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REPORT

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Monday 8 October at 4 p.m.

In this report:

1. Speeches in English are reported in full.
2. Speeches in other languages are reported using the interpretation and are marked with an asterisk
3. The text of the amendments is available at the document centre and on the Assembly's website. Only oral amendments or oral sub-amendments are reproduced in the report of debates.
4. Speeches in German and Italian are reproduced in full in a separate document.
5. Corrections should be handed in at Room 1059A not later than 24 hours after the report has been circulated.

The contents page for this sitting is given at the end of the report.

(Mr O'Reilly, Vice-President of the Assembly, took the Chair at 4 p.m.)

The PRESIDENT – The sitting is open.

1. Changes in the membership of committees

The PRESIDENT – Our first business is to consider the changes proposed in the membership of committees. These are set out in document Commissions 2018 (07) Addendum 2.

Are the proposed changes in the membership of the Assembly's committees agreed to?

They are agreed to.

2. Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee Observation of the early presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey (24 June 2018) (continued)

The PRESIDENT – The next item on the agenda is the continuation of the debate on the progress report of the Bureau and Standing Committee, Document 14632 and Addendums 1 and 2, and Document 14634, and the observation of early presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey (24 June 2018), Document 14608.

I remind members that speaking time in this debate will be limited to three minutes.

The sitting must conclude at 5 p.m., so I propose to interrupt the list of speakers at about 4.50 p.m. I call first Mr Venizelos.

Mr VENIZELOS (*Greece*) – I wish to make a point about the situation in Turkey after the last presidential and parliamentary elections. It is important to prevent the irrevocable transformation of Turkey into an authoritarian, illiberal democracy. Turkey is a deeply divided country – socially, ethnically and religiously. It is a country in financial crisis; a country bordering numerous warzones; and a country with an extremely important role as far as refugee and migratory flows to Europe are concerned

Everyone understands the importance of Turkey's stance in the eastern Mediterranean, particularly in the Aegean Sea, on the situation in Cyprus and on the future of Greek-Turkish relations. Exporting internal problems is always a very serious issue in international relations. The amendment to the Turkish constitution introduced a hybrid presidential system unaccompanied by the institutional counterweights – the checks and balances – of the classic US-style presidential system or even the French-style semi-presidential system.

The Venice Commission has made crucial remarks about this. The constitutional framework and the state of emergency, which continued for more than two years, have made the bodies of the Council of Europe very cautious. We need to be vigilant, to constantly highlight the problems and to apply institutional pressure and dialogue to ensure the validity of the principles and institutional guarantees of European legal and political culture and of secularisation in Turkey, first and foremost for the benefit of Turkey itself and the wellbeing of its citizens, but also for peace and stability in the wider region.

Mr HUSEYNOV (*Azerbaijan*) – The distance between us and a remarkable historical event is growing shorter. In six months, we will gather here to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. In June – on the threshold of the part-session and on the eve of this significant anniversary – the Assembly announced that it would place on its website 263 speeches by all the Heads of State and Government who had made an address here during the past 70 years. In general, this is a very good idea and gives us an opportunity once more to review the ground we have covered in that time, but an unpleasant situation has also emerged that raises serious questions: among the 216 presidents who have addressed the hemicycle of the Parliamentary Assembly are two former Presidents of Armenia.

Over the past 18 years, we have regularly highlighted the existence of a criminal regime in occupant Armenia, citing concrete facts and evidence, and underlined how terrorism has become a State policy of Armenia, and we have declared that its presidential elections always involve breaches of the law and grave State crimes, but unfortunately the progress reports, in contrast to the truth, have not accused Armenia, but each time have confirmed the legality of those elections. Now the Armenian State itself considers two former presidents to be criminals, but the Council of Europe, which at the time backed them, now wants to place

their speeches on its website. Armenia has publicly stated its position on these criminal offenders, but the Council of Europe, either unaware or deliberately, does not intend to acknowledge those mistakes.

Dear colleagues, when you reach the age of 70, be you a human being or an organisation, it is natural to look back over your life. Like the Council of Europe, Turkey has nearly 70 years of activity in this Organisation. In this period, Turkey has made remarkable progress in its development as a democratic country. The Council of Europe, in analysing its past activities, should approach its relations with Turkey with some criticism and make corrections. Lately, we have observed a tough stance towards Turkey on various issues. In my opinion, it is necessary to be more sensitive and fair towards Turkey and to avoid double standards. The presidential elections in Turkey were a tense struggle between candidates, but they were fair, democratic, free, transparent and fully fledged elections. Anyone can attempt to see and comment on the truth as he so desires, but this cannot change its essence. I am positive that Turkey will always be consistent in the development of its democracy and will continue to acquire new achievements.

Mr NÉMETH (*Hungary*) – I would like to start by referring to the rape and murder of the Bulgarian journalist just the other day. I was in Bulgaria with my co-rapporteur last week. We are appalled by the murder of Viktoria Marinova and have issued a declaration encouraging the Sofian authorities to investigate the case and to do their utmost to protect the profession of investigative journalism.

A few remarks have been made about Hungary, but I would like to make one small correction regarding the report in the European Parliament the other day: the so-called Sargentini report was not accepted by the European Parliament as it did not get two thirds of the votes cast. For that very reason, Hungary has initiated a court procedure at the European Court of Justice.

Concerning the elections in Turkey, I express our congratulations. Today, President Erdoğan is in Budapest, meeting Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. I believe the election was a demonstrable success of democracy in Turkey. That does not mean we should at all disregard the concerns outlined in the report. We are aware that Turkey is a factor in the stability of the broader Middle East, and the Council of Europe bears a special responsibility for security, democracy and human rights in Turkey.

Finally, I want to refer to an important recent event, the referendum in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. Unfortunately, the turnout was only 36%, but we should keep in mind that the result in the referendum was 90% yes, a clear political indication by Macedonian society. Before that, an agreement between “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Greece was essential; in the case of the amendment to the constitution, the ball will be in the court of the European Union, NATO and the Council of Europe. The stability of the Balkans is at stake.

Ms ESTRELA (*Portugal*)* – First, I congratulate Olena Sotnyk, the head of our observation mission for the elections in Turkey, on her excellent work, the excellent report and everything that she carried out on the frontline. I thank the secretariat for the assistance they provided and the impressive work they performed, and colleagues who are members of the Ad Hoc Committee. This extraordinary team worked to ensure that the mission was a success. I thank everyone for their professionalism, commitment and enthusiasm. I also take advantage of this opportunity to welcome the new representatives of Turkey in this Assembly.

I was a member of the observation mission for the elections held in Turkey. I went with Maryvonne Blondin to Izmir, a bastion of the CHP. The elections were carried out in a positive environment. We did not encounter any difficulties; we were welcomed positively on the whole, and everything was carried out in serene and peaceful conditions. With regard to female representation, it should be underlined that there were 996 women on the electoral lists, which accounts for roughly 20%. However, only 5% of them were at the head of the lists, because Turkish legislation does not provide for gender quotas. Some polling stations had only male candidates.

I fully endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the report, in particular the fact that Turkish citizens are willing to do what it takes to promote democracy. It is also important to factor in the fact that the early elections were held against the backdrop of the state of emergency, and that the electoral process started well in advance of the vote and even before the electoral campaign. That undermined the fairness of the process, as stated in the report. The law setting out stricter campaigning rules does not apply to the outgoing president.

Regarding the media, we can conclude that the media landscape has been dominated by a number of bodies that are seen as pro-government. That restricts the freedom and diversity of opinions. It is important that the Council is able to continue to work with Turkey in constant monitoring.

Mr TILKI (*Hungary*) – I was a member of the OSCE delegation that observed the elections in Turkey on 24 June. Some 56.3 million voters were registered to vote in the country and there were 3 million abroad. About 80% of registered voters voted. I was in Erzurum in the eastern part of Turkey. We visited rural areas near the town and the town itself. In the report we find at least 15 polling stations where international observers were denied access by police officers or BBC chairpersons. On polling day, we did not meet that kind of problem. Everything was in order. Muharrem İnce came in second place in the presidential vote. The result was not enough to force a second-round run-off. He said after the election result that, despite some votes being stolen, the overall result was not in question. I want to speak about that and the fact that there were no stolen votes in those polling stations that we observed.

Mr Erdoğan, who won the presidential election, said after the election that Turkey was “an example for the rest of the world”, and would carry on military campaigns in Syria, fight terror groups and raise Turkey’s international prestige. We respect the election in Turkey. We should note that turnout was unusually high and all parties accepted the results.

Based on the election results, the Hungarian Government expects both European-Turkish and bilateral Hungarian-Turkish co-operation to develop dynamically in the upcoming period. Turkey’s stability serves the interests of all European countries. Our continent faces a number of grave security challenges, and maintaining effective co-operation with Turkey is of the utmost importance. Since Turkey plays a defining role in the security of Europe, it is in the interests of both Hungary and Europe to maintain stability in Turkey. The election results will contribute to that.

Ms FATALIYEVA (*Azerbaijan*) – There are a few items to consider an election successful: providing equal opportunities to candidates, healthy competition and voter turnout. Both elections in Turkey met those criteria. Elections were held in a fierce competition. Only six candidates participated in the presidential election. At the same time, the current president was opposed by sufficiently strong and influential candidates, but his victory was so indisputable that even the main opposition candidate Muharrem İnce, the representative of the People’s Republican Party, recognised the election result and Erdoğan’s convincing victory after a short time.

The parliamentary campaign was held under equally fierce conditions. Seven parties took part in it and were preparing to do so long before the parliamentary elections. A few months before the elections, coalitions were actively created in Turkey. There was a regrouping of political forces. An active campaign was conducted in the regions. As a result, a coalition of pro-government parties, the Justice and Development Party and the National Action Party, gained the support of more than 50% of the voters who participated. Adopted on the eve of the elections, the new electoral alliance law allowed the parties to form alliances and submit them to the electoral commission, meaning that they will be grouped on the ballot paper under the name of the alliance. That gave the opposition a chance to create a wider coalition and to change the political balance in its favour.

In such circumstances, the victory of the current president and his party seems more than convincing. It happened at a time when the country faces serious economic difficulties and external pressure. Undoubtedly, the victory of Erdoğan and his party will help him to consolidate his political power and continue to follow his chosen path, since this victory shows a kind of confidence of the Turkish people in his leadership and confirmation that the reform policy carried out by the current Government has been approved by wide layers of Turkish society.

Turkey plays a stabilising role in the region; protecting its people, providing security and preserving stability are the key points of state policy in Turkey. The leadership of the country did its best to provide a transparent, democratic and safe environment for the elections during this very fragile period of time. An election is about choice and the position of people. We have to hear and respect the voices of the people of Turkey and support Turkey as one of the most important members of the Council of Europe, because the successful development of the Turkish republic is a guarantor of peace and stability in a large region, encompassing the Black Sea, the eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus.

Lord FOULKES (*United Kingdom*) – It is a particular pleasure to be speaking under your chairmanship, Mr O’Reilly. I am pleased to see you in the chair.

Like many people here, I came into politics through non-governmental organisations. I realise how vital they are in a flourishing democracy, as we saw them blossom in eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union, and that is why I welcome the fact that we are going to have a report into the restrictions on NGOs in our European countries.

I also recognise the vital importance of a free press. It causes us politicians problems from time to time, but it is absolutely vital for our democracy. As the general rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on media freedom and attacks on journalists, I fully support the point made by Mr Omtzigt from the Netherlands this morning about the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia. As your general rapporteur, I will do all I can to make sure that not just the killers but those behind the killers are brought to justice. It is particularly fitting that we raise that today as we approach the first anniversary of her murder.

I also say to Mr Németh that, today, on your behalf, as general rapporteur I issued a statement deploring the brutal murder of the young investigative journalist, Victoria Marinova, in Bulgaria. Like Mr Németh, I have asked the Bulgarian Government to urgently investigate that appalling crime.

Later this year, at the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media in December, we will have a hearing and a report on media freedom and the attacks on journalists in Council of Europe countries, with experts. I fear that we will see that a deterioration has occurred over the last few years in our Council of Europe countries, but I am convinced that with a report and that hearing, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is the body to do something about that, and I look forward to the hearing.

The PRESIDENT* – Thank you for your personal comments. I now call Mr Sobolev.

Mr SOBOLEV (*Ukraine*) – This is an excellent opportunity to not only analyse the work of the Bureau and the Standing Committee, but to see how elections have taken place in the period before our parliamentary session. We have heard a lot of facts about the Turkish elections, but I think each report needs a new item – perhaps even a new chapter – which is about the influence of other countries on the electoral process in this or that country, examples of which we can find in the last three months.

When it was declared that there was Russian influence on the US elections, that took place a while ago – two years ago – but has now been recognised by both main parties in the United States. When the German Government, the French Government, or the Government of the Netherlands announce the direct influence and interference of Russian secret services on their future or current elections, that is the most dangerous thing in the way of transparent and free elections. An analysis of the Salisbury case – these guys who flew in, who decided to go on an excursion – is only the beginning of the process. Three days ago, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands announced the case of four KGB agents – in the Russian Federation, there is still a KGB – who tried to influence the flight MH17 investigation process; that is dangerous. When the Olympic Committee in Switzerland, together with the secret services of those countries, stopped a new effort by Russian KGB agents to analyse the system of previous Olympic Games, it is not a case that only affects that country. This is why our future reports must have concrete facts – and we have a lot of such facts – so that we do not have the events such as we had in Montenegro, where only the excellent work of the Montenegro secret services, and others, stopped the Russian rebirth that they have been attempting in this period.

Mr MARUKYAN (*Armenia*) – I will not react to the whole speech of my Azeri colleague, but I would like to say: please fight for your own country and your own democracy and do not spread lies in this respected house.

It has been five months already since a democratic, non-violent, velvet revolution took place in Armenia, as a result of which a representative of a parliamentary faction of nine members was elected to the post of Prime Minister. However, the latter does not yet have a majority in Parliament to rely on and achieve the goals and programmes of the revolution. During the past five months, without the support of a majority in the Parliament, the Executive has been carrying out an uncompromising and effective struggle against the systemic corruption that has taken root in the country. Because of that struggle, I assure you that there is currently no corrupt Minister or newly appointed department head in the country. Naturally, we still have much to do to dismantle the whole system, but today we are facing an important challenge, which is the holding of extraordinary parliamentary elections.

The organisation of extraordinary parliamentary elections in Armenia has become an urgent task that should be arranged in accordance with the letter and spirit of the electoral code and constitution, with the whole process based on human rights, the rule of law and the fundamental principles of democracy. It is obvious that Armenia has not yet overcome the political crisis, one of the consequences of which is the current situation where the Government does not have a majority. The extraordinary elections initiated by the Prime Minister are aimed at overcoming this political crisis and eventually accomplishing the ideas and values of the revolution. Without that, Armenia cannot get out of the current political crisis, which, in its turn, will lead to a constitutional crisis.

I urge the Parliamentary Assembly to demonstrate consistent support for the new Armenian authorities in tackling corruption, implementing systemic reforms and organising extraordinary parliamentary elections, particularly considering the fact that the Council of Europe is also our – I mean Armenia's – Organisation. In this case, it should not assume the role of a mere observer, but should make all efforts to support the democratic processes, because the reforms are directed towards the establishment of an exemplary democracy in Armenia – which is much further ahead than our neighbour, Azerbaijan.

Mr ÖZSOY (*Turkey*) – I thank the members of the observation mission, who accomplished a great task. I suspect that the report shows only the tip of the iceberg. There were many other critical issues that are not covered in the report, but I will not go into details.

The Government and the main opposition party in Turkey decided to hold an early election one and a half years ahead of schedule, and gave us only 64 days to prepare for the most important election in the history of the country, which was to make the change from a parliamentary to a presidential system. Two months was too little time to prepare for the election. I got married in 2007 and it took my wife and me six months to prepare for our wedding ceremony, but the government decided to catch the opposition unprepared for a most important election in Turkey. It is not just that the elections happened under emergency rule. We think that emergency rule was used and exploited by the government over two years to destroy the democratic opposition, thereby paving the way for an extremely authoritarian presidential system.

This morning, Mr Seyidov stressed that the issues raised by the report are not very important and are only details. According to that logic, Mr Selahattin Demirtas, the co-chair of HDP – the People's Democratic party – who ran his candidacy from prison, where he has been, contrary to the Turkish constitution and international law, for the past two years, is a simple detail that we can ignore. Similarly, that logic sweeps under the carpet the fact that 5 000 members of my political party and 50 elected Kurdish mayors are in prison, with 100 of them dismissed from their positions; 2 000 civil society organisations have been banned in Turkey and had their property confiscated; 200 media outlets have been banned, giving the government a virtual monopoly over the media; more than 100 journalists are in prison; 70 000 people have been sent to prison over the past two years; one third of the overall prison population – 70 000 people – are registered students; 150 000 people have been dismissed from their jobs; and the government uses public resources to finance its campaign.

In conclusion, I remind those who support that argument that democracy is everything and is always about such details.

Mr KOÇ (*Turkey*)* – I thank the rapporteur and members of the committee, who were tasked with observing the presidential and early parliamentary elections in Turkey. I want to address some the inequalities and complaints that we identified.

The elections were carried out against the backdrop of a state of emergency, which means that the issues of freedom of expression, freedom of the media and freedom of assembly are highly debateable. Restrictions on written media and the Internet were extremely apparent. The government made it very difficult for independent media to work properly. According to founding legislation, State television and radio are meant to be impartial, but throughout the whole campaign they broadcast almost exclusively pro-Erdoğan and pro-AKP speeches. The supervisory board for radio and TV was unable to take action, despite the necessary statutes being in place, which meant that opposition candidates were not guaranteed their right to impartiality and equality of access. Other unfavourable conditions are clearly underlined on pages 13 and 14 of the report.

Despite all those inequalities and serious problems, we pay tribute to the high turnout of 86% and to the democratic mobilisation of the Turkish people.

On recent developments in Turkey, the Court of Cassation has adjudicated on the case of a deputy of the CHP – the social democratic party – who was sentenced in February to six years' imprisonment. He will now have to serve his sentence, and become a political prisoner, once his electoral term and parliamentary immunity come to an end. His lawyers say that the guilty verdict is unfair and unacceptable and have appealed to the Constitutional Court. The legal process in Turkey is such that if a member is re-elected, an investigation will be carried out subject to his immunity being waived by the national parliament. The court of appeal in Istanbul and the Court of Cassation have continued to adjudicate on the member's case, and the decision to release him was taken under article 83 of the constitution, relating to the criminal conviction of a national assembly member before or after elections, which states that sentencing should be postponed until he is no longer a member. Article 84 also states that a sentence is not definitive until all

avenues have been exhausted. We want the Constitutional Court to change the Court of Cassation's ruling concerning Mr Berberoğlu.

Mr FOURNIER (*France*)* – I commend the excellent, well documented and balanced report drafted by Ms Olena Sotnyk. The elections held in Turkey in June were carried out in very special conditions. The state of emergency meant that a large number of exceptional measures were taken, including arrests of political officials and journalists; the undertaking of military operations in the south-east of the country; significant curbs on the freedom of expression; self-censorship of journalists; changes to key elements of the electoral code, which was shoddy not only before but after the elections were called.

Furthermore, a number of recommendations approved by the Venice Commission and our Assembly, and drafted at the time of previous elections, have not been implemented, even though they relate to very important components of electoral legislation. For instance, the 10% threshold was initially created to exclude Kurdish political expression and is undermining pluralism in the parliament. There is also the issue of the seat distribution system and the lack of legislative clarity regarding the funding of electoral campaigns.

All of those components conspire towards one aim, namely to favour the AKP and to ensure its electoral victory, promoted by a very partial media. That aim has, in fact, been achieved. The clear victory of President Erdoğan in the very first round confirms that power is concentrated in his hands. That started with last year's referendum, which ushered in a very strong presidential regime. The AKP does not have a majority in the grand national assembly; it is dependent on its alliance with the nationalist party, the MHP. That may run the risk, however, of exacerbating the divisive nature of Turkish political life, which was very clear throughout the electoral campaign.

What is President Erdoğan going to do with his huge powers, given the meek parliament? The government lifted the state of emergency last summer, but that does not mean that the rule of law has returned. I remind colleagues that against that backdrop, 78 000 people are reported to have been arrested and 115 000 civil servants have been dismissed. We need to ensure that rights are respected.

Turkey also has to contend with a number of difficulties in the country. The economic situation, which for a long time was a reason for the AKP's success, has got a lot worse, with strong inflation, the collapse of the currency, a slowdown in growth and an increase in unemployment.

The fight against PKK remains a priority for Turkey, which has been distancing itself from its traditional allies, first and foremost the United States and the European Union, even though they have clear shared interests in the economic field and in migration. At the same time, Ankara has been developing closer ties with Moscow and, in more difficult conditions, Tehran. The Council of Europe must remain watchful of the situation in Turkey and how it develops.

Lord BALFE (*United Kingdom*) – Undoubtedly the election was satisfactory – as the report reads. Appendix 5 says that on balance the election was fair and conducted within overall international norms. However, I share the concerns that have been expressed, in particular by Mr Özsoy, about the current state of democracy within Turkey. A vibrant democracy depends as much on its opposition as on its government. In 40 years of dealing with Turkey at one level or another, including 25 years in the European Parliament, I have never known Turkish democracy to be in a more parlous state than it is today.

You cannot have a democracy and have so many people in prison. You cannot have a democracy where politicians and people standing for election cannot be sure that they will not be imprisoned. A democracy has to be about the free exchange of ideas, with people with political ideas able to exchange them freely. I accept that President Erdoğan and his Government have the will of the Turkish people behind them, but for the future and the future development of democracy in Turkey they must pay regard to the opposition and allow opposition voices to be heard and to develop.

We accept that Turkey has come through tremendous problems. The European refugee crisis is as nothing compared with the problems that Turkey has had to contend with. Looking at the war on its borders, it has had a huge number of challenges. That is why we have to be very measured in how we respond to and deal with issues there, but we must not let that allow us to ignore the fact that many things are wrong.

Finally, it is not a good idea to alienate so many members of the middle class with this succession of dismissals and imprisonments. Too many people who have a very good standing in the community have seen their families and their lives destroyed. It is in the interests of Turkey, of President Erdoğan and of the Turkish political class to address that point and to do so quickly.

Ms MIKKO (*Estonia*) – I thank Ms Sotnyk. She did her job to the highest level, including the writing of the report.

Turkey has a significant impact on Europe and on global stability. I was part of the election observation mission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in June, and I was positively surprised by the remarkably high turnout in the early presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey. The turnout was not 86%, but 88%, which shows that Turkey has good potential to develop into a pluralist democracy anchored by the unrestricted exercise of fundamental freedoms, full respect of the rule of law and inclusive policies. In addition, I was happy to see that the number of female candidates grew as compared with previous elections. There is, however, much room for improvement. Only 5.4% of candidates at the top of party lists were female.

When it comes to securing polling stations, I experienced the strong presence of police and security officers at first hand in the south-eastern city of Diyarbakır. Their very visible presence was most likely intimidating to some groups and to members of the election observation mission. I understand that there was a state of emergency, but why has it not stopped already?

It is my biggest wish that the authorities in Ankara return to supporting the principles of democracy and the rule of law. From personal experience and contact with the Turkish people, I am convinced that many of them want their country to become truly democratic. Among other things, that would have to include a significant rise in freedom of expression, which is currently lacking.

As a co-rapporteur of the Turkish monitoring mission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I assure the Chamber that the Assembly continues to stand ready to engage in a genuine dialogue with the Turkish authorities to address the challenges posed by the new presidential system, as highlighted by the Venice Commission. We are also ready to discuss other crucial issues, such as the freedom of the press and the independence of the judiciary, as well as the immediate release of politicians, journalists and human rights defenders in pre-trial detention.

When it comes to electoral legislation and other aforementioned issues, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe will continue to monitor the situation in Turkey with the broader aim of lining up Turkish legislation with Council of Europe standards. I finish by highlighting that the Assembly continues to closely monitor the situation of parliamentarians and former parliamentarians currently in detention in Turkey. I fully agree with President Maury Pasquier, who has said: “The place of parliamentarians must not be in prison: freedom of expression is at the heart of the exercise of our parliamentary mandates.”

Mr Günter VOGT (*Liechtenstein*)* – Thank you very much for this important report. The early presidential and parliamentary elections of 24 June took place irrespective of the fact that the necessary conditions were lacking. The president had an incredible advantage over others through the media and other means. The legal framework and the fact that a state of emergency existed in the country at the time allowed for the violation of numerous human rights. There was no freedom of speech and various other conditions under which proper elections should take place were not met.

There were several questions relating to participation, ballots and so on. This was not a situation in which an election should have taken place. Numerous individuals were not on the list of registered voters. The necessary political conditions for elections were not in place. The report mentions numerous other reports that have to be discussed. The particular limitations that were set and the percentage figures that were set for participation in the parliament were totally unacceptable. It is clear that the result – Erdoğan as president with increased power – is due to an election that was not democratic in nature.

With these developments in Turkey, it is necessary for the Parliamentary Assembly to continue to observe the situation there. This observation report sounds an alarm for us all. It is a call to all of us to take measures and express ourselves clearly in regard to those who are in prison in Turkey and those whose democratic rights have been limited.

Mr ARIEV (*Ukraine*) – We are discussing how elections should be independent and free of any pressure, but unfortunately we have such a problem inside the Assembly. I am a member of the Bureau, and a lot of my colleagues on it discussed one thing this morning that could have a serious impact on voting in the Assembly: the so-called legal analysis from the office of the Secretary General on the matter that we will discuss tomorrow. My colleagues raised the fact that there has been an attempt to subdue the Assembly to another branch of the Council of Europe. The legal analysis clearly says in a footnote that the Parliamentary Assembly should abstain from unilaterally taking action that would directly or indirectly result in depriving the

member State from representative or participation rights. We are being given no choice but to follow that legal analysis, but at least two different opinions exist at the moment.

There was an interesting situation on the Bureau sitting on the Friday of the summer part-session. After the Ad Hoc Committee and a Compendium of hundreds of proposals, we extracted only a couple about the Russian demands on the Assembly. It is a very tricky situation. We are discussing how to change the rules but not how to compel the Russian Federation to fulfil its obligation. After that, we found that there were only two and a half weeks from the publication of the report that we are discussing tomorrow up to the moment of voting. There is no time for good analysis. The office of the Secretary General would like to enforce us with its legal analysis, which is one-sided and without any conclusion on the position of the Assembly.

This discussion should take place tomorrow very carefully. We will decide what to do in the Assembly, and that decision should not have any pressure from outside. I hope that we are strong enough to prove that parliamentarians come first and other executive branches come after.

The PRESIDENT – I must now interrupt the list of speakers. The speeches of members on the speakers list who have been present during the debate but have not been able to speak may be given to the Table Office for publication in the Official Report. I remind colleagues that the texts are to be submitted in typescript, electronically if possible, no later than four hours after the list of speakers is interrupted. Ms Brynjólfssdóttir, do you wish to reply? You have four minutes, 45 seconds remaining.

Ms BRYNJÓLFSSDÓTTIR (*Iceland*) – Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, thank you so much for your comments and reflections on the progress report of the Bureau and Standing Committee. I would like to address some of the things that you mentioned.

Many Assembly members mentioned the necessity of a thorough investigation into the murders of European journalists. I fully agree. The attacks against investigative journalists that we have witnessed in recent years – and yesterday in Bulgaria – are a direct threat to democracy and freedom of speech, and hinder their work. We must strongly condemn those horrible actions and deliver a clear message.

Many of you also reflected on the observation of the early presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey. As both Ms Olena Sotnyk and I conveyed in our speeches, the elections were an important benchmark for Turkey, marking the transformation of the country from a parliamentary democracy to a presidential one. As one member of the election observation mission in Turkey remarked, we witnessed a very high turnout from voters, which is very welcome as we have seen a decline of voting turnout in democratic elections in most countries. However, we also observed the critical environment towards the Turkish media and NGOs, with the constriction of free debate and freedom of speech. We are also concerned about the critical situation of political prisoners in Turkey.

I spoke about the overwhelming support of MEPs for asking the European Council to determine whether Hungary was at risk of breaching the European Union's founding values. My words were questioned, but the note and the vote were by absolute majority, so I stand by my speech.

Regarding our internal affairs here at the Assembly, I took note of many remarks, among them those of Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger and Mr Tiny Kox. I fully agree with Mr Kox that we have to focus on the future now. During this session we are discussing and deciding on which direction our Organisation will take, and how we will ensure that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe continues to be a dynamic and vital institution protecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy. In that context, I fully agree as a parliamentarian with the grand aim of guarding the Assembly's strength and independence, as Mr Liddell-Grainger and other members of the Assembly talked about. However, fighting among ourselves or fighting the Committee of Ministers is not the right way to proceed, but has the effect only of weakening our great institution. We have to co-operate with the common aims that are in sight.

During the past year we have put a lot of work into the internal affairs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, while important issues regarding the constant and direct fight for human rights, and the rights of member States, have not received the attention or the time they deserve here in the Assembly. As I said, I will not elaborate on the outcomes of the reflections of the rules committee, which will be presented by its rapporteur Ms Petra De Sutter tomorrow and debated. However, I underline again that the report of the Rules Committee is not the final stage in our efforts to make the work of the Assembly more relevant and visible in the current political and inter-institutional context.

Let us join hands to implement the important work of the Assembly and focus on its main objective, which is to defend human rights wherever we can.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Ms Brynjólfsdóttir.

The Bureau has proposed a number of references to committees for ratification by the Assembly, set out in Document 14632. Is there any objection to the proposed references to committees?

There is no objection, so the references are approved.

I invite the Assembly to approve the other decisions of the Bureau, as set out in the progress report, Document 14632 Addendum 1.

The progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee is approved.

3. Next public business

The PRESIDENT – The Assembly will hold its next public sitting tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. with the agenda that was approved this morning.

The sitting is closed.

(The sitting was closed at 5 p.m.)

CONTENTS

1. Changes in the membership of committees
2. Debate continued: Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee, and Observation of the early presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey (24 June 2018)

Speakers: Mr Venizelos, Mr Huseynov, Mr Németh, Ms Estrela, Mr Tilki, Ms Fataliyeva, Lord Foulkes, Mr Sobolev, Mr Marukyan, Mr Özsoy, Mr Koç, Mr Fournier, Lord Balfe, Ms Mikko, Mr G. Vogt, Mr Ariev

3. Next public business

Appendix / Annexe

Representatives or Substitutes who signed the register of attendance in accordance with Rule 12.2 of the Rules of Procedure. The names of members substituted follow (in brackets) the names of participating members.

Liste des représentants ou suppléants ayant signé le registre de présence, conformément à l'article 12.2 du Règlement. Le nom des personnes remplacées suit celui des Membres remplaçant, entre parenthèses.

ANAGNOSTOPOULOU, Athanasia [Ms]	HUNKO, Andrej [Mr]
ANTTILA, Sirkka-Liisa [Ms]	HUSEYNOV, Rafael [Mr]
ARIEV, Volodymyr [Mr]	JABLIANOV, Valeri [Mr]
AYDIN, Kamil [Mr]	JANSSON, Eeva-Lena [Ms] (KARLSSON, Niklas [Mr])
BADIA, José [M.]	KALMARI, Anne [Ms]
BAKOYANNIS, Theodora [Ms]	KANDELAKI, Giorgi [Mr] (BAKRADZE, David [Mr])
BALFE, Richard [Lord] (GILLAN, Cheryl [Dame])	KAVVADIA, Ioanneta [Ms]
BARNETT, Doris [Ms]	KILIÇ, Akif Çağatay [Mr]
BAYR, Petra [Ms] (BURES, Doris [Ms])	KIRAL, Serhii [Mr] (GERASHCHENKO, Iryna [Mme])
BENNING, Sybille [Ms] (MARSCHALL, Matern von [Mr])	KIRILOV, Danail [Mr] (GROZDANOVA, Dzhema [Ms])
BEREZA, Boryslav [Mr]	KOÇ, Haluk [M.]
BERNACKI, Włodzimierz [Mr]	KOPŘIVA, František [Mr]
BEUS RICHEMBERGH, Goran [Mr]	LANGBALLE, Christian [Mr] (HENRIKSEN, Martin [Mr])
BILDARRATZ, Jokin [Mr]	LEITE RAMOS, Luís [M.]
BLONDIN, Maryvonne [Mme]	LEŚNIAK, Józef [M.] (MILEWSKI, Daniel [Mr])
BÖKE, Selin Sayek [Ms]	LEYTE, Carmen [Ms]
BOSCHI, Maria Elena [Ms]	LOGVYNSKYI, Georgii [Mr]
BRYNJÓLFSDÓTTIR, Rósa Björk [Ms]	LUPU, Marian [Mr]
BUCCARELLA, Maurizio [Mr]	MANIERO, Alvisè [Mr]
BÜCHEL, Roland Rino [Mr] (HEER, Alfred [Mr])	MARUKYAN, Edmon [Mr] (RUSTAMYAN, Armen [M.])
BUSHKA, Klotilda [Ms]	McCARTHY, Kerry [Ms]
BUTKEVIČIUS, Algirdas [Mr]	MIKKO, Marianne [Ms]
CHRISTOFFERSEN, Lise [Ms]	MONTILLA, José [Mr] (GUTIÉRREZ, Antonio [Mr])
CILEVIČS, Boriss [Mr] (LAIZĀNE, Inese [Ms])	MULLEN, Rónán [Mr] (COWEN, Barry [Mr])
COZMANCIUC, Corneliu Mugurel [Mr] (ȘTEFAN, Corneliu [Mr])	MUNYAMA, Killion [Mr] (POMASKA, Agnieszka [Ms])
CSÖBÖR, Katalin [Mme]	NAUDI ZAMORA, Víctor [M.]
DALLOZ, Marie-Christine [Mme]	NÉMETH, Zsolt [Mr]
DAMYANOVA, Milena [Mme]	NENUTIL, Miroslav [Mr]
DONALDSON, Jeffrey [Sir]	NICK, Andreas [Mr]
EBERLE-STRUB, Susanne [Ms]	OEHME, Ulrich [Mr] (KLEINWAECHTER, Norbert [Mr])
ECCLES, Diana [Lady]	OHLSSON, Carina [Ms]
EROTOKRITOU, Christiana [Ms] (LOUCAIDES, George [Mr])	ÖZSOY, Hişyar [Mr]
ESSL, Franz Leonhard [Mr]	PANTIĆ PILJA, Biljana [Ms]
ESTRELA, Edite [Mme]	PAVIĆEVIĆ, Sanja [Ms] (ČATOVIĆ, Marija Maja [Ms])
EVANS, Nigel [Mr]	RAMPI, Roberto [Mr]
FATALIYEVA, Sevinj [Ms] (AGHAYEVA, Ulviyye [Ms])	RIBERAYGUA, Patricia [Mme]
FIALA, Doris [Mme]	ŞAHİN, Ali [Mr]
FOULKES, George [Lord] (SHARMA, Virendra [Mr])	SCHENNACH, Stefan [Mr]
FOURNIER, Bernard [M.]	SCHNEIDER-SCHNEITER, Elisabeth [Mme] (FRIDEZ, Pierre-Alain [M.])
GAFAROVA, Sahiba [Ms]	SIDALI, Zeki Hakan [Mr]
GATTI, Marco [M.]	SILVA, Adão [M.]
GAVAN, Paul [Mr]	SIRAKAYA, Zafer [Mr]
GHILETCHI, Valeriu [Mr]	SOBOLEV, Serhiy [Mr]
GONÇALVES, Carlos Alberto [M.]	SOTNYK, Olena [Ms]
GONCHARENKO, Oleksii [Mr]	STELLINI, David [Mr]
GRECH, Etienne [Mr] (CUTAJAR, Rosianne [Ms])	STIENEN, Petra [Ms]
GRIN, Jean-Pierre [M.] (MÜLLER, Thomas [Mr])	STROE, Ionuț-Marian [Mr]
GUNNARSSON, Jonas [Mr]	TILKI, Attila [Mr] (CSENGER-ZALÁN, Zsolt [Mr])
HALICKI, Andrzej [Mr]	TORNARE, Manuel [M.] (MAURY PASQUIER, Liliane [Mme])
HARDT, Jürgen [Mr] (MOTSCHMANN, Elisabeth [Ms])	TRUSKOLASKI, Krzysztof [Mr]
HASANOV, Elshad [Mr] (HAJIYEV, Sabir [Mr])	TÜRKEŞ, Yıldırim Tuğrul [Mr]
HEINRICH, Frank [Mr] (VOGEL, Volkmar [Mr])	ULLRICH, Volker [Mr]
HOPKINS, Maura [Ms]	URPILAINEN, Jutta [Ms] (PACKALÉN, Tom [Mr])
HOWELL, John [Mr]	VALLINI, André [M.] (CAZEAU, Bernard [M.])

VAREIKIS, Egidijus [Mr]
VENIZELOS, Evangelos [M.] (*TZAVARAS, Konstantinos [M.]*)
VESCOVI, Manuel [Mr]
VOGT, Günter [Mr] (*WENAWESER, Christoph [Mr]*)
WALLINHEIMO, Sinuhe [Mr] (*PELKONEN, Jaana Maarit [Ms]*)
WASERMAN, Sylvain [M.]
XUCLÀ, Jordi [Mr] (*MATARÍ, Juan José [M.]*)
YEMETS, Leonid [Mr]
ZAVOLI, Roger [Mr] (*D'AMBROSIO, Vanessa [Ms]*)
ZINGERIS, Emanuelis [Mr]
ZRINZO AZZOPARDI, Stefan [Mr] (*MALLIA, Emanuel [Mr]*)

Also signed the register / Ont également signé le registre

**Representatives or Substitutes not authorised to vote /
Représentants ou suppléants non autorisés à voter**

DOUBLE, Steve [Mr]
GOODWILL, Robert [Mr]
HAMZAYEV, Nagif [Mr]
KATSIKIS, Konstantinos [Mr]
LOPUSHANSKYI, Andrii [Mr]
LOUCAIDES, George [Mr]
NACSA, Lőrinc [Mr]
PALLARÉS, Judith [Ms]

TZAVARAS, Konstantinos [M.]
VARVITSIOTIS, Miltiadis [Mr]
VICKERS, Martin [Mr]

Observers / Observateurs

DAVIES, Don [Mr]
HARDER, Rachael [Ms]
SIMMS, Scott [Mr]

Partners for democracy / Partenaires pour la démocratie

AMRAOUI, Allal [M.]
CHAGAF, Aziza [Mme]

**Representatives of the Turkish Cypriot Community (In
accordance to Resolution 1376 (2004) of
the Parliamentary Assembly) / Représentants de la communauté
chypriote turque
(Conformément à la Résolution 1376 (2004) de l'Assemblée
parlementaire)**

SANER Hamza Ersan