



TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly

Synopsis No 2003/01
16 January 2003

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, meeting in Paris on 10 January 2003 with Mr Lintner (Germany, EPP) in the Chair, as regards:

- *Protection of sign languages in member states* (Rapporteur: Mr Bruce, United Kingdom, LDR): considered and unanimously adopted a draft recommendation submitted by the Rapporteur;
- *Preferential treatment of national minorities by their kin-state: the case of the Hungarian law of 19 June 2001 on ethnic Hungarians living in neighbouring countries* (Rapporteur: Mr Jurgens, Netherlands, SOC): heard a statement by the Rapporteur;
- *Political prisoners in Europe* (Rapporteur: Mr Clerfayt, Belgium, LDR): had an exchange of views with Mr Trechsel, one of the Secretary's General's independent experts;
- *European Federation of Research and Information Centres on Sectarism (FECRIS)* (Rapporteur: Mrs Hajiyeva, Azerbaijan, EPP): took note that a letter had been received from Mr Vis, and decided to contact Mrs Severinsen and Mr Blaauw again;
- *Office of the Lord Chancellor in the constitutional system of the United Kingdom* (Rapporteur: Mr Jurgens, Netherlands, SOC): heard a statement by the Rapporteur;
- *Environment and human rights* (Rapporteur for opinion: Mr Jurgens, Netherlands, SOC): decided to ask the Bureau that this report be taken off the agenda of the January 2003 part-session;
- *Ombudsman Institution* (Rapporteur: Mrs Nabholz-Haidegger, Switzerland, LDR): considered an introductory memorandum submitted by the Rapporteur;
- *Rights of persons held in the custody of the United States in Afghanistan or Guantánamo Bay* (Rapporteur: Mr McNamara, United Kingdom, SOC): considered an introductory memorandum submitted by the Rapporteur;
- *Rights of national minorities* (Rapporteur: Mr Cilevičs, Latvia, SOC): considered a revised introductory memorandum submitted by the Rapporteur;
- *Petition concerning the Dutch-speakers' rights to health-care in Brussels and the surrounding Dutch-speaking municipalities*: considered a petition referred to the Committee by the Bureau of the Assembly, and decided to take up the matter again at a forthcoming meeting;

- *Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights* (Chairperson of the Sub-Committee: Mr McNamara, United Kingdom, SOC): heard a report of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held in Paris on 9 January 2003;
- *Appointment of rapporteurs:*
 - The Council of Europe's contribution to the process of drafting a European Union Constitution (for opinion): Mr Clerfayt (Belgium, LDR);
- *Participation of members in conferences, meetings, seminars, etc:* heard a report by its representative on:
 - Venice Commission (Venice, 13-14 December 2002): Mr Jurgens (Netherlands, SOC)
 appointed a representative to:
 - Group of Specialists on freedom of expression and other fundamental rights (MM-S-FR) (Strasbourg, 20-22 January 2003): Mr Olteanu (Romania, SOC);
- *Recent events in Ukraine:* instructed its Chairperson to formally ask the Bureau that an urgent debate on this matter be put on the agenda of the January 2003 part-session;
- *Next meetings:*
 - . Strasbourg, during the Assembly's January 2003 part-session
 - . Paris, Monday 3 March 2003 at 9 h 30 (Council of Europe Office)
 - . Strasbourg, during the Assembly's April 2003 part-session
 - . Berlin (Germany), Tuesday 29 April 2003

The Sub-Committee on Human Rights (of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights), meeting in Paris on 10 January 2003 with Mrs Wohlwend (Liechtenstein, EPP) in the Chair, as regards:

- *European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT):* considered the list of candidates to the CPT on behalf of Slovenia;
- *Abolition of the death penalty in Council of Europe observer States* (Rapporteur: Mrs Wohlwend, Liechtenstein, EPP): heard a statement on the preparation of the seminar on the abolition of the death penalty in the United States of America;
- *Next meeting:*
 - . Strasbourg, during the Assembly's January 2003 part-session

Danielle Coin, David Čupina, David Milner

cc: Secretary General of the Assembly
 Director General to the Assembly
 Director and staff of the Secretariat of the Assembly
 Secretaries of National Delegations to the Assembly
 Secretaries of Political Groups of the Assembly

Directors General
 Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General
 Secretary to the Committee of Ministers
 Director of Communication and Research
 Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe