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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The Session

THE INFORMATION GUIDE FOR PLENARY SESSIONS OF PACE

PROVISIONAL VERSION

24-28 January 2011

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- Communication from Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

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 - The obligation of member states of the Council of Europe to co-operate in the prosecution of war crimes
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- Address by Boris Tadić, President of Serbia
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 - The implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights
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- Promoting active ageing – capitalising on older people's working potential

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 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



209

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



179

Socialist Group (SOC)



100

European Democrat Group (EDG)



94

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)



30

Group of the Unified European Left (UEL)

The Assembly committees

84 seats

Political Affairs
Legal Affairs and Human Rights
Economic Affairs and Development
Social, Health and Family Affairs
Migration, Refugees and Population
Culture, Science and Education
Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs
Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
Honouring of obligations and commitments by member states of the Council of Europe (Monitoring)

27 seats

Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs



Monday 24 January 2011

☞ Morning (11.30 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ Opening of the first part of the 2011 Ordinary Session

The *doyen d'âge*, or oldest member of the Assembly present, presides as provisional President until the election of the President of the Assembly has been announced. No debate may take place while the provisional President is in the Chair, unless concerned with the examination of credentials or the election of the President, and no speeches may be made, though this does not prevent the *doyen d'âge* from addressing the Assembly for five minutes at the most.

Examination of credentials

One week before the opening of each Ordinary Session in January, national parliaments have to submit to the Assembly the credentials of the members of their delegations for examination with a view to their ratification. They may be challenged by members of the Assembly present in the Chamber on either substantial grounds, with respect to a national delegation as a whole, or on procedural grounds, with respect to individual members.

If the credentials of a delegation as a whole are challenged on substantial grounds – such as a serious violation of the basic principles of the Council of Europe mentioned in Article 3 of the Statute and in the Preamble, or by persistent failure to honour obligations and commitments – the challenge must be made by at least thirty members of the Assembly belonging to at least five national delegations, or by a report of the Monitoring Committee. The credentials are then referred without debate to the appropriate committee for report and to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs for opinion. The Assembly decides the issue during the same part-session on the basis of the report and opinion.

A challenge of credentials on procedural grounds – such as the lack of fair representation of political parties or groups in a national delegation, or on the ground of gender-balance, or the failure to sign the solemn declaration on the aims and basic principles of the Council of Europe – must be made by at least ten members of the Assembly belonging to at least five national delegations. It shall be referred without debate to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs.

In both cases, members whose credentials have been challenged may sit provisionally with the same rights as other Representatives or Substitutes until the Assembly has reached a decision. However, they may not vote in any proceedings relating to the examination of credentials which concern them.

Election of the President of the Assembly

This occurs at the beginning of each Ordinary Session. The President so elected remains in office until the opening of the next Ordinary Session. In cases where only one candidature is proposed, the candidate is declared elected without a ballot. As soon as the President has been elected, the provisional President leaves the Chair. The only candidate to date is Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (Turkey, EDG).

Election of Vice-Presidents of the Assembly

Candidates for the posts of Vice-President of the Assembly – of which there are currently twenty – are proposed by each national delegation in accordance with the system for rotation of Bureau seats agreed by the Assembly. Under the system, the national delegations entitled to propose a Vice-President for this election are Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. The candidates proposed by the national delegations shall be declared elected without a ballot. However, if there is a request for a vote by at least twenty Representatives or Substitutes in respect of one or several candidates – made in the Chamber at the moment when the candidatures are presented – they shall be elected by secret ballot.

Appointment of members of committees

At the beginning of each Ordinary Session, the Assembly appoints the members of its eight general committees and the Monitoring Committee and the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs. The composition of the eight general committees is decided on the basis of candidatures proposed by national delegations to the President, who will submit them to the Assembly for ratification. If proposals for appointments to committee are disputed, the Assembly will decide on them by secret ballot. In the case of the Monitoring Committee and the Committee on Rules of Procedure, candidatures are submitted by the political groups to the Bureau, which then nominates the members of those two committees and forwards its nominations to the Assembly for ratification. In the case of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, two members are additionally proposed by the Bureau from amongst members of the Assembly not affiliated with any political group. If there are objections, the matter is referred back to the Bureau, which may submit revised nominations to the Assembly.

Requests for urgent or current affairs debates

At time of going to press, there had been two requests for urgent debates, one on “Recent violence against Christians in the Middle East”, submitted by the Group of the European People’s Party (EPP/CD), and one on “The situation in Belarus in the aftermath of the Presidential election”, submitted by the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). The Assembly will decide on these requests on the basis of a proposal from the Bureau.

Adoption of the agenda

For each part-session, the Bureau draws up a draft agenda, showing at which sittings items are to be considered, which is then submitted to the Assembly for approval.¹ A member may submit a motion to alter the draft agenda proposed by the Bureau. Adoption of such a motion requires a majority of the votes cast. Once adopted, the agenda may be altered only by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. The agenda, as adopted, is published and made available to members at the document counter from Tuesday morning.

Adoption of the minutes of proceedings of the Standing Committee (12 November 2010, Antalya)

1. The draft agenda set out here has been updated to reflect modifications to be proposed to the Bureau at its meeting at 8 a.m. on Monday 24 January. A definitive version of this document (with colour cover) will be published once the Assembly has approved its final agenda later on Monday morning.

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

Rapporteur: Anne Brasseur (Luxembourg, ALDE)

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

- the parliamentary elections in **Azerbaijan** (7 November 2010)
Rapporteur: Tadeusz Iwiński (Poland, SOC)
- the parliamentary elections in **Moldova** (28 November 2010)
Rapporteur: Indrek Saar (Estonia, SOC)

Monday 24 January 2011

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-5 p.m.)

♦ **Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly presented by Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers**

Following his presentation, Mr Davutoğlu will answer oral questions from members of the Assembly.

♦ **Communication from Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe**

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

Tuesday 25 January 2011

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Possible election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Portugal**

Doc. 12463

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 obtained, a second round of voting will take place on Wednesday 26 January 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.

◆ **The protection of journalists' sources**

Doc. 12443

Report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Rapporteur: Morgan Johansson (Sweden, SOC)

Journalists depend on tip-offs, leaks and anonymous sources for many of their stories, especially if they want to bring into the public domain unlawful acts or other wrongdoing of public concern. Keeping these sources confidential, and thus protecting them against reprisals, has long been regarded as a basic condition for a free press – and a firm principle laid down by the Council of Europe, including in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

With the increasing use of new communications technologies, as well as the fight against terrorism, governments are increasingly trying to find ways of disclosing journalists' sources, according to the Culture Committee. In his report the rapporteur cites recent examples of surveillance, searches or prosecutions of journalists in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

The committee recalls that disclosure of information identifying a source should be limited to exceptional circumstances only, where vital public or individual interests are at stake, and the onus should be on the authorities to make that case. The committee also suggests that non-journalists who run websites or bloggers do not necessarily have the same "relationship of trust" with sources as professional journalists have, and therefore should not benefit from the right of journalists not to reveal their sources.

Finally, member states should pass or update their laws protecting journalists' sources to bring them into line with the case law of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Statement by Arne König, President of the European Federation of Journalists

Contact in the secretariat: Rudiger Dossow, tel. 2859.

◆ **Address by Abdullah Gül, President of Turkey**

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

Tuesday 25 January 2011

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-8 p.m.)

◆ **Possible election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Portugal (continued)**

Doc. 12463

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

◆ **Inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo¹**

Doc. 12462

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Dick Marty (Switzerland, ALDE)

According to the Legal Affairs Committee, numerous concrete and convergent indications confirm that some Serbians and Albanian Kosovars were held prisoner in secret places of detention under the control of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in northern Albania during 1998-2000, and were subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment there, before ultimately disappearing. Furthermore numerous indications seem to confirm that, during the period immediately after the end of the war, organs were removed from some of these prisoners at a clinic in Albanian territory, near Fushë-Kruje, to be taken abroad for transplantation. According to the rapporteur, this site was chosen for its proximity to Tirana airport, only 10km away. Prisoners were killed by a gunshot to the head before one or more organs – principally kidneys – were extracted from the cadavers. In a report based on personal testimony and documentary sources, the rapporteur also suggests that members of an organised crime ring of KLA commanders and affiliates known as the "Drenica Group", led by Hashim Thaci, were responsible for these and other crimes.

The international authorities in charge of the region at the time examined these circumstances only superficially, according to the committee, favouring the pragmatic approach that short-term stability should be promoted at any price. But in doing so, they have sacrificed important principles of justice. The appalling crimes committed by Serbian forces, which stirred up strong feelings worldwide, led to the assumption that one side was invariably the perpetrator while the other side were innocent victims. The reality is less clear-cut and more complex, the committee suggests. There cannot be one justice for the winners and another for the losers.

The committee calls on EULEX, the EU mission in Kosovo, to persevere with its investigative work into these crimes, and on EU and other contributing states to give the Mission the resources and political support it needs to do this work. It also calls on the Albanian authorities, and the Kosovo administration, to conduct their own investigations on the subject and to co-operate fully with other investigations.

1. All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

◆ **Follow-up to the reform of the Council of Europe**

Doc. 12458

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

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

Opinion of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs

Rapporteur: Christopher Chope (United Kingdom, EDG)

Only if the Council of Europe is relevant and effective can it achieve its goals of promoting “soft security” in Europe, setting reference standards in its core areas and enabling its members to work together, according to the Political Affairs Committee. Yet the Council’s member states are showing a worrying decline in commitment to the Organisation, continuing to cut its budget while parallel structures which duplicate its work are generously funded within the EU. The committee believes it may be time for a summit meeting to give the Council of Europe new political impetus and redefine its current role.

The Assembly has already given its backing to the reform process begun by the current Secretary General, and the second phase of reform is now awaited, which should cover strategic aims for the forthcoming decade. In the meantime, the committee has plenty of suggestions: there should be more conferences of specialised ministers, a strengthened democracy “pillar”, and a thorough review of the activities and heavy working methods of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. Courageous solutions will also be needed to solve the congestion which threatens the European Court of Human Rights, not least a greater focus on remedying the deficiencies of national justice systems, especially those generating the most cases before the Court.

Finally, the committee encourages the EU to make the most of recent new opportunities for closer partnership with the Council of Europe, and says a “strategic partnership” between the two bodies should be an important part of the reform process, kicking off with a detailed study of the division of competencies between them. For its part, the Assembly should periodically evaluate the Council of Europe’s activities and programmes, and – as its contribution to the reform process – explore all possibilities for reforming its own methods and procedures.

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

Wednesday 26 January 2011

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Possible election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Portugal (possible second round)**

Doc. 12463

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 obtained, a second round of voting takes place, for which a relative majority of votes will be sufficient.

◆ **Joint debate**

The protection of witnesses as a cornerstone for justice and reconciliation in the Balkans

Doc. 12440 Rev.

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco, EPP/CD)

Witnesses who give evidence in war crimes trials run great risks, the Legal Affairs Committee points out. Reliving traumatic events in order to testify can itself be a daunting experience, and those who speak up with the truth are sometimes perceived as traitors. If their identities are revealed, they or their families can be intimidated or threatened – or, in the worst cases, killed. So-called “insider witnesses”, such as those who have served in armed forces or the police, face special pressures. These people, who show great courage in coming forward, deserve reliable and durable protection, according to the committee – and only if they are not afraid to speak out can justice and reconciliation be fully achieved.

The committee was appalled to learn that, in the former Yugoslavia, several witnesses have been killed and numerous others have been intimidated and threatened or had their identities revealed, deterring others from speaking up. While the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has carried out important and pioneering work to protect witnesses, its rules still require the identities of all witnesses to be disclosed to the parties 30 days prior to any trial. In extreme cases, the ICTY should be able to keep witnesses’ identities secret, the committee suggests, perhaps by appointing a “special advocate” who could analyse the anonymous testimony and make representations on behalf of the defendant. The ICTY also has a moral duty to continue protecting its existing witnesses once its mandate ends, the committee believes, perhaps by handing over this residual task to the International Criminal Court.

Once the ICTY has closed its doors, it will be up to the countries of the region to bring any remaining war criminals to justice. National laws and regulations to protect witnesses have been put in place, but the level of protection varies from country to country and – all too often – potential witnesses do not trust them enough to come forward. The committee makes a series of recommendations to the different authorities so that those who have information to reveal can do so without fear of reprisal.

Contact in the secretariat: Roland Klages, tel. 5316.

The obligation of member states of the Council of Europe to co-operate in the prosecution of war crimes

Doc. 12454

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Miljenko Doric (Croatia, ALDE)

Justice and accountability for war crimes committed during the conflicts in former Yugoslavia are essential if the communities and states of the region are to live together peacefully in the future, the Legal Affairs Committee believes. With the ICTY shortly to close its doors, the main responsibility for this vital work now lies with the countries concerned – and indeed, they have already made considerable progress in narrowing “the impunity gap” through, for example, regional extradition agreements and effective arrangements between national prosecutors for transferring information and evidence.

However, a problem arises when alleged perpetrators lie beyond their reach in third countries. Such people must be either extradited or prosecuted in the countries to which they have fled – which implies that all Council of Europe member and observer states have a duty to take action when people suspected of these terrible crimes turn up on their territory. Bans on the extradition of nationals – common in Council of Europe member states and often cited in refusals to extradite war crimes suspects – are therefore a serious obstacle to the course of justice and should be lifted, the committee believes. Moreover, Council of Europe and other international standards on extradition and other forms of legal co-operation to tackle the worst crimes have not been widely accepted so far, which is disappointing.

Council of Europe member states should introduce the principle of “either extradite or prosecute” into their national laws, sign up to Council of Europe conventions on extradition and the recognition of foreign judgments, and limit any reservations. They should avoid granting nationality to individuals charged with war crimes in another state, and process extradition requests for war criminals speedily and in good faith. If the “impunity gap” is being closed in the region where the crimes took place, the committee concludes, it would be wrong to replace it with a new one in Europe or further afield.

Contact in the secretariat: Roland Klages, tel. 5316.

Reconciliation and political dialogue between the countries of the former Yugoslavia

Doc. 12461

Report of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Pietro Marcenaro (Italy, SOC)

The conflicts which ravaged the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1995 were the deadliest in Europe since the second world war: approximately 140,000 people died, and heinous war crimes were committed including genocide, ethnic cleansing and rape as a weapon of war. Sixteen years on, the countries of the region are showing their willingness to overcome the legacy of the past, according to the Political Affairs Committee, and there are many positive examples of co-operation involving people and leaders from the region. A particularly welcome example is the initiative of a coalition of NGOs from across the former Yugoslavia to create a regional commission to establish the facts on war crimes and honour the victims (RECOM). Meanwhile, at a political level, Balkan states are constructing new relationships with each other.

Yet despite overall progress, the situation varies considerably from country to country, and public discourse on the war and its legacy continues to be a potential source of hatred and conflict. Full reconciliation will depend on renewed efforts by all countries in the region to work together, the committee believes, especially on difficult issues such as determining the fate of missing persons, prosecuting war crimes, assisting those displaced and solving border disputes. Capable, determined

and visionary leadership will be required, as well as the ongoing incentive of EU integration. Greater dialogue between the parliaments of the region will also play a role, and the Assembly should offer to be a platform for such dialogue.

As regards Bosnia and Herzegovina, the committee regrets that the recent elections were again held with ethnic and residence-based limitations, and that constitutional deadlock continues. The country urgently needs constitutional change and stronger institutions to become a sustainable state.

Contact in the secretariat: Silvia Arzilli, tel. 3686.

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

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

Wednesday 26 January 2011

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

◆ **Joint debate (continued)**

The protection of witnesses as a cornerstone for justice and reconciliation in the Balkans

The obligation of member states of the Council of Europe to co-operate in the prosecution of war crimes

Reconciliation and political dialogue between the countries of the former Yugoslavia

◆ **Joint debate**

The implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights

Doc. 12455

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Rapporteur: Christos Pourgourides (Cyprus, EPP/CD)

When states fail to execute the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, the Court's authority is undermined and human rights standards throughout Europe are put in jeopardy, according to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. It is ultimately the task of the Committee of Ministers to ensure that the Court's rulings are respected, but the Assembly and national parliaments should also do what they can to ensure justice is done.

The Assembly has therefore been trying to identify and help solve major structural problems which have given rise to worrying delays in implementing Court judgments, currently in nine states: Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. The main problems, resulting in thousands of new cases every year, continue to be legal proceedings taking too long (a problem notably in Italy), court judgments already delivered that are not enforced (widespread, in particular, in Russia and Ukraine), deaths or ill-treatment caused by law enforcement officials (particularly apparent in Russia and Moldova) and unlawful or over-long detention (most evident in Moldova, Poland, Russia and Ukraine).

The committee makes a series of recommendations to the states concerned to help them tackle these underlying problems. Meanwhile, pointing to successful examples in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the committee believes greater parliamentary scrutiny can help push governments into acting. It urges national parliaments which have not yet done so to set up mechanisms to monitor the implementation of Court judgments, and calls for greater efforts from the Committee of Ministers, including firmer measures when states consistently fail to comply with Strasbourg rulings.

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

**Preventing harm to refugees and migrants in extradition and expulsion cases:
Rule 39 indications by the European Court of Human Rights**

Doc. 12435

*Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population
Rapporteur: David Darchiashvili (Georgia, EPP/CD)*

Doc. 12471

*Opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
Rapporteur: Boriss Cilevičs (Latvia, SOC)*

According to its Rules, the European Court of Human Rights has the power to order an "interim measure", a temporary instruction to a state party – usually aimed at preventing harm in a fast-changing or urgent situation – until the Court is able to properly consider a complaint and issue a full ruling. It is similar to an injunction at national level. In practice, the majority of such measures have been issued to prevent the expulsion of refugees, failed asylum seekers or irregular migrants who may face serious or irreparable harm if sent back to their own or a third country. The Court is facing growing numbers of requests for such measures, often faxed through by lawyers hours ahead of imminent deportations, and dealt with 2400 in 2009 alone. Even these have come from only a handful of states, which suggests that if the procedure became more widely known, the flow of applications could increase still further.

The Migration Committee is greatly concerned not just by the increasing numbers of such requests, but by a number of cases where states have ignored the interim measures ordered by the Court. This has resulted, for example, in individuals being deported to countries where they are at risk of torture or ill-treatment, despite clear instructions by the Court not to deport them. According to the committee, this is blatant disregard of the Convention system, undermining the integrity of the Court and effectively resulting in a violation of the Convention.

States should comply with both the letter and the spirit of interim measures, and respect the Court's decisions. If their procedures for determining asylum were fair and effective in the first place, there would be no need for interim measures. For its part, the Court should be speedy and consistent in its decisions on these requests, provide full statistics on them, and discuss with governments better ways of handling them. The ultimate aim of this procedure, the committee recalls, is to prevent vulnerable individuals coming to harm.

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

♦ The death penalty in Council of Europe member and observer states – a violation of human rights

Doc. 12456

*Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
Rapporteur: Renate Wohlwend (Liechtenstein, EPP/CD)*

The Assembly has been at the forefront of ridding Europe of the death penalty, having made its abolition a condition of membership of the Council of Europe. The European experience has conclusively shown that the death penalty is not needed to check violent crime, and that political leaders who embrace its abolition do not – as is often claimed – suffer any backlash from public opinion.

The Legal Affairs Committee once again urges the United States and Japan, as observer states, and Belarus, which aspires to become a member of the Council of Europe, to join the growing consensus among democratic countries and end executions – be it by electric chair, lethal injection or firing squad – once and for all.

The committee congratulates those American states that have recently abolished the death penalty, in particular New Mexico, New Jersey and New York State, and invites others, as well as the federal

jurisdiction, to follow their lead. The recent public scandals surrounding the different methods of execution have only stained the reputation of the country, which its friends expect to be a beacon for human rights.

As for Japan, where executions are still carried out under a shroud of secrecy, the committee says it is deeply disappointed by the missed opportunity of openly abolitionist ministers of justice whose *de facto* moratoria have not lasted. The introduction of a jury system in Japan should increase popular awareness of both the cruelty of the death penalty and its fallibility.

As for Belarus, the committee strongly condemns continued executions since 2008, which have damaged the country's bid to join the family of democratic European nations, and urges the authorities to introduce an immediate moratorium.

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

Thursday 27 January 2011

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Possible urgent or current affairs debate**

At time of going to press, there had been two requests for urgent debates, one on "Recent violence against Christians in the Middle East", submitted by the Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD), and one on "The situation in Belarus in the aftermath of the Presidential election", submitted by the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). The Assembly will decide on these requests on the basis of a proposal from the Bureau.

◆ **Address by Traian Băsescu, President of Romania**

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

Thursday 27 January 2011

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-6.30 p.m.)

◆ **Address by Sali Berisha, Prime Minister of Albania**

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

◆ **Rural women in Europe**

Doc. 12460

Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Carmen Quintanilla Barba (Spain, EPP/CD)

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

Rapporteur: Francine John-Calame (Switzerland, SOC)

Women are a driving force for the maintenance, conservation and development of rural areas, contributing to the agricultural workforce and the preservation of traditions in the face of constant depopulation. Yet they also face major challenges in the achievement of gender equality, frequently confront discrimination and are particularly vulnerable to violence. The combined effect of globalisation and the financial and economic crisis has not made the situation any easier for them.

The member states of the Council of Europe should devise legal measures and policies which specifically focus on rural women and incorporate a gender-sensitive approach. Rural women should themselves be involved in developing these policies, and encouraged to play a greater part in decision-making bodies such as local businesses, co-operatives and associations. Governments should also gather more focused statistics, make microcredit and other loans available to women, ensuring that they have the full range of economic and social opportunities open to all citizens.

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

◆ **The need to assess progress in the implementation of the Bern Convention**

Doc. 12459

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

Rapporteur: Aleksei Lotman (Estonia, UEL)

The Bern Convention, a multilateral Council of Europe treaty agreed more than thirty years ago, binds some 50 countries to protect wild plants and animals in their natural habitat, especially endangered ones. Over 500 wild plant and over 1000 animal species are now listed in appendices to the convention, which sets out national conservation policies, promotes research and encourages sharing of expertise, but more recent UN and EU frameworks on biodiversity have also come to the fore.

Despite all this effort, the Convention's target – set eight years ago – of stopping biodiversity loss by 2010 has failed: plants and animals are continuing to die out and ecosystems degrade, not least because of climate change. Scientific studies show that Europe is projected to face a higher rate of global warming than average, with some parts heating up at twice the global mean rate. Changes in habitats, species spread and migratory patterns will certainly follow, with unforeseen consequences for human well-being, the Environment Committee warns. Natural adaptation will not be enough, and mitigation measures will be needed to stop some of Europe's rarest flora and fauna from disappearing forever.

Russia and San Marino should sign up to the Bern Convention, the committee suggests, while the benefits of including more African countries in its scope should be assessed. Co-ordination with EU initiatives such as Natura 2000 needs to be improved, especially on establishing and managing protected areas, while compliance with the recommendations of the Convention's expert bodies needs to be more rigorously enforced.

Contact in the secretariat: Dana Karanjac, tel. 4877.

Friday 28 January 2011

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **The monitoring of commitments concerning social rights**

Doc. 12441

Report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Bernard Marquet (Monaco, ALDE)

Opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Birgen Keleş (Turkey, SOC)

The European Social Charter, first agreed in 1961 with a revised version approved in 1996, remains the primary instrument for setting minimum standards of social welfare provision across Europe and – through its complaints mechanism – enforcing those standards. At a time of globalisation and economic crisis, defending social rights remains as important as ever, the Social Affairs Committee believes.

