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Challenge on procedural grounds of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Andorra

Committee Opinion[1]
Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination
Rapporteur: Ms Elvira KOVÁCS, Serbia, Group of the European People's Party

A. Conclusions of the committee

1. The Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination welcomes and fully endorses the draft resolution prepared by the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs.

2. The challenging of the credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Andorra demonstrates once again that gender equality cannot be taken for granted but requires our constant vigilance. The committee wishes to underline how important it is for the Parliamentary Assembly to lead by example and to apply to its own structures the principles it promotes.

3. In the light of the above, the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination wishes to propose one amendment to further strengthen the draft resolution.

B. Proposed amendment to the draft resolution

Amendment A (to the draft resolution)

In paragraph 2, after the first sentence, insert the following sentence:

> *"The Assembly also underlines that, in order to achieve genuine equality, the principle of equality should also apply to positions of responsibility."*

C. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Elvira Kovacs, rapporteur for opinion

1. The delegation of Andorra, which is composed of two men and two women, is one of the few national delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly that respects the principle of parity that the Assembly promotes. This is to be welcomed. However, it must be noted that both women have been appointed as substitutes, and both men as representatives. This is contrary to Rule 6.2.*a* of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, which provides that at least one member of the under-represented sex must be appointed as a representative.

2. Gender equality is a requirement for all democratic societies. Achieving gender equality in all spheres of public and private life is one of the goals of the Council of Europe, and the Assembly has contributed to this goal through the adoption of numerous resolutions and recommendations. Since 1996, the Assembly has also adopted several resolutions aimed at ensuring better gender balance in its own functioning. A key measure in

1. Bureau decision, Reference 4360 of 22 January 2017. Reporting committee: Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs. See Doc. 14475. Opinion approved by the committee on 23 January 2018.

this respect was the introduction in 2003 in the Rules of the Assembly of Rule 6.2.*a*, which imposes the presence of at least one woman parliamentarian in the composition of national delegations to the Assembly. This measure was modified in 2010 to oblige national delegations to appoint, as representative, a minimum of one member of the under-represented sex.

3. The statistics on gender equality in the functioning of the Assembly[2] show that the level of representation of women as members of the Parliamentary Assembly has increased progressively since 2012, reaching 39% in 2016. However, this percentage decreased to 37% in 2017. By the same token, whereas 41% of the Assembly's representatives and 38% of the substitutes in 2016 were women, these percentages decreased slightly in 2017, to 40% of representatives and 33% of substitutes. This shows that progress towards gender equality cannot be taken for granted but requires our constant vigilance.

4. In 2007, in Resolution 1585 (2007) on gender equality principles in the Parliamentary Assembly, the Assembly set an objective of 40% representation of women. Through the impetus of our committee, the Assembly subsequently recalled, in Resolution 1485 (2017) on the Challenge on procedural grounds of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of the Slovak Republic, its support for the principle of gender parity as the ultimate goal in political representation. The committee notes with satisfaction that in December 2017, seven national delegations fully respected gender parity (compared with eight delegations in 2016) and three delegations included more women than men (Finland, Serbia and Sweden). Above and beyond statistics, however, women politicians should also be placed in positions of responsibility in order for genuine equality to be achieved. This is the purpose of the proposed amendment.

2. Doc. 14455 of 20 January 2018, Activities of the Assembly's Bureau and Standing Committee (13 October 2017-21 January 2018, p. 10.