

AS/Per (2007) PV 1
13 April 2007

Standing Committee

Minutes¹

**of the meeting held
in Paris
on 16 March 2007**

¹ Approved by the Assembly on 16 April 2007.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

Mr van der Linden, President of the Assembly, opened the meeting at 9 am.

He thanked the French parliamentary authorities for their invitation to hold the present meeting of the Standing Committee at the National Assembly in Paris. He then called on the Standing Committee to observe a minute's silence in tribute to senator Daniel Goulet, member of the French parliamentary delegation, who had passed away on 25 February 2007.

Mr Reymann, member of the French parliamentary delegation, welcomed the members of the Standing Committee and expressed the regrets of the members of the French delegation who could not be present owing to election campaign commitments in their constituencies. In connection with the current affairs debate scheduled for the present meeting, he recalled that the French parliamentarians had adopted a constitutional law enshrining the abolition of the death penalty in the Constitution of the Republic on 19 February. Finally, he pointed out that the French parliamentary delegation had made frequent and energetic calls on the French government with regard to the Council of Europe budget.

The President informed the Standing Committee of his recent visits, respectively to Belarus on 18-20 January 2007 and Cyprus on 19-22 February 2007. He was particularly satisfied with his visit to Cyprus, both for the fruitful and constructive talks with a number of personalities, including Mr Talat, and for the meetings he had chaired, bringing together representatives of the two communities from the political sphere and civil society. Finally, he drew attention to the declaration adopted by the Bureau of the Assembly on the previous day calling for the release of the Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo and the statement he had made in his own name regarding the situation of the Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor condemned to death in Libya.

2. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH MR GÖRAN LENNMARKER, PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE OSCE

Mr Lenmarker, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, reiterated that the Council of Europe and the OSCE stood on a common platform of values. Today's Europe was more democratic, peaceful and prosperous than ever before and had come a long way to achieve this. However, there were still many challenges to be taken up and, in order to ensure respect for common values and pursue the objective of promoting freedom, peace and prosperity, Europe needed strong international organisations, now more than ever. All the organisations working in Europe were responsible for their own activities in various fields, but it sometimes happened that some activities overlapped. The Charter of Paris was the mainstay of the OSCE. The OSCE currently had 56 member States covering a third of the globe, from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

The OSCE could pride itself on some extremely positive achievements. For the first time in its history, Europe was living in peace and social and economic prosperity. Nevertheless there were some sources of concern and disappointment: democracy did not reign throughout Europe, as certain countries were dictatorships; frozen, unresolved conflicts had a human cost and a social cost; trafficking in women, arms and drugs, terrorism and corruption also ranked among the priorities on the OSCE's agenda.

Observing elections was an area of vital importance for both the OSCE and the Council of Europe. Serbia, for example, had been an excellent experience. Its elections had conformed to democratic principles and met very high standards, notably with the participation of parties representing the minorities – Roms and Albanians in particular. The elections in Armenia, on 12 May, would be the next step in this exercise.

Some questions naturally came high up the OSCE agenda, particularly where efforts to find post-conflict solutions were concerned. One such case was Kosovo, where the OSCE had deployed some 1,500 operatives. However, finding a lasting solution was a task for the United Nations and its special envoy, Martti Ahtisaari. Belarus was another centre of interest for the OSCE. The Council of Europe and the OSCE had to pool their efforts to bring Belarus back into the democratic fold. The OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly had an Ad hoc Working Group on Belarus. The situation in Moldova and the question of Transnistria were other focal points for the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly, as were the situation in the Caucasus and the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh. On the latter point, he was reasonably optimistic over the chances of reaching a settlement, as the Minsk group had arrived at a solution acceptable to both sides; he hoped that the parties concerned would be capable of seizing this opportunity. As for central Asia, this was the only region not shared with the Council of Europe. It was enjoying swift economic growth but slow democratic development. This would be a priority of his presidency.

Finally, there were other OSCE cooperation activities, such as the Forum for the Future of Democracy, which offered interesting prospects for collaboration with the Council of Europe.

The President thanked the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE for his particularly detailed statement and acknowledged the importance of the activities of the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly.

In reply to questions from **MM Gross and Lintner** on Nagorno-Karabakh, **Mr Lenmarker** said that the problem was to secure acceptance of a solution by the communities, particularly the refugees; he said that Russia's role in the resolution of frozen conflicts was highly constructive, especially within the Minsk Group, although positions remained very much deadlocked on Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Mr Gardetto wished cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe to be optimised on topics of common interest. There had to be a stronger focus on the countries on the fringes of Europe, central Asia and the Mediterranean, to anchor them to the platform of values shared by the two organisations.

Mr Lenmarker agreed, especially where Kazakhstan was concerned; there were also positive signs regarding Turkmenistan. Cooperation with Mediterranean countries was an important challenge coming under the joint responsibility of the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the European Union. Nevertheless, adequate cooperation machinery had to be found, and all the more so as cooperation between Mediterranean countries themselves was yet to be defined.

Mr Lloyd also wondered what concrete action could be taken by the two organisations in areas of common interest such as Belarus.

Mr Lenmarker thought that both organisations had the same goals but their techniques sometimes differed; they had to cooperate as far as possible. The parliamentary dimension had to serve as a basis for dialogue with those countries, like Belarus, where democratic progress was to be promoted.

Mr Kox said that while pan-European cooperation, or cooperation between western States, was a positive element, it was even more important to gear efforts to cooperation with "southern" countries.

In reply to a question from **Mr Rigoni** as to whether there were grounds for optimism regarding Belarus, **Mr Lenmarker** cautioned against harbouring illusions, particularly as regards the prospects of accession.

Following a question from **Mr de Puig** on the logistics of cooperation in the observing of elections, **Mr Lenmarker** thought it necessary to promote closer consultation, through preparatory meetings for example.

Mr Iwiński pointed out that the two organisations could sometimes adopt differing stances, which had been the case with Kazakhstan. There had to be better coordination, better harmonisation of positions and a better division of labour, in the light of the expertise of the respective organisations.

The President thanked Mr Lenmarker for a most interesting and fruitful exchange of views.

3. EXAMINATION OF NEW CREDENTIALS

Doc. 11201

The Standing Committee **ratified** the credentials of the newly appointed representatives and substitutes for the parliamentary delegations of the Czech Republic, Iceland, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Switzerland, as they appeared in Doc. 11201.

4. MODIFICATIONS IN THE COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES

Commissions (2007) 3

The Standing Committee **ratified** the changes in the composition of Assembly committees in respect of the delegations of the Czech Republic, Georgia, Iceland, Portugal, Switzerland and the United Kingdom as they appeared in the document Commissions (2007) 3.

5. REQUEST FOR A CURRENT AFFAIRS DEBATE OR A DEBATE UNDER URGENT PROCEDURE

The President said that a request for a current affairs debate on "Promoting an international moratorium on the death penalty by Council of Europe member states" had been submitted by the Italian delegation on 5 February 2007 within the required deadline according to Rule 52 of the Assembly's Rules. At its meeting on the previous day the Bureau had been in favour of holding a current affairs debate on this theme and proposed that Mr Rigoni open the debate.

Agreed.

6. AGENDA

AS/Per (2007) OJ 1 rev. 2

The President informed the Standing Committee that, in the light of a letter of 14 February 2007 from Mr Marty, Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, requesting the withdrawal of the report on "Member states' duty to cooperate with the European Court of Human Rights" from the agenda and the line taken by the rapporteur, Mr Pourgourides, he had decided to take this item off the agenda and to postpone it for debate at one of the forthcoming plenary sessions, either in June or in October 2007.

Mrs Bilgehan asked that the report on "respect for the principle of gender equality in civil law", under item 15 a., be postponed to the next meeting of the Standing Committee at the request of the rapporteur, Mrs Smirnova, who was unable to attend the present meeting owing to illness.

The revised draft agenda was **adopted**.

7. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY'S SITTINGS HELD ON 25 JANUARY (AFTERNOON) AND 26 JANUARY (MORNING) 2007

AS (2007) PV 8 and 9

The minutes of the Parliamentary Assembly's sittings on 25 January 2007 (afternoon) and 26 January (morning) were **approved**.

8. REFERENCES, TRANSMISSIONS AND MODIFICATIONS OF REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES

AS/Bur (2007) 19

The Director of General Services, Mr Schade, referred to document AS/Bur (2007) 19, which set out the proposals for the references, transmissions and modifications of references to committees and had been considered by the Bureau at its meeting on 15 March 2007, and notified the members of the changes made and the decisions taken by the Bureau under this item.

The Standing Committee **approved** the references, transmissions and modifications of references as they appeared in Appendix [1] to Appendix II below.

9. OBSERVATION OF ELECTIONS

Observation of the parliamentary elections in Serbia (21 January 2007)

AS/Bur/AHSer (2007) 1

Rapporteur of the Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau:
Mr Tadeusz Iwiński (Poland, SOC)

Mr Iwiński presented the report on the observation of the parliamentary elections in Serbia (21 January 2007). He expressed his gratitude to the Serbian parliamentary delegation and its chairman for their excellent cooperation with the *ad hoc* committee. The observers had been able to deploy widely across the country, including in prisons and in Kosovo. The elections had conformed to international standards for democratic elections. Positive trends had been observed, particularly regarding amendments to electoral legislation and the increased number of women on candidate lists. More generally, he felt that a page had been turned and that the tragic events of the 1980s and 90s which had weighed heavily on the country now belonged to the past. Debate currently focused on two issues: the dissolution of the State Union, for which adequate measures had been taken, and of course the question of the future status of Kosovo. Finally, the excellent cooperation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly was a source of satisfaction.

Mr Lennmarker confirmed that cooperation over the elections had been exemplary.

The Standing Committee **took note** of the report (Doc. 11228).

10. CURRENT AFFAIRS DEBATE

Mr Rigoni opened the current affairs debate on "Promoting an international moratorium on the death penalty by Council of Europe member states". The Italian parliamentary delegation's initiative was directly linked to the reactions in international public opinion to certain recent executions, notably that of Saddam Hussein in Iraq as well as others which had already taken place or might yet do so in Libya, Iran or China. There was an urgent need to rekindle the European Union initiative aimed at promoting a worldwide moratorium on the death penalty and give concrete follow-up to the "Declaration of association" with Italy presented at the United Nations General Assembly on 19 December 2006. The Declaration of association for a universal moratorium on executions with a view to total abolition of the death penalty had been adopted by 85 States, 42 of them Council of Europe members. It was now crucial for the Assembly of the oldest European organisation, whose mission was human rights protection, to associate itself with the groundswell of NGOs and civil society. The 3rd World Congress against the death penalty had been held in Paris in February 2007; the broad consensus, mentioned in the final declaration, had been that the United Nations General Assembly should pass a resolution on a universal moratorium on executions.

France had just changed its constitution, at the initiative of the President of the Republic, in order to include the abolition of the death penalty. The president of the Parliamentary Assembly, who backed the Italian initiative for a universal moratorium, had reiterated that the member countries of the Council of Europe formed a zone where the death penalty had *de facto* been outlawed. However, abolition at European level should not be the ultimate goal. The matter could not rest there. In an age dominated by global threats and the menace of fundamentalism, Europe had to take a stand and reassert itself as the continent of freedom and human rights and build other countries' awareness of human rights protection. Asserting the inviolability of the human being was the culmination of a long process, the legacy of a deep-rooted religious tradition of the European peoples and a legal culture where the re-educative function of the penal system prevailed. In Italy, capital punishment had first been abolished in 1889 and then, after the fascist dictatorship era, definitively in 1947; it had been abolished for war-time situations in 1994. Before that, in 1786, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany had been the first State in Europe and the world to abolish the death penalty and torture.

There had to be an awareness-raising drive aimed at the States that applied the death penalty. Reference could be made in this connection to the wording of the "declaration of association" presented at the United Nations General Assembly: *"we firmly believe that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. The death penalty provides no added value in terms of deterrence. Any miscarriage or failure of justice is irreversible, when, in a cruel and inhumane way, the punishment deprives one of his or her right to life."* This was a fundamental point to be kept uppermost in parliamentarians' minds, as it was the most absolute guarantee of security of citizens and the effectiveness of justice. The death penalty was a "war waged by the Nation against its citizens", as Cesare Beccaria had put it. The issue here was not so much the cruelty of the death penalty as its inability to keep the peace.

Parliamentarians had a responsibility, in keeping with their professed values and shared ideals, to strongly assert the need to abolish the death penalty even if, in public opinion, an abolition campaign clashed with some people's nostalgia for the past, frustration over impunity of crimes or even accusations of apparent powerlessness of the State. That was why the worldwide moratorium on executions was an effective and concrete means of promoting the universal abolition of the death penalty.

Mr Kox said that the execution of Saddam Hussein and the heavy media coverage surrounding it had done nothing to promote abolition of the death penalty precisely because, in the eyes of public opinion, it was a good example. What could the approach advocated by Mr Rigoni achieve when countries of major importance such as China or the United States refused to give it their backing?

Mr de Puig said that the socialist group fully backed the Italian initiative. The Council of Europe had to examine the question and follow the United Nations' lead by supporting the general adoption of this measure worldwide.

Mr Lloyd also fully supported the initiative; it was a moral duty. He agreed with Mr Kox that the execution of Saddam Hussein had been regarded as an act of justice.

