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Standing Committee
Commission permanente

AS/Per (2010) PV 03
21 January 2011

Standing Committee

Minutes¹

of the meeting held in Antalya (Turkey)
on 12 November 2010

¹ Approved by the Assembly on 24 January 2011.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

Mr Çavuşoğlu, President of the Assembly, opened the meeting at 9 am. He thanked the Grand National Assembly and the Turkish parliamentary delegation for their invitation to hold the meeting of the Standing Committee in Antalya, two days before the transfer of the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers to Turkey.

2. WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR SADIK YAKUT, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TURKEY

The Chair welcomed Mr Sadık Yakut, Vice-President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

Mr Yakut, Vice-President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, welcomed the Standing Committee to Antalya and said he was pleased that the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers now fell to Turkey, which was a founder member of the Council of Europe. Respect for the Council's values was crucially important and the standards that had been laid down with regard to democracy, the rule of law and human rights were fundamental principles for Turkey and guided its actions at all levels of society. In that context, the role played by the Parliamentary Assembly was important, especially as it contributed to promoting harmonisation and tolerance between countries, and the Assembly's activities reflected the work done by national parliaments. The Council of Europe dealt with a large variety of subjects, including migration, security and equal opportunities between women and men, and its work was extremely important for its member states. It had developed an entire system of values and a culture of democracy, thus providing an environment in which those values could flourish.

The Chair warmly thanked Mr Yakut for his address.

3. EXAMINATION OF NEW CREDENTIALS

Doc. 12434

The Standing Committee **ratified** the credentials of the new representatives and substitutes in respect of the parliamentary delegations of Belgium, Greece, Iceland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, as set out in Doc. 12434.

4. MODIFICATIONS IN THE COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES

Commissions (2010) 8
and addendum

The Standing Committee **ratified** the modifications in the composition of the Assembly committees in respect of the delegations of Belgium, Greece, Iceland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom and in the composition of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) in respect of the EPP/CD and EDG political groups, and of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs in respect of the EPP/CD, ALDE and EDG political groups, as set out in the documents Commissions (2010) 8 and addendum.

5. REQUEST FOR A CURRENT AFFAIRS DEBATE

The Chair announced that, within the time-limit laid down, a request had been made by Mr Mignon on behalf of the French delegation for a current affairs debate on the persecution of Christians in Iraq. At its meeting the previous day, the Bureau of the Assembly had expressed its support for holding a current affairs debate on "the recent violent attacks against Christians and other religious communities in Iraq" and had chosen Mr Mignon to open the debate.

It was so **decided**.

6. AGENDA

AS/Per (2010) OJ 3 rev3

The Chair said he had received a letter from Mr Greenway, Chair of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, requesting that the two committee reports be withdrawn from the agenda. At its meeting the previous day, the Bureau had rejected that request.

The draft revised agenda was **adopted**.

7. FIRST PART-SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (24-28 JANUARY 2011)

AS/Bur (2010) 71 rev

The Chair pointed out that Rule 26.4 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure provided that the draft agenda of a part-session of the Assembly should if possible be submitted to the Standing Committee, which was invited to take note of it.

The Secretary General of the Assembly presented the draft agenda as approved the previous day by the Bureau, pointing out that the latter would discuss it at its next meeting, on 13 December.

The Standing Committee **took note** of the agenda of the Assembly's first 2011 part-session.

8. REFERENCES, TRANSMISSIONS AND MODIFICATIONS OF REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES

AS/Bur (2010) 68

The Chair referred to document AS/Bur (2010) 68 containing proposals on references, transmissions and modifications of references to committees discussed by the Bureau at its meeting the previous day.

The General Director said the Bureau proposed referring the motion for a resolution contained in Doc. 12398 with a new title: "The situation of IDPs and returnees in the North Caucasus region".

Ms Maury Pasquier requested that the motion for a resolution on "Parliaments united in combating sexual violence against children: promoting the Lanzarote Convention" and the motion for a recommendation on "Child pornography and Internet-related sexual exploitation of children: combating new forms of sexual violence" be dealt with by two separate reports since they were different issues, rather than the single report proposed by the Bureau.

Mr Volontè supported that request, arguing also that the issues mentioned, which involved terrible situations, should be dealt with by two separate reports.

Ms Woldseth noted that the focus of the discussions on reforming the Assembly was on reducing the number of reports in preparation and accordingly supported the proposal to have just one report.

After holding a vote, **the Standing Committee** supported referring a single report to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee in respect of the proposals contained in documents 12385 and 12396.

The Standing Committee **approved** the references as set out in appendix 1 to appendix II below.

9. CURRENT AFFAIRS DEBATE

Mr Mignon introduced the current affairs debate on the recent violent attacks against Christians and other religious communities in Iraq. The Assembly could not avoid discussing the matter given the events that were too often making headline news. The title of the debate was restrictive as it only referred to one country, ie Iraq. Many attacks on the Christian community had been perpetrated there with the aim of forcing its members to leave the country, but instances of the persecution of Christians took place every day in many other states, such as Mauritania, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Burma. The Council of Europe had been set up after the Second World War to avoid any repetition of such persecution in the name of religion and it could not remain silent about human rights violations. It had to react, protest and condemn such acts. It was necessary to break the taboos. In view of the continuous and repeated attacks on Christians, it was crucial for the Assembly to hold an urgent debate on the subject during its January 2011 part-session.

Mr Mendes Bota supported the proposal. After the ethnic cleansing perpetrated in certain states, others were now engaging in religious cleansing. The situation only showed there was a real strategy to force Christians to leave the Middle East. There had been more than a million Christians living there twenty years before – Syriac, Orthodox and Armenian, to name a few denominations – and there were now only 400,000 left. The Council of Europe member states had to respond and do everything possible to help the Christian community. It would, of course, be necessary to help the asylum-seekers but pressure should above all be

put on Iraq and the other countries in the region to provide protection for Christians. It would be a victory for al-Qaeda if the Christians disappeared from Iraq and that would be unacceptable. It was not possible to remain silent about the massacres of Christians.

Mr Kox, speaking on behalf of the UEL group, hoped that the re-election the previous day of president Talabani as the leader of Iraq and the forthcoming formation of a government, eight months after the elections, would bring the hoped-for stability in the country, where violence and terror were continuing to prevail. The intervention of American troops in Iraq in 2003 and their presence in the country altered nothing as the terrorist attacks had never ceased. The main victims had initially been Moslems caught between the violence between the Sunni and Shiite militias. Al-Qaeda had established a presence in the country, contrary to American assertions that the organisation had left Iraq in 2003. The attacks had focused on the Shiite community before being aimed at the Christians. Many Christians had fled the country since 2003, sometimes to Kurdistan in the north. They were also able to flee to Moslem countries like Jordan and Syria, where the conditions for receiving their community were better. The Pope had reacted and launched an appeal for peace in the Middle East. The Catholic community was pointing to the need to protect all religious communities, not only the Christians. An appeal should be issued to the Iraqi government to guarantee the security and rights of all citizens, whatever the community they belonged to, even though the terrorist attacks were mainly aimed at the Christians community.

Mr Volontè fully supported the call for an urgent debate in the January part-session. Several religious communities in Iraq were suffering violence. The number of attacks was rising and the violence was unacceptable. Human rights were not being respected. The Christians were an endangered community. The Christian community was deeply rooted in Iraq and its origins went back several centuries. 800,000 of its members had already left the country against their will. The situation had seriously deteriorated with the assassination of Christians in Mosul and the taking of hostages on 31 October at a mass in Baghdad cathedral. Al-Qaeda had publicly stated its desire to eliminate the Christians in Iraq. The Christian minority was being subjected to systematic attacks and had to be protected. The Council of Europe should demonstrate courage and a sense of responsibility. Respect for human rights was involved and Europe should demonstrate its solidarity.

Mr Moriau, who described himself as a free thinker, endorsed the call for an urgent debate, especially as he had tabled a motion for a resolution on religious minorities the previous year in the Belgian parliament. The issue of the Christian communities in Iraq was linked to the protection of minorities in the broad sense. He agreed with Mr Kox: it would not be right to adopt a crusade approach or talk about a clash of civilisations. He naturally supported Mr Mignon's proposal to hold an urgent debate during the next part-session as it was important for the Council to make its voice heard, and attention should be drawn to its values. The Organisation had made the abolition of the death penalty its credo. It should call for clemency for Tariq Aziz, an Iraqi Christian, even though he had been a member of the Saddam Hussein regime, which he had tried to change by initiating reform projects.

10. OBSERVATION OF ELECTIONS

Observation of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (3 October 2010) Doc. 12432

*Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Bureau:
Mr Tiny Kox (Netherlands, UEL)*

Mr Kox presented the report of the *ad hoc* committee on the observation of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had in the main been held in accordance with international standards. The delegation had been provided with the very welcome assistance of the Council of Europe bureau. Co-operation with the ODIHR/OSCE and the other observer delegations had been excellent. The joint declaration acknowledged the orderly conduct of the elections, which had been fair and equitable. The vote had been extremely well organised and with a great deal of professionalism and the delegation had been impressed by the calm and peaceful atmosphere surrounding it. However, the delegation had noted the imbalance in their coverage by the private media. Minor incidents had been observed, especially problems with identity cards or cases of family voting. In some regions where the number of votes was high, the central electoral commission had decided to carry out a recount in a dozen polling stations. The most significant incident had been failure of the prime minister of the Republika Srpska to comply with procedure by voting in public in front of the cameras. Also, the restrictions on eligibility based on ethnic origin and place of residence had not been lifted. The present legal framework violated the European Convention on Human Rights and the protocols thereto. The Assembly had made its views known on the matter and all the representatives of the Bosnian political parties had recognised the need to bring the country's electoral

legislation into line with European standards. The authorities had not implemented the Court's judgment of 2009 in the *Sejdic and Finci* case and the constitution had still not been amended in accordance with the Assembly's request. Mr Kox doubted that the country's political class was prepared to carry out the necessary changes, so the issue should stay on the Assembly's agenda.

Ms Brasseur said she had just returned from Azerbaijan, where she had been part of the election observation mission. She noted that observation mission members needed training on the procedures to apply. She also believed that co-operation with the ODIHR/OSCE should be reviewed, especially in order to ensure consistency of approach. Apart from the common objective of observing elections, how could the long-term observation work of the ODIHR be reconciled with the short-term electoral observation carried out by the Parliamentary Assembly, and what could be done to help improve the electoral process in member states?

Ms Woldseth, as co-rapporteur on the monitoring of the obligations and commitments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, shared Mr Kox's concerns about the situation in the country. The Council of Europe should make greater efforts at all levels. It would be worthwhile bringing all the rapporteurs of the various international organisations together round a table to discuss the problems of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, the newly elected Bosnian parliamentarians should be made aware of the need to implement the Council's recommendations.

For **Ms de Pourbaix-Lundin**, co-operation with the ODIHR/OSCE on the observation of elections was a recurrent problem. The conflicts that invariably arose within an international observation mission were a waste of time and energy for parliamentarians. It would be worthwhile establishing a degree of permanence at the Assembly level with regard to the observation of elections: since it was often the same members of the Assembly who took part in those missions, the ad hoc committees should be replaced by a standing committee of experienced members appointed by the political groups, who could thus share their views on a more regular basis.

Mr Moriau, who said he had also observed the elections in Azerbaijan, complained about the intransigence of some young ODIHR/OSCE technocrats. Parliamentarians had experience of elections and had dealings with observers over the long term in their observation work. Statements and press releases were prepared in advance. They assessed the progress of the democratic process but regarded the glass as half empty or half full depending on the point of view. It was necessary to help countries ensure that democracy took root with every passing day and to encourage them in that process and not humiliate them. A debate should be held on those issues.

Mr Gross thought the Bureau and the Presidential Committee should work to improve co-operation on electoral matters. The director of the ODIHR/OSCE could be invited for an exchange of views. There was also a need to improve the election observation guidelines.

Mr Kox responded to the comments and said he also thought it would be possible to improve both co-operation with the other international organisations and the observers' work, if only by providing better information for parliamentarians who were members of observation missions and by encouraging an exchange of experiences among those who had taken part in the past. A discussion seminar should be organised. Co-operation with the ODIHR/OSCE had been very good in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He admitted that that had not always been the case between long-term and short-term observers. There was a need to ensure the optimum segregation of duties: the ODIHR, which had a key role to play in the technical preparation of an observation mission, should accept that parliamentarians had a different view of the electoral process.

The Standing Committee **took note** of the report (Doc. 12432).

11. MIGRATION, REFUGEES AND POPULATION

a. The demographic future of Europe and migration

Doc. 12429

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population:
Ms Gultakin Hajibayli (Azerbaijan, EPP/CD)*

Mr Santini, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, presented the report on "The demographic future of Europe and migration" (Doc. 12429), in the absence of the rapporteur, who was unable to leave his country owing to the parliamentary elections there. He informed members that the

committee would have liked the report to be debated during the January part-session. Europe faced a demographic challenge: the number of young people in the population was declining because of the drop in the fertility rate and the rise in longevity. Immigration policies were restrictive, but immigration was important in order to meet labour needs and ensure a country's global competitiveness. European countries were forced to tackle the question of the ageing of their working population. Nonetheless, exploiting the potential of immigration raised several issues, especially the criteria for taking in immigrants, their social inclusion and the cost of their retirement pensions following their long-term integration into the host country. There was accordingly a need to promote targeted, beneficial and necessary migration.

Ms Maury Pasquier noted that several aspects, especially the measures mentioned in paragraph 10 of the draft resolution, raised social questions and regretted that the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, which she chaired, had not been asked to give its opinion on the report.

The Chair closed the debate. He put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12429, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1767 (2010)].

b. Roma asylum seekers in Europe

Doc. 12393

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population:
Mr Milorad Pupovac (Croatia, SOC)*

Mr Santini, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, presented the report on "Roma asylum seekers in Europe" (Doc. 12393), in the rapporteur's absence. The report condemned the situation of displaced Roma asylum-seekers who were living in a Council of Europe member state and could be refused the protection given to refugees, were unable to meet the criteria for obtaining a long-term residence permit and were liable to be returned to a Council of Europe member state by the receiving country. The Roma could thus find themselves in an unlawful situation. That was nothing new, but it risked keeping European countries busy in the years to come in the absence of proper solutions. The situation of the Roma in our societies was unacceptable and exposed increasingly horrific cases. Courage and determination were required to make a start on solving the problems involved. In order to do so, a case-by-case examination had to be made of asylum applications. The situation was compounded by the approximately 100,000 Roma from Kosovo, some of whom had been living in Western Europe for a decade and now faced expulsion, even though their chances of reintegration were not very good if they were sent back. Repatriations should be suspended and the possibility of integrating the Roma into the receiving country should be discussed. A number of countries had made considerable efforts to integrate the Roma and had sometimes met with the hostility of the communities attached to their nomadic tradition. It was important to seek a dialogue.

The Chair put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12393, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1768 (2010)]. The draft recommendation was also **adopted** unanimously [Recommendation 1941 (2010)].

12. CULTURE, SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

a. A balanced approach to the rescuing of archaeological finds from development projects

Doc. 12285

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education:
Mr Edward O'Hara (United Kingdom, SOC)*

Mr Flego, Chair of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, presented the report on "A balanced approach to the rescuing of archaeological finds from development projects" (Doc. 12285), in the absence of Mr O'Hara, who is no longer a member of the Assembly and to whom he paid glowing tribute. The archaeological heritage, like the environment, was a non-renewable resource that had to be preserved. The Assembly had always adopted a balanced approach with regard to the preservation of the cultural heritage, seeing as studying and recording archaeological finds was not an obstacle to the pursuit of economic development. The implementation of the Council of Europe's legal instruments was important, and the three core conventions in the area of the cultural heritage should be signed and ratified by member states. The report provided some examples of the clash between large-scale development projects and archaeological finds and a number of positive examples of the rescue of archaeological finds, such as decisions taken by the Turkish authorities after the discovery of the Byzantine port of Constantinople. The draft recommendation called on the Committee of Ministers to encourage an integrated approach to cultural heritage in its activities

and to strengthen the follow-up to the Valetta Convention to ensure that member states made a better contribution to the preservation of the archaeological heritage, especially by fostering preventive archaeology.

