



Political Affairs Committee Secretariat

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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21 November 2011

The Political Affairs Committee, meeting in Paris on 14-15 November 2011, with Mr von Sydow (Sweden, SOC) and Mr Pourgourides (Cyprus, EPP/CD), in the Chair:

as regards:

Towards enhanced dialogue and co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers:

- held an exchange of views with Ambassador Urszula Gacek, Permanent Representative of Poland to the Council of Europe, Chairperson of the Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM) of the Committee of Ministers, on political issues of common interest, and with Ambassador Euripides L. Evriviades, Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the Council of Europe, Chairperson of the Rapporteur Group on External Relations (GR-EXT) of the Committee of Ministers, on the Council of Europe policy towards neighbouring regions and the relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union;
- decided to invite Ambassador Eleanor Fuller, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe, in her capacity as Chairperson of the Ministers' Deputies, to a forthcoming meeting of the Committee for an exchange of views on the priorities of the United Kingdom Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, as well as on issues of common interest;

Reaffirming the universal nature of human rights (*Rapporteur: Mr Badré, France, ALDE*): considered and unanimously approved an information report;

How much and what kind of state is needed in a democratic and just society? (*Rapporteur: Mr Gross, Switzerland, SOC*):

- held a hearing with the participation of Dr Felix Roth, Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels, and Professor Dr Petra Dobner, Professor of Political Science, in particular governance, Institute of Political Science, Hamburg University;
- decided to rename the report as follows: *Crisis of democracy and role of the state in today's Europe* in order to take into account also the issues raised in the motion for a resolution on the *Erosion of confidence in democracy and possible responses*;

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Violence against religious communities (*Rapporteur: Mr Volontè, Italy, EPP/CD*): held an exchange of views on the basis of an outline report and approved a statement calling on the Egyptian authorities to protect effectively the Coptic community;

Increasing drug traffic from Afghanistan as a threat to European security (*Rapporteur: Mr Markov, Russian Federation, EDG*): in the absence of the Rapporteur, postponed this item to a forthcoming meeting;

Debate on the state of democracy in Europe, foreseen for the June 2012 part-session: held an exchange of views and proposed the following theme to be submitted to the Bureau: "Democracy at risk: the role of citizens and of the state today"; considered that, under this overarching theme, the following reports could be the subject of a joint debate: *Crisis of democracy and role of the state in today's Europe* (Rapporteur: Mr Andreas Gross, Switzerland, SOC) and *The rise of populist movements in Europe and its dangers for democracy* (Rapporteur: Ms Nursuna Memecan, Turkey, ALDE), without excluding that other reports could be included in such a joint debate, depending on the state of progress in their preparation;

Open discussion on current issues: held an exchange of views on a range of current political developments, issued a statement urging the prevention of a humanitarian disaster and human rights violations at Camp Ashraf and asked the Chair to inform the Bureau with a view to contacting the elected representatives of the Turkish Cypriot Community to express concern about recent arrests in the Northern part of Cyprus on grounds of homosexuality;

Follow-up to PACE Resolutions emanating from the Committee: heard statements by former Rapporteurs on: *The political situation in the Balkans* (Mr von Sydow); *Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the emerging democracies in the Arab world* (Mr von Sydow in the absence of Mr Gardetto); *Request for Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Parliament of Morocco* (Mr Volontè); *The situation in Tunisia* (Ms Brasseur) and *The impact of the Lisbon Treaty on the Council of Europe* (Ms Lundgren), and authorised Ms Lundgren to carry out a visit to Brussels;

Forum for the Future of Democracy, Cyprus, 13-14 October 2011: heard statements by members of the Ad Hoc Sub-Committee on the Forum for the Future of Democracy;

Future work:

.appointed:

- The Earl of Dundee (United Kingdom, EDG) as Rapporteur on *The promotion of active citizenship in Europe*,
- Ms Pourbaix-Lundin (Sweden, EPP/CD) as Rapporteur on *Counteraction to manifestations of neo-nazism and xenophobia*,
- Mr Toshev (Bulgaria, EPP/CD) as Rapporteur on *New parliamentary effort to create a stability pact in the Caucasus*,
- Ms Memecan (Turkey, ALDE) as Rapporteur on *The rise of populist movements in Europe and its dangers for democracy*;

.agreed to request the extension of the reference on *Measures to improve the democratic character of elections in the Council of Europe member states* (Rapporteur: Mr Gardetto, Monaco, EPP/CD) until 30 June 2012;

1124bis meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, Strasbourg, 7 November 2011: took note of information documents on *Stocktaking of the Ukrainian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe* and *Priorities of the United Kingdom Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*;

Changes in the composition of the sub-committees: appointed Earl of Dundee (United Kingdom, EDG) as alternate of Lord Anderson (United Kingdom, SOC) in the Sub-Committee on External Relations;

Other business:

- **The Council of Europe and the Eastern Partnership of the European Union** (Rapporteur: Mr Lipiński, Poland, EPP/CD): was informed that Mr Lipiński was no longer in a position to continue working on the report, and agreed that Mr von Sydow would finalise it and present it to the Committee for adoption in December;
- instructed its Chair to submit a request to the Bureau for a current affairs debate on “The young generation sacrificed: political, social and other consequences of the financial crisis” to be held at the meeting of the Standing Committee (Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 25 November 2011);

Next meetings:

- 13 December 2011, 4pm to 6pm, meeting of the Sub-Committee on the Middle East
- 14 December 2011, Paris
- 23-27 January 2012 (1st part-session), Strasbourg.

Despina Chatzivassiliou, João Ary, Pavel Chevtchenko, Silvia Arzilli

cc. Secretary General of the Assembly
Director General, Directors and all staff of the Secretariat of the Assembly
Secretaries of National Delegations to the Assembly
Secretaries 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
Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
for Organisation Developments and Reform
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