

Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Secretariat of the Assembly

Synopsis

2 July 2007

The Bureau of the Assembly, meeting on Friday 29 June 2007 in Strasbourg with Mr René van der Linden, President of the Assembly, and subsequently Mr Lindblad, Vice-President of the Assembly, in the Chair, as regards:

- **Communication by the President:** was informed that the President would carry out official visits to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia during the period 3 – 10 July 2007 and to the Middle East at the end of August 2007;
- **3rd Part of the 2007 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 25-29 June 2007):** was informed by the Secretary General of the Assembly about the follow-up to be given to texts adopted during the part-session;
- **Follow-up to Recommendation 1793 (2007) on the “Need for a Council of Europe convention on the suppression of counterfeiting and trafficking in counterfeit goods”:** was informed by the President of his intention to write to the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers asking him to ensure appropriate follow-up to this Recommendation;
- **Questions for oral answers to the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers during part-sessions of the Assembly:** was informed that the President would write to the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers on the need to review the modalities for this procedure with a view to introducing more spontaneity;
- **4th Part of the 2007 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 1-5 October 2007):** adopted the draft agenda and drew-up of the provisional draft order of business;
- **Protocol N° 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights:** noted that the Duma of the Russian Federation had not yet ratified Protocol N°14; was informed that the Sub-Committee on Elections of Judges of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights would consequently start interviews with candidates for the post of Judge to the Court in September 2007; and agreed that the term of office of any re-elected judges would start as from 1 November 2007, while the term of office for any newly elected judges would start as from 1 February 2008 in order to avoid any interruption in the Court's work;
- **Follow-up to the debate on “State of Human Rights and Democracy in Europe”:**
 - i. agreed to include the subject “Debate and report on the state of human rights and democracy in Europe: evaluation” in the draft agenda for its next meeting; and noted that the Chairpersons of the Political Affairs Committee, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and the Monitoring Committee - as well as Chairpersons of all other Council of Europe bodies

involved - would be given the possibility to present their views on the debate with a view to the preparation of future such debates;

ii. agreed to include the subject "Annual award of the Parliamentary Assembly for outstanding civil society action in the defence of human rights" in the draft agenda for its next meeting;

- **References and transmissions to committees:** see Appendix I;

- **Forum for the Future of Democracy (Stockholm/Sigtuna, Sweden (13-15 June 2007)):**

i. took note of the conclusions of the Forum by the General Rapporteurs;

ii. asked MM. Gross, Lindblad and de Puig to make proposals in time for its next meeting for the organisation of future Forums, on the basis of an evaluation of previous Forums;

- **European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments (Strasbourg, 22 – 23 May 2008):** decided that the conference would be devoted to the following themes:

i. "National Parliaments and the Council of Europe: promoting the core values of democracy, human rights and rule of law": "Added value of the Council of Europe as guardian of the core values" and "The Role of national Parliaments in promoting the core values: exchange of good practices";

ii. "Parliaments and Civil Society": "Interaction between Parliaments and civil society" and "Mechanisms for civil society input into parliamentary processes: exchange of good practices";

- **Elections:**

i. *Parliamentary elections in Turkey (22 July 2007)*: approved the composition of the ad hoc committee which would observe these elections and appointed Mr Van den Brande (Belgium, EPP/CD) as its Chairperson;

ii. *Parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan (18 August 2007)*: took note of an invitation letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan to observe the elections; approved the composition of the ad hoc committee which would observe them; and appointed Mr Wilshire (United Kingdom, EDG) as its Chairperson;

iii. *Parliamentary elections in Ukraine (30 September 2007)*: approved the composition of the ad hoc committee which would observe these elections and appointed Mrs Severinsen (Denmark, ALDE) as its Chairperson;

- **Communications:**

i. heard communications by the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe made on the basis of a written report and took note of an information document on a Medium Term Strategy for the Council of Europe;

ii. took note of a communication by the Secretary General of the Assembly;

- **European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT):** approved the lists of candidates in respect of Portugal and Ukraine, to be forwarded to the Committee of Ministers in the following order of preference:

i. With regard to **Portugal**:

- Mr Celso José DAS NEVES MANATA
- Mme Maria José BAIRRÃO MOTA DE MATOS

- Mr Luis Filipe MOREIRA ISIDRO

ii. With regard to **Ukraine**:

- Mme Zoreslava SHKIRYAK-NYZHNYK
- M. Mykhaylo BUROMENSKIY
- M. Mykola GNATOVSKYY

- **Co-operation with the European Parliament:** took note that a meeting between the Presidential Committee of the Assembly and the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament would be held in Brussels on 30 August 2007;

- **Analysis of the use made by the Assembly's political groups of their allocations for 2006:** approved the analysis contained in a document prepared by the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development;

- **Composition of the Monitoring Committee:** approved new members as proposed by political groups for ratification by the Assembly: Mrs Jivkova (Bulgaria, SOC), Mr Rigoni (Italy, ALDE), and Mr Zala (Slovakia, SOC);

- **Meetings elsewhere than in Strasbourg and Paris:** see Appendix II;

- **Assembly representatives for official activities:** see Appendix III;

- **Progress Report of the Bureau of the Assembly and of the Standing Committee (29 June – 1 October 2007):** appointed Mr Lindblad (Sweden, EPP/CD) as rapporteur;

- **Visits by Rapporteurs and an ad hoc committee:** authorised the following fact-finding visits:

i. Mrs Durrieu (France, SOC) to Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia within the framework of the preparation of her report “Strengthening co-operation with the Maghreb countries”;

ii. The ad hoc Committee on the implementation of Resolution 1416 (2005) on the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh region dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference to Armenia and Azerbaijan, including Nagorno-Karabakh;

- **Visit to the Middle East:** agreed to set-up an ad hoc committee - to be chaired by the Chair of the Sub-Committee on the Middle East (of the Political Affairs Committee) and composed of the Rapporteur for the Middle East and one representative from each political group - to visit Israel and the Palestinian territories with a view to preparing a Tripartite Forum;

- **Declaration on the plight of the Bulgarian medical personnel accused of having caused HIV/AIDS infections in Libya:** adopted a declaration on this matter (see Appendix IV);

- **Bureau meeting in Rome (10 September 2007):** was informed that the Secretary General of the Assembly had sent invitations to Bureau members to this meeting;

- **Date and place of next meetings:** authorised the following meetings:

- . Rome, Monday 10 September 2007 at 9 am;
- . Strasbourg, Monday 1 October 2007 at 8 am;
- . Strasbourg, Friday 5 October 2007 at 8.30 am;
- . Bratislava, Thursday 22 November 2007 at 2 pm (to be confirmed).

cc. Secretary General of the Assembly
Secretariat of the Assembly
Secretaries of National Delegations and of Political Groups of the Assembly
Observers to 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
Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe

APPENDIX I

References and transmissions to committees

The Bureau approved the following references and modifications of references, subject to ratification by the Assembly:

A. REQUEST TO MODIFY A REFERENCE

1. **Current affairs debate of 24 May 2007**
Sudan and Darfur – Europe's responsibility

Ref. no. 3345 of 24 May 2007, to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *for report* and to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *for opinion*.

II. REQUESTS TO EXTEND REFERENCES

1. **Doc. 10626**

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Margelov and others

Compliance by Observer Countries with the values of the Council of Europe

Ref. 3125 of 1 September 2005 – validity: 1 September 2007, extension until 31 December 2007.

2. **Doc. 10624**

Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Hurskainen and others

The incorporation of equality principles in the internal work and decision-making mechanisms of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Ref. 3123 of 1 September 2005 – validity: 1 September 2007, extension until 1 December 2007.

APPENDIX II

Meetings elsewhere than in Strasbourg and Paris

The Bureau authorised the following meetings:

- i. Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men: Istanbul (Turkey), autumn 2007;
- ii. Sub-Committee on the Cultural Heritage (of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education): Belgrade (Serbia), 21 – 22 September 2007;
- iii. Committee on Economic Affairs and Development: Munich (Germany), 18-19 October 2007;
- iv. Sub-Committee on the Europe Prize (of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs): Nuremberg (Germany), 10 – 11 August 2007;
- v. Ad hoc Sub-Committee (of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs): Valencia (Spain), 15 – 16 October 2007;
- vi. Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs: Azores (Portugal) 18 – 20 October 2007;
- vii. Ad hoc Sub-Committee (of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population): Budapest (Hungary), 15 – 16 October 2007;
- viii. Sub-Committee on Refugees (of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population): Belgrade (Serbia), 29 – 30 October 2007;
- ix. Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population: Aachen (Germany), 19 – 20 November 2007 (interpretation costs to be covered by the organisers);
- x. Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights: Venice (Italy), 13 – 14 December 2007;
- xi. Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe: Berlin (Germany), 5 – 6 November 2007 (interpretation costs to be covered by the organisers).

APPENDIX III

Assembly representatives for official activities

- i. Appointments of Assembly representatives for official activities: in reply to formal invitations, appointed the following Assembly members:
- a. Mr Azzolini (Italy, EPP/CD): NATO Parliamentary Assembly – Seminar of the Mediterranean Special Group, Naples (Italy), 1-2 July 2007;
 - b. Mr Eörsi (Hungary, ALDE): Croatia Summit 2007 – Europe's New South, Dubrovnik (Croatia), 6-7 July 2007;
 - c. Mr Gross (Switzerland, SOC): Annual Conference of the Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials (ACEEEO), Strasbourg, 18-19 September 2007;
 - d. Lord Russell-Johnston (United Kingdom, ALDE): 4th European Electoral Management Bodies' conference, Strasbourg, 20-21 September 2007;
 - e. Mr Doric (Croatia, ALDE), Mr Ivan Ivanov (Bulgaria, EPP/CD), Mr Glavan (Romania, ALDE), Mr Pollozhani ("the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, SOC), Ms Lillehöök (Sweden, EPP/CD): OSCE PA Fall Meetings, Portoroz (Slovenia), 29 September-2 October 2007;
 - f. Mrs Bjarnadóttir (Iceland, EDG): 53rd Annual Session of the NATO PA, Reykjavik (Iceland), 5-9 October 2007 (no cost for the Assembly);
 - g. Mr Dupraz (Switzerland, ALDE): 117th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva (Switzerland), 8-10 October 2007 (no cost for the Assembly);
 - h. Mr Legendre (France, EPP/CD): World Conference on Dialogue Among Religions and Civilizations, Ohrid, ("the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"), 26-28 October 2007;
 - i. Mr Wodarg (Germany, SOC): 8th Conference of European Health Ministers, Bratislava (Slovakia), 21-23 November 2007;
- ii. Report by Assembly representatives on their participation in official activities: took note of a report by Mr Walter (United Kingdom, EDG) on his participation in the workshop on Parliamentary oversight over the budget within the framework of the Parliamentary troika on the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in Belgrade on 11 June 2007; and decided to refer it to the competent committee for follow-up.

APPENDIX IV

The PACE Bureau recalls that the Bulgarian nurses and doctor are 'innocent'

Strasbourg, 29.06.2007 – The Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), meeting today in Strasbourg, has approved the following statement:

"The Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe expresses indignation at the plight of the five Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian now Bulgarian Doctor, who stand accused of having intentionally infected children with HIV/AIDS at the Benghazi hospital and have subsequently been condemned to death.

The Bureau of the Assembly is deeply concerned about the possible outcome of the imminent ruling on 11 July of Libya's Supreme Court on an appeal, which will mark the final stage of the medical staff's trial and will be the last opportunity for the Courts to recognise their innocence. In this context, the Assembly reiterates its firm condemnation of the unfair trial procedures, accompanied by the use of torture and threat of execution in order to extract "confessions". The defendants' right to a fair trial is universal and irrevocable, finding its basis in a variety of regional and international legal instruments, including the European Convention of Human Rights.

It recalls the Assembly's position on this case in [Recommendation 1726 \(2005\)](#) in particular its conclusion that the nurses and doctor should be regarded as innocent. It also recalls the fundamental principle to which the Assembly is attached: the rejection of the death penalty in *all* circumstances.

The Bureau of the Assembly is profoundly troubled by the humanitarian tragedy that has befallen the children and their families, and underscores the imperative need for adequate medical treatment and support. The Assembly continues to support strongly the efforts of the international community to provide the children and their families care and support."