Ms Brasseur, former Chair of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, also paid tribute to Mr O'Hara, who had been a member much admired for his competence, expertise, commitment and kindness.

The Chair put to the vote the draft recommendation contained in Doc 12285, which **was adopted** unanimously [Recommendation 1942 (2010)].

b. Strengthening measures to protect and revive highly endangered languages

Doc. 12423
Amendment

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education:
Mr Ertuğrul Kumcuoğlu (Turkey, EDG)*

Mr Kumcuoğlu presented the report on "Strengthening measures to protect and revive highly endangered languages" (Doc. 12423). Some 7,000 living languages had been identified in the world and about 94% of them were spoken by 6% of the global population. The number of languages was steadily declining as they were threatened by war, ethnic rivalries, globalisation and urbanisation. 230 languages had died out in the world in fifty years and 1,000 were in danger of extinction. If that negative trend was not reversed, 3,000 were doomed to disappear in 50 to 100 years' time. In all their diversity, languages were a key element of the cultural heritage and represented historical and social knowledge, a unique view of the world and a means of transmitting cultures. In Europe, the number of languages was also in decline, around twenty having become extinct in fifty years. Linguistic standardisation was a threat to Europe's cultural identity, which was and had to remain multifaceted. The member states should therefore make efforts to put a stop to that trend. Inclusive policies and action plans should be implemented to raise people's awareness and encourage the learning and use of languages that were under serious threat. It was also necessary to make a greater effort to promote the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and its implementation.

Ms Hurskainen pointed out that the origin of the report was a motion for a recommendation that she had tabled in 2008 and clearly drew attention to the problem of the serious threat to linguistic diversity in Europe. She fully supported the report. The promotion of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages had to be encouraged. Some member states had made use of it for the purpose of officially recognising the status of certain minority languages – for example, Finland in the case of Karelian – and that practice should be encouraged. That was the reason for the amendment she was presenting.

Mr Maissen also stressed the importance of the approach promoted in the report to preserve European cultural diversity. The list of languages under threat appended to the report was not exhaustive. In particular, there was no mention of Rhaetian (Romansch), a minority language spoken in Switzerland and northern Italy.

Mr Kumcuoğlu responded to the previous comments and said the list in the appendix had come from UNESCO and could not be altered.

The Chair said an amendment had been tabled to the draft resolution.

Ms Hurskainen presented Amendment No. 1, which **Mr Kumcuoğlu** opposed.

Mr Flego said the Committee on Culture, Science and Education had been unable to adopt a position on the amendment.

Amendment No. 1 **was adopted**.

The Chair put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc 12423, as amended. It **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1769 (2010)].

Mr Flego presented an oral amendment to the draft recommendation, which **was adopted**.

The Chair put to the vote the draft recommendation contained in Doc 12423, as amended, which **was also adopted** unanimously [Recommendation 1943 (2010)].

13. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH MR AHMET DAVUTOĞLU, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF TURKEY, CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERSCM/Inf(2010)40
CM/Inf(2010)41

The Chair welcomed Mr Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Chair of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, and Mr Ahmet Altıparmak, Governor of Antalya.

Mr Altıparmak, Governor of Antalya, said he was very honoured by the presence of members of the Parliamentary Assembly in Antalya, a place famous for its cultural diversity, its historical sites and its natural beauty. The region welcomed 35% of Turkey's tourists – about ten million a year – and, thanks to its agricultural and industrial activities, made a 3% contribution to the national GDP. Turkey enjoyed considerable economic growth and benefited from significant international investment, which helped to improve its infrastructure and liberalise its regulations. It was integrated into Europe and was committed to the consolidation of its democracy.

The Chair warmly thanked Mr Altıparmak for his words of welcome. It was not without a certain amount of pride that he welcomed Mr Ahmet Davutoğlu as the new Chair of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, at the moment when his country, Turkey, had just taken over the chairmanship of the Organisation. He assured the minister of the Assembly's full support for the initiatives of the Turkish chairmanship, whose priorities broadly corresponded to those that he also intended to promote as President of the Assembly, especially the reform of the Council of Europe.

The Council should intervene more proactively, adopting a more political stance, and resolutely increase the impact and effectiveness of its actions. In that context, the Assembly supported the reform process initiated by the Secretary General of the Organisation, especially every initiative aimed at strengthening the Council's visibility and ability to innovate.

The Turkish chairmanship's second priority, the reform of the European Court of Human Rights, was crucially important: it was necessary to strengthen the Court's ability to respond quickly to the most serious endemic human rights problems. The primary responsibility for guaranteeing rights and fundamental freedoms lay with states. The Assembly would not fail to make its own contribution to the follow-up conference on reforming the Court to be held in Izmir in April 2011.

The Council's work could not be effective if the Organisation's conventions and standards were not upheld, so the Assembly fully supported the key objective of strengthening the monitoring mechanisms – the Turkish chairmanship's third priority – especially by fostering synergies within the Organisation itself and with the other European and international players.

The accession process of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights – another of the Turkish chairmanship's priorities – should be speeded up to ensure that a coherent human rights protection system was established on the European continent. The Assembly had launched a discussion with the European Parliament on the arrangements for the latter's participation in the election of the judges of the Court. Consultations on setting up a specific co-ordinating body were underway.

The Assembly fully endorsed the aim to take up the challenges of multicultural societies in Europe, the fifth and last of the Turkish chairmanship's priorities. The Assembly's most recent reports on the "Fight against extremism" and the "Recent rise in national security discourse in Europe: the case of Roma" doubtless provided ideas and concrete proposals that could be developed at future seminars. The intercultural and interreligious dialogue was an effective tool for combating intolerance and discrimination, and the Assembly would be holding a debate on the religious dimension of that dialogue during its April 2011 part-session. It also intended to contribute to the work of the Group of Eminent Persons in connection with the "Living together in 21st century Europe" project and the report that the group would be submitting to the Committee of Ministers before the next ministerial session, which would be taking place in Istanbul on 11 May 2011.

He therefore wished the Turkish chairmanship every success.

Mr Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, welcomed the members of the Standing Committee to Antalya. He was pleased about the prospects for working with the Assembly during his country's chairmanship and counted on its support in connection with the reforms of the Organisation currently underway. Mr Davutoğlu and he were Europeans by conviction and fully intended to act together to promote the Council's values, standards and objectives. As it had been founded on the rubble of the Second World War as a collective, new and enlightened response to the dangers caused by autocratic regimes and

totalitarian ideologies, the Council was a key organisation. As a founder member, Turkey was committed to its values and to strengthening them. The political landscape had changed rapidly on our continent and in the world at large, and the Council, which had been set up to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law, had played a major role in backing up those changes. In that context, its existence was more relevant than ever. It was to the Council's wisdom and "soft power" that we owed the smooth transformation of our societies after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the old bipolar structures.

When Turkey had drawn up the priorities for its chairmanship, it had intended to define them from the point of view of strengthening the Council's visibility, effectiveness and influence. The Council was the most consummate pan-European organisation and it alone could address all our societies and respond to the challenges facing them.

It was in that context that the chairmanship had set its five priorities.

With regard to the first priority – the reform of the Council of Europe – the chairmanship supported the programme initiated by the Secretary General, Mr Jagland. The Council had to adapt to the realities of a changing political environment and tackle the new challenges now facing Europe more effectively. That meant structural reforms were necessary.

The second priority was the reform of the European Court of Human Rights. The Court was the most important mechanism in our human rights protection system as it guaranteed the actual implementation of values that could not only remain ideals. President Gül stressed the key role of the Parliamentary Assembly as a school of democracy in his speech to it in 2003, when he was prime minister. There was no perfect human rights situation in any country and there was always room for progress. The Court was not there to punish states but to help them develop the Council's values. However, it now had to deal with a considerable backlog of cases, and reforms were necessary to guarantee its long-term efficiency. The process had been launched the previous February in Interlaken. The Turkish chairmanship would endeavour to facilitate its implementation and would be hosting a follow-up conference in Izmir in April 2011.

The Turkish chairmanship's third priority was strengthening the monitoring mechanisms, which provided a snapshot of the actual situation in our societies with regard to respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law and indicated what was lacking and still needed to be done. Those instruments had to be reinforced as they should not only serve the purpose of painting a picture of the situation in all countries but also of providing the latter with advice. Criticism should be accepted; it did not matter very much that a country was criticised if the aim was to strengthen respect for democracy, the rule of law and human rights. That was the task of the monitoring mechanisms.

The Council was the most broad-based pan-European organisation, and some of its member states also belonged to the EU. The two organisations co-operated with one another, and it had been the Council that had made the process of EU enlargement possible. Relations between them should now be based on a new framework. The Union should embrace the system of values promoted by the Council, so speeding up the accession process of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights was a priority.

Finally, the Turkish chairmanship's fifth priority was to seek ways of meeting the challenges posed by the multicultural European societies in the light of the resurgence of intolerance and extremism in Europe and to lay the foundations for living together. Throughout its history, Europe had been a continent where different cultures had existed side by side, but they were now intermingling in the same countries and same towns. A new, more inclusive and more flexible concept of citizenship had emerged in our societies. Parallel to their "multiculturalisation" there was an increase in extremism, discrimination, xenophobia and Islamophobia and solutions had to be found. In a discussion he had had with the Secretary General, the idea had emerged of a Group of Eminent Persons to deal with that question. The group consisted of nine highly respected individuals – Mr Ash, Ms Bonino, Mr Hirsch, Mr Hubner, Mr Kadioğlu, Ms Licht, Mr Lukin and Mr Solana – and was chaired by Joschka Fischer. It had held its first meeting the previous month and would be holding its next in Turkey in January. The group was tasked with assessing the magnitude of the risks to the Council of Europe's values posed by intolerance and a communitarian approach. It would also have to identify the root causes of those phenomena – their ideological, moral, religious, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Finally, it would need to define a new kind of "living together" in order to prepare a future on our continent where those risks had disappeared.

Those were the priorities of the Turkish chairmanship. However, it did not intend to forget the frozen conflicts whether in the Caucasus or the Balkans. They were creating tensions between member states and affecting countries on the path to democratisation and the development of human rights, and there was a need to work together to resolve them. As Turkey had direct ties with the countries concerned because of strong

cultural bonds, it intended to build bridges between them and solve the problems on the basis of the Organisation's fundamental values.

Mr Davutoğlu also attached particular importance to the relations between the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers. Although the latter was the decision-making body, it was the Assembly that reflected the political will of the member states, as well as the individual approaches of parliamentarians and their political groups. The Committee of Ministers needed the Assembly's opinion, advice and recommendations, precisely because each parliamentarian was a European and expressed his or her political views on democracy and human rights issues whatever his or her nationality. Mr Davutoğlu said he relied on the Assembly's support and co-operation to carry out the Turkish chairmanship's programme and was ready to listen to its members' opinions and proposals on how to accomplish the programme's ambitious objectives in the coming six months. He hoped his visit to the Assembly during the January session in connection with the communication of the Committee of Ministers would provide an opportunity for a constructive exchange of views.

The Chair warmly thanked the Chair of the Committee of Ministers for his very interesting address. He particularly welcomed the minister's desire to co-operate with the Assembly on achieving the Turkish chairmanship's objectives and assured him of the Assembly's fully support in that regard.

Mr Gross welcomed the minister's speech. He noted that the minister had expressed the wish to use the Turkish chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers to make progress on the issue of Turkey's accession to the European Union. He fully supported that initiative, which was legitimate, but pointed out that the country would be judged on its ability to develop relations with the Kurdish people since that was an important issue in the context of assessing Turkey's credibility with regard to respect for human rights and pluralism.

Mr Davutoğlu said the only mention made of the European Union in the list of the Turkish chairmanship's priorities was its accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. Turkey's accession to the European Union was a matter under discussion in Brussels, not Strasbourg. He refuted any suggestion that the Turkish government would be opportunist and use the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers to further its relations with the EU. As far as the dialogue with the Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin was concerned, it was regrettable that it was presumed that none was taking place. There were many members of Kurdish origin in the Turkish parliament and they belonged to various political groups. A political dialogue took place on a daily basis at the parliamentary level and was free, frank and open. There was also a very dynamic social dialogue. We were no longer in the 1990s and many NGOs and intellectuals in Turkey were involved in that debate, which was taking place throughout Turkish society. For example, there was a public service Kurdish television channel and there were many programmes in Kurdish on the private channels. Turkey made no claim to perfection and improvements were always possible.

In response to **Mr Popescu**, who thought it was crucial to intensify the dialogue with the European Union on the protection of human rights and, more specifically, on freedom of movement in Europe and the need to abolish visas in all Council of Europe member states, **Mr Davutoğlu** said Turkey would back such proposals. He would put them forward to the Committee of Ministers but it was clear the matter would have to be discussed with the European Union. It was necessary to avoid inequalities in Europe, and there was a striking contrast between the system applicable to the EU member states and the Schengen regime.

In response to **Mr Pourgourides**, who said Turkey had refused to send him an invitation to visit the country as rapporteur of the Assembly's Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights on follow-up to judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, **Mr Davutoğlu** said the matter had to be assessed in relation to the Council's values. While he had replied at the time to the rapporteur's request as a Turkish minister, he was now responding as Chair of the Committee of Ministers. The rapporteur's planned mission should not be vitiated by any conflict of interest and required that no personal or national standpoint was involved. However, there was a conflict of interest between the position of Mr Pourgourides as rapporteur of the Legal Affairs Committee and his national positions. There was nothing personal in that assessment but he promised to review the matter.

The Chair disagreed and fully supported the position of Mr Pourgourides, who on the subject of the execution of judgments was acting solely as the Assembly's rapporteur. Turkey was the only country to which he had been unable to travel. He was confident that the issue would soon be resolved.

Mr Mendes Bota was pleased that the Turkish chairmanship's programme emphasised the role of the NGOs and relations with the INGOs, but wondered to what extent that was compatible with the severe budgetary restrictions within the Organisation. He also wondered whether the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence would be opened for signature the following May, at the end of the Turkish chairmanship, and whether Turkey planned to ratify the Convention on Action against Trafficking

in Human Beings, which it had signed in 2009. Turkey should be congratulated on the progress it had made on gender equality and combating domestic violence, but what actually happened in practice was very different from the *de jure* situation.

Mr Davutoğlu said the Secretary General had drawn up a framework document on relations with the NGOs that the Committee of Ministers was due to examine. He did not know what the budgetary implications would be. Turkey would be ratifying the anti-trafficking convention in the near future and intended to implement it.

Mr Volonté, referring to the Turkish chairmanship's fifth priority, mentioned intercultural dialogue, which had also been a priority of the Macedonian chairmanship but involved a strategy that was slightly different from the multicultural approach. Intercultural dialogue was based on human rights and respect for freedom of conscience. He also mentioned the Group of Eminent Persons and was surprised at the choices made to determine its composition: while some members were certainly front-ranking representative politicians, other names made one sceptical. He would have liked to see the group include names of major intellectuals, such as Jürgen Habermas.

Mr Davutoğlu said the criteria selected for setting up the Group of Eminent Persons had limited the choice. The criteria that had had to be taken into account were the experience and availability of the representatives, as well as a gender and geographical balance. What was important was to create a dynamic and interactive dialogue around the group. The report to be presented by the group was only the start of the reflection process.

In answer to **Mr Flego**, who mentioned the reforms of education in Europe, especially the Bologna process, and wanted to know if the Turkish chairmanship intended to continue and develop the activities in that area, **Mr Davutoğlu** said they were matters that had his undivided attention and were vitally important for future generations.

Mr Mignon said he was surprised the minister was not informed about the Organisation's budgetary situation. That was a constant concern of the Assembly, which had consistently been prepared to discuss the subject with all the ministers exercising the chairmanship. **Mr Davutoğlu** stressed the importance of continuity in the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. The six-monthly rotation and the very short time available did not enable a state to influence long-term decisions and resolve issues. He undertook to examine the matter and initiate a discussion.

Mr Kox pointed out that Turkey headed both the Council of Europe organs, which would enable it to respond better to certain challenges. As the minister had requested the parliamentarians' advice, he mentioned five issues that should be given the Turkish chairmanship's attention: the fight against all forms of discrimination, especially in the case of the Kurdish question; the opening of ports and airports to Cypriots, which would show Turkey's ability to play a useful role in resolving the frozen conflicts; the accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights, as that would help improve the Council's image and visibility; improving the co-operation of the Committee of Ministers with the Assembly; and, finally, advising the member states never to refuse access to the Assembly's rapporteurs.

Mr Davutoğlu said he had asked for the advice of members of the Assembly on matters relating to the Turkish chairmanship's programme and not on those pertaining to national policy. The Turks were Europeans and participated with other nations in European construction, in accordance with the philosophy of the Council of Europe. With regard to the Cyprus question, he pointed out that the problem would now be resolved if the Cypriot parties had accepted the international community's recommendations in 2004. In accordance with the principle of reciprocity, the Cypriot ports and airports should be opened to the Turkish Cypriots. He was prepared to resume the negotiations with Cyprus immediately. When it considered such issues, the Council should determine solutions that reflected a strictly egalitarian attitude. All Europeans should be equal. It was necessary to promote an inclusive approach vis-à-vis the Turkish Cypriots.

The Chair pointed out that the Parliamentary Assembly was the only body to include representatives of the Turkish Cypriot community.

In response to a question from **Mr Marquet**, who reminded members that the European ministers of justice would be meeting in Istanbul on 24-26 November and asked about the obstacles to the swift finalisation of the draft convention on counterfeit medicines, **Mr Davutoğlu** said he hoped the convention would be opened for signature at the ministerial conference. If that was not the case, it would be necessary to find out where the stumbling blocks were and remove them. It seemed the draft posed some problems with regard to the possibility of non-member states acceding to the convention.

Mr Walter thought the European Union's neighbourhood policy duplicated the Council's activities. Turkey had established, or rather re-established, close economic ties and a political dialogue with the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. How did it intend to contribute to the EU's neighbourhood policy both as an applicant state and in the interests of the Council of Europe?

Mr Davutoğlu said the Council had continued to expand eastwards to countries that were now members of the Organisation, which was a significant achievement. The Council's mission in Europe had not been completed and the Council's values could not be fully understood without it. The Turkish government's activities in Iraq, where Turkey supported the constitution of a representative and democratic government, clearly went beyond the political limits of the Council, but the situation in a country facing an escalation of violence brought with it consequences in neighbouring countries. Turkey's influence in the region was motivated by its desire to promote certain values and contribute to the emergence of a peaceful neighbourhood. Countries' destinies were intertwined. Turkey's position in neighbouring geopolitical areas such as the Middle East, Central Asia and the Balkans was an asset for the Council of Europe and the European Union and its policy complemented the missions and objectives of both organisations.

The Chair sincerely thanked Mr Davutoğlu for his detailed remarks in response to the questions asked. He would be honoured to welcome him in January at the Assembly's part-session.

Mr Herkel, Vice-President of the Assembly, took the place of Mr Çavuşoğlu in the Chair.

14. LEGAL AFFAIRS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

a. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Doc. 12422

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights:
Mr József Berényi (Slovakia, EPP/CD)*

Mr Pourgourides, Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, presented the report on "The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages" (Doc. 12422), in the absence of the rapporteur, Mr Berényi, who is no longer a member of the Assembly. The Charter, he said, was a unique instrument as far as the protection of those languages was concerned and thus played a crucial role in the preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe. The aim of the report was to promote the ratification of the Charter, which had only been ratified by 25 member states. It also aimed to promote the actual implementation of the Charter, including follow-up to the recommendations of the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers. The results of a questionnaire sent to the national delegations showed that states that were not parties to the Charter made little effort to sign and ratify it and that some states parties encountered problems in its implementation. The dissemination of good practices in the implementation of the Charter could be beneficial for all member states.

Mr Popescu mentioned the situation in Ukraine and said a draft law was currently being debated in the country's parliament.

Mr Kosachev pointed out that the ratification of the Charter was on the list of commitments entered into by Russia when it had joined the Council of Europe in 1996. The fact that Russia had still not ratified the Charter was due to the particular situation in the country, where there were more than 200 languages with widely varying statuses. That made it difficult to implement it. The Charter had been tested in certain regions but that involved significant costs being incurred.

Mr Petrov wondered why only half the member states had ratified the Charter 18 years after its opening for signature. The rapporteur drew no conclusions from that and provided no explanations. There seemed little point in calling for the ratification process to be speeded up without having an overall view or providing additional explanations. It would be better to ascertain and discuss the reasons for the failure to ratify the Charter before recommending to the Committee of Ministers that it step up its efforts to promote the ratification.

The Chair closed the debate. He put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12422, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1770 (2010)].

Mr Gardetto presented an oral amendment to the draft recommendation, which **was adopted**.

The draft recommendation, as amended, was also **adopted** unanimously [Recommendation 1944 (2010)].

b. An internationally recognised status of election observers

Doc.12355

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights:
Mr Frans Weekers (Netherlands , ALDE)*

Mr Gardetto, a member of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, presented the report on “An internationally recognised status of election observers” (Doc. 12355), in the absence of the rapporteur, who is no longer a member of the Assembly. The question of the need to establish such a status and incorporate it into national legislation had been raised at the Conference on the parliamentary dimension of election observation held in Strasbourg in 2007. The report was mainly based on the guidelines approved in December 2009 by the Venice Commission, which had been asked to examine them by the Legal Affairs Committee. Under those guidelines, the rights and duties of election observers should be clearly defined in national legislation and comply with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and with the Code of Conduct for International Observers.

Ms Hurskainen said he had often been involved in election observation missions and pointed out that the observer's work started before voting began. It was important for the Council to organise observer training, which meant harmonising the technical procedures.

Mr Walter referred to the difference between parliamentary and long-term observers. The parliamentarians were responsible for monitoring governments. There was a need to bring things back into balance: the long-term observation missions should inform the parliamentarians but did not have to give them instructions. It was necessary to avoid friction with the OSCE/ODIHR and promote the dialogue with all the observer organisations.

Ms Wurm supported Ms Hurskainen's idea. Work should be done upstream to avoid difficulties arising, so the observers had to be given training. That meant establishing a balance of powers.

For **Ms de Pourbaix-Lundin**, the report presented was a step in the right direction and would enable some problems with the other observer organisations to be resolved. However, even if all observers were put on an equal footing they had different roles.

The Chair closed the debate and put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12355, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1771 (2010)].

The Chair put to the vote the draft recommendation contained in Doc. 12355, which was also **adopted** unanimously [Recommendation 1945 (2010)].

*The meeting was suspended at 12.40 pm and resumed at 2.30 pm with **Mr Çavuşoğlu**, President of the Assembly, in the Chair.*

15. POLITICAL AFFAIRS

a. Re-engaging in parliamentary dialogue with the United States

Doc. 12420

*Rapporteur of the Political Affairs Committee:
Mr Göran Lindblad (Sweden, EPP/CD)*

Mr Von Sydow, Chair of the Political Affairs Committee, presented the report “Re-engaging in parliamentary dialogue with the United States” (Doc. 12420), in the absence of the rapporteur, who is no longer a member of the Assembly. Contacts between the Assembly and the American Congress, which was now dominated by a Republican majority, were virtually non-existent and the prospects for co-operation were poor. The Assembly would do well to focus on those Council of Europe activities that might interest the members of the Congress and to establish working relations by making use of the existing forms of Euro-American dialogue, especially NATO and the OSCE, along the lines of the Helsinki Commission. The Assembly committees were encouraged to establish contacts and working relations with the Congress committees.

Mr Gross agreed with the opinion expressed. It was indeed necessary to consider issues that might interest the American parliamentarians. The question of reforming the United Nations, especially the Security Council, was highly relevant and was likely to necessitate a dialogue with the Americans.

Mr Walter understood that the Americans' lack of interest in the Parliamentary Assembly explained the pessimistic tone of the report. There was a need to be realistic on the matter. Members of the US Congress took part in the NATO and OSCE parliamentary assemblies, of which they were full members. Those transatlantic organisations were interesting forums for the member parliaments and possessed specialised committees and a modus operandi that made it easier for the Americans to take part. The Assembly could participate more effectively in the meetings organised by the NATO and OSCE parliamentary assemblies and their committees.

For **Mr Moriau**, the problem was deep-rooted as there was essentially a contradiction: Europe was multilateralist and America unilateralist. Half the Congress members had no passport. They did not attend the UN bodies. Work needed to be done with the IPU and the OSCE to strengthen the transatlantic parliamentary dialogue.

The Chair closed the debate and put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12420, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1772 (2010)].

b. Promoting parliamentary diplomacy

Doc. 12428

*Rapporteur of the Political Affairs Committee:
Mr João Bosco Mota Amaral (Portugal, EPP/CD)*

Mr Vera Jardim, a member of the Political Affairs Committee, presented the report "Promoting parliamentary diplomacy" (Doc. 12428) on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee, in the absence of the rapporteur. The report reviewed the diplomatic work of the parliamentary institutions and provided an overview of the various means and forms of parliamentary diplomacy, an example of which was the dialogue with the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the present meeting. Governments were critical of what they described as parallel diplomacy. Parliamentary diplomacy had many advantages, especially as it made it possible to facilitate dialogue on sensitive subjects, and it should be strengthened.

For **Mr Kox**, conventional and parliamentary diplomacy were similar. Conventional diplomacy was very useful despite a number of failures, as shown by the frozen conflicts in Europe, the conflicts in former Yugoslavia or the conflicts between Georgia and Russia. Parliamentary diplomacy was an additional means of dialogue that provided more flexibility, but it had its limits. In that context, the parliamentary assemblies played an important role.

Mr Moriau thought parliamentary diplomacy was very important for peace. As representatives of the people, parliamentarians were in a better position to establish relations of co-operation. The role of parliamentary diplomacy should be strengthened.

Mr von Sydow, Chair of the Political Affairs Committee, pointed out that the committee was presenting a draft resolution, not a draft recommendation, and that it was up to the Assembly, as well as national parliaments, to implement the proposals it contained.

The Chair closed the debate and put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12428, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1773 (2010)].

16. ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND DÉVELOPPEMENT

Enhancing Europe's energy security through greater use of liquefied natural gas Doc. 12424
Amendments

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development:
Mr Miloš Melčák (Czech Republic, SOC)*

*Rapporteur of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs
(for opinion): Mr Mustafa Ünal (Turkey, EPP/CD)*

Doc. 12425

Mr Kumcuoğlu, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, presented the report on "Enhancing Europe's energy security through greater use of liquefied natural gas" (Doc. 12424), in the absence of the rapporteur, who is no longer a member of the Assembly. Energy security was vital for the proper functioning of European states and the competitiveness of their economies in the context of globalisation. This political and economic challenge required closer co-operation between states, international organisations and private companies as it was a case of making rational investment choices for the future. Only five countries in Europe produced more energy than they consumed. Several Council of

Europe member states had had to deal with energy supply problems, especially in January 2006 and January 2009, which had revealed their considerable vulnerability to a single supplier. Improving energy security in Europe involved the diversification of energy sources and supply routes and the co-ordination of national policies. The development of systems of liquefied natural gas, which could provide an additional source of energy in the event of a supply failure and also become a strategic element of the European energy system, offered advantages in terms of environmental compliance, security and a reduction in energy bills. States should therefore invest in the development of research programmes, infrastructure and liquefied natural gas technologies.

Mr Ünal presented the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs (Doc.12425). He fully agreed with the analysis in the report with regard to the need for states to diversify their energy resources and supply channels and improve policy co-ordination to ensure energy security at the European level. Supply problems, as recently experienced by Europe with Russia, meant there was a need for new means of distribution. If states decided on the greater use of natural gas, it would be necessary to consider the ecological aspects of the matter, especially with reference to the impact on the environment. Liquefied natural gas did not pose any major environmental or security problems as it was non-toxic, non-corrosive, inflammable and non-explosive, and it was easier to handle than other forms of energy as the liquefaction, storage and regasification technologies were well-understood. However, account should be taken of the secondary effects on the environment, especially pollution and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the transport of the gas by land or on water.

The Chair said no other member wished to speak and closed the debate. Three amendments had been tabled to the draft resolution.

Mr Ünal presented Amendments 1, 2 and 3 on behalf the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs. They were **adopted** unanimously.

The Chair put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12424, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1774 (2010)].

17. ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE AND LOCAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS

a. Military waste and the environment

Doc. 12354

*Rapporteur of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs:
Mr Latchezar Toshev (Bulgaria, EPP/CD)*

Mr Toshev presented the report on "Military waste and the environment". The text was partly based on a hearing held in November 2009 and on the results of a questionnaire sent to the national delegations, which results were disappointing owing to the low number of responses received. It was not disputed that the area covered by the Council of Europe member states contained large quantities of ammunition and various types of military waste, including nuclear, dating from the two world wars and the Cold War and representing a threat to the environment. Accidents, especially explosions, had occurred, thus illustrating how worrying the situation was. For some countries, such as Ukraine, the management of military waste was a serious problem, and they needed European solidarity. It was necessary to draw up a common European military waste management and recycling policy and strategy, adopt regulations on freedom of information on the disposal of military waste in Europe, consider setting up an international or European body to co-ordinate national efforts and, finally, initiate co-operation with the NATO member states.

Mr Popescu said only 1% of the military waste in Ukraine, including missiles, was stored at identified military sites. The processing of some 500,000 tonnes of obsolete ammunition was a real problem as it required considerable financial resources. An agreement had been reached with the OSCE for the recycling to be carried out in Russia. He paid tribute to the Swedish authorities for their assistance and co-operation on resolving the problem.

Mr Toshev regretted the absence of precise information on Ukraine in the report.

The Chair put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12354, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1775 (2010)]. The draft recommendation was also **adopted** unanimously [Recommendation 1946 (2010)].

b. Noise and light pollutionDoc. 12179
Amendment

*Rapporteur of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs:
Mr Rafael Huseynov (Azerbaijan, ALDE)*

Mr Marquet, a member of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, presented the report on “Noise and light pollution”, in the absence of the rapporteur, who was unable to leave his country owing to the parliamentary elections there. The report reviewed the damage caused by noise and light pollution to humans and other living species. Noise and sound nuisances could have serious repercussions on human beings, with a harmful impact on the metabolism and the development of diseases, and on the environment, with the disturbance of ecosystems and threats to biodiversity in towns. The situation raised environmental and public health issues and required concrete action from states in the form of information, preventive measures, training, awareness-raising, abatement campaigns and sanctions. A common and inclusive approach to the problem had to be found.

The Chair said no other member had asked to speak and closed the debate. He put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12179, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1776 (2010)].

The Chair said one amendment had been tabled to the draft recommendation and that it had been unanimously approved by the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, on whose behalf it had been tabled. As no objection had been raised to the application of Rule 33.10 of the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure, he declared Amendment No. 1 **adopted**.

The draft recommendation, as amended, was also **adopted** unanimously [Recommendation 1947 (2010)].

18. SOCIAL, HEALTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS**a. Promoting a prevention policy on online gambling addiction**

Doc. 12421

*Rapporteur of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee:
Mr Laurent Bêteille (France, EPP/CD)*

Mr Bêteille presented the report on “Promoting a prevention policy on online gambling addiction”, pointing to the considerable growth in the online gambling market. The phenomenon had assumed socially significant proportions since users incurred financial costs when they played the games concerned. More and more people were making excessive use of those games and developing a real addiction. There were insufficient studies available to assess the phenomenon. States should react, especially to protect the most vulnerable groups, such as the young, individuals living alone and people on a low income.

Ms Woldseth, said that, as a liberal, she did not support the report, especially as it stigmatised certain categories of people. Not all gamblers were necessarily addicted. The prevention of addiction to gambling was a matter for national legislation. There was also a need to ascertain and analyse the causes of addiction.

Mr Volonté fully endorsed the report. Studies had been produced on games of chance and revealed the existence of a pathological problem. National information campaigns should be launched. At the same time, European and international co-operation needed to be strengthened in order to harmonise policies in that area.

For **Mr Bêteille**, the report did not aim to stigmatise anyone. The phenomenon was well-known and the mechanisms of addiction had been fully identified. The aim of the report was to study the social consequences of online gambling in order to provide help for vulnerable people.

