



AS/Pol (2021) CB 02
8 February 2021

To the members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Synopsis of the meeting held by videoconference on 4 February 2021

The **Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy**, meeting by videoconference on 4 February 2021, with Mr Andreas Nick (Germany, EPP/CD), first Vice-Chairperson, in the Chair:

– **Appointment of Rapporteurs:**

appointed, following a vote:

Mr Tiny Kox (Netherlands, UEL), Rapporteur on *The Assembly's vision on the strategic priorities for the Council of Europe* (subject to ratification of the reference by the Standing Committee),

Ms Boriana Åberg (Sweden, EPP/CD), Rapporteur on *Justice and security for women in peace reconciliation (for opinion)*,

appointed, by acclamation:

Ms Marietta Karamanli (France, SOC), Rapporteur on *Protecting the pillars of democracy during health crises*,

and heard from them their declarations of absence of conflict of interests,

due to the absence of candidacies, postponed the appointment of a Rapporteur on *Review of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic* to its next meeting;

– **Call for candidates:** called for candidates for the report on *Strengthening the role of the Council of Europe as a cornerstone of the European political architecture*;

– **Changes to the membership of Sub-Committees:** agreed to the following changes in the Sub-Committees:

Sub-Committee on External Relations

Mr Tony Lloyd (United Kingdom, SOC) becomes alternate to Sir Christopher Chope (EC/DA),

Mr Leonid Slutskiy (Russian Federation, NR) becomes member;

Sub-Committee on the Middle East and the Arab World

Mr Jiří Kobza (Czech Republic, EC/DA) becomes member;

- **Appointment of the institutional representatives of the Committee:** in the framework of the Assembly's institutional representation and in view of the decision by the Bureau of the Assembly concerning the need to take into account gender balance, appointed the following members and substitutes, and decided to inform the Bureau of the Assembly accordingly:
 - Council for democratic elections of the Venice Commission (CDE):
 - . Member: Ms María Valentina Martínez Ferro (Spain, EPP/CD),
 - . Substitute: Mr Piero Fassino (Italy, SOC);
 - European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI):
 - . Member: Ms Yelyzaveta Yasko (Ukraine, EPP/CD),
 - . Substitute: Mr Mehmet Mehdi Eker (Turkey, NR);
- **Urgent need for electoral reform in Belarus** (*Rapporteur: Lord David Blencathra, United Kingdom, EC/DA*): considered a preliminary draft report and took note that the report would be submitted for adoption in the Committee at its meeting on 30 March;
- **More participatory democracy to tackle climate change** (*Rapporteur: Mr George Papandreou, Greece, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur, considered a revised introductory memorandum and held a hearing with the participation of Ms Helene Landemore, Associate Professor of Political Science, Yale University; Mr Gerd Leipold, Director of Climate Transparency; and Ms Alice Bergholtz, Bureau member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe (National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations – LSU);
- **Call for an inclusive national political process in Belarus** (*Rapporteur: Mr Kimmo Kiljunen, Finland, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur and agreed to his request to carry a fact-finding visit to Belarus, as appropriate (subject to the authorisation of the Bureau of the Assembly);
- **Fighting fiscal injustice: the work of the OECD on taxation of digital economy** (*Rapporteur: Mr Georgios Katrougkalos, Greece, UEL*): considered a preliminary draft report and took note that the report would be submitted for adoption in the Committee at its meeting on 30 March;
- **Follow up to Resolution 2326 (2020) Democracy hacked: how to respond?** (*Former Rapporteur: Mr Frithjof Schmidt, Germany, SOC*): heard a statement by the former Rapporteur and held an exchange of views with the participation of Mr Rafael Rubio, Substitute member of the Venice Commission for Spain, on the newly published study on *Principles for a fundamental rights-compliant use of digital technologies in electoral processes*;
- **Relationship between the parliamentary majority and the opposition in a democracy** (*Rapporteur: Ms Marija Golubeva, Latvia, ALDE*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur and a presentation of the opinion on *Parameters on the relationship between the parliamentary majority and the opposition in a democracy: a Checklist* by Ms Regina Kiener, Vice-President of the Venice Commission and member of the Commission for Switzerland;
- **Recent developments in Libya and in the Middle East: what consequences for Europe?** (*Rapporteur: Mr Piero Fassino, Italy, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur followed by an exchange of views;
- **Open discussion on current issues:** none;
- **Other business:**

held an exchange of views on issues raised by members, *inter alia*:

 - . The situation in Myanmar; and took note of the intention of Mr Emanuelis Zingeris (Lithuania, EPP/CD) and other members to draft a written statement or a motion for a resolution on this issue;
 - . The functioning of democratic institutions under states of emergency in response to the Covid-19 crisis in Council of Europe member States, and took note that this issue was to be addressed in the framework of the report on *Protecting the pillars of democracy during health crises*;

- . The case of Alexei Navalny and recent developments in the Russian Federation, and was informed that these issues were followed respectively by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and by the Monitoring Committee and could be raised under the item *Open discussion on current issues* at one of its next meetings;
- . took note of the information provided on the closure of three opposition TV channels in Ukraine;
- . took note of the call for nominations for the 2021 Václav Havel Human Rights Prize, and that the deadline for submitting nominations was 30 April 2021.
- **Next meetings:** took note that the Bureau of the Assembly had decided that the current format of meetings, i.e. hybrid or remote, remained valid until the end of June; took note of the change of date of the meeting in March and agreed that this meeting would be held by videoconference:
 - . 30 March 2021, by videoconference
 - . During the Assembly's 2nd part-session, 19-23 April 2021
 - . 11 May 2021
 - . During the Assembly's 3rd part-session, 21-25 June 2021
 - . During the Assembly's 4th part-session, 27 September-1 October 2021
 - . 4 November 2021
 - . 6 December 2021

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The **Sub-Committee on External Relations** (of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy), meeting by videoconference on 4 February 2021 with Mr Andreas Nick (Germany, EPP/CD), first Vice-President of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, as regards:

- **Election of the Sub-Committee's Bureau:** re-elected, by acclamation, Ms Ria Oomen-Ruijten (Netherlands, EPP/CD), Chairperson, and elected Mme Marietta Karamanli (France, SOC), Vice-Chairperson;
- **Date and place of the next meeting:** left it to the Chairperson to convene the next meeting.

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The **Sub-Committee on the Middle East and the Arab World** (of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy), meeting by videoconference on 4 February 2021 with first Mr Andreas Nick (Germany, EPP/CD), first Vice-President of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, and then Mr Georgios Katrougkalos (Greece, UEL) in the Chair as regards:

- **Election of the Sub-Committee's Bureau:** elected, by acclamation, Mr Georgios Katrougkalos (Greece, UEL), Chairperson, and Ms Anne-Mari Virolainen (Finland, EPP/CD), Vice-Chairperson;
- **Date and place of the next meeting:** March 2021 (tbc).

D. Chatzivassiliou, P. Chevtchenko, S. Arzilli, A. Elveriş

cc. Secretary General of the Assembly
Directors 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