In the view of **Mr Rigoni**, the Council of Europe had to react to executions carried out in certain countries and put pressure on States where death sentences were still pronounced despite there being a moratorium on executions. The existence of moratoria was not enough and efforts should go further, towards total and effective abolition of the death penalty. The Council of Europe had to set an example and stir consciences. It was indispensable, therefore, for the Parliamentary Assembly to back the United Nations effort, by swiftly adopting a report giving a firm reminder of the guidelines and steadfast position of the Council of Europe. This dynamic had to be translated into a real commitment on the part of the States to abolish the death penalty. The idea was for States practising the death penalty to be deprived of their voting rights at the United Nations. For that reason, all the abolitionist States had to unite within the United Nations General Assembly to issue a strong warning.

The President said that, in accordance with Rule 52.2 of the Rules of procedure, the Bureau had proposed that the question of "the commitment of Council of Europe member States to promoting an international moratorium on the death penalty" be referred to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for report and the Political Affairs Committee for opinion. The Assembly might debate the topic at the June 2007 part-session.

Agreed.

11. LEGAL AFFAIRS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

a. The United States of America and international law

Doc. 11181

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights:
Mr Tony Lloyd (United Kingdom, SOC)*

Mr Lloyd presented the report on "The United States of America and international law" (Doc. 11181), which was in no way a blank criticism of the United States. The United States and Europe shared common values and pursued the same goal of promoting human rights and the Rule of law. For years they had set an example for good practice in this area. The Parliamentary Assembly had criticised the American Administration on several issues: the fight against terrorism, the concept of the war on terror, Guantanamo Bay, secret detentions by the CIA and renditions were all situations in which the United States had disregarded human rights and fundamental humanitarian legal standards and reneged on their commitments under international law. The death penalty was the most obvious form of erosion of the United States' honouring of commitments to human rights. All these issues were not closed, and there were signs of positive trends in the United States. The Assembly had to reiterate its readiness to engage in constructive dialogue with American parliamentarians.

Mr de Puig congratulated the rapporteur on his critical, in-depth approach, which he fully backed. He noted that the report submitted contained useful information for the draft report on the concept of preventive war being prepared within the Political Affairs Committee. The United States had conducted numerous operations giving rise to interrogations and no one knew where these would ultimately lead.

Mr Gardetto pointed out that, throughout their history, the United States had constantly propagated the ideals underlying the construction of that country to the rest of the world. The Bush Administration had sent that objective off the rails. The damage in terms of image was enormous, even if the political climate had recently changed. Europe could not disregard its relations with the United States but it was necessary, in this context, to promote the democratic values and human rights that were our common foundation.

Mr Marty welcomed this very well balanced and nuanced report, whose most important focus was the resumption of dialogue with the United States, which could not be reduced to the Bush Administration alone. No problem at world level, be it the environment, trade, combating organised crime, terrorism, human or other forms of trafficking, could be resolved without involving the United States. The United States were a reference the world over, and it was not possible to demand that a small country respect human rights or to condemn its acts if the United States themselves did not set the example. It was true that Europe needed America but an America that respected democratic values and human rights.

Mr Kox hinted at his concerns raised by the report's conclusions; if a State discharged itself from its obligation to respect international law, that sent out a very negative signal to other States. By acting unilaterally, as in the war on terror, the United States had alienated themselves. The Committee of Ministers had to underline the necessity of the United States respecting the Council of Europe's values if they wished

to retain their observer status. Dialogue had to be resumed with the American delegation, but how was this to be done in concrete terms?

Mrs Bilgehan noted that the reputation of the United States was at its lowest ebb in many countries, such as Turkey. As a State holding observer status with the Council of Europe, they had to respect the Organisation's values. However, she doubted that there was an effective presence of an American delegation at the Council of Europe at all.

Mr Ateş noted that forging transatlantic dialogue with American parliamentarians ran into major difficulties in practice. The Political Affairs Committee had experienced this at its meetings in London in 2004 and Ottawa in 2005. The Parliamentary Assembly reports and recommendations aimed at the United States in recent years and reminding them of their obligations had not received the slightest reply from the American Administration. The Council of Europe was ready for dialogue but it came up against a wall on the American side.

For **Mr Hörster**, the behaviour of the American Administration vis-à-vis the Council of Europe showed that it did not take the organisation seriously. Yet it was indispensable to step up cooperation, as Europe would not be capable of settling its own conflicts without input from America.

