



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

Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly

Synopsis No 2003/54
10 April 2003

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, meeting in Strasbourg on 31 March 2003 with Mr Lintner (Germany, EPP) in the Chair, as regards:

- *The human rights situation in the Chechen Republic* (Rapporteur: Mr Bindig, Germany, SOC): considered and approved amendments presented by the Rapporteur and heard a statement from Mr Sultygov, Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for Human Rights in Chechnya;
- *The role of the public prosecutor in a democratic society governed by the rule of law* (Rapporteur: Mr Arabadjiev, Bulgaria, SOC): considered a draft recommendation submitted by the Rapporteur;
- *So-called "honour crimes"*: appointed Mrs Wohlwend (Liechtenstein, EPP) as Rapporteur for opinion

and resuming its meeting on 1 April 2003, with Mr Lintner in the Chair, as regards:

- *The role of the public prosecutor in a democratic society governed by the rule of law* (Rapporteur: Mr Arabadjiev, Bulgaria, SOC): continued to consider and adopted a draft recommendation submitted by the Rapporteur;
- *So-called "honour crimes"* (Rapporteur for opinion: Mrs Wohlwend, Liechtenstein, EPP): considered a report submitted by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, and considered and adopted a draft opinion submitted by the Rapporteur;
- *Protection of sign languages in the member states of the Council of Europe* (Rapporteur: Mr Bruce, United Kingdom, LDR): considered amendments;
- *Office of the Lord Chancellor in the constitutional system of the United Kingdom* (Rapporteur: Mr Jurgens, Netherlands, SOC): considered and adopted a draft resolution submitted by the Rapporteur;

- *Participation of members in conferences, meetings, seminars, etc:* heard report by its representatives on:
 - 30th meeting of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) (Strasbourg, 18-20 March 2003) and meeting of the Joint Round Table on "Local solutions to combat racism" (EUMC) (Strasbourg, 21 March 2003): heard a report from its representative Mr McNamara (United Kingdom, SOC);
 - Group of Specialists on freedom of expression and other fundamental rights (MM-S-FR) (Strasbourg, 10-12 March 2003): heard a report from its representative Mr Olteanu (Romania, SOC);
 - 1st meeting of the European Commission for the efficiency of justice (CEPEJ) (Strasbourg, 5-7 February 2003): heard a report from its representative Mrs Nabholz-Haidegger (Switzerland, LDR);

appointed representatives to:

- 4th session of the Conference of Prosecutors General of Europe (Bratislava, 1-3 June 2003): Mr Arabadjiev (Bulgaria, SOC);
- Ad Hoc meeting between representatives of the ECRI, the EUMC, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly on the Charter of European Parties for a non-racist society (Brussels, 23 April 2003): Mr McNamara (United Kingdom, SOC);
- Seminar on the death penalty (Minsk (Belarus), 23 April 2003): Mme Nabholz-Haidegger (Switzerland, LDR), subject to the Bureau authorisation;
- Conference on "The death penalty from an international perspective: a transatlantic dialogue" (Brussels, 23-24 May 2003): Mme Wohlwend (Liechtenstein, EPP);
- *The conflict in the Chechen Republic* (Rapporteur for opinion: Mr Bindig, Germany, SOC): considered amendments;

and resuming its meeting on 3 April 2003 with Mr Lintner in the Chair, as regards:

- *Rights of persons held in the custody of the United States in Afghanistan or Guantanamo Bay* (Rapporteur: Mr McNamara, United Kingdom, SOC): considered a draft resolution submitted by the Rapporteur, and agreed to consult the Venice Commission with respect to issues relating to the Geneva Conventions;
- *Appointment of rapporteurs:*
 - Petition concerning the Dutch-speakers' rights to health-care in Brussels and the surrounding Dutch-speaking municipalities: appointed Mr Cilevičs (Latvia, SOC);
 - New Bulgarian law on religion known as the Confession Act 2002: appointed Mr Contestabile (Italy, EPP);
 - Political prisoners in Azerbaijan: appointed Mr Clerfayt (Belgium, LDR);
 - Situation of European prisons and pre-trial detention centres: appointed Mr Hunault (France, EPP);

- *Sub-Committee on Human Rights*: heard a statement from the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Mrs Wohlwend (Liechtenstein, EPP);
- *Sub-Committee on Penal Law and Criminology*: agreed to call a meeting on the occasion of the June session to discuss its future work programme;
- *International Criminal Court*: agreed to invite the new Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to one of its meetings;
- *Next meetings*:
 - . Berlin (Germany), Tuesday 29 April 2003
 - . Paris, Thursday 5 June 2003 at 9 h 30 (Council of Europe Office) (to be confirmed)

The Sub-Committee on Human Rights (of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights), meeting in Strasbourg on 2 April 2003 with Mrs Wohlwend (Liechtenstein, EPP) in the Chair, as regards:

- *European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)*: considered candidatures to the CPT in respect of Finland and listed the candidates in order of preference;
- *Reform of the European Court of Human Rights*: held an exchange of views with Ambassador Harman, Chairperson of the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights of Ministers' Deputies, and Mr Boillat, Chairperson of the Reflection Group on the reinforcement of the Human Rights protection mechanism;
- *Abolition of the death penalty in Council of Europe observer States* (Rapporteur: Mrs Wohlwend, Liechtenstein, EPP): heard a statement by the Chairperson concerning the draft agenda of the Conference on the death penalty in the United States of America, to be held in Springfield (Illinois) and Washington DC on 9-11 April 2003;
- *Next meeting*:
 - . Springfield (Illinois) and Washington DC, 9 -11 April 2003 (conference on "Justice and human rights in Council of Europe observer States: the abolition of the death penalty")

Ad hoc Sub-Committee to clarify the circumstances of disappearances for allegedly political reasons in Belarus (of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights), meeting in Strasbourg on 3 April 2003 with Vice-Chairperson Mr Pourgourides (Cyprus, EPP) in the Chair, as regards:

- *Consideration of information obtained since the last meeting:* discussed on the letter of 20 January 2003 from Mr V.M. Chumachenko, Senior investigator in the Prosecutor's Office of the City of Minsk, to Mrs Krasovskaya;
- *Future activities of the Sub-Committee: preparation of a visit to Minsk:* noted that no reply had been received to the Chairman's letters of 17 March and agreed on its further course of action in liaison with the Parliamentary troika and agreed to ask Mrs Nabholz-Haidegger to raise the question of extra-judicial executions during her visit to Minsk for the Seminar on the death penalty (23 April 2003);
- *Next meeting:*
 - . Strasbourg, during the Assembly's June 2003 part-session (to be confirmed).

Danielle Coin, Günter Schirmer, 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
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