



AS/Per (2017) PV 03

15 December 2017

Standing Committee

Minutes¹

**of the meeting held in Copenhagen (Denmark)
on 24 November 2017**

¹ Approved by the Assembly on 22 January 2018.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting began at 9:30 am with **Ms Kyriakides**, President of the Assembly, in the chair.

The President welcomed the opportunity to meet in Copenhagen and thanked the Speaker of the Folketing, Ms Pia Kjaersgaard, the Danish Parliament and the Danish authorities for their hospitality. Since Denmark last chaired the Committee of Ministers in 1996, Europe had changed profoundly. The Council of Europe remained relevant. It aimed to build peace and a closer unity between Europeans on the basis of a set of shared values – democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The system of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) had created a common Pan-European legal framework. The Convention system, however, was under great pressure. She therefore welcomed the first priority of the Danish Chairmanship, *“The European human rights system in a future Europe”*, aimed at improving the national implementation of the Convention and the execution of the Court’s judgments. The Assembly was actively involved in building up the capacity of national parliaments as regards the implementation of the Convention. It could therefore share this experience with the Danish Chairmanship. She continued by referring to the Assembly’s work in areas covered by the other priorities of the Danish Chairmanship, namely on *“Equal opportunities”*, and on *“Changing attitudes and prejudice about persons with disabilities”*, and on the *“Involvement of children and young people in democracy”*, falling within the competences of several Parliamentary Assembly committees. Denmark could count on the Assembly’s support and contribution to the High-Level Ministerial meeting in April 2018. She then mentioned that the Council of Europe was faced with, on one hand, the political and financial consequences of the Russian Federation’s decision to suspend the payment of the remainder of its 2017 contribution and, on the other hand, the announcement by Turkey of their intention to discontinue their status as major contributor to the Council of Europe’s budget. Member States had to guarantee the effective functioning of the Organisation and of its Convention system. The Assembly stood ready to actively contribute to the search for ways to overcome these problems in a spirit of constructive co-operation and dialogue.

2. WELCOME ADDRESS BY Ms PIA KJÆRSGAARD, SPEAKER OF THE FOLKETINGET

Ms Kjaersgaard, Speaker of the Folketinget, welcomed the Standing Committee to Copenhagen. She recalled that the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy held a meeting on the Danish island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea in June 2017, where the People’s Political Festival took place each year, attracting those involved in, and interested in, politics, including parliamentarians. She hoped this event would inspire similar actions in other countries. As for future events, equality being one of the priorities for the Danish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, she looked forward to the participation of the Crown Princess Mary of Denmark, who was very much engaged in promoting gender equality and women’s rights all over the world, in the January 2018 part-session of the Assembly.

3. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH MS ULLA TØRNÆS, MINISTER FOR DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION, REPRESENTING THE DANISH CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CM/Inf (2017) 21

CM/Inf (2017) 22

The President welcomed Ms Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Co-operation, who had agreed to have an exchange of views with the members of the Standing Committee on the priorities of the Danish chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. Ms Tørnæs replaced the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Samuelson, who was accompanying the Queen of Denmark on an official visit abroad.

Ms Tørnæs highlighted the role played by Denmark since it joined the Council of Europe 70 years ago. During its Chairmanship, Denmark would do its utmost to support and promote the work of the Council of Europe. Denmark was deeply committed to the ECHR and the Court. She highlighted the challenges the Organisation was facing. Member States had to make sure the Organisation remained strong and relevant in the future, standing firm to uphold its values. The main aim of the Danish Chairmanship priorities was reflected in the title: *“Europe in a time of unrest and upheaval – strong values and future-proof Council of Europe”*. She called for a strong Council of Europe and a strong European legal order built on democracy and the rule of law, with respect for human rights. She reiterated the importance of the principle of subsidiarity with regard to the ECHR system. Reforms, which were agreed upon, had to be implemented by the member States. Denmark would also aim to develop new tools to ensure a closer dialogue between the Council of Europe and the member States. She continued by highlighting the other priorities of the Danish Chairmanship. A high-level conference was taking place on these issues in Copenhagen the same week. As Minister for Development Co-operation, she put great emphasis on the issue of equal opportunities,

mentioning, in particular, the launch of the new Council of Europe gender equality strategy in Denmark in May 2018. She also referred to education for democratic citizenship and the creation of inclusive communities as means of combatting radicalisation and extremism, paying attention to the involvement of children and youth in democratic processes; and to the enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities, including the prevention of violence against girls and women with disabilities, amongst other priorities. As regards the Council of Europe's work on the fight against torture, she mentioned the conference to be organised in Copenhagen on this issue in March 2018. She concluded by assuring members of the Assembly of the Danish Chairmanship's readiness to co-operate in a constructive way.

Mr Kox asked if Denmark would use the six months of its Chairmanship to endorse Protocol 12 to the ECHR; he also referred to Denmark's experience as regards self-determination with respect to Greenland and asked what Europe could learn from its experience.

Ms Tørnæs noted that the notion of self-determination was part of the Denmark's constitution. The way it developed in Greenland and The Faroe Islands was done in full respect to the constitution and the wish for self-determination and the readiness to take charge of issues that concerned them. The respect of individual rights, such as the right to use one's own language and respect for different cultures, was key in this process. This might be something that could inspire other parts of Europe. As regards Protocol 12, Denmark had not yet ratified it, but was looking into this issue. Most of the core provisions on non-discrimination were already part of the Danish legal framework.

Mr Corlăţean asked if the Danish Chairmanship would focus on the human rights situation in occupied territories, such as Transnistria in the Republic of Moldova and Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia. As the Assembly co-rapporteur on Georgia, he was concerned with the situation of children living in South Ossetia that he had witnessed while visiting Georgia. He referred, as an example, to the problem of having access to schools for those children.

Ms Tørnæs spoke about the importance of having dialogue in the Council of Europe, which allowed for serious issues to be raised, such as those mentioned by Mr Corlăţean. She wished to consult with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this.

Mr Zingeris said that integrity in the field of human rights had to be restored in the Council of Europe. He referred to a former Chairperson of the Danish Delegation in the 1960s, Ms von Lowzow, a former rapporteur for a Resolution on refusing to recognise the annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union. He hoped that the new Danish leadership would be of the same level. He asked what Denmark would do as regards the high number of cases from Russia before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Russian Federation's recent decision allowing their supreme Court to overrule the decisions of the ECtHR.

Ms Tørnæs said contacts were established with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Danish Embassy in Vilnius and she was willing to look positively at Mr Zingeris's suggestions.

Ms Mikko was pleased to hear that gender equality had been given a high priority by the Danish Chairmanship and asked if Denmark had a good strategy to encourage member States to ratify the Istanbul Convention.

