



TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Secretariat of the Assembly

Synopsis

20 March 2007

The Bureau of the Assembly, meeting on Thursday 15 March 2007 in Paris with Mr René van der Linden, President of the Assembly, in the Chair, as regards:

- ***Standing Committee (Paris, 16 March 2007):***

i. Request for a current affairs debate:

a. “*Promotion by Council of Europe member states of an international moratorium on the death penalty*” (submitted by Mr Rigoni, on behalf of the Italian delegation):

. decided to recommend to the Standing Committee to hold this current affairs debate and chose Mr Rigoni as the opening speaker;

. decided to propose - in conformity with Rule 52.5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and subject to the decision of the Standing Committee - to refer the matter to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for report and to the Political Affairs Committee for opinion, for debate, in principle, during the June 2007 part-session;

ii. Draft agenda: took note of the updated draft agenda;

- ***2nd Part of the 2007 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 16-20 April 2007):***

i. Request for a debate under urgent procedure:

a. “*Situation in the Middle East*”: took note of a letter from Mr Ates requesting, on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee, to hold a debate under urgent procedure on this matter and decided to postpone its decision until its next meeting;

ii. Revised agenda: adopted the revised agenda;

iii. Draft order of business: drew up the draft order of business;

iv. Draft agenda of the Joint Committee (Thursday 19 April 2007 at 6.30 pm): agreed to include the following items in the draft agenda:

- a. Meeting of the Committee of Ministers (10 – 11 May 2007);
- b. Council of Europe 2008 Budget;
- c. Request by Montenegro for accession to the Council of Europe;
- d. Election of Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe;

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

- i. heard an account by the Secretary General of the Assembly on the state of progress in the preparation of the report and the draft texts to be adopted; the invited personalities; the organisation of the debate; a draft programme (doc. AS/Inf (2007) 4 prov.); and the various side-events to take place in connection with the debate;
- ii. was informed that a consolidated brochure would be prepared containing an introduction by the President; the reports of the three main committees concerned and contributions by other committees, as well as an overview of Council of Europe core monitoring mechanisms; and a list of recent related texts adopted by the Assembly;
- iii. noted that each committee would only take position on amendments concerning those parts of the draft texts for which it was at the origin;
- iv. agreed that the rapporteurs of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs; the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development and the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities would intervene during the democracy part of the debate while the rapporteurs of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population and the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee would intervene in the human rights part;
- v. was informed that the President had addressed a letter to the Chairpersons of the Political Groups and Chairpersons of the parliamentary national delegations encouraging members to participate in the debate on this matter;

- ***Consequences of a possible non-entry into force of Protocol 14 to the ECHR by 1 October 2007: partial renewal of the Court:*** agreed that no action should be taken to initiate a partial renewal of the Court required by the Convention (as amended by Protocol 11) until it could be seen more clearly, by 30 June 2007 at the latest, whether or not Protocol 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights would enter into force by 1 October 2007 at the latest;

- ***Follow-up to the Third Summit:***

- i. Forum for the Future of Democracy:
 - a. Evaluation of the involvement of the Parliamentary Assembly in the Forum for the Future of Democracy: took note of a Secretariat memorandum on this matter;
 - b. Composition of the ad hoc Committee of the Bureau to participate in the Council of Europe Forum for the Future of Democracy session (Stockholm/Sigtuna, Sweden, 13-15 June 2007): took note of a provisional list of members and asked chairpersons of Committees who had not yet done so to proceed to the appointment of their members as soon as possible;
 - c. Information about the preparations for the Council of Europe Forum for the Future of Democracy session (Stockholm/Sigtuna, Sweden (13-15 June 2007)):
 - . took note of a letter addressed by the President to the Speaker of the Swedish Riksdag containing suggestions for the programme of the Forum stressing the importance of elected representatives in a democracy;
 - . took note of the preliminary draft programme for the Forum;
 - . was informed that a member of the Assembly would act as a general rapporteur and appointed Mr Gross (Switzerland, SOC) to that effect;

