



AS/Per (2020) PV 02
21 June 2021

Standing Committee

Minutes

of the meeting held by videoconference

on Friday 28 May 2021

from 10:00 to 12:30 and from 14:00 to 16:30

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

Mr Rik Daems, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, **opened** the meeting of the Standing Committee at 10 am.

2. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH MR LEVENTE MAGYAR, DEPUTY MINISTER, PARLIAMENTARY STATE SECRETARY, MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF HUNGARY, HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CM/Inf (2021) 8

CM/Inf (2021) 9

The President welcomed Mr Magyar and assured him of the Assembly's support in achieving the objectives of the Hungarian Presidency.

Mr Magyar said it was unfortunate that the event opening the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers was being held by videoconference because of the epidemic. Hungary had responded effectively to the challenges posed by covid-19 by purchasing sufficient quantities of vaccine doses, whether produced by laboratories in the East or the West. Thanks to the wise decisions taken, Hungary had been able the previous Sunday to give up the requirement to wear masks in outdoor public spaces.

The latest Hungarian statistics had shown clearly that vaccination was the only long-term solution to the covid-19 pandemic. The issue of vaccines was, and would remain, a health issue, not a political dilemma. In such critical periods, the protection of health and human lives had to take precedence over political considerations, especially geopolitical ones. The pandemic had had a serious impact on the mental health of the population and on the economies of Council of Europe member States. In over 70 years in existence, the Council of Europe, as an influential international body, had shown great ability to adapt and great flexibility in relation to developments in Europe, in particular the unprecedented historic changes that had taken place in recent decades. Close co-operation had to be encouraged in the "post-covid-19" context.

On taking over the presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from Germany last week, the Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Szijjártó, had underlined the importance of the Council of Europe as an international organisation that encouraged dialogue between the East and the West. Such dialogue was more necessary than ever given the many experiences and the catastrophic consequences of conflict between forces from the East and the West. For Hungary, the Council of Europe had always been a major international benchmark. It had been the first country in the former Eastern bloc to join the Council of Europe in 1990, shortly after the major political changes at domestic level. The Council of Europe's tools had served as effective guidelines for consolidating democratic stability while supporting the political, legislative and constitutional reforms. That had been an important means of reaffirming national sovereignty after forty years of communism. Hungary strongly supported the work done by the Organisation in the area of the rule of law and human rights, focusing on the protection and promotion of the rights of national minorities, in particular in the Carpathian basin. This tied in clearly with the objectives of Hungarian foreign policy aimed at creating a fruitful dialogue between East and West.

Hungary had now taken on the presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the second time since it joined the Organisation 30 years ago. In line with the Budapest Declaration for a Greater Europe without dividing lines adopted at the end of its first presidency of the Committee of Ministers in 1999, Hungary continued to believe that the Council of Europe was "the pre-eminent political institution capable of bringing together, on an equal footing and in permanent structures, all the countries of Greater Europe".

The Hungarian National Assembly had adopted a detailed political declaration concerning the Hungarian presidency of the Committee of Ministers in 2021, in which it expressed its support for the priorities of the presidency and the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The presidency would be strongly focused on the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe and it was in this spirit that it would continue to consolidate the stability of Europe based on democratic institutions. It would seek to strengthen the political, legal, social and cultural cohesion of the continent and would combat certain divisive factors constituted by intolerance – whether political, cultural or religious – and discrimination against minorities.

The Hungarian Presidency would focus particularly on five themes: promoting the effective protection of national minorities; interreligious dialogue; children's rights, youth participation and Roma inclusion; technological challenges; and environmental challenges. These themes covered areas that were of great importance to the Hungarian government, but they also corresponded to the challenges currently facing Europe. It was vital to step up co-operation with neighbouring countries. In 2021-2022, Hungary would also

hold the presidency of the Visegrád Group. There were synergies between the programme of the presidency of the Visegrád group and the priorities of the presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe: environmental protection was a sound link that could connect the two presidencies.

In reply to **Mr Zingeris**, who wondered what should be done following the Belarusian authorities' forced landing of a commercial flight and the arrest of Roman Protasevich and Sophia Sapega, **Mr Magyar** said that Hungary was usually in favour of dialogue and was clear about the ambiguous effect of the sanctions imposed on some countries. Nevertheless, the recent developments were a source of concern and the Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs had joined in all the international reactions to the incident.

Following **Mr Schwabe**'s comments concerning the presidency's action to support the authority of the Council of Europe convention system, which required ensuring execution of the European Court of Human Rights' judgments and accession to the conventions, including the Istanbul Convention, **Mr Magyar** pointed out that Hungary was a signatory to the Istanbul Convention. Nevertheless, a number of events had led to the current situation, which was preventing its ratification, although that situation could evolve in future.

In reply to **Mr Kox**'s question about taking account of the Assembly's contribution to the preparation of the Council of Europe's Strategic Framework, which had been adopted at the 131st ministerial session on 21 May, **Mr Rusz**, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the Council of Europe, stressed that the Assembly's contribution had been examined and incorporated in the policy decisions adopted on 21 May. At its meeting on 2 June, the Committee of Ministers would consider follow-up to the decision on the Strategic Framework.

Mr Yildiz said he was willing to offer the Turkish parliamentary delegation's support to the Hungarian Presidency in achieving its objectives, in particular those concerning environmental protection. The Black Sea and the Danube were suffering from varying forms of pollution of navigation routes. **Mr Magyar** pointed out that Hungary's policy was focused both on economic growth and job creation and also on environmental protection. Such a policy required a European framework for sustainable development. The Hungarian Presidency wished to support the European Landscape Convention, which would soon be opened for signature by non-member States of the Council of Europe. Landscapes reflected people's decisions and choices, so member States' landscape policies required particular attention. Several events being held by the Hungarian Presidency to promote the right to a healthy environment would provide an ideal opportunity for promoting synergy between the various bodies in the Organisation that worked on the issue. River pollution was part of Hungary's policy agenda because the country was downstream of the basin into which many rivers flowed that started in other countries. Upstream water pollution was therefore a matter of concern for Hungary, which maintained regular dialogue with its neighbours. Any assistance from the Council of Europe would be welcome.

In reply to **Ms Mezentseva**, who wondered about the Hungarian Presidency's action in response to digital threats, including fake news, **Mr Magyar** referred, first of all, to the Council of Europe's work concerning the fight against cybercrime. There was a risk that UN General Assembly Resolution 74/247, which established an ad hoc intergovernmental committee of experts to draw up an international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes, would end up further dividing the international community. A Convention on Cybercrime – the Budapest Convention – existed already. It had been adopted 20 years previously and was still a benchmark that provided robust standards for the 65 States Parties, including 21 non-member States of the Council of Europe. The efforts at international level, which were vital for combating cybercrime, had to focus on implementing and further developing the Budapest Convention, in particular the second additional protocol thereto, which would be finalised in 2021. The Council of Europe was willing to co-operate with the United States and the United Nations to make sure that the future treaty incorporated robust safeguards regarding human rights and the rule of law and that the Internet remained open and free. Fake news and malicious propaganda were a challenge for several states. There was no global action at present and measures were adopted individually by each state. Hungary currently did not have any legislation on the subject and it was a sensitive issue because it was necessary to defend national interests while also not undermining the right to free speech.

