

The Session

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

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Monday 23 June 2008

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23-27 June 2008

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- Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Assembly, presented by Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt
- The fight against harm to the environment in the Black Sea

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- The functioning of democratic institutions in Azerbaijan
- Empowering women in a modern, multicultural society
- The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD): a focal partner for change in transition countries, and statement by EBRD President Jean Lemierre

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- *Special debate on the state of democracy in Europe:*
 - Specific challenges facing European democracies: the case of diversity and migration
 - Measures to improve the democratic participation of migrants, statement by Jan Niessen of the Migration Policy Group
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- Urgent debate on the implementation by Armenia of Assembly Resolution 1609 (2008)

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- General policy debate on the situation in China
- Address by Serbian President Boris Tadić
- Urgent debate on the functioning of democratic institutions in Turkey: recent developments
- Activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and statement by ICRC President Jakob Kellenberger

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- Preventing the first form of violence against children: abandonment at birth
- Gökçeada (Imbros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos)

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



201

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



184

Socialist Group (SOC)



98

European Democrat Group (EDG)



90

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)



36

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



Monday 23 June 2008

☞ Morning (11.30 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Opening of the third part of the 2008 Ordinary Session**

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

The Assembly approved the credentials of new members notified by national delegations and dealt with changes in the membership of committees.

It also adopted its final agenda, deciding to hold urgent debates on "The functioning of democratic institutions in Turkey: recent developments" on Thursday 26 June at 3 p.m. and on "The implementation by Armenia of Assembly Resolution 1609 (2008)" on Wednesday 25 June at around 5 p.m.

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

Rapporteur: Boris Zala (Slovak Republic, SOC)

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:

- Parliamentary elections in Georgia (21 May 2008)
- Parliamentary elections in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (1 and 15 June 2008)

Monday 23 June 2008

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-5 p.m.)

**Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the
Parliamentary Assembly presented by Carl Bildt, Minister for
Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Chairperson of the Committee of
Ministers**

Written questions (Doc. 11649)

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

◆ **The fight against harm to the environment in the Black Sea**

Doc. 11632

*Report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs
Rapporteur: Laurențiu Mironescu (Romania, EPP/CD)*

The Black Sea was once one of Europe's most bountiful fisheries, but industrialisation and a population explosion have caused overfishing, eutrophication and a flow of chemical and radioactive poisons which risk turning it into an unprecedented ecological disaster, the Environment Committee warns.

Only a joint effort by the six states bordering the Black Sea, and those of the rivers that drain into it, can save the situation. But while there are plenty of existing co-operation bodies, few deal exclusively with the environment, the most pressing problem of all.

Towns on the shores of the Black Sea must urgently modernise their sewage systems, its ports must cut oil pollution, while the hundreds of tons of cadmium, mercury, copper, lead, zinc and chromium draining into it each year must be drastically reduced. Joint supervision of fishing, sustainable tourism and a greater reliance on renewable energy sources in the region would also help. Meanwhile the creation of a Black Sea Euroregion should help to foster co-operation on sustainable development projects. Without these steps, this crucible of cultures, once a major source of food and recreation, risks becoming a dead zone.

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

Tuesday 24 June 2008

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **The functioning of democratic institutions in Azerbaijan**

Doc. 11627

Report of the Monitoring Committee

Co-rapporteurs: Andres Herkel (Estonia, EPP/CD) and Evguenia Jivkova (Bulgaria, SOC)

The Monitoring Committee expresses great concern at the deteriorating human rights situation in Azerbaijan ahead of the forthcoming Presidential election, pointing to restrictions on freedom of expression, the intimidation of opposition journalists and limits on freedom of assembly and association which it says are "inadmissible in a Council of Europe member state". The committee demands the immediate release of opposition journalists Ganimat Zahidov, Sakit Zahidov and Eynulla Fatullayev, as well as five others seen as political prisoners.

All elections held by Azerbaijan since it joined the Council of Europe have generally failed to meet basic democratic standards, the committee says, and it believes the country cannot afford to fall short again when it comes to the forthcoming Presidential poll. Spelling out a "road-map" ahead of the elections, the committee calls on the authorities to ensure balanced election commissions and an efficient complaints procedure, allocate political parties and blocs free broadcast time and print space in state media under equal conditions, and guarantee the opposition's right to hold public rallies.

