



SECRETARIAT

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16 November 2017

To the members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Synopsis of the meeting held in Paris 14 November 2017

The **Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy**, meeting in Paris on 14 November 2017, with Mr Mogens Jensen (Denmark, SOC) in the Chair, as regards:

- **Election of the 2nd Vice-Chairperson of the Committee:** elected, by acclamation, Mr Alfred Heer (Switzerland, ALDE);
- **Assessing political consequences of foreign funding of Islam in Europe** (*Rapporteur: Ms Doris Fiala, Switzerland, ALDE*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur on her fact-finding visit to Vienna, Austria, 23-24 October 2017, and held an exchange of views with Mr Jean-Pierre Chevènement, President of the Islam Foundation of France;
- **Funding of the terrorist group Daesh** (*Rapporteur: Mr Phil Wilson, United Kingdom, SOC*): in the absence of the Rapporteur, held an exchange of views and considered a preliminary draft report;
- **Sub-Committee on relations with the OECD and the EBRD:** heard statements by members of the Sub-Committee on the meeting held at the EBRD's headquarters in London on 26 October 2017;
- **A commitment to introduce rules to ensure fair referendums in Council of Europe member States** (*Rapporteur: Ms Cheryl Gillan, United Kingdom, EC*): in the absence of the Rapporteur, considered an information document summing up the referendums organised during the last ten years in Council of Europe member States and States whose parliaments enjoy partnership for democracy status with the Assembly; took note of the fact that the Venice Commission is also preparing a study on referendums, in the light of its 2007 Code of Good Practice on Referendums, and agreed to hold a hearing on this subject, during the January 2018 part-session, with Professor Nikos Alivizatos, Rapporteur of the Venice Commission, and other experts;
- **World Forum for Democracy on *Is Populism a problem?***: held an exchange of views on this year's Forum (Strasbourg, 8-10 November 2017) and the topic of populism and decided to organise an exchange of views on the conclusions of the Forum with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe during the January 2018 part-session;
- **Open discussion on current issues:** heard statements by Lord George Foulkes (United Kingdom, SOC) on the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and by Ms Ioanneta Kavvadia (Greece, UEL) on the Paradise Papers;

- **The situation in Syria and its effects upon surrounding countries** (*Rapporteur: Mr Tobias Zech, Germany, EPP/CD*): in the absence of the Rapporteur, held a hearing with the participation of Mr Tarek Mitri, Director of the American University Beirut, Former Lebanese Minister and Former special representative of the UN Secretary General; Mr Haid Haid, Consulting Research Fellow, Chatham House, London, and Mr Julien Barnes-Dacey, senior policy fellow, Middle East & North Africa programme of the European Council of Foreign Relations, London, followed by an exchange of views;
- **Libya's future between the threats of terrorism and a democratic prospect** (*Rapporteur: Mr Attila Korodi, Romania, EPP/CD*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur on his fact-finding visit to Tunisia on 7-8 November 2017, and on his meeting with Ms Ahlem Gharbi, French President Emmanuel Macron's advisor on North Africa and Middle East, on 14 November 2017, and agreed to hold a hearing with Mr Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission, and other experts, at its meeting on 14 December 2017 in Paris;
- **Authorisations by the Committee:**
 - authorised Ms Doris Fiala (Switzerland, ALDE) to carry out a fact-finding visit to London, United Kingdom, in 2018, in the framework of the preparation of her report on *Assessing political consequences of foreign funding of Islam in Europe*;
 - authorised Mr Attila Korodi (Romania, EPP/CD) to carry out a fact-finding visit to Brussels, Belgium, in the framework of the preparation of his report on *Libya's future between the threats of terrorism and a democratic prospect*;
 - authorised Mr Adão Silva (Portugal, EPP/CD) to carry out a fact-finding visit to Geneva, Switzerland on 11 and 12 (half day) December 2017, in the framework of the preparation of his report on *Strengthening co-operation with the United Nations*, and to participate in the meeting of the Sub-Committee on External Relations, to be held in Geneva on the same dates;
 - further to the authorisation of the Bureau on 13 October 2017, agreed that Mr Andrea Rigoni (Italy, ALDE) would participate in the meetings of the Working Group on the death penalty issue to be held in the Minsk region, Republic of Belarus, from 22 to 26 November 2017, in his capacity as former Rapporteur on *The Situation of Belarus*, at the Assembly's cost;
- **Changes in the composition of the Sub-Committees:** approved the replacement of Mr Alain Destexhe by Mr Olivier Destrebecq (Belgium, ALDE) in the Sub-Committee on External Relations;
- **Other business:** further to a statement by Mr Talip Küçükcan on the worrying state of health of Mr Deniz Baykal, the Committee conveyed its best wishes to his family;
- **Next meetings:**
 - took note that the Sub-Committee on External Relations will visit United Nations bodies and other international organisations based in Geneva, Switzerland, on 11 and 12 (morning) December 2017;
 - confirmed the next plenary meeting to be held on 14 December 2017 in Paris;
 - approved the proposed meetings for 2018 as follows:
 - Strasbourg, during the Assembly's 1st part-session, 22-26 January 2018
 - Paris, 12 March 2018
 - Strasbourg, during the Assembly's 2nd part-session, 23-27 April 2018
 - Athens, Greece, 22 May 2018 (subject to the authorisation by the Bureau of the Assembly)
 - Strasbourg, during the Assembly's 3rd part-session, 25-29 June 2018
 - Paris, 11 September 2018
 - Strasbourg, during the Assembly's 4th part-session, 8-12 October 2018
 - Paris, 13 November 2018
 - Paris, 13 December 2018.

D. Chatzivassiliou, J. Ary, S. Arzilli, A. Salanson

cc. Secretary General of the Assembly
Director General, Director 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