



Political Affairs Committee

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly

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18 March 2009

The Political Affairs Committee, meeting in Paris on 16 - 17 March 2009, with Mr Lindblad (Sweden, EPP/CD) in the Chair:

as regards:

- **Situation in the Middle East** (*Rapporteur: Mr Fassino, Italy, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur on the state of the preparation of his report, held an exchange of views on the situation in the region with the participation of Mr David Ayalon, member of the Knesset, Mr Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman of the Political Committee of the Palestinian Legislative Council and Mr Fuad Kokaly, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council; and heard a statement by Mr Pavlidis, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on the Middle East on the meeting held on 16 March 2009;
- **Situation in Belarus** (*Rapporteur: Mr Rigoni, Italy, ALDE*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur and held an exchange of views on the basis of a preliminary draft report with the participation of:
 - Mr Evgenyi Smirnov, Member of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus,
 - Mr Anatoly Glatz, member of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus,
 - Mr Anatoly Lebedko - Chairman of the National Committee of the United Democratic Forces (UDF), United Civic Party
 - Mr Viktor Karneyenka – First Deputy Chairman of the ‘for Freedom!’ movement.
- **Need for a Council of Europe neighbourhood policy** (*Rapporteur: Mr Van den Brande, Belgium, EPP/CD*): in the absence of the Rapporteur, took note of elements of a draft resolution, and was informed of the Rapporteur’s intention to present the report for adoption during the April 2009 part-session;
- **Threshold levels in parliamentary elections, and their impact on representativity of parliaments in Council of Europe member states** (*Rapporteur: Mr Daems, Belgium, ALDE*): took note of an outline for a report and agreed to propose Mr Daems as one of the three General Rapporteurs of the Forum for the future of democracy to be held in Kiev on 21-23 October 2009, which will be devoted to electoral systems (subject to confirmation by the Bureau);

- **The United Nations – the reform and the Council of Europe member states** (*Rapporteur: Mr Gross, Switzerland, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur on his fact-finding visit to Rome (6 February 2009) and the state of preparation of his report;
- **Euro-Mediterranean: call for a Council of Europe Strategy** (*Rapporteur: Mr Badré, France, ALDE*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur following his initial contacts with parliamentarians from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia;
- **Ban of cluster munitions** (*Rapporteur: Mr Pflug, Germany, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur and held a hearing with the participation of:
 - Mr Louis Maresca, Legal Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross
 - Mrs Outi Holopainen, Director, Unit for Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland.
- **Forum on early warning in conflict prevention**: heard a statement by the Chair of the ad hoc sub-committee on early warning systems and conflict prevention in Europe on the meeting held on 16 March 2009, approved the draft programme of this Forum as proposed by the ad hoc sub-committee;
- **External Relations**: heard a statement by Mr Iwiński, Chair of the Sub-Committee, on the meeting held on 16 March 2009, approved the items to be put on the agenda of a joint meeting to be held on the occasion of the PACE-CIS IPA ecological congress (St. Petersburg, 14-15 May 2009), took note that the Sub-Committee will make a contribution on “Parliamentary dimension of conflict prevention”, and approved the proposal of the Sub-Committee that the 2010 joint PACE-CIS IPA conference should be focused on conflict prevention;
- **Follow-up to the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union** (*Rapporteur: Mr Wilshire, United Kingdom, EDG*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur;
- **Composition of Sub-Committees**: appointed:
 - Sub-Committee on External Relations:
 - . Mr Breen (Ireland) as titular member and Mr Fahey (Ireland) as alternate;
 - Sub-Committee on the Middle East:
 - The names of Mr Fahey (Ireland) as titular member and Mr Breen as alternate were added to the waiting list, given that no more seats were available.
- **Future work**
 - a) decided, on the basis of the proposal of its Chairman, to invite representatives of the Association of Petitioners in China for an exchange of views at the next committee meeting to be held during the April part-session (27-30 April 2009)
 - b) Authorisations by the Committee
 - . authorised Mrs Hurskainen, in her capacity as Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Belarus, to attend the Conference on the assessment of the developments in Belarus over the last 6 months, organised by the European Parliament, in Brussels, on 31 March 2009;
 - . authorised Mr von Sydow, Rapporteur on “*Situation in Kosovo*”, to conduct fact-finding visits to Brussels and to Serbia, in the framework of the preparation of his report.

- **Next meetings**

- . Second part-session (27-30 April 2009), Strasbourg
- . 26-27 May 2009, Astana (Kazakhstan)
- . Third part-session (22-26 June 2009), Strasbourg
- . 10 September 2009, Paris
- . Fourth part-session (28 September - 2 October 2009), Strasbourg
- . 17 November 2009, Paris
- . 15 December 2009, Paris

The Sub-Committee on External Relations of the Political Affairs Committee, meeting in Paris on 16 March 2009, with Mr Iwiński (Poland, SOC) in the Chair:

- postponed the election of its Vice-Chair until its next meeting;

as regards:

- **Exchange of views with parliamentarians from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia:** held an exchange of views with the participation of:

Algeria

Mr Rachid Bougherbal, Member of the Council of the Nation
Mr Tahar Khaoua, Deputy, National Popular Assembly

Tunisia

Mr Chekib Dhaouadi, Member of the Chamber of Councillors, Rapporteur of the Political Affairs and External Relations Committee;
Mrs Aziza Hatira, Member of the Chamber of Deputies;

and expressed support for a more structured political dialogue with the Maghreb countries at the parliamentary level;

- **Co-operation with the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS:** held an exchange of views with Mr Rustemov, Chairman of the Commission on Political Issues and International Co-operation of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS, and in particular, as regards:

- Joint meeting with the Commission on Political Issues and International Co-operation (CIS IPA) and the Political Committee (WEU PA) (St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 14 May 2009):
 - took note of the items for the agenda of the joint meeting suggested by the CIS and WEU Assemblies;
 - approved the proposal of the Chair that the Sub-Committee should make a contribution on "Parliamentary dimension of conflict prevention";
 - supported the proposal by the Chair that the 2010 joint PACE-CIS IPA conference should be focused on conflict prevention;
 - took note of the draft programme of the "Nevsky Ecological Congress" co-organised by the PACE and CIS IPA (St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 15 May 2009);

- **Analysis of the replies by the Committee of Ministers to Recommendations of the Assembly related to external relations:** held an exchange of views on the replies by the Committee of Ministers to the following texts:

- . Recommendation 1826 (2008) *The situation in the Republics of Central Asia*
- . Recommendation 1825 (2008) *Strengthening co-operation with the Maghreb countries*
- . Recommendation 1827 (2008) *The Council of Europe and its observer states – the current situation and the way forward.*

- **Date and place of the next meeting:** April part-session (27-30 April 2009)

The ad hoc sub-committee on early warning systems and the prevention of conflicts in Europe of the Political Affairs Committee, meeting in Paris on 16 March 2009, with Mr Wilshire (United Kingdom, EDG) in the Chair,

as regards:

- **Forum on early warning in conflict prevention:** held an exchange of views on the basis of a draft programme of the Forum proposed by its Chair and decided to submit it to the Political Affairs Committee;

- **Date and place of the next meeting:** April part-session (27-30 April 2009)

The Sub-Committee on the Middle East of the Political Affairs Committee, meeting in Paris on 16 March, 2009 with Mr Pavlidis (Greece, EPP/CD) in the Chair:

as regards:

- **Exchange of views on the preparation of the Tripartite Forum:** held an exchange of views with the participation of:

- . Mr Daniel AYALON, representative of the Knesset;
- . Mr Abdullah ABDULLAH, Chairman of the Political Committee of the Palestinian Legislative Council
- . Mr Fuad KOKALY, Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council

- took note of the commitment of both parties to continue the political dialogue within the framework of the Tripartite Forum, and agreed to pursue the preparations with a view to the organisation of the next session of the Forum;
- took note of the proposal of the Chair to hold the next Forum in Rhodes in June 2009 (dates and place to be confirmed, subject to the approval of the Committee and authorisation of the Bureau).

- **Date and place of the next meeting:** April part-session (27-30 April 2009)

Agnieszka Nachilo, Pavel Chevtchenko, Sonia Sirtori-Milner