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20 November 2020

Standing Committee

Declaration on the parliamentary contribution to the Athens Declaration by the Committee of Ministers Chairmanship on: “Effectively responding to a public health crisis in full respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law”

submitted by the President of the Assembly and adopted by the Standing Committee on 20 November 2020

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls its action and contribution towards efforts responding to the Covid-19 health crisis and its consequences, including its supporting efforts at national and Council of Europe levels to find viable and sustainable solutions to contain the pandemic.
2. The Assembly draws attention to the reports, recommendations and resolutions it adopted on various aspects of the crisis in June and October 2020, and calls for their full implementation:
 - a. [Lessons for the future from an effective and rights-based response to the Covid-19 pandemic](#)
 - b. [Democracies facing the Covid-19 pandemic](#);
 - c. [The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on human rights and the rule of law](#)
 - d. [Upholding human rights in times of crisis and pandemics: gender, equality and non-discrimination](#)
 - e. [Humanitarian consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic for migrants and refugees](#)
3. The Assembly reiterates its commitment to continue providing input to the important work carried out by the other Statutory Organ of the Council of Europe, the Committee of Ministers, including through the preparation of five additional reports focusing on Covid-19:
 - a. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education and culture
 - b. Impact of Covid-19 on children’s rights
 - c. Towards a Covid-19 vaccine: ethical, legal and practical considerations
 - d. Overcoming the socio-economic crisis sparked by the Covid-19 pandemic
 - e. Protecting the pillars of democracy during health crises
4. The Assembly stresses the importance of a human rights, rule of law and democracy centered approach in responding to the pandemic challenges.
5. Furthermore, the Assembly urges governments to ensure that all measures taken are gender-responsive, and special attention is placed on tackling increased risks of violence against women, including domestic violence, as well as on full respect of children’s rights.
6. The Assembly stresses the need for parliamentary scrutiny of all measures taken by the authorities when addressing the new waves of the novel coronavirus.

7. The Assembly welcomes progress as regards vaccine development and underlines the need to ensure equitable deployment to ensure its efficacy. It will debate this very issue during its January 2021 part-session from the ethical, legal and practical angle.

8. Taking into consideration all the above, the Assembly welcomes the Athens Declaration by the Committee of Ministers Chairmanship, as well as the “Secretary General’s Toolkit”, and resolves to continue working in close coordination with the Committee of Ministers to support the implementation of the standards, measures and policies contained therein.

9. Finally, the Assembly invites its Observers and Partners for democracy delegations to join forces with the Assembly in this regard.