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Request for Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic

Report¹

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

Rapporteur: Mr Andreas GROSS, Switzerland, Socialist Group

Summary

In October 2011, the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic made an official request for partner for democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly.

The report offers an overview of the institutional and political situation in Kyrgyzstan. It concludes that the request of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic meets, both in form and in substance, the requirements laid down in Rule 61 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly. It therefore proposes that partner for democracy status be granted to the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic.

At the same time, the report stresses the need for Kyrgyzstan to continue and deepen reforms aimed at consolidating democratic transformations, the rule of law and respect for human rights. It singles out benchmarks which are of key importance for this.

It suggests that the Assembly should review in two years' time the state of progress achieved in implementing the political commitments undertaken by the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic and political and institutional reforms.

1. Reference to committee: Bureau decision, Reference 3823 of 25 November 2011.



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A. Draft resolution²

1. In adopting [Resolution 1680 \(2009\)](#) on the establishment of a “partner for democracy” status with the Parliamentary Assembly, the Assembly resolved to establish a new status for institutional co-operation with parliaments of non-member States in neighbouring regions wishing to benefit from the Assembly’s experience in democracy building and to participate in the political debate on common challenges which transcend European boundaries.
2. In accordance with Paragraph 15 of [Resolution 1680 \(2009\)](#), the national parliaments of all southern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries participating in the Union for the Mediterranean–Barcelona Process, and of central Asian countries participating in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), should be eligible to request partner for democracy status with the Assembly. The Parliament of Morocco and the Palestinian National Council were granted this status in June and October 2011 respectively.
3. On 27 October 2011, the Speaker of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic officially requested that the parliament be granted partner for democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The Assembly welcomes this request, which is the first to come from central Asia.
4. The Assembly takes note that, in his letter, the Speaker of the Kyrgyz Parliament, in line with the requirements set out in Rule 61.2 of the Rules of Procedure, reaffirmed the following:

“The current situation in our country and the achievements of the past few years show that the Kyrgyz Republic shares the Council of Europe’s values, which are founded on pluralism and gender equality, together with parity-based democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Firm evidence of this can be seen today in the abolition of the death penalty in the Kyrgyz Republic, media freedom, and the equal representation of women and men in public and political life.”

“Our co-operation with the Council of Europe through our membership of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) has proved extremely useful for the Kyrgyz Republic and has produced positive results. We are therefore interested in making further use of the Assembly’s experience in our institutional and legislative work.”

“We have set ourselves a clear goal: to hold free and fair elections in line with international standards. We are therefore intent on building stable relations with all international organisations that have sufficient experience in this area.”

“We are, without doubt, committed to further improving our efforts in these areas, and to encouraging the competent authorities of Kyrgyzstan to become party to the relevant Council of Europe conventions and partial agreements which are open for signature and ratification by non-member States, in particular those dealing with human rights, rule of law and democracy issues.”
5. The Assembly deems these statements to be political commitments, on the part of the Kyrgyz Parliament, to continued work towards compliance with the basic values and principles of the Council of Europe and to the requirements set forth in the Rules of the Assembly.
6. The Assembly particularly welcomes the fact that Kyrgyzstan abolished the death penalty in 2007.
7. At the same time, the Assembly notes that the request contains no formal reference to the statutory obligation to inform the Assembly regularly on the state of progress in implementing Council of Europe principles. However, it deems accountability to be an integral part of the partnership, and the obligation of accountability to be a direct consequence of the granting of the status.
8. On this understanding, the Assembly considers that the request by the Kyrgyz Parliament broadly meets the formal conditions set out in its Rules of Procedure.
9. Furthermore, the Assembly acknowledges that the parliament, the main political actors, State and public officials and civil society of Kyrgyzstan broadly share the objectives of the partnership for democracy, and consider that obtaining it would be an important incentive to further develop democracy, the rule of law and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country.
10. The Assembly is convinced that it is important that Kyrgyzstan, the only country in central Asia to have chosen parliamentary democracy as the basis of its political system, succeeds on the path to democratic transition. It believes that Kyrgyzstan deserves full support in this endeavour.