- ii. Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union:
- a. took note of a letter of 9 February 2007 from the Chairman of the Ministers' Deputies transmitting a proposal for a new text of the draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union based on informal consultations; and indicating that it was his intention to try to finalise the text in time for the 117th session of the Committee of Ministers (10-11 May 2007);
 - b. took note of a letter from the President to the Chairman of the Ministers' Deputies suggesting a number of points of importance to the Assembly that should be reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding, without prejudice to the Assembly's final position;
 - c. noted that consultation of the Assembly on this subject was foreseen for the April 2007 part-session;
 - d. decided to refer this matter to the Political Affairs Committee for report for a general policy debate during the April part-session, subject to formal transmission of the draft Memorandum of Understanding to the Assembly;
- iii. The European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency: endorsed the President's proposal to forward to the Committee of Ministers and to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe the names of the following three independent persons (in alphabetical order) possessing a thorough knowledge of the Organisation, its standards, mechanisms and activities, to be appointed by the Council of Europe to participate in the agency's management structure:
- Mr Rudolf Bindig;
 - Mr Hans-Peter Furrer;
 - and Mr Hans-Christian Krüger;
- iv. Follow-up to Mr Junckers' report: took note of document CM-Suivi3 (2007) 5 concerning the follow-up to the recommendations in the Juncker report;
- **Budget of the Council of Europe for 2008:** heard a statement by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe;
 - **Communications:** took note of communications by the President; the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe; and the Secretary General of the Assembly;
 - **References and transmissions to committees:** see Appendix I;
 - **Observation of elections:**
- i. Parliamentary elections in Serbia (21 January 2007): approved the report of the Ad Hoc Committee that had observed these elections (Rapporteur: Mr Iwinski, Poland, SOC);
 - ii. Conference on the Parliamentary Dimension of election observation: applying common standards (Strasbourg, 15-16 February 2007): took note of the conclusions of this conference and agreed, more specifically, to the following proposals contained in a memorandum prepared by the Secretariat:
 - a. to refer the question of distance voting, including electronic voting, to the Political Affairs Committee for report;
 - b. to refer the question of an internationally recognised status for election observers to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for report;

c. to include in the Assembly's "Guidelines" the gender dimension for the composition of ad hoc committees to observe elections and to amend the "Guidelines" accordingly at a future meeting;

iii. Parliamentary elections in Armenia (12 May 2007):

a. took note of a letter from the President of the National Assembly of Armenia inviting the Assembly to observe the parliamentary elections in that country to take place on 12 May 2007;

b. agreed to set up an ad hoc Committee to observe these elections and fixed at 41 the number of its members: 13 SOC; 12 EPP/CD; 7 ALDE; 6 EDG; 2 UEL; and Mr Rigoni (NR);

c. approved the composition of the ad hoc Committee and appointed Mr Platvoet (Netherlands, UEL) as its Chairperson;

d. agreed to authorise a pre-electoral mission by 5 members (one from each political group) - who were at the same time members of the Ad Hoc Committee - to be carried out in the week of 10 April 2007;

iv. Chairpersons of ad hoc Committees of the Bureau of the PACE to observe elections (2005-2007): took note of a Secretariat memorandum on this matter;

v. Invitation by a so-called "National Assembly of the Republic of Abkhazia" to observe "parliamentary elections" (4 March 2007): fully supported the President's decision not to respond to this invitation, in accordance with the Assembly's practice not to observe elections or referenda in secessionist entities which were not recognised internationally;

- ***Relations with the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan:***

a. took note of a letter from Mr Abykayev, Chairman of the Senate, and Mr Mukhamedzhanov, Chairman of the Mazhlis of the Republic of Kazakhstan, indicating the interest of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan to obtain Observer status with the Assembly;

b. took note of a memorandum prepared by the Secretariat setting out the procedure for obtaining observer status with the Assembly;

c. took note of a letter from the Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee on this matter;

d. decided to modify paragraph 13. iii in its 2003 Memorandum on External Relations of the Assembly (Doc. 9835, Appendix 3) by deleting the words "*which, following a decision by the Committee of Ministers, become observer states to the Council of Europe*" and decided to submit this modification to the Assembly via the Progress Report;

e. referred - taking into account the precedents established by the requests for observer status presented by the parliaments of Canada and Mexico - the request by the Kazakhstan parliament to the Political Affairs Committee, asking it to proceed to the preparation of a report, and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for opinion, for subsequent debate in the Assembly;