The President thanked **Mr Magyar** and assured him of the Assembly's desire to continue close co-operation between the two statutory organs with a view to maintaining fruitful political dialogue. The presidency's priorities, in particular environmental protection and the protection of minorities, were also the focus of the Assembly's attention.

3. EXAMINATION OF NEW CREDENTIALS

Doc. 15297

The Standing Committee **ratified** the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegations of Andorra, Denmark, Germany, San Marino and Ukraine.

4. MODIFICATIONS IN THE COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES

Commissions (2021) 05 and Addendum

The Standing Committee **ratified** the modifications in the composition of Assembly committees in respect of the delegations of Andorra, Denmark, Georgia, Germany, San Marino and Ukraine, and in the composition of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee), in respect of the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group, the Group of the European People's Party and the European Conservative Group and Democratic Alliance, and in the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of the Group of the European People's Party.

(Ms Trisse, Vice-President of the Assembly, took the chair)

5. REQUESTS FOR A CURRENT AFFAIRS DEBATE (UNDER RULE 53 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE)

The President announced the Standing Committee that two requests for current affairs debates had been tabled, on "The forced landing by the Belarusian authorities on 23 May of civilian airliner flight FR4978 and the arrest of Roman Protasevich" and on "The urgent need to relaunch the Middle East peace process and prevent a resurgence of violence". At its meeting the previous day, the Bureau of the Assembly had decided to recommend the holding of the two current affairs debates and appointed Mr John Howell and Mr Piero Fassino respectively as the first speakers.

There being no objections, this was **agreed**.

6. AGENDA

The Standing Committee **adopted** the revised draft agenda (AS/Per (2021) OJ 02 rev4).

7. CURRENT AFFAIRS DEBATE – THE URGENT NEED TO RELAUNCH THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS AND PREVENT A RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE

Mr Fassino opened the debate and stressed the seriousness of the crisis, which had deepened the bitterness, hatred and spirit of revenge between Israelis and Palestinians still further and further compounded the lack of trust between the parties. The 11-day confrontation claimed 261 lives, including 249 Palestinians and 13 Israelis. 2,000 Palestinians and 400 Israelis were injured. Hamas fired 4,600 rockets into Israel and 1,500 buildings in the Gaza Strip were destroyed. A new attempt to expel Palestinian families that coincided with the symbolic dates marking the entry of the Israeli army into Jerusalem on 14 May 1948 and the commemoration of the Nakba, led to a resurgence of violence and hostilities that followed.

The first unfavourable element was the longevity of the peace process and the decisions of the Netanyahu government regarding the extension of settlements in the West Bank, the Judaisation of Jerusalem and the attempt to annex the Jordan Valley, which are objectively contrary to the achievement of a Palestinian state.

On the Palestinian side, the slowness in the application of the peace agreements and the many obstacles had gradually weakened the position of Abu Mazen in favour of increasing support, especially among young people, for Hamas, whose statute provided that its goal was the destruction of the State of Israel and demanded the return of its territory to Islam.

Another element concerns the interests of external actors. It should not be forgotten that Hamas is supported by Iran, Turkey, the Lebanese Hezbollah and Qatar. The Abraham Accords and Israel's links with certain Arab states have strengthened the camp of the radicals who see a danger in this.

Finally, there is a lack of political stability on both sides. In Israel, the fourth elections in two years had failed to produce a stable government majority. And the possible involvement of an Arab party in the government for the first time had further exacerbated the political context. On the Palestinian side, the attempt by Hamas to take control of the West Bank was obvious. That possibility was also being favoured by the disagreements within Fatah, which had led Abu Mazen, whose position had weakened, to postpone the Palestinian elections.

Israeli public opinion had become wary about the establishment of a Palestinian State, as people were afraid that if Hamas won the Palestinian elections, the West Bank would become another Gaza.

Is the principle that had underpinned the Oslo agreements – mutual recognition of the existence in the region of two equally legitimate rights – still valid? Given the complexity of alternative solutions – a single state with some form of autonomy for the West Bank, or two Palestinian micro-states – the "Two peoples, two states" solution must continue to serve as the path of negotiation and anything that undermines this principle must be removed. The gulf of distrust that had widened between the parties in the conflict showed that a powerful international initiative was necessary to persuade the parties to return to the negotiating table and uphold the agreements. Recently, the American administration had announced the opening of a consulate in East Jerusalem and granted funding for the reconstruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza. The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr Borrell, and the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Lavrov, had confirmed their commitment to revive the action of the Middle East Quartet. These declarations needed to be followed by action. The Council of Europe, which had promoted dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians for many years, should also develop any initiatives that would serve the cause of peace.

Mr Hendel, member of the Knesset, said that in 2005, the Government of Israel had taken the difficult decision to evacuate thousands of Israelis from the Gaza Strip to establish peace and enable the Palestinians to achieve independence. Unfortunately, a year later, Hamas had taken control of the Gaza Strip and decided to fire rockets into Israel. Since then, the civilian population in Israel had been attacked time and again and the Government of Israel was faced with a difficult dilemma: should these attacks be contained or stopped? For several weeks, Israel had been suffering rocket attacks against its civilian population. The country did have enough means to put an end to the attacks, but not at the expense of the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population, who were being used as a human shield by Hamas. Hamas had decided to launch rockets against the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Two weeks previously, he had had to seek refuge in an anti-missile shelter and the sirens were continuing to wail throughout Israel. War was a bad solution but could sometimes be the only solution if a country that was peaceful was constantly attacked. It was in the common interest of Israelis and Palestinians to be protected against Hamas. It was in the direct interest of Palestinians to make efforts and commit financial resources to develop civilian infrastructure, in particular hospitals and schools, rather than digging tunnels.

Mr Sabella, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, condemned the lack of a political solution to Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory, which was placing Israelis and Palestinians in a situation of constant confrontation. Israel's policy towards East Jerusalem employed legal measures approved by the Knesset and fostered the settlement of the area and the regeneration of its Jewish identity at the expense of its Palestinian identity. Palestinians, even those who were citizens of Israel, were unable to exercise their rights over their properties from the period before 1948. That was giving rise to a feeling of injustice on the part of the Palestinians towards the Israeli legislative system. The latest escalation in violence would, unfortunately, not be the last because a peaceful settlement to the conflict by political means was hard to imagine. The reason was the policy of Israeli leaders, who had not responded to Abu Mazen's many calls to revive the peace process. Instead, he had been described as a terrorist by Israeli leaders, in particular by Israeli right-wing extremists. The current situation was due to the complicity and silence of European countries, which applied double standards and did not take strong enough action to put an end to the occupation. The escalation was set to continue. There was already talk of hostilities resuming the following week. The involvement of the United States at the earliest opportunity was vital if progress was to be made with negotiations.

Mr Kox thanked the two speakers. It was terrifying to witness the escalations that had cost the lives of several hundred Palestinians in the Gaza Strip following the Israeli bombardments and several Israeli victims of the rockets launched by Hamas. It had taken too long to achieve a ceasefire. It was now the responsibility of the Israelis, Palestinians and the international community to find a lasting solution for peace in the Middle East. First and foremost, that solution required recognition of the origin of the problem, namely the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel. Once that had been recognised, Israel would be safe and protected by the borders, while Palestine would be an independent state. As long as Israel refused to recognise the illegal nature of the occupation, which had also been criticised by the UN, no lasting solution would be possible. Mr Hendel had rightly mentioned the fears of the Israeli population. However, he had not mentioned Israel's illegal occupation of its neighbour. Mr Kox hoped that the Israeli population would put pressure on its government to put an end to the illegal occupation, which was a precondition for a lasting peaceful solution. The Council of Europe could be a platform for negotiation for which the vital prerequisite was recognition of the origin of the problem.

Ms Bayer pointed out that the current conflict was a tragedy for the civilian population of both parties and bore witness to the ineffectiveness of the international policies aimed at establishing peace. It was obviously necessary to help the civilian population in the Gaza Strip by ensuring access to the necessary infrastructure facilities. However, funding should not reach the Gaza Strip without controls to make sure that it was not diverted to fund Hamas. A ceasefire agreement was needed between Israel and Hamas but also between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. If Egypt was willing to act as a mediator, the international community, including Europe,

should support it. Europe should adopt a pragmatic attitude and look at the situation more broadly: the lives of the Arab population also mattered in the case of people in Yemen and in Syria. A critical stance towards Mr Netanyahu should not turn into an anti-Semitic movement.

Ms Stienen said that because the Middle East had always been one of her main concerns, it was terrible to see the escalation in violence. A recent book, "Apeirogon" by Colum Mc Cann, told the story of two fathers, one Palestinian and one Israeli, who were trying to survive after the death of their daughters; both men were members of "The Parents Circle", which advocated reconciliation. These two people and the author should be invited to a forthcoming exchange of views because voices calling for reconciliation were vital. It was also essential for the Assembly to send a delegation to observe the elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council, and both parties would have to be asked to facilitate the organisation and conduct of the election observation exercise.

Mr Cilevičs did not agree with Mr Kox's view that the criticism should be levelled against Israel. Israel had not opposed the UN General Assembly resolution and had established its borders in line with the designated limits. There had been several opportunities between 1949 and 1967 to have a Palestinian State, but Egypt and Jordan had preferred to retain control of the territories concerned. Which side had refused to implement the Oslo agreements by starting an intifada in 2000? After unilaterally denouncing the agreements in 2005, Hamas, which was recognised as a terrorist organisation by the EU, had taken power in the Gaza Strip. Hamas's statutory goal was the destruction of the State of Israel and it did not pursue any goal of reconciliation or the establishment of a Palestinian State. He shared Mr Sabella's pessimistic view. Israel was not beyond reproach, and the current government could be criticised for its policy of discriminating against and marginalising the Arab minority. However, there were similar cases in Europe, too. At the same time, Israel remained a democracy with regular elections where the principle of gender equality was upheld and the media were free. The same could not be said about the Gaza Strip. Israel had demonstrated its willingness to find a peaceful compromise. It had signed a peace treaty with Egypt in 1979 and with Jordan in 1994. In both cases, the existence of a reliable partner had been a precondition for the signing of the agreements. He agreed with Ms Bayr's view that as long as funding provided was used for weapons smuggling instead of meeting the needs of the civilian population in Gaza, it would be impossible to achieve a peace agreement.

Mr Fridez said that the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons had voiced its concern about the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, in particular the death of dozens of children, the prevailing insecurity and the lack of health care and access to water. It seemed that the population was being taken hostage. As Mr Fassino had pointed out, positions were becoming more radical on both sides. The ceasefire agreement was necessary, as was the revival of the peace process. The new Biden administration could play a positive part. Both peoples had the right to exist. While Mr Sabella's pessimism was understandable, there was no choice but to find a peaceful solution to avoid any further escalation.

Mr Yildiz pointed out that Turkey had been the first state to recognise Israel following the resolution that divided Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. It was unfortunate to note that over the subsequent decades, Israel had not complied with the peace agreements, such as the Oslo and Camp David agreements, and was continuing to violate many UN resolutions by advancing on the borders of Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. The Palestinian question had existed long before the establishment of Hamas and the occupation of East Jerusalem. Millions of Palestinians had been expelled and were still living in refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. In 30 years of diplomatic career, he had been posted in the Middle East several times and could confirm Israel's lack of willingness to achieve peace in line with the UN resolutions. The maps showing its forced advance along its borders provided incontrovertible evidence of that. The only solution to the conflict would be the establishment of two states in line with the resolutions. The other members' comments about democracy were surprising: Palestine, in particular the Gaza Strip, was actually a prison guarded by the Israeli army; what democracy could be talked about until the occupation was ended and the two states were established? The latest escalation was the consequence of the policy of Israel, which was continuing the forced evictions of Palestinians, encouraging illegal settlements and displacing Christian and Muslim communities.

Mr Zingeris welcomed the Biden administration's decision to resume financial assistance to Palestinian communities. The administration had also encouraged the establishment of relations between Israel and other Arab nations. To reverse the trend in the peace process, which Mr Sabella had said was hopeless, it was necessary to recognise the right of the two states to exist and not give up the Oslo agreements. Terrorist groups had taken control of the Gaza Strip and had sought to take over Ramallah. The stance to be taken should take account of the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people but also of the Council of Europe's standards, which were in no way the approaches promoted by Hamas. It was therefore necessary to strengthen the position of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah and seek ways of achieving harmony between the local communities.

Mr Heer pointed out that the Council of Europe defended the values of the rule of law and human rights, which were values shared by Israel. On the Palestinian side, there was a terrorist organisation, Hamas, and Mr Mahmoud Abbas, who had been in power for several years. It was vital to strengthen Palestinian civil society so that it had the necessary tools to implement a peace agreement: a stable government, separation of powers, democracy and human rights and gender equality. Without these tools, all existing peace agreements had proven ineffective in the past. In 1947, the Arabs had waged an unsuccessful war. The Oslo agreements had been followed by the intifada, attacks on buses and in discotheques. Now Hamas was firing rockets from schools and hospitals, taking its own population hostage. Inside the Gaza Strip, the funding provided by Europe and the United States was diverted. The basic problem was the lack of democratic institutions on the Palestinian side, as Israel had shown its ability to build peace: peace treaties had been concluded with Egypt and Jordan, Israel's enemies during the 1947 war, and more recently with the United Arab Emirates.

Mr Sabella underlined the importance of Israel having a policy not so much about the question of the Palestinians – as they would decide their own policies – but more about the situation of the Arab communities in Israel, such as the Druze or Bedouins, in order to prevent them from being discriminated against and marginalised. It was also necessary to put an end to the eviction of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem. The approach had to be focused on human rights and Mr Hendel supported this approach in the Knesset.

Mr Hendel was always surprised to hear the representatives of Turkey or Iran talk about promoting human rights and respect for minorities. It was unfortunate and counterproductive always to criticise Israel when the discussion should focus on rebuilding the Gaza Strip, giving greater powers to moderate groups and weakening the influence of Hamas. The European partners could provide assistance here by making sure that funding was not diverted from its initial goals. He was pleased if, as Mr Sabella had said, the Palestinians were willing to introduce democratic standards. Israel encouraged that process.

In conclusion, **Mr Fassino** said that the current Israeli Government and future governments would have to be asked to cease all activity that hindered the peace process, in particular the expansion of the settlements, the Judaisation of East Jerusalem and the annexation of the Jordan Valley. The Palestinians would have to be asked unequivocally to recognise Israel's right to exist. Abu Mazen and the Palestinian Authority had already done so, but Hamas had not. And if Hamas remained a player in the conflict, for instance by winning the elections, there would always be mistrust of the peace process given its statutory goal. The 1993 agreements had been based on the principle of mutual recognition which had weakened considerably since then. The main objective now, including for the international community, was restoring that principle.

8. THIRD PART-SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (21-24 JUNE 2021)

Ms Bayr, Ms Stienen, Mr Kox and Ms Åberg spoke in favour of the inclusion on the agenda of the Assembly's third part-session of the report on "Countering Afrophobia in Europe".

The Standing Committee **took note** of the draft agenda of the third part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly (21-24 June 2021).

9. REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES

The Standing Committee **ratified** the references to committees proposed by the Bureau (see Appendix 1).

10. RULES OF PROCEDURE, IMMUNITIES⁷ AND INSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Mr Kox, General rapporteur of the Assembly on the budget and intergovernmental programme and rapporteur on the "Budgets and priorities of the Council of Europe for the period 2022-2025" (Doc. 15282) and the "Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the biennium 2022-2023" (Doc. 15283) said that the opinion and the resolution set out in the two reports would be included in the official document on the Council of Europe's programme and budget for the next two biennia (2022-2023 and 2024-2025). They would also be submitted to the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Programme, Budget and Administration, which would be meeting the following month with the ambassador of Denmark in the chair. The Committee on Rules of Procedure welcomed the new strategic framework prepared by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, which outlined the priorities and their practical implementation for the next four years. The Committee of Ministers had endorsed the strategic framework at the ministerial session the previous week. The Organisation now had a long-term strategic vision that should be backed up by a four-year budget rather than the two-year system.

The results-based approach proposed by the Secretary General was aimed at matching the planned activities with the objectives set and should enable the Council of Europe to demonstrate its usefulness and effectiveness by making sure that the action taken had a real impact.

In April, the Assembly had adopted its own strategic objectives, taking account of the priorities that it deemed important for the Organisation as a whole. The rapporteur welcomed the fact that the Assembly's vision had been taken into account when the priorities had been discussed by the Committee of Ministers, as the presidency had announced in the morning. That showed a spirit of synergy between the two statutory organs and made it possible to set the priorities that best met the needs of the member States.

Against the background of the current crisis, the Committee on Rules of Procedure acknowledged that it was hard to obtain sufficient funding to carry out ambitious projects. The Assembly should therefore call on member States to stick to their commitments to ensure the financial sustainability and political relevance of the Council of Europe. The zero real growth policy, which had replaced the zero nominal growth policy that had been in place for many years, was a positive step. Nevertheless, a real growth policy was necessary if the member States wanted to invest in democratic security. In return for the increased contributions from the member States, the Council of Europe would be asked to present tangible results. This approach had to go hand in hand with the new people strategy, which had to be finalised in co-operation with staff. The Organisation's Pension Reserve Fund was another issue that would be addressed during the meeting with the Rapporteur Group.

As far as the Assembly's expenditure was concerned, it had been able so far to overcome the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the way it operated by adapting its procedures and working methods, at considerable financial expense. Additional funding was necessary and a corresponding request had been made to the Secretary General. Moreover, consultations, which were moving in the right direction, were being held on behalf of the chairs of the political groups with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly with a view to ensuring the groups' financial viability.

On behalf of the ALDE Group, **Ms Stienen** stressed the importance of sustainable funding for the political groups.

Ms Schou, Chair of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, thanked Mr Kox, whose experience was a valuable asset at a time when the Council of Europe, under the impetus of its Secretary General, had to agree its four-year framework for action against the background of carefully weighed up strategic choices. The rapporteur's role was not confined to presenting the two reports. He continued to be the Assembly's spokesperson at the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Programme, Budget and Administration and had the politically sensitive task of reminding the member States, through the Committee of Ministers, of the need resolutely to step up their active commitment to the Organisation by guaranteeing its long-term funding. The Assembly's priorities mainly concerned major investments that were vital to the modernisation of its working environment: renovation of the Chamber and the further development of digital tools. The Assembly's other priorities involved ambitious projects concerning issues that would be the Organisation's key future activities, for which funding from the member States would be required. The members of the Standing Committee and, in particular, the heads of the national delegations, were asked to encourage their governments to support the Organisation financially and actively promote its activities.

Mr Kox reiterated the importance of ensuring adequate funding for the political groups, which were the backbone of the Assembly.

The draft opinion "Budgets and priorities of the Council of Europe for the period 2022-2025" was **adopted** unanimously, with 20 votes in favour and one abstention [Opinion 298 (2021)].

The draft resolution "Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the biennium 2022-2023" was **adopted** unanimously, with 20 votes in favour and one abstention [Resolution 2377 (2021)].

11. CURRENT AFFAIRS DEBATE – THE FORCED LANDING BY THE BELARUSIAN AUTHORITIES ON 23 MAY OF CIVILIAN AIRLINER FLIGHT FR4978 AND THE ARREST OF ROMAN PROTASEVICH

Mr Howell opened the debate and said that on 23 May a Ryanair flight from Athens to Vilnius had been compelled to land in Minsk after being forced to divert to Minsk by a MiG fighter plane. There had been over a hundred passengers on board, including the leading independent Belarusian journalist, Roman Protasevich. The Belarusian authorities claimed that the incident was linked to an alleged bomb threat, but there was nothing to support this claim and it had been proven that the justification had only been put forward after the diversion of the plane. The Belarusian authorities had then taken advantage of the emergency landing to arrest Mr Protasevich and his girlfriend. He had been detained on the basis of false accusations, in particular concerning involvement in riots, causing mass unrest and incitement to hatred and discord. It was vital to call for his immediate release and that of all other political prisoners in Belarus.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) was investigating this act of piracy and the shocking violation of the law and international practices that governed international civil aviation under the Chicago Convention. There was a common interest in ensuring that civilian aircraft could fly safely and without being harassed, in particular between member countries of NATO or the Council of Europe. The regime in Minsk had to be held to account for what seemed to be a serious violation of international law. A charge of international terrorism should be considered against President Lukashenko.

Most Council of Europe member States had called in Belarus's ambassadors to condemn these acts. Although Belarus was not a member of the Council of Europe, every effort had to be made to ensure that this act of state terrorism was condemned, either by diplomatic means or by agreeing new sanctions against those responsible for this scandalous act. To guarantee the safety of air passengers, a number of countries had stopped flying through Belarusian airspace and, in the United Kingdom, the licence of the Belarusian airline, Belavia, had been suspended.

It was necessary to keep on supporting political prisoners, civil society and media freedom in Belarus, while also upholding compliance with international law and maintaining the safety of international civil aviation. This was the first instance of air piracy that had been seen in Europe for many years. The action was a serious violation of the human rights not only of Roman Protasevich, but also of all the passengers and crew members of that commercial flight. It was a direct threat not only for dissidents against regimes like Belarus but also for all people who took commercial flights and ran the risk of flying over such a country.

In view of this attack which concerned everybody in Europe, it was necessary to suspend both the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project and also the Yamal gas pipeline that passed through Belarus.

It seemed that the Lukashenko regime had used a particularly calculating and cynical ploy to force a civilian airliner to land under the threat of a MiG fighter and on the pretext of a bomb threat. It was clear that Mr Lukashenko now had to be recognised as an international threat and a danger not only for his own people but also for the citizens of other countries. The Council of Europe had already indicated that the presidential elections had not been free and fair. The members of the pro-democracy movement in Belarus needed solidarity and support in their struggle for the right to determine their own future through free and fair elections.

The United Kingdom delegation had issued a press release on the subject on Monday. The statement had been supported unanimously by 36 members of the delegation from across the different parties, indicating how strong the indignation had been.

Ms Andrikiénė considered it an act of state terrorism perpetrated by Belarus against a civil aircraft. The operation had been planned by Belarusian special forces and, according to many experts, the Russian Federation. As a result, the Belarusian journalist and opposition activist, Roman Protasevich, had been arrested at Minsk airport together with his girlfriend, Sofia Sapega, a student at the European Humanities University in Vilnius, the Belarusian university in exile. The operation had put at risk the safety and lives of citizens of several Council of Europe member States and other countries, as well as civil aviation, and the act showed the threat posed by the Lukashenko regime to all passengers inside and outside Europe and confirmed that the regime was prepared to suppress the opposition by any means. The Assembly had to respond without delay to the threat to international civil aviation posed by the Belarusian regime. Moreover, Council of Europe member States should prohibit their carriers from flying through Belarusian airspace, and targeted sanctions should be applied to entities linked to the regime as well as to individuals who had contributed to the hijacking of the Ryanair plane. In a resolution adopted a few days earlier, the Lithuanian Parliament had called on both EU member States and all democracies to end their co-operation programmes and technical and financial assistance instruments with Belarus. It had also called on international partners to take joint action within the United Nations, NATO, the G7 and other international organisations, as well as other forums, to assess the threats posed by the Belarusian regime and bring about the release of Roman Protasevich, Sofia Sapega and other people held and sentenced by the Lukashenko regime for political reasons.

Mr Becht thought the hijacking of the plane by the Belarusian authorities raised two issues. Firstly, the question of the fate that befell political opponents in Europe in the 21st century for doing no more than opposing the government in power. The second concerned the hijacking of a civil aircraft with citizens of several states on board for the sole purpose of seizing a political opponent. That was proved by the flight plans, because in response to a bomb threat the aircraft should have landed at the nearest airport, namely Vilnius. If a US civil aircraft had been forced to land by a fighter jet belonging to a Latin American regime with the sole aim of arresting an opponent of the regime, the military base from which the jet had taken off would probably have been destroyed within 24 hours. The absence of a military response from the European Union should not be seen as a sign of weakness. Russian colleagues should not condone behaviour that could be described as "gangster-like". The Assembly's reaction should be commensurate with the actions it condemned.

For **Mr Kox**, the forced landing of a commercial flight followed by the arrest of two passengers, Roman Protasevich and Sofia Sapega, was a matter of some concern. The act had triggered a chain of reactions, including the suspension of flights through Belarusian airspace by several airlines and the suspension of commercial air traffic between the EU and Moscow following the Russian authorities' refusal to approve the modification of flight plans to avoid Belarusian airspace. The result was further worsening of the crisis in Europe. The good news was that the ICAO had already launched an investigation into whether the landing had been due to a real bomb threat or with the aim of arresting two people. Under the Chicago Convention, each state had complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory, but the lives of those on board an aircraft should not be put at risk. This was not the case as far as the two individuals currently in detention were concerned. Following the example of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, it was necessary to call for the release of these two individuals pending the outcome of the investigation.

Ms Åberg thought the forced landing of a commercial flight with the aim of arresting Roman Protasevich was an unprecedented act of terrorism that had to be sanctioned. However, it was clear that the sanctions introduced earlier against Mr Lukashenko and other political figures had had no effect, which also seemed likely with the new sanctions aimed at banning Belavia flights from European skies: Russia's support for the Lukashenko regime, which was involved in kidnapping and torture, rendered those sanctions ineffective. Why was Russia still a member of the Council of Europe when it did not share its values?

Mr Merezhko pointed out that the forced landing was not only a violation of the Chicago Convention but also of the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, which declared it a criminal offence to communicate information that the person knew to be false and thereby endangered the safety of an aircraft in flight. It was true that Belarus was not a member of the Council of Europe, but human rights violations there constituted a danger for the whole of Europe. It should not be forgotten that Belarus and the Russian Federation formed a union that gave the latter significant influence over policies and events in the former, so Russia's role in that act of state terrorism should also be investigated

[Ms Mezentseva was unable to speak owing to a faulty connection].

Mr Fridez briefly pointed out that, in contrast to what Mr Lukashenko had said, the Swiss authorities had issued no notice of a bomb threat.

Mr Zingeris called for a statement on the subject, or even for the matter to be discussed again during the June part-session and referred to the relevant committee for report. Not only had the authorities concerned failed to acknowledge the violation of international law but the Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mr Oleg Gaidukevich, had gone so far as to state that members of the opposition, who, as Mr Zingeris had pointed out, were currently in exile in Vilnius and Warsaw, would be driven in car boots directly to the KGB prison for interrogation, thus admitting that abductions could take place on the soil of other states.

12. CULTURE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND MEDIA

Ms Hopsu, rapporteur of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media on "Strengthening the role of young people in the prevention and resolution of conflicts" (Doc. 15294), regretted that, despite several conflicts on European soil, young people's potential and contribution to effective peacebuilding had received little attention or support. The report encouraged member States to be bold in their conflict resolution policies and aim to ensure an inclusive approach in peace negotiations. The young people to whom the report referred were not children but adults, with voting rights and tax obligations, but their access to the discussion forums where decisions were taken was quite limited, often for structural, cultural or political reasons. Only 3.9% of national parliamentarians in Europe were under 30. All too often, young people were directed towards youth organisations, where they could discuss youth issues among themselves without having any real impact or opportunities for meaningful participation in political processes.

However, many of the decisions now taken by policymakers, some with far-reaching consequences, would have a considerable impact on their future. That was particularly true of conflict prevention and resolution. Young people would have to live with the consequences of conflict and handle long-term rebuilding of trust and reconciliation. Many active and protracted conflicts in Europe had become part of young people's daily lives, a sad reality that could become an obstacle to conflict resolution. Conflict prevention should be a process involving formal and informal education, and numerous studies had shown that teaching young children empathy, mediation and reconciliation, combined with human rights education and media literacy, would lead to the less violent resolution of any type of conflict. The inclusion of teaching of these skills in school curricula would help young people to be better prepared for difficult situations in the future. The draft resolution encouraged member States to bear that in mind when developing military and police training programmes.

The report referred to the 2015 UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, which identified five pillars of action: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships and disengagement and reintegration. It had been immediately adopted in various youth forums at both the global and European levels but, six years on, little progress had been made and young peacebuilders found that their space for action was shrinking rather than expanding. Finland was currently the only European country to have introduced an action plan for Resolution 2250, and member States were encouraged to increase their efforts in that area.

The report also called for structures to be put in place to make use of the full potential of young people, who were much more than noisy protesters on the streets or proficient social media users. They were full members of European societies who had been left out, sometimes for lack of space but more often because they came up against closed doors.

Instead of focusing on supporting a limited number of young leaders, all young people in conflict areas should be targeted. For them, peace and security were not just about the absence of violence or the end of conflict but included positive visions of free, democratic and inclusive societies, so it was essential to let young people participate in all political processes and decisions that affected them in some way.

National parliaments also had an important role to play in implementing the youth, peace and security agenda and in supporting means of youth participation. That could include, but was not limited to, increasing the number of young people on electoral rolls, considering lowering the age limits for voting and standing in elections and introducing quotas where that was deemed necessary.

In order for its recommendations to be credible, the Assembly had to be able to critically assess its own working methods, so the Committee had decided to table a motion to strengthen the role of young people in the Assembly's work through the establishment of a Youth Partnership status.

Mr Howell, first Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, presented the committee's opinion (Doc. 15296) in the absence of Ms Erotokritou, who had election commitments. The role of young people in conflict prevention and resolution was a very complex and difficult subject that Ms Hopsu had treated with the consideration it deserved. The aim of the amendments proposed by the committee was to address three key concerns. Firstly, no peacemaking effort could be effective while the root cause of conflicts persisted, namely gross violations of international law, human rights and the rule of law. Secondly, respect for human dignity, openness to discussion and the ability to engage in dialogue should be instilled in all forms of education. The teaching of history was also very important. Lastly, not only young people but also children – especially older ones – should be involved in peacebuilding processes. Children already affected by a conflict should as far as possible be made to feel they had a role to play, and that should be done in a manner appropriate to their level of maturity while fully respecting their own best interests.

Mr Merezko supported the idea of involving young people in conflict prevention and drew attention to the need to protect them from war propaganda. In particular, the school curriculum in the Russian Federation and the occupied Ukrainian territories was "militarised".

Mr Becht, Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, said that young people paid a heavy price for conflicts because it was their future that was at risk, so it seemed right to involve them in conflict prevention and resolution. He came from Alsace, a region affected by three wars in the last 150 years, and could testify by example that peace was only possible if young people were educated with a desire for peace and not for revenge. Adults should not be an obstacle to young people's desire for peace.

Ms Hopsu also thought that policymakers had something to gain by adopting the optimistic view of young people who believed that peace was possible. It was important to protect young people from misleading messages. That subject has been raised in the report but might merit further discussion in a separate report.

The Standing Committee **considered** the amendments to the draft resolution.

Amendment No. 7, presented by **Ms Mezentseva**, was **adopted** by 10 votes in favour and one against with 5 abstentions.

Amendment No. 1, presented by **Mr Howell** on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, was **adopted** unanimously by 19 votes in favour.

Amendment No. 6, presented by **Mr Becht**, was **adopted** unanimously by 14 votes in favour and 3 abstentions. Amendment No 2 consequently **fell**.

Amendment No. 3, presented by **Mr Howell** on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, was **adopted** unanimously by 14 votes in favour with one abstention.

Amendment No. 4, presented by **Mr Howell** on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, was **adopted** by 14 votes in favour and one against.

Amendment No. 9, presented by **Ms Mezentseva**, to which nobody objected, was **adopted** by 14 votes in favour and one against.

Amendment No. 5, presented by **Mr Howell** on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, was **adopted** unanimously by 14 votes in favour with one abstention.

Amendment No. 8, presented by **Ms Mezentseva**, was **adopted** by 14 votes in favour and one against, with three abstentions.

The draft resolution was **adopted** by 15 votes in favour and one against, with one abstention [Resolution 2378 (2021)].

13. MIGRATION, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

Mr Fridez, Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, presented the report on “Role of parliaments in implementing the United Nations global compacts for migrants and refugees” (Doc. 15229), in the absence of the rapporteur, Mr Tornaritis, owing to his election commitments. The report called for support for two UN global compacts, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact for Refugees. Those instruments should help structure international co-operation in the coming years to provide refugees and migrants with the essential human rights protection to which they were entitled under existing international treaties. In addition, the two compacts provided for international co-operation platforms to monitor their implementation, bringing together key players. Lastly, they established a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing between governments, international organisations and other stakeholders, for the benefit of refugees and host communities. Sustainable solutions could only be achieved through collective action, empowerment and the meaningful participation of refugees and migrants.

A precondition for the successful implementation of those two global compacts was the need to address the root causes of displacement, build stronger institutions and promote good governance in the countries of origin of forced displacement, call for measures to end hate speech in public discourse and promote international solidarity on migration and asylum issues, including solidarity with frontline countries.

Specific measures could help all Council of Europe member States to have a positive impact on the implementation of the two compacts through the different parliamentary functions: representation, legislation, oversight and international parliamentary diplomacy. Through the representative function, there was a need to raise awareness of the compacts and deal constructively with the issues and concerns raised by those who had spoken out against them. More needed to be done to combat hate speech against migrants and refugees in political discourse. Through the legislative function, parliaments could monitor the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals commitment to “leave no one behind”, especially the most vulnerable, and create the necessary legal frameworks to enable the implementation of best practices for the integration of refugees and migrants through education, employment and social cohesion initiatives. Through the oversight function, parliaments could participate in the implementation and monitoring of both compacts, based on a multi-stakeholder partnership approach as a key tool for burden- and responsibility-sharing. Governments could also be asked to include the needs of refugees and forcibly displaced persons in multi-annual national and regional development planning and to regularly monitor the implementation of relevant laws and budget allocations. Lastly, international parliamentary diplomacy could be used to promote adherence to the two compacts and participation in their respective monitoring mechanisms, by strengthening co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organisation for Migration. There was also a need to strengthen development co-operation to help the countries of origin and transit of refugees and migrants to build state systems that met the needs of those groups and protected those forced to flee.

All those measures would help to prevent future migration crises and enable European societies to develop the mechanisms necessary for managing migration in an effective, safe and orderly manner, while at the same time taking account of the needs of host communities. The compacts were appropriate instruments for helping the thousands of people forced to leave their homes in response to the hardships they faced, while respecting human rights and complying with humanitarian law.

Lord Alexander Dundee, rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons on “Humanitarian action for refugees and migrants in countries in North Africa and the Middle East” (Doc. 15284), noted that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that 80 million people had been forced to leave their homes as a result of conflicts, violence, human rights violations, persecution and natural disasters. Those people, and the countries that hosted them, needed help. As the cases of displaced persons in Yemen and Mozambique showed, the situation of displaced persons could change rapidly and therefore required constant monitoring to ensure timely assistance. In 2016, the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons had visited Jordan, which had taken in 650 000 Syrian refugees. It was difficult for a country to cope with such an influx of migrants without support. North African and Middle Eastern countries were transit countries for many migrants wishing to reach Europe. Those migrants were often subject to violence and abuse, as were migrants in Libya. Although the number of deaths at sea was falling, the number of boat people continued to grow. European countries needed to adopt policies at national and European level to assist countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

If humanitarian assistance were to be effective, it needed to focus on several aspects. The necessary resources had to be allocated to those already providing support on the ground with regard to housing and care. 40% of people who had crossed the Mediterranean in the past 12 months were Algerian, Moroccan or Tunisian citizens. Some European countries, such as Spain and Morocco, had readmission agreements concerning irregular migrants. The policy of returning irregular migrants was hampered by the economic difficulties of the partner countries, hence the need for targeted assistance. For example, the International Organisation for Migration was developing assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes.

