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Communication by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly

President's activities between the second and the third part of the 2008 Ordinary Session

Addendum to the report
Bureau of the Assembly

1. Past meetings and visits

1.1. 30 April 2008, Vienna: Closing conference of the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence

This conference was organised jointly by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Austrian Parliament. I took the floor at the opening of the conference, with several prominent speakers:

- Mr Alfred Gusenbauer, Chancellor of the Republic of Austria;
- Ms Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian Parliament;
- Ms Nicola Duckworth, Director of the Europe and Central Asia Programme, Amnesty International;
- Ms Gisela Wurm, Chairperson of the Austrian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly.

I had bilateral meetings with:

- Ms Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian Parliament;
- Mr Winkler, State Secretary and Mr Gerhard Koller, Head of the European Relations Department.

At the end of the conference, the participants adopted the "Vienna declaration": "Parliaments: act now to stop domestic violence!".

1.2. 6 and 7 May 2008, Strasbourg: 118th Session of the Committee of Ministers (ministerial conference)

In the margin of the ministerial conference, I had several bilateral meetings with:

- Mr S. Alkalaj, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Mr G. Baramidze, Vice Prime Minister of Georgia;
- Mr A. Gruschko, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation;
- Mr A. Lossada, Secretary of State of Spain;
- Ms R. Matache, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania;



- Mr E. Nalbandian, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia.

I also attended the working breakfast hosted by H.E. Mr Ján Kubiš, outgoing Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, and H.E. Mr Carl Bildt, incoming Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, on the occasion of the 118th Session of the Committee of Ministers.

1.3. 22 and 23 May 2008, Strasbourg: International Conference of Presidents and Speakers of Parliaments

I presided at this conference, together with Ms Ene Ergma, President of the Estonian Parliament. This conference brought together 40 speakers and 17 vice-speakers of parliaments to discuss the following topics:

- parliaments and civil society;
- the role of national parliaments in promoting core values of democracy, human rights and rule of law.

I gave the opening speech at this conference and presented the final conclusions, which can be consulted on the Parliamentary Assembly website.

In the margin of the conference, I had bilateral meetings with the speakers of parliaments of the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Monaco, Montenegro, Moldova, Romania, Spain and Mexico.

1.4. 24 May 2008, The Hague: Conference of the European Movement

This conference, organised by the European Movement, marked the 60th anniversary of the The Hague Congress.

I participated in the plenary session on 24 May and was one of the speakers on the official panel, which included the Slovenian Prime Minister and President of the European Council, Mr Janez Janša, the President of the European Commission, Mr José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Parliament, Mr Hans-Gert Pöttering, the President of the EESC (European Economic and Social Committee), Mr Dimitris Dimitriadis and the President of the Committee of the Regions, Mr Luc Van den Brande.

1.5. 29 May 2008, Stockholm: Bureau, Presidential Committee and Standing Committee meetings

On the occasion of these meetings, I had bilateral meetings with Mr Per Westerberg, Speaker of the Swedish Parliament.

1.6. 5 and 6 June 2008, Buenos Aires: Interparliamentary conference on the Parliamentary View of International Humanitarian Law

At the invitation of the Secretary General of the Latin American Parliament, Senator Sonia M. Escudero, I took part in the interparliamentary conference on the Parliamentary View of International Humanitarian Law, held at the National Congress of the Republic of Argentina in Buenos Aires from 4 to 6 June 2008.

Ms Escudero invited me to give a speech at the opening session of the conference on 5 June, along with the Speakers of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies of Argentina and the President and Secretary General of the Latin American Parliament.

I also took part in two of the conference's discussion panels, which dealt with the following subjects:

- "National measures for the application of international humanitarian law in Latin America and the Caribbean and the role of parliamentarians: the ICRC's humanitarian work";
- "Prison conditions: respect for and protection of human rights and international humanitarian law: the case of Guantánamo".

During the first discussion, I described the Parliamentary Assembly's work and, in particular, the work of its Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population on measures to protect the rights of refugees in Europe. I also expressed my appreciation, in the presence of representatives of the ICRC, of the outstanding co-operation between the ICRC and the Council of Europe, the most obvious example being the debate on the activities of the ICRC that the Assembly would be holding at its next plenary session.

During the second discussion, I described the activities of the Assembly's Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and the texts adopted by the Assembly on the subject under consideration, including the resolutions and recommendations on the lawfulness of detentions by the United States in Guantánamo and on democratic oversight of security services.

On the same occasion, I attended a meeting of the Bureau of the Latin American Parliament, at which I invited the Chilean Chair, Mr Jorge Pizarro Soto, to visit Strasbourg in the near future to address the Parliamentary Assembly and discuss possible co-operation arrangements. Mr Soto highlighted the shared objectives of the Latin American Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly and said that he intended to accept my invitation: he would probably attend the next part-session, in October 2008, and would seek to promote further exchanges.

2. Press releases

1. PACE President calls on the US to abide by its international obligation to review cases of death row prisoners denied consular access.
2. PACE President calls for better funding for Council of Europe.
3. PACE President pays tribute to German Chancellor Angela Merkel's human rights engagement.
4. European unity does not mean European uniformity, says PACE President.
5. PACE and national parliaments: extremely successful co-operation as regards national-level investigation of violations of human rights.
6. Parliaments should lead public opinion in "tackling racist and xenophobic tendencies in society".
7. First ever guide to international parliaments published.
8. Chemical munitions in the Baltic Sea on the agenda of the PACE Standing Committee meeting.
9. PACE President reminds Turkey of the right to freedom of association following the prohibition of a gay association.
10. PACE President urges a legal "right to a healthy environment".
11. Lluís Maria de Puig at the Parlatino: "We want to move forward with you".
12. PACE President condemns further executions in Japan.
13. PACE President welcomes the Euro 2008 Campaign against Trafficking in Women.

3. Speeches

1. Reception hosted by Ms Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian Parliament (Vienna, 29 April 2008).
2. Closing conference of the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence (Vienna, 30 April 2008).
3. Ministerial session of the Ministers' Committee (Strasbourg, 7 May 2008).
4. Conference of Presidents and Speakers of Parliaments (Strasbourg, 22-23 May 2008).

For a full text of these press releases and speeches, please follow the link <http://assembly.coe.int>.