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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The Session

THE INFORMATION GUIDE FOR PLENARY SESSIONS OF PACE

11-15 April 2011

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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



203

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



176

Socialist Group (SOC)



100

European Democrat Group (EDG)



96

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)



29

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 11 April 2011

☞ Morning (11.30 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Opening of the second part of the 2011 Ordinary Session**

Parliamentary Assembly President Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu opened the second part of the 2011 Ordinary Session and made an opening statement.

The Assembly examined credentials, including of any new members notified by national delegations, and dealt with changes in the membership of committees.

Adopting its agenda, the Assembly decided to hold an urgent debate on Thursday on "The large-scale arrival of irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on Europe's southern shores" on the basis of a report by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population. It also decided to hold a current affairs debate on "The situation in Northern Africa".

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

Doc. 12570 Part I + Addendum, Part II

Rapporteur: Sinikka Hurskainen (Finland, SOC)

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

Monday 11 April 2011

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-5.20 p.m.)

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

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

◆ **Over-indebtedness of states: a danger for democracy and human rights**

Doc. 12556

Report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development

Rapporteur: Pieter Omtzigt (Netherlands, EPP/CD)

Opinion of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Andrej Hunko (Germany, UEL)

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

Rapporteur: Alan Meale (United Kingdom, SOC)

Public debt in European states has increased dramatically over the last few years and is still growing, according to the Economic Affairs Committee. In most western European countries, sovereign debt has exceeded the threshold for long-term sustainability in the EU's Stability and Growth Pact, fixed at 60 per cent of GDP, although the debt situation of central and eastern European states is somewhat better. This is having serious consequences for the continent: Europeans find their quality of life eroding, and the very foundations of European economic structures are under threat.

The basic problem is that the existing system of governance has failed to assess risk correctly and to perform responsibly in boom years and now needs fixing. An excessive reliance on financial services to the detriment of other economic sectors should be curbed, while the market distortion caused by large state bailouts – or the expectation of them – should be addressed, not least because it is unfair to ask taxpayers to pay for private sector losses. Plans for stronger regulation of the financial sector, better oversight of credit rating agencies and more effective measures against tax evasion should all help, as should a promised EU mechanism for restructuring banks deemed too large, complex or interconnected to fail. Similar mechanisms for an orderly restructuring of public debt should not be taboo.

State accounts need to be fully transparent, with an end to dubious practices such as off-balance bookkeeping or the misuse of derivatives to hide public debt. In particular, any major guarantees states take on should be clearly spelled out and fully reported to parliament. Existing such guarantees should be gradually scaled down. Situations where states are forced to guarantee each others' sovereign debt are extremely worrying. Such guarantees should be a temporary emergency measure reserved for truly exceptional circumstances, the committee believes.

Finally, the worrying influence of the financial markets on state governance needs further reflection, as does ways of improving the advice economists give to policymakers, which can be dubious or even manipulative.

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

Tuesday 12 April 2011

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Norway and Switzerland**

Doc. 12527

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 13 April from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., for which a relative majority of votes will be sufficient.

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

◆ **The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue**

Doc. 12553

Report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Rapporteur: Anne Brasseur (Luxembourg, ALDE)

Opinion of the Political Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Lachezar Toshev (Bulgaria, EPP/CD)

Bringing communities and peoples of different cultures and backgrounds together so that they understand each other better and learn to co-exist peacefully lies at the heart of intercultural dialogue. Europe's cultural differences enrich it, and all are invited to share their differences positively in a way which builds cohesive societies. Yet governments' efforts to put this high ideal into practice are constantly being undermined by a lack of mutual understanding or intolerance, even barbarous individual acts of hatred and violence. Within this context, the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue has a key role to play in the promotion of the values that make up the common core of any democratic society.

In the committee's view, it is necessary that the continent's various churches and religious communities – particularly Christians, Jews and Muslims – not only recognise each other but engage in a dynamic and constructive dialogue, also with humanist movements, to create a new culture of living together based on everyone's equal dignity and wholehearted adherence to the fundamental principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Public authorities should actively facilitate dialogue and foster collaborative projects, while states and religious groups should jointly review teaching on religions, denominational education, and training of

teachers and of ministers of religion according to a holistic approach, seeking to create opportunities for mutual encounter. For its part, the Council of Europe should create a new platform for this ongoing dialogue, a "workspace" where high-level representatives of religions and of non-denominational organisations can meet to build up a genuine partnership for democracy and human rights, inviting the EU, the Alliance of Civilisations and other partners to contribute where possible.

Statements by:

- **His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania**
- **His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, Vatican**
- **Professor Mehmet Görmez, Chairperson of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey**
- **Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar, Chief Rabbi of Russia**
- **Prelate Bernhard Felmberg, Plenipotentiary Representative of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany to the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union**

Contact in the secretariat: Roberto Fasino, tel. 2373.

Tuesday 12 April 2011

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-8 p.m.)

◆ **Election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Norway and Switzerland (continued)**

Doc. 12527

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

◆ **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**

Doc. 12560

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

◆ **The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue (continued)**

◆ **Combating poverty**

Doc. 12555

Report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Luca Volontè (Italy, EPP/CD)

Opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Mirjana Feric-Vac (Croatia, SOC)

There has been an alarming increase in poverty in Europe in recent years, according to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, partly because of the effects of the economic crisis. Recent statistics quoted by the rapporteur show that approximately 80 million people are currently affected by poverty in the EU alone, around 16 per cent of the population, while it is believed that 60 million people in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union live on less than \$2 a day.

Poorer people are more likely to face violations of their human rights, the report points out, being on average less legally protected, more vulnerable to abuses of various kinds and with fewer resources to ensure their rights are fully upheld.

The committee proposes adopting a human rights approach to poverty reduction, ensuring, in particular, the provision of an adequate education so that young people have the skills and qualifications they need to find jobs, an adequate minimum wage and a guarantee of a minimum income for those who cannot work, as well as full and equal access to employment, housing and healthcare. The revised European Social Charter – one of the Council of Europe’s key instruments – can play a critical role in securing standards in all these fields. All Council of Europe member states should agree to be bound by its Article 30, for example, which enshrines the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion.

Any poverty-reduction strategies will require a joint effort involving all of society’s main stakeholders. New ways must be found to give those on low incomes a voice in society and generate a more positive public attitude to social inclusion, such as the appointment of “poverty ombudspersons”. Finally, the committee believes, it is time for Council of Europe member states to make a firm commitment to ending poverty: building on the first of the Millennium Development Goals, they should pledge to end child poverty and extreme poverty by 2025.

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

Wednesday 13 April 2011

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Norway and Switzerland (possible second round)**

Doc. 12527

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.

◆ **The honouring of obligations and commitments by Georgia**

Doc. 12554

Report of the Monitoring Committee

Co-rapporteurs: Kastriot Islami (Albania, SOC) and Michael Aastrup Jensen (Denmark, ALDE)

The Monitoring Committee considers that the Georgian authorities have continued to make significant progress in honouring their obligations and remaining commitments to the Council of Europe, despite the impact and the consequences of the war with Russia in 2008.

There have been steps to overcome the political polarisation in the country and strengthen the role of the opposition, and welcome progress on electoral reform. Recent constitutional amendments have strengthened the judiciary and reinforced parliament's powers, though some provisions should be further clarified or improved. The media environment is still an example for the region, though further efforts are needed to improve transparency and pluralism. Local self-government is getting stronger, aided by the government's "decentralisation" policy.

Efforts to make judges more independent – including the new Code of Criminal Procedure – continue unabated, although the new powers of the Minister of Justice to personally prosecute the President and other high-level personalities are a matter of concern and should be reversed. There has also been progress in fighting corruption, reforming the police and improving prisons, though the Monitoring Committee has suggestions for further improvement in all these areas. Efforts to improve the integration of minorities continue apace, though more could be done to protect faiths other than the Georgian Orthodox Church, and the committee makes some recommendations concerning the ongoing process for repatriating the Meskhetian population.

