Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 14101
22 June 2016

The need to enable the Committee of Ministers to give answers to the Assembly even in the absence of a consensus

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Pieter OMTZIGT and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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The Committee of Ministers regularly replies to written questions by members of the Assembly that "owing to a lack of consensus", it has not been possible to adopt a reply. Important issues are thus not dealt with if only one Member of the Committee of Ministers decided to block an answer. That is a very effective way to give a veto to every country on an answer about its own human rights records.

Recently, the Committee of Ministers replied that: "The Statute of the Council of Europe does not contain any specific provisions on the handling, by the Committee of Ministers, of replies to written questions from members of the Parliamentary Assembly. Under those circumstances, Article 19 of the Statute of the Council of Europe which covers statements by the Committee of Ministers to the Assembly, combined with Article 20 of the Statute, which provides that decisions on statements to the Assembly are taken unanimously has always been applied to written questions" (answer to written question 707, Doc. 14089).

Article 19 of the Statute does not deal with answers to written questions at all. It states: "At each session of the Consultative Parliamentary Assembly the Committee of Ministers shall furnish the Assembly with statements of its activities, accompanied by appropriate documentation"

The Assembly should investigate what the right interpretation of the Statute of the Council of Europe is and should find or propose ways in which the Committee of Ministers is able to give a meaningful answer to a politically sensitive question if the overwhelming majority of the Committee of Ministers agrees on an answer.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left