Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1425 (2005)[1]

Revision of the terms of reference of Assembly committees

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly adopts the revised terms of reference of the Assembly committees as reproduced in the appendix to the present resolution. The latter will come into force on its adoption.

2. The Assembly also decides that the reports currently being prepared (including those stemming from orders adopted by the Assembly) which are not covered by the present revised terms of reference of Assembly committees should be submitted within two years from the entry into force of this resolution.

3. The present resolution supersedes Resolution 1176 (1998) and the appendix to Resolution 1235 (2000).

1. Assembly debate on 28 January 2005 (8th Sitting) (see Doc. 10379, report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities, rapporteur : Ms Brasseur).

Following the state succession of Serbia and the accession of Montenegro an extra seat has been added to each of the committes (see Assembly decision on 25.06.2007)

Appendix Appendix - Revised terms of reference of Assembly committees

A. General terms of reference applicable to all Assembly committees

1. Committees may examine any matter within their specific terms of reference (Rule 44.1 of the Rules of Procedure) and, possibly, table information reports on these matters (Rule 49.6).

2. Committees shall only prepare reports for debate in the Assembly :

on matters referred to them (Rule 24) ;

when so instructed by texts adopted by the Assembly (taking account of Rule 23.1.b) ;

when stipulated by the Assembly's Rules of Procedure ;

when mandated to do so by their specific terms of reference.

3. Committees shall examine the action taken on texts adopted by the Assembly on the basis of their reports (Rule 44.2).

4. Committees may organise conferences and other events on matters within their specific terms of reference and which are linked to their work programme, subject to availability of funds.

5. Committees are entitled to establish and are responsible for developing working relations with :

the competent bodies (committees, etc.) of national parliaments of member states ;

the competent bodies (committees, etc.) of European parliamentary assemblies (European Parliament, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, CIS Interparliamentary Assembly and others) and of the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) ;

subject to decision by the Bureau of the Assembly, the competent bodies (committees, etc.) of national parliaments holding Observer or Special Guest status ;

subject to decision by the Bureau of the Assembly, the competent bodies (committees, etc.) of national parliaments of non-member states ;

the relevant rapporteur groups, working groups and liaison committees of the Ministers' Deputies and rapporteurs of the Ministers' Deputies ;

the relevant Council of Europe structures and bodies such as the European Court of Human Rights, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe partial agreements, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (Ecri), the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and the relevant intergovernmental expert committees.

6. Committees shall follow the activities of the Committee of Ministers in the fields covered by their specific terms of reference.

7. Committees are entitled to be represented in the Assembly's delegations to the relevant European conferences of specialised ministers and to follow their activities.

8. Committees are entitled to establish and are responsible for developing working relations with the European and international non-governmental organisations which carry out activities within these committees' specific terms of reference (Rule 44.5).

B. Specific terms of reference of Assembly committees

I. Political Affairs Committee (AS/POL)

Number of seats : 83

Background : The committee is the successor to the General Affairs Committee established in 1949. Its title was changed to "Political Committee" in 1957 and to "Political Affairs Committee" in 1968.

Terms of reference :

1. The committee shall consider the general policy of the Council of Europe, that is, all political matters which fall within the competence of the Council of Europe. It shall, if necessary, report on urgent political situations and crises in Council of Europe member states.

2. The committee shall in particular consider :

requests for membership of the Council of Europe ;

requests for granting Observer status with the Council of Europe and with the Parliamentary Assembly, subject to the provisions of Rule 60 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure ;

requests for Special Guest status with the Parliamentary Assembly (in accordance with Rule 59.3 of the Rules of Procedure) ;

questions relating to the functioning and development of democratic institutions in Europe ;

major political challenges to modern society ;

the prevention and settlement of crises and conflicts in, between, or having an impact on, Council of Europe member and Observer states.

3. The committee shall consider activities and co-operation of the Council of Europe with other European and international organisations, in particular the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations.

4. In the light of the fundamental values of the Council of Europe, the committee shall consider the situation in states which are not members of the Council of Europe, make proposals, and, subject to approval by the Bureau, take political action to promote these values.

5. The committee may propose to the Bureau the conclusion of co-operation agreements with parliaments of non-member states.

6. The committee shall share the Assembly representation in the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (Ecri) and in the Council for Democratic Elections of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission).

II. Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights (AS/JUR)

Number of seats : 83

Background : The committee was established in 1949 with the title "Legal and Administrative Questions" and known from 1956 until the end of 1989 as the "Legal Affairs Committee", when the title was changed to the "Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights".

Terms of reference :

1. The committee shall consider all legal and human rights matters (including proposals for and the preparation of statutory opinions on draft Council of Europe conventions) which fall within the competence of the Council of Europe.

2. The committee shall in particular consider :

human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law in the member states of the Council of Europe ;

judicial institutions (as well as ombudspersons and national human rights institutions), the police, detention centres and prisons in the member states of the Council of Europe ;

the rights of national and other minorities ;

questions of discrimination on any ground such as sexual orientation, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status with the exception of discrimination on the grounds of gender to be considered by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men ;

all matters concerning the human rights treaties and mechanisms of the Council of Europe, notably the European Convention on Human Rights and its protocols, European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and other international instruments ;

criminal law and criminology, the treatment of offenders and conditions of detention ;

legal and human rights issues relating to the fight against terrorism.

3. The committee shall give an opinion on the law, legal practice and the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms of applicant states for membership of the Council of Europe, to assess compliance with Council of Europe standards.

4. The committee shall promote Council of Europe standard-setting legal instruments in the field of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law in non-member states.

5. The committee shall be in charge of interviewing all candidates for posts of judges to the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, before their election by the Assembly. It shall also examine the curricula vitae of candidates to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

6. The committee shall follow the activities of and maintain working relations with the relevant European and international organisations, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the OSCE (notably the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (Odihr) and the High Commissioner on National Minorities), the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), the International Law Commission and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Unidroit).

7. The committee shall follow the activities of the European Ombudsmen Conference.

8. The committee shall participate in the work of the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission).

9. The committee shall represent the Assembly in and follow the work of the relevant intergovernmental expert committees of the Council of Europe.[2]

10. The committee shall share the Assembly representation in the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (Ecri).

III. Committee on Economic Affairs and Development (AS/EC)

Number of seats : 83

Background : The committee was established in 1949 as the Committee on Economic Questions. Its title was changed in 1956 to “Economic Committee” and again in 1968 to “Committee on Economic Affairs and Development” in order to clarify that it was the committee responsible for developing countries. This change was also intended to meet the concerns of the authors of a motion for a resolution (Doc. 2179) to set up a new general committee on the developing countries.

Terms of reference :

1. The committee shall consider all matters relating to economic co-operation, growth and development.

2. The committee shall in particular consider :

economic development and co-operation across Europe, including employment policies, and the economic and development policies of the European Union especially as they affect member states of the Council of Europe which are outside the European Union ;

worldwide economic co-operation and development ;

development co-operation between industrialised and developing countries (North-South co-operation) ;

European transport policies ;

developments in European energy policy, in particular energy co-operation ;

tourism development.

3. Following special agreements, the committee shall prepare annual reports on the activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). These shall be debated in the Assembly following presentations by

2. As of 31 December 2004 these committees are the following : the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ), the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and the Steering Committee on the Mass Media (CDMM).

the Secretary General of the OECD and the President of the EBRD. For the preparation of the reports and debates, the committee maintains relations with the OECD and the EBRD and with parliaments of non-member states participating in these debates.

4. The committee shall report on all budgetary and financial matters. The committee in particular prepares the Assembly's annual opinions on the Council of Europe's draft budget and on Assembly expenditure, considers the budgetary and financial aspects of future activities proposed by the Assembly and examines questions related to the Assembly's budgetary competences.

5. The committee shall consider questions concerning the Council of Europe's role in the co-ordination of conditions of service in the European international organisations and in the establishment of a European civil service.

6. The committee shall follow the activities of and maintain working relations with the relevant European and international organisations, such as the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Free Trade Area (Efta), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Unece), the Bretton Woods Institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other institutions (European Civil Aviation Conference, International Air Transport Association). In the case of the Bretton Woods institutions, in principle the committee shall prepare a report on their activities every three years.

7. The committee, together with the Committee on Culture, Science and Education and the Bureau of the Assembly, shall follow the activities of the Council of Europe North-South Centre.

IV. Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee (AS/SOC)

Number of seats : 83

Background : The committee was appointed in 1949 and until 1988 it was known as the "Committee on Social and Health Questions". It was then renamed at its own request to reflect its increasing preoccupation with matters relating to children, young people and the family.

Terms of reference :

1. The committee shall consider matters and future trends relating to social welfare, labour, public health, the family and vulnerable groups of the population. It shall evaluate, on behalf of the Assembly, the implementation by member states of the European Social Charter and other relevant Council of Europe conventions, and their development.

2. The committee shall in particular consider :

ways of improving social cohesion within the member states, the contribution which social cohesion can make to political stability, and ways to strengthen the European social model as a basis for a stable and socially prosperous Europe ;

social aspects of employment and unemployment policy, including the social aspects of globalisation and the creation of hospitable conditions for social dialogue ;

social policies affecting children, the elderly, people with disabilities and ways of increasing solidarity between the generations ;

questions relating to health, including the development of concerted European health policies and the fight against drug trafficking and abuse, as well as the new ethical questions raised by biomedicine.

3. The committee shall have regular contacts with representatives of employers and employees of industry in Europe, in particular with the European Trade Union Confederation (Etuc) and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (Unice).

4. The committee shall follow the activities of and maintain working relations with the relevant European and international organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Unicef.

5. The committee shall represent the Assembly in and follow the work of the relevant intergovernmental expert committees of the Council of Europe.[3]

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3. As of 31 December 2004 these committees are the following : the European Committee for Social Cohesion (CDCS), the European Health Committee (CDSP) and the Steering Committee on Bioethics (CDBI).

V. Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population (AS/MIG)

Number of seats : 83

Background : During the Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly in 1950 and 1951, two special committees were appointed to study refugee questions. In December 1951 the Assembly decided that the problems which confronted these two committees were sufficiently important and lasting to justify the creation of another general committee. The committee was named the "Committee on Population and Refugees" and was appointed for the first time at the opening of the ordinary session in 1952. In 1979 (Resolution 685), the committee was given the title "Migration, Refugees and Demography" in order to reflect its growing concern with general migration problems. In 2003 the word "demography" was replaced by "population" to better take into account its major activities in a transparent manner.

Terms of reference :

1. The committee shall consider all relevant matters relating to migration, refugee and population policy issues. It shall work and propose actions for closer European co-operation in these fields, as well as, when relevant, with non-European countries.

2. The committee shall in particular consider :

questions relating to migration and refugees in Europe and in other parts of the world, including the problem of asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons as well as close co-operation between countries of origin, transit and destination ;

population trends in Europe and in other parts of the world and the social and economic effects of those trends ;

community relations in multicultural societies, including the situation and integration of migrant workers and their social, economic and political rights ;

humanitarian law and humanitarian issues.

3. The committee shall follow the activities of and maintain working relations with the relevant European and international organisations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

4. The committee shall represent the Assembly in and follow the work of the relevant intergovernmental expert committees of the Council of Europe.[4]

VI. Committee on Culture, Science and Education (AS/CULT)

Number of seats : 83

Background : The committee's name results from the merger of the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Science and Technology in 2001. The Committee on Culture and Education was appointed in 1949 as the "Committee on Cultural and Scientific Questions". Resolution 326 (1966) established a separate "Committee on Science and Technology" with specific terms of reference. The Committee on Cultural and Scientific Questions became at that time the "Cultural Committee". In 1968, the Cultural Committee was renamed to become the "Committee on Culture and Education". In 2001 the committee's title became the "Committee on Culture, Science and Education".

Terms of reference :

1. The committee shall consider issues relating to culture in Europe and shall encourage cultural co-operation within Europe and between Europe and other parts of the world, in particular the Mediterranean area. Culture and cultural co-operation include the fields of science, education, the arts, heritage, media, youth and sport, but in no order of priority.

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4. As of 31 December 2004 these committees are the following : the European Population Committee (CAHP), the Specialist Group on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (MG-S-ROM), the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) and the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Legal Aspects of Territorial Asylum, Refugees and Stateless Persons (Cahar).

2. The committee shall in particular consider :

the preservation of Europe's cultural heritage ;

education and youth policy ;

the media, including, in particular, questions of media ethics ;

issues relating to freedom of expression and the role of the artist and censorship, development of respect for and tolerance of differing cultures, including minority cultures within the member states ;

sport ;

scientific research ;

the impact of scientific and technological developments in society.

3. The committee shall, on behalf of the Assembly, decide on the annual award of the Council of Europe Museum Prize.

4. The committee shall follow the activities of and maintain working relations with the relevant European and international organisations such as Unesco, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Cultural Foundation, the European Science Foundation and the European Parliamentary Technology Assessment Network (Epta).

5. The committee, together with the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development and the Bureau of the Assembly, shall follow the activities of the Council of Europe North-South Centre. It shall also follow the activities of the European support fund for the co-production and distribution of creative cinematographic and audiovisual works "Eurimages".

6. The committee shall represent the Assembly in and follow the work of the relevant intergovernmental expert committees of the Council of Europe.[5]

7. The committee shall share representation in the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (Ecri).

8. The committee shall represent the Assembly in the Council of Europe's Committee for Works of Art.

VII. Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs (AS/ENA)

Number of seats : 83

Background : This committee results from the merger, in 2001, of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities and the Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Food.

The Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities was established in 1952 as a special committee on municipal and regional affairs. It became a general committee in 1956. The subject of regional planning was added in 1968 ; the environment was added to the committee's title in 1986.

The Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Food was first created in 1951 as a special committee. It became a general committee in 1956. Its title was changed to "Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development" in 1994 and was renamed "Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Food" by the Assembly in April 2000.

Terms of reference :

1. The committee shall consider all matters relating to the environment, regional planning, agriculture, food and consumer protection as well as those relating to local and regional government.

5. As of 31 December 2004 these committees are the following : the Steering Committee for Education (CDED), the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR), the Steering Committee for Culture (CDCULT), the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage (CDPAT), the Steering Committee for the Development of Sport (CDDS), the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ), the Steering Committee on the Mass Media (CDMM) and the Steering Committee on Bioethics (CDBI).

2. The committee shall in particular consider :

issues related to sustainable development from local to global level (protection of the environment, regional planning, natural resources management) as well as sectoral policies (transport, energy, etc.) as they contribute to a sustainable environment and well-balanced spatial planning ;

issues relating to agricultural policies, rural development, fisheries, forestry, food and consumer protection ;

issues relating to local and regional authorities, such as local and regional democracy and self-government, transfrontier and interregional co-operation and urban planning and policies.

3. The committee shall, on behalf of the Assembly, select the candidates for, and the winners of, the Europe Prize and the other awards (European Diplomas, Flags of Honour and Plaques of Honour) for local authorities.

4. The committee shall follow the activities and maintain working relations with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

5. The committee shall follow the activities of and maintain working relations with the relevant European and international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (Unep), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Unece) and the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (Icamas).

6. The committee shall follow the activities of the relevant European organisations and associations of local and regional co-operation.

7. The committee shall represent the Assembly in and follow the work of the relevant intergovernmental expert committees of the Council of Europe.[6]

VIII. Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (AS/EGA)

Number of seats : 51

Background : Established by Resolution 1144 (1998).

Terms of reference :

1. The committee shall consider questions of equal opportunities for women and men and gender issues.

2. The committee shall, in particular, consider :

equal opportunities for women and men and activities, policies and legislation related thereto in Council of Europe member and Observer states, as well as in the Council of Europe itself and in its bodies ;

questions of discrimination on the grounds of gender ;

violence against women, including gender-related crimes such as "honour crimes" and "feminicides" ;

trafficking in women ;

sexual and reproductive health issues related to women's rights and freedoms.

3. The committee shall follow up on the compliance of the Council of Europe, its bodies, its member and Observer states with the recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly relating to equal opportunities for women and men.

4. The committee shall maintain relations with and participate in the meetings of the Network of Parliamentary Committees for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the European Union (NCEO).

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6. As of 31 December 2004 these committees are the following : the Council of the Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (STRA-CO), the Committee for the Activities of the Council of Europe in the field of Biological and Landscape Diversity (CO-DBP), the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (T-PVS), the Standing Committee of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes (T-AP), the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) and the Public Health Committee (CD-P-SP).

5. The committee shall follow the activities of and maintain working relations with the relevant European and international organisations, such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Unece), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Cedaw) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (Odihr).

6. The committee shall follow the activities of United Nations world conferences on women and their preparatory conferences at the European level.

7. The committee shall represent the Assembly in and follow the work of the relevant intergovernmental expert committees of the Council of Europe.[7]

IX. Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities (AS/PRO)

Number of seats : 51

Background : The committee was established in 1949 with the name “Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges”. The part of the title concerning “privileges” was removed in 1956. The words “and Immunities” were added to the committee’s title in 1998.

Terms of reference :

1. The committee shall ensure that the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure are applied properly and that they – as well as the ancillary texts to the rules – remain consonant with the Assembly’s practice. It shall consider proposed amendments to the rules, in accordance with Rule 65 of the Rules of Procedure.

2. The committee shall, in particular :

advise the Bureau of the Assembly (following its request) on all matters of procedure or report to the Assembly or the Standing Committee on questions of interpretation or modification of the Rules of Procedure ;

report to the Assembly on any contested credentials of Representatives and Substitutes, in accordance with Rule 7.2 of the Rules of Procedure, and give its opinion on any challenge of still unratified credentials and any requests for annulment of previous ratifications of credentials on substantive grounds, in accordance with Rules 8.3 and 9.2 of the Rules of Procedure ;

report to the Bureau on any contested credentials of members of Special Guest delegations, after a joint meeting with the Political Affairs Committee, in accordance with Rule 59.6 of the Rules of Procedure ;

consider questions relating to the privileges and immunities of members of the Assembly, including those connected to the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe of 2 September 1949 and its protocol of 6 November 1952.

consider requests for waiver of immunity referred to it under Rule 64 of the Rules of Procedure ;

consider questions concerning the right of Representatives and Substitutes to participate in meetings and the reimbursement of travel costs by national parliaments or governments ;

keep under review the Assembly’s committee structure and the functioning of the Assembly’s system of committees, and report on proposals for the setting up of new committees.

3. The committee shall, upon instruction from the Bureau of the Assembly, update the terms of reference of Assembly committees.

4. The committee shall consider questions of an institutional character referred to it by the Assembly or its Bureau.

5. The committee shall follow the evolution at European and international level of legal instruments concerning privileges and immunities of parliamentarians.

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7. As of 31 December 2004 the committee concerned is the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG).

X. Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) (AS/MON)

Number of seats : 83

Background : Established by Resolution 1115 (1997)

Terms of reference

1. The committee is responsible for seeking to ensure :

the fulfilment of the obligations assumed by the member states under the terms of the Council of Europe Statute, the European Convention on Human Rights and all other conventions concluded within the Organisation to which they are parties ;

the honouring of the commitments entered into by the authorities of member states on their accession to the Council of Europe.

2. The committee may propose to the Assembly the initiation of a monitoring procedure when a member state is not fulfilling its obligations or not honouring its commitments.

3. The committee shall also consider applications to open a monitoring procedure originating from :

the general committees of the Assembly by reasoned written application to the Bureau ;

no fewer than ten members of the Assembly representing at least two national delegations and two political groups, through the tabling of a motion for a resolution or recommendation ;

the Bureau of the Assembly.

4. The committee may also be instructed to carry out a monitoring procedure by decision pursuant to a text adopted by the Assembly or the Standing Committee.

5. The committee shall report to the Assembly once a year on the general progress of the monitoring procedures and at least once every two years on each country being monitored.

6. Once a post-monitoring dialogue with a member state has been decided on by the Assembly, the committee shall pursue this dialogue on the follow-up undertaken by the authorities of that state to the steps recommended by the Assembly in its adopted texts closing the monitoring procedure, or on any other issues arising from that state’s obligations. It shall subsequently report to the Bureau of the Assembly.

7. The committee shall follow the activities of and maintain working relations with the subsidiary bodies of the Committee of Ministers which are competent to monitor member states’ obligations and commitments, and with the relevant international institutions.

8. The committee shall share the Assembly representation in the Council for Democratic Elections of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission).