



SECRETARIAT

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To the members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Synopsis of the meetings held in Strasbourg from 24 to 27 April 2017

The **Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy**, meeting in Strasbourg from 24 to 27 April 2017, with Mr Mogens Jensen (Denmark, SOC) and Mr Hendrik Daems (Belgium, ALDE) in the Chair:

Monday 24 April 2017, 14:00 – 15:00, room 9, as regards:

- **Debate under urgent procedure: Alarming developments in Hungary: A new NGO law restricting civil society and the closure of an international university:** appointed Mr Mogens Jensen (Denmark, SOC) as Rapporteur and heard from him a declaration of absence of any conflict of interest;
- **Open discussion on current issues:**
 - heard a statement by the Chairperson on the opinion of the Venice Commission with respect to freedom of the media in Turkey following the emergency decree laws, adopted in the aftermath of the July 2016 coup attempt, and held an exchange of views;
 - held an exchange of views on the political consequences of the new Israeli Settlement Regulation Law with the participation of Mr Majed Bamyá, First Counsellor, Palestinian Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations, New York, and regretted the fact that the Israeli observer delegation had decided not to send an expert on the matter;
- **Call for candidates:** called for candidates for opinion on *A comprehensive humanitarian and political response to the migration and refugee crisis in Europe*;
- **The evaluation of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic** (*Rapporteur: Mr Alain Destexhe, Belgium, ALDE*): decided to declassify the introductory memorandum presented by the Rapporteur at the meeting of the Committee on 6 March 2017;

Tuesday 25 April 2017, 09:00 – 10:00, room 1, as regards:

- **Prosecuting and punishing the crimes against humanity or even possible genocide committed by Daesh:** held a joint hearing with the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, with the participation of Ms Nadia Murad, Yazidi survivor of ISIS, winner of the 2016 PACE Václav Havel Human Rights Prize (via video link); Ms Ewelina Ochab, legal researcher, PhD scholar, University of Kent, United Kingdom; and Mr Geoffrey Robertson QC, author of "Crimes Against Humanity; The struggle for global justice", Former President of the UN War Crimes Court in Sierra Leone, Founder and co-head of Doughty Street Chambers, London;

Tuesday 25 April 2017, 14:00 – 15:30, room 9, as regards:

- **Debate under urgent procedure: Alarming developments in Hungary: A new NGO law restricting civil society and the closure of an international university** (*Rapporteur: Mr Mogens Jensen, Denmark, SOC*): considered a draft report, decided to change the title to *Alarming developments in Hungary: draft NGO law restricting civil society and possible closure of the European Central University*, and adopted a draft resolution;
- **The political transition in Tunisia** (*Rapporteur: Mr George Loucaides, Cyprus, UEL*): considered a draft report and unanimously adopted a draft resolution and a draft recommendation;

Wednesday 26 April 2017, 14:30 – 15:30, room 9, as regards:

- **The situation in Belarus** (*Rapporteur: Mr Andrea Rigoni, Italy ALDE*): considered a draft report, unanimously adopted a draft resolution and a draft recommendation and agreed to the request of the Rapporteur to carry out a fact-finding to Brussels in the coming weeks;
- **Open discussion on current issues (continued):**
 - continued the exchange of views on the political consequences of the new Israeli Settlement Regulation Law;
 - heard a statement by Ms Josette Durrieu (France, SOC), Rapporteur on *The evaluation of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of Jordan*, and held an exchange of views with the participation of the Jordanian delegation;

Thursday 27 April 2017, 08:30 – 10:00, room 9, as regards:

- **Debate under urgent procedure: Alarming developments in Hungary: draft NGO law restricting civil society and possible closure of the European Central University** (*Rapporteur: Mr Mogens Jensen, Denmark, SOC*): took position on the 14 amendments to the draft resolution and agreed to table 1 oral amendment;
- **Corruption as governance regime: a barrier to institutional efficiency and progress** (*Rapporteur: Mr Michele Nicoletti, Italy, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur on his participation in the 5th Evaluation Round of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) on *Preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments (top executive functions) and law enforcement agencies*, Strasbourg, 20 March 2017;
- **The activities of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)** (*Rapporteur: Mr Hendrik Daems, Belgium, ALDE*): heard from the Rapporteur a declaration of absence of any conflict of interest as well as a statement on the preparation of his report; agreed to the proposal by the Sub-Committee on relations with the OECD and EBRD to hold a meeting in London on 26 October 2017 (subject to the authorisation by the Bureau of the Assembly);
- **Ad hoc Sub-Committee to participate in the events organised by the IPA-CIS Saint Petersburg, 27-28 March 2017**: heard a statement by the Chairperson followed by an exchange of views;
- **Institutional representation of the Committee**: heard a statement by Mr Titus Corlăţean (Romania; SOC) on his participation in the 72nd plenary meeting of the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), Strasbourg, 22-24 March 2017;
- **Work programme:**
 - decided to advise the Bureau to give no follow-up to the motion for a resolution on “Illegal elections in the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in the city of Sebastopol”, given the fact that the matter had already been covered by paragraph 4.1. of Assembly Resolution 2132 (2016);
 - appointed Mr Tobias Zech (Germany, EPP/CD) as Rapporteur on *The situation in Syria and its effects upon surrounding countries* and heard from him a declaration of absence of any conflict of interest;

- appointed Ms Thorhildur Sunna Ævarsdóttir (Iceland, NR) as Rapporteur for opinion on *Prosecuting and punishing the crimes against humanity or even possible genocide committed by Daesh* and heard from her a declaration of absence of any conflict of interest;
 - appointed Ms Olena Sotnyk (Ukraine, ALDE) as Rapporteur for opinion on *Media freedom as a condition for democratic elections* and heard from her a declaration of absence of any conflict of interest;
 - appointed Ms Ioanneta Kavadia (Greece, UEL) as Rapporteur for opinion on *A comprehensive humanitarian and political response to the migration and refugee crisis in Europe* and heard from her a declaration of absence of any conflict of interest;
 - in the absence of candidates, decided to postpone the appointment of a Rapporteur for the opinion on *Counter-Narratives to Terrorism*;
- **Appointment of Committee representatives to external events:** appointed Ms Anne Brasseur (Luxembourg, ALDE) to participate in the Conference on Human Dignity (Nafplion, Greece, 26-27 May 2017), organised by the European Centre for Research and Training on Human Rights and Humanitarian Action and the Jean Monnet Chair “EU Solidarity in Civil Protection and Humanitarian Action” of the University of Athens, in co-operation with the Permanent Representation of Greece to the Council of Europe;
- **Authorisations by the Committee:** agreed to request an extension of the reference for the reports on *Libya’s future between the threats of terrorism and a democratic prospect* and on *Establishing genuine parliamentary dialogue with Algeria* until the end of January 2018;
- **Other business:** took note that the deadline for submitting nominations for the 2017 Václav Havel Human Rights Prize had been extended to the 30 June 2017;
- **Next meetings:** confirmed the forthcoming meetings as follows:
- 14-15 June 2017, Bornholm Island, Denmark
 - Strasbourg, during the Assembly’s 3rd part-session, 26-30 June 2017
 - 6 September 2017, Paris
 - Strasbourg, during the Assembly’s 4th part-session, 9-13 October 2017
 - 14 November 2017, Paris
 - 14 December 2017, Paris;

Thursday 27 April 2017, 14:00 – 15:30, room 9, as regards:

- **Setting minimal standards for electoral systems in order to offer the basis for free and fair elections** (*Rapporteur: Ms Elena Centemero, Italy, EPP/CD*): held a joint hearing with the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, with the participation of Prof. Dr Florian Grotz, Chair of Comparative Politics, Institute of Political Science, Helmut Schmidt University of Hamburg; Ms Marilisa D’Amico, Professor of constitutional law, University of Milan; and Ms Ana Rusu, Senior Election Adviser, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), followed by an exchange of views.

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The **Sub-Committee on relations with the OECD and the EBRD** (of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy), meeting in Strasbourg on 26 April 2017 with Mr Hendrik Daems (Belgium, ALDE) in the Chair, as regards:

- **The activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development (OECD) in 2016-2017** (*Rapporteur: Mr Alfred Heer, Switzerland, ALDE*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur on the preparation of his report;
- **The activities of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)** (*Rapporteur: Mr Hendrik Daems, Belgium, ALDE*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur on the preparation of his report and agreed, on his proposal and that of the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee, to hold a meeting at the headquarters of the EBRD in London on 26 October 2017 (subject to the approval by the Committee and the authorisation by the Bureau of the Assembly);
- **Date and place of the next meeting**: left it to the Chairperson to convene its next meeting.

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D. Chatzivassiliou, J. Ary, P. Chevtchenko, S. Arzilli, A. Salanson

cc. Secretary General of the Assembly
Director General, Director and all staff of the Secretariat of the Assembly
Secretaries of National Delegations and of Political Groups of the Assembly
Secretaries of observer and partner for democracy delegations
Secretary General of the Congress
Secretary to the Committee of Ministers
Directors General
Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
Director of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights
Director of Communication
Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe