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Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and of the Standing Committee (26 June-28 September 2009)

Progress report
Bureau of the Assembly
Rapporteur: Mr Mátyás EÖRSI, Hungary, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

1. Introduction

1. The Bureau met on 26 June in Strasbourg and on 7 September in Paris.

2. Functioning of the Assembly

2.1. Progress Report of the Bureau of the Assembly and of the Standing Committee (26 June-28 September 2009)

2. On 26 June, the Bureau appointed Mr Eörsi (Hungary, ALDE) as rapporteur.

2.2. Follow-up to be given to texts adopted during the 2009 Third ordinary part-session of the Assembly (Strasbourg, 22-26 June 2009)

2.2.1. Resolution 1671 (2009) "Situation in Belarus"

3. On 26 June, further to the requests made to the Bureau in paragraph 19 of the resolution, the Bureau decided to ask the Secretariat to prepare a document on the implementation of that paragraph.

4. On 7 September, the Bureau:

a. took note of a memorandum prepared by the Secretariat, upon the instructions of the President, on the implementation of paragraph 19 of Resolution 1671 (2009);

b. referred the issue of follow-up of the situation in Belarus to the Political Affairs Committee for report;

c. asked the Political Affairs Committee – within the framework of the preparation of the report on the situation in Belarus and within one year of the lifting of the suspension of the special guest status of the Parliament of Belarus with regard to the Council of Europe, or sooner – to submit an evaluation of whether Belarus has made substantive and irreversible progress towards Council of Europe standards.

2.2.2. Resolution 1675 (2009) on "The state of human rights in Europe: the need to eradicate impunity"

5. On 26 June, in accordance with paragraph 13, the Bureau decided to refer to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for report the examination of the "advisability of establishing an independent European committee to investigate serious allegations of gross and systematic violations of human rights".

2.2.3. Resolution 1678 (2009) on "The situation in Iran"

6. On 26 June, in accordance with paragraph 19, the Bureau decided to ask the Political Affairs Committee to present proposals to the Bureau regarding the means of intensifying contacts between the Assembly and the Iranian parliament, with democratic forces in Iran as well as with Iranian civil society.

2.2.4. Resolution 1677 (2009) "The functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia"

7. On 26 June, in accordance with paragraph 16, the Bureau decided to instruct the Monitoring Committee to continue to follow this issue.

2.2.5. Resolution 1679 (2009) "Nuclear energy and sustainable development"

8. On 26 June, in accordance with paragraph 19, the Bureau asked the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs to organise parliamentary debates on the future of nuclear energy.

2.2.6. Resolution 1680 (2009) "Establishment of a "Partner for democracy" status with the Parliamentary Assembly"

9. On 26 June, in accordance with paragraph 16, the Bureau decided to ask the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to submit proposals to the Bureau concerning amendments to the Rules with regard to the implementation of this resolution.

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

10. On 7 September, the Bureau:

a. took note of the opinion of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs;

b. agreed to ask the Chairman of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to consult the chairpersons and/or secretaries of national delegations before the end of 2009, on the proposals contained in this opinion and in particular the setting up within that committee of a sub-committee with the task of selecting the texts requiring parliamentary action;

c. agreed to return to this point in the light of the results of the above-mentioned consultation.

2.4. Report on the situation in Kosovo[1]

11. On 7 September, in the context of the preparation of this report, the Bureau took note of the decision of the Political Affairs Committee to invite representatives of the Kosovo Assembly, as well as other actors with first-hand knowledge of the situation in Kosovo to an exchange of views to be held during one of its forthcoming meetings in the course of the next part session.

2.5. 2009 Fourth ordinary part-session of the Assembly (28 September – 2 October 2009)

2.5.1. Draft agenda

12. On 26 June, the Bureau approved the preliminary draft agenda.

13. On 7 September, the Bureau updated the draft agenda and noted its agreement for the acting Chairman of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to be invited to participate in the debate on "The challenges posed by climate change" to take place on Tuesday 29 September.

2.5.2. Joint Committee

14. On 7 September, the Bureau agreed to propose to the Committee of Ministers that the following points be placed on the agenda for the meeting:

a. Enhancing dialogue and cooperation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers;

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1. All references to the territory, institutions or population of Kosovo in the present text are made in compliance with Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

b. Current political questions.

2.5.3. Ceremonies commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Council of Europe

15. On 7 September, the Bureau took note of the programme of events taking place in Strasbourg on 30 September and 1 October 2009.

2.6. 60th anniversary of the Council of Europe "Festival del Cinema (Venice (Italy), 9 September 2009)

16. On 26 June, the Bureau set up an ad hoc committee of the Bureau composed of the contact parliamentarians for the Assembly on violence against women in order to participate in an event organised by the Italian parliamentary delegation on the occasion of the Venice film festival in the framework of the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the Council of Europe, and left it to the President of the Assembly to appoint the Chairperson.