Migrant workers in North African and Middle Eastern countries were another area of concern. The International Labour Organisation had introduced standards in that area but humanitarian assistance was needed to enable the countries concerned to implement them. Many of those people were currently in a precarious situation or had simply lost their jobs as a result of the epidemic and were therefore falling prey to traffickers.

The amendment tabled by Mr Cottier and other colleagues calling on parliaments to increase the unearmarked portion of national contributions to humanitarian organisations was welcome because displacement was often the consequence of emergencies that were hard to foresee, such as the outbreak of a conflict or a natural disaster. Debates on humanitarian assistance in national parliaments and decisions on funds to be allocated to it could usefully be guided by the Assembly’s findings. The Council of Europe’s means of interaction with the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, such as the participation of some of those states in the partial agreements and the Partner for Democracy status that the parliaments of certain countries had with the Assembly, were effective and played an important role in assessing and debating the need for humanitarian assistance.

Ms De Temmerman, rapporteur for opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development (Doc. 15285), agreed with Lord Alexander Dundee. She wondered what action should be taken to find long-term, effective and efficient responses to the situation of migrants in the Southern Neighbourhood, as called for in the appeal by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. People were dying at sea because of the lack of a response to that humanitarian disaster. Humanitarian action was a divisive issue and the blocking of the reform of the European Union’s migration policy was regrettable. Safe, legal routes for migrants, including children, were essential. Repressive and inhumane responses did not make for lasting solutions. Commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals included migrants’ access to the right to work and assistance for orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility. The Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was already the basis for co-operation projects in Morocco and Tunisia. The amendments tabled by the committee emphasised the need to respect socioeconomic rights and to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable. Amendments 1, 2 and 3 referred to major Council of Europe conventions focusing on the protection of children and women, who were the most vulnerable groups among migrants and asylum-seekers. Amendment 4 highlighted how misplaced the term “voluntary return” was. Amendment 5 supported the COVAX scheme. The aim of Amendment 6 was to call on the public authorities to address the situation of children held in Syria. Lastly, Amendment 7 pointed out how the arms trade had destabilised the institutions of states in the region.

Mr Fridez, Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, referred to the recent report by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights entitled “A distress call for human rights – The widening gap in migrant protection in the Mediterranean”, which pointed to the lack of resources and the lack of solidarity in Europe towards migrants, who were subjected to a threefold punishment. Firstly, they were forced to leave their native environment for economic reasons or to escape violence. During the journey, they were often victims of rape and abuse, while having arrived in Europe they were given a poor reception, refused entry or stayed in camps for long periods while awaiting a decision. Lord Dundee’s report drew attention to those facts and called on the Assembly to raise the flag of solidarity and respect for human

rights. Mr Tornaritis' report dealt with the legal aspects of the same problem which, unfortunately, had not yet been resolved in Europe and required joint action and more solidarity with the frontline countries.

Lord Alexander Dundee agreed with Mr Fridez on the need for solidarity. Even if the population of the migrant camps was currently decreasing, a new influx was always possible. Migrants were now arriving on the Aegean islands and it was hoped that the period of transition, rehousing or return would not be too long.

The draft resolution on "Role of parliaments in implementing the United Nations global compacts for migrants and refugees" was **adopted** by 14 votes in favour with 2 abstentions [Resolution 2379 (2021)].

The Standing Committee **considered** the amendments to the draft resolution on "Humanitarian action for refugees and migrants in countries in North Africa and the Middle East".

Amendments Nos. 1, 3, 5 and 8, adopted unanimously by the committee referred to for report, were declared **adopted** under Rule 34.11 of the Rules of Procedure.

Amendment No. 2, presented by **Ms De Temmerman** on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, was **adopted** unanimously by 14 votes in favour with 3 abstentions.

Amendment No. 4, presented by **Ms De Temmerman** on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, to which **Mr Fridez** objected, was **rejected** by 10 votes against and 2 votes in favour with 3 abstentions.

Amendment No. 6, presented by **Ms De Temmerman** on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, was **adopted** unanimously by 14 votes in favour with one abstention.

Amendment No. 7, presented by **Ms De Temmerman** on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, to which **Mr Fridez** objected, was **rejected** by 10 votes against and 2 votes in favour with 3 abstentions.

Amendment No. 9, presented by **Ms Stienen**, was adopted unanimously by 12 votes in favour with 4 abstentions.

The draft resolution on "Humanitarian action for refugees and migrants in countries in North Africa and the Middle East" was **adopted** unanimously by 15 votes in favour with one abstention [Resolution 2380 (2021)].

The draft recommendation on "Humanitarian action for refugees and migrants in countries in North Africa and the Middle East" was **adopted** unanimously by 15 votes in favour [Recommendation 2203 (2021)].

14. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

15. NEXT MEETING

The President announced that the following meeting of the Standing Committee would be held on 26 November 2021, the place and format to be confirmed.

APPENDIX 1

Decisions on documents tabled for references to committees

A. REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES

1. **Public health emergency: the need for a holistic approach to multilateralism and health care**
Motion for a resolution tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development
[Doc. 15245](#)

Reference to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for report*

2. **For a fairer future: building on the lessons of the Covid-19 pandemic to promote equality in Europe**
Motion for a resolution tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination
[Doc. 15246](#)

Reference to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *to be taken into account in the framework of the report on “Overcoming the socio-economic crisis sparked by the Covid-19 pandemic”* and to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for opinion*

3. **The need to address discrimination on the basis of political opinion**
Motion for a resolution tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination
[Doc. 15247](#)

No further action

4. **Sexual and reproductive health and rights**
Motion for a resolution tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination
[Doc. 15248](#)

Reference to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for report*

5. **Forced migration due to political repressions**
Motion for a resolution tabled by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
[Doc. 15249](#)

Reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *to be taken into account in the framework of the report on “Call for an inclusive national political process in Belarus”*

6. **Covid-19 impact on global tourism and aviation industries and their safe revival**
Motion for a recommendation tabled by Ms Mariam Kvrivishvili and other members of the Assembly
[Doc. 15254](#)

Reference to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *to be taken into account in the framework of the report on “Overcoming the socio-economic crisis sparked by the Covid-19 pandemic”*

7. **Establishment of a “youth partner” status with the Parliamentary Assembly**
Motion for a resolution tabled by the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media
[Doc. 15262](#)

Reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report* and to the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media *for opinion*

8. **Preventing addictive behaviours in children**
Motion for a recommendation tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development
[Doc. 15269](#)

Reference to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for report*

- 9. The deployment of mercenaries in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict**
Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Birgir Thórarinnsson and other members of the Assembly
Doc. 15271

Transmission to Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) *for information*

- 10. The impact of the Covid-19 restrictions for civil society space and activities**
Motion for a resolution tabled by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
Doc. 15273

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

- 11. Precarious status of cross-border and seasonal workers in Europe**
Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Viorel-Riceard Badea and other members of the Assembly
Doc. 15274

Reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons *for report* and to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for opinion*

B. REQUEST BY A COMMITTEE (Rule 26.4 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure)

- 1. Strengthening parliamentary dialogue with Algeria**
Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Jacques Maire and other members of the Assembly
Doc. 14476
Reference 4363 of 15 March 2018 – validity: 15 December 2021

Lapse of the reference

APPENDIX 2**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)
M. Jacques MAIRE Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) /
Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe (ADLE)
Mr Ian LIDDELL-GRAINGER European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance
(EC/DA) / Groupe des Conservateurs européens et Alliance
démocratique (CE/AD)
Mr Tiny KOX Group of the Unified European Left (UEL) /
Groupe pour la gauche unitaire européenne (GUE)

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

M. José BADIA Monaco
Mr Kimmo KILJUNEN Finland / Finlande
Mr Emanuel MALLIA Malta / Malte
Ms Theodora BAKOYANNIS Greece / Grèce
Mr John HOWELL United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni
Ms Laima Liucija ANDRIKIENĖ Lithuania / Lituanie
Mme Nicole TRISSE France
Mr Zsolt NÉMETH Hungary / Hongrie
Mr Ahmet YILDIZ Turkey / Turquie
Mr Andreas NICK Germany / Allemagne
M. Petr TOLSTOI Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie
Mr Arkadiusz MULARCZYK Poland / Pologne
Mr Oleksandr MERZHKO Ukraine
Mr Lars Aslan RASMUSSEN Denmark / Danemark

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

Mr Ervin BUSHATI Albania / Albanie
Ms Mònica BONELL Andorra / Andorre
Mr Ruben RUBINYAN Armenia / Arménie
Mr Reinhold LOPATKA Austria / Autriche
Mr Samad SEYIDOV Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan
Ms Alma ČOLO Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosnie-Herzégovine
Ms Marijna BALIĆ Croatia / Croatie
Mr Lars Aslan RASMUSSEN Denmark / Danemark
Ms Maria JUFEREVA-SKURATOVSKI Estonia / Estonie
Mr Kimmo KILJUNEN Finland / Finlande
Mme Nicole TRISSE France
Mr Andreas NICK Germany / Allemagne
Ms Dora BAKOYANNIS Greece / Grèce
Mr Zsolt NÉMETH Hungary / Hongrie
Mr Ólafur Þór GUNNARSSON Iceland / Islande
Ms Fiona O'LOUGHLIN Ireland / Irlande
Ms Inese LIBINA-EGNERE Latvia / Lettonie
Mr Emanuelis ZINGERIS Lithuania / Lituanie
Mr Emanuel MALLIA Malta / Malte

M. José BADIA	Monaco
Ms Maja VUKIĆEVIĆ	Montenegro / Monténégro
Ms Petra STIENEN	Netherlands / Pays-Bas
Ms Ingjerd SCHOU	Norway / Norvège
Mr Arkadiusz MULARCZYK	Poland / Pologne
M. Pedro BACELAR DE VASCONCELOS	Portugal
Mr Ionuț-Marian STROE	Romania / Roumanie
M. Petr TOLSTOI	Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie
Ms Anna ZÁBORSKÁ	Slovak Republic / République slovaque
Mr Antonio GUTIÉRREZ	Spain / Espagne
Ms Boriána ÅBERG	Sweden / Suède
M. Pierre-Alain FRIDEZ	Switzerland / Suisse
Mr Ahmet YILDIZ	Turkey / Turquie
Ms Mariia MEZENTSEVA	Ukraine
Mr John HOWELL	United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni

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

Mr Zsolt NÉMETH	Hungary / Hongrie
Mr Andreas NICK	Germany / Allemagne
Ms Fiona O'LOUGHLIN	Ireland / Irlande

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

Mr Zsolt NÉMETH	Hungary / Hongrie
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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**

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**

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**

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

Ms Petra BAYR	Austria / Autriche
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**Chairperson of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of
the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) /
Président de la Commission pour le respect des obligations et engagements des États membres du
Conseil de l'Europe (commission de suivi)**

Mr Michael Aastrup JENSEN	Denmark / Danemark
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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**

Ms Ingjerd SCHOU	Norway / Norvège
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Rapporteurs of the Committees / Rapporteur-e-s des commissions

Ms Inka HOPUSU Finland / Finlande
 Mme Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN France
 Lord Alexander DUNDEE United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni

Other members of the Parliamentary Assembly / Autres membres de l'Assemblée parlementaire

Mr Hovhannes IGITYAN Armenia / Arménie
 Ms Anne-Mari VIROLAINEN Finland / Finlande
 Mr Irakli CHIKOVANI Georgia / Géorgie
 Mr Piero FASSINO Italy / Italie
 Mr Alfred HEER Switzerland / Suisse

Other delegations / Autres delegations

Mr Bernard SABELLA Palestine

Invited personality / Personnalité invitée

Mr Levente MAGYAR Deputy Minister, Parliamentary State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe / ministre adjoint, secrétaire d'État chargé des relations avec le Parlement, ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce de la Hongrie, Présidence hongroise du Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe

Other participants / Autres participants

Mr Yoaz HENDEL Member of the Knesset / Membre de la Knesset

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

Ms Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU Secretary General / Secrétaire Générale
 Ms Marja RUOTANEN Director of Committees / Directrice des commissions
 Mr Alfred SIXTO Head of the Table Office / Chef du Service de la Séance
 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 du Cabinet
 Ms Kateryna GAYEVSKA Secretary of the Standing Committee / Deputy Head of the Office of the Secretary General / Secrétaire de la Commission permanente / Cheffe adjointe du Bureau de la Secrétaire Générale
 Mr Artemy KARPENKO Head of the Office of the Secretary General / Chef du Bureau de la Secrétaire Générale
 Mme Isild HEURTIN Head of the Secretariat of the Bureau of the Assembly / Advisor to the Director of Committees / Cheffe du Secrétariat du Bureau de l'Assemblée / Conseillère de la Directrice des commissions
 Mme Rachel MOREL Principal administrative assistant of the Table Office / Assistante administrative principale du Service de la Séance
 Mme Annick SCHNEIDER Principal administrative assistant, Central Division / Assistante administrative principale, Division centrale
 Mme Martine MEYER Administrative assistant of the Standing Committee / Assistante administrative de la Commission permanente
 Mme Noémie SCHOEN Assistant to the Secretary General / Assistante de la Secrétaire Générale
 Mme Aurélie HAUG Assistant of the Table Office / Assistante du Service de la Séance

Private Office of the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General / Cabinet de la Secrétaire Générale et du Secrétaire Général adjoint du Conseil de l'Europe

Mr Gianluca ESPOSITO Deputy Director, Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General / Directeur adjoint, Cabinet de la Secrétaire Générale et du Secrétaire Général adjoint

Council of Europe / Conseil de l'Europe

Ms Leyla KAYACIK Secretary to the Committee of Ministers ad interim / Secrétaire du Comité des Ministres ad interim