



SECRETARIAT

AS/PoI (2012) CB 07

8 October 2012

Apcb07_12

To the members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Synopsis of the meetings held in Strasbourg from 2 to 5 October 2012

The Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, meeting in Strasbourg with Mr Pietro Marcenaro (Italy, SOC) and Ms Kerstin Lundgren (Sweden, ALDE) in the Chair:

on Tuesday 2 October 2012 at 8.30 am, as regards:

- **The European response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria:** appointed Mr Marcenaro as Rapporteur for Opinion;
- **For more democratic elections** (*Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Charles Gardetto, Monaco, EPP/CD*): took position on the amendments tabled to the draft resolution; upon a proposal by Lord Tomlinson, agreed to change the title of the report to ensure consistency between the English and French versions;
- **World Forum for Democracy (5-11 October 2012):** heard a statement by the Chairperson and took note of an updated programme of the Forum, including the roundtable on the theme “Is representative democracy in crisis?” organised by the Assembly on 10 October 2012;
- **Conference on “Human Rights and Foreign Policy” and meeting of the Committee in Turin, Italy (13-14 December 2012):** heard a statement by the Chairperson;
- **Sub-committees:** approved the changes in the composition of the sub-committees;
- **Open discussion on current issues:** held a discussion on current international issues, including serious human rights violations in the northern part of Mali, and invited its Chairperson to issue a statement on this issue;

on Tuesday 2 October 2012 at 2 pm, as regards:

- **Rapporteurs:** appointed:
 - Ms Kerstin Lundgren (Sweden, ALDE) for *The Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union – evaluation 5 years after*,
 - Mr Andreas Gross (Switzerland, SOC) for *Challenges of a federal Europe*,
 - Ms Anne Brasseur (Luxembourg, ALDE) for *The political transition in Tunisia*,
 - Mr Hans Franken (Netherlands, EPP/CD) for *Internet and politics: the impact of new information and communication technology on democracy* (for Opinion),

and heard from them a declaration on the absence of conflict of interest;

- **The situation in the Middle East:** called for candidates for report;
- **Enlarged debate on The activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2011-2012** with the participation of delegations of non-European OECD member countries (*Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Marie Bockel, France, EPP/CD*): took position on the amendments tabled to the draft resolution and held an exchange of views with the delegations of non-European OECD member countries: Canada, Chile, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico;

on Wednesday 3 October 2012 at 2 pm, as regards:

- **Human rights and foreign policy** (*Rapporteur: Mr Pietro Marcenaro, Italy, SOC*): took position on the amendments tabled to the draft resolution and to the draft recommendation;
- **The European response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria** (*Rapporteur for opinion: Mr Pietro Marcenaro, Italy, SOC*): considered and approved an Opinion;
- **Meeting of the Sub-Committee on External Relations at the United Nations (New York, 6-7 December 2012)**: heard a statement by the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee;

on Thursday 4 October 2012 at 8.30 am, as regards:

- **Situation in Belarus** (*Rapporteur: Mr Andres Herkel, Estonia, EPP/CD*): considered and declassified an information note prepared by the Rapporteur; endorsed the Rapporteur's proposal's to nominate Mr Ales Bialiatski for the Parliamentary Assembly Human Rights Prize 2013; approved a statement and held an exchange of views with representatives of civil society, namely:
 - Mr Aleh Hulak, Chairperson of Belarusian Helsinki Committee, member of "Human Rights Defenders for free elections",
 - Ms Lidia Sagidulina, Campaign "Tell the Truth",
 - Mr Valentin Stefanovic, Vice-President of Viasna Human Rights Centre, member of "Human Rights Defenders for free elections",
 - Ms Olga Sergeeva, member of the Belarusian Union of Women, Deputy Chairperson of the Constitutional Court,
 - Mr Andrey Yurov, International Control Committee on the human rights situation in Belarus;
- **Situation in the Middle East:** held an exchange of views with Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe;
- **Evaluation of the partnership for democracy with the Palestinian National Council** (*Rapporteur: Mr Tiny Kox, Netherlands, UEL*): considered an information note on the fact-finding visit of the Rapporteur to the Palestinian Territories (15-18 July 2012);
- **Authorisations by the Committee:** approved the decision of the Sub-Committee on the Middle East to accept an invitation from Mr Bernard Sabella, Chairperson of the partner for democracy delegation of the Palestinian National Council, to hold a meeting of the Sub-Committee on the Middle East in the Palestinian Territories and in Jordan at the end of November 2012; authorised the same sub-committee to hold a meeting also in Israel, before or after the meeting in the Palestinian Territories, subject to the receipt of an invitation from the Israeli observer delegation;
- **Other business:** heard a statement by Mr Mohamed Yatim, Chairperson of the Moroccan partner for democracy delegation, on the invitation sent on 26 September 2012 by the Speaker of the Chamber of Councillors to hold a meeting of the Plenary Committee in Rabat on 21-22 March 2013; noted that an official invitation, in the name of the two Chambers of the Parliament, would be sent in due time, and agreed to accept the invitation;
- **Next meetings:** took note of the following dates and venues:
 - 14-15 November 2012 (plenary and Sub-Committees), Paris,
 - 6-7 December 2012, Sub-Committee on External Relations, New York, USA,
 - 13-14 December 2012, Turin, Italy,
 - 21-25 January 2013 (1st part session), Strasbourg,
 - 21-22 March 2013, Rabat, Morocco.

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The Sub-Committee on the Middle East (of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy), meeting in Strasbourg on 3 October 2012, with Ms Josette Durrieu (France, SOC) in the Chair, as regards:

- **Situation in the Middle East:** held an exchange of views with the Partner for democracy delegation from the Palestinian National Council and accepted an invitation from Mr Bernard Sabella, Chairperson of that delegation, to hold a meeting in the Palestinian Territories and in Jordan at the end of November 2012; agreed to hold a meeting also in Israel, subject to the receipt of an invitation by the Israeli observer delegation;
- **Date and place of the next meeting:** left it to its Chairperson to convene its next meeting.

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