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Activities of the Assembly's Bureau and Standing Committee (22 April-19 June 2016)

Progress report
Rapporteur: Mr Ian LIDDELL-GRAINGER, United Kingdom, European Conservatives Group

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 22 April 2016, the Bureau appointed me as rapporteur for this report, which covers activities over the period from the last Bureau meeting of the second part-session of 2016 (Friday 22 April) to the first Bureau meeting of the third part-session of 2016 (Monday 20 June).

The following chapters include the decisions taken at the Bureau meetings of 22 April in Strasbourg and 26 May in Tallinn. Chapter 2 presents a list of decisions, which have either already been ratified by the Standing Committee on 27 May or which do not require ratification.

An addendum to this report will be issued after the Bureau meeting of 20 June which will also include decisions to be ratified on the same day. A second addendum will be issued after the Bureau meeting of 24 June. It will include only the decisions to be ratified by the Assembly on the same day, notably the references and transmissions which will have been approved by the Bureau.

The Bureau will hold its next meetings in Strasbourg on Monday 20 June at 8 am and Friday 24 June at 8.30 am, then on Monday 5 September in Paris.

2. Activities of the Bureau since the last part-session and decisions not requiring ratification by the Assembly

2.1. Follow-up to the second part-session of 2016 (Strasbourg, 18-22 April)

On 22 April, the Bureau agreed that the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Nils Muižnieks, would address the Assembly the same day, in the context of the debate on *The case against a Council of Europe legal instrument on involuntary measures in psychiatry*.

It also approved the proposals made by the Secretary General of the Assembly for the follow-up to adopted texts:

– Current affairs debate on The case of the "Panama Papers" and the concern about fiscal, social justice and public trust in our democratic system: to postpone a decision on the follow-up to its next meeting;

– Resolution 2111 (2016) *on Assessing the impact of measures to improve women's political representation* (Rapporteur: Ms Elena Centemero, Italy, Group of the European People's Party):

> *14. The Assembly underlines the importance of the gender dimension in election observation missions. The Assembly is committed to promoting this dimension with its international partner organisations in the framework of election observation missions both concerning the composition of missions, which should be gender balanced, and the observation reports which should systematically include a specific focus on women's participation in all stages of the electoral process.*

Follow-up: to be taken into account in the context of the review of the Guidelines for the observation of elections.

2.2. Standing Committee (Tallinn, 27 May 2016)

On 22 April and 26 May, the Bureau took note of the draft agenda.

2.3. Third part-session of 2016 (Strasbourg, 20-24 June)

On 22 April, the Bureau drew up the preliminary draft agenda, which it revised at its meeting of 26 May.

2.4. Election observation

2.4.1. Observation of local elections in Ukraine (25 October 2015)

On 22 April, the Bureau took note of the report which had been adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on 23 March 2016.

2.4.2. Kazakhstan: early parliamentary elections (20 March 2016)

On 22 April, the Bureau took note of the press release. On 26 May, the Bureau approved the report of the ad hoc committee.

2.4.3. Serbia: early parliamentary elections (24 April 2016)

On 22 April, the Bureau took note of the statement of the pre-electoral mission and approved the revised list of members of the ad hoc committee to observe these elections (Appendix 1). On 26 May, the Bureau approved the report of the ad hoc committee.

2.4.4. "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia": early parliamentary elections

On 22 April, the Bureau approved the revised list of members of the ad hoc committee to observe these elections initially scheduled on 5 June 2016. On 26 May, the Bureau took note of the press release of the pre-electoral mission and of the cancellation of these elections.

2.4.5. Schedule of elections for 2016

On 22 April, the Bureau took note of the elections calendar for 2016 as presented in the memorandum prepared by the Secretary General of the Assembly (Appendix 2).