Mr Iwiński noted that the Council of Europe was engaged in effective cooperation and high-quality dialogue with several observer States, such as Japan, Canada, Israel or Mexico. The United States were extremely ill-disposed. More had to be done to overcome this obstacle, by a more offensive relaunching of dialogue.

The President said that he had prepared two letters, to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to the chairman of the House's foreign affairs committee, but doubted that they would yield tangible results. Even so, the Assembly and its committees must not be discouraged and, on the contrary, strive to resume cooperation.

Mr Lloyd fully shared the concerns of those who were calling for the resumption of dialogue. The breakdown was not the fault of the Parliamentary Assembly. The American delegation lacked commitment. The political situation in the United States was changing. There were a considerable number of fields of common interest where dialogue might be engaged.

The President put to the vote the draft resolution set out in Doc. 11181, which was **adopted** with three abstentions (Resolution 1539 (2007)). He then put to the vote the draft recommendation which was also **adopted** with two abstentions (Recommendation 1788 (2007)).

b. Improving selection procedures for CPT members

<i>Rapporteur of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights:</i>	Doc. 11182
<i>Mr Erol Aslan Cebeci (Turkey, EPP/CD)</i>	Amendments
<i>Rapporteur of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (for opinion):</i>	Doc.11194
<i>Mrs Gisela Wurm (Austria, SOC)</i>	

Mr Cebeci presented the report on "Improving selection procedures for CPT members" (Doc. 11182), reiterating that the activities of the CPT were fundamental in promoting human rights in Europe and eradicating torture and inhuman or degrading treatment. In this context, it was equally important for the CPT to be able to choose from the best possible candidates. On this point, further improvement was possible where the procedure for selecting candidates was concerned, whether at national or at Parliamentary Assembly level, notably by enabling the Sub-committee on human rights to interview the candidates. Finally, regarding the question of gender balance in the candidate lists, it had to be borne in mind that the prison population was overwhelmingly male. He called on the Standing Committee to back the compromise position in the draft resolution, which advocated a degree of flexibility in this matter.

Mrs Wurm presented the opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Doc.11194). She deplored the fact that six years after Resolution 1248 (2001), the gender equality situation as regards the composition of the CPT had not improved. It was questionable that certain States were unable to produce candidatures from women in the medical or legal professions where there was no shortage of qualified women. For that reason the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was presenting three amendments, reiterating the principles which the Assembly could not abandon. Positive discrimination had to be deployed if the situation was to change.

MM Lindblad and Schmied expressed their viewpoints.

The President said that 3 amendments had been tabled for the draft resolution.

Amendment no. 1 was presented by **Mrs Wurm**, on behalf of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. **Mr Gardetto**, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, indicated that the committee was in favour. Amendment no. 1 was **adopted**.

Mrs Wurm also presented amendments no. 2, and no. 3. **Mr Gardetto** indicated that the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights was against.

Amendments no. 2 and no. 3 were **adopted**.

The President put to the vote the draft resolution set out in Doc. 11182, which was **adopted** as amended with one abstention (Resolution 1540 (2007)).

12. SOCIAL, HEALTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS

The role of ethical and solidarity-based financing and responsible consumption in social cohesion

Doc. 11120

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Social, Health and Family Affairs:
Mrs Gratiela Denisa Iordache (Romania, ALDE)*

Mr Preda, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Social, Health and Family Affairs, presented the report on “The role of ethical and solidarity-based financing and responsible consumption in social cohesion” (Doc. 11120), pointing out that financial mechanisms geared to an ethical and solidarity-based economy could contribute to social development in a number of ways. The Assembly had to recognise the special importance of ethical and solidarity-based involvement in the economy and give backing to the activities of the European dialogue platform on ethical and solidarity initiatives, a Council of Europe initiative since 2004 to promote dialogue between public authorities and civil society.

Mrs Pernaska, Chair of the Committee on Social, Health and Family Affairs, called on the Standing Committee to back the draft resolution.

The President put to the vote the draft resolution set out in Doc. 11120 which was **adopted** unanimously (Resolution 1541 (2007)).

13. CULTURE, SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

Professional education and training of journalists

Doc. 11170

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education:
Mr Rafael Huseynov (Azerbaijan, ALDE)*

Mr Huseynov presented the report on “Professional education and training of journalists” (Doc. 11170). Freedom of expression, the situation of the media and media independence had always been a recurring subject of concern as much for the Parliamentary Assembly, which had adopted a great many resolutions and recommendations in this area, as for the Council of Europe as a whole, which had produced several major instruments. The situation of the media was an indicator of the democratic development of a State. For the media to function properly, journalists had to demonstrate responsibility and professionalism. Accordingly, they required adequate training, fully in keeping with the present realities, demands and challenges of their profession.

