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The allocation of seats in the Parliamentary Assembly with respect to Turkey

Report¹

Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs
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Summary

Since 1949, the allocation of seats in the Parliamentary Assembly between Council of Europe member States, as set out in Article 26 of the Statute of the Council of Europe, is based solely on the criterion of population size. Due to very high demographic growth, Turkey now has the third-largest population in Europe. The representation of the Turkish Parliament in the Assembly is clearly too low and it is entirely justified and fair to grant the request made by the Turkish parliamentary delegation to increase to eighteen the number of seats allocated to it.

The Turkish delegation's request to introduce Turkish as a working language in the Assembly should also be supported, provided that the Assembly does not bear the financial cost involved and subject to the allocation of corresponding additional appropriations in the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe.

1. Reference to committee: [Doc. 13675](#), Reference 4100 of 26 January 2015



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A. Draft resolution²

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls that the allocation of seats in the Assembly between Council of Europe member States, as set out in Article 26 of the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1), is based solely on the criterion of States' populations, which was established in the *travaux préparatoires* on the Statute in 1949. It notes that the allocation of seats in the Assembly has not been adjusted since 1977 and that the Statute has only been amended in connection with new accessions to the Organisation.

2. The Assembly further notes that, since then, Turkey has seen the highest population growth in Europe and now has Europe's third-largest population. It therefore believes that the representation of the Turkish Parliament in the Assembly is clearly too low and that, given recent population statistics, it is entirely justified and fair to grant the legitimate request made by the Turkish parliamentary delegation to increase the number of seats allocated to the Turkish national delegation in the Assembly.

3. The Assembly also supports the request made by the Turkish parliamentary delegation to introduce Turkish as a working language in the Assembly. However, in view of the major implications of this measure for the Assembly's budget, it believes that it cannot meet the financial cost involved, estimated at €0.7 million a year, without being allocated corresponding additional appropriations in the ordinary budget of the Council of Europe.

4. The Assembly underlines the clear stance it took in [Resolution 2046 \(2015\)](#) on the expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the biennium 2016-2017 and in [Opinion 288 \(2015\)](#) "Budget and priorities of the Council of Europe for the biennium 2016-2017", in which it welcomes the Turkish Government's decision to support the strengthening of the Council of Europe's capacities and resources by offering to become a major contributor to the Organisation's budgets from 1 January 2016. It therefore makes the introduction of Turkish as a working language in the Assembly dependent on a decision by the Committee of Ministers to approve the request by Turkey to become a major contributor to the Council of Europe's budgets, without any counterbalancing exercise, and to allocate it in the biennial budget for 2016-2017 – and in subsequent budgets – the necessary corresponding resources.

5. Accordingly, in view of the above and subject to an actual subsequent decision by the Committee of Ministers to amend the Statute of the Council of Europe and increase to 18 the number of seats allocated to the Turkish national delegation, the Assembly resolves to amend its Rules of Procedure as follows:

5.1. with regard to the membership of committees:

5.1.1. replace the first two paragraphs in Rule 44.2 with the following two paragraphs: "France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, **Turkey** and the United Kingdom shall have four seats in each of the first six committees. Poland, Romania, Spain and Ukraine shall have three seats in each of the first six committees";

5.1.2. in Rule 44.1, for the first seven Assembly committees, replace "84 seats" with "**85 seats**" (Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination) and "89 seats" with "**90 seats**" (Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, Monitoring Committee);

5.1.3. in Rule 44.3 (appointment of members of the Monitoring Committee), replace "84 of the 89 members" with "**85 of the 90 members**";

5.1.4. in Rule 49.3 (number of standing sub-committees per committee), replace "A committee of 84 or 89 seats may not appoint more than three standing sub-committees" with "A committee of **85 or 90** seats may not appoint more than three standing sub-committees;

5.1.5. in the complementary texts, amend the number of seats allocated to the committees in the Assembly committees' specific terms of reference;

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 21 April 2015

5.2. with regard to the vice-presidents of the Assembly and the granting of a permanent vice-presidency of the Assembly to the Turkish delegation, amend the system for allocating seats on the Bureau for Assembly Vice-Presidents (Appendix to [Resolution 1379 \(2004\)](#)), as follows:

5.2.1. “group I: delegations with eighteen seats in the Assembly (France, Germany, Italy, Russian Federation, **Turkey**, United Kingdom) will have **six** seats in the Bureau every ordinary session;

5.2.2. group II: delegations with between twelve and seventeen seats in the Assembly (Poland, Spain, Ukraine) will have **two** seats in the Bureau every ordinary session”;

5.3. with regard to recognition of Turkish as a working language, replace Rule 28.3 with the following: “The working languages in the Assembly shall be German, Italian, Russian and Turkish.”

6. The Assembly resolves that the amendments to the Rules of Procedure set out in this resolution will enter into force:

6.1. following the actual amendment of the Statute of the Council of Europe, subject to the decision by the Committee of Ministers and the procedure provided for in Article 41.d of the Statute, in the case of the amendments mentioned in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2;

6.2. from the opening of the 2016 ordinary session, in the case of the amendment mentioned in paragraph 5.3, subject to a decision by the Committee of Ministers to allocate the Assembly the essential budgetary appropriations to offset the additional expenditure arising from the decision to introduce Turkish as a working language in the Assembly.

7. In addition, the Assembly invites the enlarged Parliamentary Assembly, in connection with the next report on the activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) scheduled for the fourth part-session of 2015, to consider the issue of increasing the number of seats for the Turkish delegation and adopting the necessary amendments to its rules of procedure.

B. Draft recommendation³

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to Resolution ... (2015) on the allocation of seats in the Parliamentary Assembly with respect to Turkey, and noting that Turkey has seen the highest population growth in Europe in recent decades and now has Europe's third-largest population, believes that an end should be put to the under-representation of the Turkish Parliament in the Assembly and that, given recent population statistics, it is entirely justified and fair to increase the number of seats allocated to the Turkish national delegation in the Assembly.
2. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers amend Article 26 of the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1) and set the number of seats allocated to Turkey in the Assembly at 18.
3. The Assembly hopes that the recommended amendment to the Statute will be finalised in time for the opening of its third part-session of 2015.
4. Reiterating the stance it took in [Resolution 2046 \(2015\)](#) on the expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the biennium 2016-2017 and in [Opinion 288 \(2015\)](#) "Budget and priorities of the Council of Europe for the biennium 2016-2017", the Assembly welcomes the Turkish Government's decision to support the strengthening of the Council of Europe's capacities and resources by offering to become a major contributor to the Organisation's budgets from 1 January 2016. The Assembly expects the Committee of Ministers to approve the Turkish authorities' decision to become a major contributor, without any counterbalancing exercise and without any reduction in the level of contributions paid into the Organisation's budgets by the other member States.
5. The Assembly also supports the request made by the Turkish parliamentary delegation to introduce Turkish as a working language in the Assembly. However, in view of the major implications of this measure for the Assembly's budget, it believes that it cannot meet the financial cost involved without being allocated corresponding additional appropriations. It therefore makes the introduction of a sixth working language in the Assembly, from the 2016 ordinary session, dependent on a decision by the Committee of Ministers to allocate to it in the biennial budget for 2016-2017 and in subsequent budgets the necessary and adequate resources of €0.7 million a year.
6. The Assembly expects the Committee of Ministers to adopt the budgetary decisions reflecting the Assembly's requests, in particular regarding Turkey's position as a major contributor, at the earliest opportunity.

3. Draft recommendation adopted unanimously by the committee on 21 April 2015.

C. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Gross, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. On 26 January 2015, the Parliamentary Assembly referred to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, for report, the motion for a recommendation tabled by Mr Denemeç and 48 other members of the Assembly on the allocation of seats in the Parliamentary Assembly with respect to Turkey (Doc. 13675), in which the signatories state that the Assembly should “recommend that the Committee of Ministers fix at 18 the number of seats in the Assembly to which Turkey is entitled and make the necessary consequential amendment to Article 26 of the Statute of the Council of Europe”, and “should accordingly also amend Article 28.3 of its Rules of Procedure to include the Turkish language among its working languages”.

2. The purpose of the present report is to prepare the ground for the Assembly’s discussion on these two points by providing some clarification, firstly on the statutory provisions and regulations governing the allocation of seats in the Assembly, and the practice followed in recent decades, and secondly on the budgetary implications, in particular the consequences of introducing a sixth working language in the Assembly.

2. Increase in the number of seats held by the Turkish delegation in the Parliamentary Assembly

2.1. Reminder of the current statutory provisions

3. Article 6 of the Council of Europe Statute (ETS No. 1) states that the Committee of Ministers determines the number of Representatives in the Parliamentary Assembly to which the proposed Member will be entitled and its proportionate financial contribution.

4. Article 26 of the Statute lists the member States and indicates their corresponding number of seats in the Assembly, ranging from 2 to 18. No similar provision appears in the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure.

5. The criteria for allocating seats are mentioned neither in the Council of Europe Statute nor in the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure, nor in any text of a para-regulatory nature. The principle of a scale for the allocation of seats based on population was established in the *travaux préparatoires* on the Statute, in 1949. The scale itself, however, ranged from a minimum of 3 seats to a maximum of 18 (between 1949 and 1978), before being set at between a minimum of 2 seats and a maximum of 18 from 1979 onwards.

6. Only the Committee of Ministers is entitled to amend Article 26 of the Statute, either on its own initiative (after consulting the Assembly)⁴ or on the recommendation of the Assembly (Article 41 of the Council of Europe Statute). The Assembly has not taken any such initiative since 1977 (see below).

2.2. Historical and regulatory considerations

7. The scale for the allocation of seats in the Assembly among Council of Europe member States was fixed in 1949 on the basis, *inter alia*, of the population figures available at that time and having regard to certain general principles:

- capping of the total number of seats;
- allocation of seats among delegations on the basis of population, adjusted using the following criteria: maximum of 18 seats for the most populous countries; relative parity between the most heavily populated countries and regional groups of countries; relative parity of countries of comparable size within regional groups; minimum of 3 seats per delegation (reduced to 2 in 1978 when Liechtenstein joined the Council of Europe).⁵

8. There is no proportionality in this rule and the “number of seats to population” ratio has naturally evolved in 65 years and remains very approximate.

4. The Statutory Resolution (51) 30 adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 1951 stipulates that before inviting a Member to join the Council of Europe, or an existing Member to withdraw, the Committee must consult the Assembly.

5. See the report of the Political Affairs Committee (Doc. 4193).

9. Some States have acquired one or two additional seats, by means of an amendment to the Statute decided by the Committee of Ministers (Resolution (51) 63 of 2 August 1951,⁶ Resolution (51) 76 of 23 November 1951⁷ and Resolution (78) 1 of 17 January 1978,⁸ adopted in response to Assembly Recommendation 824 (1977)), and Article 26 of the Statute has been amended accordingly. All these changes were made on the basis of the increase in populations of countries concerned, at their request.

10. As regards the relevant general principles, Assembly Recommendation 1247 (1994), paragraph 11, has para-regulatory force when it comes to determining the number seats (“Delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly should comprise a minimum of two and a maximum of eighteen members”).⁹

11. In the past, steps have been taken to change the scale for allocating seats in the Assembly for the benefit of one or more member States, either when new member States joined, or to take account of demographic growth in a given member State. In most cases, it was the Parliamentary Assembly which requested that the Statute be amended.

12. As regards the procedure for accession by new member States, since 1965, it has been the Assembly which suggests to the Committee of Ministers, in its opinion, the number of seats in the Assembly which should be allocated to the new member State (see Opinion 44 (1965) on the accession of Malta).¹⁰

13. As far as taking account of demographic growth in one or more member States is concerned, no such steps have been taken by the Assembly for 37 years now. In 1977, in Recommendation 824 (1977) concerning the allocation of seats in the Assembly among member States, the Assembly, for the last time in its history, took the decision to increase the number of seats of two delegations only, the Turkish and Spanish ones, on the basis of “recent population statistics” (the Assembly having considered at the time that Turkey was manifestly under-represented, given the sizeable increase in its population, and that Spain’s allocation likewise needed to be adjusted).

14. At the time, the Assembly had declined to follow up the request made by several of its members who, in a motion for a recommendation, had invited the Committee of Ministers to undertake a comprehensive review of the scale for the allocation of seats among member States, according to the automatic criteria based on proportionality and also their allocation in the light of updated population statistics for all the member States.¹¹

15. Nor did the Assembly act on later motions on this subject, including for example one presented by Mr Güner and others in 1992, requesting that the number of seats allocated to Turkey be increased to 18 (Doc. 6691). This motion had been referred to the Ad hoc Committee on the Revision of the Statute of the Council of Europe, for consideration in the report being prepared at the time.¹² The ad hoc committee then considered that no changes should be made until the criteria governing the allocation of seats had been clearly defined.

6. Whereby Turkey’s seats increased from 8 to 10 (following a request made by the Turkish Government, supported by the Assembly).

7. Which increased the number of seats allocated to Belgium (from 6 to 7), Denmark (from 4 to 5), Greece (from 6 to 7), the Netherlands (from 6 to 7) and Norway (from 4 to 5).

8. Which led to an increase from 10 to 12 in the number of seats allocated to Spain and Turkey. See paragraph 13 of this report.

9. It will be observed that so far there have been no moves to increase the maximum number of seats, namely 18.

10. In 1977, the Assembly initially left it to the Committee of Ministers to determine the number of seats that would be allocated to Spain (see Recommendation 820 (1977)), but eventually reversed the Committee of Ministers’ decision and increased the number of Spanish seats from 10 to 12 (Recommendation 824 (1977)).

11. See the Political Affairs Committee’s report (Doc. 4068) on the allocation of seats in the Assembly among member States, in response to the motion for a resolution presented in 1976 by Mr Üstündag and others (Doc. 3810), and which led to the adoption of Recommendation 824 (1977).

12. See the report on the adoption of a revised Statute of the Council of Europe (Doc. 6788), presented by the Rules Committee. In Recommendation 1212 (1993) on the adoption of a revised Statute of the Council of Europe, the Assembly proposed that a new criterion be taken into account: “Article 32 – The Parliamentary Assembly shall determine the distribution of seats among member States, having regard, *inter alia*, to their population figures and their gross domestic product. Members shall be entitled to not more than eighteen and not fewer than two Representatives.” In its final reply, in 1999, the Committee of Ministers indicated that it had taken on board and implemented several Assembly recommendations since 1993 but that a complete revision of the Statute was not advisable because of the cumbersome nature of such a process.

2.3. Impact of increasing the number of seats allocated to the Turkish parliamentary delegation on the functioning of the Assembly

16. The request presented by Mr Denemeç and the members of the Turkish delegation, supported by numerous colleagues, is legitimate. As rapporteur, I consider that it would be just and equitable to accede to this request. In 2014, Turkey had a population of nearly 77 million. In 1977, when the number of seats allocated to the Turkish delegation was last revalued and increased from 10 to 12, Turkey had a population of 40 million. In light of up-to-date demographic statistics, the representativeness of the Turkish Parliament within the Assembly is obviously underestimated, compared to Council of Europe member States belonging to the same category:

- the delegations of the Russian Federation (142 million inhabitants), Germany (81 million), France (66 million), the United Kingdom (64 million) and Italy (61 million) hold 18 seats in the Assembly;
- in addition to the Turkish delegation, the delegations of Spain (46 million inhabitants), Ukraine (44 million) and Poland (38 million) hold 12 seats in the Assembly.

17. Increasing the number of seats allocated to the Turkish parliamentary delegation will automatically have the following effects, under the existing regulations:

- increase in the number of members of seven of the nine Assembly committees, which will rise from 84 to 85 in the case of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media and the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, and from 89 to 90 in the case of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy and the Monitoring Committee;¹³
- allocation of an Assembly permanent Vice-Presidency to the Turkish delegation, and change in the system of rotating vice-presidencies among the second group of parliamentary delegations.

18. The Rules of Procedure and the relevant para-regulatory texts will therefore have to be amended accordingly.

19. In addition, the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy will need to consider increasing the number of seats held by the Turkish delegation in the enlarged Parliamentary Assembly and adopt the appropriate amendments to these specific rules, in the context of the next report on the activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to be presented at the fourth part-session of 2015.

3. Introduction of a sixth language in the Parliamentary Assembly

20. From a regulatory point of view, there is no connection between the number of seats held by a delegation in the Assembly and the status of languages in the Assembly. The fact that a member State's delegation has 18 seats is of no relevance to the decision to recognise that State's language as one of the working languages of the Assembly, and there would be nothing automatic about such recognition. However, it is a matter of fact that the five working languages in the Assembly are the languages of the five largest delegations in the Assembly, and those of the States currently the main contributors to the Council of Europe budget.

21. The committee therefore ought to consider this issue separately.¹⁴

13. The Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs and the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court on Human Rights will retain their current membership, with 37 and 20 seats respectively, given their ad hoc appointment method (on the proposal of the political groups).

14. In a 1994 report on the enlargement of the Council of Europe and the budgetary prospects (Doc. 7180 rev), the rapporteur of the Committee on the Budget and the Intergovernmental Work Programme stated, with regard to the request made in 1993 by several parliamentarians to introduce new official or working languages (see the draft orders on the use of Russian as a working language of the Assembly (Doc. 6761) and on increasing the number of official languages of the Council of Europe (Doc. 6846)), that "The introduction of a new official or working language is clearly a political matter before all else". Conversely, when the Committee on Rules of Procedure in 2012 considered the motion for a resolution on "The need to amend Article 27 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly so as to establish German, Italian and Russian, which have hitherto been working languages, as official languages of the Assembly" (Doc. 12850), which had been submitted to it for information, it concluded that promoting a multilingual approach was not relevant in the context of the budgetary restrictions affecting the Organisation and would not help to improve the Assembly's working methods.

3.1. Regulatory considerations

22. Article 12 of the Council of Europe Statute states that the official languages of the Organisation are English and French. The Rules of Procedure of the Parliamentary Assembly expand on this provision, and grant German, Italian and Russian the status of “working languages” (Rule 28.3). It follows from the above-mentioned provisions that:

- official documents of the Assembly (Rule 24) are published in both official languages;
- speeches made at plenary sessions are simultaneously interpreted into the five official and working languages (Rule 29);
- interpretation in committees is provided into the five official and working languages (except in the case of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights); interpretation in sub-committees is limited to two languages (Rule 30);
- interpretation into other languages during part-sessions, in plenary sittings and committee meetings is allowed and the related costs are met by the national parliaments concerned.

3.2. Budgetary implications

23. It has already been estimated that introducing Turkish as a working language in the Assembly during sessions and committee meetings would require the Assembly to spend an additional €660 000 a year on interpretation.

24. In addition, and this is something that still needs to be determined, there would be the costs involved in publishing records of the debates in Turkish (along the lines of the existing arrangement for statements made at plenary sittings in German and Italian), or of translating adopted texts into Turkish (as is the case with Russian, the Russian delegation having accepted in 1996 not to have records of the debates in Russian), and which amount to an extra €40 000 or so per year.

25. It will also be observed that the language issue, and its budgetary implications, affects not only the Parliamentary Assembly but also the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (see also section 4 below).

3.3. Situation in other interparliamentary assemblies

26. There are very few pan-European parliamentary assemblies (far more common in Europe are sub-regional assemblies which organise co-operation in specific fields between what are often neighbouring countries). Interestingly, too, some organisations have been created along linguistic lines (the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries).¹⁵

- In the Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, all documents, including summary records of sittings, are distributed in English and in French. Simultaneous interpretation of debates is provided in both languages as well as in Arabic and Spanish (Rule 37 of its Rules).
- The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) recognises six official languages – English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish (Rule 28 of its Rules of Procedure) and provides interpretation of debates and translation of documents in these six languages. The cost of interpretation in any other language must be met by the members concerned.
- The Parliamentary Assembly of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (which consists of delegates from 39 of the 47 Council of Europe members) recognises only English and French as official languages and provides interpretation of debates and translation of documents in both of these languages (Article 49 of its Rules of Procedure). Any speaker wishing to use another language is responsible for ensuring its interpretation into one of the official languages.
- The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (16 of whose members belong to the Council of Europe) recognises Arabic, English and French as official languages (Rule 19 of its Rules of Procedure).

15. There are only three parliamentary assemblies operating in Europe which count Turkey among their members and have Turkish as one of their official languages: the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Article 17 of its Rules of Procedure states that the working languages are English, French, Russian and Turkish. English is the official language for documents and correspondence, but documents are translated into the other three working languages).

- The recently created Parliamentary Assembly of the South-East European Cooperation Process, which encompasses 12 Council of Europe member States, has explicitly opted for a single official language, English.
- Lastly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (33 of whose members also belong to the Council of Europe) has very detailed and somewhat complex provisions on the recognition and use of languages (Rules 13 and 14 of its Rules of Procedure).

4. Turkish Government's request to become a major contributor to the Council of Europe budget and the procedure currently under way at Committee of Ministers level

27. At the same time as the procedure initiated in the Assembly with a view to increasing the number of seats held by the Turkish delegation and having Turkish recognised as a working language in the Assembly, an initiative has been launched at Committee of Ministers level by the Turkish Government, in order that Turkey become a major contributor to the Council's budget from 1 January 2016.¹⁶ It should be pointed out that the increase in Turkey's contribution to the Council of Europe budget is of no relevance to the current budget but would affect the next biennial budget 2016-2017.

28. It is important to note that there is no connection between the status of "major contributor" to the Council of Europe budget and the number of seats granted to the parliamentary delegation of the State concerned,¹⁷ and that, broadly speaking, there is no statutory link between Article 38 of the Statute (which deals with the Council's budget and States' contributions) and Article 26.

29. Should Turkey become a major contributor to the Organisation's budget from 1 January 2016, its contribution would translate into nearly €20 million in additional funding (including €15 million for the ordinary budget).

30. The Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Group on Programme, Budget and Administration (GR-PBA) has been asked to examine the implications of including Turkey in the category of major contributors. At its meeting on 19 March 2015, the following approach was adopted: member States' contributions would be maintained at their current level, with a 7% rise in the overall sum due to the increase in Turkey's share.¹⁸ The GR-PBA also took into account the costs involved in allocating extra seats in the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (€35 000), as well as the budgetary impact on both assemblies of (possibly) introducing a new working language (€900 000).

31. It will be observed, however, that introducing a sixth working language will also necessitate alterations in some meeting rooms (Council of Europe Office in Paris), the cost of which is not mentioned in the GR-PBA documents.

32. The Assembly expressed its views on this subject in the opinion that it submitted to the Committee of Ministers at its April 2015 part-session, on the budget and priorities of the Council of Europe for the biennium 2016-2017. In the report approved by the Rules Committee, the rapporteur, Mr Rudy Salles, believes that the increase in the Turkish contribution must not lead to a reduction in the amount contributed to the Organisation's budgets by the other member States. Pressure from certain member States wishing to use this opportunity to reduce their own contributions to the Council's budget must not ultimately lead to the adoption of decisions detrimental to the Organisation.¹⁹

16. In a letter dated 6 January 2015, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, stated that, through this initiative, his country wished to respond to the request by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to member States to provide the Organisation with the resources it needed to carry out its tasks in order to meet the many challenges facing Europe.

17. On joining the Council of Europe, in 1996, the Russian Federation was allocated 18 seats in the Assembly even though it was not a "major contributor" at that stage.

Also worth mentioning is the view endorsed by the Committee of Ministers in 1973 (when it examined the request made by Turkey, in 1972, to reduce its contribution to the Council's budget, and this issue gave rise to several months of debate in the Committee of Ministers on whether or not Article 26 of the Statute should be revised and criteria established for allocating seats in the Assembly): "In consequence, there would seem to be no legal arguments to be adduced in favour of the view that a change in the scale for calculating the contributions of States to the general budget should have any repercussions on the representation of States in the Assembly" (document CM(73)7, memorandum on contributions to the general budget of the Council of Europe – proposal by Turkey for revision of the present scale of contributions).

18. Which means that, as a percentage of the overall budget, the share of States other than Turkey would fall, in the case of France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom, for example, from 11.54% to 10.78%, in the case of Spain from 6.21% to 5.8%, in the case of Ukraine from 1.57% to 1.47%, in the case of Poland from 2.71% to 2.53%, in the case of Romania from 1.13% to 1.05%, in the case of the Netherlands from 3.46% to 3.23%, etc.

33. The Assembly must also make it clear to the Committee of Ministers that, in its view, it is essential and only fair that the introduction of Turkish as a working language in the Assembly be offset in its budget by a corresponding increase in its funding, in the amount of €700 000 per year,²⁰ on a lasting basis.

34. The Committee of Ministers has not yet taken any formal decision and is due to continue considering Turkey's request to become a major contributor in June, namely after this report has been discussed by the Standing Committee.

5. Conclusion

35. Under Article 41 of the Council of Europe Statute, the Parliamentary Assembly is entitled to request an amendment of Article 26 of the Statute concerning the allocation of seats among member States in the Assembly. No such initiative has been taken by the Assembly since 1977. A motion for a recommendation, aimed at increasing the number of seats held by the Turkish parliamentary delegation, has been referred to the Rules Committee, for consideration.

36. In addition, the committee considered the question, which is also raised in the said motion for a recommendation, of whether a sixth working language should be introduced in the Assembly. This issue has not only regulatory implications, in that an amendment to the Rules of Procedure would be required, but also budgetary ones.

37. The committee has therefore taken a stance on both issues. Consequently, this report:

- includes a draft recommendation asking the Committee of Ministers to amend the Statute of the Council of Europe so as to increase the number of seats allocated to the Turkish parliamentary delegation to 18 and also to approve the Turkish Government's request to become a major contributor to the Organisation's budget. Granting the request made by the Turkish delegation for Turkish to be introduced as a working language in the Assembly depends strictly on a decision by the Committee of Ministers to allocate the Assembly the necessary budgetary funds to offset the corresponding costs;
- also includes a draft resolution setting out in advance the changes to the Rules of Procedure and the complementary texts resulting from the increase in the Turkish delegation's number of seats to 18 (regarding membership of Assembly committees) and the introduction of Turkish as a working language in the Assembly.

38. It must be made clear that the proposed changes depend very closely on the subsequent decisions by the Committee of Ministers. They will only be effective once the amendment to Article 26 of the Statute of the Council of Europe has been approved by the Committee of Ministers and the Certificate established by the Secretary General has been transmitted to the governments of the member States (Article 41.d of the Statute). In addition, Turkish as a working language in the Assembly is envisaged to be introduced from January 2016, subject to an allocation being added to the Assembly budget for 2016-2017 to cover the additional costs arising from this decision.

39. Lastly, the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy's report on the activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) due to be presented at the fourth part-session of 2015 will have to propose the necessary amendments to the rules of procedure for enlarged debates of the Parliamentary Assembly on the activities of the OECD so as to increase the Turkish delegation's number of seats in the enlarged Parliamentary Assembly ("Appendix") and introduce interpretation into Turkish (Section IV, "Use of languages and documents").

19. See the reports "Budget and priorities of the Council of Europe for the biennium 2016-2017" and "Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the biennium 2016-2017" (Doc. 13743 and Doc. 13744), as well as [Opinion 288 \(2015\)](#) and [Resolution 2046 \(2015\)](#).

20. Should the discussions at Ministers' Deputies level result in the budgetary contributions made by all the States being reduced to a level that would negate the increase in the Turkish contribution, then the Assembly would be well advised to ask the Turkish Government to pay a specific voluntary contribution to the Assembly budget to offset the cost of introducing Turkish as a working language.