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Parliamentary questions to the Chairperson-in-office of the Committee of Ministers

Parliamentary questions

1. Question from Mr Volontè, Italy, EPP/CD

Three weeks ago the G20 in London showed concern and invited all countries to undertake initiatives to face the world economical crisis. Recently the International Monetary Fund requested all countries to avoid protectionism.

Mr Volontè asks the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers what kind of decision the Committee of Ministers would take to confront the tendency toward protectionism and what decision it would intend to take to promote the opening of the European Market to the East Europe and the economic development of emerging economies.

Reply by Mr Miguel Ángel Moratinos, on behalf of the Committee of Ministers:

Although the implications of the economic crisis on trade, industry and financial governance in member states are not directly within the competences of the Council of Europe, the Organisation is of course fully cognisant and concerned by the repercussions and potential risks of the economic crisis. And many of these do fall within the realm of the Council of Europe.

Firstly, it is clear that there is a heightened risk that difficulties faced on a national level can have an impact on human rights and social protection in member states. It is therefore crucial that we be particularly vigilant in ensuring that the values and fundamental rights of this Organisation are not compromised in any way.

More specifically, it is imperative to sustain our efforts in promoting social cohesion. A deteriorating economic climate, which includes rising unemployment and its consequences, can put great pressure on society.

The more vulnerable in our society, such as the elderly, the disabled, children but also migrant and minority populations, including Roma, also need to be afforded particular attention and protection as it is often they who are often the first to suffer from any threat to social cohesion or to the protection of human and social rights. The fight against social exclusion and the activities of the Council of Europe in these areas are therefore more pertinent than ever.

In ensuring that adequate attention is given to preserving and strengthening social cohesion and protecting the more vulnerable in our societies, we can try to temper the effects of the crisis on our communities, and conserve or restore the confidence of all citizens – which is an essential goal in difficult times.

2. Question from Mr Badea , Romania, EPP/CD

The authorities in Kishinev responded violently to the demonstrations which followed the official announcement of the parliamentary elections in Moldova, and at least two people died as a result.



Mr Badea asks the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers what action the Committee of Ministers intends to take to investigate the post-electoral situation in Moldova, and more precisely the serious human rights violations and the way in which the elections were conducted.

Reply by Mr Miguel Ángel Moratinos, on behalf of the Committee of Ministers:

The situation in Moldova is indeed very worrying. Like your Assembly, the Committee of Ministers is following it with particular attention. It had, moreover, begun doing so even before the parliamentary elections of 5 April as part of the implementation of the Council of Europe's pre-election assistance plan.

I applaud the organisation's speedy reaction following the events of 7 April in Chisinau, with the visit first by a high-ranking official of the Secretariat to Moldova and then by the Commissioner for Human Rights at the beginning of this week.

As I said in a statement on 23 April last, it is imperative that the Moldovan authorities guarantee full respect for the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights, in accordance with the country's commitments to the Council of Europe.

I am thinking in particular of the freedom of peaceful assembly, the right to information and the freedom of expression.

The allegations of ill-treatment, whoever the presumed perpetrators are, must be properly investigated.

Furthermore, all the concerns voiced regarding the preparation and conduct of the elections of 5 April should be looked at in a transparent way, as part of a dialogue involving all the political forces in Moldova.

The Council of Europe is ready to offer its support to this process, in particular to reform the electoral legislation using the expertise of the Venice Commission.

3. Question from Mrs Postanjyan, Armenia, EPP/CD

The European Court of Human Rights held, in its judgments in the case of Harutyunyan v. Armenia (Application no. 36549/03) and in the case of Meltex Ltd and Mesrop Movsesyan v. Armenia (Application no. 32283/04), that there have been violations of the European Convention on Human Rights, of Article 6.1 and Article 10 respectively.

However, Mr Misha Harutyunyan, who had been found guilty and subsequently had served his prison sentence, again has become a defendant in the same case. Relating to the case of Meltex Ltd under the pretext of digitalizing the country's television broadcasting domain, the Armenian authorities have stopped the tender for providing television-broadcasting licenses on the basis of law.

Mrs Postanjyan asks the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers if the Committee of Ministers is aware of the fact that the Republic of Armenia has not completely honored the above-mentioned decisions of the ECHR and what actions would the Committee of Ministers take to actually resolve the above-mentioned matters.

Reply by Mr Miguel Ángel Moratinos, on behalf of the Committee of Ministers:

The Committee of Ministers is supervising the execution of both the judgments mentioned by the Honourable Member under the terms of Article 46, paragraph 2, of the European Convention on Human Rights, in close co-operation with the authorities of the respondent state. Its task in this context is to ensure that the Armenian authorities take all necessary measures to ensure execution of the terms of the judgments. These include individual measures to restore the applicants as far as possible to the enjoyment of their rights and general measures to prevent the occurrence of similar violations in future. The Committee will not put an end to its examination of these cases until it is satisfied that all such measures have been implemented.

The cases are on the Committee's agenda for the 1059th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies in the first week in June 2009.