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

i. Ad hoc Sub-Committee on Intercultural Dialogue (of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education): San Marino, 23-24 April 2007;

ii. Political Affairs Committee: Kyiv (Ukraine), 21-22 May 2007;

- iii. Sub-Committee on External Relations (of the Political Affairs Committee): St-Petersburg (Russian Federation), 31 May – 1 June 2007;
- iv. Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau to participate in the Forum for the Future of Democracy: Stockholm/Sigtuna (Sweden), 13-15 June 2007;
- v. Committee on Culture, Science and Education: Torun/Bydgoszcz (Poland), 22-24 October 2007;

- ***Assembly representatives for official activities:***

i. Appointments of Assembly representatives for official activities: in reply to formal invitations, took the following decisions:

a. Mr Çavuşoğlu (Turkey, EDG) and Mrs Cliveti (Romania, SOC): International Conference “Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Region Full of Chances”, Tunis (Tunisia), 18-19 March 2007 (no cost for the Assembly for Mrs Cliveti);

b. Mr Vera Jardim (Portugal, SOC): North-South Prize of the Council of Europe, Lisbon (Portugal), 19 March 2007 (no cost for the Assembly);

c. Mr Nessa (Italy, EPP/DC): 69th Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions, Rome (Italy), 22-23 March 2007 (no cost for the Assembly);

d. Mr Mooney (Ireland, ALDE): Series of meetings in relation with the report on “Europe’s response to humanitarian disasters”, New York (United States of America), 26-27 April 2007 (no cost for the Assembly);

ii. Reports by Assembly representatives on their participation in official activities: took note of the report from Mr Gardetto on his participation in the 6th annual Winter Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held on 22-23 February 2007 in Vienna, and decided to refer this report to the competent committee for follow-up as appropriate;

- ***Draft convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse:***

i. took note of a letter from the Chairman of the Ministers’ Deputies transmitting the draft convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse to the Assembly for opinion;

ii. referred the draft convention to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for report and to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee for opinion;

- ***Agendas of the Standing Committee:*** took note of a letter from Mr Schmied, Chairman of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, advocating a rotation in the order in which the Standing Committee debated reports emanating from different committees, and agreed to consider this matter at one of its future meetings;

- ***Statement concerning the fate of the Bulgarian medics and Palestinian doctor:*** was informed that the President would make a statement on this matter at the meeting of the Standing Committee the following day;

- ***Statement calling for the release of Mr Daniele Mastrogiacomo, Afghanistan correspondent of the Italian newspaper “La Repubblica”:*** adopted, at the initiative of Mr Rigoni, Chairman of the Italian delegation to the Assembly, a statement on this subject (Appendix II);

- **Situation in Belarus:** was informed that the President would address a letter to the Speaker of the Belarus Parliament regarding the Assembly's concern over the recent arrests of opposition leaders in Belarus;

- **Date and place of the next meetings:** decided to hold the following meetings:

- . Strasbourg, Monday 16 April 2007 at 8.00 am;
- . Strasbourg, Friday 20 April 2007 at 8.30 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 I

References and transmissions to committees

The Bureau approved the following references and modifications of references, subject to ratification by the Assembly:

A. REFERENCES TO COMMITTEE

1. **Doc. 11122**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Wodarg and others
The election of committee chairpersons and their term of office, to the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities *to be taken into account in the preparation of the report on "the application and amendment of various provisions of the Rules of Procedure"*
2. **Doc. 11149**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Ilicali and others
Enhancing rural development via organic farming, to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for information*
3. **Doc. 11152**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Fischer and others
Information technologies and the traceability of products, particularly food products, to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for information*
4. **Doc. 11154**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Scheer and others
The environment and renewable energies, to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for report at the Standing Committee [PACE priority: Promoting sustainable development]*
5. **Doc. 11155**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Eörsi and others
Secret ballot – European code of conduct on secret balloting, including guidelines for politicians, observers and voters, to the Political Affairs Committee *for report at the Standing Committee [PACE priority: Strengthening democracy, good governance and the rule of law in member states]*
6. **Doc. 11156**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Kosachev and others
Risk of resurgence of Nazi ideology in Estonia, no further action
7. **Doc. 11157**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Lindblad and others
Discrimination against the Hungarian minority in the Romanian higher education system, to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education *for information*
8. **Doc. 11159**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Arnaut and others
The European sport model: need of preservation, to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education *for report [PACE priority: Strengthening democracy, good governance and the rule of law in member states (combating corruption and organised crime); guaranteeing social cohesion and public health]*

9. **Doc. 11209**
Request for an opinion from the Committee of Ministers on the draft Convention against sexual exploitation and abuse of children, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report* and to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *for opinion* [*PACE priority: Responding to common threats to Europeans (violence against children)*]
10. **Doc...**
Request for an opinion from the Committee of Ministers on the Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union (subject to the Committee of Ministers having transmitted the draft text to the Assembly for opinion): to the Political Affairs Committee *for report* [*PACE priority: Fostering co-operation with other international and European organizations and institutions*]
11. **Request for a current affairs debate on the “Promotion by Council of Europe member states of an international moratorium on the death penalty”** (submitted by Mr Rigoni, on behalf of the Italian delegation), in conformity with the Rule 52.5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and subject to a decision of the Standing Committee, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report* and to the Political Affairs Committee *for opinion*, for debate, in principle, during the June 2007 part-session;
12. **Request by the Parliament of Kazakhstan for observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly**, to the Political Affairs Committee *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion*;
13. **Distance voting, including electronic voting**, to the Political Affairs Committee *for report*;
14. **An internationally recognised status for election observers**, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*;

B. FOLLOW-UP TO ADOPTED TEXTS

1. **Resolution 1533 (2007)**
Current situation in Kosovo, to the Political Affairs Committee *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion* on “developments as regards the future status of Kosovo” [*PACE priority: Strengthening democracy, good governance and the rule of law in member states; reinforcing the role of the Council of Europe as a forum for political dialogue within and among member states*]

C. REQUESTS TO MODIFY REFERENCES

1. **Doc. 11069**
Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Mendes Bota and others
Sustainable development and tourism: towards quality growth
Ref. 3290 of 22 January 2007, to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *for report* and to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education and the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for opinion*
2. **Doc. 11084**
Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Çavuşoğlu and others
The problem of environmental refugees
Ref. 3297 of 22 January 2007, to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *for report* and to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for opinion*

D. REQUESTS FOR EXTENSION OF REFERENCES

1. Doc. 10488

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Gross and others

Guidelines for the status of the opposition in a democratic parliament

Ref. 3069 of 25 April 2005 – Validity: 25 April 2007, extension until 31 December 2007

2. Doc. 10522

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Jakavonis and others

Disposal and storage of spent nuclear fuel and long-lived radioactive nuclear waste

Ref. 3076 of 29 April 2005 – Validity: 29 April 2007, extension until 30 September 2007.



APPENDIX II

PACE calls for the release of Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo

[15/03/2007] PACE's Bureau, meeting today in Paris, adopted the following statement at the initiative of the head of the Italian delegation to PACE Andrea Rigoni: "The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, in line with the essential principles upheld by the Organisation, recalls that every time journalists are deprived of their freedom, this amounts to an attack on the very concept of freedom of expression and information – freedoms which are essential pillars of any democracy upholding the rule of law. For this reason, the Assembly wishes to add its voice to those from all quarters, governments and international organisations alike, demanding the release of La Repubblica's Afghanistan correspondent Daniele Mastrogiacomo, and appeals for a speedy resolution."