



AS/Per (2020) PV 08

18 December 2020

Standing Committee

Draft minutes

of the meeting held by videoconference on

Friday 4 December 2020 from 14:00 to 17:45

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The President of the Assembly, Rik Daems declared the meeting of the Standing Committee open.

It had been agreed that he would go to Moscow with the two co-rapporteurs of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States but unfortunately one of the co-rapporteurs was not in a position to travel in December for reasons he was unaware of. He commented that he would go to Moscow with them on around 14 January. His visit would be shorter but the two co-rapporteurs would stay longer to complete their work. He mentioned that he would be in New York the following week for a meeting arranged with the Secretary General of the United Nations and the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations and other individuals. He would therefore chair the meeting of the Bureau on 9 December from New York. He hoped that there would be no technical issues but asked that the Vice-Presidents be on stand-by via videoconference to replace him if he were to have connection problems.

2. EXAMINATION OF NEW CREDENTIALS

The Standing Committee **ratified** the credentials of the new members in respect of the parliamentary delegations of Denmark and Poland, as set out in document Doc. 15188.

3. MODIFICATIONS IN THE COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES

The Standing Committee **ratified** the changes in the composition of an Assembly committee in respect of the delegation of Denmark, as set out in document Commissions (2020) 10.

4. REVISED DRAFT AGENDA

The revised draft agenda was **adopted**.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held by the Standing Committee by videoconference on 20 November were **approved**.

6. SOCIAL AFFAIRS, HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Ms Fataliyeva, rapporteur on “*Supporting people with autism and their families*” of the Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development Committee, began by highlighting the fact that when she had been appointed Rapporteur on this report over two years earlier, she had not had any in-depth knowledge of autism. She could thus honestly say that she had learned a lot. She expressed her gratitude to all of her colleagues, the many NGOs, civil servants and activists, and persons with autism and their family members who had accompanied her on the journey to finding out how the Council of Europe could best support people with autism and their families. She hoped that her report would be a stepping-stone for a better future for them, and that the recommendations they were about to debate would be widely applied across all member states. She then highlighted some key findings. Autism was not a disorder: it was a disability and a difference. Its manifestations varied greatly in terms of combinations and levels of severity of symptoms. It was important to understand that the neurological differences could involve areas of strength, as well as weaknesses. Research suggested that only 20-30% of autistic individuals also suffered from co-occurring intellectual disability and/or language delay. In other words, many widespread stereotypes about people with autism actually did not fit the reality of the majority of people with autism. She mentioned the importance of the concept of stereotyping when it came to autism. Her own understanding of autism had evolved a lot and other people’s understanding of autism also needed to evolve. Polling from the National Autistic Society in the UK in 2015 suggested that 99.5% of people had heard of autism, but just 16% of autistic people and their families felt the public understood what it meant to be autistic. This was the crux of the matter. They could not properly support people with autism and their families if the general public did not understand autism – and more importantly if the professionals that people with autism came into contact with did not understand autism. Misunderstanding autism could lead to misassessing the needs of people with autism: it could stand in the way of access to education, health care, social services, or benefits. It could be a barrier to a job. It could lead to unwarranted arrest, pre-trial detention or even prison time. It could lead to unnecessary and involuntary psychiatric placement and treatment.

Research across several EU member states was being carried out by the University of Cambridge, entitled “Access-EU”. This research aimed to explore autistic people’s experiences of services across Europe: services such as autism diagnosis services, needs assessment, therapy and allied health services, mental health services, educational services, housing services, employment services or social care services. All these services were essential for people with autism in order to access their rights and live a full life. Three of the researchers involved in the project, from the Autism

Research Centre at the University of Cambridge, had kindly prepared a preliminary report for her on early UK data, so that she could present some of the first findings in her presentation. These findings largely confirmed what they had learned through the replies to the ECPRD questionnaire, the hearing they held in January 2020, and the virtual fact-finding visit to the UK in September 2020: it was often very hard for people with autism and their families to access the services they needed in a timely manner. Long wait times were commonly reported for autism diagnostic services. These were particularly essential, since only an autism diagnosis will “open up” access to other services.

The services with the most unsuccessful access attempts in the previous two years in the UK were housing, employment, and therapy services. Mental health services were also very difficult to access. The most often reported barriers to access were reported as the services not being suitable, or the person seeking it not being deemed eligible for the service. The most frequently reported suggestions for improvements involved improving resources, specifically including funding, but also improving autism-related training.

This data confirmed what they knew from previous research: they urgently needed to make the world more “autism-friendly”, so that people with autism and their families could access their rights and be properly supported. This was not as hard as it sounded: her report was full of good practice examples from all over Europe. Specifically, this meant they needed to adopt specific legislation on autism, as well as national autism strategies and action plans and regularly review and adjust them; involve all stakeholders in policy development, review and implementation, including and especially people with autism and their families; stamp out stigma, negative stereotyping and discrimination against people with autism and their families; provide person-centred and life-long support to people with autism and their families, with a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of children (including in their transition to adulthood), and of people diagnosed in adulthood, including through the establishment of specialist autism teams. This was even more important now, in COVID-19 times. People with autism and their families had been heavily and disproportionately affected by measures taken to combat the novel coronavirus and the current pandemic. She finished by saying how important it was to take action; she hoped the report was acceptable to everyone and she looked forward to the debate.

Baroness Doreen Massey was pleased to speak in support of this excellent report on behalf of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group. She commented that her colleague Ms Fataliyeva had produced a comprehensive and well-researched report, which had been scrutinised by the Committee for Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development. Everyone on the Committee learned a great deal from the production of this report. There was an excellent presentation by experts including a young man with autism himself, and the rapporteur described her contact with the UK. It was a very important report in that it explored an issue – autism – which was often misunderstood, undiagnosed or misdiagnosed and distressing for people who suffer from this syndrome and for their families. As the report stated, people with autism needed to have a right to support in order to reach their potential. That potential was often great but unrevealed. As a former teacher, she knew that she had met children with autism without her knowing it. They remained undiagnosed due to lack of knowledge and understanding of the condition. They were often treated as disruptive, lacking intelligence, and incapable of being in school. Many of them were suspended. Researchers’ diagnoses of the condition had revealed the suffering experienced by those with autism and their families.

Thankfully, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Council of Europe’s Disability Strategy had been helpful. Ms Fataliyeva’s report summarised the results of surveys to find out the current position of autism in several European countries. In particular, issues around education and employment were discussed. She commented that there was much good practice in education, such as inclusion in mainstream schools supported by resources, such as teacher training, special-needs teachers, and resource centres. She pointed out that many countries struggled with this due to lack of financial and human resources, late diagnosis, and unclear responsibilities. It was clear that the holistic approach was important and was encouraging people with autism with their families and developing policies such as at all settings. Employment was obviously important but getting a job was often difficult, even for university graduates. Important initiatives, such as those in Denmark and Finland, were finding a way forward with preparation for the job market, including training both employers and those with autism. The Committee would be aware of the recommendations from the Assembly to Council of Europe member states based on good practice. These included the development of specific legislation policies involving all stakeholders, stamping out of stigmas and stereotyping, training of professionals, prejudice discrimination and running evidence-based awareness-raising campaigns. She stated it was a very important report, which she believed filled a gap on the neglected topic and congratulated the rapporteur and the Secretariat for diligence in preparing it.

Speaking on behalf of the Group of the European People’s Party, **Mr Munyama** thanked the rapporteur Ms Fataliyeva for the excellent job in preparing the report on supporting people with autism and their families. He commented that it was known that autism was a generally life-long disability emerging in early childhood that could also be understood as a natural variation of human diversity. He said that people with autism needed our support in order to reach their full potential and access to their rights. He pointed out that it was sad to know and observe that people with autism still faced widespread stigma, lack of awareness and inadequate support structures more than 75 years after autism was first diagnosed. All around the world, including in Europe, people with autism clearly had difficulties in accessing their

rights and often suffered from this condition. Though autism did not become the mainstream diagnosis until well into the 20th century, it was certainly not anything new. History was full of people who many considered to be or had been somewhere on the autism spectrum. He listed a number of famous people who had lived or still lived with autism: Warren Buffett, Wolfgang Mozart, Albert Einstein, Emily Dickinson, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, among others. We might wonder whether autism was a genius affliction or not. One could question, why should we tackle the subject of autism when there are so many successful persons with autism? Research showed that autistic people were seven times more likely to suffer from loneliness than other individuals. People with autism were frequently excluded not only from their communities but also from all related autism issues. Furthermore, their loved ones systematically carried substantial emotional, economic and care burdens. He applauded the need for the report and congratulated the rapporteur.

Although she was speaking today on behalf of the ALDE group, **Ms de Bruijn-Wezeman** personally invested in this report because it had extensions with her report on ending coercion in mental health, which was adopted the year before and her new report to promote deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities. Ms Fataliyeva had noted that in too many countries, too many autistic people ended up unnecessarily in inpatient mental health care, often against their and their families' will. It really struck her to read that misassessment of persons with autism by medical personnel could lead to an unwarranted sectioning and involuntary psychiatric placement of treatments. Special needs of people with autism and their families were often not recognised and that societies were not offering adequate support structures. She recommended that all professionals who came into contact with autistic people and their families should be properly trained to develop a right approach, especially in the health, social care and education sectors. She also wanted to pay attention to the employment sector. She said that a healthcare professional had informed her the week before of the case of a client diagnosed with autism. Having a job was very important for this client. It gave him satisfaction and structure. But suddenly the employer changed his routine task. The client could not cope with change. This resulted in severe depression and he needed medical help and support once more. This could have been prevented if the employer had known how to approach people with autism. This example showed that people with autism need lifelong support in all domains of life. Early diagnosis with immediately appropriate support was essential to ensure the people and children with autism can realise the potentials. She urged a change to the omnipresent strategy of showing people with autism how to be less different from society to rather teaching them more self-confidence. She highlighted that autism did not only impact the person's physical condition but also their families, so it was important to involve parents and provide them with necessary support. She concluded with one remark: she was not in favour of specific autism legalisations because it might exclude other disabilities. We should work instead on more inclusive legislation and develop national applicable guidelines for the diagnosis and support of children and adolescents with autism. She congratulated the rapporteur for the meaningful report.

Mr Howell, speaking on behalf of the European Conservatives Group & Democratic Alliance, congratulated the rapporteur for the excellent report and believed the points that she had made throughout were extremely well-targeted, and he supported them. He congratulated his colleague, Cheryl Gillan, for her work in the early part of the decade, which had helped autistic children enormously and confirmed that she continued to play a great role in that. He commented that in his constituency there was an international musical conductor whose son had autism, and he always argued that autistic people should be seen as differently abled rather than as disabled, and he had tried to get that definition put across in all government publications. He commended the work the conductor's orchestra did with autistic people in providing them with musical opportunities. He stated that the fact remained that autistic people continued to be disadvantaged in areas, which included health outcomes, education, employment, and the criminal justice system. He gave a few words about criminal justice system. It was not that autistic people were there because they had done anything wrong, but they often appeared as witnesses, for example, in what could be quite complex court cases. He urged for a justice system that really worked well to take into account the needs of autistic people, i.e. providing a quiet room in which they could rest, but also in which they could be interrogated. This would also require a great deal of communication skills. The national parliaments would be another area of focus. He stated that even with the best will in the world, no European parliament was autistic friendly, and the amount of noise created there would be terribly off-putting. He shared that he employed a young man with autism as an intern in his office in London, and it went extraordinarily well. By being very conscious of his needs, they were able to tailor his experience so that he got a lot out of it and we got a lot out of it as well. He recommended that people took that into account when looking at how they could deal with autism.

Mr Hunko, speaking on behalf of the European United Left, congratulated the rapporteur for an excellent and important report. He believed that point 2 of the draft resolution was very important in that autism should be understood as a natural variation of human diversity, not something pathogenic. He believed it was important in terms of our own understanding and the way we relate to people with autism. He mentioned that famous people had had autism, such as Albert Einstein or Mozart. He touched upon one last point: item 6 in the draft resolution, because there were currently many groups, including people with autism, who had been somewhat forgotten or overlooked in the fight against the coronavirus. There was a need to ensure that they did not suffer further from the situation. He stated that the European United Left supported the report and the draft resolution.

Mr Schennach stressed the importance of the topic and noted that children often did not get the correct diagnosis of autism. He mentioned being sad about the fact that the rapporteur had been unable to visit Vienna, where in the last two years they had set up a new autism centre, currently the most modern in the world and a very inclusive centre. He stressed the importance of early diagnosis for children with autism, because children with autism needed proper care. He then explained that those with disabilities, and especially children with autism, had some very strong features and stressed the importance of supporting those features. He said that if Mr Hunko was surprised to learn that Mozart had autism, he suggested reading some of Mozart's letters over Christmas, as these clearly show that he was affected by a mixture of autism and Tourette's Syndrome. He went on to mention that Mozart's strong musical nature was a by-product of his condition. He then stressed the fact that autism had nothing to do with psychiatric clinics: parents of autistic children could send them to normal schools, they could work. He mentioned that in Vienna they had built working places in the gardens of Vienna especially for people with Tourette's Syndrome and they also did not need to go to psychiatric clinics. He urged everybody to simply accept that people were different. He then revealed that his own brother had a mental disability and his strength was music – he had a strong sense of rhythm and could perform. The Council of Europe should follow the suggestions of the report.

Ms Tanguy reminded the audience that the previous day, 3 December, was the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, an opportunity for member states to reaffirm their commitment to ensuring persons with disabilities can exercise their rights. She mentioned that unfortunately persons with disabilities and those affected by autism still had to deal with many obstacles to their full integration in society and that such people and their families were often faced with a lack of understanding. She explained that society was not inclusive and that a lack of understanding was encountered in schools, but also from medical practitioners sometimes and employers. She said that this lack of understanding could be ascribed to a lack of knowledge about what autism really was. She also mentioned that unfortunately people with autism, in childhood and throughout their lives, were often subjected to stigmatisation and discrimination. Hence, she urged member states to do more to support such people and their families. She said that the draft resolution of the rapporteur stressed exactly that need, that duty that the member states had to include those people with disabilities so that they could fully enjoy their rights and societies become more inclusive. She then mentioned that she was appointed to be the rapporteur on the issue of deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities and she could confirm that France was playing a very pro-active role in that respect, adopting a national plan on autism. She then asked the rapporteur a question: what conclusion do you draw when it comes to the deinstitutionalisation of people with autism throughout Europe? What measures would you advocate to support families as they go through this process of deinstitutionalisation?

The rapporteur thanked the President and colleagues for their support, their kind words and their understanding of the report. She mentioned that as it could be seen from other reports and discussions, there were a great number of aspects that the report could have focused on. Since they were not medical researchers, they needed to focus mainly on social aspects, like social inclusiveness, and on the psychological aspects of the problem. They all agreed that in terms of dealing with autistic people, their families depended much on the understanding and perception people had of them. According to one of her colleagues, understanding made people with autism self-confident. As Ms Fataliyeva said in her presentation, they had to think about preventing discrimination and breaking stereotypes. She expressed that they should have started from themselves, from their understanding. Then they could have easily worked out autism-friendly strategies and autism-friendly policies in their countries. One person mentioned the role of parents. The name of the report was "Supporting people with autism and their parents". They did not separate people and their families because the atmosphere, understanding, and perceptions of people with autism within families were very important. She agreed with the words by Mr Howell that people with autism were differently abled rather than disabled. Regarding the last speaker's question on institutionalisation and the terms of institutionalisation, Ms Fataliyeva explained that what they were suggesting in their report was that education had to be made inclusive, work for people with autism had to be made accessible, and that social services had to, of course, also be accessible. The age of the autistic person did not have to matter. In terms of education, employment, provision of necessary medical and social services, she thought that strategies and policies had to be worked out that made the lives of those people easier and better not only for people with autism, but also for their family members. Ms Fataliyeva went on to thank the secretariat of the Social Affairs Committee for their work and their support. She also dedicated great thanks to all her colleagues from the UK delegation who organised the virtual fact-finding visit that was highly informative and helpful for the preparation of the report. She also gave special thanks to Lord Touhig and Dame Cheryl Gillan, as well as to Baroness Massey. She also recalled Mr Schennach's recommendation to visit Vienna, but she excused herself with how the pandemic had made them change plans.

Mr Leite Ramos, chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, recalled the public hearing their committee held on the 30th of January of that year with two expats: Ms Olivia Cattan, who shared with them her experience as mother of an autistic child and chair of a French NGO specialised in awareness raising around the issue of autism, and Daniel Morgan Jones, a young autistic man from the United Kingdom who explained a little about his work for the Aspie World of the United Kingdom. Mr Leite Ramos thought that hearing had a great impact on them all. They began to understand how urgent it was to deal with that issue. He also congratulated Dame Gillan

and their former colleague Lord Touhig for tabling the motion for a resolution, which enabled them to commence work on such an important subject. He also congratulated the rapporteur Ms Fataliyeva for the great amount of work she did that led to an excellent draft resolution to which no amendment was tabled. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously so that the recommendations were able to be transposed into legislative texts immediately in national parliaments. As Ms Fataliyeva said in her report, it was time to stop asking people with autism to adapt to the world of those without it. It was time for the world to be adapted for people with autism. Autism was not a disorder. It was a natural variation on human diversity. That human diversity was needed. Work needed to be done so that parliaments adopted specific legislation on autism as well as strategies and action plans at national level that were in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. What was needed was a holistic approach adopted by whole governments. Stakeholders needed to be involved in the framing and implementation of policies, but in particular people affected by autism and their families. The public at large and professionals dealing with autism needed to be educated. Risks of intersectional discrimination needed special attention. He concluded by affirming that together they could support people suffering from autism and their families to build a world where they could develop freely.

The draft resolution “*Supporting people with autism and their families*” was **adopted** with 20 votes in favour and one abstention [**Resolution 2353 (2020)**].

7. MIGRATION, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

a) EFFECTIVE GUARDIANSHIP FOR UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN

Ms Brynjólfsdóttir, rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons on “*Effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children*”, explained that unaccompanied and separated migrant children were among the most vulnerable individuals and as such require additional protection when they arrive in Europe, often after traumatic experiences in their countries of origin or during their migration. During the global COVID-19 pandemic, these children, who were already exposed to a great deal of hardship and danger, faced worse threats to their health and safety, with the added risks of contamination and further human rights violations. Currently 4 190 unaccompanied and separated migrant children were based in Greece, and that, according the data of the Hellenic Police, 147 unaccompanied and separated migrant children were temporarily in protective custody and that about 100 were at that point living under precarious conditions. She explained the importance of establishing an effective guardianship mechanism for unaccompanied and separated migrant children in Europe in order to safeguard their rights and help to find better solutions for their future.

She then illustrated the current situation of guardianship in European countries, explaining that guardianship systems were not harmonized across Europe and differed from country to country. She pointed to a serious lack of qualified professionals able to exercise the function of guardian and the fact that there were considerable delays in their appointment, in particular in the countries which face large influxes of migrants. As an example, she mentioned that in some countries one guardian was responsible for more than 20 children and there was no regular monitoring of a guardians’ performance.

She described how in many European countries the guardianship system was decentralised and each local authority decided on the appointment of guardians. The decentralisation of guardianship created discrepancies within countries, where regions may have different approaches. In this context, she stressed the key role that local authorities played in providing access to child-friendly services, including guardianship. She added that one of the most common and serious problems was the delay in the appointment of guardians, as in some countries they were appointed as soon as children received accommodation, but in other countries the appointment of a guardian could take up to four months. She also mentioned that the lack of employees and structural equipment contributed to the increase in delays.

She then illustrated another problem, that was the absence of accommodation for children on arrival. As a solution to this problem, she suggested the use of transitional accommodation, foster care and independent apartment accommodation. The main challenge was the absence of the social welfare system for children which should support the role of guardians. She expressed disappointment for the fact that some European states did not foresee the appointment of a guardian for unaccompanied or separated migrant children. She explained that this was often the case when it was believed that the child would turn 18 before the decision on his or her asylum claim was made. She added that some member states considered that unaccompanied children had the legal capacity to complete administrative formalities related to their asylum or residence permit application by themselves before they turned 18. She explained that many member states did not invest enough financial resources in supporting guardians and that guardians did not systematically receive financial compensation for their work.

Each Council of Europe member state faced difficulties with regards to the process of guardianship. Provisions specified in national legislation were only partially applied, which resulted in gaps between what was done and what should have been done to ensure that unaccompanied and separated migrant children were well protected in the receiving country.

She added that differences in national guardianship systems exacerbated the lack of a uniform approach in Europe and that disparities in terms of knowledge and skills of guardians, appointment procedures and their tasks were noticeable on the ground. All those factors were not in line with the child's best interests' principle and neglected the well-being of unaccompanied children in Europe.

how can we ensure the effective guardianship system for the child's best interest? She quoted the UNHCR, saying that a guardian "is an independent person who safeguards a child's best interests and general well-being and complements the limited legal capacity of the child." The tasks guardians needed to fulfil were listed in paragraph 104 of the 2010 UN Resolution on Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. These responsibilities included: "ensuring that the rights of the child are protected" and "ensuring that the child has access to legal and other representation where necessary". Moreover, paragraph 36 of General Comment No. 6 included the necessity of appointing a legal representative for unaccompanied minors in order to help them to fill in their asylum or residence permit application, in case of legal proceedings involving the child. The European Court of Human Rights had already proved the vulnerability of unaccompanied and separated migrant children in several cases, underlying the necessity of appointing a guardian for these children. The most comprehensive reply to the question "What is effective guardianship for unaccompanied migrant children?" was recently given in Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11 on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration, adopted on 11 December 2019 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. This recommendation, which had been prepared by the Ad hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child, set clear guiding principles for putting at the forefront the protection, assistance and safety of children in migration through guardianship. This instrument was based on nine essential principles and targeted both decision-makers and practitioners working to secure the protection, reception, care and well-being of unaccompanied and separated children through guardianship. She added that it also provided concrete guidance for the formulation of legislation, the planning of public policies and institutional measures, ensuring these children's access to justice and effective remedies, and for the concrete aspects of cooperation and coordination among relevant stakeholders, including at international level.

She urged parliamentarians to address their governments to ensure that this Council of Europe recommendation was successfully implemented.

She stressed the importance of strengthening the guardianship institutions in their countries and to train enough specialists who can perform the tasks of guardians. She urged to not delay their appointment and to prepare them adequately to perform their tasks. The guardianship authorities should provide clear guidance to guardians and monitor their performance.

She urged the member states to take measures to review domestic and European legislations, policies and practices, to share the progress made and learn from such an exchange of good practices.

In the draft resolution they also suggested creating a Europe-wide unified database of unaccompanied and separated migrant children to make sure that they were identified and provided with timely protection, while taking into account the provisions of the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (ETS N° 108).

She also called on the Council of Europe member states to study the possibility of creating a mechanism to allow the quick and safe relocation of unaccompanied migrant children who were not eligible for family reunification to countries with the most developed child protection system, taking into account the child's opinion. For this purpose, a European register of guardians for unaccompanied migrant minors could be set up. This would help member states to implement guidelines, exchange good practices, reinforce their national guardianship systems and increase cross-border cooperation, including on family reunification.

She also urged the European Union to consider earmarking financial resources from the European Refugee Fund for the support and implementation of guardianship systems for unaccompanied migrant children.

In the draft recommendation, with a view to successful implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11 on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration, they recommended to the Council of Europe to include in the Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe those activities which will facilitate its successful implementation and to invite the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) to promote European best practices in guardianship of unaccompanied and separated migrant children.

She concluded by asking her colleagues to support the adoption of the draft resolution and draft recommendation and to show their willingness to provide a better protection to unaccompanied and separated migrant children.

Ms Arslan, rapporteur for opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, began by stating that their work was made substantially easier by the fact that the report by Ms Brynjólfssdóttir was excellent. They fully subscribed to the main points of the report. Namely, that member states needed to adopt measures so that member states were enabled to comply with international obligations and that they protected unaccompanied and separated migrant children. In particular, provisions had to be made for an effective guardianship system. As it was rightly said in the report, those children were those who were most at danger. An effective guardianship system should be an important component of any national child protection system. A system that was to protect all children on their territory irrespective of their nationality or their migration status. An effective guardianship system also had to take account of the particular needs and circumstances of unaccompanied and separated migrant children so that their rights could be protected and their interests safeguarded. Ms Arslan showed particular concern over the situation of unaccompanied and separated migrant children in overpopulated camps and centres. She welcomed the efforts of a particular number of member states to relocate a number of unaccompanied migrant children that followed the fire that broke out in the refugee camp in Moria in September. Yet that was certainly not enough. According to the Greek Council for Refugees and other human rights organisations, in the new refugee camp, Kara Tepe, there were still thousands of children who were now exposed to even more worrying conditions over the winter months than was the case in Moria. As the EU Commissioner Johansson said, “We cannot afford any further Morias”.

Ms Arslan explained how their committee had put forward a series of amendments the aim of which was to strengthen the protection of children in the text of the Migration Committee. They were particularly concerned that children with a migration status were not discriminated against in their guardianship system, and that children had a right to ensure that their rights were protected, and their interests safeguarded. She expressed her delight because those amendments were taken on board by the Migration Committee, and she hoped that the Standing Committee would in turn adopt those amendments. She concluded by recalling that they did their best to effectively protect unaccompanied and separated migrant children.

Ms Stienen commenced by complimenting Ms Brynjólfssdóttir on her report on behalf of the ALDE group. The urgency of this report was clear. Children who had no parents or other adults who could protect when they arrived in our countries were prone to extra abuse, hardship and traumatic experiences such as sexual exploitation. Those children required and deserved additional protection that took into account previous traumatic experiences in their countries of origin or during their journey. The report provided an excellent analysis of the legal basis for guardianship in European countries, as well as different practices of guardianship in the member states of the Council of Europe. It was clear that not all of the Council of Europe member states had well established systems of guardianship for those groups of children. Good guardianship could be key to the transition into adulthood and integration in a new country for those children, while it helped to protect their human rights in that new country. She transmitted the ALDE group’s congratulations to Ms Brynjólfssdóttir for her excellent insights and overview of what was needed to have a better and more unified system of guardianship in the Council of Europe member states. The draft resolution and draft recommendation gave a good guideline of what needed to happen next, at all levels, around children in need of a guardian: be it legislation, public policy, training, representation and a gender specific approach by all stakeholders involved. She affirmed their belief in the importance for the well-being of minors that a legal representative was appointed as soon as possible after arrival. Wherever possible they believed that changes of guardians in different phases of the procedure had to be avoided. Ms Stienen also encouraged that guardians were facilitated to stay with a limited number of children. The ALDE group agreed with the conclusion of the rapporteur that the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11 on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration was a big step forward in that direction. Ms Stienen reaffirmed their support in the call to member states to step up their action and assess their legislation, policies and practices and where appropriate, take measures and allocate resources to ensure the necessary reforms to implement this recommendation. The ALDE group believed that the monitoring of the next steps was crucial. They wanted to ask the rapporteur how she intended to make sure that it would be followed up.

Mr Hunko, speaking on behalf of the Unified European Left, believed the report came at a very timely moment as it put forward some concrete suggestions as to what they could do in order to ensure more effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated migrant children. It was a very important issue in general, when asylum policies were debated, particularly when minors and their guardianships were talked about. The problems had been clearly defined and a certain number of very specific proposals had been put forward. He communicated that the Unified European Left supported the report, and he hoped that it met a sizeable majority for a follow-up to be ensured on whether the recommendations in the report were acted upon or not. Mr Hunko reiterated the full support of his political group and expressed his congratulations to the rapporteur Ms Brynjólfssdóttir and the secretariat.

Ms Jazłowiecka began with a quotation of Janusz Korczak. “Children are not the people of tomorrow, but people today. They are entitled to be taken seriously. They have a right to be treated by adults with tenderness and respect, as equals. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be. The unknown person inside each of them is the hope for the future.” She underscored that the place of children in society depended on the culture they were from.

Bringing up a child in Europe was probably easier than anywhere else. Often, migrant children came from countries where the legal system did not protect children's rights. That was why the European guardianship system should be an integral part of the national child protection system of member states: a system which should equally protect all children, regardless of their nationality or migration status. She noted that guardianship systems were not harmonised across Europe and they differed from country to country. The provision of the necessary guidance to form legislation, plan public policies, and institutional measures was needed. As a relevant proposition of legislation, Ms Jazłowiecka stated that her political group fully agreed that the adoption of a holistic and effective guardianship system in Europe was necessary. She also expressed that they agreed that member states had to take stronger action towards fulfilling their obligations under international law, and protecting unaccompanied and separated migrant children, including by providing them with effective guardianship.

Mr Katrougkalos began by congratulating Ms Brynjólfssdóttir on a very thorough and scientific report, which he believed was very solution focused. It was not only important to focus on the problems, but above all, on solutions. Unaccompanied children were one of the hardest problems that had to be faced during the peak of the migration crisis, and it continued to be one of the major problems. This was something not only related to the well-being of minors, which was their primary concern, but it was also a very important issue for their legal council and for the respect of humanitarian values. Even self-evident issues such as family reunification were not easy to resolve. As Ms Brynjólfssdóttir demonstrated, there was a complete lack of harmonisation of rules at a European level. Mr Katrougkalos stressed how important it was that the competent legal authorities had the necessary means to serve the interests of minors. However, it was also of a primary interest to have a common European response to that issue. Not only to the issue of guardianship, but more generally for a common European migration policy stemming from a common EU policy. This had to be designed having in mind the well-being of minors, but also the respect for human rights and humanitarian values without any kind of ideological prejudice. Mr Katrougkalos expressed the need for common rules in Europe. These rules had to be for the burden sharing on migration. Above all, all migration and refugee issues, as Ms Brynjólfssdóttir demonstrated, needed to be addressed with practical steps such as a pan-European data base for unaccompanied children that ensured the relocation in countries where they had better guardianship and better life conditions.

The rapporteur thanked the president for allowing her to answer and also thanked her colleagues for their support, which was very important, not for her, but for the most vulnerable individuals and groups in their societies, including unaccompanied migrant children. This report helped to harmonise guardianship systems across Europe and in all member states. Supporting this report, they were supporting the important work that the Council of Europe had been doing and was doing in terms of guardianship and in terms of welcoming and assuring good conditions for unaccompanied migrant children. Ms Stienen had asked about what else they could do in terms of implementing the report and its recommendations. She believed that they all, as members of their national parliaments, needed to step things up, remind their societies about these vulnerable groups and uphold their rights. Agreeing upon the report they did so, by harmonising their systems, making them more professional with the aim of protecting the human rights of this vulnerable group.

Mr Fridez, chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, congratulated Ms Brynjólfssdóttir on her work and commitment to this subject. In the committee they had no trouble being enthusiastic about taking up the issue of protecting these children, the most vulnerable among the vulnerable. Many children were disappearing and they feared that they were being victims of trafficking. One of the causes of the disappearances was the choices of these children, who did not feel that they were being protected and supported. Therefore, guardianship was essential; it was a very important form of protection. The guardian was essentially the advocate of the child. He or she had to commit to ensuring the very best possible future for the child, to protect their rights, to try to find their family in another country perhaps, to take care of the child, protect his or her legal rights and ensure their education. The campaign against detention of unaccompanied children in 2018 had given him the opportunity to visit two detention centres in Athens where there was a guardianship system in place. It was done very professionally, and the children were taken care of properly. Every country had to come up with clear legislation on the subject, preferably with harmonisation. Guardians had to be really available and not overloaded with cases, well trained, committed, and they should follow children right through to the end of their education or until a family could take them in. These children had suffered a lot and many of them would remain in Europe, they would be their neighbours, and it was important that they were able to integrate in their new societies. Guardianship was the best way of ensuring a good future for them. He finished by reminding his colleagues that one of the best ways of solving the issue was relocating these children into appropriate families in appropriate countries.

The Standing Committee **examined** the amendments tabled to the draft resolution.

Amendments 1 was **adopted** with 14 votes in favour and one abstention.

Amendments 2 and 3 were **both adopted** with 17 votes in favour and one abstention.

Ms Arslan withdrew amendment n° 4.

Amendment 5, which was **adopted** with 19 in favour and one abstention.

Amendment 6 was **adopted** with 18 in favour and one abstention.

Amendment 7 was **adopted** with 20 in favour and one abstention.

Amendment 8 and 9 were **adopted** with 20 in favour, no abstentions.

Amendment 10 was **adopted** with 21 in favour and no abstentions.

The draft resolution “*Effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children*”, as amended, was **adopted** with 22 votes in favour, nobody against and no abstentions [**Resolution 2354 (2020)**].

The Standing Committee **examined** the amendments tabled to the draft recommendation.

Amendment 12 was **adopted** with 19 votes in favour and one abstention.

Amendment 13 was **adopted** with 18 votes in favour and 1 abstention.

Amendment 14 was **adopted** with 19 votes in favour and no abstentions.

The draft recommendation “*Effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children*”, as amended, was **adopted** with 21 votes in favour and no abstentions [**Recommendation 2190 (2020)**].

b) INVESTMENT MIGRATION

Mr Pocij, rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons on “*Investment Migration*”, stated that the restrictions on international travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic had reduced people’s movements and also reduced foreign investment for the purpose of receiving work visas, residence permits, tax domiciles, and citizenship. Nevertheless, this subject was of high political importance. His report had a wide angle of investment migration, because illegal acts such as money laundering, tax evasion or corruption could be linked to all forms of investment migration. It was not so much the acquisition of citizenship or passports which caused trouble in this respect. Criminals might also seek to benefit from long-term residence permits or visa-free travel schemes based on all kinds of investments, as well as investment opportunities with low taxes or in anonymous funds or real estate. The subject of his report had received great attention because of illegal practices linked to investment migration. Recently, one member state had changed its practice of awarding citizenship for investors when the media found a prominent case involving a high-level corruption scandal. For some time, the EU Commission and the European Parliament had voiced strong criticism of so-called “golden passports”. This discussion was part of the wider discussion about the EU’s competence to regulate national citizenships in the EU. If EU member states agreed that “golden passports” should be banned by the EU, they *de jure* agreed to recognise EU competency in this field. For the Council of Europe, he believed that it might be delicate and difficult to engage in the internal debate within the EU. The subject was also delicate because the Council of Europe had 47 countries against 27 members of the EU, and extending EU regulations over countries that were not members would be, in his eyes, quite abusive. This was also the reason why he was against some of Mr Omtzigt’s amendments. They were not the EU, but the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. On top of that, the two countries that had received greater criticism from the reporter for the opinion were Malta and Cyprus, both members of the EU. The EU should deal with its members.

Practically all Council of Europe member states had one or several forms of “investment migration”. The research he had carried out for his report through the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation had clearly shown this. Most national investment migration schemes required a considerable amount of money to be invested. Bulgaria required an investment of half a million euros for a passport after six years’ residency. A 10-year residency permit in France required an investment of at least 10 million euros in industrial or commercial assets in France, and citizenship was awarded only after five years’ residency. Moldova had suspended its “citizenship by investment programme” in February 2020. It required investment into a state fund. Cyprus had ended a programme recently that typically used real estate investment. Real estate investment was also typical for residence permits in Portugal, Spain or the United Kingdom. Overseas territories of member states frequently offered investment migration schemes that granted lower taxes and often less transparency. His political friend and colleague, Mr Omtzigt, might tell them more about the Dutch Antilles in this context, which offered long-term residence permits and Dutch citizenship after five years for an investment in real estate of 420.000 USD.

His report did not criticise countries for seeking such investments, as long as the investments were not opening possibilities for illegal practices. The core objective of his report was to draw the attention of member states to the standards developed by the Council of Europe against corruption and money laundering as well as tax evasion. The rapporteur for opinion had proposed a number of amendments to the draft resolution and recommendation. He congratulated Mr Omtzigt for his work and commitment, but he would have preferred that he had been able to participate in the preparatory meetings of the Migration Committee. However, in summary, he was able to accept most of the draft amendments, also in order to facilitate the remote adoption of the report. The only amendments he had refused were those that put the EU before the Council of Europe. They were the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and they had to stick to their own rules.

Mr Omtzigt, rapporteur for opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, welcomed the report which dealt with an important issue not only from the perspective of migration and nationality issues, but also for the rule of law, and in particular the fight against organised crime, corruption, and money-laundering. Mr Omtzigt noted how the Migration Committee's report assumed that a state had to have complete sovereignty over who came and lived on its territory. On that basis it was possible that nationality or legal residency was put up for sale, provided the price was right, and provided there were procedural safeguards to keep out known criminals. Recent scandals, notably in Cyprus and in Malta, showed that legal safeguards were very often inadequate. Anti-corruption organisations and investigative journalists had reported on a wide variety of concerns. Cyprus had now suspended its golden passport scheme after senior officials were filmed offering to assist a fictional Chinese businessman with a known criminal record for money-laundering. However, it was not just a question of practice. The sale of citizenship violated the principle of equality before the law and undermined social cohesion by weakening the traditional link between a person's citizenship and the rights and duties attached to it. The acquisition of nationality had to continue to be based on the traditional grounds of family, place of birth, or long-term legal residency. These grounds were sufficient for any legitimate purpose. When work had begun on this report, the migration and legal affairs committees had held a joint hearing with an expert from Transparency International and a representative of the European Commission. Both bodies had been very critical of golden visas and especially golden passport schemes. Unfortunately, very little of this criticism appeared in the Migration Committee's report. The European Commission had since underlined its criticism by opening infringement proceedings against Malta, Cyprus, and Bulgaria over their investment migration schemes. That went to show that for EU and Schengen countries, residency and citizenship were not just a matter of national sovereignty. They also gave access to every other EU or Schengen country. In an inter-connected Europe, weak links were a matter of common concern. The European Parliament had been at least, if not more, as critical as the Commission. This Assembly should not have taken a weaker position on that front in the fight against corruption and money-laundering as compared to colleagues in Brussels. Legal residency status could be acceptably granted to allow a person to manage a legitimate business investment. That could even lead to an application for citizenship, once enough time had passed. But a mere financial investment, which did not need to be managed in person, or the acquisition of a residential property alone, especially when that property was supposed to be lived in by the applicant, was not to be enough. The advantages of residency status, let alone citizenship, had to be based on a real and immediate connection. Mr Omtzigt mentioned how that also mattered to the Netherlands. The amendments by the Legal Affairs Committee were designed to pull the Migration Committee's draft resolution back into the European mainstream, which rejected golden passports and was also very critical of golden visas. Mr Omtzigt was pleased to see that the Migration Committee and Mr Pocij accepted many of the amendments. There was one remaining amendment, however, that he would have preferred to see adopted. That was amendment which would have deleted the encouragement to the European Commission and the European Parliament to accede to certain Council of Europe conventions. It was simply the case that they were not even allowed to accede to those conventions.

Mr Pisco, speaking on behalf of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group, said that they supported the report with the amendments that had been tabled by the Legal Affairs Committee because it was very important that some consistency and stability be introduced in that area, a very important area when it came to combating organised crime, money-laundering and other forms of corruption such as tax evasion. Those were issues that were very important to society. People were quite shocked that citizenship or residency permits could be granted simply on a basis of investment. He mentioned how important it was to support the report, but it was also very important that the recommendations be put into place. There was certain tension they had observed in the respective positions of their colleagues Mr Pocij and Mr Omtzigt. That tension really reflected the tension that prevailed in society. Many people felt that there was a problem associated with golden passports, giving citizenship in return for money, basically. At the same time there was a will on the part of member states to have a mechanism in place that facilitated investments in their countries by foreigners. It was positive for Mr Pisco that those issues should be brought up. The fact that there was a direct link between those forms of golden passports and organised crime and money-laundering suggested the existence of a moral dimension to the issue. If such mechanisms were used to avoid taxes or to avoid judicial proceedings, it could not be accepted. Mr Pisco mentioned how within the European Union and in the context of the OECD and the Council of Europe there was quite a variation of practices. A report like that one had to serve to clean up the situation. He concluded by recalling how complex and difficult a subject it was. It was something that was practiced

not only within EU member states but also outside Europe altogether, in third countries. Mr Pisco finalised by advocating for a planet-wide or global approach in order to resolve that in the best possible manner. It was important for the discussion to continue and that the deep details of it were gotten into to come up with rules that ensured that taxes due were paid. He reiterated the support of the Socialist Group for the report with the amendments that were tabled by the Legal Affairs Committee.

Mr Munyama, speaking of behalf of the Group of the European People's Party, jokingly mentioned that he had a very bad nut to crack, given both of his colleague rapporteurs, Mr Pocij and Mr Omtzigt, were both members of his group. During the meeting of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons on Wednesday 2 December, they voted on amendments tabled by the Legal Affairs Committee. He found it as if he had been trying to be a referee to two teams which were both at his heart. Mr Munyama underlined the importance of the report because it shed light on some of the problems encountered by the Council of Europe member states. It was worthwhile to emphasise that they, as the Parliamentary Assembly, fully welcomed the European Parliament's resolution of 26 March 2019 on financial crimes, tax evasion and tax avoidance. National programmes of member states for awarding citizenship, residence permits and tax dimissories had to respect the legal standards set by the Council of Europe. He pointed out that most importantly, the resolution called upon those member states that had not signed and ratified the Council of Europe's conventions. Secondly, he also affirmed that member states had to refrain categorically from awarding citizenship on residence permits to foreign investors when investments were effectuated in goods and funds with little transparency. Thirdly, it was important that member states set up domestic rules and procedures for the withdrawal of citizenship where corrupt means of obtaining them had been applied. Mr Munyama concluded by congratulating the rapporteur for the report, which was important for those who were sincerely looking for destinations for investments. Harmonisation of the rules of the game in investment migration was a necessity, indeed.

Mr Cottier expressed that the ALDE considered the debate a very important one. They believed that investment migration did not have to be dissuaded but had to be plan based within a clearly defined framework that made it possible for fraud, corruption, terrorism, or threats to collective security to be combated. He insisted it had to be in an appropriate framework, and it did not have to be dependant only on the financial capacity of individuals. Mr Cottier stated the particular relevance in the case of member states, but also for associated or partner states, such as states that participated in the free circulation of individuals and were members of the Schengen group, which was the case of Norway, Iceland or Lichtenstein, or his country Switzerland, which had specific agreements in those areas with the European Union. Within that geographic space which included more than half of the member states of the Council of Europe, the debate was all the more important because residency rights did offer certain rights on the entire Schengen territory. Once one was a resident in one, he could live in the others. It was also an important subject for all Council of Europe member states because rights that were granted in the form of citizenship also had an impact on the rights of individuals in the country of origin. For instance, states did not extradite their own nationals in many cases. That meant that dual or multiple citizenship could be advantageous, or that one could also choose where he paid his taxes. The thrust of the recommendation and the resolution submitted to them on that day suggested that they should avoid, in particular, golden passports that offered the provision of citizenship for financial reasons. Mr Cottier mentioned that in their opinion the amendments of the Legal Affairs Committee further improved the text while they respected the sovereignty of states. The Assembly was inviting states to limit and end the possibility of golden passports being obtained, and that citizenship was only acquired through family or residency ties, or having been born or lived in the country for a very long time. He concluded by reaffirming that corruption, fraud, terrorism and threats to collective security needed to be combated. He insisted that the ALDE group supported the report and also supported the amendments tabled by the Legal Affairs Committee.

Mr Hunko, speaking on behalf of the Unified European Left, thanked the rapporteur Mr Pocij for the important report. He believed it to be an important and sensitive issue, and it was right that it was being discussed. He also thanked Mr Omtzigt for the draft amendments that he had tabled. Those amendments were very worthy of the United European Left Group's support. They felt that thanks to those amendments the text was made clearer. He underlined that amendment 3 of the Legal Affairs Committee was a decisive point. It said that citizenship was not just a commodity that was bought and sold, because it violated the principle of equality before the law and therefore put into question the concept of a state based on the rule of law. Against that backdrop, the UEL supported the amendments tabled by Mr Omtzigt. Regarding the question raised by Mr Pocij in his introductory statement, where he said that they were the Council of Europe and not the EU, of course, citizenship was a national prerogative. But if that was to be situated in the context of the EU, that went in hand with a certain number of rights and obligations that concerned them all. Any resolutions of the EU had to be seen as a separate issue. They were 47 member states and not 27. Any wording had to be such that they avoided wording that suggested they were talking only about the EU. Mr Hunko thought that what was important was that they talked about principals and standards, and that they needed to be supported. The amendments tabled sought to do just that.

Mr Cilevičs appreciated the rapporteur's work and commented that the report was very timely. He began by saying that he had seen this problem from the other side of the border. He was born and grew up in the USSR behind the Iron

Curtain and had a chance to travel abroad for the first time when he was almost 40. Even after the fall of the Iron Curtain and before Latvia joined the EU and Schengen Area, he had fully enjoyed all pleasures of trying to enter other states in whatever capacity. When it came to crossing borders, immigration and particularly citizenship, they could not really speak about full equality and justice. Not everyone, even living in Europe, had been lucky enough to be born a French, Belgian or Dutch citizen. Indeed, a successful businessperson, sportsman or artist from the southern countries was a priori seen as criminals and tax avoiders. They had some quite positive experiences with the residents (not citizenship) by investment in Latvia. For many business people from ex-USSR states, residence by investment in Latvia was chance to keep up diligent work by not engaging in corruption schemes, in particular to secure their businesses from a hostile takeover by their competitors close to the authorities. He fully agreed with the rapporteur that ensuring due diligence was absolutely necessary. What he did not agree with was, however, that investors from the southern countries should be treated a priori as potential criminals. He believed that if potential immigrants met the same high standards as their colleagues who happened to be born in the EU member states, those investors should be treated without prejudice and discrimination. Investors and immigrants were not the source of corruption. The source of corruption was exactly unscrupulous civil servants and politicians who were citizens of old democracies. To fight corruption, they had to start with them rather than scapegoating people, most of whom simply wanted to work and enjoy the rule of law. He agreed that golden passport schemes were real and very dubious from a legal point of view. However, as to residence in exchange for investments, he believed that if properly organised and if Anti-Money Laundering standards were met, it might be to the benefit of all.

Mr Tornaritis wished to congratulate and thank the rapporteur, Mr Pocij, as well as the rapporteur for opinion, Mr Omtzigt, for their contributions. Investment migration had been an important public issue in Cyprus the past couple of years and the significant means to attract foreign investment after the bailout of the Cypriot economy in 2014. It had contributed to job creation and had effectively helped their economy. The Cyprus government and the House of the Representatives had made a series of changes to the Cyprus investment programme through the adoption of stricter provisions pertaining to transparency and due diligence in line with European and international standards and recommendations. However, recent developments had led to the suspension of the program by the government. They supported the report, the draft resolution, which aimed to lay out the applicable legal standards and the established rules for granting of citizenship so that there would not be any room for manoeuvring or illicit practices.

Mr Yildiz fully agreed with the rapporteur Pocij on the EU and Council of Europe relationship, taking into consideration that the Council of Europe had broader membership. He strongly believed that referring to EU documents and conventions, and making them criteria for all members of the Council of Europe were not appropriate. He thought it was legally and politically problematic. Vice versa, addressing the disagreements within the EU was not their business. If they agreed on a text within their organisation, it automatically covered the EU members. He invited all members to vote accordingly and to consider this when voting.

Mr Pocij said he had accepted a large number of the amendments tabled by Mr Omtzigt, who had expressed agreement with his sub-amendment and his rejection of two of his amendments. There was one great difference concerning the last amendment, which involved deleting paragraph 11 in the draft resolution. However, in his opinion, since they were doing everything they could to take the EU on board as a member of the Council of Europe, there was nothing preventing them from calling on the EU to apply their recommendation.

Mr Fridez, chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, said they were highly appreciative of the report and wanted to congratulate Mr Pocij. Normally, within the committee they talked about the situation of the desperate plight of migrants who were fleeing poverty, insecurity and war and were being ill-treated and badly received in Europe. However, Mr Pocij was dealing with migration from a diametrically opposed perspective – that of wealth – which brought with it fiscal advantages. He believed that golden visas had been around for some time, attracting the wealthy. Yet as the report stated, they needed to avoid any criminal phenomena, such as tax evasion, corruption or money laundering. Hence, this vigilance was needed on the part of member states, and they had to beef up legislation to have clear rules so that, in the event of crime or illegal practices, it would be possible to put an end to accessing citizen fiscal residency. The exchange of fiscal data between member states had been the rule for all transparency. Globalisation had facilitated the movement of capital from one country to another. What mattered was to enable member states to have the means to fund the services that they owe their citizens: social welfare, education, security, and public infrastructure. Those who cheated, had stolen or who were attempting to launder their capital had to be unmasked and not protected by doubtful arrangements.

The Standing Committee **examined** the amendments tabled to the draft resolution.

Amendment 2 had been **unanimously approved** by the committee. Hence, Rule 34.11 allowed them to adopt it immediately, without needing to vote, except if anyone opposed, which wasn't the case.

Mr Fridez wished to table an oral amendment to paragraph 1 which read as follows: in the draft resolution, paragraph 1, after the word “must respect the legal standards set by the CoE” add the following words “as well as relevant international legal standards designed to prevent corruption, money laundering, and terrorism financing”.

The President said the oral amendment was in order. If it was adopted, then amendment 1 would fall.

Mr Omtzigt expressed his agreement with the oral amendment.

The oral amendment was **adopted** with 17 votes in favour, none against and one abstention.

Amendment 1 thus fell.

Amendment 3, presented by Mr Omtzigt, whom no one opposed, was **adopted** with 14 votes in favour, one against and one abstention.

Mr Omtzigt presented Amendment 4 by saying that it was legally correct to say, as the rapporteur did in the report, that the granting of citizenship or residence status fell under the competence of the state. But states were also bound to respect international engagements they had entered in and this included the duty of all EU members to give due considerations to the legitimacy of other EU member states. EU citizenship was a collection of shared rights that all member states provide in solidarity. For this reason, the citizenship of any EU member state was particularly valuable. The infringements proceedings in this respect launched by the European Commission made sense because if you bought citizenship in one country you could go and live in all other 26 countries. That’s why he asked to support amendment 4.

Mr Pocij, presented a sub-amendment to Amendment 4 and explained that he agreed with the amendment proposed by Mr Pocij but said that they should not go after the EU even though his country was a member of the EU and they are devoted to following EU recommendations. He said he would rather delete the third phrase. He said he would like to leave everything as Mr Omtzigt had tabled but without referring to the EU standards because they were more than the EU family.

The sub-amendment to Amendment 4 was **agreed** upon with 18 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.

Amendment 4, as sub-amended, was **adopted** with 18 votes in favour, one against, and no abstentions.

Amendment 5, presented by Mr Omtzigt, whom no one opposed, was **adopted** with 18 votes in favour, none against and no abstention.

Mr Omtzigt intervened on amendment 6, saying that access to secondary residences during health emergencies was unrelated to the topic of “investment migration”. As a matter of fact, governments had even prevented their own nationals from using secondary residences elsewhere in their own countries in order to protect local health infrastructures in rural holiday regions from being overwhelmed. So there were no reasons for which COVID-19 could be used as an excuse to say that one should give citizenship to somebody. He added that if one wanted to allow someone in for a given time one could simply use a visa.

Mr Pocij spoke against the amendment, explaining that the Council of Europe was all about human rights, and the paragraph that the amendment wanted to delete said that “During the Covid 19 pandemic, national and regional authorities had banned the entry to their territories for foreigners as well as the use of secondary homes.” He said that they could not allow countries to stop people who had those two residencies from travelling between the two, because that would mean that they would be cut off from their families. As an example, he mentioned the case of many Lithuanians and Estonians who were stopped at the border with Poland and were prevented from going home, simply because they had two residencies.

Mr Fridez expressed the committee opinion as being against the amendment.

Amendment 6 was **rejected**, with four votes in favour, 10 against, and three abstentions

Amendment 7, presented by Mr Omtzigt, whom no one opposed, was **adopted** with 19 votes in favour, one against and two abstention.

Amendment 8, presented by Mr Omtzigt, whom no one opposed, was **adopted** with 17 votes in favour, one against and one abstention.

Amendment 9, presented by Mr Omtzigt, whom no one opposed, was **adopted** with 18 votes in favour, none against and one abstention.

Mr Omtzigt said that through Amendment 10 he asked to delete paragraph 11 because he had been told that a number of these convention were not open for the EU to access as a whole but only for some states.

Mr Pocij repeated what he said before, which was that they were working on the EU to be with them and even if the EU was not with them at the moment this was not a reason to not ask them once they would have joined them to accede to what they were proposing. He said that this was not any harm to the EU and so he would leave this as it was, and he was thus against the amendment.

Mr Fridez expressed the committee opinion as being against the amendment.

Amendment 10 was **rejected** with four votes in favour, 12 against and two abstentions.

The draft resolution “Investment Migration”, as amended, was **adopted** with 16 votes in favour, one against, and one abstention [**Resolution 2355 (2020)**].

The Standing Committee **examined** the amendments tabled to the draft recommendation.

Amendment 11, presented by Mr Omtzigt, whom no one opposed, was **adopted** with 16 votes in favour, one against, and one abstention.

Amendment 12, presented by Mr Omtzigt, whom no one opposed, was **adopted** with 16 votes in favour, one against, and one abstention.

The draft recommendation “Investment Migration”, as amended, was **adopted** with 17 votes in favour, one against and one abstention [**Recommendation 2191 (2020)**].

c) RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF NGO’S ASSISTING REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN EUROPE

Mr Hajduković, rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons on “Rights and obligations of NGO’s assisting refugees and migrants in Europe” argued that Resolution 2340 on “Humanitarian consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for migrants and refugees” had underlined earlier that year, that they were currently living in extreme times which had also a strong impact on refugees and migrants as particularly vulnerable persons. Without volunteers, charities and NGOs, they would not be able to cope with the serious humanitarian effects of the pandemic on refugees and migrants. It was therefore probably appropriate to go back at the end of their long meeting to where they had started.

NGOs were extremely important for democracy, because they reflected civil society action and involvement in virtually all sectors of society. The Council of Europe as well as the United Nations and the European Union depended on NGO action in order to implement locally many of their work programmes. The Committee of Ministers had even created the INGO Conference of the Council of Europe, in order to strengthen that cooperation and give it a structural framework.

The report that he was presenting focused on NGOs assisting refugees and migrants. This subject was primarily political, because relevant legal standards already existed. Therefore, the report and its proposed resolution recalled those legal standards and tried to raise political awareness and initiate action. In addition, the draft recommendation contained proposed action by their Committee of Ministers.

Nearly every report of their committee had given testimony of many humanitarian initiatives by NGOs. They were all aware, from their own countries’ experience, of how vital civil society and NGOs had been during the 2015-16 crisis, when they provided food, clothing and other humanitarian aid to the hundreds of thousands of migrants stranded on European shores and streets at that time. Now, during the COVID-19 pandemic, NGOs were also in the forefront of providing humanitarian assistance to migrants in need. NGOs were as diverse as their societies, and they focused on humanitarian work, on political advocacy or on related objectives. Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights protected freedom of association for all persons who wished to create or join an NGO. However, he argued that NGOs should also be transparent in their work and accountable – in particular to their donors, contractual partners, the volunteers working for them and, of course, the refugees and migrants whom they assisted.

In his report, he had kept a broad definition of NGOs. He had included purely humanitarian charities or private non-profit organisations, private interest groups or associations that aimed for advocacy or lobbying, as well as mixed forms of civil society ranging from NGOs created by political parties or religious communities to NGOs that fulfilled public

functions or had a direct link to governments. All those NGOs had rights and obligations in accordance with Council of Europe standards. In that regard, the European Convention on the Recognition of the Legal Personality of International NGOs was an important standard set by the Council of Europe, besides the European Convention on Human Rights.

As indicated in its mandate, the report reminded member states that migrant smuggling was a criminal offence, but not humanitarian smuggling. NGOs, which helped migrants without financial or other gains, but with purely humanitarian objectives, could not be held criminally liable in accordance with the Palermo Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. In that context, NGOs could obviously search and rescue boat migrants in distress at sea. If they wished to cooperate with national search and rescue activities, national authorities could set up a code of conduct for their territorial waters. However, international law prevented national authorities from barring private vessels that rescued boat migrants. Their Assembly adopted reports on that subject, which led to Resolution 2305 (2019) on "Saving lives in the Mediterranean: the need for an urgent response". Therefore, his report did not repeat or duplicate that Assembly work.

In the draft recommendation to the Committee of Ministers, he proposed setting more precise standards for NGOs assisting refugees and migrants, including the rights and responsibilities of volunteers working with NGOs. Volunteers were often overlooked, although they carried most of the burden. It was important – and surely in line with the humanitarian approach of humanitarian NGOs – to protect their volunteers' rights under labour law and social standards.

He repeated that the subject of the report was primarily political. This meant that, as parliamentarians, they could take the conclusions of the report into their own parliaments and political debates. Political discussions in the media or otherwise often lacked a detailed and informed approach, but remained emotional and frequently populist. NGOs were neither sacred or above the law, nor were they the incarnation of evil. But they should all admit that they were a vital part of their democratic societies and carried out essential work every day, in particular for refugees and migrants who were the focus of the report.

Finally, he thanked all members and experts who had contributed to the substance of the report. A few members felt at unease with the work of NGOs in their countries, and he was grateful that they had been finally able to accept the report, which in fact recalled existing legal standards and invited their political action. He particularly wanted to thank Ms Louis, who had prepared a very supportive opinion for the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. The amendments proposed in that opinion recalled earlier work of her committee as well as relevant standards set for instance by the Venice Commission. He fully supported those amendments, which had also been supported by his committee.

Mr Cilevičs, chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, stated that, since Ms Louis, the committee rapporteur for opinion, could not attend the virtual meeting, he had the pleasure to present her opinion, which was adopted by the committee in October 2020. First of all, he wanted to welcome the report prepared by the rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, Mr Hajduković. The report by Mr Hajduković rightly focused on the situation of NGOs that assisted refugees and migrants and helped states to meet their humanitarian commitments in that area. Not without reason, the report drew attention to the various attacks on these NGOs and their donors and pointed out that, as well as rights, organisations had obligations under national law, not least as regards the transparency of their funding. NGOs played the role of a "watchdog" in a democratic society and they fully enjoyed the rights for freedom of assembly and association and freedom of expression, although those rights may be subject to some restrictions. NGOs assisting migrants and refugees helped states to fulfil their obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular, with regard to the prohibition of *refoulement*. Therefore, it was even more deplorable that those NGOs met obstacles in their daily activities. Ms Louis was currently preparing a third report on this subject for adoption at the forthcoming committee meeting of 8 December. It was worth noting that Mr Cruchten and their committee had already been critical of the Hungarian legislation specifically targeting NGOs that were helping refugees and migrants, namely the "Stop Soros" law and the immigration tax law. Moreover, since 30 January 2020, Ms Louis had been acting as the general rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. Her predecessors had already reported cases of intimidation of migrant rights defenders, particularly in Croatia, Spain and Italy. Ms Louis intended to focus more on those issues. To conclude, the committee fully supported the proposed draft resolution and draft recommendation. Nevertheless, they did wish to propose some amendments to further strengthen the draft resolution and draft recommendation. One of the aims of the proposed amendments was to add references to relevant legal texts and recent recommendations made by Council of Europe organs and bodies with regard to NGOs.

Mr Ben Chikha, speaking on behalf of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group, argued that they were in a situation that member states were deciding whether to dissolve or support, but the decision of governments not to assist or help migrants was costing lives and constituted a breach in the protection of human rights. Unfortunately, the burden had fallen mostly on NGOs who carried a great responsibility. The responsibility they had was heavy enough without the obstruction of their work by member states or other political parties. As people and member states of the Council of Europe, they had the obligation to assist people in need. This included migrants in distress in open sea. Therefore,

NGOs didn't have to be in fear of facing prosecution for criminal liability, because they provided help for people who found themselves in a humanitarian crisis. It was for that reason that any attack or obstructions from member states or political parties should be prohibited. Politically motivated attacks did not belong in acts that provided humanitarian assistance. That of course included the transportation of migrants across borders, better known as "humanitarian smuggling". It was necessary that the NGOs who were carrying out humanitarian crisis assistance could count on member states.

Mr Munyama, speaking on behalf of Group of the European People's Party, began by thanking the rapporteur for his wonderful work in preparing the report on the rights and obligations of NGOs assisting refugees and migrants in Europe. The states of Europe had a duty to care for refugees and migrants. It resulted from the EU regulations and international agreements. Practice showed that that care was often not enough. The resources allocated by states to help refugees

were sufficient to meet only basic living needs and very modest integration assistance. However, the needs were much greater. This was where the NGOs working for refugees and migrants came into play. Specialised organisations that operated close to the recipients of aid and knew their needs well, were actually performing much more effectively than the government structures. Most of these organisations conducted information activities, legal counselling, various types of integration activities, psychological assistance and language courses for refugees and migrants. They did, of course, organise various types of workshops, artistic activities, they helped in finding a home, cultural and social events, material assistance, medical assistance, language assistance, activities for children and collecting of various things or money needed. They operated in centres for foreigners, conducted sports activities, anti-discrimination activities, activities for adults and vocational training. He believed that a very important factor in the decision process on if "to be or not to be" for a non-government organisation, was the availability of funds for its efficient functioning. They did complain about complicated commodities connected with using subsidies from sponsors or EU funds. Therefore, this report was timely and required in order to formalise all the activities of NGOs.

Ms Stienen began her intervention by saying that, on behalf of the ALDE group, she wanted to compliment Mr Hajduković on the important report on the rights and obligations of NGOs assisting refugees and migrants in Europe. The ALDE group appreciated the way the rapporteur had explained the legal context, the different types of NGOs and the obligations of member states. When they discussed assisting refugees and migrants, it was necessary to be aware of the enormous task and the international obligations at hand. They were all aware of the statistics, but they shouldn't hide behind those statistics. Because statistics didn't show the effects of the individual loss of life, the emotions, the fear, the sorrow of the relatives and friends of those whose lives were lost while trying to reach Europe in order to seek protection. In many religions, it was said that the one who saved one life saved humankind. Indeed, the report touched on a shared humanity and how not to be an indifferent bystander when people in need sought for protection in Council of Europe member states. The reception and integration of migrants and refugees was greatly held by the enormous efforts of international NGOs, who were of important added value to the services that local and national authorities were not always able to deliver. NGOs were particularly essential in assisting migrants and refugees arriving in frontline states and thus in assisting frontline states. They appreciated the special attention that the rapporteur gave to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the situation of refugees and how frontline states were left alone dealing with these extra responsibilities. With the resolution and recommendation, they did neither approve nor condemn the conduct of individual NGOs. It was for their independent rule of law systems to respond to individual cases. They did call on NGOs to take all necessary precautions when providing humanitarian assistance. However, they should not be mistaken, it was not by fighting NGOs that were assisting refugees and migrants that they would change migration flows, eradicate terrorism or trafficking in human beings. The ALDE group agreed with the conclusion of the report that member states were meant to respect the rights of foreign and local NGOs. NGOs were free to receive funds, also from abroad, but had to be transparent about their funding and work. Council of Europe standards had to be respected by member states and not discriminate against foreign or domestic NGOs providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and migrants. Therefore, the ALDE group agreed with the draft resolution and draft recommendations. Finally, on behalf of the ALDE group she wanted to thank all of the staff members, the Secretariat, the Secretary-General and his team, the interpreters and the president for the amazing work they had been doing over the past year.

Mr Hunko thanked the rapporteur on behalf of the Unified European Left. He believed it was a very necessary and important report. It was a disgrace that NGOs in Europe were taking over functions and responsibilities that actually were supposed to be carried out by the member states or the EU, when it came to providing support for refugees. He knew many NGOs in Germany, which were very active and committed and even took personal risks when it came to operations in the Mediterranean. It was a disgrace that those functions were not being carried out by member states. What was totally unacceptable was that those NGOs were also under attack. Sometimes they were subjected to physical attacks but they were also encountering legal difficulties and obstacles to their work, so it was very important to adopt the report. The UEL group was going to give its determined support to the report. The Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee had tabled a number of amendments that were moving in the right direction and they would also support them.

Mr Ben Chikha said that it was necessary that NGOs who were carrying out humanitarian assistance could count on all member states to have regulations that allowed them to do their work. He added that that this was why the reason for which the Committee of Ministers should support NGOs to do their work at that time more than ever, when the pandemic had resulted in a closing up of foreign resources. He explained that the recommendations that had been made were more than legitimate and they would help NGOs and volunteers who actively protected and assisted migrants on sea and land. He then said that while it was imperative that NGOs fulfilled their requirements and jobs it was also vital that member states fulfilled theirs. He then congratulated the rapporteurs.

Lord Balfe explained that most migrants who came to Europe were economic refugees and there was nothing wrong with that. He said that we took in millions or at least thousands of refugees who were doctors, nurses or had other professions. He explained that we actually strip out the intellectual abilities of many countries by taking in their brightest minds, but we had to recognise that, as the report says, smuggling of people could bring in a lot of money and often NGOs, although they were motivated by the best intentions, were nonetheless actually facilitating criminal activity. He then mentioned operation Sophia, a EU operation, to which the UK looked at unhappily because there was a lot of collusion between the refugee boats and various NGOs. So he welcomed the report and claimed that the matter needed to be discussed and urged everybody to discuss it in a non-romanticised way. He explained that this was a difficult topic and that many of the migrants and refugees who came to Europe were the best of their countries: they are very resourceful people who contribute enormously, as Germany had found out. Nonetheless he warned against romanticising the matter too much and he believed that more debating was needed on the topic.

Mr Hajduković thanked the secretariat for their support and help as well as all the colleagues who took part in the debate. He drew attention on the fact that what many NGOs and volunteers were doing was saving lives and they were doing a great job at it. He described the report as a call to political action and he asked all colleagues to support it. He concluded by sending season greetings to everybody and wishes for a COVID-free 2021.

Mr Fridez, chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, said that migrations constituted a challenge for many countries in Europe which were doing what they could even though admittedly they could be doing a little more. He added that many countries were under considerable burdens, like Greece or Italy, and in that context the work of NGOs was essential and needed to be properly appreciated when it came to providing assistance to refugees and migrants, such as medical assistance. He explained that they also had a crucial role as witnesses, as they were really on the field, which, in some cases, could be an unwanted presence for some of the parties involved, and they also played a very important role when it came to search and rescue operations at sea. He said again that they were very important witnesses of the push back phenomenon and that they were often attacked and criticized. He explained that he thought we should see NGOs as genuine partners working side by side with a spirit of cooperation. However, that partnership also entailed obligations for NGOs in terms of transparency and integrity. For this reason, he thanked Mr Hajduković for such an important report. Before leaving the floor he quickly added that all amendments had been agreed to almost unanimously by the commission.

The President indicated eight amendments had been tabled to the draft resolution. The President understood that the amendments had been unanimously adopted by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons. Therefore, he applied Rule 34.11, and if no Standing Committee member objected, they would be declared as adopted by the Standing Committee.

Mr Kislyak expressed that there were some parts of the amendments that they were very concerned about. He pointed to amendment 2, an amendment to paragraph 4. There was something about threats that were supposedly levelled against NGOs and talked about smear campaigns and political accusations. It was very broad-ranging and not balanced when it stated that NGOs were subject to that. It was going too far. They often did not act in accordance with the legislation of the countries where they were acting. He therefore said they could not accept that. In other amendments, there were some direct references to recommendations of the group of experts on NGOs. He called for the complete deletion of amendment 5 where there was a reference to the Expert Council on NGO Law. Mr Kislyak also expressed their difficulties with the wording of amendments 4 and 9 because a recommendation of the Expert Council on NGO Law did not have to be directly included in a resolution. Some of the things that were recommended could not be implemented. National legislation did not have to be called upon to bow to the needs of NGOs. Mr Kislyak tried to be very quick on that but insisted that those amendments – 2, 4, 5, and 9 – had to be voted on.

The President acknowledged a request to vote on amendments 2, 4, 5, and 9 only four minutes before the meeting terminated and accepted the right of any member to ask for such requests. He then indicated that the other four amendments out of the total eight were accepted and reminded members that he did not accept any more interventions. He then proceeded to put the four amendments objected to by Mr Kislyak to the vote, and reminded members that they had been unanimously accepted by the Committee.

The Standing Committee **examined** the amendments 2, 4 and 5 tabled to the draft resolution.

Amendment 2 was **adopted** by 13 votes in favour, 1 against, and 1 abstention.

Amendment 4 was **adopted** by 13 votes in favour, 1 against, and 1 abstention.

Amendment 5 was **adopted** by 14 votes in favour, 1 against, and 2 abstentions.

The President announced that all amendments to the resolution were adopted, and they therefore proceeded to vote on the draft resolution as amended by the eight amendments.

The draft resolution “Rights and obligations of NGO’s assisting refugees and migrants in Europe”, as amended, was **adopted** by 14 votes in favour, 0 against, and 3 abstentions [**Resolution 2356 (2020)**].

The President then called on the recommendation to be voted on, to which one amendment, number 9, had been tabled.

Amendment 9 was **adopted** by 10 votes in favour, 3 against, and 3 abstentions.

The draft recommendation “Rights and obligations of NGO’s assisting refugees and migrants in Europe”, as amended, was **adopted** by 15 votes in favour, 0 against, and 3 abstentions [**Recommendation 2192 (2020)**].

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. NEXT MEETING

The President announced the next Standing Committee meeting on 19 March 2021 in Berlin, provided that the health situation allows the meeting to take place.

APPENDIX**List of participants / Liste des participants****President of the Parliamentary Assembly / Président de l'Assemblée parlementaire**

Mr Rik DAEMS Belgium / Belgique

Chairpersons of Political Groups / Présidents des groupes politiques

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

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

Mr Ian LIDDELL-GRAINER European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance
(EC/DA) / Groupe des Conservateurs européens et Alliance
démocratique (CE/AD)

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

Sir Roger GALE United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni

Mr Kimmo KILJUNEN Finland / Finlande

Mr Egidijus VAREIKIS Lithuania / Lituanie

Mr Antonio GUTIÉRREZ Spain / Espagne

Mme Nicole TRISSE France

Mr Andreas NICK Germany / Allemagne

Mr Oleksandr MEREZHKO Ukraine

Mr Akif Çağatay KILIÇ Turkey / Turquie

Ms Inese LIBINA-EGNERE Latvia / Lettonie

Mr Alvis MANIERO Italy / Italie

Chairpersons of National Delegations / Président-e-s de délégations nationales

Mr Ruben RUBINYAN Armenia / Arménie

Mr Reinhold LOPATKA Austria / Autriche

Mr Samad SEYIDOV Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan

Mr Nicos TORNARITIS Cyprus / Chypre

Mr Kimmo KILJUNEN Finland / Finlande

Mme Nicole TRISSE France

Mr Andreas NICK Germany / Allemagne

Ms Theodora BAKOYANNIS Greece / Grèce

Mr Zsolt NÉMETH Hungary / Hongrie

Ms Rósa Björk BRYNJÓLFSDÓTTIR Iceland / Islande

Mr Alvis MANIERO Italy / Italie

Ms Inese LIBINA-EGNERE Latvia / Lettonie

Mr Emanuel MALLIA Malta / Malte

Mr José BADIA Monaco

Ms Petra STIENEN Netherlands / Pays-Bas

Ms Ingjerd SCHOU Norway / Norvège

Mr Pedro BACELAR DE VASCONCELOS Portugal

Ms Suzana LEP ŠIMENKO Slovenia / Slovénie

Mr Antonio GUTIÉRREZ Spain / Espagne

M. Pierre-Alain FRIDEZ Switzerland / Suisse

Mr Ahmet YILDIZ Turkey / Turquie

Sir Roger GALE United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni

Ex-officio members of the Bureau / Membres ex-officio du Bureau

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Ms Theodora BAKOYANNIS | Greece / Grèce |
| Mr Andreas NICK | Germany / Allemagne |
| Mr Zsolt NÉMETH | Hungary / Hongrie |
| Mr Alvis MANIERO | Italy / Italie |

**Chairperson of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy /
Présidente de la Commission des questions politiques et de la démocratie**

| | |
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| Dame Cheryl GILLAN | United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni |
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**Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights /
Président de la Commission des questions juridiques et des droits de l'homme**

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| Mr Boriss CILEVIČS | Latvia / Lettonie |
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**Chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development /
Président de la Commission des questions sociales, de la santé et du développement durable**

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| M. Luis LEITE RAMOS | Portugal |
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**Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons /
Président de la Commission des migrations, des réfugiés et des personnes déplacées**

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| M. Pierre-Alain FRIDEZ | Switzerland / Suisse |
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**Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media /
Président de la Commission de la culture, de la science, de l'éducation et des médias**

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| M. Olivier BECHT | Royaume-Uni |
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**Chairperson of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination /
Présidente de la Commission sur l'égalité et la non-discrimination**

| | |
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| Ms Petra BAYR | Austria / Autriche |
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**Chairperson of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs /
Présidente de la Commission du Règlement, des immunités et des affaires institutionnelles**

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| Ms Ingrid SCHOU | Norway / Norvège |
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Rapporteurs of the committees / Rapporteur-e-s des commissions

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ms Siebel ARSLAN | Switzerland / Suisse |
| Ms Rósa Björk BRYNJÓLFSDÓTTIR | Iceland / Islande |
| Ms Sevinj FATALIYEVA | Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan |
| Mr Domagoj HADJUKOVIC | Croatia / Croatie |
| Mr Pieter OMTZIGT | Netherlands / Pays-Bas |
| Mr Aleksander POCIEJ | Poland / Pologne |

**Other members of the Parliamentary Assembly, Observers and Partners for Democracy /
Autres membres de l'Assemblée parlementaire, Observateurs et Partenaires pour la démocratie**

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mr Sos AVETISYAN | Armenia / Arménie |
| Ms Tatevik HAYRAPETYAN | Armenia / Arménie |
| Mr Hovhannes IGITYAN | Armenia / Arménie |
| Mr Vladimir VARDANYAN | Armenia / Arménie |
| Ms Stefanie KRISPER | Austria / Autriche |
| Mr Stefan SCHENNACH | Austria / Autriche |
| Ms Nigar ARPADARAI | Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan |
| Mr Sabir HAJIYEV | Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan |
| Mr Rafael HUSEYNOV | Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan |
| Mr Kamal JAFAROV | Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan |

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| Mr Asim MOLLAZADA | Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan |
| Mr Fourat BEN CHIKHA | Belgium / Belgique |
| Ms Anne-Mari VIROLAINEN | Finland / Finlande |
| M. Bernard FOURNIER | France |
| Mme Liliana TANGUY | France |
| Mme Laurence TRASTOUR-ISNART | France |
| Mme Martine WONNER | France |
| Mr Andrej HUNKO | Germany / Royaume-Uni |
| Mr Kakhaber KUTCHAVA | Georgia / Géorgie |
| Mr Tasos CHATZIVASILEIOU | Greece / Grèce |
| Mr George PAPANDREOU | Greece / Grèce |
| Mme Brigitte BOCCONE-PAGES | Monaco |
| Mme Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO | Monaco |
| Ms Reina DE BRUIJN-WEZEMAN | Netherlands / Pays-Bas |
| Ms Danuta JAZŁOWIECKA | Poland / Pologne |
| Mr Killion MUNYAMA | Poland / Pologne |
| Mr Carlos Alberto GONÇALVES | Portugal |
| Mr Paulo PISCO | Portugal |
| Mr Sergey KISLYAK | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Ms Alfia KOGOGINA | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Mr Vladimir KOZHIN | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Mr Vladimir KRUGLYI | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Mr Maxim KUDRYAVTSEV | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Ms Irina RODNINA | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Mr Roman ROMANENKO | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Mr Shamsail SARALIEV | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Ms Svetlana ZHUROVA | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Ms Laura CASTEL | Spain / Espagne |
| Ms Marta GONZÁLEZ VÁZQUEZ | Spain / Espagne |
| Ms Carina OHLSSON | Sweden / Suède |
| Mr Roland Rino BÜCHEL | Switzerland / Suisse |
| M. Damien COTTIER | Switzerland / Suisse |
| M. Jean-Pierre GRIN | Switzerland / Suisse |
| Mr Alfred HEER | Switzerland / Suisse |
| Mr Ziya ALTUNYALDIZ | Turkey / Turquie |
| Mr Kamil AYDIN | Turkey / Turquie |
| Ms Sena Nur ÇELİK | Turkey / Turquie |
| Ms Emine Nur GÜNAY | Turkey / Turquie |
| Ms Serap YAŞAR | Turkey / Turquie |
| Ms Zeynep YILDIZ | Turkey / Turquie |
| Ms Yuliya LOVOCHKINA | Ukraine |
| Lord Richard BALFE | United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni |
| Lady Diana ECCLES | United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni |
| Lord Leslie GRIFFITHS | United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni |
| Mr John HOWELL | United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni |
| Baroness Doreen MASSEY | United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni |

Secretaries of National Delegations / Secrétaires de délégations nationales

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|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Mr Georg MAGERL | Austria / Autriche |
| Mr Arjen WESTERHOFF | Austria / Autriche |
| Mme Sonja LANGENHAECK | Belgium / Belgique |
| Ms Maria YANEVA | Bulgaria / Bulgarie |
| Ms Marijana BALIĆ | Croatia / Croatie |

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| Ms Martina PETEK-STUPAR | Croatia / Croatie |
| Ms Gabriella MARANGO D'AVERNAS | Cyprus / Chypre |
| Ms Veronika KRUPOVÁ | Czech Republic / République tchèque |
| Ms Marjo RANTASOLA | Finland / Finlande |
| Mme Claire MOISSET | France |
| M. Laurent SAUNIER | France |
| Mr Michael HILGER | Germany / Allemagne |
| Ms Aikaterini KARTSAKLI | Greece / Grèce |
| Ms Panagiota MICHA | Greece / Grèce |
| Ms Voula SYRIGOS | Greece / Grèce |
| Ms Judit GOTSCHALL | Hungary / Hongrie |
| Ms Bylgja ÁRNADÓTTIR | Iceland / Islande |
| Ms Eileen LAWLOR | Ireland / Irlande |
| Ms Fabrizi BIENTINESI | Italy / Italie |
| Mr Giuseppe TREZZA | Italy / Italie |
| Mr Martins OLEKSS | Latvia / Lettonie |
| M. Yves CARL | Luxembourg |
| Ms Anna SCHEMBRI COLEIRO | Malta / Malte |
| Ms Victoria CAMPANA | Monaco |
| Ms Jovana KOVAČEVIĆ | Montenegro / Monténégro |
| Ms Dorthe BAKKE | Norway / Norvège |
| Mr Eric CHRISTENSEN | Norway / Norvège |
| Ms Marija STEFANOVA | North Macedonia / Macédoine du Nord |
| Mr Artur ZANIEWSKI | Poland / Pologne |
| Ms Ana GUAPO | Portugal |
| Ms Alina ILIE | Romania / Roumanie |
| Ms Anna KUCHEREVSKAYA | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Ms Elisaveta GROMOGLASOVA | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Ms Maria NIKULINA | Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie |
| Ms Alja ŠKIBIN | Slovenia / Slovénie |
| Mr Diego GARCIA | Spain / Espagne |
| Ms Teresa GÓMEZ-BERNARDO | Spain / Espagne |
| Ms Petra SJÖSTRÖM | Sweden / Suède |
| Ms Anna Lea GNAEGI | Switzerland / Suisse |
| Mr Kenan ARPACIOĞLU | Turkey / Turquie |
| Mr Oğuzhan TEKİN | Turkey / Turquie |
| Mr Nicholas WRIGHT | United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni |

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| Mr Yaron GAMBURG | Israel / Israël |
| M. Youssef AIT ZEDDIB | Morocco / Maroc |

Secretaries of Political Groups / Secrétaires des groupes politiques

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| Ms Francesca ARBOGAST | SOC |
| Ms Marianna NTALLA | SOC |
| Ms Denise O'HARA | EPP/CD / PPE/DC |
| Ms Natalia ODZIMKOWSKA | EPP/CD / PPE/DC |
| Ms Maria BIGDAY | ALDE / ADLE |
| Ms Anna KOLOTOVA | UEL / GUE |

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

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| Mr Wojciech SAWICKI | Secretary General / Secrétaire Général |
| Ms Marja RUOTANEN | Director of Committees / Directrice des commissions |
| Mr Alfred SIXTO | Head of the Table Office / Chef du Service de la Séance |

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| Mme Valérie CLAMER | Deputy Head of the Table Office / Chef adjointe du Service de la Séance |
| Ms Liri KOPACI-DI MICHELE | Head of the Private Office / Cheffe de Cabinet |
| Ms Micaela CATALANO | Head of the Communication Division / Cheffe de la Division de la communication |
| Ms Kateryna GAYEVSKA | Secretary of the Standing Committee and the Bureau / Secrétaire de la Commission permanente et du Bureau |
| Mme Isild HEURTIN | Head of the Secretariat of the Bureau / Cheffe du Secrétariat du Bureau |
| Mme Martine MEYER | Administrative assistant of the Standing Committee / Assistante administrative de la Commission permanente |
| Mme Rachel MOREL | Principal administrative assistant of the Table Office / Assistante administrative principale du Service de la Séance |
| Mme Annick SCHNEIDER | Assistant to the Secretary General / Assistant to the Bureau Assistante du Secrétaire Général / Assistante du Bureau |
| Mme Aurélie HAUG | Assistant of the Table Office / Assistante du Service de la Séance |

Council of Europe / Conseil de l'Europe

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| Mr Bjorn BERGE | Secretary to the Committee of Ministers / Secrétaire du Comité des Ministres |
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