



SECRETARIAT

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To the members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Synopsis of the meeting held in Helsinki in the Parliament of Finland “Eduskunta” Auditorium of the Annex building on 10-11 September 2012

The Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, meeting in Helsinki (Finland) with Mr Pietro Marcenaro (Italy, SOC) and Ms Anne Brasseur (Luxembourg, ALDE) in the Chair,

- **on Monday 10 September 2012, from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm**
- **heard a welcome address by Mr Eero Heinäluoma**, Speaker of the Finnish Parliament, and a **statement by Ms Susanna Huovinen**, Chairperson of the Finnish delegation to the PACE;
- **held an exchange of views with Mr Erkki Tuomioja, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland;**

as regards:

- **Challenges arising from the current economic and financial crisis:** heard a statement by Professor Sixten Korkman, Department of Economics, Aalto University School of Business, followed by an exchange of views;
- **For more democratic elections** (*Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Charles Gardetto, Monaco, EPP/CD*): considered and approved a report and unanimously adopted a draft resolution;
- **Activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2011-2012** (*Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Marie Bockel, France, EPP/CD*): enlarged with the participation of the delegations of non-European OECD member countries, considered and approved a report and unanimously adopted a draft resolution;
- **Increasing drug traffic from Afghanistan as a threat to European Security** (*Rapporteur: Lord Tomlinson, United Kingdom, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur followed by an exchange of views; took note that the Rapporteur did not intend to carry out fact-finding visits to Turkey and Tajikistan, previously authorised for the former Rapporteur, and authorised the Rapporteur to make fact-finding visits to Europol Headquarters (The Hague, Netherlands), to the Serious Organised Crime Agency, SOCA (London, United Kingdom) and to the Anti-Drugs Policy Coordination Unit, European Commission (Brussels, Belgium);
- **The status of chairpersons of political groups in Assembly committees:** heard a statement by the Chairperson with regard to a letter from Mr Arcadio Díaz Tejera (Spain, SOC) on the status of chairpersons of political groups within Assembly committees and agreed that, in the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, the chairpersons of political groups should enjoy the same rights as other committee members;

– **Work programme:**

(a) heard the following statements:

- Ms Anne Brasseur (Luxembourg, ALDE), former Rapporteur on *Political transition in Tunisia*, on the hearing of the Venice Commission at the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia on "Political regimes : mechanisms, advantages, disadvantages", which took place on 26 July 2012 in Tunis (Tunisia);
- Mr Latchezar Toshev (Bulgaria, EPP/CD), Rapporteur on *New parliamentary effort to create a stability pact in the South Caucasus*, on his decision to postpone his fact-finding visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan;

(b) called for candidates for reports on:

- The Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union – evaluation 5 years after;
- Challenges of a federal Europe;
- Political transition in Tunisia;
- Internet and politics: the impact of new information and communication technology on democracy (for opinion);

• **on Tuesday 11 September 2012, from 9 am to 1 pm**

– **Counteraction to manifestations of neo-nazism and xenophobia** (*Rapporteur: Ms Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin, Sweden, EPP/CD*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur;

– **Activities of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in 2010-2012** (*Rapporteur: Mr Tuur Elzinga, Netherlands, UEL*): in the absence of the Rapporteur, heard a statement by Mr Andreas Gross on the meeting of the ad hoc Sub-Committee on Relations with the EBRD in London, on 5 September 2012, and agreed that Sir Suma Chakrabarti, President of the Bank, should be invited to the Assembly debate in January 2013;

– **Human rights and foreign policy**: heard a statement by Ms Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland 2000-2012, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, former member of the Finnish delegation to the PACE followed by an exchange of views;

– **Democracy and human rights in the foreign policy of Council of Europe member States: search for a joint approach** (*Rapporteur: Mr Pietro Marcenaro, Italy, SOC*):

- held an exchange of views with Ms Laura Mirachian, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva;
- considered and approved a report with the amended title "Human rights and foreign policy", adopted unanimously a draft resolution and adopted a draft recommendation;
- upon the Chairperson's proposal, agreed to organise a conference on "Human rights and foreign policy" with the participation of the Chairpersons of the Foreign Affairs Committees and Human Rights Committees of the 47 parliaments of the Council of Europe member States, as well as of the relevant committees of the European Parliament, on 13 December 2012 in Turin and agreed to hold a meeting of the Committee on that occasion on 13-14 December 2012 in Turin (subject to the authorisation of the Bureau);

– **Authorisations by the Committee**

authorised Mr Luca Volontè (Italy, EPP/CD), Rapporteur on *Violence against religious communities*, to participate in the mission in Egypt which is foreseen for mid-October in the context of the preparation of the report on the *Political transition in Egypt* by Mr Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco, EPP/CD);

– **Other business**

None;

– **Next meetings in 2012**

The Committee agreed on the following dates and places for its meetings in 2012:

- 1-5 October (4th part-session), Strasbourg;
- 14 November (plenary) - 15 November (Sub-Committees), Paris;
- 13-14 December, Turin (subject to the authorisation of the Bureau of the Assembly).

D. Chatzivassiliou, J. Ary, P. Chevtchenko, S. Arzilli

cc. Secretary General of the Assembly
Director General, 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