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COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

# The Session

THE INFORMATION GUIDE FOR PLENARY SESSIONS OF PACE

## 26-30 April 2010

### Monday 26

- Opening of the part-session and statement by Assembly President Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
- Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Assembly, presented by the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers Micheline Calmy-Rey
- Lobbying in a democratic society (European code of conduct on lobbying)

### Tuesday 27

- Election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Ukraine
- Associating women in the prevention and the solution of unsolved conflicts in Europe
- Address by Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich
- Communication by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjørn Jagland
- Joint debate on the consequences of the economic crisis:
  - The social impact of the economic crisis
  - The impact of the global economic crisis on migration in Europe
  - Women and the economic and financial crisis
  - Investing in family cohesion as a development factor in times of crisis
- Wealth, welfare and wellbeing: how to reconcile them in a changing Europe?

### Wednesday 28

- Current affairs debate: the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia, and statement by the former head of the international fact-finding mission on the conflict in Georgia, Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini
- Joint debate:
  - Piracy – a crime and a challenge for democracies
  - The necessity to take additional international legal steps to deal with sea piracy
- Annual activity report 2009 by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg, and statement by Mr Hammarberg
- Commemorating the victims of the great famine (*Holodomor*) in the former USSR
- Honouring of obligations and commitments by Montenegro

### Thursday 29

- Urgent debate: the urgent need for a constitutional reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Urgent debate: the situation in Belarus – recent developments
- Address by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov
- Effective implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights: the Interlaken process, and statement by the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Justice and Police Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf
- Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity
- Protection of "whistle-blowers"

### Friday 30

- Post-monitoring dialogue with Bulgaria
- Migrants and refugees: a continuing challenge for the Council of Europe
- Biodiversity and climate change
- The Euro-Mediterranean region: call for a Council of Europe strategy

# 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



**205**

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



**183**

Socialist Group (SOC)



**97**

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)



**96**

European Democrat Group (EDG)



**28**

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 26 April 2010

☞ Morning (11.30 a.m.-1 p.m.)

## ◆ **Opening of the second part of the 2010 Ordinary Session**

Parliamentary Assembly President Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu opened the second part of the 2010 Ordinary Session and made an opening statement.

The Assembly examined the credentials of new members, dealt with changes in the membership of committees and approved its agenda. It also elected a Vice-President with respect to Ukraine. Finally, the Assembly adopted the minutes of proceedings of the Standing Committee (12 March 2010, Paris).

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

*Doc. 12210 Parts I and II + Addendum*

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

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

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# Monday 26 April 2010

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-5 p.m.)

◆ **Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly presented by Micheline Calmy-Rey, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers**

Following her presentation, Ms Calmy-Rey will answer questions from members of the Assembly.

◆ **Lobbying in a democratic society (European code of conduct on lobbying)**

*Doc. 11937*

*Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development*

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

Lobbying in Europe is growing dramatically, according to the Economic Affairs Committee: it is estimated that over 15,000 special interest groups are now active in Brussels alone, more than 2,600 of which are based there specifically to influence EU institutions.

While it is perfectly legitimate for members of society to organise to promote their interests, unregulated or secret lobbying may undermine democratic principles and good governance, the committee believes. Moreover, in countries where democratic traditions are not deeply rooted, the absence of civil society checks and balances could be downright dangerous.

Council of Europe member states should study the experience, both positive and negative, of the US and Canada, where lobbying is already extensively regulated, the committee points out. At EU level, a welcome start was made in June 2008 with the creation of a register of lobbyists. At national level, although the parliaments of some 14 Council of Europe member states have looked into lobbying, so far only four have adopted laws regulating it: Georgia, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland.

What is needed is a European code of good conduct on lobbying, which would distinguish between paid lobbyists and the activities of civil society, establish registers of lobbyists, lay down rules on conflict of interest for politicians, civil servants, pressure groups and businesses, and ban public officials from lobbying for a certain period after leaving office. The aim, the committee concludes, should be clearly-defined, transparent and honest lobbying.

Contact in the secretariat: Chemavon Chahbazian, tel. 4292.

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## Tuesday 27 April 2010

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Ukraine**

*Doc. 12196*

*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, judges are elected by the Parliamentary Assembly from a list of three candidates nominated by the High Contracting Party concerned.

To assist it in making its decision, the Assembly invites its sub-committee on the election of judges to make confidential recommendations based on personal interviews with all the candidates and assessments of their CVs. The document containing these recommendations is made available only to members of the Assembly.

An absolute majority of votes cast is required in the first round of voting. If this is not achieved, a second round of voting will take place on Wednesday 28 April from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., for which a relative majority of votes will be sufficient.

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

◆ **Associating women in the prevention and the solution of unsolved conflicts in Europe**

*Doc. 12169*

*Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men  
Rapporteur: Krista Kiuru (Finland, SOC)*

Women's experience of conflict is different to that of men. On the one hand, they can be among the main civilian victims of conflict, in the worst cases forced to endure systematic rape at the point of a gun, or caught up in the trafficking which can be common during and after the upheaval of war. But on the other hand they are also actively engaged in dealing with its grim fallout: as society crumbles, it is often women who take the lead in providing basic income and food for their families, shouldering leadership roles in the community, or speaking out about injustice.

Yet, despite this first-hand experience, women are often excluded from the corridors of power when the fighting stops and the talking starts. As the rapporteur points out, in the Council of Europe – as in other international organisations – there are few women around the negotiating tables. Drawing on good examples from Northern Ireland, Kosovo and Azerbaijan, she shows how women can bring skills and experience that help to bridge ethnic, religious, political and cultural divides.

A gender perspective needs to be brought into peace-making activities at the highest level, according to the Equal Opportunities Committee. There need to be active policies to empower women in areas of unresolved conflict, such as at least 40 per cent female participation in decisions relating to any peace process. For its part, the Assembly should ensure a balanced participation of men and women in its conflict-resolution activities, and arrange systematic hearings with representatives of women's organisations involved in Europe's unsolved conflicts. Peace-making, the committee points out, can only be really effective when it includes everyone.

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

◆ **Address by Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine**

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

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## Tuesday 27 April 2010

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-8 p.m.)

◆ **Election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Ukraine (continued)**

*Doc. 12196*

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

◆ **Communication by Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe**

Following his communication, the Secretary General will answer questions from members of the Assembly.

◆ **Joint debate on the consequences of the economic crisis**

**The social impact of the economic crisis**

*Doc. 12026*

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

*Rapporteur: Maria de Belém Roseira (Portugal, SOC)*

The Social Affairs Committee sees the financial crisis and its fallout as an urgent call for significant change in the economic and social policies of Council of Europe member states: returning to "business as usual" – deregulation and an over-emphasis on profit and growth at the expense of social stability – will not solve it, or stop it happening again.

The key to overcoming the current crisis, the committee believes, is solidarity and adequate social security: as well as offering immediate support to those hit hardest by the crisis – including cash handouts for the very poorest – governments should strengthen social and health services by extending unemployment benefit and guaranteeing minimum pensions, increase employment, improve training and education and reinforce social dialogue. They need to boost demand by investing in infrastructure and public services, as well as "green" enterprises, and help small businesses by making affordable credit available.

At international level, there should be stronger regulation of the financial sector, fair trade without protectionism, and a shift to a low-carbon economy. Meanwhile the rights in the European Social Charter – so critical to any recovery – should be made more widely known, even among politicians.

Contact in the secretariat: Geza Mezei, tel. 2143.

## **The impact of the global economic crisis on migration in Europe**

*Doc. 12200*

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

*Rapporteur: Pedro Agramunt Font de Mora (Spain, EPP/CD)*

*Opinion of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development*

*Rapporteur: Göran Lindblad (Sweden, EPP/CD)*

With unemployment soaring in Europe, migrant workers – often doing dirty, dangerous and demeaning tasks in construction, hospitality or homes – have been among the first to lose their jobs, forcing many of them into an irregular situation. The impact of the crisis on migration flows is harder to gauge, but initial indications are that fewer people are making the journey to Europe, especially as admission rules become tougher. And yet, as the Migration Committee points out, Europe continues to need the energy and industry of would-be workers from beyond its borders to help build its recovery, especially over the longer term. As times get harder, migrants also face the risk of a xenophobic backlash in public opinion.