The committee calls for further ratifications of the Charter, as well as a review of its operation and monitoring mechanisms. For its part, the Assembly should continue to undertake political monitoring of social rights in the member states and boost its involvement in the operation of the Charter, as well as holding joint debates every two years on the state of human rights and social rights, with a first such debate in June 2011.

Contact in the secretariat: Maren Lambrecht-Feigl, tel. 4778.

◆ **Preventive health care policies in the Council of Europe member states**

Doc. 12219

Report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Liliane Maury Pasquier (Switzerland, SOC)

There have been extraordinary gains in health and longevity over the last century, and European health systems are appreciated worldwide for delivering free or less costly treatment, even as the global consumer society and an ageing population brings new patterns of illness. Yet these systems are mainly geared towards fixing what goes wrong, rather than preventing problems. In addition, according to the Social Affairs Committee, there is growing inequality: the well-educated enjoy easy access to health resources, while disadvantaged groups suffer.

Government policies can change all this, the committee believes. Minimum health standards should be defined for all, health goals should be pursued across all policy areas, environment-related health hazards reduced and health screening improved. The poor and the young should benefit equally from preventive health work. Scientific research – especially in the food, pharmaceutical and tobacco industries – should be independent and free from lobbying. Nutritional advice should be more widely given, especially on reducing saturated fat and added sugar, while sport and recreation should be more widely available to all. Mental health needs greater attention too, as do healthy practices in the workplace, including an improved work-life balance, and more wholesome transport options.

In short, the committee concludes, national health policies across Europe need to shift course and apply a new mindset which focuses on prevention as much as cure and which treat everybody equally, irrespective of socio-economic status.

Contact in the secretariat: Angela Garabagiu, tel. 4520.

◆ **Promoting active ageing – capitalising on older people’s working potential**

Doc. 12431

Report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Denis Jacquat (France, EPP/CD)

Ageism may be less acknowledged than racism and sexism, but it is a harmful prejudice that results in widespread mistreatment of older people, ranging from degrading images in the media to physical or financial abuse, unequal treatment at work or the denial of appropriate medical care. Over-50s, even when active and ready to work, cannot find or are discouraged from finding jobs, while their voluntary contributions to society – as citizens, carers and mentors – are frequently undervalued.

“Active ageing” should become the watch-word for governments, the Social Affairs Committee believes, adopting laws which end age-discrimination and encourage employers to view older people as assets, offering them flexible working arrangements. There should be a safety net for older people who have worked all their lives in the home or an informal sector, while re-skilling programmes and lifelong learning should offer them fresh perspectives as they enter the so-called Third Age. Proactive and preventive health policies will play a role, as will creative schemes enabling senior citizens to share their wisdom or skills with younger generations.

Contact in the secretariat: Maren Lambrecht-Feigl, tel. 4778.

◆ **Constitution of the Standing Committee**

◆ **Closure of the first part of the 2011 Ordinary Session**

Practical information

1. Meetings of committees and political groups

The list of meetings held by the committees and the other organs of the Assembly (Bureau, political groups, etc.) is published on the Assembly's website 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 2011 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 24 January: Monday 24 January at 12 noon;
- for debates on Tuesday 25 January: Monday 24 January 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 established practice, 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.

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(Speakers' lists, questions and amendments)

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Services

Internet access

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

Badges

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

Bars and restaurants

Parliamentarians' Bar: 1st floor, opposite the Chamber, open from 8.30 a.m. to the end of the sitting. Restaurant Bleu: ground floor, for official meals (tel. 3704 for reservations). Palais cafeteria: ground floor, open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Palais self-service: ground floor, lunch from midday 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 11.30 a.m. and from midday to 5.45 p.m., tel. 3712, librairie.kleber@coe.int

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 8 a.m. to 6.15 p.m., tel. 3549. Now selling parliamentary bus tickets.

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.