On the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh – which Azerbaijan has pledged to solve peacefully together with Armenia – the committee says sustainable democratic development in Azerbaijan will be extremely difficult "as long as the country's territorial integrity has not been restored".

Contact in the secretariat: Marine Trevisan, tel. 3716.

◆ **Empowering women in a modern, multicultural society**

Doc. 11612

Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Ingrida Circene (Latvia, EPP/CD)

Doc. 11621

Opinion of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Rapporteur: Azis Pollozhani ("the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", SOC)

The Equal Opportunities Committee believes there has been a backlash against gender equality taking place for several years now. Quota policies are being called into question – even within the Assembly itself – while arguments put forward in the name of culture or religion seek to return women to traditional roles. It is time for "vigorous policies" to consolidate and extend women's rights, alter traditional stereotypes and empower women in their national communities, the committee declares.

Council of Europe member states should inscribe the principle of equality between women and men into their national constitutions as a basic human right, if they have not already done so, and support its incorporation into the European Convention on Human Rights. They should refuse to accept cultural and religious relativism and combat plain discrimination, do all they can to end gender-based violence,

promote “positive measures” to achieve a balanced participation of women in public, political and economic life, and make women’s education a priority issue, as well as actively involving women in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

Finally, the committee suggests that the Council of Europe could organise a regional conference to prepare the way for a 5th UN World Conference on Women, needed in order to counter the recent questioning of women’s rights and tackle new challenges such as the spread of HIV/AIDS among women, limits on their access to new information technologies and the deliberate targeting of women during armed conflicts.

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

Tuesday 24 June 2008

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-5 p.m.)

♦ **The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development: a focal partner for change in transition countries**

Doc. 11630

Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development

Rapporteur: Maximiano Martins (Portugal, SOC)

Democratic and market reforms have improved the lives of millions of Europeans since 1992, when the Council of Europe began its partnership with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), but multiple problems remain. The EBRD is more than a bank, the Economic Affairs Committee points out, building confidence, imparting democratic values, instilling business ethics and changing mentalities – which is why it makes such a good partner for the Council of Europe.

The Bank has had another highly successful year, despite market turbulence and carrying out more of its work in riskier countries. The committee approves of the Bank's decision to focus on the poorest of its 29 countries of operation, as well as its growing support for small businesses, most notably in rural Russia and Ukraine. Greater energy efficiency and diversifying energy supply continue to be important aims. In south-east Europe and the Balkans, helping countries to move from "simplistic rivalry" to healthy competition must remain a priority.

As before, Russia remains the EBRD's largest beneficiary, where the Bank plays an important role in stimulating regulatory improvements and facilitating foreign investors. A new strategy in Belarus is welcome, and more can be done in Central Asia – though the EBRD must be careful that its investments there do not indirectly support human rights abuses. Finally, the Bank should carefully consider how to accommodate Turkey's request for funds, so that its core work of supporting transition economies is not compromised.

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

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

Wednesday 25 June 2008

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

Special debate on the state of democracy in Europe:

◆ **Specific challenges facing European democracies: the case of diversity and migration**

Doc. 11623

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Andreas Gross (Switzerland, SOC)

Opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Nursuna Memecan (Turkey, ALDE)

Globalisation and demographic change have made cultural diversity a permanent feature of contemporary democratic societies, primarily as a result of migration. Reliable estimates suggest around 8.8 per cent of Europe's total population are migrants, and the figure is increasing. All Council of Europe states are involved. But European democracies, originally designed for more homogeneous societies, have sometimes been slow to seize the opportunities of a more diverse population, leaving some parts of it feeling excluded. These shortcomings of democracies can, in extreme cases, result in violence and should be remedied without further delay.

Everybody is affected by the decisions taken in the countries where they live, which is why all long-term lawful residents should have the same basic democratic rights, the Political Affairs Committee contends. The situation for migrants and people of migrant origin has improved significantly in recent years, the committee believes, but more can be done. Access to citizenship – including dual citizenship – should be made easier, long-term lawful residents should have the right to vote and stand in local and regional elections, and any restrictions on the political activity of foreigners should be lifted. Long-term, lawfully-resident migrants should be treated the same, regardless of their country of origin.

However, this welcome expansion of democratic inclusiveness should go hand in hand with the integration of migrants and people of migrant origin, the committee points out, who should be encouraged to acquire a knowledge of the language of their country of residence, and must respect its constitutional values.