Mr Legendre, Chair of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, said that the report was based on the conclusions of a seminar on media freedom and ethics, co-organised by the Sub-committee on the media in Baku in November 2006.

The President put to the vote the draft recommendation set out in Doc. 11170, which was **adopted** unanimously (Recommendation 1789 (2007)).

14. ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE AND LOCAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS

a. Electronic waste and the environment

Doc. 11106

Rapporteur of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs:
Mr Osman Coşkunoglu (Turkey, SOC)

Mr Coşkunoglu presented the report on “Electronic waste and the environment” (Doc. 11106), pointing out that the electronic waste generated by technological progress was a considerable burden on the environments of our countries and its volume was expanding three times faster than that of solid municipal waste. The proposals set out in the report drew on two European Union directives adopted in 2003 and the United Nations Basel convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal. The proposals focused on several phases: the product design and production phase; the consumption phase; the collection, reuse and recycling phase.

Mr Schmied, Chairman of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, reiterated that the Basel convention was the only worldwide agreement on hazardous waste in existence. The States had to be encouraged to back the Ban amendment, which prohibited all hazardous waste exports from wealthy countries to poor countries and had yet to enter into force.

The President put to the vote the draft resolution set out in Doc. 11106, which was **adopted** unanimously (Resolution 1542 (2007)).

b. Management of municipal solid waste in Europe

Doc. 11173

Rapporteur of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs:
Mr Cezar Florin Preda (Romania, EPP/CD)

Mr Preda presented the report on “Management of municipal solid waste in Europe” (Doc. 11173). Proper management of solid waste was a priority for public health policy and a major challenge facing local authorities. The substantial disparities between the member States called for a coherent and integrated approach, based on minimum waste processing standards and medium- and long-term obligations.

Mr Kox backed the report on the principle but found its proposals none too convincing. The key strategy at this stage was prevention, and this idea was lacking in the report. Sounding the alarm was an outmoded approach, as the volume of waste had been a reality to be managed for decades.

Mr Schmied, Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, pointed out that the report was intended to promote a common platform for better waste management and the implementation of a minimum legislation.

The President put to the vote the draft resolution set out in Doc. 11173, which was **adopted** with one abstention (Resolution 1543 (2007)).

15. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN

The situation of women in the South Caucasus

Doc. 11178

Rapporteur of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men:
Mrs Vera Oskina (Russia, EDG)

Mrs Oskina presented the report on “The situation of women in the South Caucasus” (Doc. 11178) compiled from the information gathered at a regional parliamentary seminar, followed by a hearing, organised in Tbilisi in October 2005, and her fact-finding visits to the three countries in April 2006. The report covered topics such as combating violence against women, the participation of women in public and political life, combating job discrimination, women's health, the situation of refugee and displaced women, the situation of women in prison, the role of women in conflict prevention etc. The discussion had not been completely open and a number of questions had gone unanswered, as a long list of subjects, beginning with women's reproductive health or violence, remained taboo in these countries. She regretted that she had not been able to broach

themes that were just as much a priority, such as poverty among women, with the situation of women in the South Caucasus being so difficult. She hoped that the political authorities would have the heart to find responses to the problems raised in the report.

Mr Çavuşoğlu mentioned the situation of refugee or displaced women.

Mr Lloyd thought that combating domestic violence was an absolute priority.

Mr Ateş agreed and said that the campaign against domestic violence was enjoying great success in Turkey.

Mrs Oskina reiterated that domestic violence remained a priority for the committee. She had also been shocked by the situation of refugees in some of the countries she had visited.

Mrs Bilgehan, Chair of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, welcomed the report presented, which gave a highly comprehensive overview of the situation of women in a region posing acute problems. The Assembly had to invite the States concerned to make the situation of women and the promotion of equality an absolute priority.

The President thanked the rapporteur. He put to the vote the draft resolution set out in Doc. 11178, which was **adopted** unanimously (Resolution 1544 (2007)). The draft recommendation set out in Doc. 11178, was also **adopted** unanimously (Recommendation 1790) (2007)).

16. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

17. NEXT MEETING

The Standing Committee **confirmed** that the next meeting would be held in Belgrade (Serbia) on Thursday, 24 May 2007.

