

# The Session

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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.



Monday 14 April 2008

**Final version**

<http://assembly.coe.int>

## 14-18 April 2008

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- Address by Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko
- Current affairs debate: the consequences of the declaration of independence by the Kosovo Assembly
- Child and teenage suicide in Europe: a serious public health issue

### Thursday 17

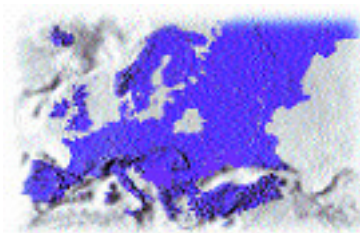
- Urgent debate: the functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia
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- Immigration from sub-Saharan Africa
- Sustainable development and tourism: towards quality growth

# The 47

The Council of Europe brings together 47 democracies including 22 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, Montenegro, 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 636 members (318 representatives and 318 substitutes) from the national parliaments of the 47 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), Montenegro (2007).

Applications for membership: Belarus (12 March 1993).

The Special Guest status of the Belarus parliament was suspended on 13 January 1997.

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

## The political groups



**203**

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



**182**

Socialist Group (SOC)



**94**

European Democrat Group (EDG)



**92**

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)



**38**

Group of the Unified European Left (UEL)

## The Assembly committees

**84 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)

**27 seats**

Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs



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# Monday 14 April 2008

☞ Morning (11.30 a.m.-1 p.m.)

## ♦ **Opening of the second part of the 2008 Ordinary Session**

Parliamentary Assembly President Lluís Maria de Puig opened the second part of the 2008 Ordinary Session and made an opening statement.

The Assembly examined the credentials of any new members notified by national delegations and elected Andros Kyprianou as a Vice-President of the Assembly with respect to Cyprus, before dealing with changes in the membership of committees.

It also adopted its final agenda, deciding to hold an urgent debate on "the functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia" on Thursday 17 April at 10 a.m., and a current affairs debate on "the consequences of the declaration of independence by the Kosovo Assembly" on Wednesday 16 April at about 4 p.m.

## ♦ **Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee**

*Docs. 11534, 11535, 11536*

*Rapporteur: John Greenway (United Kingdom, EDG)*

The progress report covers the discussions held and decisions reached by the Bureau and the Standing Committee since the last part-session, including reports on the Assembly's observations of the following elections:

- Second round of the Presidential election in Serbia (3 February 2008)
- Parliamentary elections in Monaco (3 February 2008)
- Presidential election in Armenia (19 February 2008)
- Presidential election in the Russian Federation (2 March 2008)
- Presidential election in Montenegro (6 April 2008).

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## **Monday 14 April 2008**

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-5 p.m.)

◆ **Address by Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic**

The Slovak Republic currently holds the six-month chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Following his address, the President will answer questions from members of the Assembly.

◆ **Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee (continued)**

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# Tuesday 15 April 2008

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

## ◆ **Election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights**

*Doc. 11529 and addendum*

*Voting takes place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the area behind the presidential rostrum*

According to the European Convention on Human Rights, the six-year terms of office of half the judges of the European Court of Human Rights expire every three years, resulting in a periodic renewal of half the Court. The procedure for this renewal, together with the need to elect judges in respect of states that have recently joined the Council of Europe, has meant a number of elections are now due.

Under the Convention, each judge is elected by the Parliamentary Assembly from a list of three candidates presented by the Contracting State 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.

Under the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, 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 16 April, for which a relative majority of votes will be sufficient.

Contact in the secretariat: Andrew Drzemczewski, tel. 2326.

## ◆ **European Muslim communities confronted with extremism**

*Doc. 11540*

*Report of the Political Affairs Committee*

*Rapporteur: João Bosco Mota Amaral (Portugal, EPP/CD)*

*Opinion of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population*

*Rapporteur: Hakki Keskin (Germany, UEL)*

*Opinion of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education*

*Rapporteur: Mehmet Tekelioğlu (Turkey, EPP/CD)*

*Opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*

*Rapporteur: Gisela Wurm (Austria, SOC)*

Islam is the second religion of Europe, and is woven into the fabric of European life. Yet many were disconcerted to learn that some young Muslims, born and brought up in Europe, had been involved in the terrorist attacks in London, Madrid and elsewhere.

According to the Political Affairs Committee, a vivid distinction must be drawn between Islam as a faith – peaceably professed by millions of Europeans – and Islamic fundamentalism as an ideology, which advocates an extremist agenda, promotes a society at odds with human rights and democratic values, and in its worst form advocates the indiscriminate slaughter of innocents.

European governments and Muslim communities must work hand in hand to prevent radicalisation, says the committee. Muslim leaders should firmly and unequivocally condemn terrorism, highlight the Islamic faith's compatibility with core European values, and promote moderate Islam in the media, in

schools and in prisons. European countries, for their part, should eliminate factors which create fertile ground for extremism – such as discrimination or Islamophobia – and promote the political and civic integration of immigrants.

Finally, they should openly ask whether their foreign policy – in particular as regards the Middle East – may have contributed to radicalisation, and ensure that they track and bring to justice terrorists in ways that strictly respect human rights and the rule of law.

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

### ◆ **Address by Angela Merkel, Federal Chancellor of Germany**

Following her address, the Federal Chancellor will answer questions from members of the Assembly.

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# Tuesday 15 April 2008

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-8 p.m.)

◆ **Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly presented by Jan Kubiš, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers**

Following his presentation, the Chairperson will answer questions from members of the Assembly.

◆ **Annual activity report 2007 by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights**

*Doc. 11553 rev.*

Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, will present his annual activity report for 2007 and answer parliamentarians' questions.

◆ **Abuse of the criminal justice system in Belarus**

*Doc. 11464*

*Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights*

*Rapporteur: Christos Pourgourides (Cyprus, EPP/CD)*

The criminal justice system in Belarus has for several years been subject to numerous politically-motivated abuses, according to the Legal Affairs Committee. Opposition figures have disappeared, independent-minded journalists and diplomats have met mysterious deaths, and peaceful demonstrators have been beaten, all without proper investigation. Meanwhile the legitimate, peaceful activities of NGOs and the media have been turned into crimes, and political opponents find themselves facing arbitrary charges and unfair court proceedings.

The committee calls for the repeal of unjust laws, such as the so-called "anti-revolution" law, and an end to the death penalty, and appeals to judges, prosecutors and police officers in Belarus to use "personal courage and imagination" to mitigate the effects of such abusive legislation. Meanwhile, abuses and those involved in perpetrating them should be carefully recorded so that when Belarus one day joins the family of European nations upholding human rights, justice can be done and individuals held to account.

In the meantime, the international community should continue to impose targeted sanctions such as visa-bans and asset-freezes on Belarus officials involved in violations, protect political prisoners and their families and try to help victims, perhaps through a dedicated working group involving local and international human rights defenders.

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

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# Wednesday 16 April 2008

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights  
(possible second round)**

*Doc. 11529 and addendum*

*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, 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, for which a relative majority of votes is sufficient.

◆ **Access to safe and legal abortion in Europe**

*Doc. 11537 rev.*

*Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*

*Rapporteur: Gisela Wurm (Austria, SOC)*

*Opinion of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee*

*Rapporteur: Christine McCafferty (United Kingdom, SOC)*

Abortion is legal in the vast majority of Council of Europe member states: according to the rapporteur it is available on request – in theory – everywhere except Andorra, Ireland, Malta, Monaco and Poland.

Abortion should be avoided as far as possible, the Equal Opportunities Committee believes, and certainly never used as a family planning method, but it should not be banned outright, since this mainly leads to dangerous and traumatic clandestine abortions.

Yet even where it is theoretically legal, many women do not have effective access to abortion because of the lack of local health-care facilities, the lack of doctors willing to carry it out, and the time involved in repeated medical consultations and statutory waiting periods. The net effect is that women who are better-informed or better-off can often obtain legal and safe abortions more easily.

This leads to discrimination, and such restrictions should be lifted, according to the committee: suitable financial cover should be offered to women seeking abortions, and the appropriate conditions for medical and psychological care put in place. At the same time, to avoid as many unwanted pregnancies (and therefore abortions) as possible, men and women should have access to contraception at reasonable cost, while education on sex and relationships should be made compulsory in schools.

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

◆ **Address by Yulia Tymoshenko, Prime Minister of Ukraine**

Following her address, the Prime Minister will answer questions from members of the Assembly.



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## Wednesday 16 April 2008

Afternoon (3 p.m.-7 p.m.)

◆ **Access to safe and legal abortion in Europe (continued)**

◆ **Current affairs debate: the consequences of the declaration of independence by the Kosovo Assembly**

The first speaker is due to be Björn von Sydow, Vice-Chairperson of the Swedish parliamentary delegation, which requested the holding of a current affairs debate on this subject.

No report is prepared for a current affairs debate, and there is no vote.

◆ **Child and teenage suicide in Europe: a serious public health issue**

*Doc. 11547*

*Report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee*

*Rapporteur: Bernard Marquet (Monaco, ALDE)*

More people kill themselves each year than die in road accidents, according to the Political Affairs Committee. It is time that teenage suicide – often a call for help from people grappling for the first time with the complexities of adult life – was recognised as a serious public health issue, with underlying causes that are social as well as psychological.

Several member states have taken steps to prevent teenage suicide, but these measures should be tried Europe-wide: programmes that shape children's and teenagers' attitudes to suicide, and death in general, as well as opening a dialogue with troubled teenagers on issues such as abuse, cultural and sexual differences. The committee is particularly concerned at evidence that suicides are higher among young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people – a sign of the stigmatisation and discrimination they can face. The internet too has played a role, glorifying suicide or enabling teenage "suicide pacts".

There is plenty that governments can do: they should acknowledge "suicidology" as an academic subject in its own right and fund research into it, use the web to combat pro-suicide content as part of their public service role, and do more to combat drug and alcohol abuse in the young. But the key lies in psycho-social support: walk-in centres or helplines for troubled teenagers, as well as family support programmes which give priority to young people who have attempted suicide already, and which involve parents and close friends too.

Contact in the secretariat: Laurent Pfaadt, tel. 3453.

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# Thursday 17 April 2008

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Urgent debate: the functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia**

*Report of the Monitoring Committee*

*Co-rapporteurs: Georges Colombier (France, EPP/CD) and John Prescott (United Kingdom, SOC)*

This report is due to be approved by the Monitoring Committee during its meeting on Tuesday 15 April at 8.30 a.m.

◆ **Address by Bernard Kouchner, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of France**

Following his address, the Foreign Minister will answer questions from members of the Assembly.

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# Thursday 17 April 2008

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-6.30 p.m.)

## ◆ **Promoting the teaching of European literature**

*Doc. 11527*

*Report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education*

*Rapporteur: Jacques Legendre (France, EPP/CD)*

Knowledge of the great works of literature – whether past or contemporary – enriches thought and enhances life, according to the Culture Committee. While learning about literature in the mother tongue is a natural part of forging a national consciousness among schoolchildren, learning about other literatures helps inculcate European citizenship.

The rapporteur explores what this might mean in his report, touching on Europe's openness to world literary influences, and its contribution to the global spread of ideas over the centuries, as well as evoking the multiple voices, experiences and languages of its writers. But he acknowledges some of the challenges too: the East-West imbalances caused by translation policy and Soviet intellectual isolation, as well as the dizzying impact of new technology.

European countries need to promote the teaching of European literature at all levels, the committee concludes, and support the translation of texts past and present into and from European languages. Websites on Europe's literary heritage should also be encouraged – including the European Parliament's proposal to establish a digital library as a single, multilingual point of access to Europe's cultural heritage.

### **Statement by Amin Maalouf, writer**

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

## ◆ **The accession of the European Union/European Community to the European Convention on Human Rights**

*Doc. 11533*

*Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights*

*Rapporteur: Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc (Netherlands, EPP/CD)*

Today there is broad consensus that it is time for the European Union to begin the process of acceding to the European Convention on Human Rights. The legal path has been laid out, and in the Treaty of Lisbon the 27 countries of the EU unambiguously declared their intention to take this step – though only on a unanimous vote after approval by the European Parliament.

The case for accession is clear, according to the Legal Affairs Committee: without it, divergences in human rights standards might appear, European citizens who feel their human rights have been violated by EU institutions will have no direct access to the Strasbourg Court, and there is a risk that the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union may grow out of step. As a community based on law, committed to shared European values, accession would convey a clear message of the EU's commitment to human rights.

With a clear political will on both sides and a legal framework in place, EU governments should now apply themselves to the task of accession without delay, and take a positive, creative approach to solving the technical and legal questions remaining.

Contact in the secretariat: Isild Heurtin, tel. 4100.

**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 current and future developments at the European Court of Human Rights, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council of Europe and the Council's 2009 budget.**

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# Friday 18 April 2008

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

## ◆ **Immigration from sub-Saharan Africa**

*Doc. 11526*

*Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography*

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

Migratory flows from Africa currently make up a large share of migration into Europe. Of this group, migrants from sub-Saharan Africa are one of the largest in number, with particular characteristics and problems of their own. Most have come by irregular channels, at great risk to their lives, or have overstayed temporary visas and are now living in Europe irregularly. Many are strongly opposed to going home, creating great difficulties for authorities who try to return them, yet they face additional discrimination because of xenophobic reactions to their African origins.

European states therefore have a particular responsibility towards these migrants, according to the Migration Committee. It proposes a series of steps including more and better information on how sub-Saharan migratory flows work, more humane and secure removals, improved provision for migrant students, closer harmonisation of European legislation, and stronger links with African countries, including development aid. European states are reminded that sub-Saharan migrants have the same rights and duties as others, and have the right to be treated humanely.

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

## ◆ **Sustainable development and tourism: towards quality growth**

*Doc. 11539*

*Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development*

*Rapporteur: José Mendes Bota (Portugal, EPP/CD)*

*Opinion of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education*

*Rapporteur: Kent Olsson (Sweden, EPP/CD)*

*Opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs*

*Rapporteur: Carina Ohlsson (Sweden, SOC)*

Europe is the world's most visited region. As travel becomes easier and cheaper, the flow of tourists is likely to increase still more. There is a real risk, says the Economic Affairs Committee, of overcrowding, congestion and strain on natural and cultural resources at Europe's main tourist hotspots. One answer could be to develop tourism in Europe's more disadvantaged regions – off the beaten track – helping to boost local incomes hit by economic restructuring.

But even in the better-known tourist areas, the emphasis should be on value rather than volume, if Europe is to remain competitive in the long term, according to the committee. The principles of sustainable development, and a holistic approach which takes the larger picture into account, should help Europe to become not only the most popular but also the most successful tourist destination.

Authenticity and diversity should become the watchwords of quality growth in the sector, while European policymakers will need to pay more attention to the issues of safety and security, congestion management and the threat of climate change, as well as finding creative new ways to work with the private sector. Europe can either reap vast benefits from the sustainable development of tourism, the committee concludes, or face the grim consequences of failing to manage unbridled growth.

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

◆ **Closure of the second part of the 2008 Ordinary Session**

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# 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.

Meetings of political groups take place on Monday morning and late afternoon as well as Wednesday morning.

## 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.

**Agenda:** For each part-session the Bureau prepares a draft agenda listing the sittings at which the items will be examined. **The draft agenda** 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 agenda (Rule 26.4 of the Rules

of Procedure). A member may propose an amendment to the draft agenda drawn up by the Bureau. The adoption of such a motion requires a majority of the votes cast (Rule 26.5). Once adopted, the agenda 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 agenda is published (Rule 26) 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 30 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 23 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 January 2008 in two parts, the Rules and complementary texts in one part, and the Statute of the Council of Europe in another part. They are available in bilingual versions (English/French).

## **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 100 of the Rules of Procedure and forward), the **time limits for tabling amendments** are the following (where appropriate the Bureau may decide to change these limits, in particular for urgent debates or debates on general policy):

- for debates on the afternoon of Monday 14 April: Monday 14 April at 12 noon;
- for debates on Tuesday 15 April: Monday 14 April at 4 p.m.;
- for all other debates (except urgent debates, unforeseen debates or as otherwise indicated on the agenda): 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 one hour before the scheduled end of the sitting preceding that in which the debate begins.

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 24.2). 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.

For motions tabled during a part-session, the Bureau has decided that only those motions which have been tabled by **12 noon on the Tuesday of a part-session** 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 25.2). 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. If the national parliament cannot make all such appointments in time for the opening of a new Ordinary Session, it may

decide, for a period of not more than six months after the election, to be represented in the Assembly by members of the existing delegation (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, of one or more political groups, 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 draft 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 50.4).

An urgent debate is based on a written report and gives rise to a vote, whereas a current affairs debate is not based on a report.

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 draft agenda. The request must be made in writing to the President of the Assembly in time for the last meeting of the Bureau before the opening of the part-session. The possible choice between several requests is made by the Bureau, a decision which needs to be endorsed 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. Although there is no vote on any text, 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 Badge 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 welcome Protocol desk at the main entrance of the Palais de l'Europe in order to receive their card. Staff of the Badge Service, 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 Badge 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 11.30 a.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). For the first sitting on Monday at 11.30 a.m., the deadline is 10 a.m. 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 1074, 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 only 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 one and a half hours before the start of the sitting (i.e. at 10 a.m.). 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 106 to 108 of the Rules of Procedure.

**Speaking time** is limited to a total of 13 minutes for committee rapporteurs (to present the report and to reply to the debate) and 3 minutes for rapporteurs for opinion, to present the opinion or to reply to the debate. 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 Chairperson 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 agenda 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 agenda is published and the name of the guest speaker appears, unless the draft agenda specifies that there is only one question from each political group. For most 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 of written questions 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. In this context, a precise deadline is specified in the draft agenda. The written questions for oral answer by the Chairperson are then published as an Assembly document. In addition, subject to the consent of the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, the final fifteen minutes of the questions for oral answer may be reserved for spontaneous questions. A separate list, mutually exclusive of the list of written questions, is kept by the Table Office for this purpose.

For the other guest speakers, there is no formal deadline as such, as the questions are "spontaneous". However, members have an interest in registering their names as early as possible, as there is usually not enough time to answer all questions.

### **Electronic voting**

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

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

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

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

Rule 39.9 indicates that a member cannot modify his or her vote after the voting is closed.

The names of Assembly members who participate in votes, as well as how they voted in each case, are published on the Assembly's website.

### **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

## Secretariat of the Assembly

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## Table Office

(Speakers' lists, questions and amendments)

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## Protocol

Head of Protocol  
Rafael Benitez, office 0149, tel. 2137

## 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.