

# PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE



Progress report – Main activities  
(January–July 2020)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The first part of the Parliamentary Assembly session (27-31 January 2020) launched the activities for the Assembly's work programme for 2020. The newly elected President outlined the priority issues of his Presidency, grounded on and aligned with the priorities and the overall work and activities of the Assembly and focusing on:

- ▶ supporting and encouraging close co-operation between the three branches of the Council of Europe – the Assembly, the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General – with the aim of strengthening the impact of the Organisation's work – in the form of a 'trialogue';
- ▶ strengthening the link between environment and human rights;
- ▶ promoting key Council of Europe Conventions, with a view to their ratification and effective implementation by all member States;
- ▶ seeking ways to strengthen the Assembly's role and visibility, especially vis-à-vis national parliaments, and increasing the impact of our actions.

However, the COVID-19 crisis caused major disruptions to the Assembly's work and activities. At the same time, it induced getting out of the "comfort zone", thinking "out of the box", to adjust, adapt and come up with practical and innovative solutions to allow the continued functioning of the Assembly, hence fulfilling its mission as the political "engine" of the Council of Europe.

The Assembly members, the Secretariat and the Secretary General are to be commended for rising to the challenges. Jointly, we swiftly adopted the working methods and were able to ensure the continuity of our work and activities.

The committees finalised five reports that focused on the consequences of the pandemic for our health systems, democratic institutions, human rights and the rule of law, equality and non-discrimination, violence against women and domestic violence, the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and recommendations for action by governments and parliaments to address them.

The Assembly also engaged with the 47 national parliaments offering guidance and sharing practical tools to address the consequences of the pandemic based on the Council of Europe's values and standards.

In parallel, work continued on the priorities set out and the overall mission of the Parliamentary Assembly, notably reports on **artificial intelligence**, work on **environment and human rights**, **promotion of the ratification and effective implementation of key Council of Europe Conventions** and **intra-institutional co-operation: the trialogue**.

Throughout this process, the Assembly paid due attention to the gender dimension of its work.

The present report describes the highlights and achievements of the Assembly's activities during the first six months of the year 2020 as well as the key activities of the Presidency during this period.



## Foreword by the President of the Assembly

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**B**uilding upon the Assembly's ongoing activities and the priorities of its Committees, upon my election as President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I highlighted four issues to be addressed as a matter of priority:

1. supporting and encouraging close co-operation between the three branches of the Council of Europe – the Assembly, the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General - with the aim of strengthening the impact of the Organisation's work – in the form of a 'trialogue';
2. strengthening the link between environment and human rights;
3. promoting key Council of Europe Conventions, with a view to their ratification and effective implementation by all member States;
4. seeking ways to strengthen the Assembly's role and visibility, especially vis-à-vis national parliaments, and increasing the impact of our actions.

In the face of the rapidly developing COVID-19 pandemic, affecting all Council of Europe member States, a new political priority was added to the Assembly's agenda: upholding Council of Europe values in the context of a serious public health emergency and supporting national parliaments in addressing the consequences of the pandemic by making full use of the Council of Europe standards, practical tools and expertise.

Tackling discrimination and promoting equality between women and men continued to be a transversal priority of the Assembly's overall work and activities. The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures further exposed and exacerbated gender inequalities and violence against women and highlighted both the need and importance of analysing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through the gender lenses and putting the gender dimension at the centre of all recovery measures.

The first six months of 2020 have been very challenging for the Assembly and the Presidency. We have risen to the challenges together. The road ahead is not easy. For the Assembly to continue to play its important role in supporting national parliaments and the work of the Council of Europe to deal with the political, social and economic challenges in the new normal, we need the mobilisation, creativity, determination and commitment of each one of us. I know I can count on you.

**Rik Daems**  
*President of the Parliamentary Assembly*

## Institutional co-operation within the Council of Europe – introducing the “trialogue” format

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**B**uilding upon the momentum created by strengthened collaboration between the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General during 2019, the Assembly has continued to develop closer intra-institutional co-operation in its activities. Regular consultations with the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers (at Ministerial level and at the level of the Ministers’ Deputies) and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe were held by the President of Assembly in the so-called “trialogue” format.