17. On 7 September, the Bureau approved of the composition of the ad hoc committee of the Bureau to participate in this event and appointed the President of the Assembly as its Chairperson.

2.7. References and transmissions to committees

18. On 26 June, the Bureau approved the following references and modifications of references, which were ratified the same day by the Assembly:

2.7.1. references to committees

a. Improving the procedure for drafting documents of the Assembly

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Harutyunyan and others

Doc. 11945, to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs *for information*

b. The human rights situation in Western Sahara

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Lecoq and others

Doc. 11946, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report* and to the Political Affairs Committee *for opinion*

c. The necessity to take additional international legal steps to deal with sea piracy

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Kosachev and others

Doc. 11947, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report (for a joint debate with the report on "Piracy – a crime and a challenge for democracies")* (Ref. 3531 of 29 May 2009 to the Political Affairs Committee)

2.7.2. extension of references

a. The United Nations – Reform and the Council of Europe member states

Reference No. 3294 of 22 January 2007 – validity: 30 June 2009, extension until 30 September 2009

b. Guaranteeing the authority and effectiveness of the European Convention on Human Rights

Bureau decision of 5 October 2007

Reference No. 3380 – validity: 5 October 2009, extension until 30 June 2010

2.8. Composition of the Monitoring Committee

19. On 26 June, the Bureau approved the changes in the lists of members of this committee.

2.9. Meetings of the Standing Committee and the Bureau in 2010

20. On 7 September, the Bureau approved the following dates:[2]

– Monday 25 January, 8.00 am Strasbourg (part-session): Bureau

– Friday 29 January, 8.30 am Strasbourg (part-session): Bureau

– Thursday 11 March, 3 pm, Paris: Bureau

– Friday 12 March, 9.00 am, Paris (to be confirmed): Standing Committee

– Monday 26 April, 8.00 am, Strasbourg (part-session): Bureau

– Friday 30 April, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session): Bureau

– May, Skopje (date to be confirmed): Bureau and Standing Committee (CM Presidency)

– Monday 21 June, 8.00 am, Strasbourg (part-session): Bureau

– Friday 25 June, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session): Bureau

– Monday 6 September, 9.30 am, Paris: Bureau

– Monday 4 October, 8.00 am, Strasbourg (part-session): Bureau

– Friday 8 October, 8.30 am, Strasbourg (part-session): Bureau

– November, Turkey (date and place to be confirmed): Bureau and Standing Committee (CM Presidency)

– Monday 13 December, 9.30 am, Paris: Bureau

2.10. Meetings elsewhere than in Strasbourg and Paris

21. On 7 September, the Bureau authorised the following meetings:

a. Sub-committee on the Europe Prize (of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs), Ankara (Turkey), 9-10 October 2009;

b. Sub-committee on Local and Regional Democracy (of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs), Utrecht (Netherlands), 16-17 November 2009;

c. Sub-committee on Youth and Sport (of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education), Budapest (Hungary), 5-7 October 2009;

d. Sub-committee on Media (of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education), Luxembourg (Luxembourg), 26 October 2009;

e. Sub-committee on the Cultural Heritage (of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education), Lisbon (Portugal), 20 November 2009.

2.11. Appointments of Assembly Representatives for official activities

22. On 7 September, in reply to formal invitations, the Bureau took the following decisions:

a. Mrs Wurm (Austria, SOC): 10th Conference of the Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons organised by the OSCE, Vienna (Austria), 14-15 September 2009 (at no cost to the Assembly);

b. Mr Lindblad (Sweden, EPP/CD): 61st plenary session of the Nordic Council, Stockholm (Sweden), 27-29 October 2009 (at no cost to the Assembly).

2.12. Visits by rapporteurs

23. On 26 June, the Bureau authorised Mr Çavuşoğlu, rapporteur for the report "The need for international condemnation of Holodmor in Ukraine in 1932-1933 – 75th Anniversary of mass famine in the territory of the former USSR", to visit Kazakhstan and Belarus in the framework of the preparation of his report.

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2. 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.

24. On 7 September, the Bureau authorised Mr Badré (France, ALDE), within the framework of the preparation of his report on "Euro-Mediterranean: call for a Council of Europe strategy", to visit Cairo for meetings with representatives of the League of Arab States.

3. Forums

3.1. Forum for the Future of Democracy (Kyiv, 21-23 October 2009)

25. On 26 June, the Bureau took note of the updated list of members of the ad hoc committee of the Bureau for participating in the Forum as well as the draft programme.

26. On 7 September, the Bureau took note of the summary and conclusions of the meeting of the Advisory Board on 26 June 2009.

3.2. Forum on Early Warning in Conflict Prevention (Strasbourg, 24-25 September 2009)

27. On 26 June, the Bureau approved the composition of the ad hoc committee for participating in the Forum and appointed Mr Wilshire (United Kingdom, EDG) as Chairperson.

4. Relations with other bodies of the Council of Europe

4.1. Committee of Ministers

4.1.1. Enhancing dialogue and cooperation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers

28. On 7 September, the Bureau was informed by the President of the outcome of the meetings between the Presidential Committee of the Assembly and the Bureau of the Committee of Ministers held in Paris on 13 July 2009 and in Bled on 31 August 2009 and also of the holding of another meeting in Brussels on 14 September 2009.

4.2. European Court of Human Rights

4.2.1. Election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Malta

29. On 26 June, the Bureau:

a. took note that following a vote on this matter, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights did not reach the required majority to accept that Malta had taken all the necessary and appropriate steps to ensure that the list of candidates contained a candidate of the under-represented sex and that the committee considered that the list submitted by the Maltese delegation should therefore be rejected;

b. according to Resolution 1627 (2008), this position shall be ratified by the Assembly in the framework of the Progress Report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee.

4.3. European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)

30. On 26 June, the Bureau:

a. approved the lists of candidates to the CPT in respect of Estonia, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Ukraine, to be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers;

b. asked the parliamentary delegation of Luxembourg to present a new list of candidates including persons of both sexes in accordance with Resolution 1540 (2007), as the minimum quota of 40% of the under-represented sex had been reached in the CPT;

c. asked the Turkish parliamentary delegation to present a new list of candidates that would not include persons in a situation of conflict of interest in view of their current situation, in accordance with Resolution 1540 (2007).

5. Elections

5.1. Parliamentary elections in Albania (28 June 2009)

31. On 7 September, the Bureau approved the report of the ad hoc committee.

5.2. Parliamentary elections in Bulgaria (5 July 2009)

32. On 26 June, following an invitation letter by the authorities of Bulgaria to observe the parliamentary elections in Bulgaria, the Bureau reconsidered its decision and decided to observe these elections according to modalities defined at its meeting on 28 May in Ljubljana.

33. On 7 September, the Bureau approved the report of the ad hoc committee and decided to return to this issue following the debate in the Assembly.

5.3. Parliamentary elections in Moldova (29 July 2009)

34. On 26 June, the Bureau approved the list of members of this ad hoc committee and appointed Mr Çavuşoğlu (Turkey, EDG) as Chairperson.

35. On 7 September, the Bureau approved the report of the ad hoc committee.

6. Budgetary matters

6.1. Apportionment of the allocation to political groups for 2009

36. On 26 June, the Bureau approved the apportionment of the allocation to political groups for 2009.

7. Other business

7.1. Fourth Summer University for Democracy (Strasbourg, 6-10 July 2009)

37. On 7 September, the Bureau took note of the final declaration.

7.2. International Day of Democracy, 15 September 2009 (Interparliamentary Union)

38. On 7 September, the Bureau adopted a declaration (see the Assembly web site).

7.3. Organisational chart of the Secretariat of the Assembly

39. On 7 September, the Bureau took note of the new organisational chart.

7.4. Communications

40. On 26 June, the Bureau took note of the revised communication by the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

41. On 7 September, the Bureau took note of communications by the President, the Acting Secretary General of the Council of Europe, as well as the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Appendix – References to committees and Modifications to references

On 7 September, the Bureau approved the following references and modifications of references, subject to ratification by the Assembly:

i. References to committees

a. Raising awareness in national parliaments and governments of the Council of Europe's vital mission and need for sufficient resources

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Meale and others

Doc. 11967, to the Political Affairs Committee *for report* and to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *for opinion*

b. The investigation of events of 1 and 2 March 2008 in Armenia, in particular the exact circumstances that led to the deaths

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Pourgourides and others

Doc. 11970, to the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) *to be taken into account in the preparation of the report onthe Assembly's monitoring procedure on Armenia*

c. Situation in Belarus

Decision by the Bureau, to the Political Affairs Committee *for report* in order to continue to follow the situation in Belarus

d. Code of good conduct in the field of political parties

Decision by the Bureau, to the Political Affairs Committee *for report*

ii. Modifications to references

a. Impact of the financial crisis upon pensioners

Motion for a recommendation presented by Baroness O'Cathain and others

Doc. 11834, to the Committee on Social, Health and Family Affairs *for report* and to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *for opinion*

b. Situation in Venezuela

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Kukan and others

Doc. 11849, no further action

c. Democracy and the limitation of mandates

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Mota Amaral and others

Doc. 11863, to the Political Affairs Committee *for report*

d. Human rights and family courts

Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Rowen and others

Doc. 11742, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*