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To the members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Synopsis of the meeting held in Paris on 14-15 November 2012

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

on Wednesday 14 November 2012, from 11am to 1pm, as regards:

– **Parliamentary contribution to solving the Western Sahara conflict** (*Rapporteur: Ms Liliane Maury Pasquier, Switzerland, SOC*):

. held a hearing organised by the **Sub-committee on conflict prevention through dialogue and reconciliation** with the participation of:

- Mr Alexander Ivanko, Senior Political Adviser, United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO),
- Ms Christine Perregaux, International Bureau for the Respect of Human Rights in Western Sahara (BIRDHSO),
- Mr Eric Sottas, Kennedy Foundation, former Secretary General of the World Organisation Against Torture,
- Ms Saïda Brahim Bounab and Mr Mohamed Boukhalfa, members of the Algerian Parliament;

. heard a communication by the Chairperson of the Sub-committee, Mr Patrick Moriau (Belgium, SOC);

. took note of the intention of the Rapporteur to invite representatives of the Sahrawi people for an exchange of views with the Committee at one of its forthcoming meetings;

. endorsed the request by the Rapporteur to carry out a fact-finding visit to the region (subject to authorisation by the Bureau);

– **Evaluation of the partnership for democracy with the Palestinian National Council** (*Rapporteur: Mr Tiny Kox, The Netherlands, UEL*): took note of a letter from the Chairman of the Israeli Observer delegation and of the Rapporteur's comments thereon;

– **Changes in the composition of Sub-committees**: took note of the change in the Sub-committee on external relations, namely the appointment of Mr José María Beneyto (Spain, EPP/CD) as full member and Mr Gabino Puche (Spain, EPP/CD) as his substitute;

Wednesday 14 November 2012, from 2.30pm to 6pm, as regards:

– **The situation in Kosovo**¹ (*Rapporteur: Mr Björn von Sydow, Sweden, SOC*):

. held a hearing with the participation of:

- representatives of the political forces elected to the Kosovo Assembly, Mr Hydajet Hyseni (Democratic Party of Kosovo, PDK) and Ms Teuta Sahatqija (Democratic League of Kosovo, LDK),
- Mr Sami Kurteshi, Ombudsperson of Kosovo,

¹ All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

- Ms Pilar Morales, Head of Division for strategic programming and resource mobilisation, Directorate General of programmes of the Council of Europe;
considered a preliminary draft report presented by the Rapporteur;
- **Future work:** appointed Mr Pietro Marcenaro (Italy, SOC) as Rapporteur on *The situation in the Middle East* following a vote by secret ballot;
- **New parliamentary effort to create a stability pact in the South-Caucasus** (*Rapporteur: Mr Latchezar Toshev, Bulgaria, EPP/CD*): held an exchange of views on the basis of a draft report and decided to postpone further consideration of it;
- **Biennial debate on the Activities of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)** (*Rapporteur: Mr Tuur Elzinga, The Netherlands, UEL*): considered a preliminary draft report presented by the Rapporteur;
- **Increasing drug traffic from Afghanistan as a threat to European Security** (*Rapporteur: Lord Tomlinson, United Kingdom, SOC*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur on his meetings with representatives of the EU and Europol (7-8 November 2012, Brussels and The Hague), and authorised him to carry out further fact-finding visits to Turkey and to the Headquarters of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Vienna, Austria);

Thursday 15 November 2012, from 10am to 1pm, as regards:

- **Political transition in Tunisia** (*Rapporteur: Ms Anne Brasseur, Luxembourg, ALDE*): heard a statement by the Rapporteur and held an exchange of views with Ms Simona Granata-Menghini, Deputy Secretary of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission);
- **Request for partner for democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic** (*Rapporteur: Mr Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Turkey, EDG*): in the absence of the Rapporteur, was informed that his fact-finding visit to the country had been postponed for the third time;
- **Follow-up to adopted texts emanating from the Committee:** heard a statement by its Chairperson; heard comments on the replies by the Committee of Ministers to Assembly recommendations 1954 (2011) on *Reconciliation and political dialogue between the countries of the former Yugoslavia* by Mr Marcenaro and 1975 (2011) on *Living together in 21st-century Europe: follow-up to the report of the Group of Eminent persons of the Council of Europe* by Mr Toshev; held an exchange of views on ways of strengthening co-operation with national parliaments in the context of the follow-up to resolutions adopted by the Assembly and, in the framework of the follow-up to Resolution 1899 (2012) on *The activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2011-2012*, decided to request to be seized for a new report on this issue;
- **World Forum for Democracy (5-11 October 2012):** heard a statement by the Chairperson;
- **Open discussion on current issues:** held a discussion on current international issues, and took note of a statement on the fresh outbreak of violence in the Gaza Strip issued by the President of the Assembly and its Chairperson;
- **Authorisations by the Committee:** authorised Mr Björn von Sydow (Sweden, SOC) to pay a fact-finding visit to Belgrade on 15-16 November 2012, in the framework of the preparation of his report on *The situation of Kosovo*;
- **Other business:** following a request by Mr Hancock (United Kingdom, ALDE), Rapporteur on *Democracy and the limitation of mandates*, was informed by Mr Andreas Gross (Switzerland, SOC), in his capacity as Chairperson of the Council for Democratic Elections of the Venice Commission, of the state of progress of the report requested by the Committee;
- **Next meetings:** decided to hold its next meetings as follows:
 - 13-14 December 2012, Turin, Italy,
 - 21-25 January 2013 (1st part session), Strasbourg,
 - 21-22 March 2013, Rabat, Morocco (subject to authorisation by the Bureau).

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The Sub-Committee on the Middle East, meeting in Paris on 14 November 2012, with Ms Josette Durrieu (France, SOC) in the Chair, as regards:

- **Preparation of the meeting in the Middle East in 2013:** heard a statement by the Chairperson and held an exchange of views with the participation of the Israeli and Palestinian delegations;
- **Activities of the association “A heart for Peace” (“*Un Coeur pour la Paix*”):** heard a presentation by Dr Muriel Haïm, its Chairperson and founder, and held an exchange of views;
- **Date and place of the next meeting:** during the January 2013 Assembly part-session in Strasbourg.

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The Sub-Committee on external relations, meeting in Paris on 15 November 2012, with Mr Leonid Slutsky (Russian Federation, SOC) in the Chair, as regards:

- **Preparation for the participation in the 67th General Assembly of the United Nations:**
 - a) considered the draft Resolution on the *Co-operation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe* with the participation of Mr Jiri Vogl, Head of the Department of Relations with International Organisations and Non-Member States of the Council of Europe;
 - b) heard a statement by its Chairperson on the preparation of the visit to the United Nations and held an exchange of views with Mr Guillaume Devin, Professor of Political Science, Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris;
- **Date and place of the next meeting:** 6-7 December 2012, New York.

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