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Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and of the Standing Committee (3 October 2008-26 January 2009)

Progress report
Bureau of the Assembly
Rapporteur: Mr Paul WILLE, Belgium

1. Introduction

1. The Bureau met on 3 October 2008 in Strasbourg, on 27 November 2008 in Madrid and on 9 January 2009 in Barcelona. The Standing Committee met on 28 November in Madrid.

2. Functioning of the Assembly

2.1. Progress Report of the Bureau of the Assembly and of the Standing Committee (3 October 2008-26 January 2009)

2. On 3 October, the Bureau appointed Mr Wille (Belgium, ALDE) as rapporteur.

2.2. Follow-up to the 4th Part of the 2008 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 29 September-3 October 2008)

2.2.1. Resolution 1633 (2008) on "The consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia"

3. On 3 October, the Bureau decided:

a. to ask the Presidential Committee, led by the President, to visit Tbilisi and Moscow for meetings at the highest level with the authorities concerning the implementation of Resolution 1633 (2008);

b. to place an item on the agenda of the Standing Committee in Madrid (28 November 2008) concerning "Follow-up given to Resolution 1633 (2008)";

c. to place on the agenda of the January 2009 part-session a report on the "Implementation of Resolution 1633 (2008)" and to refer the matter to the Monitoring Committee for report, and to the Political Affairs Committee and the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for opinion;

d. to ask the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population to prepare a report on the "Humanitarian consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia", which could be debated during the January 2009 part-session;

e. entrusted the Political Affairs Committee with the task of formulating proposals for the organisation of an international conference on early warning systems and mechanisms for conducting parliamentary diplomacy, as well as considering other questions such as the setting-up of an international committee of inquiry and the consequences of the conflict for the stability of the region;

f. to ask the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights to examine questions relating to human rights in the region;

g. to set up an Ad Hoc Committee in order to promote dialogue between the Russian and Georgian parliamentary delegations and to return to the question of the composition and working methods of the Ad Hoc Committee at the Bureau's next meeting.

4. On 28 November, the Standing Committee held an exchange of views on the follow-up to Resolution 1633 (2008) on "the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia".

5. On 9 January, the Bureau was informed about the discussions held concerning the implementation of this resolution within the Monitoring and the Political Affairs Committees.

2.2.2. "The humanitarian consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia"

6. On 9 January, the Bureau was informed about the discussions held concerning this issue within the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population.

2.2.3. Visit by the Presidential Committee to Georgia and Russia

7. On 27 November, the Bureau took note of a memorandum prepared by the President regarding the Presidential Committee's visit to Georgia and decided to declassify it (see Addendum II).

8. On 9 January, the Bureau was informed about the programme for the visit of the Presidential Committee to Moscow which would take place from 18 to 20 January 2009.

2.2.4. Resolution 1627 (2008) on "Candidates for the European Court of Human Rights"

9. On 3 October, the Bureau asked the President to contact the Maltese authorities to request that they submit a list of candidates.

2.3. Standing Committee (Madrid, 28 November 2008)

2.3.1. Draft agenda

10. On 3 October, the Bureau took note of the draft agenda and the draft programme.

11. On 27 November, the Bureau took note of the updated draft agenda.

2.3.2. Request for a current affairs debate: "The world financial crisis: the economic collapse of Iceland" (submitted by the Icelandic parliamentary delegation)

12. On 27 November, the Bureau decided to recommend to the Standing Committee to hold a current affairs debate on this subject and appointed Mr Sigfusson (Iceland, UEL) to introduce the debate.

13. On 28 November, the Standing Committee held a current affairs debate on "the world financial crisis: the economic collapse of Iceland", following the request of the Icelandic parliamentary delegation, introduced by Mr Sigfusson (Iceland, UEL).

14. On 9 January, the Bureau referred this matter to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development for report and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for opinion.

2.3.3. Meeting of the Standing Committee

15. On 28 November, the Standing Committee:

a. heard a welcome address by Mr Francisco Javier Rojo, President of the Spanish Senate;

b. held an exchange of views with Mr Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Spain, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;

c. ratified the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegation of Denmark, France and Serbia;

d. ratified the changes in the composition of Assembly committees in respect of the delegations of Denmark, France, Italy and Russia, and in the composition of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs in respect of the EPP/CD group.

2.3.4. Follow-up to Resolution 1640 (2008) on the "Use by Assembly members of their dual parliamentary role – both national and European"

16. On 9 January, the Bureau decided to ask the Committee on Rules, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to provide the Bureau with proposals concerning, in particular, paragraph 6.1.

2.4. Adopted texts

17. On 28 November, the Standing Committee unanimously adopted, on behalf of the Assembly, the following texts:

– Recommendation 1850 (2008), Europe's "boat-people": mixed migration flows by sea into southern Europe

– Recommendation 1851 (2008), Crafts and cultural heritage conservation skills

– Recommendation 1852 (2008), Migration and mobility in the Eurasian region – prospects for the future

– Recommendation 1853 (2008), Involving men in achieving gender equality

– Resolution 1637 (2008), Europe's "boat-people": mixed migration flows by sea into southern Europe

– Resolution 1638 (2008), Crafts and cultural heritage conservation skills

– Resolution 1639 (2008), Migration and mobility in the Eurasian region – prospects for the future

– Resolution 1640 (2008), Use by Assembly members of their dual parliamentary role – both national and European

– Resolution 1641 (2008), Involving men in achieving gender equality

18. On 28 November, the Standing Committee postponed consideration of the following reports:

a. Mobilising parliaments for Africa's development (Doc. 11636)

b. Attitude to memorials exposed to different historical interpretations in Council of Europe member states (Doc. 11746)

c. Riots in European cities: lessons and Council of Europe response (Doc. 11685)

d. Promoting the participation of children in decisions concerning them (Doc. 11615).

2.5. 2009 First part-Session of the Assembly (26-30 January 2009)

2.5.1. Draft agenda

19. On 3 October, the Bureau drew up a preliminary draft agenda.

20. On 27 November, the Bureau drew up a draft agenda.

21. On 9 January 2009, le Bureau updated the draft agenda.

2.5.2. Requests for current affairs debates:

22. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau:

a. took note of two requests for current affairs debates: one submitted by the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development on the "Financial crisis and the protection of citizens' rights"; and the other submitted by the chairpersons of the Assembly's Political Groups, on behalf of their groups, on the "Situation in Gaza";

b. in accordance with Rule 52.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, decided to recommend to the Assembly to hold a current affairs debate on the "Situation in Gaza".

2.5.3. Request for a debate under urgent procedure

23. On 9 January 2009 the Bureau decided, on the basis of a request submitted by the chairpersons of the Assembly's Political Groups, on behalf of their groups, to recommend to the Assembly to hold a debate under urgent procedure on "The consequences of the global financial crisis" and to refer this matter to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development for report.

2.5.4. Election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights:

24. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau took note of the report by the Sub-Committee on the Election of Judges and proposed that the Assembly ask the Government of San-Marino to submit a new list;

2.6. References and transmissions to committees

25. On 3 October, the Bureau approved the following references and modifications of references which were ratified the same day by the Assembly:

2.6.1. References to committees

a. Doc. 11713

Motion for a recommendation presented by Mrs Čurdová and others

Decent pensions for women to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *for report* and to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *for opinion*

b. Doc. 11714

Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Stump and others

Action against sexist representations in the media, to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *for report*

c. Doc. 11716

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Hancock and others

The protection of Camp Ashraf residents, to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *for report*

2.6.2. Modification of a reference

a. Doc. 11581

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Prescott and others

The challenges posed by climate change, to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for report*, and to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population and the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *for opinion*

2.6.3. Reply after consultation

a. Doc. 11602

Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Dorić and others

The obligation of member states of the Council of Europe to co-operate in prosecution of war crimes, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*

2.6.4. Decision postponed

a. Doc. 11715

Motion for a recommendation presented by Mrs Err and others

Extending the "most favoured European woman clause" to all Council of Europe member states, postponed its decision

26. On 28 November, the Standing Committee approved the following references and modifications to references:

2.6.5. References to committees

a. Implementation of Resolution 1633 (2008) on the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia

Decision of the Bureau on 3 October 2008, to the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) *for report* and to the Political Affairs Committee and the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion*

b. Humanitarian consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia

Decision of the Bureau on 3 October 2008, to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *for report*

c. Doc. 11729

Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Marquet and others

Drafting an additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights, concerning the right to a healthy environment, to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion*

d. Doc. 11734

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Mignon and others

Curbing the threats of war in Europe, no further action

e. Doc. 11715

Motion for a recommendation presented by Mrs Err and others

Extending the "most favoured European woman clause" to all Council of Europe member states: to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *for report*

f. Doc. 11633 rev.