Initial triologue discussions focused on the setting up of the complementary joint procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly in response to a serious violation by a member State of its statutory obligations, as well as on addressing the issue of environment and human rights. During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, the triologue consultations provided a valuable platform for co-ordinating the Organisation’s response to the COVID challenges.

Furthermore, the triologue consultations allowed us to discuss other political and institutional issues on our agenda, such as the priorities of the Greek and German Presidencies of the Committee of Ministers or the organisation of the election of the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

We shall continue to use, and further develop, the triologue approach with the President of the Ministers’ Deputies and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, as well as in a broader format of a “full triologue” involving the Assembly’s Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers’ Deputies.

# Strengthening the link between environment and human rights

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**T**he impact of climate change on fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as on the life of our societies, is one of the strategic political challenges that the Council of Europe must address.

In this context, we particularly welcomed the inclusion of environment and human rights as one of the key priorities of the Georgian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. The President of the Assembly will continue to engage in consultations with the Committee of Ministers and the relevant Council of Europe entities to identify the need or possibilities for Council of Europe acquis in this field and discuss the way forward.

At the High-Level Conference on “Environmental Protection and Human Rights” organised by the Georgian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, the President of the Assembly launched the idea of a three-step blueprint for strengthening Council of Europe action in the field of human rights and the environment and encouraged future presidencies of the Committee of Ministers (Greece and Germany), to maintain environment and human rights as a priority area for further work and action. Furthermore, in close consultation with the relevant departments of the Council of Europe, the Assembly has identified the concrete deliverables that could be promoted in this field. These include:

- ▶ updating of the Council of Europe Handbook on Environment and Human Rights, including references to the relevant case-law of the European Court on Human Rights and of the European Committee on Social Rights;
- ▶ drafting a Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation to member States with specific guidelines and possibly establishing a mechanism of exchange of information on good practices;
- ▶ drafting of a new legal instrument regarding criminal liability for damage to the environment which would strengthen legal co-operation between member States in addressing transnational criminal activities that deliberately harm the environment.

The Assembly and the President welcomed the political declaration on environment and human rights adopted by the Georgian, Greek and German Presidencies of the Committee of Ministers on 15 May 2020, during the Presidency Handover Ceremony. The political declaration opens the way for the implementation of the three-step blueprint.

On World Environment Day, the President of the Assembly joined the Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Mr Miltiadis Varvitsiotis, representing the Greek Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, and and Council of Europe Secretary General, Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić, in a statement encouraging further Council of Europe action towards the development of new legal texts on human rights and environment.

The Parliamentary Assembly will actively support and contribute to this work, and in this regard, we are currently preparing reports dealing with:

- ▶ Inaction on climate change – a violation of children’s rights
- ▶ Climate change and the rule of law: a baseline study
- ▶ More participatory democracy to tackle climate change

- ▶ Impact of armed conflicts on transboundary environmental damage
- ▶ Artificial intelligence and climate change
- ▶ Anchoring the right to healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe
- ▶ Climate and migration.

To ensure comprehensive input, all relevant Assembly committees will be involved, and additional reports will be prepared.

The Assembly and the President shall continue to work closely with the Greek and German Presidencies in order to provide both political and practical support to the work carried out by the intergovernmental experts regarding the development of legal texts in this field.

# Addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic

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**T**he COVID-19 pandemic represents a serious test and formidable challenge to the safety of our planet, the functioning of our societies and democratic institutions and the values and standards at the core of the Council of Europe work and activities.

Thus, addressing the COVID-19 impact and consequences and supporting efforts at national and Council of Europe level to find viable and sustainable solutions to the pandemic, became the priority and focus of the Assembly's work and activities during the first half of 2020 focusing on three key aspects:

1. Ensuring the continuation and efficient functioning of the Parliamentary Assembly (institutional aspect);
2. Upholding the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the face of emergency measures by member States and recalling the "red lines" set by the European Convention on Human Rights (political aspect);
3. Providing practical support to national parliaments of the Council of Europe's 47 member States regarding the relevant standards and expertise to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic (co-operation aspect).

As regards the institutional aspect, the President of the Assembly initiated the practice of weekly remote meetings of the Presidential Committee which focused on:

- ▶ addressing current political issues and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to fundamental rights, our democratic institutions and the rule of law;
- ▶ identifying ways to adapt our working methods to a rapidly changing context to allow the Assembly and its bodies to operate remotely.

In parallel, the President continued remote bi-weekly triologue meetings and consultations with the President of the Ministers' Deputies and the Secretary General and launched the circulation of weekly messages addressed to the members of the Assembly to ensure that they were regularly informed about the work and activities of the Assembly and initiatives launched during the lockdown period. Such messages proved to be an effective way of communicating with the members to keep them up-to-date and engaged with the work of the Assembly and to gather information about challenges or good practices at the level of national parliaments.

Discussions in the Presidential Committee reached consensus on the need to adapt the Assembly's working methods and allowed the Assembly to act swiftly and find solutions that would enable us to convene remote meetings of the Bureau, the Standing Committee and the Committees. The political leadership of the Assembly is grateful to the Secretary General of the Assembly for leading and guiding the Secretariat efforts to identify the adjustments that had to be made to our working methods, for drafting the necessary adaptations to our Rules of Procedure, as well as for setting up the necessary technical facilities for holding Assembly meetings remotely, using the KUDO online platform and the Blue Jeans platform for online-thematic events and webinars. As a result of initiative, quick action, dedication and hard work, the Assembly continued to operate throughout the crisis. The Assembly organised an impressive number of meetings and events which included 47 institutional meetings, 8 public exchange of views and hearings, 9 webinars and 3 election observation missions.

The adaptation of working methods allowed the Assembly Committees to meet and address the impact and consequences of the pandemic based on, and with due respect for, the Council of Europe standards. These meetings were no normal meetings. They required a lot of work, energy and commitment. Therefore, the President of the Assembly addressed the first round of on-line meetings of all the Committees to thank members for their work and express the support of the leadership of the Assembly.

Once we were able to meet virtually, we went about dealing with our parliamentary business. Following consultations in the Presidential Committee and the decision by the Bureau of the Assembly, our Committees started working on the preparation of five reports dealing with various aspects of Europe's response to the pandemic:

- i. Lessons for the future from an effective and rights-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ii. The impact of COVID-19 on human rights and the rule of law;
- iii. Democracies facing the COVID-19 pandemic;
- iv. Upholding human rights in times of crisis and pandemics/gender, equality and non-discrimination;
- v. Humanitarian consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for migrants and refugees.

The first of these reports – “Lessons for the future from an effective and rights-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic” – was adopted by the Assembly's Standing Committee on 26 June 2020. It is important to note that to ensure coordination, avoid duplication and increase impact, we engaged actively with our regional and international partners. Thus, the adoption of the first report was preceded by a comprehensive exchange of views with the Director General of the World Health Organisation, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Furthermore, other on-line events such as webinars focused on the different aspects of the COVID crisis, such as violence against women, the impact of the pandemic on sexual and reproductive health and rights or the impact on children's mental health, and provided a platform to raise awareness about Council of Europe and PACE standards, discuss challenges and exchange good practice.

An opinion piece in leading European media by the President of the Assembly, urging governments and parliaments of our member States to adhere to the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights in addressing the consequences of the pandemic, marked the first step of political action to safeguard the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the face of emergency measures. The President recalled the “red lines” set out in the Convention regarding emergency rule and derogations from the Convention, stressing that the basic building-blocks of a democracy – the parliament, the judiciary and the media – should be allowed and supported to exercise their functions during the state of emergency. The President stressed that only by acting proportionately, being guided by principles of democratic societies and by keeping in place parliamentary and judicial scrutiny over the executive, we would make sure that exceptional restrictions of fundamental rights and freedoms, justified during the pandemic, do not morph into a “new normal” after the end of the lockdown.

The Assembly rapporteurs and Committee chairpersons further reinforced and amplified the messages by the President of the Assembly through their own public statements or social media activities.

In the same context of political action, the President of the Assembly contributed to online meetings organised by the Greek Presidency of the Committee of Ministers focusing on the preparation of the Athens Declaration to be presented at the Ministerial session in November 2020.

Furthermore, the President addressed several high-level events, webinars and exchanges of views organised by the Assembly committees, the intergovernmental sector, and other partner regional or international organisations. These covered a whole range of issues in focus of the work of the Assembly such as democracy and COVID, data protection (regarding the use of algorithms and election campaigns), upholding women's rights and combating violence against women and domestic violence, children's rights etc.

The President addressed the 2020 Annual Conference of the Council of Europe HELP Programme (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals) where among others, he launched the idea of using the HELP platform to develop online “crash courses” for parliamentarians on the European Convention on Human Rights. These events offered the opportunity to further promote the Assembly's work on addressing the consequences of the pandemic.

Co-operation with national parliaments was the third aspect of the Assembly's response to the consequences of the pandemic. Parliaments play a crucial role in ensuring democratic scrutiny over the emergency measures taken, therefore it is of utmost importance for the Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Europe to provide them with the necessary support and expertise regarding our core standards. In this context, the President of the Assembly took the initiative of sharing with the Speakers and Presidents of Parliaments of our 47 member

States an open-ended “Toolbox” containing standards and practical information on addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, namely:

- ▶ the Secretary General’s Toolkit recalling Council of Europe standards in the field of democracy, rule of law and human rights as well as the relevant case-law of the Court;
- ▶ the Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)1 on the human rights impact of algorithmic systems;
- ▶ the Handbook for parliamentarians on the Council of Europe Convention of Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention);
- ▶ the joint statement by the Chairperson of the Committee of the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (Convention 108) and of the Data Protection Commissioner of the Council of Europe, containing guidance on track-and-trace applications.

Such tools provide parliaments and parliamentarians with appropriate guidance during a state of emergency and the steps to ensure a gradual return to normal rule, precautionary and proactive protection measures to be put in place after the lockdown through track-and-tracing applications and the use of algorithms and artificial intelligence, and legally binding standards and practical tools to tackle growing acts of violence against women and domestic violence.

Using the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention to combat increasing violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic took an important place in the work and activities of the Assembly. The Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination organised a webinar on Europe Day (5 May 2020) urging governments to tackle the dramatic situation of growing violence against women by fully implementing the measures laid out in the Istanbul Convention. Addressing discrimination, and gender equality challenges more generally, were the focus of other webinars organised by the Committee on topics such as the gender dimension of foreign policy, and parliamentary response to institutional racism. Such events provided useful information to on-going work for the preparation of Assembly reports on these subjects.

The President promoted the idea of parliamentary hearings, webinars or other on-line events in national parliaments either at the level of competent committees or cross-party parliamentary groups, to raise awareness about, and promote the Council of Europe standards and expertise, in dealing with the impact and the consequences of the pandemic and of the exceptional measures taken in response to it. The aim of this initiative is to allow parliaments to share experience and expertise with, and among peers, as well as to benefit from Council of Europe support if, and as needed, for the preparation of national policies and revision or drafting of new legislation.

The Parliaments of Greece, Germany and Georgia were the first to take on board this initiative and to hold hearings on specific issues of interest in the national and European context. These events brought together parliamentarians, official representatives and experts from other Council of Europe bodies and institutions. During the event organised by the Greek Parliament, we exchanged views with the Committees on Foreign and on European Affairs on the priorities of the Greek Presidency of the Committee of Ministers and the preparation of the Athens Declaration. At the Bundestag, in an exchange of views with the Human Rights Committee, we discussed challenges posed by the pandemic to democratic values and fundamental freedoms. At the Georgian Parliament, in a hearing at the Legal Affairs Committee, we focused on discussing modalities of holding elections in a post-pandemic context.

Such thematic events have shown that there is so much we can learn from each other and the expertise available at national level and within the Council of Europe. The President will continue to support and promote the organisation of similar events in all national parliaments.

## Promoting the signature, ratification and implementation of Council of Europe conventions

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**W**ith more than 220 Conventions, the Council of Europe has developed an impressive, innovative and ground-breaking legal framework at the disposal of our 47 member States. Some of these conventions are also open for accession by non-member States. They also provide a blueprint and can be suitable models for developing global standards.

The strength of our conventions lies in their rigorous implementation at national level. By adopting ratification laws and implementing the provisions of our conventions in domestic law, parliaments play a crucial role in this process. The President of the Assembly has focused on promoting the signature and ratification of a number of key conventions in areas where the Council of Europe has developed unique expertise, notably the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (the so-called 108 Convention) as well as its amending protocol (the so-called Convention 108+).

Both the Istanbul Convention and the Conventions 108 and 108+ play a prominent role in the “Toolbox” for addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the President has actively promoted these two legal instruments within the framework of hearings and webinars held by our Committees, in national parliaments or events organised by other regional and international partners.

## Strengthening the Assembly's role and visibility

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**B**uilding upon the numerous proposals contained in the Assembly's report on its Role and Mission adopted in 2019, the President launched, at the beginning of March 2020, a reflection process about the measures that could be taken in order to strengthen the Assembly, make its work and activities more relevant for its members and national parliaments and increase the visibility of its work and achievements.

This reflection is structured around five themes:

- i. reinforcing political groups to make them more effective;
- ii. looking at in-house reforms to strengthen the efficiency of the PACE;
- iii. examining interparliamentary connections to raise impact and give more visibility, importance and recognition to PACE members' work in their domestic settings;
- iv. developing political connections in order to promote synergies (for example, visits to member States along the so-called "Route 47");
- v. raising public attention and awareness to reinforce PACE's presence and visibility in the map of regional and international institutions.

The COVID-19 lockdown measures and the subsequent shift in working methods and re-assessment of priorities, have somewhat slowed the pace of our work. Nevertheless, the Assembly was able to hold a first exchange of views on the above five themes within the framework of its Standing Committee on 5 March 2020. Leaders of national delegations have provided important input in this process. The next step will be to take forward discussions with a view to identifying concrete measures that could be put in place for the Assembly's first physical plenary session after the lockdown.

## Conclusions – the way forward

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**T**he first six months of 2020 were a particularly complex period for the Council of Europe and for Europe as a whole, not least because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic challenge and our response to it have shown our resilience and determination to identify new opportunities and working methods and fulfil our mandate. The commitment and constructive engagement of the members of the Presidential Committee, the Bureau, and all the members of the Assembly have been both encouraging and praiseworthy.

United around the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, we continued to uphold Europe's collective good: multilateral co-operation, common and uniform Pan-European legal standards, as well as a forward-looking and human-rights-compliant climate agenda.

We will build on this dynamic and progress with our work and activities towards the achievement of our objectives.

Triologue co-operation will continue to play an important role in our institutional cooperation to discuss and address existing and emerging political challenges.

The Assembly will follow closely the implementation of the priorities of the current Greek and forthcoming German Presidencies and continue to push for strengthening the link between environment and human rights, supporting the process of EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights and developing legal standards regarding the use of artificial intelligence.

In the coming months, the COVID19 pandemic will continue to affect our work and may necessitate more adaptations and innovative solutions, the mobilisation, commitment and creativity of all the members of the Assembly and the support of the Secretariat. The past six months have shown we can turn challenges into opportunities and achieve results.

# APPENDIX I

## LIST OF STATEMENTS SINCE 27 JANUARY 2020

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**27/07/2020** | Poland and the Istanbul Convention: joint statement by PACE President, General Rapporteur on violence against women, and co-rapporteurs on the monitoring of Poland

**21/07/2020** | 'We must do more to stop the trolls' urges PACE President, as online hate crimes soar

**15/07/2020** | Rik Daems: 'part of the European recovery fund must be allocated to a common vaccination programme'

**08/07/2020** | The Convention sets clear 'red lines' that cannot be crossed even in times of severe public health emergency

**24/06/2020** | President concerned by the 'persistent deadlock' in the Middle East peace process

**04/06/2020** | COVID-19: PACE President, joining other Council of Europe leaders, urges democratic safeguards during and after pandemic

**04/06/2020** | Beyond COVID-19, human rights can help save the planet

**09/05/2020** | COVID-19: 'Life after the Corona crisis will be different, but our rights stay the same' says PACE President

**04/05/2020** | COVID-19 / The challenge of European unity: preserving Europe's common good in times of crisis

**30/04/2020** | COVID-19 / World Press Freedom Day: 'We need free and independent media, now more than ever'

**23/04/2020** | COVID-19: 'Let's not normalise the abnormal'

**16/04/2020** | COVID-19: Joint statement on the role of parliaments in a time of pandemic

**09/04/2020** | COVID-19: 'In defeating the evil of coronavirus, we must not open the door to an Orwellian future of personal surveillance' President says

**07/04/2020** | COVID-19 / World Health Day: President calls on member States to better protect those who protect us

**24/03/2020** | COVID-19: President urges states to abide by the ECHR when responding to the crisis

**06/03/2020** | On Women's Rights Day, PACE President calls for 'fifty-fifty' gender parity in the Assembly

**27/02/2020** | Rik Daems calls for 'the right to a healthy environment'

**29/01/2020** | A convention for the people: Council of Europe marks the 70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights

**27/01/2020** | Rik Daems elected PACE President

## APPENDIX II

### PRESS REVIEW

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#### **PACE President Rik Daems – Selected media coverage listing (January to July 2020)**

1. Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe urges Polish Parliament to hold a hearing to dispel “myths of the Istanbul Convention”  
[29-07-2020], Agence Europe
2. Europarat fordert verstärkten Kampf gegen Hass im Netz  
[21-07-2020] AFP, Wochenblatt
3. Consiliul European, mesaj pentru 47 de tari membre sa combata ura pe internet: «Trolii distrug vieti, seamana mizerie si alimenteaza acte de violenta in lumea reala»  
[21-07-2020], Ziare.com
4. Rik Daems : “Le climat doit être un objectif prioritaire pour le Conseil de l’Europe”  
[07-07-2020], La Libre Belgique
5. Rik Daems : «Ce n’est pas acceptable qu’une application soit comme un Big brother»  
[29-06-2020], France24, Boursorama
6. President concerned by the ‘persistent deadlock’ in the Middle East peace process  
[25-06-2020], ReliefWeb
7. Israele: Strasburgo contro piano annessione parte Palestina  
[24-06-2020], ANSAMED
8. Council of Europe launches human rights-based environmental protection strategy  
[19-06-2020], Agence Europe
9. PACE President sends ‘toolkit’ to all 47 national parliaments to tackle pandemic  
[03-06-2020], Agence Europe
10. HUMAN RIGHTS: PACE President sends ‘toolkit’ to all 47 national parliaments to tackle pandemic  
[26-05-2020], Agence Europe
11. PACE President: Georgia makes great job for six months  
[17-05-2020], AzerNews, Trend
12. « L’Assemblée parlementaire est prête à jouer son rôle face à la pandémie », déclare Rik Daems à l’occasion de la journée de l’Europe  
[06-05-2020], Agence Europe
13. Coronavirus et surveillance : prenons garde au verrouillage politique  
[27-04-2020], La Libre Belgique

14. Council of Europe: launch of a platform for exchanges on defence of fundamental rights in context of COVID-19 pandemic  
[17-04-2020], Agence Europe
15. Coronavirus – La lutte contre le virus ne doit pas créer un avenir orwellien (président APCE)  
[10-04-2020], Agence Belga, La Libre Belgique
16. L'APCE appelle les États membres à bien encadrer et justifier les mesures de traçage des individus pour contenir le Covid-19  
[09-04-2020], Agence Europe
17. COVID-19: Le Président de l'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe demande aux États de respecter la CEDH  
[27-03-2020], Le Monde du Droit
18. Rik Daems calls on member countries to abide by ECHR Convention in dealing with COVID-19  
[26-03-2020], Agence Europe
19. European governments urged to abide by ECHR when responding to COVID-19 crisis  
[25-03-2020], New Europe
20. Council of Europe: Rik Daems advocates a strong legal link between environmental protection and fundamental rights  
[04-03-2020], Agence Europe
21. Rik Daems élu à la présidence de l'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe  
[28-01-2020] La Libre Belgique
22. Rik Daems nouveau président de l'assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe  
[28-01-2020], RTBF
23. Council of Europe: new President of Parliamentary Assembly, Rik Daems, takes up climate crisis  
[28-01-2020], Agence Europe
24. Conseil de l'Europe : le Belge Hendrik Daems est le nouveau président de l'Assemblée parlementaire  
[27-01-2020] AFP, Ouest-France
25. Un Belge va devenir président de l'assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe  
[27-01-2020], La Libre Belgique

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. The Parliamentary Assembly, consisting of representatives from the 47 national parliaments, provides a forum for debate and proposals on Europe's social and political issues. Many Council of Europe conventions originate from the Assembly, including the European Convention on Human Rights.

