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Activities of the Assembly's Bureau and Standing Committee (23 January 2012)

Addendum to the report

Bureau of the Assembly

Rapporteur: Mr Mevlüt ÇAVUŞOĞLU, Turkey, European Democrat Group

1. Decisions of the Bureau of 23 January 2012 requiring ratification by the Assembly

1.1. Evaluation of the Partnership for Democracy

- to approve the memorandum and the proposals contained in it, and note that these would be brought for ratification by the Assembly in the Progress report (Appendix I);
- to refer the evaluation of the Partnership for Democracy in respect of the Parliament of Morocco and the Palestinian National Council to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy for report and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination for opinion.

1.2. Resolution 1376 (2004) relating to Cyprus

- to take note of the letters from the two Turkish Cypriot political parties informing the President of the Assembly of the names of the “elected representatives of the Turkish Cypriot community” entitled to sit in the Assembly, namely Mr Ahmet Eti (National Unity Party) and Mr Mehmet Çaglar (Republican Turkish Party), to be submitted to the Assembly for its approval within the framework of the Progress Report.



Appendix

AS/Pol (2011) 37rev, 20 December 2011

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Political Affairs Committee

Evaluation of Partnership for Democracy, Memorandum prepared by the Secretariat upon instructions from the Chairman

1. Rule 60.2 on the conditions to be met by a parliament requesting the status of partner for democracy refers to “aspirations” and “intentions” of the said parliament, a number of “commitments” that it has to undertake, as well as the “obligation” to inform the Assembly regularly on the state of progress in implementing Council of Europe principles.
2. In its resolutions granting the status to the parliament of Morocco and to the Palestinian National Council, the Assembly added further recommendations on a number of specific issues, which it considered to be important for strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Assembly also resolved to review, no later than two years from the adoption of these resolutions, the state of progress achieved in implementing both the (political) commitments undertaken by the parliament concerned, as well as in carrying forward the specific recommendations on the issues mentioned in the respective resolutions.
3. It is clear that the status is not an award for something accomplished but an incentive to accomplish something. It sets the rules for a continued dialogue between the parliament concerned and the Assembly.
4. Rule 60.7 says that “decisions on granting, suspending or withdrawing partner for democracy status shall be taken by a resolution of the Assembly following a report by the Political Affairs Committee”. Also, the new terms of reference of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, to enter into force as of 23 January 2011, foresee that the Committee shall consider “questions relating to the state of democracy and the functioning and development of democratic institutions in [...] the states whose parliaments enjoy [...] partner for democracy status”. The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and the Committee on Equality and Non Discrimination may be seized for opinion on the matter in line with their new terms of reference.
5. It is therefore clear that, when granting the status of partner for democracy to a parliament, the Assembly, through its Political Affairs Committee, has the obligation to follow the state of progress achieved by the parliament concerned in implementing both the commitments it has undertaken and the specific recommendations which the Assembly may have addressed to it. It is considered that two years is a reasonable period in which to review such progress.
6. The Political Affairs Committee should thus appoint a rapporteur to follow this progress and to prepare a report in time for an Assembly debate two years after the granting of the status. The report should also include an assessment of the respective benefits and commitments of the partnership.
7. On the basis of such a report, the Assembly should decide to maintain, to suspend or to withdraw the partner for democracy status. It may also decide to extend the revision period in case some of the commitments have not been fulfilled or some recommendations have not been implemented.
8. It is advisable that the rapporteur is appointed not later than 6 months after the granting of the status.
9. The rapporteur on the evaluation of the partnership for democracy in respect of a parliament which enjoys such status with the Assembly should follow the situation in the country concerned on a regular basis, maintain the dialogue with its parliament and keep the Committee informed as appropriate.
10. In cases requiring urgent action prior to the appointment of the rapporteur on the evaluation of the partnership for democracy, the Chairperson of the Committee or the (former) rapporteur who prepared the report on the request for the status could perform the above-mentioned tasks.