2. Draft resolution adopted by the committee on 12 March 2014.

11. The Assembly welcomes Kyrgyzstan's commitment to deep constitutional, institutional, political and legal reforms in order to strengthen democracy, and encourages the national authorities to make full use of the Council of Europe expertise and standards. It considers that the partner for democracy status provides an appropriate framework for strengthening the involvement of the Kyrgyz Parliament in the realisation of these reforms.

12. At the same time, the Assembly is fully aware that Kyrgyzstan, as a young independent country with a turbulent political history and a burden of problems inherited from the past, still has a long way to go towards democracy, the rule of law and the full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

13. The Assembly commits itself to helping Kyrgyzstan overcome these obstacles. It stands ready to share its experience and offer its assistance in addressing them. It recalls that partner for democracy status is not a certificate of a perfect democracy but rather a tool to improve it. It deems that, by requesting partner for democracy status, the Kyrgyz Parliament has demonstrated its will to embark on this path and its readiness to learn from best European practice, and has chosen Council of Europe standards as benchmarks on its way forward.

14. In this context, pervasive corruption, an ethnically flawed, non-impartial and non-independent judiciary, continued use of torture and still unresolved consequences of inter-ethnic tensions cause particular concern and must be addressed as matters of priority, including in the framework of future co-operation between the Council of Europe and Kyrgyzstan.

15. Against this background, and building on its experience of co-operation with other countries in transition, the Assembly considers that the following specific issues are of key importance for strengthening democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Kyrgyzstan:

15.1. holding free and fair elections in accordance with relevant international standards, and improving the electoral framework in co-operation with the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission);

15.2. enhancing public interest in, and awareness of, the democratic process, as well as ensuring a higher level of participation in elections and involvement of citizens in political life;

15.3. strengthening public monitoring of elections by independent observers, including strengthening the capacities of domestic observer networks;

15.4. consolidating the institutional framework resulting from the 2010 constitutional reform, in particular by enhancing the separation of powers and strengthening the role of the parliament;

15.5. further involving civil society organisations in legislative and other decision-making processes;

15.6. promoting education in democratic citizenship and in respect for human rights;

15.7. further improving equal opportunities for women and men in political and public life;

15.8. strengthening local and regional democracy;

15.9. stepping up the fight against corruption, in particular in law-enforcement agencies; strengthening transparency and accountability in the governance system;

15.10. consolidating justice reform with a view to ensuring the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, with particular focus on excluding ethnic bias;

15.11. adhering to and effectively implementing relevant international instruments in the field of human rights, including full co-operation with United Nations special mechanisms and implementation of the United Nations Universal Periodic Review recommendations;

15.12. providing better training for judges, prison staff and law-enforcement officers as regards respect for international human rights standards;

15.13. effectively implementing legislation on the prevention of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment of persons deprived of their liberty; fighting impunity for crimes of torture and ill-treatment;

15.14. improving conditions of detention, in line with the United Nations prison-related norms and standards;

15.15. fighting xenophobia and all forms of discrimination;

15.16. guaranteeing and promoting the rights of ethnic minorities, reaffirming Kyrgyzstan's status as a multi-ethnic State where all ethnic groups enjoy equal rights, promoting reconciliation, cultural diversity and inter-cultural dialogue, and actively fighting nationalist rhetoric;

15.17. ensuring full respect for freedom of conscience, of religion and belief, including the right to change one's religion;

15.18. guaranteeing and promoting freedom of expression and media independence and plurality; implementing legal provisions that effectively guarantee press freedom and protect the media from political pressure;

15.19. guaranteeing and promoting, in law and in practice, freedom of association and of peaceful assembly; ensuring strict implementation of the law on associations;

15.20. fighting, in law and in practice, all forms of discrimination based on gender; ensuring and actively promoting effective equality between women and men; fighting all forms of gender-based violence;

15.21. drawing up and implementing a coherent and comprehensive policy aimed at improving the situation of children, including stepping up efforts to reduce child labour and providing all children with the opportunity to receive high quality education.

16. The Assembly encourages the Council of Europe and Kyrgyzstan to take these elements into account in their current discussions on Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities 2014-2016.

17. The Assembly expects Kyrgyzstan to accede in due course to relevant Council of Europe conventions and partial agreements open to non-member States, in particular those dealing with human rights, the rule of law and democracy issues, in accordance with the commitment contained in the letter of 27 October 2011 from the Speaker of the Parliament.

18. Noting that the Kyrgyz Parliament has reiterated its determination to work to ensure full implementation of the political commitments contained in Rule 61.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and entered into by the letter of its Speaker of 27 October 2011, the Assembly resolves to:

18.1. grant partner for democracy status to the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic as from the moment of the adoption of the present resolution;

18.2. invite the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic to appoint a partner for democracy delegation consisting of three representatives and three substitutes, to be composed in accordance with Rule 61.4 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure.

19. The Assembly believes that progress in taking forward reforms is the prime aim of the partnership for democracy and should constitute the benchmark for assessing the efficiency of this partnership.

20. It accordingly resolves to review, no later than two years from the adoption of this resolution, the state of progress achieved in implementing the political commitments undertaken by the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as in carrying forward the specific issues mentioned in paragraph 15 above.

21. The Assembly stresses the importance of free and fair elections as a cornerstone of a genuine democracy. It therefore expects to be invited to observe elections in Kyrgyzstan as from the next general elections.

22. The Assembly is confident that granting partner for democracy status to the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic will contribute to intensifying co-operation between the country and the Council of Europe and promoting Kyrgyzstan's accession, in due course, to Council of Europe conventions. It therefore encourages the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, in co-ordination, as appropriate, with the European Union and other international partners, to mobilise the Organisation's expertise, including that of the Venice Commission, with a view to contributing to the full implementation of democratic reforms in Kyrgyzstan.

23. The Assembly calls on Council of Europe member and observer States and international organisations, in particular the European Union, to:

23.1. increase their assistance to Kyrgyzstan in the field of democratic reforms;

23.2. find appropriate ways to assist the Kyrgyz partner for democracy delegation to take part in the work of the Assembly and its committees.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Gross, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. In October 2011, the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic officially requested to be granted partner for democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly. The request was referred to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy. Mr Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu was appointed as rapporteur. He conducted two fact-finding visits to the country (in January and June 2013) and presented a preliminary draft report in June 2013.
2. In addition, following an exchange of views with a delegation of the Kyrgyz Parliament in April 2013, the committee constituted an ad hoc sub-committee to visit the country. The visit took place in October 2013. I reported back to the committee in December 2013 in my capacity as Chairperson of the ad hoc sub-committee.
3. On 26 December 2013, Mr Çavuşoğlu was appointed Minister of European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator of the Government of Turkey, and therefore left the Assembly. I was appointed as rapporteur on 28 January 2014 with the specific task of finalising the work on the report within the previously decided time frame. I carried out a brief visit to the country on 24 and 25 February 2014.
4. Upon assuming my duties, I stated that I valued the work of the previous rapporteur and broadly shared his analysis, conclusions and proposals in relation to the request for partner for democracy status with the Assembly submitted by the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic.
5. I am grateful to my predecessor for providing us with a solid basis for assessing the request of the Kyrgyz Parliament contained in his preliminary draft report.³
6. Therefore, instead of re-drafting the detailed report prepared by Mr Çavuşoğlu following his two visits to Kyrgyzstan as well as discussions in the committee, I intend to limit myself to summing up the main findings on the Kyrgyz Parliament's request for the status, and to providing, where necessary, updated information on some specific issues raised by my predecessor and the members of the committee.
7. For the sake of continuity in our work, I also refer to the memorandum which I presented on behalf of the Ad hoc Sub-Committee on Kyrgyzstan following our visit to the country in October 2013.⁴

2. Main findings related to the Kyrgyz Parliament's request for partner for democracy status

8. The report by the former rapporteur provides basic information on Kyrgyzstan (Chapter 2), and detailed analysis of the request submitted by its parliament with regard to its conformity, in form and substance, with the requirements for granting partner for democracy status (Chapter 5).
9. I share his view that the official letter from the Speaker of the Kyrgyz Parliament of 27 October 2011 (see Appendix) broadly meets the formal conditions set out in the Assembly's Rules of Procedure (Rule 61.2, indents 1 to 6).
10. The request for partner for democracy status contains no formal reference to the statutory obligation to inform the Assembly regularly on the state of progress in implementing Council of Europe principles (Rule 61.2, indent 7). However, accountability is an integral part of the partnership, and the obligation of accountability must be seen as a direct consequence of the granting of the status. Therefore, the draft resolution suggests, in accordance with established practice, that the Assembly should review, within two years at the latest, the progress achieved in implementing the partnership.
11. On this understanding, I consider that the formal conditions for granting the status are met.
12. I believe that, in substance too, the Kyrgyz Parliament qualifies for partner for democracy status. Our contacts with the Kyrgyz parliamentarians has shown that they are genuinely committed to learning from the experience of European parliamentary democracies in order to consolidate and streamline democracy-building in Kyrgyzstan.

3. Revised preliminary draft 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) ([AS/Pol \(2013\) 12 rev](#)).

4. Memorandum on the fact-finding visit to Kyrgyzstan by the Ad hoc Sub-Committee on Kyrgyzstan ([AS/Pol \(2013\) 22](#)).

13. Kyrgyzstan needs political support for the system of power based on parliamentary democracy which it adopted under the 2010 Constitution. The parliament is the key actor in the new institutional system, which is perceived as the best hope to prevent corrupt clan-based rule. That is why parliamentary democracy in Kyrgyzstan deserves to be helped, supported and encouraged. Granting partner for democracy status would certainly contribute to this purpose.

14. I also draw on Mr Çavuşoğlu's proposals with regard to reforms which should be carried out in Kyrgyzstan in order for the country to continue on the path of democratic transition (Chapter 6), and I have included these elements in the draft resolution.

15. Obviously, Kyrgyzstan is far from being an accomplished democracy, and there are a number of issues of concern with regard to the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. These issues, some of which are referred to in Mr Çavuşoğlu's report (Chapter 7) and were raised by committee members with the Kyrgyz parliamentarians, must continue to be followed closely.

16. In particular, pervasive corruption, an ethnically flawed, non-impartial and non-independent judiciary, continued use of torture, and still unresolved consequences of inter-ethnic tensions cause particular concern and must be addressed as matters of priority. The parliament should take the leading role in pushing forward reforms in these areas.

17. Partner for democracy status does not provide immunity from criticism in the Assembly. On the contrary, it should provide a basis, and create conditions, for the Assembly to take a more attentive and specific look at areas where the situation needs to be seriously improved.

18. The report by Mr Çavuşoğlu concludes that the official request by the Kyrgyz Parliament to be granted partner for democracy status is consistent with the requirements of the Rules of Procedure (paragraph 72), and suggests that it be accepted (paragraph 114). I agree with these conclusions and proposals. Several discussions in the committee have shown that, while there was considerable scepticism with regard to the Kyrgyz Parliament's request at the beginning of the procedure, the majority of colleagues is now in favour of the granting of the status.

3. Visit to Kyrgyzstan (February 2014)

19. On 24 and 25 February 2014, I carried out a brief visit to Kyrgyzstan in order to collect updated information on the current political situation in the country and the prospects for the future. I also wanted to discuss some of the questions raised by colleagues in the previous committee meetings, especially the situation of children and the high number of emigrant workers.

20. During my visit, I had the opportunity to meet with the First Deputy Prime Minister Mr Djoomart Otorbaev, the Deputy Prime Minister Mr Toktokuchuk Mamytov, the Minister of Culture Mr Sultan Rae, and the Deputy Minister for Social Development Ms Narynkul Eshenkulova. In the parliament, I met with the Deputy Speaker, Ms Asiya Sasykbaeva, as well as with the chairpersons, members and the staff of the Committees on Foreign Affairs, on Defence and Security, on Social Affairs and Education, and on Culture and Sport. I also had briefings with the representatives of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union, as well as with a number of foreign representatives in Bishkek.

21. My general conclusion following this visit is that, despite many internal and external challenges, the Kyrgyz authorities are committed to strengthening parliamentary democracy and improving the rule of law as well as to fighting corruption. According to various interlocutors, the main political forces and the majority of the population continue to support the political choices made after the 2010 "revolution", including the parliamentary democratic model.

22. At the same time, many systemic problems which led to the revolution remain unresolved and may trigger a new wave of tensions. The degree of support for the current government, but also for the political model, largely depends on the capacity of the authorities to deliver practical and tangible results for the improvement of the life of most of the population.

23. Despite good economic results in 2013, with a 10.5% growth of gross domestic product (GDP) and the inflation rate maintained at 4%, living standards remain very low. The 70% increase in foreign investment recorded in 2013 has yet to produce its positive effects on the economy and the future of the people. In some areas, unemployment reportedly reaches 50% to 60% of the population. The number of Kyrgyz migrant workers abroad is now estimated to be more than one million. The authorities have stepped up efforts to fight corruption but its level remains extremely high, which further weakens people's confidence in political and public institutions, including political parties.

24. The consolidation of democracy in Kyrgyzstan, especially its parliamentary democracy, requires the transformation of its parties into genuinely democratic political parties which represent and involve citizens. Currently, while there exists about 30 parties in the country, only a few of them are more than “one-man shows”, have concrete programmes, are able to represent and mobilise citizens, and function in accordance with democratic principles. Too many parties are still based on personal loyalties and function according to clan and clientele interests. Europe’s political experience in this field would be very useful for Kyrgyzstan. One concrete proposal would be to organise, in the framework of our future partnership with the Kyrgyz Parliament, a seminar dedicated to the role and functioning of political parties as cornerstones of democracy and to develop, together with Kyrgyz colleagues, concrete steps for the democratic transformation of their parties.

25. The apparent stability in the south remains fragile and the root causes of the 2010 inter-ethnic clashes have still to be properly addressed. Ethnic Uzbeks are strongly under-represented in the administration, in particular in law-enforcement bodies and the judiciary. Reportedly, there are no ethnic Uzbeks in the police in the areas where they represent the majority, which strengthens mistrust of the police.

26. In addition to tensions between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek citizens, a recent incident between border guards from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan further complicated the situation in the southern regions. The borders between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are only partly demarcated and there are several hundred kilometres of contested borders. These problems are linked to problems of water management and supply, as well as the construction of roads, which also serve to traffic drugs.

27. One of the specific problems raised by the members of the committee is child labour. In his report, Mr Çavuşoğlu refers to a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyzstan “Working Children in Kyrgyzstan: Results of the 2007 Child Labour Study”. According to this research, “672 000 of the 1 467 000 children aged 5-17 in Kyrgyzstan are economically active. This figure represents 45.8% of all children aged 5-17 and 21.9% of all working individuals in Kyrgyzstan”.

28. During my visit to Kyrgyzstan, I raised this issue with several interlocutors in the parliament and the government. Although my counterparts contested the data of the 2008 ILO report, and quoted much lower figures,⁵ they acknowledged the difficulty of gathering precise data and did not deny the gravity of the problem. Nation-wide research on the situation of children, including their schooling, is now being prepared by the government.

29. Whether or not the ILO figures are correct, it is clear that there is a child labour problem in Kyrgyzstan and it needs to be addressed. I am convinced, however, that this should not become an obstacle for the Assembly to grant the status to, and to co-operate with, the Kyrgyz Parliament. On the contrary, as already mentioned above, the status would offer the framework for raising this and other issues of concern in our dialogue with Kyrgyz colleagues and find ways for all children to get adequate schooling – an undeniable condition for a better economy in the future.

30. Another serious problem related to children, and one of the consequences of child labour, are high school-dropout rates. According to many interlocutors, the school education system is in a poor condition, classes are overcrowded, teachers’ salaries are too low and textbooks are lacking. At the same time, education does not seem to be an issue of priority for foreign aid programmes. This situation should be changed and we should consider this also as a priority for bilateral aid. Kyrgyzstan needs international support to seriously upgrade its education system. Democracy cannot survive without well-educated and socially active citizens. Investing in education would help prepare the citizens of the future and would therefore be an investment in the consolidation of democracy.

31. In the regional context, Kyrgyzstan remains the only country which shows a serious commitment to parliamentary democracy and has a political system which seeks to provide a balance between various political actors and does not rely on a single person. The closest “neighbours” trying to affect similar changes are South Korea and Mongolia, which are geographically closer than Turkey, with whom Kyrgyzstan shares historical roots. In view of the changes which will inevitably occur in the region in the years to come, the success of the democratic transition in Kyrgyzstan may have a stabilising effect for the whole region and should become an inspiring example for neighbouring States.

5. According to the Ministry of Social Development of Kyrgyzstan, there were 9 208 working children in 2012. Other figures quoted during the visit range from 3 000 to 120 000.

4. Conclusions

32. In my view, the Kyrgyz Parliament meets the criteria laid down in Rule 61 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure and should be granted partner for democracy status.

