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Activities of the Assembly's Bureau and Standing Committee (26 April – 23 June 2013)

Progress report

Bureau of the Assembly

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1. Introduction

At its meeting on 30 May 2013 in Yerevan, the Bureau appointed me as rapporteur for this report. In line with my predecessors, this progress report covers the period outside of Assembly sessions, leaving aside the decisions which have already been ratified by the Assembly. Therefore, this report presents the Bureau's activities since the end of the second part-session of 2013 (22-26 April) until the third part-session of 2013 (24-28 June). It also covers the meeting of the Standing Committee held on 31 May 2013 in Yerevan.

The Bureau will hold its next meetings in Strasbourg on Monday 24 June at 8 a.m. and Friday 28 June 2013 at 8.30 a.m. (during the 3rd part-session), then on 2 September 2013 in Dubrovnik (Croatia).

2. Activities of the Bureau since the last part-session

2.1. Follow-up to the Assembly's Resolutions

2.1.1. Follow-up to the second part-session of 2013 (Strasbourg, 22-26 April)

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau approved the following proposals made by the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly:

- Current affairs debate on "Syrian refugees in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq, how to organise and support international assistance?": the Bureau decided to refer this subject to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons for report and to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy for opinion;
- Request for the opening of a monitoring procedure in respect of Hungary: the Bureau took note of the Opinion by the Monitoring Committee, adopted on 25 April 2013, and decided to put this item on the agenda of the Bureau meeting which was held in Yerevan on 30 May 2013.



2.2. Third part-session of 2013 (Strasbourg, 24-28 June)

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau drew up the preliminary draft agenda, which it updated at its meeting of 30 May 2013.

On 30 May 2013, at the request of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, the Bureau decided to invite Ms Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister of Women's Rights, France, to address the Assembly in the context of the debate on "Tackling discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity".

2.3. Standing Committee (Yerevan, 31 May 2013)

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau took note of the draft agenda and of the revised draft agenda on 30 May.

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau took note of a draft statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which was adopted on the following day by the Standing Committee (see Appendix).

2.4. Election observation

2.4.1. Presidential election in Montenegro (7 April 2013)

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau approved the final report of the ad hoc committee.

2.4.2. Early parliamentary elections in Bulgaria (12 May 2013)

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau took note of the press release issued by the ad hoc committee.

2.4.3. Parliamentary elections in Albania (23 June 2013)

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau approved the composition of the ad hoc committee to observe these elections and appointed Mr Luca Volontè (Italy, EPP/CD) as its Chairperson. At its following meeting in Yerevan, the Bureau approved the final composition of the ad hoc committee.

2.4.4. Presidential election in Azerbaijan (16 October 2013)

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau decided to observe this election and constituted an ad hoc Committee for this purpose composed of 32 members: EPP/CD: 11, SOC: 10, ALDE: 4, EDG: 4, UEL: 1 (in accordance with the D'Hondt system) and the two Co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee. It authorised a pre-electoral mission composed of 7 members (one from each political group and the two Co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee), to take place at least one month ahead of the election.

2.4.5. Presidential election in Georgia (October 2013 – subject to the receipt of an invitation)

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau decided to observe this election (subject to the confirmation of the date) and constituted an ad hoc Committee for this purpose composed of 32 members: EPP/CD: 11, SOC: 10, ALDE: 4, EDG: 4, UEL: 1 (in accordance with the D'Hondt system) and the two Co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee. It authorised a pre-electoral mission composed of 7 members (one from each political group and the two Co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee), to take place at least one month ahead of the election.

2.5. Request for the opening of a monitoring procedure in respect of Hungary

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau decided to propose to the Assembly not to open a monitoring procedure in respect of Hungary. It also decided to designate Mr Robert Walter (United Kingdom, EDG) to speak on behalf of the Bureau during the plenary debate on this issue.

2.6. Václav Havel Human Rights Prize

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau approved a memorandum prepared by the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly concerning the designation of members of the Selection Panel of the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize. It invited Bureau members to propose candidatures for the third Selection Panel member to be designated by the Bureau and to submit them before 15 May 2013 to the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly.

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau confirmed Mr Thomas Hammarberg and Ms Nuala Mole as members of the Selection Panel and elected Mr Christos Pourgourides as the third Selection Panel member to be designated by the Bureau, taking note that the three members would start their two years term of office as of 1 June 2013.

2.7. Issues raised by committees

2.7.1. Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau, at the request of the Chairperson of the Committee, decided to:

- authorise Mr Andres Herkel (Estonia, EPP/CD), Rapporteur on “The situation in Belarus”, to carry out a fact-finding visit to Belarus, in the framework of the preparation of his report;
- authorise Mr Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (Turkey, EDG), Rapporteur on the “Request for partner for democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic” to carry out a fact-finding visit to Kyrgyzstan in June 2013, in the framework of the preparation of his report;
- authorise an ad hoc Sub-Committee composed of representatives of all political groups to carry out a fact-finding visit to Kyrgyzstan, in the framework of the preparation of the report on the “Request for partner for democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic” (Rapporteur: Mr Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Turkey, EDG);
- authorise Ms Liliane Maury Pasquier (Switzerland, SOC), Rapporteur on the “Parliamentary contribution to solving the Western Sahara conflict”, to carry out a fact-finding visit to the region, in the framework of the preparation of her report.

2.8. References and transmissions to committees

2.8.1. References approved by the Bureau

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau approved the following references, which were subsequently ratified by the Assembly:

- [Doc. 13148](#), Motion for a resolution, Protecting patients and public health against undue influence of the pharmaceutical industry, to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for report*;
- [Doc. 13149](#), Motion for a resolution, The inclusion of children’s rights in national constitutions as an essential component of effective national child policies, to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for report*;
- [Doc. 13150](#), Motion for a resolution, Effectively combating the adverse consequences of dirty money, to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for report*;
- [Doc. 13153](#), Motion for a resolution, Focusing on the perpetrators to prevent violence against women, to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for report*;
- [Doc. 13164](#), Motion for a resolution, The “left-to-die boat”: actions and reactions, to the Committee on Migration and Displaced Persons *for report*;
- [Doc. 13165](#), Motion for a recommendation, Criminalisation of irregular migrants: a crime without victim, to the Committee on Migration and Displaced Persons *for report*;
- Bureau decision, Activities of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report*;
- Bureau decision, Draft Protocol no. 16 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Rights, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*;
- Bureau decision, Modification of Article 45.7 of the Rules of Procedure on Length of mandate and non-eligibility of committee chairpersons, to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs *for report*;
- Bureau decision, Syrian refugees in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq, how to organise and support international assistance, to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons *for report* and to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for opinion*.

- On 30 May 2013, the Bureau approved the following references, which were subsequently ratified by the Standing Committee:
- [Doc. 13173](#), Motion for a resolution, The “backbone” to a successful regional democracy, to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for information*;
- [Doc. 13185](#), Motion for a recommendation, Urgent need to deal with new failures to co-operate with the European Court of Human Rights, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*;
- [Doc. 13186](#), Motion for a resolution, Ensuring equal treatment and dignified care for the elderly, to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for information*;
- [Doc. 13188](#), Motion for a recommendation, Violence against women in Europe, reference to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for report*;
- [Doc. 13189](#), Motion for a recommendation, Innovative medical treatments of infectious diseases, transmission to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for information*;
- [Doc. 13190](#), Motion for a resolution, Improving co-operation between National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Parliaments in addressing Equality and Non-Discrimination Issues, to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for report*.

2.8.2. Request for modification of a reference

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau modified the following reference, which was subsequently ratified by the Assembly:

- [Doc. 12603](#), Motion for a resolution, Parliamentary contribution to solving the Western Sahara conflict (Ref. 3783 of 20 June 2011 to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report*), request from the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons to be referred to for opinion: *no further action*.

2.8.3. Requests for extension of references

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau approved the extension of the following references:

- [Doc. 12603](#), Motion for a resolution, Parliamentary contribution to solving the Western Sahara conflict (Ref. 3783 of 20 June 2011 – validity: 20 June 2013): extension until 30 April 2014;
- [Doc. 12604](#), Motion for a recommendation, Integration tests for migrants: a step forward or back? (Ref. 3784 of 20 June 2011 – validity: 20 June 2013): extension until 31 December 2013;
- [Doc. 12635](#), Motion for a resolution, Missing persons from Europe’s conflicts: the long road to finding humanitarian answers (Ref. 3786 of 24 June 2011 – validity: 24 June 2013): extension until 31 October 2013.

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau approved the extension of the following reference:

- [Doc. 12585](#), Motion for a resolution, Improving user protection and security in cyberspace (Ref. 3772 of 27 May 2011 – validity: 27 May 2013): extension until 31 January 2014;
- [Doc. 12252](#), Motion for a resolution, The rule of law in Council of Europe member states: upholding the authority of the Parliamentary Assembly’s recommendations (Ref. 3684 of 21 June 2010 (extended on 25 May 2012): extension until 30 June 2014.

2.8.4. Reply after consultation

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau decided to refer the motion for a resolution on Measures to combat the rising popularity of right-wing extremism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in the Council of Europe’s member States (Doc. 13103) to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *to be taken into account in the preparation of the report on “Counteraction to manifestations of neo-Nazism and xenophobia”* (Ref. 3816 of 3 October 2011).

2.9. Communications

The Bureau took note of communications by the President of the Assembly and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

2.10. Ad hoc Committee to participate in the International parliamentary conference: Role of Parliamentary Organisations in building a Europe without dividing lines (St Petersburg, Russian Federation, 12 April 2013)

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau took note of the oral report by the President of the Assembly.

2.11. ONE in FIVE campaign - Partnership between the Parliamentary Assembly and the A.G. Leventis Foundation, signed on 4 April 2013

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau took note of a memorandum prepared by the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly.

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

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau drew up the list of candidates for the CPT in respect of Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Serbia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, which was subsequently forwarded to the Committee of Ministers.

2.13. Composition of the Monitoring Committee

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau appointed Mr Jean-Charles Allavena (Monaco, EPP/CD), Mr Charlò Bonnici (Malta, EPP/CD) and Mr Gergely Gulyàs (Hungary, EPP/CD), on the basis of proposals submitted by the EPP/CD group, and on the basis of a proposal submitted by the ALDE Group, appointed Ms Tina Acketoft (Sweden, ALDE); those appointments were subsequently ratified by the Assembly

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau appointed Mr Michael Mc Namara (Ireland, SOC), on the basis of a proposal submitted by the Socialist Group; this appointment was subsequently ratified by the Standing Committee.

2.14. Meetings elsewhere than in Strasbourg and Paris

During the reference period, the Bureau authorised the following meetings:

- an ad hoc Sub-Committee (of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development) to participate in the parliamentary conference on the implementation of the ONE in FIVE Campaign of the Council of Europe on 11 June 2013 in Baku;
- the ad hoc Sub-Committee on the reform of international football (of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media) to hold a meeting in 2013 (date to be confirmed) in Zurich and Nyon, Switzerland;
- the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to meet on 30 May 2013 in Yerevan.

2.15. Appointment of Assembly representatives for official activities

The following members were appointed during the reference period:

- Mr Joao Mota Amaral (Portugal, EPP/CD) to participate in the ceremony for the 2012 North-South Prize award which took place in Lisbon on 21 May 2013;
- Ms Nursuna Memecan (Turkey, ALDE) to participate in the 22nd Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Istanbul (Turkey) from 29 June to 3 July 2013.

2.16. Analysis of the use made by the Assembly's political groups of their allocations for 2012

On 30 May 2013, the Bureau approved the draft communication submitted by the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs.

2.17. Project of installation of stained glass windows in the upper part of the Assembly Chamber

On 26 April 2013, the Bureau took note of the project of the Armenian government to donate stained glass windows for the windows in the Assembly Chamber.

3. Activities of the Standing Committee (Yerevan, 31 May 2013)

The Standing Committee heard a welcome address from Mr Hovik Abrahamyan, Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia and held an exchange of views with Mr Edward Nalbandian, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers.

Following debates, the Standing Committee adopted the following texts on behalf of the Assembly, which are available on the Assembly website:

- Opinion 284 (2013) on Budgets and priorities of the Council of Europe for the biennium 2014-2015
- Resolution 1935 (2013) on Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the biennium 2014-2015
- Resolution 1936 (2013) on Harmonisation of regulatory and para-regulatory provisions of monitoring and post-monitoring dialogue procedures
- Resolution 1937 (2013) on Length of term of office and re-eligibility of committee chairpersons
- Resolution 1938 (2013) on Promoting alternatives to imprisonment
- Resolution 1939 (2013) on Parental leave as a way to foster gender equality
- Recommendation 2018 (2013) on Promoting alternatives to imprisonment

It adopted a statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, contained in the Appendix hereafter.

The Standing Committee ratified the references as listed in chapter 2.8 of this report. It referred back to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination the report on “Gender equality in the countries of the former Yugoslavia” (Doc. 13092).

It ratified the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegations of Hungary, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Russian Federation and Spain, and approved changes in the composition of Assembly committees.

The Standing Committee took note of the draft agenda of the third part-session of the Assembly (24 – 28 June 2013) as well as of the report of the Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau on “Observation of the presidential election in Montenegro (7 April 2013)”.

Appendix

Statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

On the occasion of its meeting in Yerevan on 31 May 2013, the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) made the following statement:

“The search for a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a commitment taken by Armenia and by Azerbaijan upon their accession to the Council of Europe. In this context, we express our full support to the negotiations within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group, on the basis of the ‘Madrid principles’ which establish a framework for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The Assembly urges Armenia and Azerbaijan to seize the opportunity offered by their respective chairmanships of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, to promote reconciliation between these two member states and their populations, as well as to intensify the search, in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group, for a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This should be reflected in the respective priorities of these two chairmanships.

Our Assembly is ready to do everything it can, through parliamentary diplomacy, to facilitate dialogue and establish a climate of trust between parliamentarians from both member States.”