Cases of sexual violence against women in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Motion for a recommendation presented by Mrs Smet and others, to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *for report* which would include cases of such violence in Europe

2.6.6. Modification of a reference

a. Doc. 11634

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Jakavonis and others

Forests: the future of our planet

Ref. no. 3471 of 27 June 2008, to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for report*

2.6.7. Extension of references

a. Doc. 11066

Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Wodarg and others

The need for a global consideration of Human rights implications of Biometrics

Ref. 3288 of 22 January 2007 – validity: 22 January 2009, extension until 31 January 2010

b. Doc. 10714 and 10724

Motions for Resolutions presented by Mr Pourgourides and Mr Mercan and others

Freedom of religion and other human rights for non-Muslim minorities in Turkey and for Muslim minorities in Thrace (Western Greece)

Ref. 3203 of 17 March 2006 – validity: 31 December 2008, extension until 31 March 2009;

c. Doc. 10641

Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Wohlwend and others

Protection of human rights in emergency situations

Ref. 3230 of 29 May 2006 – validity: 31 December 2008: extension until 30 April 2009

2.7. Opinion and proposals of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs

27. On 3 October, the Bureau asked the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to prepare a report proposing modifications to the Rules of Procedure as a result of questions which had arisen relating to the interpretation of the Rules of Procedure during the part-session.

2.7.1. Rules on voting by secret ballot in committees

28. On 27 November, the Bureau considered the opinion of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs and approved the guidelines which appear in it as a supplementary text to the Rules of Procedure to ensure that the procedure used in committees satisfies clear criteria.

2.7.2. Relations with the Committee of Ministers

29. On 27 November, the Bureau:

a. Increased contacts at working level between the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers*:* considered the proposals put forward by the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs and decided to transmit them to the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers;

b. Questions to the Committee of Ministers: considered the proposals made by the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, and asked the Committee to prepare a report on this subject.

2.7.3. External relations of the Assembly: implementation of proposals contained in Resolution 1600 (2008) on "the Council of Europe and its observer states – the current situation and a way forward"

30. On 27 November, the Bureau considered the opinion put forward by the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, and asked the Committee to prepare a report on this subject.

2.7.4. Measures to improve the democratic participation of migrants: follow-up to be given to Resolution 1618 (2008) concerning a better representation of persons of migrant origin in the membership of the Assembly

31. On 27 November, the Bureau considered the opinion put forward by the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs and decided that it was not necessary, at this stage, to propose any new provisions for the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly.

2.8. Forum for the Future of Democracy (Madrid, 15-17 October 2008)

32. On 3 October, the Bureau took note of the programme for the Forum.

33. On 27 November, the Bureau took note of the conclusions of the Forum.

2.9. Debates on the state of human rights and democracy in Europe

34. On 3 October, the Bureau registered its agreement with the proposals made in document AS/Bur (2008) 62 prepared by the Secretariat.

35. On 27 November, the Bureau decided to return to this question at its next meeting.

36. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau approved the theme put forward by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights on “The state of human rights in Europe: The need to eradicate impunity”.

2.10. Parliamentary Assembly Human Rights Prize

2.10.1. Drawing by lot of two independent experts from the jury whose term of office will be for 5 years

37. On 3 October, the Bureau took note that the term of office of Mrs Vermot Mangold and Mr Nowicki would be 5 years.

2.10.2. Extension of the deadline for submitting nominations

38. On 3 October, exceptionally, the deadline would be 31 December 2008 for the 2009 prize.

2.11. Composition of the Monitoring Committee and the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs:

2.11.1. Monitoring Committee

39. On 3 October, the Bureau approved the new members as proposed by the political groups, for ratification by the Assembly: Mrs Herasym’yuk (Ukraine, EPP/CD); Mr Jensen (Denmark, ALDE), Mrs Konecna (Czech Republic, UEL) and Mrs Taktakishvili (Georgia, ALDE).