Ms Tørnæs assured Ms Mikko that the Danish Chairmanship would make sure that the Istanbul Convention was ratified. In general terms, it was important to focus on the Convention's implementation. Denmark will host a Conference in May 2018 on equality issues, including gender equality and the rights of LGBT persons. As she mentioned in her statement, the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy will be launched at that Conference.

Mr Fischer, referring to the Council of Europe's work on migration, refugees and asylum seekers, asked what Denmark had been doing to combat the root causes of migration and, in particular, economic migration from Africa.

Ms Tørnæs, in her capacity as Minister for Development co-operation, noted that Denmark was among the few countries that fulfilled the target of 0.7% of GNI for the official development assistance to address the root causes of migration. She believed it was important to assist African countries in creating hope for the future for the millions of young people living there, fostering economic growth, trade, job creation, and education. She referred to a forthcoming EU-African Union summit in the Ivory Coast focused on youth.

Mr Arieu asked about the measures that would be taken by the Danish Chairmanship with regard to the situation in the occupied Crimea and gave examples of individual cases, mentioning in particular the case of

an 82-year-old Ukrainian activist who was killed in Crimea. He deplored Putin's refusal to hear the arguments put forward by the international community and Ukraine. He called for the release of hostages and the return of occupied territories back to Ukraine.

Ms Tørnæs believed the mandate of the Council of Europe was not to resolve conflicts, since this was a matter for other international organisations. This being said, all persons living in Europe had to benefit from the protection offered by the Council of Europe instruments, and in particular by the ECHR. She recalled the Secretary General's initiative to send a fact-finding mission to Crimea. Access to Crimea for Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms should remain open. The Committee of Ministers had called for the full respect for the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. The Committee of Ministers had condemned the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and urged it to refrain from any military interference. The human rights of all people living in Crimea had to be secured in accordance with the relevant Council of Europe instruments.

Ms Wurm appreciated the reference to gender equality and LGBT rights as part of the Danish Chairmanship priorities and asked about the influence of digitalisation on these issues. She deplored the increasing hate speech on Internet, particularly with regards to women or LGBT persons. She asked if the Danish Chairmanship intended to do something against this.

Ms Tørnæs said all kind of abuse or harassment had to be prevented and the Danish Chairmanship would address these issues as part of its priorities.

The President assured the Minister that the Assembly supported and would closely follow the implementation of the priorities of the Danish Chairmanship. There would also be an opportunity to hold another exchange of views during the January 2018 part-session.

4. EXAMINATION OF NEW CREDENTIALS

Doc. 14442

The Standing Committee **ratified** the credentials of new members and substitutes, as set out in Doc. 14442.

5. MODIFICATIONS IN THE COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES

Commissions (2017) 08
and addendum

The Standing Committee **ratified** the changes in the composition of Assembly committees, as set out in the document Commissions (2017) 08 and its addendum 1.

6. REQUESTS FOR A CURRENT AFFAIRS DEBATE

The President informed the Standing Committee that two requests for a current affairs debate had been submitted. The first one was tabled by Mr Kox and Mr Nicoletti on behalf of their respective political groups, on "*Defending the acquis of the Council of Europe: the role of the Parliamentary Assembly. Follow-up to Resolution 2186 (2017) and Recommendations 2113 (2017) and 2114 (2017)*"; the second was tabled by Mr Zingeris on behalf of his political group, on "*Democracy hacked. How to respond?*" In accordance with Rule 53 of the Rules of Procedure, the Standing Committee could only hold one current affairs debate. The Bureau, following a vote, decided to recommend that the Standing Committee hold a current affairs debate on *Defending the acquis of the Council of Europe: the role of the Parliamentary Assembly. Follow-up to Resolution 2186 (2017) and Recommendations 2113 (2017) and 2114 (2017)*, and appointed Mr Michele Nicoletti as the first speaker.

Mr Zingeris noted that the Bureau's decision was taken with a vote of 12 to 11. He objected, suggesting that the decision in the Standing Committee had to reflect the interest of the greater number of delegations to focus on one issue over another. There were endangered democracies, which were under threat due to foreign interference through "hacking" in democratic processes in these countries. This required an immediate response. Intelligence reports showed proof of such interference.

Following questions by Mr Németh and Mr Heer, **the Secretary General of the Assembly** explained the procedure, specifying that the Standing Committee could have only one current affairs debate. The Standing Committee was able to take the final decision. The first request to be voted on would be the one that was first submitted, namely the request put forward by Mr Kox and Mr Nicoletti. Should the majority of members vote in favour, this debate would be accepted. If not, a subsequent vote would be held on the proposal put

forward by Mr Zingeris.

Mr Fischer felt it was important for members who did not attend the Bureau meeting to know that a Russian delegation had been invited to attend the Presidential Committee meeting on 14 December. He therefore suggested focusing on the theme proposed by Mr Nicoletti in the plenary in January rather than at the Standing Committee.

The President, following the objection to the Bureau recommendation, opened the vote. The first proposal had 14 votes in favour and 15 votes against. As regards the second proposal, there were 18 votes in favour and 13 votes against. The Standing Committee therefore chose to hold the current affairs debate on “*Democracy hacked. How to respond?*” and proposed that Mr Zingeris open the debate.

7. AGENDA

AS/Per (2017) OJ 03 rev 6

The revised draft agenda was **adopted**.

8. FIRST PART-SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (22-26 January 2018)

AS/Bur (2017) 86

As required by Rule 27.4 of the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure, the Standing Committee **took note** of the draft agenda for the first part-session of 2018.

9. REFERENCES, TRANSMISSIONS AND MODIFICATIONS OF REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES

AS/Per (2017) 09

The Standing Committee **ratified** the references and transmissions to the committees, as set out in Appendix I.

10. CURRENT AFFAIRS DEBATE (UNDER RULE 53 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE)

Mr Zingeris opened the debate by referring to reports by intelligence services in Europe on the fact that Russia and China were using modern technologies to undermine democratic systems and had been actively involved in meddling in election processes in Council of Europe member States. This was a new phenomenon. He had reports by both intelligence services and newspapers concerning Russia’s influence on the elections in Germany, on the Brexit vote, on the referendum vote in Catalonia and on the 2016 elections in the USA, where an investigation was pending. He then mentioned China’s influence on the political processes in the USA. He asked how to react to such a phenomenon, and how to respond in a democratic way. States could create new legislation, which would better protect against fake news and those who produce it. Disinformation campaigns had become an increasingly important feature of Russian military doctrine. NATO had established an institution in Riga to counter such influence. The goal of these campaigns was to weaken and undermine support for the European Union (EU) and NATO, and public trust and confidence in democracy itself. With the rise of anti-establishment and anti-EU policies, Russia had found an increasingly receptive audience for such operations. Having noted earlier that the Council of Europe should be the leading force defending democracies in Europe, he wondered what the Assembly could do in future to address these issues.

Mr Kox said that the goal of the debate was not clear to him. Using modern technology to interfere in other countries’ business was a serious matter and had to be discussed by the Assembly. He regretted that the facts mentioned by M Zingeris, who quoted sources from intelligence services, could not be checked. He was also disappointed by the fact that the presentation focused only on Russia and China, and did not mention the USA, the country that invented the Internet. This matter should be discussed based on a thoroughly prepared report with a draft resolution.

Mr Arieu referred to the report entitled “*Information disorder*” that described how the Russian Federation or terrorist or radical organisations intervened in order to influence democratic processes. He referred to statements by the Spanish government on the Russian Federation’s meddling in the referendum in Catalonia, the UK Prime Minister, Theresa May’s statement on the traces found by the UK Government regarding Russia’s meddling in the Brexit campaign. Ukraine was their main target and people were paid to produce fake news about it and to distribute them in social networks. He deplored the working of the

brainwashing system that operated through social networks and mentioned the banning by Ukraine of some of the networks created in the Russian Federation that propagated fake news.

Mr Corlăţean believed it was important to have a serious discussion on *“Defending the acquis of the Council of Europe: the role of the Parliamentary Assembly”*. He felt that this second theme had to be addressed in a much more structured way with a document that presented clear proposals and recommendations. The problem raised by Mr Zingeris was serious. He referred to a report of the Joint Intelligence Community Council (JICC) of the United States, which had in part been made public. Democratic systems were facing serious challenges. He referred, as an example, to the reports by the Netherlands on the way the referendum on the ratification of the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine had taken place. He suggested that a motion for a resolution on this issue be tabled and a proper debate be held in the Assembly.

Mr Vlasenko found the debate was timely and argued that democracy was in danger. Hybrid attacks were a new phenomenon. Countries did not know how to protect themselves against such attacks. He admitted there was no easy solution to that and suggested there should be a set of solutions: political, legal and technical. There were statements by governments in the media on evidence of meddling in political processes of these countries. Russia was the only country accused of doing that. He supported the suggestion of a motion for a resolution.

Mr Heer disagreed with Mr Kox’s criticism addressed to Mr Zingeris. There was, indeed, evidence that cyberattacks came from a specific country. This was a major threat to democracy and freedom in all Council of Europe member States. Democratic institutions had to be protected. Those countries that launched these attacks had to know that the Parliamentary Assembly was aware of them.

Mr Michael Astrup Jensen agreed with Mr Zingeris that there was evidence of Russia interfering in various ways and trying to influence elections in other countries. Facebook wrote a dire report on how this was done in practice. There were farms of technicians working day and night to exert influence. Russia was implementing a strategy aimed at influencing other countries. The Council of Europe should stand for transparency and democracy and all attempts to interfere with democracy had to be stopped. Specific recommendations were needed on how countries should protect themselves, on one hand, and on how to put pressure on the instigator of such interference, on the other. He supported previous speakers who spoke in favour of a motion for resolution on this issue. Having noted the earlier reference to “fake news”, he suggested broadening the scope of the future motion to cover the Russian television broadcasting for European countries.

Mr Németh argued that the Assembly had to avoid being driven by a conspiracy theory, and, at the same time, this did not mean there were no conspiracies. Social media had become a major political platform. Parliamentarians used social media for their activities. He noted the discussion focused on State actors. Russia had a clear defence doctrine of “plausible deniability”, which it used on several occasions. He then referred to the term “deep State” that meant acting under the surface to influence decisions, using social media. There were also non-State actors that used similar methods, like the ones promoting Islamic radicalism. These were professionals in “hacking” activity. Rule of law, democracy, and human rights risked being challenged in the future by organised “hacking” activities. He endorsed the proposal of having a report on this subject. NATO had established a Strategic Communication Unit. He suggested the Council of Europe should do the same.

Mr Seyidov saw radicalisation as a major trend in Europe. Radicalism was also reaching the Council of Europe. Countries had to focus on the core values of dialogue and tolerance and avoid hate speech. Europe was faced with serious challenges. The answer should be more clever than just an “organisational” thinking. One should avoid making mistakes which would lead to increased radicalism within the organisation.

Ms Sotnyk was convinced this was a matter of security. In this century of information, information security was an essential matter for the survival of democracy. Disinformation through fake news generated a lack of trust. Social media, on one hand, was a new tool for mobilising people and giving them power to control their governments, and on the other hand, a threat to the democratic world. Authoritarian countries had learned how to use disinformation in social media to their advantage. Russia did not need to show things were positive on their side. For Russia it was sufficient to damage trust in democratic institutions in European countries. Revolutions in Ukraine and in other countries in recent years took place thanks to social media. She deplored the use by authoritarian countries of social media and of thousands of “web trolls” and “bots” in order to spread disinformation and influence elections in other countries.

Ms Schou agreed this was an important debate but thought it was not urgent. The theme had to be prepared, qualified and its scope widened. She had heard various beliefs and some interpretations, but she

expected a report with evidence and a widened perspective. Modern communication did not know State borders. This was a constantly developing matter, which could threaten democratic principles. She looked forward to a report, with better evidence, and a debate with better qualified views.

The President, upon Mr Zingeris's request, informed members that he had a document which he could distribute. She noted that many speakers had referred to the wish to discuss, in the near future, the growing influence of social networks in the functioning of European democratic systems. The Bureau may decide that the subject raised in the current affairs debate should be referred to a committee for a report.

11. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH MR GEORGE TSERETELI, PRESIDENT OF THE OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The President welcomed Mr George Tsereteli, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), and congratulated him with his taking over the presidency of the OSCE PA. The two Assemblies shared the same values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and performed complementary roles. She recalled the close co-operation in election observation processes, working together towards fighting terrorism and violent extremism, and the positive contribution to the prevention of inter-State tensions. Having witnessed unprecedented challenges – including security challenges, increasing mistrust among member States, and migration-management crisis – she called for multilateral, comprehensive and strategic responses to these challenges.

Mr Tsereteli wished to encourage multilateral dialogue and maintain solid ties between the two assemblies. Greater efforts were necessary to resolve conflicts in Europe. The OSCE PA had consistently passed resolutions reiterating its support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and condemning the occupation of Crimea. Such conflicts had tragic human consequences. People-focused mediation efforts were critical for confidence and, ultimately, peace. The OSCE PA's includes both the United States and the Russian Federation. He regretted the deteriorating geopolitical landscape, but also a worrisome erosion of core principles and commitments in the sphere of fundamental rights and democratic institutions. The OSCE PA focused recently on the situation in Turkey, following the attempted coup in July 2016, and stressed its solidarity with the Turkish people in their fight for the preservation of democratic institutions. He underscored that all actions by the government must be in line with international standards, commitments and principles. Co-operation between the two assemblies had to be fostered. One of the clearest examples of the OSCE PA's practical contribution had been on migration. Over the past two years, the Ad Hoc Committee on Migration had visited front-line facilities and conducted fact-finding visits to exchange with experts, civil society representatives, political actors, and migrants and refugees. The committee made recommendations with a view to improving the treatment of, and prospects for, migrants and to contribute to the United Nations global compact on migration to be adopted in 2018. The two assemblies had to continue working together, facing new realities, but should never compromise on their principles. The OSCE PA enjoys fruitful co-operation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe during election observation missions. He also mentioned the campaigns led by the Parliamentary Assembly, and the Parliamentary Assembly's "monitoring efforts" as an important tool for democratic development in Europe.

The President thanked Mr Tsereteli for highlighting the importance of using the synergies between the two Assemblies to overcome current challenges, and for having acknowledged the Parliamentary Assembly's campaigns in opening the way for bringing about change.

Mr Kox asked how the OSCE PA managed to keep all the 57 delegations in the OSCE PA and how the Parliamentary Assembly could make better use of reports made by the OSCE PA on regions belonging to territories of Council of Europe member States, which were "black holes" in terms of application of Council of Europe instruments: Transnistria, South Ossetia, and Donbass. He hoped for better co-operation between the two assemblies in these matters.

Mr Tsereteli acknowledged the complexity of having all members together, with tensions and tough discussions at times. The spirit of dialogue, which was the philosophy of his organisation, had to be promoted. He stressed that certain principles, such as territorial integrity, had to be respected and that the OSCE PA was clear about that. He referred to the Helsinki Final Act and called member States' delegations to defend the principles enshrined therein. The OSCE PA had discussed whether to keep a certain delegation in or isolate it, and had chosen to keep it in, but also to use very sharp wording in its decisions to express its views. He gave the example of the recent Minsk Declaration as regards the Russian Federation, with a clear condemnation of its actions. Having referred to the two concepts, namely peace through power and peace through understanding, he noted that the OSCE PA had acted on the latter, but regretted the lack of progress. In the previous two weeks there had been more than 11 000 violations of the ceasefire in

Eastern Ukraine and the Donbass area.

Mr Zingeris questioned the possibility of having a dialogue with Russia, given that it had taken over the territories of neighbouring countries. He asked if Russian parliamentarians attending the meetings of the OSCE PA, once back in the Kremlin, could influence the situation as regards the occupation of Crimea, and whether there was an impact of such a dialogue, for example, as regards the withdrawal of Russian troops.

Mr Tsereteli regretted that the results which had been aimed at had not been achieved. Given that the Russian Federation was member of the OSCE PA, it should show it shared the principles of that Assembly. Unfortunately, given the internal situation in Russia, not many people could influence the decisions in the Kremlin. He referred, as an example, to the situation in Georgia and deplored that almost 10 years after the 2008 events had taken place, the overall situation had not changed, and the human rights situation had worsened.

Mr Arieu asked if there were success stories about the Russian Government or Parliament. He asked if, following dialogue in the OSCE PA, they had changed their policies to bring them in line with international standards.

Mr Tsereteli said there was no progress, which was regrettable, but the OSCE PA, given its philosophy of dialogue, kept working in that direction. One could not give up the treatment when symptoms were still there.

Mr Corlăţean, speaking about the protracted conflicts, noted that three organisations – the OSCE PA, the Council of Europe and the EU – were interested in European enlargement. In the Eastern Partnership summit there was rather limited enthusiasm among European leaders as regards the political vision. Partners were suffering from the blockage of their European aspirations. Foreign occupation of parts of their territories prevented progress in European enlargement. It was important to use European instruments when dealing with these States. In the case of Transnistria, there had been new developments (economy, the issuing of Moldovan passports, etc.). He asked if Mr Tsereteli could see a role to be played by political bodies such as the OSCE PA. He knew that the Russian Federation opposed the NATO aspirations of the Eastern partnership countries, but hoped that overall the European aspirations of those countries could be discussed at political level also in the OSCE PA.

Mr Tsereteli noted that the OSCE was a European organisation. Co-operation with Eastern European countries brought closer ties between European countries, including economic ones. He did not recall examples of a majority of delegations being against European enlargement. The OSCE PA would not hamper the “rapprochement” with the EU, as it could bring progress, including as regards democracy.

12. OBSERVATION OF ELECTIONS

Observation of the presidential election in Kyrgyzstan (15 October 2017)

Doc. 14438

The President invited Ms Doris Fiala, Rapporteur of the Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau, to present the report, which had been approved by the Bureau the previous day.

The Rapporteur noted that in 2014, when granting the Kyrgyz Parliament the “Partner for democracy” status, the Assembly had highlighted a number of issues linked to elections. In 2015, the election observation delegation was informed about cases of irregularities during the election campaign, in particular, the misuse of administrative resources by candidates and allegations of bribing of voters. It expressed the hope that these problems could be resolved before the next elections. Two years later, on 15 October 2017, the Assembly observed the presidential election in co-operation with the OSCE PA, the European Parliament and ODIHR representatives. She witnessed clear signs of the growing political maturity of Kyrgyz society. The voting day was calm and the voting, in general, well organised. This being said, during the election campaign, the Assembly was informed of cases of misuse of public resources and pressure on voters, as well as allegations of vote-buying. The election campaign was peaceful; the registered candidates could, in general, campaign freely. Issues related to interethnic peace and national unity featured in some candidates’ rhetoric at campaign events and these were at times used for political ends, contributing to the confrontational nature of the campaign. As for the financing of candidates’ election campaigns, the Assembly delegation regretted that the Venice Commission’s recommendations contained in the 2014 Opinion had still, to a large extent, not been acted upon. This applied in particular to the need for increased transparency and accountability in campaign finance and effective mechanisms for monitoring legal compliance through audits. The removal of the overall spending limits for presidential candidates did not meet these recommendations and such a situation could lead to an unlevel playing field in terms of the financing of presidential candidates.

As for women's participation in political life in general, women remained under-represented. She concluded by saying that the Parliamentary Assembly should continue its close co-operation with Kyrgyzstan via its "Partner for democracy" status, and that the country should continue to co-operate with both the Assembly and the Venice Commission in order to improve its legal framework and electoral practices.

Ms Wurm had observed the previous elections in Kyrgyzstan. She observed the manner in which a newly set up electronic system had been used. She questioned the security of the votes. She asked whether the Rapporteur could say that, having observed the election this year, the votes were indeed secure, private and confidential.

The Rapporteur agreed that the security of e-voting had to be ensured. People had to present their passports to ensure their data was in accordance with the data in the voter lists. Once ballot papers had been received, voters could mark them in private, but after having marked them, some walked around with the ballot papers showing the marking. This could be criticised, but on the other hand, this was also a proof of confidence. Votes were controlled at the end of the process and no evidence of cheating had been found.

The Standing Committee **took note** of the report.

13. POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND DEMOCRACY

The Relations of the Council of Europe with Kazakhstan

Doc. 14436

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy
Mr Axel Fischer (Germany, EPP/CD)*

The Rapporteur said that his report aimed to reinforce co-operation with the Republic of Kazakhstan on the basis of the values of the Council of Europe. A former Soviet Union country, large enough to be both in Asia and in Europe, Kazakhstan had always stated that it advocated working together with Europe and Asia. 70% of the population were Sunni Muslims and 25% were Christians (mainly followers of the Russian Orthodox Church, but also Roman Catholics and Protestants). There was, however, room for improvement when it came to religious freedom. In 2017, President Nazarbayev converted into law changes by which some of his powers were conveyed to the parliament. The authorities of Kazakhstan requested an opinion of the Venice Commission on the draft law on constitutional reform. The Venice Commission concluded that the proposed constitutional amendments submitted for review represented a step forward in the process of democratisation. The revision of the competences of branches of power and the setting up of a system of checks and balances was a difficult task. Many aspects of these efforts could only be assessed over time, when practical experience would reveal the most appropriate approach, taking into account historical development and traditions, societal development, as well as international developments. There could be no doubt that the reform constituted a clear step forward. Other steps should follow in future. The Council of Europe had, therefore, to take steps to help Kazakhstan. The country had been very active in the region. He praised the fact that Kazakhstan had introduced a moratorium on the death penalty. To conclude, he suggested intensifying co-operation on the rule of law, election monitoring and the reform of the judiciary.

Mr Seyidov felt that it was more important to speak about values than borders, Kazakhstan being an example. The Council of Europe had to do its best to support Kazakhstan to advance in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Kazakhstan was doing its best to be more visible within the Council of Europe, co-operating with the Venice Commission and GRECO. It was a key country in Central Asia. The Council of Europe could better promote its values, and peace and stability in the region. He welcomed Kazakhstan's efforts.

Mr Corlăţean supported the strategic direction proposed in the report. He asked about the level of openness and engagement in Kazakhstan concerning the proposals put forward in the draft resolution. He referred to some of the legal instruments of the Council of Europe, such as the Partial Agreement on the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). Implementing the commitments in the areas covered by GRECO was not simple. There could be some other big actors in the region that would be less enthusiastic about a possible European development for Kazakhstan. Should the Council of Europe to work in a different manner to support the European reorientation of Kazakhstan?

The Rapporteur believed the Council of Europe should extend its support to Kazakhstan and keep its doors open to co-operation with this country. On the other hand, their reforms should translate into concrete actions and results on the basis of Council of Europe values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. He was in favour of an active participation of parliamentarians from Kazakhstan in meetings of the Assembly,

including committee meetings.

The President called for a vote on the draft resolution.

The Standing Committee unanimously **adopted** the draft resolution [Resolution 2193 (2017)].

14. LEGAL AFFAIRS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

a. Towards a democratic approach to the issues of self-determination and secession

Doc. 14390

Rapporteur of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
Mr Alain Destexhe (Belgium, ALDE)

In the absence of the rapporteur, Mr Alain Destexhe, who had left the Assembly, the report was presented by Ms Olena Sotnyk, Chairperson of the Committee.

Ms Sotnyk explained why the Committee had decided to present an information report only, without a draft resolution or recommendation. She noted the Committee felt it was not possible for it to assume the role of arbitrator and to define universally applicable, generic guidelines as regards self-determination and secession. These issues were determined by various factors, such as history, culture, identity and language, and also important territorial, financial and budgetary matters. The report reiterated some principles of public international law and emphasised the need to settle these issues through peaceful and democratic dialogue that respected the rule of law and human rights. The report looked into the right to self-determination and secession in international law. It recalled different ways in which new States came to exist: creation, dissolution of an existing State, secession, and merger. The rapporteur had chosen to illustrate the report with the situations in Scotland, Flanders and Catalonia (prior to the most recent events; the report was approved by the committee on 27 June 2017). He had also looked at peaceful independence processes leading to the creation of one or more States, such as Czechoslovakia's "velvet" divorce", Serbia and Montenegro's separation, and Quebec. She believed the issues raised in the report were complex and controversial, touching upon two principles of public international law that could not be easily reconciled: the right of people to self-determination and the principle of territorial integrity of States. While it was possible to identify various criteria which contributed to a peaceful, negotiated solution, the processes followed were never completely transposable, as each State's circumstances were complex and unique. She concluded by stressing that foreign powers should never meddle in, or manipulate, secessionist movements in other countries, let alone provide weapons to such movements, or intervene militarily in another country in their support.

Mr Kox recalled a number of cases of secession and mergers in the history of Europe since the 16th century (in 1581, the Netherlands unilaterally seceded from Spain and was internationally recognised in 1648; the southern part of the Netherlands, was not allowed to join the Dutch Republic and only became part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1814. It went on to secede 15 years later, when it unilaterally split to become independent Belgium). The histories of States were a long and ongoing series of annexations and secessions, unification and disintegration. Sometimes these were on a consensual basis, but often surrounded by a brutal disrespect for fundamental rights and bloody wars. A democratic approach to secession and the right to self-determination was needed, but had not been available until now. He then referred to some recent attempts made by regions to leave their "motherland" (Algeria leaving France (1962), the dissolution of the Soviet Union (1991), Montenegro leaving Serbia (2006)). In the cases of consensual secessions, acceptance of the new situation had come quicker. In other cases, however, secession was not consensual but unilateral. There was a relation between the level of trust in the central government and the wish to become independent. He argued that, in certain cases, there was an opposite move towards (re)unification, often based on the idea that this would improve living conditions, as was for example the case in Germany when the GDR reunified with the FRG. He then made a parallel comparison with the situation in Crimea, arguing that it fell under the latter category, together with South-Ossetia. There were no eternal international laws regarding States and borders he said, but he insisted that what had to prevail was the highest possible respect for human rights and freedoms, as enshrined in the ECHR, and democratic dialogue. To avoid unilateral decisions and, above all, to avoid violence and civil wars, the international community and organisations such as the Council of Europe, had to recognise where and when conflicts could arise and then offer its good services to allow peaceful processes to take place and avoid any kind of violence. The United European Left disagreed with those who said that these issues should only be dealt with by the States involved. He suggested the Council of Europe should send an observation mission to the upcoming elections in Catalonia to monitor the process.

Mr Corlăţean welcomed the decision to have an information report. However, some of the solutions presented in the report went against the principals of international law. He had written a thesis on State succession in international law, looking at the former Soviet Union and self-determination of States. Sending observers to observe the referendum in Catalonia would fundamentally contradict the sovereignty of Spain and generate great political consequences.

Mr Arieu asked for accuracy in the definition of self-determination and secession. He referred to the earlier discussion on external meddling in political processes of that kind. He spoke about the difference between the political and legal aspects of self-determination. All former colonies had the right to self-determination, declaring their independence from colonial powers. Moreover, serious violations of human rights were recognised as a major factor triggering self-determination.

Mr Loucaides felt there was one thing members could agree upon: the rejection of all forms of violence and the search for peaceful, negotiated settlements that would lead to durable solutions benefiting, first and foremost, peoples and their aspirations for peace, prosperity and security. In his view, with due respect to minority rights and the right to self-determination, the principles of State sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders under public international law were of paramount importance. Where breakups were caused or sustained through foreign intervention in the internal affairs of recognised states, such acts were considered illegal under international law. Referring to the political crisis in Spain and Catalonia, he noted that Catalonia had enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy, the attributes of which were partly revoked by the Constitutional Court in 2010. This had fuelled the national sentiment that culminated in the referendum of 1 October 2017. He warned against accepting and legitimising claims that would open a Pandora's Box and pose a threat to European security. Different mechanisms were available to State and non-State actors to assist them in settling such issues at European and international levels, including the United Nations system. He concluded by referring to Cyprus, and the efforts to reunite the country and its people since the 1974 Turkish invasion and subsequent occupation by Turkish troops. The bi-communal federation in the making represented the transformation of State's internal structures. This should effectively guarantee Cyprus' independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty whilst ensuring the political equality of both communities and the functioning of democratic institutions. Any attempts to partition the island, or introduce confederal elements to a settlement, would have disastrous consequences. They would amount to a new violation of the territorial integrity of the single State of the Republic of Cyprus, which had been jointly introduced by the Greek and Turkish Cypriots through its establishment in 1960, and would undermine the interests of the Cypriot people as a whole.

Mr Vlasenko felt self-determination was a sensitive issue. He disagreed with Mr Kox's presenting a list of so called "reunifications" and using that with regard to Crimea. He stressed that what had happened in Crimea was not a matter of self-determination or reunification, but an illegal annexation.

Ms Sotnyk agreed history was important and that it allowed learning from mistakes. However, she believed that the provisions of international law had to be respected. They had been agreed as a result of bloody wars and the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. Countries had to follow the rules agreed upon. If a country violated the international law, other countries had to be sufficiently decisive to impose sanctions.

The Standing Committee **took note** of the information report.

b. Draft Protocol amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (ETS No. 108) and its explanatory report

Doc. 14437

Doc. 14389

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
Mr Raphaël Comte (Switzerland, ALDE)*

The Rapporteur recalled that the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with Regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (ETS No. 108) was opened for signature in 1981. It had been the first, and was still, the only binding international legal instrument in the field of data protection. However, the developments in new information and communication technology, had had a considerable impact on areas covered by the Convention. The draft protocol amending Convention would introduce a number of changes in order to address the challenges to privacy resulting from the use of information and telecommunication technologies; strengthen the right to data protection; reconcile the right to the protection of personal data with the exercise of other rights and fundamental freedoms (especially freedom of expression); enhance the Convention's monitoring mechanisms; and preserve the Convention's consistency and compatibility with other applicable legal frameworks, particularly that of the EU (i.e. the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) due to enter into force on 25 May 2018). He outlined a number of issues, on which there was still no consensus within the Committee of Ministers, namely the questions relating to the system of exceptions (Article 9.3 of the revised Convention), trans-border flows (Article 12.1), voting rights within the Convention Committee – in particular the voting rights of the EU (Article 20) and the arrangements for the entry into force of the new protocol. On this latter issue, he disagreed with the possibility of having an automatic – “tacit” – entry into force two years after the signing of the protocol. Such a clause deprived national parliaments of their prerogatives in the field of ratification of international treaties. Consequently, and given the nature and duration of the disagreement within the Committee of Ministers, he suggested that it would be more judicious to consider another path. He concluded by suggesting that the adoption of a new Convention on this issue could be the way to go, as described in the draft opinion.

The Committee Chairperson, **Ms Sotnyk**, pointed out that there had been interesting discussions in the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights on this issue. The Council of Europe had always been a leader in this field and it should continue playing that role in future.

The Standing Committee unanimously **adopted** the draft opinion [Opinion 296 (2017)].

15. SOCIAL AFFAIRS, HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Cross-border parental responsibility conflicts

Doc. 14435

*Rapporteur of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development
Ms Martine Mergen (Luxembourg, EPP/CD)*

The Rapporteur noted the difficulties in solving cross-border parental responsibility conflicts. She referred to the complexity of the award of custody procedures in cases where conflicts involved nationals of different States (often including nationals from States not members of the Council of Europe). It was not enough to have legal advice only. It was important to have effective mediation in such cases to prevent people from taking desperate measures, including, for instance, child abduction. She recalled the existing legal instruments that applied in such cases, as referred to in the report (see Chapter 2), and insisted that all these texts had one thing in common, namely the protection of the child's best interests. She noted that most of the legal instruments focused on the habitual residence of the child as the favoured connecting factor for matters of parental responsibility. This meant that, in practice, usually the law of the country of habitual residence of the child was applied and the court at the place of the habitual residence of the child was considered to be the one generally best suited to decide on child-related matters. The ECtHR had also insisted on the need to ensure that a child, who had been abducted, returned to his habitual place of residence as soon as possible. It was important to act swiftly. If proceedings to return the child took years and years, it might no longer be in the best interests of the child to be returned. In the preparation of her report, she assessed the difficulties encountered by parents with regard to legal proceedings in such conflicts. She insisted, in particular, on the importance of promoting properly (and internationally) recognised mediation services and on the recommendation that the child be heard, which was not always the case in European countries.

Ms Wurm, as the Rapporteur in the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination on “Gender equality and child maintenance”, looked in her report at the situation of single parents, including those who did not receive

any support from the other parent, which had great consequences. More than 80% of single parents were women. Children in such cases were more likely to be affected by poverty, might not receive the necessary education and not take part in extracurricular activities at school. She compared the situation in various countries. She studied the actions taken by States in such cases, namely in the form of an “advance payment”. States could support a single parent financially until the other parent, who did not provide support initially, was able to do so and fulfil his or her responsibility. She regretted that international treaties did not manage to solve these very tough and often sad situations for the children of such broken relationships. There were more and more couples from different countries who came together. The law should cover such situations. There was a need to deal with the issue of dual residences, in particular when parents lived several hundreds of kilometres apart. It was important to ensure that the parent, with whom the child spent most of his or her time, did not bear a two-fold burden.

The Rapporteur agreed with Ms Wurm that the people who were poorest were in danger of not coming to an agreement because they did not have access to legal support and mediation services, as noted in the report. Member States should cover financial costs of transnational disputes of that nature.

The Standing Committee unanimously **adopted** the draft resolution [Resolution 2194 (2017)].

16. MIGRATION, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

Child-friendly age assessment for unaccompanied migrant children

Doc. 14434

Rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
Ms Doris Fiala (Switzerland, ALDE)

The Rapporteur spoke about the increasing number of unaccompanied and separated children arriving in Europe. Authorities were faced with real challenges, when tasked with identifying, protecting and supporting those children. It was therefore critical for children to be protected appropriately, and to receive the services they needed and were entitled to, such as decent accommodation and school placements. For that to happen, the age of anyone seeking asylum who may be a child had to be determined. The report provides an analysis of the age assessment methodology and different examples, coming to the conclusion that only a holistic child-centred approach that captured the social aspects of a child's life (family circumstances, education history, ethnic and cultural considerations, etc.) would provide a mechanism by which any dispute of age could be resolved. Social workers are the lead professionals as they put the needs of the child first. The role of other professionals (border and immigration officials, teachers, guardians, police officers, health professionals, etc.) is complementary. The report also recommended appointing a guardian to support each unaccompanied migrant child individually during the age assessment procedure and to provide migrant children with reliable information about age assessment procedures in their own language. Invasive medical procedures should be prohibited. Specific age-assessment standards were in the process of being developed by the Council of Europe Ad hoc Committee on the rights of the Child, and, she, therefore, encouraged member States to adopt these standards. She concluded by mentioning the Assembly Campaign to *End Immigration Detention of Children*, the last year of which would be devoted to advocacy actions on issues raised in her report.

Ms Kavvadia believed that refugees and migration issues haunted European policy-making. There were serious problems with regard to managing migration. Unaccompanied migrant children were the most sensitive category of people and required special care. They risked being victimised and used by traffickers or even being lost altogether. Social roles of minors might be different in their countries of origin. Yet they had to be treated as children if they were under 18 years of age. There were sometimes problems determining the age and doctors studied various approaches. However, the medical tests used had a margin of error of at least two years. This meant that a lot of minors ran the risk of being dismissed, when they applied for the care they were entitled to as children, and pushed away into a very dangerous and stressful adult environment. To protect children's rights, the two-year margin had to be taken into consideration when assessing the age of unaccompanied minors.

The Rapporteur agreed with Ms Kavvadia and pointed out that, in the spirit of the parliamentary campaign to *End Immigration Detention of Children*, she called for a prohibition of detention of unaccompanied migrant children who were subject to age assessment and of those who were determined to be eighteen, but with a margin of error of two to three years. Once one sees an immigration camp, one loses one's innocence. Keeping young boys and girls behind bars just because countries did not know how best to carry out a holistic age assessment was unacceptable.

Ms Gafarova, Chairperson of the Committee praised Ms Fiala's work on the report and as General Rapporteur of the campaign to *End Immigration Detention of Children* with a view to respecting children's human rights and dignity. She hoped that the recommendations put forward would be taken into account and implemented by the member States.

4 amendments to the draft resolution tabled by Mr Munyama, Mr Bildarratz, Mr Fridez, Mr Büchel, Mr Comte, and Mr Michael Aastrup Jensen were adopted unanimously. No amendments were tabled to the draft recommendation.

The Standing Committee **adopted** unanimously the draft resolution and the draft recommendation [Resolution 2195 (2017) and Recommendation 2117 (2017)].

17. OTHER BUSINESS

The President, following the attack on a mosque in Egypt's North Sinai province, reportedly killing at least 155 people, made the following statement: "I'm appalled by the loss of life of so many innocent people following the bomb attack targeting a mosque in Egypt. On behalf of the Assembly, meeting currently at the level of the Standing Committee in Copenhagen, I extend my condolences to the families of the victims and the people of Egypt. We must stand firm against the threat of terrorism, which knows no borders, and increase our efforts to tackle this senseless violence."

18. NEXT MEETING

The Standing Committee **decided** to hold its next meeting in Paris on Friday 16 March 2018 and in Zagreb on Friday 1 June 2018, on the occasion of the Croatian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers.

The President thanked the Danish delegation and its Chairperson, Mr Michael Aastrup Jensen, for their invitation to meet in the Folketing and for their hospitality in Copenhagen.

The meeting **rose** at 5:00 pm.

APPENDIX I

Decisions on documents tabled for references to committees

A. REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES

1. **A legal status for "climate refugees"**
Motion for a resolution tabled by Ms Sahiba Gafarova and other members of the Assembly
[Doc. 14413](#)

Reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced persons *for report*

2. **Missing refugee and migrant children in Europe**
Motion for a resolution tabled by Ms Serap Yaşar and other members of the Assembly
[Doc. 14417](#)

Reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced persons *for report*

3. **New challenges in the fight against organised crime and money laundering – the need to improve international co-operation**
Motion for a resolution tabled by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
[Doc. 14439](#)

Reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*

4. **Sergei Magnitsky and beyond – fighting impunity by targeted sanctions**
Motion for a resolution tabled by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
[Doc. 14440](#)

Reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*

5. **Amending Rule 20.3 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure on the status of the immediate past President of the Assembly**
Decision of the Bureau

Reference to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs *for report*

6. **Procedure for considering motions for resolutions and recommendations and its possible improvement**
Decision of the Bureau

Reference to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs *for report*

7. **Strengthening the link between popular sports events and cultural heritage**
Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Pierre-Yves Le Borgn' and other members of the Assembly
[Doc. 14218](#)

Reference to the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media *for report*

APPENDIX II

List of participants

President of the Parliamentary Assembly / Présidente de l'Assemblée parlementaire

Ms Stella KYRIAKIDES Cyprus

Chairpersons of Political Groups / Président(e)s des groupes politiques

Mr Emanuelis ZINGERIS¹ Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD) /
Groupe du Parti populaire européen (PPE/DC)

Mr Michele NICOLETTI Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group (SOC) /
Groupe des socialistes, démocrates et verts (SOC)

Sir Roger GALE² European Conservatives Group (EC) /
Groupe des conservateurs européens (CE)

Mr Hendrik DAEMS Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) /
Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe (ADLE)

Mr Tiny KOX Group of the Unified European Left (UEL) /
Groupe pour la gauche unitaire européenne (GUE)