Ms Maury Pasquier, Chair of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, thought the report did not intend to be interventionist but aimed to provide solutions to problems caused by pathological behaviour.

The Chair closed the debate and put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12421, which **was adopted** [Resolution 1777 (2010)].

b. Promoting volunteering in Europe

Doc. 12430

*Rapporteur of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee:
Mr Luca Volontè (Italy, EPP/CD)*

Mr Volontè presented the report on “Promoting volunteering in Europe”, reminding members that 2011 had been designated European Year of Volunteers by the European Union, ten years after the proclamation of International Year of Volunteers by the United Nations in 2001. The Council of Europe should participate in that initiative and develop it by taking various measures, supporting information campaigns to raise awareness of the voluntary sector, and calling on member states to sign and ratify the European Convention on the Promotion of a Transnational Long-term Voluntary Service for Young People. Voluntary work was essential in society and should be given greater prominence.

The Chair said no other member had asked to speak and closed the debate. He put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12430, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1778 (2010)].

The draft recommendation was also **adopted** unanimously [Recommendation 1948 (2010)].

c. Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Maghreb countries in the field of social cohesion

Doc. 12353

*Rapporteur of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee:
Mr Roland Blum (France, EPP/CD)*

Ms Maury Pasquier, Chair of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, presented the report on “Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Maghreb countries in the field of social cohesion”, in the absence of the rapporteur. She pointed out that the three Central Maghreb countries had made considerable progress on combating poverty and should continue their efforts in the area of social cohesion. The Council of Europe member states had a particular responsibility to co-operate with them owing to their economic and social interdependence and were called upon to strengthen their co-operation through the relevant Council of Europe bodies, to support their democratic development and the promotion of human rights, and to help them tackle the real challenges of social cohesion, namely illiteracy, education, child abuse, access to health care, equal opportunities, etc. That co-operation with the Maghreb countries required the intensification of the work of the North-South Centre. In that context, the Social Affairs Committee should be involved more closely in the Centre’s work.

The Chair said no other member had asked to speak and closed the debate. He put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12353, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1779 (2010)].

19. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN**Promoting the most favourable gender equality laws in Europe**

Doc. 12427

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men:
Ms Ingrida Circene (Latvia, EPP/CD)*

Ms Circene presented the report on “Promoting the most favourable gender equality laws in Europe” (Doc. 12427). Despite the significant progress made on gender equality, women’s rights varied considerably from one country to another. Women were thus subject to territorial discrimination. The association *Choisir la cause des femmes* (“Choose the women’s cause”), set up by Gisèle Halimi in 1971 to defend the status of women in French society, had analysed all the legislation of the 27 EU member states in order to identify the most progressive laws. Every woman should benefit from the most favourable provisions. The Assembly should promote that initiative in all Council of Europe member states in five priority areas: combating violence against women; combating human trafficking; the promotion of women’s participation in political and public life and combating sexist stereotypes; the promotion of reproductive health; and improving the position of women in economic life. National parliaments were invited to draw inspiration from the most progressive laws in those priority action areas, which were set out in the draft resolution.

Ms Brasseur supported the entire report but would not be voting in favour as she was against quotas to promote women’s participation in public, political or economic life. In her opinion, quotas were discriminatory.

For **Ms Wurm**, quotas were not the most elegant solution to improve women's representation but no others were available. Women were still often excluded from representative posts and measures of positive discrimination were necessary if a certain balance was to be ensured in various sectors of society. Equality had to be promoted to ensure more justice.

Ms Maury Pasquier also regarded quotas as more a means than an end. It was important to promote gender equality in elective or representative posts too.

Ms Circene responded to the comments and reminded members of the importance of achieving a gender balance. Quotas were sometimes necessary. Latvia was among the countries where women's representation had reached high levels.

Mr Mendes Bota, Chair of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, thought there was a danger of the current economic crisis leading to a decline in women's rights. Such a retrograde step with regard to equality could not be afforded. He did not share Ms Brasseur's view on quotas, which were a provisional measure to bring about equality. It was necessary to promote the best examples of the policies of member states.

The Chair closed the debate and put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12427, which **was adopted** unanimously [Resolution 1780 (2010)].

The draft recommendation was also **adopted** [Recommendation 1948 (2010)].

20. RULES OF PROCEDURE, IMMUNITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

A minimum of 30% of each sex in Assembly national delegations

Doc. 12260
Amendments

Rapporteur of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs:
Mr John Greenway (United Kingdom, EDG)

Rapporteur of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (for opinion):
Ms Birgen Keleş (Turkey, SOC)

Doc. 12388

Mr Kox, a member of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, presented the report on "A minimum of 30% of each sex in Assembly national delegations" (Doc. 12260) as the rapporteur, to whom he paid tribute, is no longer a member of the Assembly. The Rules Committee had been asked to examine a motion for a resolution proposing that the national delegations should contain at least 30% representatives of each sex. After consulting the national delegations, that committee had concluded that, although a majority supported the proposal to introduce a minimum representation threshold of 30%, there was also a majority that did not want any sanctions to be imposed for failure to comply. The committee advocated a pragmatic approach and thought there was hardly any point in introducing an ambitious objective without being able to sanction non-compliance. However, the committee considered it was necessary to promote women's effective participation in the work of the Assembly and its committees and thus facilitate their appointment as representatives of their national delegations. The member states were called upon to support the efforts to increase women's participation in the national parliaments, and awareness measures were required.

Ms Keleş presented the opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Doc. 12388) and thought the measures proposed should provide more encouragement for achieving a balance between women and men in the national delegations and require those delegations to contain 30% representatives of the under-represented sex. The objective of 30% was not reached in many national parliaments, but that was not a reason to justify half-hearted measures. The requirement that there be at least one woman representative in each delegation was clearly insufficient. There was a need to reaffirm the objective for the national delegations to contain a minimum proportion of 30% of the under-represented sex. Ms Keleş was convinced that the national parliaments would be able to meet that objective.

Mr Gross pointed out that the aim of the report was not to introduce quotas to increase the number of women in the Assembly. It would be interesting and worthwhile to examine the operation of the national parliaments with regard to the promotion of gender equality.

Ms de Pourbaix-Lundin noted that it was difficult to imagine strengthening the rules on gender representation for the small delegations, especially as account had to be taken of the representation of the political parties. She was opposed to quotas and therefore did not support some of the amendments tabled.

Ms Brasseur shared the previous speaker's view and reiterated her opposition to the introduction of quotas. She did not support the amendments tabled.

Mr Mendes Bota fully supported the approach of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. He acknowledged that the composition of the national delegations was a difficult exercise in the light of the rules to be observed. However, the committee's proposals contained nothing mandatory as the aim was to set objectives. Each parliament was sovereign when it came to composing its delegation.

Ms Wurm reiterated that the introduction of quotas was necessary to bring about a better balance in the representation of the sexes.

Ms Hurskainen referred to Finland, which could be cited as an example. The political parties conducted negotiations, which enabled a balanced representation of women and men to be achieved.

Mr Kox responded to the contributions. It was necessary to promote the fair representation of the sexes; the rules had to be complied with as there would otherwise be no point in having them. Rules of procedure stated what had to be done and did not make simple political declarations. The Rules Committee's report was based on the opinions gathered from the national parliaments on that question. The Rules of Procedure had been amended in 2007 to promote the fairer representation of the sexes and the situation was improving.

The Chair closed the debate and said seven amendments had been tabled to the draft resolution.

Ms Keleş presented Amendments 1 and 2 on behalf of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

Mr Kox said the Rules Committee approved the two amendments.

Amendments 1 and 2 were **adopted**.

Ms Keleş presented Amendments 6 and 3 on behalf of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. **Mr Kox** said the Rules Committee opposed them.

Amendments 6 and 3 were **rejected**.

Amendment 4, tabled on behalf of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, **was withdrawn** by **Ms Keleş**.

Amendment 5, presented by **Ms Keleş** on behalf of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and opposed by **Mr Kox** on behalf of the Rules Committee, **was rejected**.

Amendment 7, presented by **Ms Keleş** on behalf of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and approved by the Rules Committee, **was adopted**.

Mr Petrov presented an oral amendment to change the title of the resolution. It **was adopted**.

The Chair put to the vote the draft resolution contained in Doc. 12260, as amended. It **was adopted** [Resolution 1781 (2010)].

21. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

22. NEXT MEETING

The Standing Committee **decided** to hold its next meeting in Paris (National Assembly on 11 March 2011).

The meeting **closed** at 5.30 pm.

APPENDIX 1**List of participants****President of the Assembly / Président de l'Assemblée**

Mr Mevlüt ÇAVUŞOĞLU Turkey

Vice-President of the Assembly / Vice-Président(e) de l'Assemblée

Mr Konstantinos VRETTOS Greece
 M. Jean-Claude MIGNON France
 Mrs Sinikka HURSKAINEN Finland
 Mr Andres HERKEL Estonia
 Mr Konstantin KOSACHEV Russian Federation
 Mr Erol Aslan CEBECİ Turkey
 M. Ivan POPESCU Ukraine
 Mr Václav KUBATA Czech Republic

Chairpersons of Political Groups / Président(e)s de Groupes politiques

Mr Luca VOLONTÈ Group of the European People's Party /
 Groupe du Parti populaire européen
 Mr Andreas GROSS Socialist Group /
 Groupe socialiste
 Mme Anne BRASSEUR Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for
 Europe /
 Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux
 pour l'Europe
 Mr Tiny KOX Group of the Unified European Left /
 Groupe pour la gauche unitaire européenne

Chairpersons of National delegations / Président(e)s de délégations nationales

Mr Davit HARUTYUNYAN Armenia
 Mrs Gisela WURM Austria
 M. Patrick MORIAU Belgique
 Mr Petar PETROV (replacing Mr Zhivko TODOROV) Bulgaria
 Mr Luigi VITALI Italy
 M. Jean-Charles GARDETTO Monaco
 Mr Predrag SEKULIĆ Montenegro
 Ms Karin S. WOLDSETH Norway
 Mr Dariusz LIPIŃSKI Poland
 M. José VERA JARDIM Portugal
 M. Cezar Florin PREDA Roumanie
 Mr Pavol KUBOVIČ Slovak Republic
 Mrs Darja LAVTIŽAR-BEBLER Slovenia
 Ms Marietta de POURBAIX-LUNDIN Sweden
 M. Theo MAISSEN Suisse
 Mr Zoran PETRESKI (replacing Mr Aleksandar
 NIKOLOSKI) "The former Yugoslav Republic of
 Macedonia"
 Mr Robert WALTER United Kingdom

**Chairperson of the Political Affairs Committee /
 Président(e) de la Commission des questions politiques**

Mr Björn von SYDOW Sweden

**Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights /
Président(e) de la Commission des questions juridiques et des droits de l'homme**

Mr Christos POURGOURIDES Cyprus

**Chairperson of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee /
Président(e) de la Commission des questions sociales, de la santé et de la famille**

Mme Liliane MAURY PASQUIER Suisse

**Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population /
Vice-Président de la Commission des migrations, réfugiés et de la population**

Mr Giacomo SANTINI Italy

**Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education /
Président(e) de la Commission de la culture, de la science et de l'éducation**

Mr Gvozden Srećko FLEGO Croatia

**Chairperson of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men /
Président(e) de la Commission sur l'égalité des chances pour les femmes et les hommes**

Mr José MENDES BOTA Portugal

Rapporteurs (not member of the Standing Committee) / Rapporteur (non membre de la Commission permanente) :

M. Laurent BETEILLE	France
Mrs Ingrida CIRCENE	Latvia
Mrs Birgen KELEŞ	Turkey
Mr Ertuğrul KUMCUOĞLU	Turkey
Mr Bernard MARQUET (replacing Mr Rafael HUSEYNOV)	Monaco
Mr Latchezar TOSHEV	Bulgaria
Mr Mustafa ÜNAL	Turkey

Invited personalities / Personnalités invitées

Mr Sadık YAKUT, Vice-President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey/ Vice-Président de la Grande Assemblée nationale de Turquie
Mr Ahmet DAVUTOĞLU, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe/ ministre des Affaires étrangères de la Turquie, Président du Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe
Mr Ahmet ALTIPARMAK, Governor of Antalya / Gouverneur d'Antalya

Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly / Secrétariat de l'Assemblée parlementaire

Mr Mateo SORINAS, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly/ Secrétaire Général de l'Assemblée parlementaire
Mr Wojciech SAWICKI, Director General / Directeur Général
Mr Horst SCHADE, Director of General Services / Directeur Général des Services Généraux
Mr Alfred SIXTO, Head of the Table Office / Chef du Service de la Séance
Mr Petr SICH, Head of the Private Office of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly/ Chef de Cabinet du Président de l'Assemblée parlementaire

Council of Europe

Mrs Maud DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe
Mr Alexandre GUESSEL, Adviser, Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General

APPENDIX II

SYNOPSIS

The **Standing Committee**, meeting on 12 November 2010 in Antalya (Turkey), with first Mr Çavuşoğlu, President of the Assembly, and then Mr Herkel, Vice-President, in the chair:

- heard welcome addresses by Mr Sadık Yakut, Vice-President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and Mr Ahmet Altıparmak, Governor of Antalya;
- held an exchange of views with Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;
- ratified the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegations of Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom;
- ratified the changes in the composition of Assembly committees in respect of the delegations of Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom, and in the composition of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) with regard to the EPP and EDG political groups, as well as of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs with regard to the EPP, ALDE and EDG political groups;
- took note of the preliminary draft agenda of the first part-session of the Assembly (24-28 January 2011);
- ratified the references proposed by the Bureau which are contained in the Appendix hereafter;
- held a current affairs debate on “Recent violent attacks against Christians and other religious communities in Iraq” introduced by Mr Mignon (France, EPP/CD);
- held an exchange of views on the observation of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (3 October 2010) and took note of the report of the Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau;
- adopted, on behalf of the Assembly, the following texts:

Recommendation 1941 (2010)	Roma asylum seekers in Europe
Recommendation 1942 (2010)	A balanced approach to the rescuing of archaeological finds from development projects
Recommendation 1943 (2010)	Strengthening measures to protect and revive highly endangered languages
Recommendation 1944 (2010)	The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
Recommendation 1945 (2010)	An internationally recognised status of election observers
Recommendation 1946 (2010)	Military waste and the environment
Recommendation 1947 (2010)	Noise and light pollution
Recommendation 1948 (2010)	Promoting volunteering in Europe
Recommendation 1949 (2010)	Promoting the most favourable gender equality laws in Europe
Resolution 1767 (2010)	The demographic future of Europe and migration
Resolution 1768 (2010)	Roma asylum seekers in Europe

Resolution 1769 (2010)	Strengthening measures to protect and revive highly endangered languages
Resolution 1770 (2010)	The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
Resolution 1771 (2010)	An internationally recognised status of election observers
Resolution 1772 (2010)	Re-engaging in parliamentary dialogue with the United States
Resolution 1773 (2010)	Promoting parliamentary diplomacy
Resolution 1774 (2010)	Enhancing Europe's energy security through greater use of liquefied natural gas
Resolution 1775 (2010)	Military waste and the environment
Resolution 1776 (2010)	Noise and light pollution
Resolution 1777 (2010)	Promoting a prevention policy on online gambling addiction
Resolution 1778 (2010)	Promoting volunteering in Europe
Resolution 1779 (2010)	Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Maghreb countries in the field of social cohesion
Resolution 1780 (2010)	Promoting the most favourable gender equality laws in Europe
Resolution 1781 (2010)	A minimum of 30% of representatives of the under-represented sex in Assembly national delegations

- decided to hold its next meeting in Paris (National Assembly), on 11 March 2011.

Appendix**Decisions on documents tabled for references to committees****A. REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES**

1. **Decent pensions for all**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Marquet and others
Doc. 12395

Reference to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee for report

2. **Parliaments united in combating sexual violence against children: promoting the Lanzarote Convention**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Ohlsson and others
Doc. 12385
3. **Child pornography and Internet-related sexual exploitation of children: combating new forms of sexual violence**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mrs Rupprecht and others
Doc. 12396

Reference to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee for one report

4. **The situation of IDPs and returnees in the North Caucasus region: cause for concern**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Badré and others
Doc. 12398

Reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population for report on "The situation of IDPs and returnees in the North Caucasus region".