33. The letter of 27 October 2011 containing the formal request for the status to be granted should be considered as the political commitment, on the part of the Kyrgyz Parliament, to continued work in order to conform to the basic values and principles of the Council of Europe, and to the requirements set forth in the Rules of the Assembly.

34. It is important that Kyrgyzstan, the only country in Central Asia to have chosen parliamentary democracy as the basis of its political system, continues on the path of democratic transition. Kyrgyzstan deserves full support in this endeavour.

35. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan, as a young independent country with a turbulent political history and a burden of problems inherited from the past, still has a long way to go towards democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

36. Partner for democracy status is not a certificate of perfect democracy but a tool to improve it by openly discussing and overcoming deficiencies. The Assembly should remain vigilant with regard to the problems and shortcomings of Kyrgyzstan falling within its remit, and stand ready to share its experience and offer its assistance in addressing them.

37. By requesting partner for democracy status, the Kyrgyz Parliament has demonstrated its will to embark on this path and its readiness to learn from best European practice, and has chosen Council of Europe standards as benchmarks on its way forward.

38. The draft resolution, with a favourable view on the request for partner for democracy status, contains a list of priority areas where further progress is needed in order to consolidate democratic transition. We expect the granting of the status to encourage the parliament to play a more prominent role in the process of reforms.

39. Accountability is an important part of the partnership. In accordance with established practice, I believe that the Assembly should review, within two years at the latest, the progress achieved by the Kyrgyz Parliament in implementing the aims of the partnership, with particular attention to the priority areas listed in the draft resolution.

40. In the meantime, the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy should follow up developments in Kyrgyzstan both through regular dialogue with the Kyrgyz partner for democracy delegation in the Assembly and through rapporteur fact-finding visits.

41. In accordance with Rule 61.3, and taking into account the size of the population and the political diversity of Kyrgyzstan, its parliament should be allocated three seats of representative and three seats of substitute. Furthermore, in accordance with Rule 61.4, the partner for democracy delegation shall be composed in such a way as to ensure a fair representation of the political parties or groups present in the parliament. It shall include at least the same percentage of the under-represented sex as is present in the parliament and in any case one representative of each sex.

42. I strongly encourage the Kyrgyz Parliament to avail itself of the opportunity offered by partner for democracy status in order to actively participate in the work of the Assembly and its committees. As the examples of the Moroccan Parliament and the Palestinian National Council show, such participation contributes to strengthening the position and the capacity of the parliament in the political system of the country and its responsibility for the implementation of much-needed reforms.

43. We must be aware that an active participation by the Kyrgyz parliamentarians in our work – which would be the best way of contributing to the learning process and the strengthening of a democratic parliamentary culture in the country – will require additional resources from the parliament, and that assistance from our member States and international organisations might be needed.

44. Last but not least, it needs to be borne in mind that the partner for democracy status of the Kyrgyz Parliament may be questioned, suspended and even withdrawn should the parliament consistently fail to comply with its political commitments, or should political developments in the country so require.

Appendix – Letter from Mr Akhmatbek Keldibekov, Speaker of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, to Mr Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, dated 27 October 2011

(Unofficial translation)

...

On 30 October 2011, presidential elections are planned in the Kyrgyz Republic. For our country, where a model for the parliamentary system of government is emerging and developing, this is a very important and significant event. We have set ourselves a clear goal: to hold free and fair elections in line with international standards. We are therefore intent on building stable relations with all international organisations that have sufficient experience in this area.

Our co-operation with the Council of Europe through our membership of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) has proved extremely useful for the Kyrgyz Republic and has produced positive results. We are therefore interested in making further use of the Assembly's experience in our institutional and legislative work.

The current situation in our country and the achievements of the past few years show that the Kyrgyz Republic shares the Council of Europe's values, which are founded on pluralism and gender equality, together with parity-based democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Firm evidence of this can be seen today in the abolition of the death penalty in the Kyrgyz Republic, media freedom, and the equal representation of women and men in public and political life.

We are, without doubt, committed to further improving our efforts in these areas, and to encouraging the competent authorities of Kyrgyzstan to become party to the relevant Council of Europe conventions and partial agreements which are open for signature and ratification by non-member States, in particular those dealing with human rights, rule of law and democracy issues.

In the light of the foregoing and in accordance with [Resolution 1680](#) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on the establishment of a "Partner for Democracy" status with the PACE, we hereby request that you consider our application for this status.

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