Vice-Presidents of the Assembly / Vice-président(e)s de l'Assemblée

Sir Roger GALE United Kingdom

Ms Ingjerd SCHOU Norway

Ms Marianne MIKKO Estonia

Mr Antonio GUTIÉRREZ Spain

Mr Talip KÜÇÜKCAN Turkey

Mr Zsolt NÉMETH Hungary

Mr Axel E. FISCHER Germany

Mr George LOUCAIDES Cyprus

Mr Titus CORLĂȚEAN Romania

Ms Arpine HOVHANNISYAN Armenia

Mme Nicole TRISSE France

Ms Marija OBRADOVIĆ Serbia

Chairpersons of National Delegations / Président(e)s de délégations nationales

Mr Ervin BUSHATI Albania

Ms Arpine HOVHANNISYAN Armenia

Ms Gisela WURM Austria

Mr Samad SEYIDOV Azerbaijan

Mr Hendrik DAEMS Belgium

Ms Stella KYRIAKIDES Cyprus

Ms Marianne MIKKO Estonia

Ms Maria GUZENINA Finland

Mme Nicole TRISSE France

Mr Axel FISCHER Germany

Ms Ioanetta KAVVADIA Greece

Mr Zsolt NÉMETH Hungary

Mr Joseph O'REILLY Ireland

Mr Michele NICOLETTI Italy

Mr Algirdas BUTKEVIČIUS Lithuania

Ms Anne BRASSEUR Luxembourg

Mr Emanuel MALLIA Malta

Ms Ingjerd SCHOU Norway

Mr Titus CORLĂȚEAN Romania

Ms Aleksandra TOMIĆ Serbia

Ms Ksenija KORENJAK KRAMAR Slovenia

Mr Pedro AGRAMUNT Spain

² Vice-Chairperson

Mr Alfred HEER	Switzerland
Mr Talip KÜÇÜKCAN	Turkey
Mr Volodymyr ARIEV	Ukraine
Sir Roger GALE	United Kingdom

**Chairperson of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy /
Président de la Commission des questions politiques de la démocratie**
Mr Mogens JENSEN Denmark

**Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights /
Président de la Commission des questions juridiques et des droits de l'homme**
Ms Olena SOTNYK Ukraine

**Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons /
Présidente de la Commission des migrations, des réfugiés et des personnes déplacées**
Ms Sahiba GAFAROVA Azerbaijan

**Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media /
Présidente de la Commission de la culture, de la science, de l'éducation et des médias**
Mr Volodymyr ARIEV Ukraine

**Chairperson of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs /
Présidente de la Commission du règlement, des immunités et des affaires institutionnelles**
Mme Liliane MAURY PASQUIER Suisse

**Chairperson of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights /
Président de la Commission sur l'élection des juges à la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme**
Mr Sergiy VLASENKO (in the absence of the Chairperson / *en l'absence du Président*) Ukraine

**Rapporteurs (not members of the Standing Committee) /
Rapporteur(e)s (non-membres de la Commission permanente)**

Mme Martine MERGEN	Luxembourg
M. Raphael COMTE	Suisse
Mme Doris FIALA	Suisse

Invited personalities / Personnalités invitées

Ms Pia KJÆRSGAARD	Speaker of the Folketing / Présidente du Folketing
Ms Ulla TØRNÆS	Minister for Development Co-operation, representing the Danish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe / ministre de la Coopération au développement, représentant la Présidence danoise du Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe
Mr George TSERETELI	President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly / Président de l'Assemblée parlementaire de l'OSCE
Mr Roberto MONTELLA	Secretary General of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly / Secrétaire Général de l'Assemblée parlementaire de l'OSCE
Mr Andreas BAKER	Chief of the Executive Office of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly / Chef du Bureau exécutif de l'Assemblée parlementaire de l'OSCE

Delegation Secretaries / Secrétaires de délégations

Mr Emin MAMMADOV	Azerbaijan
Ms Sonja LANGENHAECK	Belgium

Ms Martina PETEK-STUPAR	Croatia
Mr Panicos POURGOURIDES	Cyprus
Ms Gabriella MARANGO d'AVERNAS	Cyprus
Ms Veronika KRUPOVÁ	Czech Republic
Ms Mette VESTERGAARD	Denmark
Mr Kenneth FINSEN	Denmark
Ms Liisi VAHTRAMÄE	Estonia
Ms Gunilla CARLANDER	Finland
M. Laurent SAUNIER	France
Mr Michael HILGER	Germany
Ms Voula SYRIGOS	Greece
Ms Judit GOTTSCHÁLL	Hungary
M. Federico CASELLI	Italy
Mr Martins OLEKŠS	Latvia
Ms Laura ŠUMSKIENĖ	Lithuania
Mr Arjen WESTERHOFF	Netherlands
Ms Dorthe BAKKE	Norway
Ms Anna TRĘBACZKIEWICZ	Poland
Mr Razvan TANASE	Romania
Ms Jelena SUDIMAC	Serbia
Ms Lucia NOVOSADOVÁ	Slovak Republic
Ms Alja ŠKIBIN	Slovenia
Mr Daniel ZEHNDER	Switzerland
Mr Nicholas WRIGHT	United Kingdom

Secretaries of Political Groups / Secrétaires des Groupes politiques

Ms Denise O'HARA	EPP/CD / PPE/DC
Mme Francesca ARBOGAST	SOC
Ms Maria BIGDAY	ALDE / ADLE
Ms Anna KOLOTOVA	UEL / GUE

Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly / Secrétariat de l'Assemblée Parlementaire

Mr Wojciech SAWICKI	Secretary General / Secrétaire Général
Mr Mark NEVILLE	Head of the Private Office / Chef de Cabinet
Mr Alfred SIXTO	Head of the Table Office / Chef du Service de la Séance
Ms Sonia SIRTORI	Head of the Secretariat of the Bureau / Chef du Secrétariat du Bureau
Ms Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU	Head of the Political Affairs and Democracy Department / Chef du Service des questions politiques et de la démocratie
Ms Angela GARABAGIU	Secretary of the Bureau / Secrétaire du Bureau
Mr Francesc FERRER	Deputy to the Head of the Communication Division / Adjoint au Chef de la Division de la communication
Ms Sally-Ann HONEYMAN	Specialised Administrative Assistant, Table Office / Assistante administrative spécialisée du Service de la Séance
Mme Annick SCHNEIDER	Assistant to the Secretary General / Assistante du Secrétaire Général
Mr Martin McMILLAN	Assistant of the Standing Committee / Assistant de la Commission permanente

Council of Europe / Conseil de l'Europe

Ms Biljana PRLJA

Advisor, Directorate of Political Affairs /
Conseillère de la Direction des affaires politiques

Other participants / Autres participants

Mr Thomas LARSEN

Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark to the Council of
Europe / Représentant permanent adjoint du Danemark auprès du
Conseil de l'Europe

Ms Maria PAPAKYRIAKOU

Ambassador of Cyprus to Denmark /
Ambassadeur de Chypre au Danemark

Mr Askhat ABLAISSOV

Representative of Kazakhstan to the Council of Europe /
Représentant du Kazakhstan auprès du Conseil de l'Europe

Ms Narine AVAGYAN

Assistant to Ms Hovhannisyan / Assistante de Mme Hovhannisyan