



TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Secretariat of the Assembly

Synopsis

7 September 2006

The Bureau of the Assembly, meeting on Wednesday 6 September 2006 in Paris first with Mr René van der Linden, President of the Assembly, and then Mr Schreiner, Vice-President of the Assembly, in the Chair, as regards:

- **4th Part of the 2006 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 2-6 October 2006):**

- i. adopted the updated draft agenda;
- ii. following a request by the Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee, allowed a derogation from Rule 33.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, thereby authorising that Committee to adopt its report on the situation in the Balkans as late as the first day of the part-session;
- iii. agreed, subject to receiving formal requests, to propose to the Assembly to hold debates under urgent procedure on the “Situation in Lebanon” and on the “Mass arrivals of migrants in Europe”;
- iv. drew up the draft order of business and reiterated its firm position that social events organised within the framework of part-sessions should start only after the end of sittings;
- v. Joint Committee (Thursday 5 October at 6.30 pm): agreed to include the following items in the draft agenda:
 - a. Situation in the Balkans
 - b. Third Council of Europe Summit: Implementation of decisions
 - c. Institutional balance at the Council of Europe
 - d. Budgetary prospects for the Council of Europe for 2007
- vi. agreed to make public – via the Assembly website – the names of members of the Assembly who participate in votes as from the October part-session and asked the Secretary General of the Assembly to inform the members of the Assembly accordingly;

- ***Relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union:***

i. Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union as transmitted by the Russian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers:

a. took note of the amendments submitted by the President of the Assembly to the draft Memorandum of Understanding, reflecting the position of the Assembly as expressed in Recommendation 1743 (2006);

b. noted that the Assembly would be represented at the next meeting of the Ministers' Deputies devoted to this matter (CM-Suivi3), to be held in Strasbourg on 19 September 2006;

ii. Draft agreement on the strengthening of cooperation between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament:

a. noted that the President had transmitted the draft agreement to the President of the European Parliament for comment and joint approval;

b. noted that a meeting between the Presidential Committee of the Assembly and the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament would take place on 9 November 2006 in Brussels;

- ***Forum for the future of democracy (Moscow, 18-19 October 2006):*** took note of the state of preparation of the Forum, including the fact that the Ministers' Deputies had welcomed the Assembly's proposal that Mr Elo serve as General Rapporteur for the Forum;

- ***Report on the state of Human Rights and Democracy in Europe:***

i. approved the proposals contained in a memorandum prepared by the Secretariat on the instruction of the President of the Assembly ;

ii. decided to hold a debate on this issue at the April part-session 2007 following an assessment in January 2007 of the state of progress in the preparation of the report;

iii. asked the Monitoring Committee and the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights to implement the proposals contained in the above-mentioned memorandum with a view to preparing their respective contributions;

iv. asked Assembly committees to consider what contribution they might possibly make to the preparation of this report;

- ***References and transmissions to committees:*** see appendix 1;

- ***Observation of elections:***

i. **Presidential and parliamentary elections in Mexico (2 July 2006):**

a. approved the report of the ad hoc Committee that had observed these elections;

b. asked Mr De Puig, (Spain, SOC) Rapporteur, to continue to follow post-electoral developments in the country;

ii. **Parliamentary elections in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (5 July 2006):** approved the report of the ad hoc Committee that had observed these elections;

iii. **Parliamentary elections in the Republic of Montenegro (10 September 2006):**

- a. took note of a letter from Mr Krivokapic, President of the Parliament of the Republic of Montenegro, inviting the Assembly to observe the forthcoming parliamentary elections in his country;
- b. approved the composition of the ad hoc Committee to observe the elections and appointed Mr Gardetto (Monaco, EPP/CD) as its Chairperson;
- c. noted that a pre-election mission could not take place;

iv. **General elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1st October 2006):**

- a. took note of a letter from Mr Raguz, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, inviting the Assembly to observe the forthcoming general elections in his country;
- b. approved the composition of the ad hoc Committee to observe these elections and appointed Lord Russell-Johnston (United Kingdom, ALDE) as its Chairperson;
- c. noted that a pre-election mission would not take place;

v. **Invitation by the secessionist administration of the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova to observe a referendum:** decided not to respond to this invitation in accordance with the current practice whereby the Assembly did not observe elections or referenda in secessionist entities not recognised internationally;

- **Joint PACE-UEFA conference in cooperation with the State Duma of the Russian Federation (Strasbourg, 29 September 2006):** took note of the updated draft programme of this conference;

- **Football match between the Parliamentary Assembly and the State Duma of the Russian Federation (Strasbourg, 1 October 2006):** took note of the state of preparation;

- **Dates of Assembly part-sessions (2008-2010):** agreed to propose to the Assembly the following dates for the Assembly's part-sessions in 2008, 2009 and 2010:

- i. 2008: 21-25 January; 14-18 April; 23-27 June; 29 September - 3 October;
- ii. 2009: 26-30 January; 20-24 April; 22-26 June; 28 September – 2 October;
- iii. 2010: 25-29 January; 26-30 April; 21-25 June; 4-8 October;

- **The stepping up of internal security in the Palais de l'Europe via an extension of the access control system:** was informed of the new security measures to be introduced in the Palais de l'Europe in the coming months and in this context decided to modify the existing ruling on access to and movement and security within Council of Europe premises during Parliamentary Assembly Sessions;

- **Statement on the re-trial of Bulgarian medical staff in Libya:** adopted a statement: see appendix 2;

- **Calls on the Slovak Government to intensify the fight against hate speech:** adopted a statement: see appendix 3;

- **Meetings of the Standing Committee¹ and the Bureau in 2007²**: agreed on the following dates:

(if necessary)

Wednesday 10 January, 9.30 am, Paris	Bureau
Monday 22 January, 8.30 am Strasbourg (part-session)	Bureau
Friday 26 January, 8.30 am Strasbourg (part-session)	Bureau
Thursday 15 March, 3 pm, Paris	Bureau
Friday 16 March, 9.00 am, Paris	Standing Committee
Monday 16 April, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session)	Bureau
Friday 20 April, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session)	Bureau
In the period 21-25 May, Belgrade	Bureau and Standing Committee (CM Presidency)
Monday 25 June, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session)	Bureau
Friday 29 June, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session)	Bureau
Monday 10 September, 9.30am, Paris	Bureau
Monday 1 October, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session)	Bureau
Friday 5 October, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session)	Bureau
In the period 19-23 November, Bratislava	Bureau and Standing Committee (CM Presidency)
Monday 17 December, 9.30 am, Paris	Bureau

- **Meetings elsewhere than in Strasbourg and Paris**: authorised the following meetings:

- i. Ad Hoc Sub-Committee (of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee): St Petersburg (Russian Federation), 21-22 September 2006 on the occasion of the conference on "Improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe: participation for all, innovation, effectiveness";
- ii. Sub-Committee on the Europe Prize (of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs): Szeged (Hungary), 22 September 2006;
- iii. Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs: Quebec (Canada), 26 – 28 October 2006;
- iv. Ad hoc Sub-Committee for the Forum for the Future of Democracy (of the Political Affairs Committee): Moscow (Russian Federation), 18 – 19 October 2006;
- v. Sub-Committee on External Relations (of the Political Affairs Committee): New York (United States of America) on the occasion of the General Assembly debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe (date to be confirmed);
- vi. Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population: Manchester and London (United Kingdom): 13 - 15 November 2006;

¹ Subject to ratification by the Assembly.

² Dates of meetings due to be held elsewhere than in Strasbourg and Paris are subject to the conclusion of a formal agreement with the Parliament of the country concerned.

- **Assembly representatives for official activities:** see appendix 4;
- **Vedovato Library:** took note of a letter addressed to the President by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe regarding the library's future;
- **Communications:** took note of the written communications of the President; the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe; and the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly;
- **Date and place of the next meetings:** decided to hold the following meetings:
 - . Strasbourg, 2 and 6 October 2006 at 8.30 am;
 - . San Marino, Thursday 16 November 2006 (time still to be fixed);
 - . Paris, Friday 15 December 2006 at 9.30 am.

Kjell Torbiörn/Alexandra Alléon

cc. Secretary General of the Assembly
 Secretariat of the Assembly
 Secretaries of National Delegations and of Political Groups of the Assembly
 Observers to the Assembly
 Directors General
 Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
 Secretary to the Committee of Ministers
 Director of Communication
 Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe

Appendix 1

Decisions on documents tabled for reference to committees

A. REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES

1. **Doc. 10978**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mrs Pirozhnikova and others
Preservation areas and unique natural sites as the sustainable development dimension of activities of the Council of Europe, to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development and to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for information*
2. **Doc. 10983**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Szabó
Global elections day, to the Political Affairs Committee *for information*
3. **Doc. 10984**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Fenechiu and others
Sustainable development of the Black Sea: co-operation between local and regional authorities, to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for information*
4. **Doc. 10985**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Txueka and others
The situation of human rights defenders in Council of Europe member states, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *to be taken into account in the preparation of the report on "the state of human rights and democracy in Europe"*
5. **Doc. 10986**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Evans and others
Against the resumption of international whaling, to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for information*
6. **Doc. 10987 rev (English only)**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Marquet and others
Paediatric medicines in Europe, to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *to be taken into account in the preparation of the report on "the quality of medicines in Europe"*
7. **Doc. 10988**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mrs Cliveti and Mrs Bargholtz and others
To promote the involvement of children in decisions concerning them, to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *for report*
8. **Doc. 10990**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr R. Huseynov and others
The Armenian policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis, No further action
9. **Doc. 10991**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Ms Pashayeva and others
Illegal settlement of Armenians in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia as a gross violation of the principles of international law, No further action

10. **Doc. 10992**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Seyidov and others
Massive fires in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan committed by Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh separatists during the last 20 days, No further action

B. REQUESTS FOR MODIFICATION OF A REFERENCE

1. **Doc. 10916**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Jurgens and others
Legal remedies for human rights violations in the North-Caucasus Region
Ref. 3243 of 26 June 2006, postponed to the next meeting
2. **Doc. 10968**
Request for accession to the Council of Europe from the Republic of Montenegro
Ref. 3245 of 26 June 2006, to the Political Affairs Committee *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) *for opinion*

C. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF A REFERENCE

1. **Doc. 10237**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Skarphéðinsson and others
The situation of migrant workers in temporary employment agencies
Ref. 2989 of 7 September 2004 – **Validity: 7 September 2006**, extension until 31 December 2006 *for report at the Standing Committee*
2. **Doc. 10180**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Holovaty and others
The principle of the rule of law
Ref. 2974 of 21 June 2004 modified by Ref. 2998 of 7 September 2004 extended on 30 June 2006 until 31 December 2006, extension until 31 March 2007

Appendix 2

Statement by the Bureau of PACE on the re-trial of Bulgarian medical staff in Libya

Strasbourg, 06.09.2006 – The following statement was adopted today by the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), meeting in Paris:

“The Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is dismayed by the Libyan Prosecutor’s recent call for the death penalty at the retrial of the five Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor accused of deliberately contaminating some 426 children with the AIDS virus at the Al-Fateh hospital in Benghazi.

The Bureau recalls the position of the Parliamentary Assembly on this case in its Recommendation 1726 (2005), in particular its conclusion that the nurses and doctors should be regarded as completely innocent, as well as its grave concerns about the torture and ill-treatment to which they were subjected, the lack of evidence supporting the allegations and the flaws in the conduct of the investigations and trial.

The Libyan Supreme Court’s decision in December 2005 cancelling the 2004 death sentence and ordering a fresh trial offered the authorities the opportunity to remedy the grave deficiencies surrounding the investigations and trial, and to carry out a thorough investigation into the allegations of torture and ill-treatment. The Bureau is therefore shocked that witnesses on behalf of the defence have not been heard and that the defence lawyers’ request for international expertise has been rejected. Such a flagrant denial of defence rights can only but cast serious doubts on the outcome of the retrial.

The Bureau once more reaffirms the complete opposition of the Parliamentary Assembly to capital punishment, which has no place in the penal systems of modern, civilised societies.

It calls on the Libyan authorities to release the five Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor, or failing that, to ensure that the new trial is conducted in conditions which guarantee a fair trial, including full respect for the rights of defence, and to accept that international expertise is called in to determine the causes of this human tragedy and the circumstances in which it occurred.

At the same time, the Bureau is equally seized with the plight of the victims of the AIDS virus and unconditionally reiterates the Assembly’s compassion for the Libyan children and its sympathy with their families. The Bureau therefore welcomes the recent initiative of the European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom and Bulgaria to create an international fund to assist Libya in combating AIDS, to bring the hospital in Benghazi up to standard and to compensate victims or their families.”

Appendix 3

Assembly Bureau calls on the Slovak Government to intensify the fight against hate speech

Strasbourg, 06.09.2006 - The Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) called today on the Slovak government to take a firmer stand against the use of racist or xenophobic discourse in politics and in society, which contributes to a climate of violence by legitimising hatred and intolerance.

Assembly members expressed great concern at the increase in xenophobic incidents in Slovakia during recent months and, in particular, the recent violent attack on a young ethnic-Hungarian woman. They stressed that xenophobia and intolerance are incompatible with the basic values of democracy which all Council of Europe member States are obliged to respect.

The Bureau of the Assembly welcomed the condemnation of these acts by the Slovak authorities, but urged them to take concrete measures to prevent and punish all xenophobic behaviour. It also asked its Monitoring Committee to put this matter on the agenda of its next meeting on 14 September 2006.

Appendix 4

Assembly representatives for official activities

- i. Appointments of Assembly Representatives for official activities: in reply to formal invitations, took the following decisions:
 - a. Mr Bokeria (Georgia, ALDE): 1st inter-parliamentary meeting of the Community of Democratic Choice, Tbilisi (Georgia), 28-29 September 2006;
 - b. Mrs Papadimitriou (Greece, EPP/CD) and a member of the delegation of Switzerland: 115th Assembly of IPU and a conference on parliamentary broadcasting, Geneva (Switzerland), 16-18 and 19 October 2006;
 - c. Mr Messerschmidt (Denmark, EDG): 58th plenary session of the Nordic Council, Copenhagen (Denmark), 31 October-2 November 2006;
 - d. Sub-Committee on External Relations (of the Political Affairs Committee): UN hearing on "conflict prevention and peace-building: reinforcing the key role of the UN", New York (United States of America), 13-14 November 2006;
 - e. Mrs Ohlsson (Sweden, SOC): 52nd annual session of NATO PA, Quebec (Canada), 13-17 November 2006;
 - f. Mr Debono Grech (Malta, SOC): OSCE PA 2006 Fall Meetings, Malta, 17-20 November 2006;
- ii. Reports by Assembly Representatives on their participation at official activities: took note of the following reports and decided to transmit these reports to the competent committees for follow-up:
 - a. Mr Rigoni (Italy, EPP/CD), St Petersburg Economic Forum, 13-14 June 2006;
 - b. Mr Legendre (France, EPP/CD), Conference on Elected Representatives of the Mediterranean, Rabat (Morocco), 28-29 June 2006;
 - c. Mr Gross (Switzerland, SOC), Conference of the Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials (ACEEEO), Riga 31 August- 2 September 2006.