The meeting **rose** at 12.45 pm.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

President of the Parliamentary Assembly

Mr	van der LINDEN, René	The Netherlands
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Vice-Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly

Mr	HÖRSTER, Joachim	Germany
Mr	LINDBLAD, Göran	Sweden
Mr	LLOYD, Tony	United Kingdom
Mrs	LAVTIŽAR-BEBLER, Darja	Slovenia
Mr	SCHMIED, Walter	Switzerland
Mr	PREDA, Cezar Florin	Romania
Mr	RIGONI, Andrea	Italy
Mr	ALIGRUDIĆ, Miloš	Serbia
Mr	SAMBEVSKI, Oliver	« the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia »

Chairpersons of Political Groups

Mr	de PUIG, Lluís Maria	Socialist Group
Mr	EÖRSI, Mátyás	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
Mr	KOX, Tiny	Group of the Unified European Left

Chairpersons of National Delegations

Mrs	WURM, Gisela	Austria
Mr	HENRY, Jean-Pol	Belgium
Mr	LOUTFI, Younal	Bulgaria
Mr	MATUŠIĆ, Frano	Croatia
Mrs	ČURDOVÁ, Anna	Czech Republic
Mr	ELO, Mikko	Finland
Mr	HÖRSTER, Joachim	Germany
Mrs	PAPADIMITRIOU, Elsa	Greece
Mr	SZABÓ, Zoltán	Hungary
Mr	RIGONI, Andrea	Italy
Mr	BERZINS, Andris	Latvia
Mr	VAREIKIS, Egidijus (pour M. PALECKIS, Algirdas)	Lithuania
Mr	GARDETTO, Jean-Charles	Monaco
Mr	IWIŃSKI, Tadeusz (pour M. KARSKI, Karol)	Poland
Mr	PREDA, Cezar Florin (pour M. FRUNDA, György)	Romania
Mr	ALIGRUDIĆ, Miloš	Serbia
Mr	ZALA, Boris	Slovakia
Mrs	LAVTIŽAR-BEBLER, Darja	Slovénia

Mr	de PUIG, Lluís Maria	Spain
Mr	LINDBLAD, Göran	Sweden
Mr	MARTY, Dick	Switzerland
Mr	SAMBEVSKI, Oliver	« the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia »
Mr	LLOYD, Tony	United Kingdom

Chairperson of the Political Affairs Committee

Mr	ATEŞ, Abdülkadir	Turkey
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Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Mr	MARTY, Dick	Switzerland
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Chairperson of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Mrs	PERNASKA, Lajla	Albania
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Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

Mr	ÇAVUSOĞLU, Mevlüt	Turkey
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Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Mr	LEGENDRE, Jacques	France
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Chairperson of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs

Mr	SCHMIED, Walter	Switzerland
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Chairperson of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Mrs	BÍLGEHAN, Gülsün	Turkey
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Chairperson of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities

Mr	GROSS, Andreas	Switzerland
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Chairperson of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee)

Mr	LINTNER, Eduard	Germany
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Rapporteurs (not members of the Standing Committee):

Mr CEBECI Erol Aslan
 Mr HUSEYNOV Rafael
 Mr COSKUNOĞLU Osman
 Mrs OSKINA Vera

Turkey
 Azerbaijan
 Turkey
 Russian Federation

Also present:**Members of the Parliamentary Assembly**

Mrs MARKOVIĆ Milica
Mr REYMANN Marc

Bosnia-and-Herzegovina
France

Invited Guests

Mr LENNMARKER Göran, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Mr OLIVER Spencer Robert, Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Others

Mr DANILOVIĆ Marko, Secretary General of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia

Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly

Mr Mateo SORINAS, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly
Mr Wojciech SAWICKI, Director General of the Parliamentary Assembly
Mr Horst SCHADE, Director of the General services of the Parliamentary Assembly
Mr Kjell TORBIÖRN, Head of the Office of the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly and Head of Secretariat of the Bureau of the Assembly
Mr Petr SICH, Head of the Private Office of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly
Mrs Valérie CLAMER, Secretary of the Standing Committee

Council of Europe

Mrs Maud DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe
Mrs Mireille PAULUS, Deputy Secretary of the Committee of Ministers
Mrs Stefania KRUGER, Advisor, Private Office of the Secretary General and of the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

APPENDIX II

SYNOPSIS

The **Standing Committee**, meeting on 16 March 2007 in Paris with Mr van der Linden, President of the Assembly:

- observed one minute's silence to pay tribute to Senator Daniel Goulet, member of the French delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly, who died on 25 February 2007;
- held an exchange of views with Mr Göran Lennmarker, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE;
- ratified the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegations of the Czech Republic, Iceland, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Switzerland;
- ratified the changes in the composition of general Assembly committees in respect of the delegations of the Czech Republic, Georgia, Iceland, Portugal, Switzerland and the United Kingdom;
- ratified the references and modifications of reference proposed by the Bureau which are contained in Appendix I hereafter;
- held an exchange of views on the observation of the parliamentary elections in Serbia (21 January 2007) on the basis of the report by the *Ad Hoc* Committee of the Bureau;
- held a current affairs debate on the promotion by Council of Europe member states of an international moratorium on the death penalty, introduced by Mr Rigoni, Chairperson of the Italian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly;
- adopted, on behalf of the Assembly, the following texts:

Resolution 1539 (2007)	The United States of America and international law
Resolution 1540 (2007)	Improving selection procedures for CPT members
Resolution 1541 (2007)	The role of ethical and solidarity-based financing and responsible consumption in social cohesion
Resolution 1542 (2007)	Electronic waste and the environment
Resolution 1543 (2007)	Management of municipal solid waste in Europe
Resolution 1544 (2007)	The situation of women in the South Caucasus
Recommendation 1788 (2007)	The United States of America and international law
Recommendation 1789 (2007)	Professional education and training of journalists
Recommendation 1790 (2007)	The situation of women in the South Caucasus;

- postponed consideration of the report on Respect for the principle of gender equality in civil law (Doc. 11177) to the next Standing Committee meeting;
- confirmed that the next meeting of the Standing Committee will be held in Belgrade on Thursday 24 May 2007.

APPENDIX 1

Decisions on documents tabled for reference to committees

A. REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES

Reference No. 3309 Doc. 11122
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Wodarg and others
The election of committee chairpersons and their term of office

Reference to the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities *to be taken into account in the preparation of the report on "the application and amendment of various provisions of the Rules of Procedure"*

Reference No. 3310 Doc. 11149
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Ilicali and others
Enhancing rural development via organic farming

Transmission to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for information*

Reference No. 3311 Doc. 11152
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Fischer and others
Information technologies and the traceability of products, particularly food products

Transmission to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for information*

Reference No. 3312 Doc. 11154
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Scheer and others
The environment and renewable energies

Reference to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for report at the Standing Committee*

Reference No. 3313 Doc. 11155
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Eörsi and others
Secret ballot – European code of conduct on secret balloting, including guidelines for politicians, observers and voters

Reference to the Political Affairs Committee *for report at the Standing Committee*

Reference No. 3314 Doc. 11157
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Lindblad and others
Discrimination against the Hungarian minority in the Romanian higher education system

Transmission to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education *for information*

Reference No. 3315 Doc. 11159
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Arnaut and others
The European sport model: need of preservation

Reference to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education *for report*

Reference No. 3318 Bureau decision
Request by the Parliament of Kazakhstan for observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly

Reference to Political Affairs Committee *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion*

Reference No. 3319 Bureau decision (Doc. 11209)
Request for an opinion by the Committee of Ministers on the draft Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

Reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report* and to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *for opinion*

Reference No. 3320 Bureau decision
Request for an opinion by the Committee of Ministers on the Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union

Reference to the Political Affairs Committee *for report*

Reference No. 3321 Bureau decision
Distance voting, including e-voting

Reference to the Political Affairs Committee *for report*

Reference No. 3322 Bureau decision
An internationally recognised status of election observers

Reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*

Reference No 3323 Follow-up to the current affairs debate
Promotion by Council of Europe member states of an international moratorium on the death penalty

Reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report* and to the Political Affairs Committee *for opinion*

Reference No. 3324 Resolution 1533 (2007)
Developments as regards the future status of Kosovo

Reference to the Political Affairs Committee *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion*

B. MODIFICATION OF REFERENCES

Reference No. 3316 Doc. 11069
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Mendes Bota and others
Sustainable development and tourism: towards quality growth
Ref. 3290 of 22 January 2007

Reference to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *for report* and to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education and the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for opinion*

Reference No. 3317 Doc. 11084
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Çavuşoğlu and others
The problem of environmental refugees
Ref. 3297 of 22 January 2007

Reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *for report* and to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for opinion*

C. EXTENSION OF REFERENCES

1. Doc. 10488
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Gross and others
Guidelines for the status of the opposition in a democratic parliament
Ref. 3069 of 25 April 2005 – Validity: 25 April 2007

Extension until 31 December 2007

2. **Doc. 10522**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Jakavonis and others
Disposal and storage of spent nuclear fuel and long-lived radioactive nuclear waste
Ref. 3076 of 29 April 2005 – Validity: 29 April 2007

Extension until 30 September 2007