Finally, the committee reiterates its condemnation of continuing human rights violations as a result of the 2008 war, and calls on the Georgian authorities to initiate a credible investigation into all alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law by persons under its jurisdiction or control during the war.

Despite the government's progress, the committee recommends that the Assembly continue to monitor Georgia pending further progress on the issues highlighted in the draft resolution.

Contact in the secretariat: Bas Klein, tel. 4992.

◆ **Address by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey**

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

Wednesday 13 April 2011

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-8 p.m.)

◆ **Annual activity report 2010 by the Council of Europe
Commissioner for Human Rights**

Doc. CommDH(2011)4

Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, will present his annual report for 2010 and reply to questions from parliamentarians.

◆ **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 has failed to achieve its target – set eight years ago – of stopping biodiversity loss by 2010: 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.

◆ **Education against violence at school**

Doc. 12513

Report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education

Rapporteur: Gvozden Srećko Flego (Croatia, SOC)

Too many schools in Europe continue to be confronted with very serious acts of violence, according to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education. Incidents include bullying and harassment, attacks by pupils, sometimes with weapons or involving sexual violence, and aggression against teachers. There are also cases of teachers assaulting or abusing pupils.

Kids who are violent or are exposed to violence at school are likely to be violent in adult life, the committee points out, and resolutely tackling the problem early – especially when firm measures can still have some impact – makes sense. Violence of any kind within school grounds should be absolutely prohibited, with clear guidelines and sanctions put in place to prevent it, the committee says. Strict security should ensure weapons and drugs cannot be brought into classrooms. When serious incidents do occur, the police or other outside authorities should be brought in, if appropriate. Parents should be informed promptly, and there should be measures in place to protect victims' privacy. Headmasters should be held professionally responsible for enforcing these rules, and encouraged to create a culture of tolerance and mutual respect.

More widely, pupils should be able to learn about and discuss their own individual rights and resolving conflicts peaceably, while teachers – whose role as mentors and role-models for young people can be critical – should receive mandatory training in understanding and dealing with violence. Schools should consider organising extracurricular activities, also involving parents on a voluntary basis and NGOs with experience in the field. Finally, national educational authorities should gather statistics on this ugly phenomenon and identify and share good practice, with the aim of making classrooms the safe, positive places of learning and personal development they are supposed to be.

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

◆ **Safeguarding children and young people from obesity and type 2 diabetes**

Doc. 12559

Report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Mike Hancock (United Kingdom, ALDE)

There has been a dramatic increase in obesity and type 2 diabetes affecting children and young people in the last decade, according to the Social Affairs Committee. These life-shortening conditions – which can lead to other illnesses and which negatively affect sufferers' quality of life – also place a considerable burden on health-care systems. Member states need to respond urgently to this public health crisis by promoting better food, healthier nutrition and more active lifestyles in the family, at school and in the community.

Breastfeeding for the first six months after birth should be actively encouraged, synthetic trans-fats and additive chemicals eliminated, and school meals made more healthy. Children should have access to affordable fruit and vegetables. TV advertising targeting children with high-energy, low-nutrient foods should be limited and food marketing regulated to reduce the pressure on children to consume products with a high sugar, salt or fat content. Such foods could be taxed, and the revenue generated used to lower the cost of healthy foods or treat those affected by obesity and diabetes, the committee suggests.

Meanwhile there should be plenty of physical exercise available at school and improved public sports facilities for young people, especially in disadvantaged areas, as well as measures to promote cycling and walking in cities. Ways could also be found to boost the feelings of self-worth of young people, helping to eliminate the sadness or anger which can be triggers for harmful binge-eating. Finally, governments should take a firm stand against discrimination aimed at people suffering from obesity.

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

Thursday 14 April 2011

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Urgent debate: the large-scale arrival of irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on Europe's southern shores**

Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

This report is due to be approved by the Migration Committee during its meeting at 2 p.m. on Tuesday 12 April.

◆ **Current affairs debate: the situation in Northern Africa**

The opening speaker in this debate will be Andreas Gross (Switzerland, SOC). No report is prepared for a current affairs debate, and there is no vote.

Thursday 14 April 2011

☞ Afternoon (3 p.m.-7.30 p.m.)

◆ **Rural women in Europe**

Doc. 12460

Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

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

Doc. 12532

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 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.

Statement by Federico Mayor Zaragoza, President of the International Commission against the Death Penalty

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

◆ **Strengthening torture prevention mechanisms in Europe**

Doc. 12551

Report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

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

Combating torture continues to be at the heart of the Council of Europe's mission, spearheaded by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT). The Legal Affairs Committee congratulates the CPT on its high-quality work, sustained by faultless dedication for over twenty years, declaring that it constitutes "one of the Council of Europe's greatest successes".

However, the success of the Anti-Torture Committee depends to a large extent on the professional skills, experience and independence of its members: the doctors, psychiatrists, lawyers and prison experts who conduct visits to places of detention in the 47 member states and prepare the normally confidential reports which so often prompt governments to make improvements. Currently, the Assembly selects candidates from a shortlist and makes a proposal to the Committee of Ministers. It is time for the Assembly to fully elect the CPT's members, the Legal Affairs Committee believes, giving them greater democratic legitimacy and authority. In the meantime, there is scope for improving the procedures for shortlisting candidates at national level.

While confidentiality aids the CPT's close co-operation with national authorities, speedy and systematic publication of its reports, together with authorities' comments, would make its work more effective, enabling timely public debate on the problems found. The current procedure – in which reports are confidential unless states request that they be made public – should be altered so that reports are published automatically, with each party given the possibility to request a postponement of publication for up to six months.

Finally, the CPT needs to expand synergies with other prison visiting and anti-torture mechanisms, such as the national preventive mechanisms foreseen under the optional protocol to the UN's Convention against Torture (OPCAT), or any future work carried out by the EU. All Council of Europe member states should also ratify the OPCAT mechanism, and set up well-resourced and effective national systems to ensure that detainees never face inhuman or degrading treatment.

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

Friday 15 April 2011

☞ Morning (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

◆ **Water – a source of conflict**

Doc. 12538

*Report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs
Rapporteur: Bernard Marquet (Monaco, ALDE)*

Drinking water is essential for human survival, and yet a billion people in the world do not have access to it, the Environment Committee points out. Growing populations worldwide, together with pressure from climate change, have made access to water a political issue, sometimes giving rise to conflict. In the Middle East, the Caucasus and China there have been examples of water shortages leading to violent confrontation which has threatened social stability. Water supply is therefore intimately linked to security, the committee concludes, and has become a political and military issue, even a potential target for terrorists.

Europe's governments should join the UN in declaring that access to water is a fundamental human right, and make sure their populations have access to good quality water in sufficient quantities at fair prices. Shared water resources should be jointly managed, and disputes settled amicably. Meanwhile, states should be careful that their activities do not damage resources in neighbouring countries, and should try to assist countries facing shortages. Technical knowhow will be needed too: more efficient irrigation, better safeguards against accidental pollution and the sharing of technologies such as desalination.

In short, the committee believes, the precious resource of water – the birthright of every human being – should be carefully preserved and responsibly shared if future conflicts are to be avoided.

Contact in the secretariat: Agnès Nollinger, tel. 2288.

◆ **Unaccompanied children in Europe: issues of arrival, stay and return**

Doc. 12539

*Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population
Rapporteur: Mailis Reps (Estonia, ALDE)*

Doc. 12558

*Opinion of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee
Rapporteur: Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca (Malta, SOC)*

Statistics are patchy, but it is thought there may be up to 100,000 unaccompanied migrant children in Europe, predominantly boys of 14 to 17. They come for multiple and complex reasons, but escaping war, violence or extreme poverty rank high. However, it is clear that once they are in Europe their treatment varies from country to country. In many cases – despite the commitments made by all Council of Europe member states under the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child – they face abuse and neglect, or become victims of trafficking and other criminal networks.

Protecting these children should be the starting point for European policies, rather than immigration control, according to the Migration Committee, with the overriding emphasis on acting in their best interests. No unaccompanied child should be refused entry at a border or summarily deported, they

should immediately be provided with an independent legal guardian, and given special assistance commensurate with their age. They should never be held in detention, but receive appropriate care, preferably foster care. If put up in a centre, they should be accommodated separately from adults. Age assessments should be made sparingly, and the young person given the benefit of the doubt in cases of uncertainty.

Finding a durable solution for the future should be the ultimate aim from first contact, including family-tracing, if the child requests it. This might be integration into the host country, family reunification in a third country, or return and reintegration in the country of origin. An individual "life project" should be drawn up for each child – as recommended in 2007 by the Committee of Ministers – and the child should be granted legal residence until this is fulfilled, including access to the same education, training and health care as citizen children receive. If return is foreseen, it should only be if this is in the best interest of the child, when secure care arrangements are known in advance – especially if no parents or extended family have been identified.

The committee proposes a set of 15 common principles for member states to apply when handling unaccompanied migrant children, which Council of Europe member states should observe. For its part, the Committee of Ministers should set up a working group to establish guiding principles for member states based on these principles.

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

◆ **Protecting migrant women in the labour market**

Doc. 12549

Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population

Rapporteur: Pernille Frahm (Denmark, UEL)

Opinion of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Ingrida Circene (Latvia, EPP/CD)

According to UN estimates, just over half of the 69 million migrants in Europe are women, many of them coming in search of work to support their families. For the Migration Committee, these women tend to find work in traditional women's roles such as domestic work, child minding, healthcare or hotels and catering, where they work long hours for low pay and may face intense exploitation, especially if they have no papers. In the worst cases, they have no benefits, little recourse to justice and may even face abuse or violence from unscrupulous employers.

These women deserve special protection, the committee believes. Council of Europe member states should begin by boosting legal migration opportunities for women, with gender-sensitive policies that promote equality. There should be more information made available in countries of origin, to help women avoid the dangers of trafficking and target appropriate jobs. Women who join their spouses through family reunion should be granted a special legal status and be authorised to seek work. Women who do find jobs should be granted the same rights as national workers when it comes to labour laws and social security.

Finally, states should combat exploitation in the labour market by regulating the riskier sectors such as healthcare or domestic work, with strong sanctions against companies or agencies who break the rules. Domestic and care workers, in particular, should get clearly-defined labour rights and protections, as well as visa schemes allowing them to enter legally to carry out this kind of work.

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

◆ **Closure of the second 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 11 April: Monday 11 April at 12 noon;
- for debates on Tuesday 12 April: Monday 11 April at 4 p.m.;
- for all other debates (except urgent debates, unforeseen debates or as otherwise indicated on the agenda): 23 and a half hours before the opening of the sitting at which the debate is to begin.

Sub-amendments must be tabled at least one hour before the scheduled end of the sitting preceding that in which the debate begins.

The procedure for tabling, examining and voting on amendments and sub-amendments is set out in Rule 33 of the Rules of Procedure.

5. Motions for resolutions and recommendations

A motion for a recommendation or resolution, not exceeding 300 words, must be signed by at least 20 Representatives or Substitutes belonging to at least five national delegations (Rule 24.2). The President decides which motions are admissible.

Any motion considered admissible is printed and distributed as soon as possible. The Bureau then decides whether it should be referred to one or more committees, or forwarded to one or more committees for information, or that no further action should be taken. The Bureau's decision must then be ratified by the Assembly.

For motions tabled during a part-session, the Bureau has decided that only those motions which have been tabled by **12 noon on the Tuesday of a part-session** will be examined by the Bureau meeting after the part-session.

A document may be referred to only one committee for report but to any other committee for opinion (Rule 25.2). The opinion of the latter concerns the report of the former committee. The report concerned must therefore be made available to the committee whose opinion has been sought in good time for it to prepare its opinion. Committee opinions may be presented orally or in writing. An opinion presented in writing must contain a chapter at the beginning entitled "Conclusions of the committee" and an explanatory memorandum by the rapporteur (Rule 48.3 of the Rules of Procedure).

6. Written declarations

Written declarations may be tabled provided that they:

- do not exceed 200 words;
- are on subjects within the competence of the Council of Europe;
- are signed by at least twenty Representatives or Substitutes belonging to four national delegations and two political groups.

They are neither referred to a committee nor debated in the Assembly (Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure).

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

7. Opinions of the Assembly (to the Committee of Ministers)

According to the Statute of the Council of Europe, or to other texts of a statutory character, the Committee of Ministers seeks the Assembly's opinion on such matters as the accession of new member states, draft conventions or the Council of Europe's budget. These requests for opinions are debated in the Assembly, following which the Assembly votes on the opinion to be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers (Rule 56).

8. Changes in the membership of national delegations or committees

Members of the Assembly are appointed for the whole Ordinary Session. Following parliamentary elections, the national parliament concerned or other competent authority shall make appointments to the Assembly within six months of the elections. If the national parliament cannot make all such appointments in time for the opening of a new Ordinary Session, it may decide, for a period of not more than six months after the election, to be represented in the Assembly by members of the existing delegation (Rule 10.2 and 3).

Should any seat on a national delegation fall vacant in the course of a session as a result of death or resignation, the president of the national parliament concerned, or the Minister for Foreign Affairs, presents the credentials of the member who is to fill the vacant seat to the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, who submits them to the Assembly or the Standing Committee for ratification at the first sitting or meeting following their receipt (Rule 6.4).

The chairperson of a national delegation informs the President of the Assembly of any proposed change(s) in committee membership concerning that delegation's members. The President of the Assembly submits the proposed change(s) to the Assembly, the Standing Committee or, failing that, the Bureau for ratification (Rule 42.6).

9. Requests for debates under urgent procedure or current affairs debates

At the request of the Committee of Ministers, of the committee concerned, of one or more political groups, or of twenty or more Representatives or Substitutes, a debate may be held on an item which has not been placed on the Assembly's draft agenda. Requests for debates under urgent procedure must be addressed to the President of the Assembly. The President submits them to the Bureau, which makes a proposal to the Assembly. The adoption of urgent procedure requires a two-thirds majority of the votes cast (Rule 49.4).

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

At least twenty members, or one political group or national delegation may request a current affairs debate (Rule 51) on a subject which is not on the Assembly's draft agenda. The request must be made in writing to the President of the Assembly in time for the last meeting of the Bureau before the opening of the part-session. The possible choice between several requests is made by the Bureau, a decision which needs to be endorsed by the Assembly. A current affairs debate may not exceed one and a half hours. The debate shall be opened by one of the members who requested it, chosen by the Bureau. The first speaker has ten minutes speaking time, other speakers five. Although there is no vote on any text, the Bureau of the Assembly may subsequently propose that the subject be referred to the appropriate committee for report.

10. Electronic voting, notification of Substitutes, list of speakers, and quorum

All votes in the Assembly, except elections, take place by electronic voting.

11. Voting cards

Voting cards issued to all members are simultaneously used for identification and voting.

Distribution of voting cards is ensured by the Badge Service of the Council of Europe. In principle, this distribution is organised via secretaries of each national delegation. Members who do not have their card (in case a card has been lost or forgotten, or when the Parliamentary Assembly database does not contain the member's photo) should present themselves at the welcome Protocol desk at the main entrance of the Palais de l'Europe in order to receive their card. Staff of the Badge Service, before delivering a new card, will invite the member to present his or her identification document. If a third and consecutive card is issued to the same member during the same calendar year for whatever reason, loss or otherwise, the national delegation will be required to pay the cost (6 euros per card).

Voting cards as distributed by the Badge Service do not give an automatic right to vote. In order to enjoy such a right, the member's card has to be validated. This operation will be carried out by the Assembly Secretariat.

12. Notification of Substitutes

In principle, all Representatives at the opening of the first sitting (on Monday, at 11.30 a.m.) have their cards validated, but not Substitutes unless the Secretariat of the Assembly is properly informed about substitutions. Therefore secretaries of national delegations have the duty to inform the Secretariat of the Assembly about all cases of substitution. If this is not done, Substitutes attending the sitting do not have speaking and voting rights.

Notice of substitutions has to be given before the opening of the sitting concerned (if possible by the previous day and at the latest before 8.30 a.m. for a morning sitting and before 1 p.m. for an afternoon sitting). For the first sitting on Monday at 11.30 a.m., the deadline is 10 a.m. This notification, including the names of Substitutes, the names of Representatives to be substituted and the length of substitution, must be given in writing for each sitting to the Secretariat of the Assembly (Beejul Tanna, Room 1074, fax during session weeks +33 3 88 41 27 27, fax outside session weeks +33 3 88 41 27 33).

If the Substitute is replacing the Representative for one or more consecutive sittings, the substitution for each sitting must be notified. Substitutions are never carried automatically over to the following sitting.

When the correct notification has been given, Substitutes will have their voting cards validated. At the same time, cards of Representatives who are to be replaced by Substitutes will become invalid, preventing them from speaking in the debate and voting, including in elections.

13. Register of attendance

Members shall continue to sign the register of attendance before entering the Chamber for a sitting (Rules 11.2 and 39.1). A duly designated Substitute will find his or her name in the register next to the name of the Representative for whom he or she is substituting. If, in the register of attendance, no name is found next to the Representative's name, it means that no substitution was notified for the Representative for that particular sitting and therefore only the Representative is authorised to speak in the debate and vote.

All members of the Assembly – Representatives and Substitutes as well as Observers – have access to the Chamber at any time of the sitting, regardless of their speaking and voting rights. Therefore, all members, even those who are not authorised to speak in the debate or vote, are invited to sign the register of attendance if they attend the sitting.

14. Speakers' register

Members who wish to speak in a debate must enter their names on the list of speakers. They may do this by post in advance of the part-session, or in person during the part-session at the Table Office (Room 1083). The list is closed one hour before the scheduled end of the previous sitting, except in the case of the first sitting of a part-session, when the deadline is one and a half hours before the start of the sitting (i.e. at 10 a.m.). It should be noted that in any one part-session members may enter their names on the list for a maximum of **five debates** but may take the floor **not more than three times** (this limit does not apply to members appointed as political group spokespersons or as rapporteurs). A Substitute whose name has not been notified to the secretariat before a sitting cannot participate in the debate.

The order of speakers on the list for each debate is determined according to criteria set by the Bureau and can be found in the Rules of Procedure.

Speaking time is limited to a total of 13 minutes for committee rapporteurs (to present the report and to reply to the debate). Rapporteurs for opinion, to present the opinion or to reply to the debate, shall have the same speaking time to present their opinions as the speakers registered for the debate concerned. Other speakers on the list normally have a maximum of 5 minutes, although this may be reduced depending on the number of speakers on the list. At the start of each sitting the President announces the speaking arrangements.

Only authorised members – i.e. Representatives or their duly appointed Substitutes – may speak in debates or submit questions for oral reply to the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers or to guest speakers. The list of speakers is verified accordingly.

15. Questions to invited guest speakers

For most invited guest speakers, the draft agenda indicates whether there is the possibility for members to ask questions. Where there is that possibility, members are encouraged to register their names with the Table Office as soon as the draft agenda is published and the name of the guest speaker appears, unless the draft agenda specifies that there is only one

question from each political group. For most guest speakers other than the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, members are invited to submit the subject of their question.

For the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, the name of the member wishing to ask a written question is registered if accompanied by the full written text of the question. In this context, a deadline is specified in the draft agenda. The written questions to the Chairperson are published as an Assembly document.

In accordance with 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.

Directory

Secretariat of the Assembly

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Table Office

(Speakers' lists, questions and amendments)

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Protocol

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Services

Internet access

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

Badges

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

Bars and restaurants

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