

22 April 2008
Synopsis AS/Jur No 2008/03

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

Synopsis of the meetings held in Strasbourg from 13 to 17 April 2008

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, meeting in Strasbourg

- on 15 April 2008 at 8 h 30 with Mrs Herta Däubler-Gmelin (Germany, SOC), in the Chair, as regards:
 - **For a Europe-wide sex offenders register** (*Rapporteur: Mrs Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin, Sweden, EPP/CD*): considered an information memorandum and approved a questionnaire to be sent to the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) for reply before 15 July 2008;
 - **An internationally recognised status of election observers** (*Rapporteur: Mr Frans Weekers, Netherlands, ALDE*): considered an information memorandum and decided to ask the Venice Commission to prepare an opinion on this subject;
 - **Motion for a resolution on the state of health of Mr Abdullah Öcalan**: decided to inform the Bureau that, in view of the division of labour between the Council of Europe's different human rights bodies, the Committee found that the appointment of a special rapporteur on Mr Öcalan's state of health was not necessary. The ongoing post-monitoring dialogue between the Assembly and Turkey – supported by the Committee – provided sufficient opportunity to follow up any new developments, in particular as regards the issue of the long-term effects of Mr Öcalan's isolation;
 - **Abuse of the criminal justice system in Belarus** (*Rapporteur: Mr Christos Pourgourides, Cyprus, EPP/CD*):
 - considered and approved an addendum to the report
 - took position on the amendments to the draft resolution and to the draft recommendation;
 - **Appointment of rapporteurs:**
 - Situation in the Middle East (*for opinion*): Mr Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco, EPP/CD);
 - **Participation of members in conferences, meetings, seminars, etc.:** heard reports by the following representatives:
 - Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law (CAHDI) (Strasbourg, 6 March 2008): Mrs Däubler-Gmelin (Germany, SOC)
 - Conference: "Ten years of protecting national minorities and regional or minority languages - Institutions and Impact" (Strasbourg, 11 March 2008): Mr Cilevičs (Latvia, SOC)

- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) (Strasbourg, 12-14 March 2008): Mr Cilevičs (Latvia, SOC)
- Octopus Conference: Cooperation against cybercrime and meeting of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) (Strasbourg, 1-3 April 2008): Mr Sasi (Finland, EPP/CD)
- International Conference: "Reporting on Torture in the Context of the War on Terrorism" (Brussels, 4 April 2008): Mr Marty (Switzerland, ALDE)
- Working session of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on the European Council Framework decision amending the Framework decision on combating Terrorism (Brussels, 7 April 2008): Mr Marty (Switzerland, ALDE);

- **Appointment of representatives of the Committee:**

- **Forum for the Future of Democracy (Madrid (Spain), 15-17 October 2008):** appointed the following representatives to the ad hoc committee of the Bureau to take part in this event: Mr Christopher Chope (United Kingdom, EDG), Mrs Nino Nakashidzé (Georgia, ALDE), Mrs Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin (Sweden, EPP/CD), Mr Øyvind Vaksdal (Norway, EDG);
- **Swedish Forum for Human Rights (Luleå (Sweden), 13-14 November 2008):** Mrs Lydie Err (Luxembourg, SOC) and Mr Frans Weekers (Netherlands, ALDE).

- on 15 April 2008 at 14 h with Mrs Herta Däubler-Gmelin in the Chair, as regards:
 - **Protection of "whistle-blowers"** (*Rapporteur: Mr Pieter Omtzigt, Netherlands, EPP/CD*): considered an introductory memorandum and decided to hold a hearing on this subject, with the participation of experts, at a forthcoming meeting;
 - **Legal remedies for human rights violations in the North-Caucasus Region** (*Rapporteur: Mr Dick Marty, Switzerland, ALDE*): considered, approved and declassified a supplementary introductory memorandum, and instructed its Chairperson to transmit it to the Bureau;
 - **Ratification by the Russian Federation of Protocol No 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights:** took note of recent correspondence between the Chairperson of the Committee and the Chairperson of the Russian Delegation, as well as of their meeting during the part-session, and agreed to invite the Chairperson of the State Duma's Legal Committee to an exchange of views at the Committee's meeting in Paris on 2 June 2008;
 - **Sub-Committee on Crime Problems and the Fight against Terrorism** (*Chairperson: Mr Dick Marty, Switzerland, ALDE*): heard a report by the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the meeting held in Athens on 28 March 2008;
 - **Sub-Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights** (*Chairperson: Mrs Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Vidéc, Netherlands, EPP/CD*): heard a statement by the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the meetings held in Paris on 7 March 2008 and in Strasbourg on 13 April 2008;
 - **The situation of national minorities in Vojvodina and of the Romanian ethnic minority in Serbia** (*Rapporteur: Mr Jürgen Herrmann, Germany, EPP/CD*): took note that the debate had been postponed until a forthcoming Assembly session and took position on the amendments to the draft resolution and draft recommendation which had already been tabled (Nos 1-8);

- on 17 April 2008 at 8 h 30 with Mrs Herta Däubler-Gmelin in the Chair, as regards:
 - **The situation of human rights defenders in Council of Europe member states** (*Rapporteur: Mr Holger Haibach, Germany, EPP/CD*):
 - considered an introductory memorandum
 - held a hearing with the participation of the following invited persons:
 - Ms Rachel Denber, Human Rights Watch, Deputy Director of the Europe and Central Asia Division
 - Ms Ekaterina Sokirianskaya, Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Head of the Grozny Office (Russian Federation)
 - Ms Caitriona Rice, Front Line - The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Protection Coordinator/Researcher
 - Ms Delphine Reculeau, Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, FIDH/OMCT, Coordinator
 - Mr Johannes Heiler, Amnesty International, Adviser
 - Mr Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
- and also heard statements by Ms Kirsten Mlacak (ODIHR/Warsaw) and Mr Aage Borchgrevink (Norwegian Helsinki Committee).

- on 17 April 2008 at 14 h 15 with Mrs Herta Däubler-Gmelin in the Chair, as regards:
 - **The accession of the European Union/European Community to the European Convention on Human Rights** (*Rapporteur: Mrs Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc, Netherlands, EPP/CD*): took position on the amendments to the draft resolution and the draft recommendation;
 - **Sub-Committee on Human Rights** (*Chairperson: Mr Jean-Charles Gardetto, Monaco, EPP/CD*): heard a report by the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the meeting held in Strasbourg on 16 April 2008, and endorsed the proposals of the Sub-Committee concerning the list of candidates to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) submitted by the parliamentary delegation of Poland;
 - **Membership of sub-committees**: took note of the following changes:
 - *Sub-Committee on Human Rights*: Mrs Iglia Ivanova (Bulgaria, SOC) to become a member
 - *Sub-Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights*: Mr Christopher Chope (United Kingdom) to become an alternate member on behalf of the European Democrat Group;
 - **Legal recognition of same-sex partnerships in Europe and Freedom of assembly and expression for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons in Council of Europe member states** (*Rapporteur: Mr Andreas Gross, Switzerland, SOC*): decided to make public the report of the hearing held in Paris on 7 March 2008;
 - **Resolution 1594 (2007) on the principle of the Rule of Law**: decided to ask the Venice Commission to prepare an opinion on this subject, as proposed in the Resolution;
 - **Freedom of religion and other human rights for non-Muslim minorities in Turkey and for Muslim minorities in Thrace (Western Greece)** (*Rapporteur: Mr Michel Hunault, France, EDG*): decided to hold an exchange of views with two experts at one of its meetings during the June 2008 part-session;
 - **Appointment of representatives of the Committee**:
 - Conference on “Information technology as an element of the fight against international terrorism” (St Petersburg, 12-13 May 2008): Mr Dmitry Vyatkin (Russian Federation, EDG);
 - **Next meetings**:
 - Paris, Monday 2 June 2008 at 9 h (Council of Europe Office)
 - Strasbourg, during the Assembly’s 3rd part-session of 2008 (23-27 June)
 - Paris, Tuesday 9 September 2008 at 9 h (Council of Europe Office)
 - Strasbourg, during the Assembly’s 4th part-session of 2008 (29 September - 3 October)

The Sub-Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights (of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights), meeting in Strasbourg on 13 April 2008 at 17 h with Mrs Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc (Netherlands, EPP/CD) in the Chair, as regards:

- **Hearing:** held a hearing with the candidates to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of San Marino and adopted its recommendations for the attention of the Bureau of the Assembly with respect to the candidates from this country;
- **Next meeting:**
 - Paris, Monday 2 June 2008 at 16 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 16 April 2008 at 14 h 30 with Mr Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco, EPP/CD) in the Chair, as regards:

- **European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT):** considered and approved its recommendations for the list of candidates to the CPT in respect of Poland;
- **Next meeting:** left it to the Chairperson to convene the next meeting.

Andrew Drzemczewski, Günter Schirmer, Catherine Maffucci-Hugel, Isild Heurtin,
Jennifer Schuetze-Reymann

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