



SECRETARIAT

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13 May 2014

To the members of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Synopsis of the meetings held in Athens, Greece on 7 May 2014

The Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, meeting in Athens on 7 May 2014, with Ms Theodora Bakoyannis (Greece, EPP/CD) and with Mr Miloš Aligrudić (Serbia, EDG) in the Chair, as regards:

- **Conference on Freedom of religion or belief in the Middle East and the Southern Mediterranean: the situation and safety of Christian communities**, organised in the framework of the Joint EU/CoE Programme “Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood:
 - heard introductory statements by Mr Vangelis Meimarakis, Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament, Ms Anne Basseur, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr Constantinos Arvanitopoulos, Greek Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, and Ms Theodora Bakoyannis, Chairperson of the Committee and of the Greek delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly;
 - heard contributions from the following guest speakers:
 - **The Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa Theodoros II**
 - **H. E. Monseigneur Youssef Antoine Soueif**, the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus
 - **Mor Clemis Daniel Kourieh**, Archbishop of Beirut
 - **Father Poules Halim**, Spokesperson of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Egypt
 - **Dr Sotiris Roussos**, Associate Professor, University of Peloponnese and Head of the Centre for Mediterranean, Middle East and Islamic Studies (CEMMIS)
 - **Dr Evangelos Venetis**, Lecturer on Islamic and Iranian studies, Department of Arabic, Persian and Turkish, University of Leiden
 - held an open debate with the participation of representatives of parliaments of Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, of the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia, of the Palestinian National Council, as well as representatives from Egypt;
 - heard a summing-up of the Conference by Ms Theodora Bakoyannis;
- **Parliamentary contribution to solving the Western Sahara conflict** (*Rapporteur: Ms Liliane Maury Pasquier, Switzerland, SOC*): heard a statement from the Rapporteur; approved a report and unanimously adopted a draft resolution;
- **Towards a better European democracy: facing the challenges of a federal Europe** (*Rapporteur: Mr Andreas Gross, Switzerland, SOC*): heard a statement from the Rapporteur; approved a report and adopted a draft resolution;

- **The situation in Kosovo^{*} and the role of the Council of Europe** (*Rapporteur: Mr Agustín Conde, Spain, EPP/CD*): heard a statement from the Rapporteur and held an exchange of views with the participation of Dr Othon Anastasakis, Director of the European Studies Centre and of South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX) and Mr Hasan Preteni, Director of the Anti-Corruption Agency in Kosovo;
- **Kidnapping of young girls in Nigeria**: asked the Chairperson to issue a statement condemning without reservation the continued holding as hostage of young girls in Nigeria;
- **Next meetings**: agreed on the following list of forthcoming meetings:
 - 23-27 June 2014, part-session of the Assembly, Strasbourg
 - 4-5 September 2014, Sénat, Palais du Luxembourg, Paris 6th
 - 29 September – 3 October 2014, part-session of the Assembly, Strasbourg
 - 3 November 2014, Strasbourg (*to be confirmed*)
 - 8-9 December 2014, Paris.

D. Chatzivassiliou, J. Ary, S. Arzilli

cc. Secretary General of the Assembly
Director General, Director 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

^{*} 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.