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

◆ **Measures to improve the democratic participation of migrants**

Doc. 11625

Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

Rapporteur: John Greenway (United Kingdom, EDG)

Migrants are not a homogenous group, the Migration Committee points out, and their participation in civic and political life can take many forms. The important thing, according to the committee, is that they should all be given "a fair share" in the democratic processes of Europe, while coming to be fully integrated into the host society in a non-discriminatory, two-way process. In practice, migrants' participation is particularly important at local level.

Migrants should have the right to vote and stand in at least local elections after a residence period of five years or less, the committee believes. Those lawfully living in the country for five years should be able to apply for nationality – including dual nationality – while language, income or other conditions for naturalisation should not be unduly onerous. Even irregular migrants should not be excluded from all forms of democratic participation, and regularisation of their situation should be considered if they are not to be returned to their countries of origin.

The committee also suggests ways of creating “social bridges” between communities by organising joint educational, cultural, religious or sporting activities, promoting language-learning programmes, building local links and avoiding exclusion in jobs and housing. Migrant groups should be consulted through consultative bodies, while stereotypes in the media and political discourse avoided. Finally, the committee suggests ways to promote better representation of people of migrant origin within the Assembly itself.

Statement by Jan Niessen, Director of the Migration Policy Group

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

Wednesday 25 June 2008

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

Special debate on the state of democracy in Europe (continued):

◆ Functioning of democratic institutions in Europe and progress of the Assembly's monitoring procedure

Doc. 11628 and addendum

Report of the Monitoring Committee

Rapporteur: Serhiy Holovaty (Ukraine, ALDE)

In the latest of its annual reports, covering the period April 2007 to June 2008, the Monitoring Committee undertakes a country-by-country analysis of the situation in the eleven member states currently subject to the Assembly's full monitoring procedure (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Ukraine), especially the four which faced urgent crises during that period: Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. It also reports on the three countries engaged in a post-monitoring dialogue (Bulgaria, Turkey and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia").

The committee lists both progress and shortcomings on the main issues affecting the democratic development of these countries: the separation of powers and the role of parliament, elections and electoral reform, political parties and their funding, the fight against corruption, media pluralism, and local and regional democracy. It also takes a special look at the unresolved conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria, where it regrets finding "no significant positive developments" in any of them.

Finally, the committee completes a three-year cycle by reporting on the third and last group of eleven member states not subject to monitoring or post-monitoring dialogue (Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), based on assessments from the full range of Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms.

Statement by Miklos Marschall, Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, Transparency International

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

◆ Urgent debate: the implementation by Armenia of Assembly Resolution 1609 (2008)

Report of the Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee is due to approve this report at its meeting on Monday 23 June at 2 p.m.

Thursday 26 June 2008

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **General policy debate on the situation in China**

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Jean-Claude Mignon (France, EPP/CD)

The Political Affairs Committee is due to approve this report at its meeting on Monday 23 June at 2 p.m.

◆ **Address by Boris Tadić, President of Serbia**

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

Thursday 26 June 2008

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-6.30 p.m.)

◆ **Urgent debate: the functioning of democratic institutions in Turkey: recent developments**

Report of the Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee is due to approve this report at its meeting on Tuesday 24 June at 8.30 a.m.

◆ **Activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**

Doc. 11608

Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

Rapporteur: Michael Hancock (United Kingdom, ALDE)

The Assembly produces regular reports on the activities of the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), lending political support to its precious humanitarian work, and suggesting future directions for its activities. With a worldwide staff of over 12 000, the ICRC now operates in more than 80 countries, the Migration Committee points out, quietly working round the suspicion or obstructionism of warring parties to bring food, shelter and medical aid to millions affected by war or internal conflict.

Council of Europe members states are generous in funding the ICRC's work, but must go further and champion the principles of international humanitarian law it upholds, according to the committee. For example, they could press for universal acceptance and enforcement of the treaties underpinning humanitarian law, while making sure their own armed forces and security personnel conduct operations in ways which minimise suffering for civilians and non-combatants.

Meanwhile, the ICRC's future objectives of focusing on protection, preventing forced disappearances and tackling the effects of landmines, cluster munitions and other war remnants should receive the full support of Europe's governments.

Statement by Jakob Kellenberger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Contact in the secretariat: Olga Kostenko, tel. 3473.

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, as proposed by the Assembly, include the Council of Europe and the situation in south-eastern Europe, the Council of Europe and the situation in the South Caucasus region, and current and future developments at the European Court of Human Rights.

Friday 27 June 2008

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

♦ **Preventing the first form of violence against children:
abandonment at birth**

Doc. 11538

Report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Michael Hancock (United Kingdom, ALDE)

The abandonment of children, particularly newborn babies, has always existed and always will, according to the Social Affairs Committee. There will always be young mothers who feel too ashamed, too young, too poor, too ill or too beset with problems to care for their children. Abandonment of newborns continues in certain states of central and eastern Europe, where it was even partially “institutionalised” in the past, and it is reappearing in west European states, often involving women from abroad, illegal immigrants or prostitutes. In the worst cases, mothers in distress, vulnerable and unaware of other options, are exploited by traffickers to feed the adoption market.

The response to this complex problem must be both humane and subtle, according to the committee. In the first place, women should never be pressured by doctors or other professionals to abandon their offspring, and vulnerable mothers should be made fully aware of all the child-rearing support they can receive. For those who still see no other option, accessible reception facilities – a modern-day form of the “foundling wheel” – could be made available to avoid dangerous “dumping”. Mothers should nonetheless be urged to give their identity, though “protected” forms of childbirth could be introduced in certain cases to give them some confidentiality.

To make trafficking more difficult, parents should be obliged to register newborns with the state, but the process should be totally free of charge, or even encouraged through a “birth grant”. Abandoned children should never be placed in institutions, but safe homes found for them in their own families ideally, or with foster or adoptive parents. Finally, adoption procedures should be transparent, with a preference for national over international adoption where possible, and adopted kids should always have the possibility to find out about their origins.

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

♦ **Gökçeada (Imbros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos): preserving the
bicultural character of the two Turkish islands as a model for co-
operation between Turkey and Greece in the interest of the
people concerned**

Doc. 11629

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Andreas Gross (Switzerland, SOC)

The two Turkish islands of Gökçeada (Imbros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos), situated at the entrance of the Dardanelles, have been inhabited mostly by ethnic Greeks since antiquity, governed essentially by Venetian and Ottoman rulers and, since 1922, by the Turkish Republic.

According to the rapporteur, various measures taken by the authorities in the second half of the 20th century – such as the closure of all Greek community schools on the islands, large-scale expropriations of land and other forms of harassment – together with economic decline led the vast majority of the original inhabitants of the islands to emigrate, leaving only about 250 mostly elderly members of the ethnic Greek community on Gökçeada (Imbros) and 25 on Bozcaada (Tenedos). At the same time, many thousands of exiled islanders and their offspring have demonstrated their desire to maintain close links with their homeland.

While welcoming a number of positive gestures already taken, the Legal Affairs Committee urges Turkey to take a “positive attitude” to this remaining ethnic Greek minority, including a fair settlement of education and land issues, and steps to repair damage done to the natural and cultural heritage of the islands. This would be “an excellent example of Turkey’s willingness to overcome outdated nationalist attitudes and to embrace European values of good neighbourliness”, the committee suggests, serving as a model of co-operation between Greece and Turkey.

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

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

Practical information

1. Meetings of committees and political groups

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

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

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

Each day a “**notice paper**” is produced, setting out the agenda for the two sittings of the day. It also contains other useful information relevant to the proceedings and procedure.

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 23 June: Monday 23 June at 12 noon;
- for debates on Tuesday 24 June: Monday 23 June 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 (Beejul Tanna, 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 and 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, although this may be reduced depending on the number of speakers on the list. 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.

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(Speakers' lists, questions and amendments)

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Services

Internet access

Free Wi-Fi access is available in most areas of the Palais building. Terminals with free broadband access are also available in the lobby of the debating chamber and outside the second floor meeting rooms. The Assembly's website and the Council of Europe portal, including other language portals, can be accessed here.

Badges

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

Bars and restaurants

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

Bank

Société Générale, in the entrance hall, open from 8.15 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., tel. 7060. A cash dispenser is located opposite the cafeteria (ground floor).

Bus

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

Bookshop

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

Philatelic agency

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

Post office

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

Medical centre

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

Newsagent

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

City of Strasbourg information desk

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