2.4.6. Azerbaijan: repeat of the parliamentary elections in constituency No. 90 (18 June 2016)

On 26 May, the Bureau decided to ensure a presence on the occasion of these elections with a delegation composed of 3 members: Mr Jordi Xuclà (Spain, ALDE) and the co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee, Mr Stefan Schennach (Austria, SOC) and Mr Cezar Florin Preda (Romania, EPP/CD). On 9 June, having been consulted in writing, the Bureau approved the President's proposal that Mr Xuclà, who would be unable to participate, be replaced by Mr Alain Destexhe (Belgium, ALDE).

2.4.7. Belarus: parliamentary elections (11 September 2016, subject to receiving an invitation)

On 26 May, the Bureau decided to observe these elections and constituted an ad hoc committee for this purpose composed of 11 members (EPP/CD: 3; SOC: 3; ALDE: 2; EC: 2; UEL: 1) as well as the Rapporteur on the situation in Belarus of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy.

2.4.8. Russian Federation: parliamentary elections (18 September 2016, subject to receiving an invitation)

On 26 May, the Bureau decided to resume the matter at a later stage.

2.4.9. Morocco: parliamentary elections (7 October 2016, subject to receiving an invitation)

On 26 May, the Bureau decided to observe these elections and constituted an ad hoc committee for this purpose composed of 11 members (EPP/CD: 3; SOC: 3; ALDE: 2; EC: 2; UEL: 1).

2.4.10. Georgia: parliamentary elections (8 October 2016, subject to receiving an invitation)

On 26 May, the Bureau decided to observe these elections and constituted an ad hoc committee for this purpose composed of 30 members (EPP/CD: 11; SOC: 10; ALDE: 4; EC: 3; UEL: 2) as well as the co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee. It also authorised a pre-electoral mission.

2.4.11. Montenegro: parliamentary elections (16 October 2016, date to be confirmed, subject to receiving an invitation)

On 26 May, the Bureau decided to observe these elections and constituted an ad hoc committee for this purpose composed of 11 members (EPP/CD: 3; SOC: 3; ALDE: 2; EC: 2; UEL: 1) as well as the co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee.

2.4.12. Republic of Moldova: presidential election (30 October 2016)

On 26 May, the Bureau decided to observe this election and constituted an ad hoc committee for this purpose composed of 20 members (EPP/CD: 8; SOC: 7; ALDE: 2; EC: 2; UEL: 1) as well as the co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee. It also authorised a pre-electoral mission.

2.4.13. Bulgaria: presidential election (October 2016, date to be confirmed, subject to receiving an invitation)

On 26 May, the Bureau decided to observe this election and constituted an ad hoc committee for this purpose composed of 11 members (EPP/CD: 3; SOC: 3; ALDE: 2; EC: 2; UEL: 1) as well as the co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee.

2.5. References and transmissions to committees

On 22 April, in addition to the references and transmissions that were ratified by the Assembly on the same day within the addendum to the Progress report, the Bureau considered and approved the following references which did not require ratification.

2.5.1. Extension of references

– Doc. 12866, motion for a resolution, The political transition in Egypt (Ref. 3857 of 23 April 2012 – validity: 30 April 2016: extension until 30 April 2018;

– Doc. 13150, motion for a resolution, Effectively combating the adverse consequences of dirty money (Ref. 3952 of 26 April 2013 – validity: 26 April 2016): extension until 26 April 2017.

2.5.2. References and transmissions to committees

On 26 May, the Bureau approved the following references and transmissions, which were subsequently ratified by the Standing Committee:

– Doc. 13978, motion for a resolution, The functioning of democratic institutions in Poland: reference to the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) *for report;*

– Doc. 13980, motion for a resolution, Resolving the ongoing conflict in Turkey and finding a political solution to the Kurdish question: *no further action;*

– Doc. 13981, motion for a resolution, Promoting diversity and equality in politics*:* reference to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for report;*

– Doc. 14026, motion for a resolution, The value of cultural heritage in a democratic society*:* consultation of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media *on possible follow-up*;

– Doc. 14027, motion for a resolution, Good football governance*:* reference to the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media *for report*;

– Doc. 14032, motion for a resolution, Counter-Narratives to Terrorism*:* reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion*;

– Doc. 14033, motion for a resolution, A potential threat to European countries imposed by the nuclear power plant in Belarus: transmission to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *on possible follow-up;*

– Doc 14034, motion for a resolution, The "Panama Papers" – an opportunity to expose corruption and organised crime,

– Doc 14045, motion for a resolution, The "Panama Papers" and the concern about fiscal, social justice and public trust in our democratic system,

– Doc 14047, motion for a resolution, Panama Papers: what lessons for the state of democracy in Council of Europe member States?: reference of the three motions to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for opinion* with the following title: "The concern about fiscal, social justice and public trust in our democratic system".

2.5.3. Modification of references

On 26 May, the Bureau approved the following modification of references, which were subsequently ratified by the Standing Committee:

– Doc. 13646, motion for a recommendation, Closing the protection gap of unaccompanied children in Europe (Ref. 4099 of 26 January 2015): reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons *for report* and to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for opinion*;

– Doc. 13905, motion for a resolution, Jurisdictional immunity of international organisations and rights of their staff (Ref. 4185 of 29 January 2016)*:* reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report* and to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for opinion;*

– Doc. 13965, motion for a resolution, Compatibility of Sharia law with the European Convention on Human Rights: can States Parties to the Convention be signatories of the "Cairo Declaration"? (Ref. 4188 of 4 March 2016): reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report* and to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for opinion.*

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

On 22 April, the Bureau approved the list of candidates in respect of Azerbaijan, which was subsequently transmitted to the Committee of Ministers.

2.7. Issues raised by committees

2.7.1. Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

On 22 April, the Bureau authorised Ms Deborah Bergamini (Italy, EPP/CD), Rapporteur on *The political transition in Egypt*, to carry out a fact-finding visit to Egypt by the end of 2016, in the framework of the preparation of her report.

2.8. Institutional representation of the Parliamentary Assembly in 2016

On 22 April, the Bureau approved the appointments of Mr Luís Leite Ramos (Portugal, EPP/CD) as member and Mr Paolo Corsini (Italy, SOC) as substitute of the Executive Committee of the North-South Centre (European Centre for Global interdependence and Solidarity), as proposed by the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media.

2.9. Meetings elsewhere than Strasbourg and Paris

On 22 April, the Bureau authorised:

– the Sub-Committee on Media and Information Society (Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media) to meet in Berlin on 4 July 2016;

– the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media to meet in Kyiv on 19 and 20 September 2016;

– the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) to meet in Tirana on 22 and 23 September 2016.

2.10. Václav Havel Human Rights Prize

On 22 April, the Bureau took note of the extension of the deadline for the submission of nominations to 30 June 2016.

2.11. Participation of the delegation of "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly

On 22 April, the Bureau took note of a letter by the Chairperson of the delegation informing that parliament had been dissolved on 15 April 2016, hence the absence of the delegation, and that early parliamentary elections would be held on 5 June 2016. These elections have since been cancelled.

2.12. Communications

On 26 May, the Bureau took note of the communication by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly and of his intention to submit a draft declaration on interparliamentary dialogue and co-operation at its next meeting. The Bureau also took note of the communication by the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

2.13. Ad hoc committee of the Bureau on the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Greece

On 26 May, the Bureau took note of the draft agenda of the meeting held on 30 and 31 May. It approved the list of members of the ad hoc committee (Appendix 3) and appointed Mr Pedro Agramunt, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, and Ms Meritxell Mateu (Andorra, ALDE) respectively as Chairperson and Rapporteur of the ad hoc committee.

2.14. World Forum for Democracy (Strasbourg, 7-9 November 2016)

On 26 May, the Bureau took note of the concept paper and decided to constitute an ad hoc committee of the Bureau to participate in the Forum, composed of members to be proposed by the Assembly committees before the Bureau meeting of 24 June 2016.

2.15. Budgetary matters – Analysis of the use made by the Assembly's political groups of their allocations for 2015

On 26 May, the Bureau took note of the communication submitted by the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs.

2.16. Request for a financial allocation by a member not belonging to any political group

On 26 May, the Bureau decided that a fixed amount of €679.01 of *per capita* allowance be granted in 2016 to Mr Alex Salmond (United Kingdom, NR) upon his request in accordance with the Assembly Rules of Procedure and Opinion 82 (1977) after the submission to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs of proof of expenses incurred.

2.17. Petitions

2.17.1. No Maternity Traffic petition

On 26 May, the Bureau took note of the memorandum by the Secretary General of the Assembly, found that the petition was admissible and decided to transmit it to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development to be taken into account in the context of the preparation of the report on *Human rights and ethical issues related to surrogacy*.

2.17.2. Petition on serious administration problems at the European Court of Human Rights concerning the case of Ms S.H.

On 26 May, the Bureau took note of the memorandum by the Secretary General of the Assembly and decided that the petition was inadmissible.

2.18. Composition of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs

On 26 May, on the basis of a proposal by the Socialist Group, the Bureau nominated Mr Evangelos Venizelos (Greece) to replace Mr Florin Iordache (Romania).

2.19. Other business

On 26 May, the Bureau took note of the exchange of letters between the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly and Mr Axel Fischer (Germany, EPP/CD) on the procedures for the adoption of reports in committees and in plenary session and agreed to request the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to give its opinion on interpretation of the Rules of Procedure in this respect.

The Bureau invited the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly to inform it about the procedure concerning staff appointments at one of its next meetings.

3. Activities of the Standing Committee (Tallinn, 27 May 2016)

On 27 May, the Standing Committee heard a welcome address by Mr Eiki Nestor, Speaker of the Riigikogu, and held an exchange of views with Ms Marina Kaljurand, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers.

It ratified the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegations of Romania and San Marino 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 (20 - 24 June 2016) and ratified the references which are contained in chapter 2.5.

It held an exchange of views with Mr Marin Mrčela, President of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), and Mr Daniel Thelesklaf, Chairperson of the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL).

It also took note of the reports of the ad hoc committees of the Bureau on Observation of the early parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan (20 March 2016) and Observation of the early parliamentary elections in Serbia (24 April 2016).

The Standing Committee adopted the following texts on behalf of the Assembly:

– Resolution 2116 (2016) on *Urgent need to prevent human rights violations during peaceful protests*

– Resolution 2117 (2016) on *Promoting city-to-city co-operation in the field of culture*

Finally, it decided to hold its next meeting in Cyprus on 25 November 2016.

Appendix 1 – Ad hoc committee for the observation of the early parliamentary elections in Serbia (24 April 2016)

Revised list of members

– **Chairperson**: Volodymyr ARIEV (Ukraine, EPP/CD)

– **Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD)**
- Viorel BADEA, Romania
- Mónika BARTOS, Hungary
- Nicole DURANTON, France
- Samvel FARMANYAN, Armenia
- Volodymyr ARIEV, Ukraine*
- Egidijus VAREIKIS, Lithuania

– **Socialist Group (SOC)**
- George FOULKES, United Kingdom
- Stefan SCHENNACH, Austria
- René ROUQUET, France*
- Pierre-Alain FRIDEZ, Switzerland
- Snežana JONICA, Montenegro
- Marit MAIJ, Netherlands
- Predrag SEKULIĆ, Montenegro

– **Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)**
- Alfred HEER, Switzerland
- Carles JORDANA, Andorra
- Andrea RIGONI, Italy*

– **European Conservatives Group (EC)**
- Nigel EVANS, United Kingdom

– **Group of the Unified European Left (UEL)**
- Matjaž HANŽEK, Slovenia

– **Venice Commission expert**
- Richard BARRETT, Ireland

– **Secretariat**
- Chemavon CHAHBAZIAN, Head of Secretariat, Election observation and Interparliamentary Co-operation Division
- Franck DAESCHLER, Principal Administrative Assistant, Election observation and Interparliamentary Co-operation Division
- Danièle GASTL, Assistant, Election observation and Interparliamentary Co-operation Division
- Gaël MARTIN-MICALLEF, Administrator, Venice Commission

* members of the pre-election delegation

Appendix 2 – Elections calendar 2016

COUNTRY	TYPE	DATE	STATUS	BUREAU DECISION
Azerbaijan	Repeat of the parliamentary elections in constituency No. 90	18 June 2016	Monitoring	3 members
Belarus	Parliamentary elections	11 September 2016	Special guest status was suspended by the Bureau on 13/01/97	11 members + rapporteur AS/Pol
Russian Federation	Parliamentary elections	18 September 2016	Monitoring	
Morocco	Parliamentary elections	7 October 2016	Partner for democracy	11 members
Georgia	Parliamentary elections	8 October 2016	Monitoring	30 members + 2 co-rapporteurs AS/Mon
Montenegro	Parliamentary elections	16 October 2016 (tbc)	Post-monitoring dialogue	11 members + 2 co-rapporteurs AS/Mon
Republic of Moldova	Presidential election	30 October 2016	Monitoring	20 members + 2 co-rapporteurs AS/Mon
Bulgaria	Presidential election	October 2016 (tbc)	Post-monitoring dialogue	11 members + 2 co-rapporteurs AS/Mon

Appendix 3 – Ad hoc committee of the Bureau on the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Greece

Visit to Greece (30-31 May 2016) – List of members

– **President of the ad hoc committee**
  - Mr Pedro Agramunt, President of the Assembly*****

– **Rapporteur**
  - Ms Meritxell Mateu (ALDE), Chairperson of the delegation of Andorra

– **Members of the Presidential Committee or their representatives**
  - Mr Zsolt Csenger-Zalán (Hungary, EPP/CD)*
  - Mr Michele Nicoletti (Italy, SOC)*
  - Mr Jordi Xuclà (Spain, ALDE)*
  - Mr Paul Scully (United Kingdom, EC)*
  - Mr Nikolaj Villumsen (Denmark, UEL)*

– **Chairpersons of national delegations or their representatives**
  - Ms Petra De Sutter (Belgium, SOC)
  - Mr Senad Šepić (Bosnia and Herzegovina, EPP/CD)
  - Mr René Rouquet (France, SOC)
  - Ms Ioanneta Kavvadia (Greece, UEL)*
  - Mr Karl Garðarsson (Iceland, ALDE)
  - Mr Yves Cruchten (Luxembourg, SOC)
  - Mr Predrag Sekulić (Montenegro, SOC)
  - Mr Frank J. Jenssen (Norway, EPP/CD)
  - Mr Aleksander Pociej (Poland, EPP/CD)
  - Mr Antonio Gutiérrez Limones (Spain, SOC)
  - Mr Alfred Heer (Switzerland, ALDE)
  - Mr Erkan Kandemir (Turkey, EC)
  - Mr Serhii Kiral (Ukraine, EC)
  - Mr Mark Pritchard (United Kingdom, EC)
  - Mr Mohamed Yatim (Morocco), Partner for democracy delegation

– **Delegation of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons**
  - Ms Sahiba Gafarova (Azerbaijan, EC)
  - Ms Annette Groth (Germany, UEL)
  - Mr Manlio Di Stefano (Italy, NR)
  - Mr Andrea Rigoni (Italy, ALDE)
  - Ms Tineke Strik (Netherlands, SOC)*
  - Ms Eva-Lena Jansson (Sweden, SOC)

– **Members of the Secretariat**
  - Mr Wojciech Sawicki, Secretary General of the Assembly
  - Ms Sonia Sirtori, Head of the Secretariat of the Bureau of the Assembly / Head of the Office of the Secretary General of the Assembly
  - Mr David Milner**, Secretary of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
  - Ms Greta Faggiani, Deputy to the Head of the Office of the President of the Assembly
  - Ms Nathalie Bargellini, Press Officer
  - Ms Annick Schneider, Assistant to the Secretary General of the Assembly
  - Mr Sandro Weltin**, Photographer

– **Interpreters**
  - Ms Julia Tanner
  - Ms Ina Kang

* members of the delegation going to Lesvos on 31 May

** members of the secretariat accompanying the delegation to Lesvos on 31 May