2.11.2. Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs

40. On 3 October, the Bureau approved the new members as proposed by the political groups, for ratification by the Assembly: Mr Saar (Estonia, SOC) and Mr Schram (Iceland, SOC).

41. On 27 November, the Bureau approved Mrs Benaki (Greece) as a new member as proposed by the EPP/CD group, for ratification by the Standing Committee.

2.12. Appointments of Assembly Representatives for official activities

2.12.1. Désignations de représentants de l’Assemblée à des activités officielles

42. On 3 October, in reply to formal invitations, the Bureau took the following decisions:

a. Mr Mignon (France, EPP/CD): International Session of the European Youth Parliament, Rennes (France), 24 October – 2 November 2008;

b. Mr Biberaj (Albania, EPP/CD): 60th Nordic Council Plenary Session, Helsinki (Finland), 27-29 October 2008;

c. Mr Cosarciuc (Moldova, ALDE): 30th Plenary Session of the PABSEC General Assembly, Chisinau (Moldova), 3-5 November 2008 (no cost for the Assembly);

d. Mrs Jonker (Netherlands, EPP/CD): High level Conference on human rights in culturally diverse societies, The Hague (Netherlands), 12-13 November 2008 (no cost for the Assembly);

e. A member of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education: European Youth Forum General Assembly, Rotterdam (Netherlands), 13-15 November 2008;

f. Mr Gross (Switzerland): UniDem Seminar on “the cancellation of election results”, Malta, 14-15 November 2008;

g. Mr MacShane (United Kingdom, SOC): 54th Annual Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Valencia (Spain), 14-18 November 2008 (no cost for the Assembly);

h. Mr Berényi (Slovak Republic, EPP/CD): 4th Plenary Assembly of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, Strasbourg (France), 24 November 2008;

i. Mr Greenway (United Kingdom, EDG): International Conference on International Humanitarian Law, Saint Petersburg (Russian Federation) 28 November 2008.

43. On 27 November, in reply to formal invitations, the Bureau took the following decisions:

a. Mr McIntosh (United Kingdom, SOC), Second Parliamentary Forum of the United Nations and the International Telecommunication Union on "shaping the information society: the role of parliaments and legislators", Hyderabad (India), 2 December 2008;

b. Mr Mendes Bota (Portugal, EPP/CD), Interparliamentary Union conference on "Combating violence against women", Geneva (Switzerland), 2-4 December 2008;

c. Mr Jakavonis (Lithuania, ALDE) and Mrs Lilliehöök (Sweden, EPP/CD), 27th session of the Baltic Assembly, 14th Baltic Council and Conference "Baltic Sea Strategy and Energy Security", Viljandi (Estonia), 4-6 December 2008;

d. Mr Sudarenkov (Russian Federation, SOC), Nevsky International Ecological Congress, St Petersburg, 9 December 2008;

e. Mr Schneider (France, EPP/CD), International Symposium to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights organised by the Robert Schuman Institute, Strasbourg, 12 December 2008.

44. On 9 January 2009, in reply to a formal invitation, appointed Mr Gardetto (Monaco, EPP/CD) to participate in the Winter Meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE in Vienna on 19-20 February 2009.

2.12.2. Reports by Assembly representatives on their participation in official activities

45. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau took note of a report by Mrs Pourbaix-Lundin (Sweden, EPP/CD) regarding her participation at a seminar in Stockholm on 6 October 2008 on "Systematic Work for Human Rights – a challenge to local/regional politics" organised by the association of local authorities of Stockholm.

2.13. Visits by rapporteurs

46. On 3 October, the Bureau:

a. following a request by the Political Affairs Committee, authorised Mr Pavlidis, Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on the Middle East, to carry out a fact-finding visit to the Middle East in the framework of preparations for the next Tripartite Forum;

b. following a request by the Political Affairs Committee, authorised Mr Gross, rapporteur on "United Nations – Reform and the Council of Europe member states" to conduct a fact-finding visit to Ottawa and New York (UN Headquarters) without expenses for the Assembly in the framework of the preparation of his report and took note that the report would be presented at the meeting of the Political Affairs Committee on 16 December 2008.

47. On 27 November the Bureau:

a. authorised Mr Lindblad (Sweden, EPP/CD), Chairperson of the Political Affairs Committee, Mrs Hurskainen (Finland, SOC), Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Belarus and Mr Rigoni (Italy, ALDE), rapporteur on the "Situation in Belarus" to visit Belarus at the invitation of that country's parliament;

b. authorised Mrs Hurskainen (Finland, SOC), in her capacity of Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Belarus, to join the Chairpersons of the parliamentary troika on Belarus of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, in order to carry out a visit to Belarus in 2009.

2.14. Meetings elsewhere than in Strasbourg and Paris

48. On 3 October, the Bureau authorised the following meetings:

a. Sub-Committee on Human Rights (of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights): Limassol (Cyprus), 24 November 2008;

b. Sub-Committee on the European Social Charter and Employment and Sub-Committee on Health (of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee): Geneva (Switzerland), 24-25 November 2008;

c. Sub-Committee on Violence against women (of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men): Madrid (Spain), 27 November 2008;

d. Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population: Las Palmas (Spain), 11-12 December 2008;

49. On 27 November, the Bureau authorised the following meetings:

a. Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs: The Hague, 8-9 December 2008;

b. Sub-Committee on Human Rights (of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights): Monaco, 9-10 March 2009;

50. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau authorised the following meeting: Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights: Berlin (Germany), 23-24 March 2009.

2.15. Meetings of the Standing Committee and the Bureau in 2009

51. On 3 October, the Bureau approved the following dates:

Preliminary proposals for dates[1]

Friday 9 January, 9.30 am, Barcelona, Bureau

Monday 26 January, 8.00 am, Strasbourg (part-session), Bureau

Friday 30 January, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session), Bureau

Thursday 12 March, 3 pm, Paris, Bureau

Friday 13 March, 9.00 am, Paris (to be confirmed), Standing Committee

Monday 27 April, 8.00 am, Strasbourg (part-session), Bureau

Tuesday 5 May, (time and place to be confirmed), Bureau

May, Ljubljana (date to be confirmed), Bureau and Standing Committee (CM Presidency)

Monday 22 June, 8.00 am, Strasbourg (part-session), Bureau

Friday 26 June, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session), Bureau

Monday 7 September, 9.30am, Paris, Bureau

Monday 28 September, 8.00 am, Strasbourg (part-session), Bureau

Friday 2 October, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session), Bureau

November, Bern (date to be confirmed), Bureau and Standing Committee (CM Presidency)

Monday 14 December, 9.30 am, Paris, Bureau

3. Relations with other bodies of the Council of Europe

3.1. Committee of Ministers

3.1.1. Joint Committee (Thursday, 29 January 2009 at 6.30 pm)

52. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau agreed to propose to the Committee of Ministers to include the following items on the agenda:

a. The Council of Europe's 60th Anniversary and the May 2009 meeting of the Committee of Ministers;

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1. Dates of meetings due to be held elsewhere than in Strasbourg and Paris are subject to the conclusion of a formal agreement with the Parliament of the country concerned.

b. Reform of the European Court of Human Rights: recent developments;

c. Follow-up given to Assembly Recommendation 1846 (2008) on "the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia";

d. The situation in Armenia;

e. Budgetary prospects for 2010.

4. Relations with other international organisations and others

4.1. Joint Conference of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 2009

53. On 3 October, the Bureau:

a. took note of a letter from Mr Mironov, President of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, proposing that the next joint conference between the Assembly and the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly be devoted to the subject of "Ecological security";

b. signalled its agreement in principle with the proposal to organise this joint conference with the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS in 2009 and with the subject suggested;

c. asked the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs to make more detailed proposals as to specific topics for the conference.

54. On 27 November, the Bureau approved the proposals for possible themes for the conference put forward by the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs.

4.2. Co-operation between the United Nations and regional and other organisations

55. On 27 November, the Bureau heard a communication by Mr Lindblad, Chairperson of the Political Affairs Committee, on the debate which had taken place and the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on this subject.

4.3. European Youth Parliament

56. On 27 November, the Bureau took note of an information document transmitted by Mr Mignon, Chairperson of the French Parliamentary Delegation, suggesting the creation of a partnership between the Assembly and the association "European Youth Parliament".

4.4. Co-operation agreement between the Assembly and the Latin American Parliament

57. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau noted that the President signed this agreement with the President of the Latin American Parliament on 5 December 2008 (see Appendix II).

5. Elections

5.1. Presidential election in Azerbaijan (15 October 2008)

58. On 27 November, the Bureau approved the report of the ad hoc committee which had observed this election (rapporteur: Mr Herkel, Estonia, EPP/CD).

59. On 28 November, the Standing Committee held an exchange of views on the observation of the presidential election in Azerbaijan (15 October 2008), and took note of the report of the Bureau Ad hoc Committee.

5.2. Parliamentary elections in Ukraine (date to be confirmed)

60. On 27 November, the Bureau was informed by the President that President Yuschenko had announced that these elections would be held in 2009.

5.3. Presidential election in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (22 March 2009)

61. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau, subject to receipt of an invitation:

a. set up an ad hoc committee to observe these elections, composed of 20 members in accordance with the "D'Hondt" system (7 EPP/CD, 6 SOC, 3 EDG, 3 ALDE and 1 UEL);

b. authorised a pre-electoral mission composed of five members – one from each political group who were also members of the ad hoc Committee – on the understanding that it should take place approximately one month ahead of the elections.

5.4. Parliamentary elections in Moldova (March 2009, date to be confirmed)

62. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau, subject to receipt of an invitation:

a. set up an ad hoc committee to observe these elections, composed of 20 members in accordance with the "D'Hondt" system (7 EPP/CD, 6 SOC, 3 EDG, 3 ALDE and 1 UEL);

b. authorised a pre-electoral mission composed of five members – one from each political group who were also members of the ad hoc Committee – on the understanding that it should take place approximately one month ahead of the elections.

5.5. Schedule for 2009

63. On 9 January, the Bureau took note of the elections which would take place in 2009.

5.6. Meeting of Chairpersons and members of ad hoc committees for the observation of elections during the period 2006-2008

64. On 9 January, the Bureau was informed that this meeting would take place on Tuesday 27 January 2009 at the close of business;

6. Budgetary matters

65. On 28 November, the Standing Committee held an exchange of views on the budgets of the Council of Europe and of the Parliamentary Assembly for the financial year 2009 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 25 November.

66. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau approved a series of measures proposed by the Secretary General of the Assembly in order to meet budgetary restrictions [AS/Bur (2009) 06].

7. Other business

7.1. Conferences

7.1.1. Conference organised by the EFI (European Friends of Israel), Paris, 6 November 2008

67. On 3 October, the Bureau set up an Ad Hoc Committee composed of 5 members, one from each political group, to attend the conference.

7.1.2. 3rd World Holocaust Forum commemorating the seventy years since the Kristallnacht,Brussels,10 November 2008

68. On 3 October, the Bureau approved the composition of the Ad Hoc Committee to participate in the Forum.

7.2. Statements

69. On 3 October, the Bureau took note of a declaration by the President concerning the petition by the Chief Prosecutor of Turkey to ban the DTP Party (see on the Assembly web site).

70. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau adopted a statement calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza (see on the Assembly web site).

7.3. 60th anniversary of the Council of Europe

71. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau was informed by the Secretary General of the activities which might be carried out by the Assembly in the framework of the celebrations planned for this event.

7.4. Communications

72. On 3 October, the Bureau took note of the communications of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe as well as of the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly.

73. On 27 November, the Bureau took note of the communications of the President, the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, as well as the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly.

74. On 9 January 2009, the Bureau took note of the communications of the President, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and of the Secretary General of the Assembly.

Appendix 1

On 9 January 2009, the Bureau approved the following references and modifications of references, subject to ratification by the Assembly:

i. References to committees

a. Follow-up to the current affairs debate on “The global financial crisis: the economic collapse of Iceland”: to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion*

b. Doc. 11740

Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Bjarnadóttir and others

Geothermal Energy: a solution for the future? to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for report*

c. Doc. 11741

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Ducarme and others

Armed conflicts and the environment, to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for report*

d. Doc. 11742

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Rowen and others

Human rights and family courts, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for information*

e. Doc. 11744 rev.

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Chope and others

Clarification on the rules of motions, to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs *to be taken into account in the preparation of thereport on* "*Modifications to the Rules of Procedure*"

f. Doc. 11748

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Boswell and others

Identity documents and databases, consultation of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *on the follow-up to be given*

g. Doc. 11749

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Omtzigt and others

End the travel ban for Chernobyl children, to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *for information* and to the Political Affairs Committee *for information*

h. Doc. 11750

Motion for a recommendation presented by Ms McCafferty and others

15 years since the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, to the Committee on Social, Health and Family Affairs *for report* and to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *for opinion*

i. Doc. 11751

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Biberaj and others

Term of office of co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee, to the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) *for report* and to the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities *for opinion*

j. Doc. 11752

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr McIntosh and others

The potential contribution of the Council of Europe in the development of the European Higher Education Area, to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education *for report at the Standing Committee*

k. Doc. 11753

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Kiuru and others

Involving women in the prevention and solution of unsolved conflicts in the Council of Europe area, to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *for information*

l. Doc. 11754

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Lambert and others

Discriminatory laws against Macedonian political refugees from Greece, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for information*

m. Doc. 11755

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Çavuşoğlu and others

Iraqi displacement crisis: a humanitarian disaster, to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *for information*

n. Doc. 11756

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Wodarg and others

The situation of immigrants and asylum seekers in Southern Europe, to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *for information*

o. Doc. 11757

Motion for a resolution presented by Ms Hägg and others

Women's access to lawful medical care: the problem of unregulated use of conscientious objection, to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *for report* and to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *for opinion*

ii. Reply after consultation

a. Doc. 11672

Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Asko-Seljavaara and others

Prevention of obesity and type 2 diabetes and promotion of healthy nutritional habits among children and the young, to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *for report*

iii. Modification of references

a. Ref. 3483 of 29 September 2008. Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Hurskainen and others (Doc. 11678)

The socio-economic potential of the Baltic Sea region, to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *for report at the Standing Committee* and to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for opinion*

b. Ref. 3200 of 17 March 2006. Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Bousakla and others (Doc. 10753)

Abduction and “re-education” of Muslim women and children who have become too “Western-minded”, to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *for report* and to the Committee on Social, Health and Family Affairs *for opinion*

iv. Extension of a reference

a. Ref. 3294 of 22 January 2007. Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Gross and others (Doc. 11073)

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validity 22 January 2009, extended until 30 June 2009

Appendix 2 Co-operation agreement between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Latin American Parliament (5 December 2008)

I. Aim of the Agreement

1. The aim of the agreement is to enhance co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino), while fully respecting their respective competencies. In view of their common concerns and complementarity at intercontinental level, the two assemblies agree to establish a political dialogue, particularly with a view to promoting the principles of parliamentary democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. The Parlatino will encourage the competent authorities to make use of the possibilities to sign, ratify or accede to the relevant Council of Europe conventions, which are open to non-member states, as well as the expertise offered by the European Commission for Democracy through Law ("Venice Commission") and by the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity ("North-South Centre").

3. In particular, the Parlatino and the PACE will endeavour to encourage the competent Latin American authorities to introduce a moratorium on executions and abolish the death penalty, where necessary.

II. Reciprocal Representation

4. The PACE and the Parlatino will invite each other to be represented at their respective statutory plenary meetings. The Presidents will be invited, at appropriate intervals, to address each other's sessions.

5. The same arrangements will apply to ad hoc meetings, such as conferences, seminars, symposia and other events, organised by the PACE or the Parlatino.

III. Joint Activities

6. Based on their respective mandates, the PACE and the Parlatino may jointly organise, or co-operate in the organisation of, specific events which fall in areas of common concern, notably parliamentary democracy, rule of law, human rights and North-South relations.

IV. Working Arrangements

7. The PACE will put at the disposal of the Parlatino its expertise on parliamentary practice and procedure.

8. The PACE and the Parlatino will exchange official documentation, including orders of business of statutory meetings and adopted resolutions and recommendations, on a regular basis.

9. Documents of mutual interest may be sent to members of the two assemblies. When appropriate the PACE and the Parlatino may submit written communications on subjects under consideration in the other Assembly.

10. Senior officials of PACE and the Parlatino's secretariats will meet for consultations at suitable intervals to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination between the two assemblies.

11. The PACE is ready to organise traineeships in the framework of this Agreement.

V. Final Provision

12. This Co-operation Agreement enters into force on the day of its signature by both parties. It may be amended by mutual consent, or suspended or annulled by either one of the parties.