Europe's governments need to keep regular migration channels open, with an eye to recovery in the longer term, continue channelling money into integration programmes, and make sure that remittances keep flowing. They should grant migrant workers who have lost their jobs time to find another one before deporting them, and avoid criminalising irregular migrants, treating them in any case with dignity. They should be extra-vigilant against racist violence and xenophobia, and – now more than ever – raise awareness of the positive contribution of migrants. In the meantime, international bodies should continue to gather as much data as possible about the effects of the economic downturn on migrants and their children.

Contact in the secretariat: Ivi-Triin Odrats, tel. 2979.

## **Women and the economic and financial crisis**

*Doc. 12195*

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

*Rapporteur: Nursuna Memecan (Turkey, ALDE)*

Women have suffered disproportionately from the financial crisis, the Equal Opportunities Committee contends, having fewer and less effective buffers to cope with economic hardship, and their modest gains in the world of work in recent years risk being wiped out. This is all the more unfair because, it argues, the crisis was literally "man-made": male decision-makers in the financial services sector are widely blamed for starting it. In fact, most experts agree that the financial crisis could have been avoided if there had been more women in the relevant positions. Even the bail-out is unfair: rescue money has been skewed towards male-dominated sectors of the economy, such as banks, insurance and car manufacture, leading to the shelving of investment in areas which would mainly benefit women, such as care and education.

The solution is to have more women involved in financial decision-making and represented in the boardroom. There should be greater effort to get the work-life balance right, to close the gender pay gap and to stimulate entrepreneurship. Women should have an equal voice with men in all discussions on rescue and recovery packages, and the gender aspect should be fully considered when plans are drawn up to avoid future crises. Equality between women and men is not a luxury for the boom times only, the committee points out, it is a legal and moral obligation. But it also makes economic sense.

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



## **Investing in family cohesion as a development factor in times of crisis**

*Doc. 12103*

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

*Rapporteur: Luca Volontè (Italy, EPP/CD)*

The current economic crisis has undoubtedly created a generally unfavourable social environment for most families all over Europe, according to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee. Changing demographics, low birth rates, population ageing and increasing women's participation in the workforce are some of the factors which are driving the need for societies to invest in human capital by adopting dynamic family policies.

The committee takes the view that a comprehensive family policy should be a core priority for each Council of Europe member state, linking income, childcare facilities, gender equality, education, social and cultural services, inter-generational solidarity, employment, infrastructural provision and urban planning.

Contact in the secretariat: Silvia Arzilli, tel. 4898.

## **◆ Wealth, welfare and wellbeing: how to reconcile them in a changing Europe?**

*Doc. 12199*

*Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development*

*Rapporteur: Konstantinos Vrettos (Greece, SOC)*

Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which measures a country's level of production, has traditionally been seen as the benchmark of national progress, and it has generally been assumed that a higher GDP means greater well-being for that country's citizens. But the current crisis is forcing Europeans to re-examine whether greater wealth necessarily makes for a happier society.

The Economic Affairs Committee believes GDP – as a purely accounting tool – is inadequate as a measure of well-being and that it is high time economic growth, social harmony and protection of the environment were rebalanced to generate policies that put quality of life first. Broader indicators of well-being need to be developed which take into account, for example, income and employment levels, the state of the environment, health and education, and the degree of development of democratic values, as well as the usual purely economic benchmarks.

Furthermore, a high-level international debate on developing such benchmarks should be encouraged. Governments need a range of options which go beyond a simple choice between all-pervading government control, on the one hand, or the sole rule of free-market economics on the other.

Contact in the secretariat: Laurent Pfaadt, tel. 3627.

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# Wednesday 28 April 2010

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Ukraine (possible second round)**

*Doc. 12196*

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

An absolute majority of votes cast is required in the first round of voting. If this is not achieved, a second round of voting takes place, for which a relative majority of votes will be sufficient.

◆ **Current affairs debate: the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia**

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

**Statement by Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, former head of the international fact-finding mission on the conflict in Georgia**

◆ **Joint debate**

**Piracy – a crime and a challenge for democracies**

*Doc. 12193*

*Report of the Political Affairs Committee*

*Rapporteur: Birgen Keleş (Turkey, SOC)*

Modern-day piracy, especially off the coast of Somalia, has become endemic: heavily-armed gangs in fast boats are ranging further and further offshore in search of tankers and other large ships, kidnapping the crews and freeing them only when large ransoms are paid.

The Assembly's Legal Affairs Committee has prepared a report on the legal aspects of this new threat, while this report by the Political Affairs Committee looks at the overall situation and the challenges of an effective counter-piracy policy. Military deterrence seems to have been the main response to pirates so far: some 45 nations have despatched warships to protect their ships or cargoes, which has helped to thwart or deter some attacks. But weapons will never be a long-term solution, in the Political Affairs Committee's view, since the root cause of the problem lies ashore: the poverty, instability and lack of governance in Somalia and the other coastal states where piracy flourishes.

Greater efforts to bring peace, security and good governance to the region are therefore essential for any long-term solution. In the meantime, Council of Europe member states should continue to provide naval escorts to ships at risk, but co-ordinate their operations more effectively. They should stop paying ransoms, which only encourages further piracy, and ensure that captured pirates are prosecuted instead of freed. In any case, captured pirates should always be treated according to the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights – and transferred only to countries that will do likewise.

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

## **The necessity to take additional international legal steps to deal with sea piracy**

*Doc. 12194*

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

*Rapporteur: Serhiy Holovaty (Ukraine, ALDE)*

Modern-day piracy, especially off the coast of Somalia, has become endemic: heavily-armed gangs in fast boats are ranging further and further offshore in search of tankers and other large ships, kidnapping the crews and freeing them only when large ransoms are paid.

The Assembly's Political Affairs Committee has prepared a report on the political aspects of this new threat, while this report by the Legal Affairs Committee looks at the issue from a legal point of view. Council of Europe member states combating these pirates are bound by the European Convention on Human Rights, the committee recalls, and any bilateral agreements on how to treat them – for example with Kenya and the Seychelles – should comply with international human rights standards.

In the meantime, the Committee of Ministers should conduct a study of member states' practice in dealing with pirates – including any national laws that apply – and prepare a code of conduct on how they should be treated during any action on the high seas, capture, transfer or trial. It could also look at whether international laws need to be updated to meet the needs of police operations on the high seas. However if prosecutions are necessary, they should be handled by states alone, the committee believes. The UN, AU, NATO and EU should work together to develop a common strategy for combating piracy, but it must be one that is fully in line with international law.

Contact in the secretariat: Agnieszka Szklanna, tel. 4141.

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# Wednesday 28 April 2010

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

◆ **Annual activity report 2009 by the Council of Europe  
Commissioner for Human Rights**

*Doc. CommDH(2010)8*

Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, will present his annual report for 2009 and reply to questions from parliamentarians.

◆ **Commemorating the victims of the great famine (*Holodomor*) in  
the former USSR**

*Doc. 12173*

*Report of the Political Affairs Committee*

*Rapporteur: Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (Turkey, EDG)<sup>1</sup>*

*Doc. 12181*

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

*Rapporteur: Paul Rowen (United Kingdom, ALDE)*

One of the most tragic pages in the history of the peoples of the former Soviet Union was the mass famine in grain-growing areas of the country which started in the late 1920s and culminated in 1932-33. Millions of innocent people in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine – then parts of the Soviet Union – starved to death.

In Ukraine, which suffered the most, the peasantry was particularly hard hit: millions of individual farmers and members of their families died of hunger following forced “collectivisation”, a ban on leaving the affected areas and the confiscation of grain and other food. These tragic events are referred to as the *Holodomor* – or politically-motivated famine – and are recognised in Ukrainian law as an act of genocide. But other areas suffered terribly too: in Kazakhstan, the ratio of the dead to the whole population is believed to be the highest among all the peoples of the former USSR, while the death toll in Russia from Stalin’s agrarian policies was the highest in absolute figures.

These terrible events were caused by the cruel and deliberate actions and policies of the Soviet regime, according to the Political Affairs Committee: millions of human lives were mercilessly sacrificed to fulfil Stalin’s plans, constituting nothing less than a crime against humanity. The Assembly should honour the memory of all those who perished, recognising them as victims of a cruel crime perpetrated by the Soviet regime against its own people.

Furthermore, it is time for the full, un-biased and un-politicised truth about this human tragedy to be made public: the archives should be thrown open, and historians from all countries encouraged to establish exactly what happened without political interference. Finally, any attempts to justify these policies must be absolutely rejected. Only when the truth of such crimes is known and fully acknowledged can they be avoided in the future.

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

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1. As the rapporteur has since been elected President of the Assembly, this report is due to be presented by the Chair of the Political Affairs Committee, Björn von Sydow (Sweden, SOC).

## ◆ **Honouring of obligations and commitments by Montenegro**

*Doc. 12192*

*Report of the Monitoring Committee*

*Co-rapporteurs: Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco, EPP/CD) and Serhiy Holovaty (Ukraine, ALDE)*

Since joining the Council of Europe in 2007, Montenegro has made substantial progress in implementing its post-accession commitments and statutory obligations, according to the Monitoring Committee. To date, it has signed and ratified 67 Council of Europe conventions, completing a great number, although not all, of its formal commitments. Recent elections have met almost all international standards, though there is room for further improvement in some areas, and Montenegro's new constitution has been generally positively assessed by the Council's independent legal experts. Moreover, the country has played a stabilising role in the region.

On the other hand, the deadlines originally foreseen have not always been met, and the implementation of adopted laws needs to be closely monitored, the committee points out. There are also a number of important outstanding commitments which have yet to be ratified. Montenegro should maintain the current reform dynamic, the committee says, by strengthening parliament's oversight capacity, introducing greater transparency in party funding, and continuing to devolve power to local authorities. Fostering greater independence and professionalism in judges and prosecutors is needed, and fighting corruption must continue to be a priority. Montenegro should also do more to protect minority rights. Pending progress on these and other recommendations, the committee concludes, the monitoring of Montenegro should be continued.

Contact in the secretariat: Artemy Karpenko, tel. 5209.

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## Thursday 29 April 2010

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Urgent debate: the urgent need for a constitutional reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

*Report of the Monitoring Committee*

*Co-rapporteurs: Karin Woldseth (Norway, EDG) and Kimmo Sasi (Finland, EPP/CD)*

The Monitoring Committee is due to approve this report during its meeting at 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April.

Contact in the secretariat: Artemy Karpenko, tel. 5209.

◆ **Urgent debate: the situation in Belarus – recent developments**

*Report of the Political Affairs Committee*

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

The Political Affairs Committee is due to approve this report during its meeting at 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April.

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

◆ **Address by Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation**

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

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# Thursday 29 April 2010

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-8 p.m.)

## ◆ **Effective implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights: the Interlaken process**

*Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights  
Rapporteur: Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc (Netherlands, EPP/CD)*

The Legal Affairs Committee welcomes the declaration and action plan which emerged from February's high-level conference on the future of the European Court of Human Rights in Interlaken, especially its recognition of the basic principle that human rights must be guaranteed first and foremost at national level. Convention rights need to be better implemented nationally, states with major structural problems which give rise to repeated breaches of the Convention must deal with these more effectively, and Court judgments should be swiftly and fully executed.

For their part, parliaments can play a key role in stemming the flood of applications by, for example, scrutinising draft laws to make sure they are compatible with Convention standards and keeping up the pressure on governments to execute Court judgments.

The committee concludes by welcoming the changes introduced by the entry into force in June of Protocol No. 14 to the Convention, and spells out when the new nine-year term of office for judges will begin.

### **Statement by Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police of Switzerland**

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

## **Urgent debate: the situation in Belarus – recent developments (continued)**

### ◆ **Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity**

*Doc. 12185  
Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights  
Rapporteur: Andreas Gross (Switzerland, SOC)*

*Doc. 12197  
Opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men  
Rapporteur: Nursuna Memecan (Turkey, ALDE)*

Sexual orientation – be it heterosexuality, bisexuality or homosexuality – is a profound part of the identity of each one of us, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights points out, and under international law nobody should be treated differently because of it.

Yet lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people across Europe still face deep-rooted prejudice and widespread discrimination. This can range from physical violence – including, in the worst cases,

killings – through to hate crimes, gags on expression, bans on demonstrations, state intrusion into private life and unfair treatment at school or in the workplace. Transgender people are refused gender reassignment treatment or told they cannot register their new gender, contributing to high rates of suicide in this group.

These human rights violations must end, as well as incitement to commit them from public figures, according to the committee. Meanwhile, Council of Europe member states are asked to ensure legal recognition of same-sex partnerships, providing in particular for “next of kin” status. Exemptions for religious institutions should be permitted, but only if they are compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Finally, dialogue between all bodies, based on mutual respect, is essential in order to improve mutual understanding, end prejudice, encourage public debate and promote reform on issues concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Contact in the secretariat: Agnieszka Szklanna, tel. 4141.

### ◆ **The protection of ‘whistle-blowers’**

*Doc. 12006*

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

*Rapporteur: Pieter Omtzigt (Netherlands, EPP/CD)*

“Whistle-blowing” is when concerned individuals working in a government, organisation or company sound the alarm – using internal procedures at first, but if this is not possible or does not work, eventually to outside bodies or the media – in order to stop wrongdoing that places fellow human beings at risk.

“Whistle-blowing” requires courage and determination, the Legal Affairs Committee points out, as those who take the risk of exposing “inside information” can face reprisals, such as losing their job or worse. This is why laws are needed to protect those who speak up in the public interest, offering them a safe alternative to silence.

A series of avoidable disasters has prompted the United Kingdom to enact forward-looking laws to protect whistle-blowers, and similar legislation has been in force in the United States for many years, with globally satisfactory results. Such laws should cover people in both the private and public sector, including members of the armed forces and special services, should define the kinds of unlawful acts that ought to be exposed, and should give “whistle-blowers” protection against unfair dismissal, defamation or prosecution for breaching official secrets.

There needs to be a change in culture too: “whistle-blowing” should be freed of any association with disloyalty or betrayal. In fact, the committee suggests, this brave individual act strengthens accountability and bolsters the fight against corruption and mismanagement, as well as human rights violations. The Council of Europe itself should set a good example by creating a strong internal “whistle-blowing” mechanism within the organisation.

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



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# Friday 30 April 2010

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

## ◆ **Post-monitoring dialogue with Bulgaria**

*Doc. 12187*

*Report of the Monitoring Committee*

*Rapporteur: Serhiy Holovaty (Ukraine, ALDE)*

In 2000, the Assembly decided to end the monitoring of Bulgaria, but to continue with “post-monitoring” dialogue on a list of outstanding matters and any other concerns arising from its obligations as a member state. In this report, the Monitoring Committee welcomes progress made by Bulgaria since then, not least joining the EU – whose membership criteria largely coincide with those set by the Council of Europe – and NATO.

However, the committee points out that some of the reforms carried out to meet EU accession deadlines involved “cosmetic changes” that pushed the country in an undesired direction, particularly over the judicial system and the constitution. While the government elected last year has set itself ambitious goals and seems committed to democratic reform, there are still a number of concerns and worrying trends which need to be addressed, especially as regards the functioning of the judiciary, the fight against corruption, the freedom of the media and the rights of minorities.

The committee lists the detailed steps Bulgaria now needs to take, and pledges to follow closely what happens next. It also calls on the Bulgarian parliament to hold a debate on these matters.

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

## ◆ **Migrants and refugees: a continuing challenge for the Council of Europe**

*Doc. 12201*

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

*Rapporteur: Doris Fiala (Switzerland, ALDE)*

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

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

How European governments handle migration will have far-reaching consequences in the years to come, the Migration Committee points out. Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons are at once a future workforce and a rich source of renewal for European economy, culture and society. Yet they continue to be some of the most vulnerable people in Europe, facing exploitation, administrative obstacles from authority and xenophobic reactions from some local populations.

The Council of Europe, which has the great advantage of uniting under the same roof both countries of origin and countries of destination, needs to give a much higher priority to migration issues, the committee believes. Where the EU concentrates on migration *processes*, the Council – through the prism of its values and basic standards – should concentrate more on the *people* involved.

It is time for the Council of Europe to create an integrated medium-term strategy on migration, asylum and displacement, one which focuses on protecting the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum

seekers, and helps them to integrate fully. This would streamline the Council's diverse activities in the field, boosting their impact and visibility, revive the much-needed inter-governmental committee dealing with refugee and displacement issues, and encourage closer co-operation with the other international organisations handling this issue, one that is critical for the future of Europe.

Contact in the secretariat: Ivi-Triin Odrats, tel. 2979.

#### ◆ **Biodiversity and climate change**

*Doc. 12198*

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

*Rapporteur: Francine John-Calame (Switzerland, SOC)*

No other living being has transformed its habitat as dramatically as human beings have – not least through the global effects of climate change – with the result that other species on the planet are becoming extinct faster than ever before. Higher global temperatures are modifying the seasons, affecting reproduction and animal and plant growth, the density and distribution of species and the incidence of disease. Exacerbated by deforestation and pollution, these changes could lead to what the Environment Committee calls “disastrous results at global level”.

With 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity upon us, policy-makers must give priority to international pledges to cut species-loss, stop underestimating the vital importance of biodiversity, urgently expand their knowledge of how climate change affects ecosystems, and do more to fight the illegal trade in flora and fauna. Protected areas should be enlarged and modified to allow new migration routes. Old-growth forests, wetlands and grassland should be given special protection, agriculture made more sustainable, and renewable energies supported.

Humankind draws heavily on the free resources provided by the biosphere and the delicate ecosystems it nourishes, and is ultimately dependent on them for its well-being. Climate change is an unprecedented challenge to them and the species that depend on them.

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

#### ◆ **Euro-Mediterranean region: call for a Council of Europe strategy**

*Doc. 12108*

*Report of the Political Affairs Committee*

*Rapporteur: Denis Badré (France, ALDE)*

*Doc. 12135*

*Opinion of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development*

*Rapporteur: Ertuğrul Kumcuoğlu (Turkey, EDG)*

*Doc. 12139*

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

*Rapporteur: Elsa Papadimitriou (Greece, EPP/CD)*

The Political Affairs Committee takes stock of existing Euro-Mediterranean relations, both at European Union level, including the Barcelona process and, more recently, the Union for the Mediterranean, and as regards the Council of Europe.

The committee notes that, while the Union for the Mediterranean is intended to enhance the political nature of relations between the European Union and its neighbours in the Mediterranean basin and to carry out tangible – regional and transnational – projects, there are areas in which it seems less

ambitious, including its plans in the spheres of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. But it is these values which provide a long-term basis for peace and stability in the region.

The committee therefore considers that the Council of Europe's contribution to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership process should be strengthened. The Council of Europe should not try to compete with the actions of the Union for the Mediterranean by setting up parallel structures, but complement it by adding the dimension relating to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The committee also advocates intensifying the Council of Europe's bilateral co-operation in those spheres within its remit with any Mediterranean countries which so desire.

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

### **◆ Closure of the second part of the 2010 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, Greek and Turkish.

## 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 or 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 33 (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.

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

Twice a day a **"notice paper"** is produced, setting out the agenda for the 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 2010 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 90 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 26 April: Monday 26 April at 12 noon;
- for debates on Tuesday 27 April: Monday 26 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 33 of the Rules of Procedure.

#### **5. Motions for resolutions and recommendations**

A motion for a recommendation or resolution, not exceeding 300 words, must be signed by at least 20 Representatives or Substitutes belonging to 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 48.3 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 52 of the Rules of Procedure).

Any Representative or Substitute may add his or her signature to a written declaration up to the close of the next part-session, after which no further signatures may be added. The declaration shall be issued with the names of all members who have signed it.

## **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 56).

## **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 42.6).

## **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 49.4).

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 51) 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.

## **11. 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.

## **12. 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.

### **13. 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.

### **14. 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 in 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). Rapporteurs for opinion, to present the opinion or to reply to the debate, shall have the same speaking time to present their opinions as the speakers registered for the debate concerned. 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.

## **15. 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 written question is registered if accompanied by the full written text of the question. In this context, a deadline is specified in the draft agenda. The written questions to the Chairperson are published as an Assembly document.

In accordance with the practice established at the last part-sessions, the Bureau has agreed that written questions will receive a written reply from the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers. These replies will be published in the report of the sitting. The Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers has indicated that he or she is prepared to give an oral reply to spontaneous questions at the end of his address. Rule 57.2 of the Rules of Procedure states, however, that "No Representative or Substitute may table more than one question for oral answer at any one part-session." Members may therefore register on one of the two lists by completing and returning the appropriate form (either "written question for oral reply" or "spontaneous question").

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.

## **16. 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 Presidential dais; 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 38.9 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.

## **17. 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 40.3).

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.

## **18. 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.

## **19. 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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## Directorate of Communication

Director *ad interim*  
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Audiovisual Service, tel. 3500.

## Protocol

Head of Protocol  
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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.