



SECRETARIAT

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15 April 2014

To the members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Synopsis of the meetings held in Strasbourg from 7 to 10 April 2014

The **Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy**, meeting in Strasbourg from 7 to 10 April 2014, with Ms Theodora Bakoyannis (Greece, EPP/CD), Ms Anne Brasseur (Luxembourg, ALDE) and Mr Tadeusz Iwiński (Poland, SOC) in the Chair:

Monday, 7 April 2014, 14:00 – 15:00, as regards:

- **Parliamentary contribution to solving the Western Sahara conflict** (*Rapporteur: Ms Liliane Maury Pasquier, Switzerland, SOC*): held a hearing with the participation of Mr Maouelainin Ben Khalihanna Maoulainin, Secretary General of the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS), and Mr Khatri Adduh, President of the Saharawi National Council;
- **The political transition in Egypt** (*Rapporteur: Mr José María Beneyto, Spain, EPP/CD*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur and approved a statement concerning the death sentences handed down against more than 500 ex-President Morsi supporters; the statement was submitted to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights which approved it on Thursday 10 April and was thereafter jointly issued;

Tuesday 8 April 2014, 08:30 – 09:00, as regards:

- **Work programme:**
 - took note of the documents concerning the *Conference on Freedom of religion and safety for the Christian communities in the Middle East and the Southern Mediterranean* and agreed on the draft agenda for the meeting to be held in Athens, Greece on 7 May 2014;
 - constituted an *ad hoc* Sub-Committee on Iran and decided that it should be composed of the members of the bureaus of the Committee and of its Sub-Committees on the Middle East and the Arab World and on External Relations plus one member representing the Group of the Unified European Left which otherwise would not be represented; agreed that the *ad hoc* Sub-Committee be competent to deal with the recent developments in Iran and the extent to which they may influence “democratic stability” and “deep/soft security in Europe”, in accordance with the terms of reference of the Committee;
- **Request for Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic** (*Rapporteur: Mr Andreas Gross, Switzerland, SOC*): took position on the amendments to the draft resolution;

- **The implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union** (*Rapporteur: Ms Kerstin Lundgren, Sweden, ALDE*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur on her visit to Brussels on 20-21 March 2014;
- **Activities of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in 2013-2014** (*Rapporteur: Ms Cheryl Gillan, United Kingdom, EDG*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur on the meeting of the Sub-Committee on relations with the OECD and the EBRD which took place in London on 4 February 2014;

Thursday 10 April 2014, 09:00 – 10:00, as regards:

- **Appointment of Rapporteur**: took note of the candidates for the report on *The situation in Belarus* and, as there were more than one candidate, agreed to proceed to a vote by secret ballot at its meeting in the afternoon;
- **The political transition in Tunisia** (*Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Marie Bockel, France, EPP/CD*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur and held an exchange of views under the chairmanship – and with the participation of – Ms Anne Brasseur, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, with Mr Mohamed El Arbi Abid, 2nd Vice-President of the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia; Ms Hasna Marsit, Deputy Rapporteur of the Committee on rights and freedoms, National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia, and Ms Simona Granata-Menghini, Deputy Secretary of the Venice Commission;

Thursday 10 April 2014, 14:00 – 15:30, as regards:

- **Appointment of Rapporteur on *The situation in Belarus***: appointed Mr Andrea Rigoni (Italy, ALDE) as Rapporteur and heard from him a declaration of absence of conflict of interest;
- **Activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** (*Rapporteur: Mr Tuur Elzinga, Netherlands, UEL*): heard a statement and approved proposals by the Rapporteur concerning the OECD debates and heard from him a declaration of absence of conflict of interest;
- **Towards a better European democracy: facing the challenges of a federal Europe** (*Rapporteur: Mr Andreas Gross, Switzerland, SOC*): considered a preliminary draft report;
- **Situation in Hungary following the adoption of Assembly Resolution 1941 (2013)** (*Rapporteur: Mr Robert Walter, United Kingdom, EDG*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur;
- **Composition of the Sub-Committees**: approved the following change:
 - Ms Naira Karapetyan, (Armenia, EPP/CD) becomes full member of the Sub-Committee on External Relations further to the resignation of Mr Zoran Vukčević (Montenegro, SOC);
- **Other authorisations by the Committee**:
 - authorised the Chairperson, Ms Theodora Bakoyannis (Greece, EPP/CD), to carry out an information visit to London on 4-6 June 2014 in the framework of the preparation of her report on *Violence against Christian communities in the Middle East and the South Mediterranean and its consequences*;
 - authorised Mr Tuur Elzinga (Netherlands, UEL) to participate in the OECD Forum, which will take place in Paris on 5-6 May 2014;
 - authorised Mr Jean-Marie Bockel (France, EPP/CD) to carry out an information visit to Tunisia before the elections;
- **Other business**:
 - upon proposal by Mr Brian Binley (United Kingdom, EDG), decided to issue a statement on the *Situation of Iranian refugees in Camp Liberty*;
 - took note of Sub-Committees' requests to meet outside Paris or Strasbourg and decided to come back to this issue at a later stage;

- decided to ask for the following extensions of references:
 - *Parliamentary contribution to solving the Western Sahara conflict* (Doc. 12603, Motion for a resolution, Ref. 3783 of 20 June 2011 – validity: 30 April 2014): extension until 30 June 2014;
 - *The implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union* (Bureau decision, Ref. 3887 of 29 June 2012 – validity: 29 June 2014): extension until 30 September 2014;
 - *Political transition in Tunisia* (Bureau decision, Ref. 3889 of 29 June 2012 – validity: 29 June 2014): extension until 29 June 2015;

– **Next meetings:** took note of the forthcoming meetings as follows:

- 7 May 2014, Athens
- 23-27 June 2014, part-session of the Assembly, Strasbourg
- 4-5 September 2014, Sénat, Palais du Luxembourg, Paris 6th
- 29 September – 3 October 2014, part-session of the Assembly, Strasbourg
- 3 November 2014, Paris (to be confirmed)
- 8-9 December 2014, Paris.

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The **Sub-Committee on the Middle East and the Arab World** (of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy), meeting in Strasbourg, on 9 April 2014, with Lord Donald Anderson (United Kingdom, SOC) in the Chair, as regards:

– **Request for partner for democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Parliament of Jordan** (*Rapporteur: Ms Josette Durrieu, France, SOC*):

- heard a statement by the Rapporteur on her visit to Jordan on 25-26 March 2014;
- held an exchange of views with a delegation of the Jordanian House of Representatives, Mr Mustapha Ibrahim Al Hamarneh, MP, and Mr Yousef Al Qarneh, MP;

– **Future work:** discussed a possible meeting in Lebanon;

– **Date and place of the next meeting:** left it to the Chairperson to convene the next meeting.

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The **Sub-Committee on External Relations** (of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy), meeting in Strasbourg on 9 April 2014, with Mr Miloš Aligrudić (Serbia, EDG) then with Mr André Bugnon (Switzerland, ALDE) in the Chair, as regards:

– **Election of the Sub-Committee's Bureau:** elected Mr André Bugnon (Switzerland, ALDE) Vice-Chairperson, by acclamation;

– **Future work:** considered an outline programme for a possible visit to the United Nations bodies and other international organisations based in Geneva, Switzerland, in June 2014, and took note that such visit needed to be authorised by the full Committee and the Bureau of the Assembly;

– **Date and place of the next meeting:** left it to the Chairperson to convene the next meeting.

D. Chatzivassiliou, J. Ary, P. Chevtchenko, S. Arzilli

cc. Secretary General of the Assembly
Director General, 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