

21 December 2007  
Synopsis AS/Jur No 2007/10

## To the Members of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

### Synopsis of the meetings held in Venice (Italy) on 13-14 December 2007

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, meeting in Venice (Italy) on 13-14 December 2007 with Mr Erik Jurgens (Netherlands, SOC), 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chairperson, in the Chair, as regards:

- **Sub-Committee on Human Rights:** heard a report by Mr Christos Pourgourides (Cyprus, EPP/CD) on the meeting held in Venice earlier the same day and approved the proposals of the Sub-Committee concerning the lists of candidates to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) submitted by the parliamentary delegations of Greece, Armenia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Iceland and Poland;
- **Towards decriminalisation of defamation (Resolution 1577 (2007)):** adopted a declaration relating to the situation of journalists in Azerbaijan;
- **Video surveillance of public areas (Rapporteur: Mr Yuri Sharandin, Russian Federation, EDG):** considered and approved a report and adopted a draft resolution and a draft recommendation;
- **Legal remedies for human rights violations in the North-Caucasus Region (Rapporteur: Mr Dick Marty, Switzerland, ALDE):** heard a statement by the Chairperson, on behalf of the Rapporteur, and decided to ask the Bureau to be seized for report on this issue;
- **Sub-Committee on Rights of Minorities (Chairperson: Mr Boriss Cilevičs, Latvia, SOC):** heard a report by the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the meeting held in Bratislava on 22 November 2007;
- **Minority protection in Europe: best practices and deficiencies in implementation of common standards (Rapporteur: Mr Boriss Cilevičs, Latvia, SOC):** heard a statement by the Rapporteur and considered an outline report;
- **Guaranteeing the authority and effectiveness of the European Convention on Human Rights: the position of the Parliamentary Assembly?:** held a hearing with the participation of:
  - Professor Rick Lawson, Europa Instituut - Department of Public Law, Faculty of Law, University of Leiden
  - Professor Frédéric Sudre, Faculty of Law, University of Montpellier;

- **Situation of human rights and democracy in Europe** : reiterated its position in favour of a triennial rhythm for the report and debate;
- **Application and amendment of various provisions of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure (Resolutions 1583 (2007), 1584 (2007) and 1585 (2007))**: heard a presentation by Mrs Dinsdale, Director of Political and Legal Affairs, on the major changes to the Assembly's Rules of Procedure introduced by these three Resolutions, which will enter into force on the first day of the January 2008 part-session;
- **Campaign for the release of Ingrid Betancourt** : instructed its Chairperson to publish in its name an appeal in favour of the release of Ingrid Betancourt ;
- **Appointment of rapporteurs**: appointed the following rapporteurs:
  - *Compliance by Observer Countries with the values of the Council of Europe* (for opinion): Mr Pieter Omtzigt (Netherlands, EPP/CD)
  - *Allegations of politically-motivated abuses of the criminal justice system in Council of Europe member states*: Mrs Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger (Germany, ALDE)
- **Participation of members in conferences, meetings, seminars, etc.** : heard reports on the following events:
  - European Commission for Democracy through Law ("Venice Commission") (Venice (Italy), 19-20 October 2007): Mr Erik Jurgens (Netherlands, SOC)
  - Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) (Strasbourg, 7 November 2007): Mr Erik Jurgens (Netherlands, SOC)

and continuing its meeting on 14 December 2007, at a **joint meeting with the Enlarged Bureau of the Venice Commission** with Mr Jurgens (Netherlands, SOC), 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, and with Mrs Hanna Suchocka (Poland), Vice-Chairperson of the Venice Commission, in the Chair, as regards:

- **Cooperation between the Venice Commission and the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly**: held an exchange of views on this issue ;
- **"State secrets" as an obstacle to parliamentary and judicial scrutiny**: held an exchange of views with the participation of Professor Andreas Paulus, Institute of International and European Law, University of Göttingen (Germany) ;
- **Next meetings**:
  - Plenary Committee*:
    - Strasbourg, during the 1<sup>st</sup> part-session of 2008 (21-25 January)
    - Paris, Friday 7 mars 2008 at 9 h (Council of Europe Office)
  - Sub-Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights*:
    - Paris, Monday 17 December 2007 (15 h - 19 h)
    - Paris, Tuesday 18 December 2007 (9 h - 12 h 45)

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**The Sub-Committee on Human Rights** (of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights), meeting in Venice (Italy) on 13 December 2007 with Mr Christos Pourgourides (Cyprus, EPP/CD) in the Chair, as regards:

- **European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)**: considered and approved its recommendations for the lists of candidates to the CPT in respect of Greece, Armenia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", and Iceland, decided to postpone to a next meeting the list of candidates in respect of Albania, and proposed to the Bureau to send back the list in respect of Poland;
- **Next meeting**: left it to its Chairperson to convene the next meeting.

Günter Schirmer, Catherine Maffucci-Hugel, Isild Heurtin

cc: Secretary General and 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 of the Council of Europe  
Secretary to the Committee of Ministers  
Director of Communication and Research

Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe