



SECRETARIAT

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1 July 2020

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

### Synopsis of the meeting held by videoconference on 29 June 2020

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, meeting by videoconference on 29 June 2020, with Mr Boriss Cilevičs (Latvia, SOC) in the Chair, as regards:

- **The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on human rights and the rule of law** (*Rapporteur: Mr Vladimir Vardanyan, Armenia, EPP/CD*): considered a draft report and adopted a draft resolution and, unanimously, a draft recommendation; took note of the intention of Ms Sopio Kiladze (Georgia, SOC) to submit a dissenting opinion to this report;

- **Appointment of rapporteurs:**

#### For report:

- **Legal aspects of the accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights:** appointed Mr Titus Corlăţean (Romania, SOC) and heard from him a declaration of no conflict of interest;
- **Emergence of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) and their necessary apprehension through European human rights law:** appointed Mr Fabien Gouttefarde (France, ALDE) and heard from him a declaration of no conflict of interest;
- **Restrictions on NGO activities in Council of Europe member States:** appointed Ms Alexandra Louis (France, ALDE) and heard from her a declaration of no conflict of interest;
- **Political prisoners in the Russian Federation:** appointed Ms Thorhildur Sunna Ævarsdóttir (Iceland, SOC) and heard from her a declaration of no conflict of interest;

#### For opinion:

- **Rights and obligations of NGOs assisting refugees and migrants in Europe:** appointed Ms Alexandra Louis (France, ALDE) and heard from her a declaration of no conflict of interest;
- **Appointment of a General Rapporteur for the Protection of Whistleblowers:** appointed Mr Pieter Omtzigt (EPP/CD, the Netherlands) and heard from him a declaration of no conflict of interest;
- **Fighting corruption – General principles of political responsibility** (*Rapporteur: Mr Sergiy Vlasenko, Ukraine, EPP/CD*): considered an introductory memorandum and agreed, subject to the availability of funds, to the rapporteur's requests to hold a hearing with representatives of GRECO, MONEYVAL, the World Bank, Transparency International and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and to carry out a fact-finding visit to Iceland;

- **Urgent need to strengthen Financial Intelligence Units – Sharper tools needed to improve confiscation of illegal assets** (*Rapporteur: Ms Thorhildur Sunna Ævarsdóttir, Iceland, SOC*): considered an introductory memorandum and agreed to the rapporteur’s request to hold a hearing with up to three experts, subject to the availability of funds;
- **Should politicians be prosecuted for statements made in the exercise of their mandate?** (*Rapporteur: Mr Boriss Cilevičs, Latvia, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur following his fact-finding visit to Spain from 3-6 February 2020, and held an exchange of views with Dr Kerem Altiparmak, Legal Programme Consultant, recipient of the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights & the Rule of Law in 2017;
- **Opinion by the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) on the Draft amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation related to the execution in the Russian Federation of decisions by the European Court of Human Rights**: held an exchange of views with Mr Nicos C. Alivizatos, member of the Venice Commission in respect of Greece (and co-rapporteur of the Venice Commission); considered a draft statement, which was not adopted due to a lack of quorum when voting;
- **Replies from the Committee of Ministers to recommendations emanating from the Committee**: took note of the replies from the Committee of Ministers to the following Assembly recommendations:
  - “Unlimited access to member States, including “grey zones”, by Council of Europe and United Nations human rights monitoring bodies”, [Recommendation 2140 \(2020\)](#);
  - “Ombudsman institutions in Europe – The need for a set of common standards”, [Recommendation 2163 \(2019\)](#);
  - “Improving the protection of whistle-blowers all over Europe”, [Recommendation 2162 \(2019\)](#);
- **Work programme of the Committee: Priorities for 2020**: took note of the Committee’s work programme for 2020;
- **Participation of members in conferences, meetings, seminars etc**: took note of summary reports by the following representatives on:
  - 59<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of MONEYVAL, 2-6 December 2019 by Mr Titus Corlăţean (Romania, SOC);
  - 67<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council for Democratic Elections (of the Venice Commission), 5 December 2019 by Lord Richard Balfe (United Kingdom, NR);
- **Hearings during the next meeting**: agreed to open to the public the hearings to be held at the forthcoming meeting;
- **Other business**: heard a statement by the Chairperson on the recent indictment of Mr Hashim Thaçi, President of Kosovo,<sup>1</sup> and others for war crimes and crimes against humanity before the Kosovo Specialist Chambers, recalling Assembly Resolution 1782 (2011) on allegations of inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo based on the report by former committee chairperson Mr Dick Marty;

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<sup>1</sup> All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

- **Next meetings:** took note of the next meetings as follows:

*Plenary Committee:*

- Paris, 9 September 2020 (Council of Europe Office)
- Strasbourg, during the Assembly's 4<sup>th</sup> part-session of 2020 (12-15 October 2020)
- 9-10 November 2020, Komotini, Thrace, Greece (subject to authorisation by the Bureau and the availability of funds)
  
- Paris, 8 December 2020 (Council of Europe Office) (to be confirmed).

Günter Schirmer, David Milner, Agnieszka Szklanna, Kelly Sipp

cc: Secretary General of the Assembly  
Directors and all staff of the Secretariat of the Assembly  
Secretaries of National Delegations and of Political Groups of the Assembly  
Secretaries of observer and partner for democracy delegations  
Secretary General of the Congress  
Secretary to the Committee of Ministers  
Directors General  
Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe  
Director of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights  
Director of Communication  
Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe