries and financial markets.

The Economic Affairs Committee welcomes the Bank's stabilising role in Russia, which is by far the largest country of operation and the largest recipient of the Bank's funding, as well as in south-eastern Europe and the Caucasus. It calls for more resources to enable the EBRD to pursue grass-roots investment in the poorest seven countries, where half of the population lives in abject poverty.

In Ukraine, the Bank needs to help reform the energy sector, a key objective across its area of operations, but one which should be achieved with minimum negative impact on the environment. Finally, it should continue to contribute to raising incomes in rural areas, particularly in non-EU countries, through rural credit schemes.

Statement by Jean Lemierre, President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Contact in the secretariat: Aiste Ramanauskaite, tel. 3117.

◆ **The human rights of irregular migrants**

Doc. 10924

Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

Rapporteur: Ed van Thijn (Netherlands, SOC)

Whatever states do to control the entry of irregular migrants, or return them to their countries of origin, there will always be irregular migrants in Europe, the Migration Committee believes. Some will lose their lives trying to reach Europe, while those that make it risk exploitation and face life in dangerous and inhumane conditions. This is the plight of some three to five million irregular migrants estimated to be living in Europe at the moment.

Whatever their legal status, such people retain their basic human rights, the committee points out. It should be possible to consolidate the patchwork of international laws which currently apply, leaving many irregular migrants caught in a "web of uncertainty" as to their rights.

States should not use unreasonable force to prevent the entry of irregular migrants, and have a duty to rescue those whose lives are in danger. They should be protected from inhuman treatment or trafficking. Collective expulsions should be prohibited. Furthermore, states should respect the human dignity of persons belonging to this group and provide, where necessary, basic shelter and emergency healthcare, with special attention given to children and other vulnerable groups.

Statement by Nouzha Chekrouni, Minister-Delegate to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Morocco in charge of Moroccans Living Abroad

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

A meeting of women members of the Assembly – the third such meeting – is due to take place at 7 p.m., or at the end of the sitting, in Room 5. The guest speaker is Yakin Ertürk, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women. Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg and Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General Maud De Boer-Buquicchio will also take part.

Wednesday 28 June 2006

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Finland, Monaco and Switzerland (possible second round)**

Docs. 10942, 10933

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.

◆ **Statement by Sergey Mironov, President of the Council of the Russian Federation**

◆ **Freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs**

Report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Rapporteur: Sinikka Hurskainen (Finland, SOC)

This report is due to be approved by the Committee on Culture, Science and Education at its meeting on Thursday 22 June.

Address by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey

Contact in the secretariat: Joao Ary, tel. 2112.

Wednesday 28 June 2006

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

◆ **Joint debate on follow-up to the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of member states of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005)**

Implementation of the decisions of the Third Summit

Doc. 10958

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Konstantin Kosachev (Russian Federation, EDG)

A year after the Summit, at which the Council of Europe's Heads of State and Government spelled out an ambitious plan of action intended to set the course of the Organisation for years to come, this report takes stock of progress made.

There has been welcome action on ensuring the Court's effectiveness, looking at the future of democracy, restructuring monitoring, setting up a taskforce for social cohesion and – in the form of the Juncker Report – improving EU-Council of Europe relations, but the Political Affairs Committee remains concerned at the low use of the Council's potential to set standards and shape international law.

The committee urges courageous action to enable the Court to handle its workload, strengthening of the Convention system, pushing forward in discussions with the EU and more reflection on future challenges. The Assembly itself should be granted the right of legislative initiative and given greater standard-setting and budgetary powers. Finally, the committee suggests a major conference in 2007 to assess implementation of the Summit decisions.

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

Migration, refugees and population in the context of the Third Summit

Docs. 10868

Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

Rapporteur: Michael Hagberg (Sweden, SOC)

This report spells out the three ways in which the Assembly intends to re-focus its activities in the migration field.

Firstly, it aims to strengthen the legal rights of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons – and make sure this legal framework reflects Council of Europe core values. Secondly, it aims to promote inter-cultural dialogue and foster tolerance so that migrant communities are better able to integrate. Thirdly, it aims to manage migration, whether regular or irregular, in a way which respects the different needs of countries of origin, transit and destination.

The committee also pledges to work more closely with other international bodies, such as the European Parliament, the UNHCR, the IOM and ICRC, as well as a range of non-governmental organisations, on these priority areas.

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

Priorities for cultural co-operation

Report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Rapporteur: Lluís Maria de Puig (Spain, SOC)

This report is due to be approved by the Committee on Culture, Science and Education at its meeting on Thursday 22 June.

Contact in the secretariat: Christopher Grayson, tel. 2114.

Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women

Doc. 10934

Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Minodora Cliveti (Romania, SOC)

Domestic violence is one of the most widespread violations of human rights and affects every single Council of Europe member state, the Equal Opportunities Committee points out. It has no geographical boundaries, no age limit, is not the preserve of any particular race, and occurs in every kind of family relationship or social milieu.

Following a request from the Assembly, the Council of Europe decided to launch a three-year pan-European campaign (2006-2008) to combat violence against women, including domestic violence. This report proposes ways in which parliamentarians – whether at national or international level – can support this vital campaign.

The national parliaments of the Council's 46 member states could, for example, be invited to hold a symbolic meeting at noon on 24 November – the launch of the main campaign – in order to denounce domestic violence against women and to make it a political issue at the highest level. They could promote awareness of the problem in their respective countries, in co-operation with civil society. But above all, they can adopt legislative measures – such as making marital rape a crime, or enabling the removal of a violent spouse from the marital home – which will help to stamp out this scourge forever.

Statement by Yakin Ertürk, United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women

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

◆ **Position of the Parliamentary Assembly as regards the Council of Europe member and observer states which have not abolished the death penalty**

Doc. 10911

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Renate Wohlwend (Liechtenstein, EPP/CD)

The death penalty has been abolished in all Council of Europe member states, with just one exception: the Russian Federation retains the death penalty in its legislation, although it has respected a moratorium on executions since 1996. When it joined the Council, Russia promised to take this step within three years, but – ten years on – that commitment remains only partially honoured. According to the Legal Affairs Committee, Russia must now show the same determination and persuasiveness as other member states, who abolished capital punishment despite the potential unpopularity of the measure.

Of the states which hold Council of Europe observer status, both Japan and the United States continue to apply the death penalty – in violation of the statutory requirement that observer states must share the organisation's fundamental values – despite repeated appeals from the Assembly.

It is now up to the Committee of Ministers to engage in an active and substantive dialogue with both countries on this most basic human right – not least by pointing out that the Council of Europe could no longer, in principle, accept observer states applying the death penalty. If no progress is made, the Committee of Ministers should discuss, before the end of 2006, the question of suspending their observer status.

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

Thursday 29 June 2006

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-12.30 p.m.)

◆ Possible urgent debate

Three requests for urgent debates have been received, on "The political consequences of the referendum in Montenegro", on "The consequences of the referendum in Montenegro on the fulfilment of commitments and obligations by Serbia and by Montenegro" and on "Constitutional reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina". The Assembly will decide on these requests at the opening of the session on Monday 26 June 2006.

A ceremony to launch the "All different, all equal" European Youth Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation will take place in the Chamber between 12.30 p.m. and 1 p.m. in the presence of campaign organisers and supporters. PACE President René van der Linden, Russian Education and Science Minister Andrey Fursenko (to be confirmed) and Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis are among those due to address the participants.

Thursday 29 June 2006

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-6.30 p.m.)

◆ **Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly presented by Alexander Grushko, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, representing the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers**

Following his presentation, Mr Grushko will answer parliamentarians' questions.

◆ **Progress of the Assembly's monitoring procedure (May 2005-June 2006)**

Doc. 10960 and Addendum

Report of the Monitoring Committee

Rapporteur: György Frunda (Romania, EPP/CD)

Ten member states are currently subject to the Assembly's monitoring procedure, which assesses how they are fulfilling the commitments they undertook when they joined the organisation, while another three states are engaged in "post-monitoring dialogue". The impact and credibility of the Assembly's monitoring reports – nine of them in the last year alone, either general "road maps" for future reform or reacting to particular political events – are now widely acknowledged, not least by the EU, which uses them in its assessments for enlargement.

Yet the Monitoring Committee is supposed to assess *all* member states' honouring of obligations – not just those, almost exclusively states which have joined the organisation since 1989, involved in a monitoring procedure or post-monitoring dialogue. Therefore, in a new departure, the committee presents the first in a three-year cycle of periodic reports which will eventually cover all these remaining member states. These reports are country-by-country assessments based on comparative information drawn from all the Council's bodies.

The committee begins with Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France and Germany, which are invited to take specific steps, such as to implement Court judgments, ratify or sign Council of Europe conventions, or – in some cases – join Council monitoring bodies.

Contact in the secretariat: Despina Chatzivassiliou, tel. 3075.

Around 30 Mayors from across Europe will take part in the award ceremony for the 2006 European Diplomas – part of the Europe Prize – which takes place in Room 5 at 3.30 p.m.

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 alleged secret detentions and unlawful inter-state transfers of detainees involving Council of Europe member states, Council of Europe-EU relations and the Forum for the Future of Democracy.

Friday 30 June 2006

☞ Afternoon (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Ratification of the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities by member states of the Council of Europe**

Doc. 10961

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Boriss Cilevičs (Latvia, SOC)

The protection of national minorities has been one of the Council of Europe's greatest successes. This work – largely inspired by the Assembly – has helped to prevent social tensions and promote the diversity of Europe's cultures and languages. One key to that success has been the Framework Convention on National Minorities, the world's first multilateral treaty in this field, which allows states to designate national minorities on their territory, whose religion, language, traditions and culture they agree to protect in various ways.

Yet eight of the Council's member states (Andorra, Belgium, France, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, Monaco and Turkey) have not ratified the Convention, despite the Assembly's recent urging to do so, arguing that their constitutions do not allow them to recognise the existence of national minorities, or that none exist on their territory, or that other instruments concerned with non-discrimination do the job better.

This report aims to evaluate these different points of view, and proposes ways to encourage ratification by the eight states concerned. It also suggests that it could be time for a fresh look at the Framework Convention itself.

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

◆ **Preventing forest fires**

Doc. 10962

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

Rapporteur: Iñaki Txuekas (Spain, ALDE)

Every year forest fires deplete Europe's natural heritage and biodiversity, especially in southern Europe. The consequences are, in some cases, the tragic loss of human life as well as destruction of property and considerable costs for forest owners and public authorities.

Despite increases in fire-fighting resources and improved techniques, the number of forest fires continues to rise each year – sometimes as a result of climate-change or other natural factors, but also as a result of the rural exodus of recent decades.

The Environment Committee suggests ways that Europe's governments can act to predict and prevent forest fires, as well as improving the response to them when they break out.

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

◆ **Academic freedom and university autonomy**

Doc. 10943

Report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Rapporteur: Josef Jařab (Czech Republic, ALDE)

The intellectual freedom to seek out and disseminate knowledge, which lies at the heart of any academic system, is best served when universities are morally and intellectually independent of political or religious authority and of economic power, according to the Culture Committee. Yet universities cannot be isolated "ivory towers" either, and must respond to the cultural, social and scientific challenges of the societies they serve. The inevitable corollary of their academic liberty is that they must be accountable to the public.

This report, prepared by a parliamentarian who is also a professor and former University Rector, seeks to define this balance more clearly, drawing its inspiration from the Magna Charta Universitatum, a 1988 document setting out principles of academic freedom and university autonomy which has now been signed by some 600 universities around the world.

The committee proposes to co-operate with the Observatory of the Magna Charta, giving a "parliamentary dimension" to this worldwide initiative, and calls for academic freedom and university autonomy to be made a condition for Council of Europe membership.

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

◆ **Closure of the third part of the 2006 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.

The latest edition of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly was published in April 2006 and is available in a bilingual version (English/French), with an update of June 2006.

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 26 June: Monday 26 June at 12 noon;
- for debates on Tuesday 27 June: Monday 26 June at 4 p.m.;
- for all other debates (except urgent debates, unforeseen debates or as otherwise indicated on the order of business): 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 only consider those Motions which have been tabled by **12 noon on Tuesday of the Part-Sessions** will be 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 (Jocelyne Gibert, Room 1076, fax during session weeks +33 3 88 41 27 27, fax outside session weeks +33 3 88 41 27 33).

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 normally specified in the draft order of business. The written questions for oral answer by the Chairperson are then 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.

For the June 2006 Part-Session, the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers has agreed to take spontaneous questions from those parliamentarians wishing to ask a question, with no formal deadline being specified. The questions will therefore not be published in advance in a Doc. but will be asked by those members present.

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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Robert Bertrand, office 1073, tel. 3936

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Services

Internet access

Free Wi-Fi access is available in most areas of the Palais building. Terminals with free broadband access are also available in the lobby of the debating chamber and outside the second 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 cafeteria (ground floor).

Bus

Free shuttle service departing from Allée Spach 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.