



SECRETARIAT

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13 December 2018

To the members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Synopsis of the meeting held in Paris on 11 December 2018

The **Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy**, meeting in Paris on 11 December 2018 with Ms Ria Oomen-Ruijten (Netherlands, EPP/CD) in the Chair, as regards:

- **Updating guidelines to ensure fair referendums in Council of Europe member States** (*Rapporteur: Dame Cheryl Gillan, United Kingdom, EC*): approved the report and unanimously adopted a draft resolution; decided to propose to the Bureau of the Assembly that, given the subject matter and the fruitful co-operation with the Venice Commission, its President, Mr Gianni Buquicchio, be invited to participate in the plenary debate during the January 2019 part-session;
- **Setting minimum standards for electoral systems in order to offer the basis for free and fair elections** (*Rapporteur: Mr Hendrik Daems, Belgium, ALDE*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur, including a declaration of absence of any conflict of interest, and, upon his proposal, agreed to request to the Bureau of the Assembly an extension of reference until 31 December 2019;
- **Protecting and supporting the victims of terrorism** (*Rapporteur: Ms Marietta Karamanli, France, SOC*): considered a preliminary draft report and held a hearing with the participation of Mr Julien Rencki, Director General of the French Guarantee Fund for Victims of Terrorism and other Offences (FGTI), and Ms Julie Heisserer, responsible for European and international relations of the inter-ministerial delegation for victim assistance to the French Ministry of Justice;
- **Compatibility of Sharia Law with the European Convention on Human Rights: can States Parties to the Convention be signatories of the “Cairo Declaration”?** (*Rapporteur for opinion: Ms Maryvonne Blondin, France, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur for opinion and held an exchange of views in order to prepare the draft opinion to be adopted during the January 2019 part-session;
- **Media freedom as a condition for democratic elections** (*Rapporteur for opinion: Ms Olena Sotnyk, Ukraine, ALDE*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur for opinion and held an exchange of views in order to prepare the draft opinion to be adopted during the January 2019 part-session;
- **Sub-Committee on External Relations, United Nations Headquarters** (New York, 5-6 December 2018): heard a statement by the Chairperson and decided to come back to this point at one of the Committee's next meetings;

- **Strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (*Rapporteur: Mr Adão Silva, Portugal, EPP/CD*): in the absence of the Rapporteur, decided to come back to this point at one of the Committee's next meetings;
- **The evaluation of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of Morocco** (*Rapporteur: Mr Bogdan Klich, Poland, EPP/CD*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur and agreed to his proposal to hold a hearing on 23 January, during the January 2019 part-session, with the participation of Ambassador Katrin Kivi, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the Council of Europe and Chairperson of the Rapporteur Group on External Relations of the Committee of Ministers (GR-EXT), Ms Amina Bouayach, Chairperson of the Moroccan National Human Rights Council, Mr Driss El Yazami, former Chairperson of the Moroccan National Human Rights Council and President of the Council of the Moroccan Community abroad, as well as a representative from the Moroccan Social, Economic and Environmental Council;
- **The evaluation of the partnership for democracy in respect of the parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic** (*Rapporteur: Mr Corneliu M. Cozmanniuc, Romania, EPP/CD*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur, including a declaration of absence of any conflict of interest and a proposal to invite the Kyrgyz delegation for an exchange of views during the January 2019 part-session;
- **The evaluation of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of Jordan** (*Rapporteur: Mr Mogens Jensen, Denmark, SOC*): in the absence of the Rapporteur, took note of the programme of his fact-finding visit of to Amman, 27-28 November 2018, thanked the Jordanian delegation for its support and decided to come back to this point at one of the Committee's next meetings;
- **Work Programme:**
 - after an exchange of views and a vote, decided, under Rule 45.1 of the Rules, to take no action on the reference on *Undue influence of financial capital in political systems of microstates of the Council of Europe*, and to inform the Bureau of the Assembly accordingly;
 - decided to keep the reference on *Reshaping the foundations of multilateralism* on its work programme and to examine it at a later date, in light of the report under preparation on *Strengthening co-operation with the United Nations in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*;
 - took note of the documents concerning the Conference on "Building democratic security in the Mediterranean: Common challenges, Shared responsibility" which took place in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on 6 November 2018, and decided to come back to this point during the January 2019 part-session in order to consider the follow-up proposals by Mr George Loucaides, Chairperson of the *ad hoc* committee which took part in this conference;
 - decided to request the Bureau of the Assembly for an extension of the reference on *The situation in Syria and its effects upon surrounding countries* (Rapporteur: Ms Theodora Bakoyannis, Greece, EPP/CD), until 30 June 2019;
 - further to the invitation from the Chairperson of the German delegation, agreed to hold a Committee meeting in Berlin, Germany, on 14 November 2019 (subject to the authorisation by the Bureau of the Assembly);
- **Open discussion on current issues:** held an exchange of views on escalating tension between Russia and Ukraine in the Azov Sea and agreed that the Chairperson calls for the release of crew members of Ukrainian military vessels illegally captured by Russia;
- **Changes in the composition of the Sub-Committees:** appointed Mr Andrej Šircelj (Slovenia, EPP/CD) as member of the Sub-Committee on the Middle East and Arab World;

– **Meetings in 2019:** agreed on the following meetings:

- Strasbourg, during the Assembly's 1st part-session, 21-25 January 2019
- Paris, 5 March 2019
- Strasbourg, during the Assembly's 2nd part-session, 8-12 April 2019
- Paris, 20 May 2019
- Strasbourg, during the Assembly's 3rd part-session, 24-28 June 2019
- Paris, 11 September 2019 (tbc)
- Strasbourg, during the Assembly's 4th part-session, 30 September-4 October 2019
- Berlin, 14 November 2019 (subject to the authorisation by the Bureau of the Assembly)
- Paris, 9 December 2019.

D. Chatzivassiliou, J. Ary, S. Arzilli

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