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13 April 2018

Activities of the Assembly's Bureau and Standing Committee (26 January-21 April 2018)

Progress report

Bureau of the Assembly

Rapporteur: Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER, Switzerland, Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 26 January, the Bureau appointed me as rapporteur for this report, which covers its activities over the period from the last Bureau meeting of the first part-session of 2018 (Friday 26 January) until 21 April 2018.

The following chapters include the decisions taken at the Bureau meetings of 26 January in Strasbourg and 15 March in Paris. Chapter 2 presents a list of decisions, which have either already been ratified by the Standing Committee on 16 March or which do not require ratification.

An addendum to this report will be issued after the Bureau meetings of 22 and 23 April, which will also include decisions to be ratified the same day. Another addendum will be issued after the Bureau meeting of 27 April. It will include only the decisions to be ratified by the Assembly 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 Friday 27 April, then on 31 May in Zagreb. The next meeting of the Standing Committee will also be held in Zagreb, on 1 June.

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

2.1. Follow-up to the first part-session of 2018 (Strasbourg, 22-26 January)

On 26 January, the Bureau held an exchange of views on the first-part session.

2.2. Standing Committee (Paris, 16 March 2018)

On 26 January and 15 March, the Bureau took note of the draft agenda.

2.3. Second part-session of 2018 (Strasbourg, 23-27 April)

2.3.1. Draft agenda

On 26 January and 15 March, the Bureau drew up the draft agenda.



2.3.2. Request for a debate under urgent procedure

On 15 March, the Bureau took note of the request tabled by Mr Akif Çağatay Kiliç (Turkey, EC) and 25 members of the Assembly for the Assembly to hold a debate under urgent procedure on *Rising anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and xenophobia in Europe: a threat to European values*.

2.4. Communications

On 15 March, the Bureau took note of the communications by the President of the Assembly and by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

2.5. Independent investigation body on the allegations of corruption within the Parliamentary Assembly

On 26 January, the Bureau decided to hold an additional meeting on Sunday 22 April 2018 to have an exchange of views with the three members of the independent investigation body on its final report.

On 15 March, the Bureau took note of the information provided by the Secretary General of the Assembly on the preparation of the 22 April meeting and decided:

- i. to organise the meeting on 22 April 2018 in two parts:
 - an exchange of views “in camera” with members of the investigation body, followed by
 - a discussion on possible reaction of the Bureau to the report of the investigation body (not “in camera”);
- ii. to authorise the Secretary General of the Assembly to:
 - transmit the report of the investigation body, upon its receipt, exclusively to the President of the Assembly;
 - make the report available to Bureau members as from 2 pm on 22 April 2018 by providing members with a paper copy to be read exclusively inside the meeting room;
 - release the report, excluding any confidential parts that might be requested by the investigation body, to the public at the end of the Bureau meeting on 22 April 2018;
 - transmit the report, after the Bureau meeting on 22 April 2018, to all Speakers of national Parliaments of Council of Europe member States;
- iii. as a preliminary measure:
 - to invite the members of the Assembly whose behavior has been found by the investigation body as unethical or in violation of the Assembly’s code of conduct, or who have refused to cooperate with the investigation body, to suspend all their activities within the Assembly with immediate effect;
 - to invite the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to consider further possible actions.

2.6. Election observation

2.6.1. Meeting of the Chairpersons and members of ad hoc committees for the observation of elections (24 January 2018)

On 15 March, the Bureau took note of the report of the meeting.

2.6.2. Guidelines for the observation of elections by the Parliamentary Assembly and draft Code of conduct for International Election Observation Missions (IEOM)

On 15 March, the Bureau:

- took note of the revised Guidelines;
- approved paragraph 16 of the Guidelines to be applied with immediate effect, and;

- fixed 30 April 2018 as a deadline for submission of comments/amendments on other parts of the Guidelines to the Secretary General of the Assembly with a view to adopting these Guidelines at the Bureau meeting in Zagreb on 31 May 2018.

2.6.3. Azerbaijan: early presidential election (11 April 2018)

On 15 March, the Bureau:

- considering its earlier decision, taken by a written consultation, that in case the ODHIR – for any reasons – was unable to deploy its mission, the observation mission of the Assembly would be cancelled, confirmed its decision to observe this election in co-ordination with ODHIR and OSCE PA and to constitute an ad hoc committee for this purpose composed of 31 members (EPP/CD: 10; SOC: 10, EC: 5, ALDE: 3, UEL: 2, FDG: 1), as well as the 2 co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee;
- approved the list of members of the Ad hoc Committee to observe this election provided that the respective declarations on conflict of interest are submitted prior to the mission;
- appointed Mr Viorel Riceard Badea (Romania, EPP/CD) as Chairperson of the Ad hoc Committee (Appendix 1).

2.6.4. Montenegro: presidential election (15 April 2018)

On 26 January, the Bureau approved the list of members of the Ad hoc Committee to observe this election (subject to receiving their declarations on conflict of interest) and appointed Mr Jonas Gunnarsson (Sweden, SOC) as Chairperson of the Ad hoc Committee. On 15 March, the Bureau approved the revised list of members of the Ad hoc Committee to observe this election (Appendix 2).

2.6.5. Schedule of elections for 2018

On 15 March, the Bureau took note of the document.

2.7. Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the 2018 financial year

On 26 January, the Bureau held an exchange of views on the memorandum prepared by the Secretary General of the Assembly and approved the proposals contained therein (Appendix 3).

2.8. Follow-up to [Resolution 2182 \(2017\)](#): promoting and strengthening transparency, accountability and integrity of Parliamentary Assembly members

2.8.1. Content and format of declaratory requirements

On 15 March, the Bureau:

- took note of the declaration of interest form as approved by the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs;
- set a deadline of 30 September 2018 for the members of the Assembly to return their signed sworn declaration of interest for 2018;
- took note that, at the expiry of this deadline, a failure to make a declaration, a refusal to complete and submit a declaration, a failure to disclose a relevant interest or the submission of an untruthful declaration will automatically lead to the deprivation of the right to be appointed rapporteur or to act as committee rapporteur, or to be a member of an ad hoc election observation committee (pursuant to paragraph 27 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Parliamentary Assembly);
- invited the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to elaborate, at its next meeting, the guidelines/explanatory note to be added to the declaration of interest form.

2.8.2. Rules on access to and movement within the Council of Europe during Assembly sessions and meetings

On 15 March, the Bureau:

- held an exchange of views on the memorandum on the rules on access to and movement within the Council of Europe during Assembly sessions and meetings prepared by the Secretary General of the Assembly and;
- decided to fix for 30 April 2018 the deadline for possible comments by Bureau members on those rules to be submitted to the Secretary General of the Assembly with a view to adopting these rules at the Bureau meeting in Zagreb on 31 May 2018.

2.9. References and transmissions to committees

2.9.1. References and transmissions to committees

On 15 March, the Bureau considered and approved the following references and transmissions to committees, which were subsequently ratified by the Standing Committee on 16 March:

[Doc. 14474](#), motion for a resolution, Greek islands: more needs to be done: reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons *for report*;

[Doc. 14476](#), motion for a resolution, Strengthening parliamentary dialogue with Algeria: reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report*;

[Doc. 14477](#), motion for a resolution, Jewish cultural heritage preservation: reference to the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media *for report*;

[Doc. 14478](#), motion for a resolution, Concerted action on human trafficking: reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons *for report* and to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for opinion*;

[Doc. 14479](#), motion for a resolution, Daphne Caruana Galizia's assassination and the rule of law, in Malta and beyond: ensuring that the whole truth emerges: reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*;

[Doc. 14480](#), motion for a resolution, Stepping up co-operation between European initiatives for better child protection against sexual violence: reference to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for report*;

[Doc. 14482](#), motion for a resolution, European weapons and funds for Daesh: reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for information*;

[Doc. 14483](#), motion for a resolution, Improving the protection of whistleblowers all over Europe: reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*;

[Doc. 14485](#), motion for a resolution, So-called "tax optimisation" and policy, two incompatible concepts: reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for information*;

[Doc. 14262](#), motion for a resolution, Russian racial discrimination of Crimean Tatars in Crimea: reference to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for report*.

2.9.2. Modification of references

On 15 March, the Bureau considered and approved the following modification of references, which were subsequently ratified by the Standing Committee on 16 March:

[Doc. 14380](#), motion for a resolution, Defining guidelines for international NGOs (Ref. 4331 of 13 October 2017) reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion*;

[Doc. 13812](#), motion for a resolution, Libya's future between the threats of terrorism and a democratic prospect (Ref. 4140 of 26 June 2015) reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report* and to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons *for opinion*;

2.9.3. Extension of references

On 26 January, the Bureau considered and approved the following extensions of references:

[Doc. 13979](#), motion for a resolution, Detention of Palestinian minors in Israeli prisons (Ref. 4200 of 22 April 2016 – validity: 22 April 2018): extension until 31 December 2018;

[Doc. 14033](#), motion for a resolution, A potential threat to European countries imposed by the nuclear power plant in Belarus (Ref. 4225 of 24 June 2016 – validity: 24 June 2018): extension until 31 December 2018;

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

[Doc. 13812](#), motion for a resolution, Libya's future between the threats of terrorism and a democratic prospect (Ref. 4140 of 26 June 2015 – validity: 31 January 2018): extension until 15 March 2018;

[Doc. 14000](#), motion for a resolution, Protecting human rights defenders in Council of Europe member States (Ref. 4202 of 22 April 2016 – validity: 22 April 2018): extension until 30 September 2018.

On 15 March, the Bureau considered and approved the following extension of a reference:

[Doc. 13972](#), motion for a resolution, Education and culture: new partnerships to support personal development and cohesion (Ref. 4194 of 22 April 2016 – validity: 22 April 2018): extension until 22 April 2019

2.10. Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau on the role and mission of the Parliamentary Assembly

The Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau, meeting on Friday 16 March 2018 in Paris, heard a statement by the Chairperson and held an exchange of views on the replies received to the President's letter dated 24 January 2018.

2.11. Participation of members in Parliamentary Assembly plenary sessions and committee meetings

On 15 March, the Bureau took note of the information memorandum prepared by the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, and decided to invite the President of the Assembly to notify in writing the chairpersons of the delegations and the speakers of the parliaments concerned by low participation rates (Rule 44.10 of the Rules of Procedure and paragraph 7.2 of [Resolution 1583 \(2007\)](#) – the President of the Assembly is invited “to examine, with the speakers and political groups of the parliaments concerned, the possible consequences if the average level of participation of national delegations in Assembly sittings falls below 50% of their nominal strength”) or to arrange a meeting with the chairpersons of the relevant delegations. The Bureau also decided to make publicly available the statistics related to the participation of national delegations on the Assembly's website.

2.12. Composition of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs and the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights:

2.12.1. Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs

On 15 March, the Bureau on the basis of proposals by the EC Group, nominated Mr Yıldırım Tuğrul Türkeş, Turkey.

2.12.2. Committee on the election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights

On 15 March, the Bureau:

- on the basis of a proposal by the EPP Group, appointed Mr Vusal Huseynov, Azerbaijan and Ms Biljana Pantić Pilja, Serbia;
- on the basis of a proposal by the SOC Group, appointed Mr Constantinos Efstathiou, Cyprus.

2.13. Issues raised by committees

On 26 January, the Bureau considered the requests for fact-finding visits submitted by rapporteurs, invited the Secretary General of the Assembly to explore the possibility of having their costs covered by the respective Parliaments, and decided to authorise them, provided that the rapporteurs' travel and accommodation costs are covered by their respective national parliaments; or, should this not be the case, subject to availability of financial resources of the Assembly.

2.13.1. Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

On 26 January, the Bureau authorised:

- the fact-finding visit to Egypt by Ms Tineke Strik (Netherlands, SOC), Rapporteur on “*Human rights impacts of the “external dimension” of European Union asylum and migration policy: out of sight, out of rights?*”, to be carried out in the first quarter of 2018 in the framework of the preparation of her report;
- the fact-finding visit to Lebanon by Mr Manlio Di Stefano (Italy, NR), Rapporteur on “*The humanitarian situation of refugees in the countries neighbouring Syria*”, to be carried out in 2018 in the framework of the preparation of his report.

2.13.2. Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

On 26 January, the Bureau authorised the fact-finding visit to Morocco by Mr Bogdan Klich (Poland, EPP/CD), Rapporteur on “*The evaluation of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of Morocco*”, to be conducted in 2018 in the framework of the preparation of his report.

2.13.3. Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs

On 15 March, the Bureau took note of the Committee's decision to merge two references (Reference 4346 and Reference 4347 of 24/11/2017) into a single report currently under preparation (Reference 4316 of 9/10/2017) under the new title “Modification of various provisions of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure”.

2.13.4. Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

On 15 March, the Bureau took note of the letter and the draft statement concerning the draft Declaration on the European Human Rights system in the future Europe, as adopted by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights at its meeting on 14 March 2018.

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

On 26 January, the Bureau approved the recommendation of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights to invite the delegation of Spain to submit a new list of candidates to the CPT.

2.15. Institutional representation of the Parliamentary Assembly in 2018

On 26 January, the Bureau approved the appointments and asked the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights to come back to the Bureau with a revised proposal concerning the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) to ensure a more balanced political representation. On 15 March, the Bureau approved the appointments of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights concerning the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and of the Monitoring Committee for the Council on Democratic Elections of the Venice Commission, as set out in Appendix 4.

2.16. Václav Havel Human Rights Prize

On 26 January, the Bureau took note of the launch of the 2018 edition of the Prize.

2.17. European Conference of Presidents of Parliament 2018 (Ankara, 13-14 September 2018)

On 15 March, the Bureau took note of the information provided and, in view of problems in sending out invitation letters to Presidents of Parliaments of all 47 member States of the Council of Europe, unanimously agreed to propose that a new nominative invitation letter be signed by both the Speaker of the Grand National

Assembly of Turkey and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to be sent by the Parliamentary Assembly to each President of Parliament of the 47 member States of the Council of Europe and that this procedure will also be followed for future Conferences of Presidents of Parliament.

2.18. Meetings elsewhere than Strasbourg and Paris

On 26 January, the Bureau authorised:

- the Sub-Committee on Refugee and Migrant Children and Young People of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons and the Sub-Committee on Culture, Diversity and Heritage of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media to hold a joint meeting in London on 26 March 2018;
- the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights to meet in Reykjavik on 22-23 May 2018.

On 15 March, the Bureau authorised the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media to meet in Tbilisi on 25 September 2018.

3. Activities of the Standing Committee (Paris, 16 March 2018)

The Standing Committee:

- ratified the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegations of Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Monaco and a change in the delegation of Andorra;
- approved changes in the composition of Assembly committees;
- took note of the draft agenda of the second part-session of the Assembly (23-27 April 2018);
- ratified the references proposed by the Bureau (see Chapter 2.9.);
- held an exchange of views with Mr Guido Raimondi, President of the European Court of Human Rights;
- adopted a declaration on the “Draft Copenhagen Declaration on the European Human Rights system in the future Europe” (see Appendix 5); and
- adopted the following texts on behalf of the Assembly:
 - [Resolution 2207 \(2018\)](#) Gender equality and child maintenance;
 - [Resolution 2208 \(2018\)](#) Modification of the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure: the impact of the budgetary crisis on the list of working languages of the Assembly;
 - [Recommendation 2124 \(2018\)](#) Modification of the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure: the impact of the budgetary crisis on the list of working languages of the Assembly.

4. Decision of the Bureau requiring ratification by the Assembly

4.1. [Resolution 1376 \(2004\)](#) relating to Cyprus

On 15 March, the Bureau took note of the letter from one of the Turkish Cypriot political parties (the Republican Turkish Party) informing the President of the Assembly of the name of one of the "elected representatives of the Turkish Cypriot community" entitled to sit in the Assembly in 2018, namely Mr Armağan Candan.

The Assembly is invited to ratify this Bureau decision.

Appendix 1 – List of members of the ad hoc committee to observe the early presidential election in Azerbaijan (11 April 2018)

Chairperson: Mr Viorel Riceard BADEA, Romania (EPP/CD)

Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD)

- Mr Viorel Riceard BADEA, Romania
- Mr Şaban DİŞLİ, Turkey
- Ms Nicole DURANTON, France
- Mr Claudio FAZZONE, Italy
- Mr Giuseppe GALATI, Italy
- Mr Valeriu GHILETCHI, Republic of Moldova
- Ms Marija OBRADOVIĆ, Serbia
- Mr Aleksander POCIEJ, Poland
- Mr Egidijus VAREIKIS, Lithuania
- Mr Ion POPA, Romania

Substitute

- Mr Kęstutis MASIULIS, Lithuania

Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group (SOC)

- Ms Liliane MAURY PASQUIER, Switzerland
- Mr Frank SCHWABE, Germany
- Ms Marianne MIKKO, Estonia
- Ms Adriana Diana TUŞA, Romania
- Ms Thorhildur Sunna ÆVARSDÓTTIR, Iceland
- Mr Pierre-Alain FRIDEZ, Switzerland
- Ms Angela SMITH, United Kingdom
- Mr José CEPEDA, Spain
- Ms Idália SERRÃO, Portugal
- Mr Luis Alberto ORELLANA, Italy

Substitutes

- Ms Daniela WAGNER, Germany
- Mr Betian KITEV, "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"
- Ms Didem ENGIN, Turkey
- Mr Antonio GUTIÉRREZ, Spain
- Mr Predrag SEKULIĆ, Montenegro
- Mr Florian KRONBICHLER, Italy

European Conservatives Group (EC)

- Mr Dominik TARCZYŃSKI, Poland
- Mr Tom PACKALÉN, Finland
- Mr Suat ÖNAL, Turkey
- Lord David BLENCATHRA, United Kingdom
- Mr Arkadiusz MULARCZYK, Poland

Substitute

- Mr Józef LEŚNIAK, Poland

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)

- Mr Alfred HEER, Switzerland
- Mr Dzheyhan IBRYAMOV, Bulgaria
- Mr Claude KERN, France

Substitute

- Mr Mart van de VEN, Netherlands

Group of the Unified European Left (UEL)

- Mr Petter EIDE, Norway
- Ms Felekna UCA, Turkey

Free Democrats Group (FDG)

- Ms Adele GAMBARO, Italy

Rapporteur of Monitoring Committee

- Mr Stefan SCHENNACH, Austria
- Mr Cezar Florin PREDA, Romania

Venice Commission

- Mr Eirik HOLMØYVIK, Substitute member, Norway

Secretariat

- Mr Bogdan TORCĂTORIU, Administrative Officer, Election Observation and Interparliamentary Co-operation Division
- Ms Danièle GASTL, Assistant, Election Observation and Interparliamentary Co-operation Division
- Ms Anne GODFREY, Assistant, Election Observation and Interparliamentary Co-operation Division
- Mr Gaël MARTIN-MICALLEF, Legal advisor, Venice Commission

Appendix 2 – List of members of the ad hoc committee to observe the presidential election in Montenegro (15 April 2018)

Chairperson: Mr Jonas GUNNARSSON (SOC, Sweden)

Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD)

- Ms Elena CENTEMERO, Italy
- Ms Marie-Christine DALLOZ, France
- Ms Alina Ștefania GORGHIU, Romania

Substitutes

- Ms Boriana ÅBERG, Sweden
- Ms Nicole DURANTON, France
- Ms Iryna GERASHCHENKO, Ukraine
- Ms Martine MERGEN, Luxembourg
- Mr Tritan SHEHU, Albania
- Mr Egidijus VAREIKIS, Lithuania
- Ms Arpine HOVHANNISYAN, Armenia

Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group (SOC)

- Mr Paolo CORSINI, Italy
- Ms Didem ENGIN, Turkey
- Mr Jonas GUNNARSSON, Sweden

Substitutes

- Mr George FOULKES, United Kingdom
- Mr Stefan SCHENNACH, Austria
- Ms Sunna ÆVARSDÓTTIR, Iceland
- Mr Pierre-Alain FRIDEZ, Switzerland
- Mr José CEPEDA, Spain
- Mr Jan SKOBERNE, Slovenia
- Mr Jérôme LAMBERT, France
- Ms Idália SERRÃO, Portugal
- Mr Florian KRONBICHLER, Italy
- Mr Antonio GUTIÉRREZ, Spain
- Ms Marietta KARAMANLI, France

European Conservatives Group (EC)

- Mr Oleksii GONCHARENKO, Ukraine
- Mr Suat ÖNAL, Turkey

Substitutes

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Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)

- Ms Emilie Enger MEHL, Norway
- Mr Robert TROY, Ireland

Substitutes

- Mr Aleksandar STEVANOVIĆ, Serbia
- Ms Anne MULDER, Netherlands
- Mr Jokin BILDARRATZ, Spain
- Mr Thomas MÜLLER, Switzerland
- Mr Claude KERN, France
- Mr Jordi XUCLA, Spain
- Mr Alfred HEER, Switzerland

Group of the Unified European Left (UEL)

- Mr Marco NICOLINI, San Marino

Substitutes

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Free Democrats Group (FDG)

- Mr Fazil MUSTAFA, Azerbaijan

Substitutes

- ...

Co-rapporteurs AS/MON (ex officio)

- Mr Andrea RIGONI, Italy
- Mr Ionut-Marian STROE, Romania

Secretariat

- Mr Chemavon CHAHBAZIAN, Head of Division, Election Observation and Interparliamentary Co-operation Division
- Mr Franck DAESCHLER, Principal Administrative Assistant, Election Observation and Interparliamentary Co-operation Division
- Mr Michael JANSSEN, Administrator, Venice Commission

Appendix 3 – Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the 2018 financial year

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 15 December 2017, the Bureau discussed the expenditure of the Assembly for 2018. In that context, it took note of the decision by the Turkish Government to discontinue its status as a major contributor to the budget of the Council of Europe as from the end of 2017. The effect of the cessation of Turkey's major contributor status is a decrease in its 2018 contributions of a total of € 19.6 million across all budgets concerned. It entails a reduction of € 14.8 million in the Ordinary Budget of the Council of Europe (6.3% of the Ordinary Budget initially foreseen for 2018).
2. Furthermore, the Bureau was informed that on 22 November 2017, the Committee of Ministers had adopted the Council's General Budget for 2018-2019 with a continued policy of zero nominal growth, and not a policy of zero real growth of 0.5% as anticipated, which entailed further cuts of € 2.8 million in the Ordinary Budget. The total cuts in the Council's Ordinary Budget therefore amount to almost € 18 million.
3. The budget of the Assembly is a part of the Ordinary Budget of the Council of Europe. The expenditure of the Assembly as foreseen for 2018 amounts to € 17 498 400 – of which almost € 11.4 million is to cover the cost of staff and related contributions to the Pension budget, while € 6.1 million is to cover operational expenditure. More than half of the operational expenditure of the Assembly covers the cost of interpretation/translation in the Assembly. In view of the decision taken by the Turkish Government and of the decision of the Committee of Ministers to maintain a zero nominal growth policy, the Assembly's budget for 2018 will inevitably also have to be accordingly reduced.
4. When in 2015 Turkey decided to become a major contributor to the budget of the Council of Europe, the Assembly's budget was increased by € 900 000 to cover the cost of introducing Turkish as a working language of the Assembly (€ 700 000) and to increase operational capacities of the Assembly (€ 200 000). It would therefore be logical to expect that the budget of the Assembly should now be decreased by the corresponding amount of € 900 000. However, this amount will be more substantial due to the decision of the Committee of Ministers to maintain the zero nominal growth policy.
5. Taking account of the fact that working languages in the Assembly correspond in principle to the languages of the major contributors, the Bureau of the Assembly asked the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to prepare a report modifying the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, notably with a view to removing Turkish from the list of working languages of the Assembly. Until the Rules of Procedure are changed on this point, possibly on 16 March 2018 on the occasion of the Standing Committee, the inevitable costs for the Assembly to provide Turkish interpretation will be € 100 000. Therefore, the minimum expected cuts in the operational budget of the Assembly (in addition to the removal of Turkish from the list of working languages) should be at least at the level of € 300 000 (€ 200 000 mentioned in para. 4 plus € 100 000 mentioned just above).
6. I will in due course present to the Bureau the proposed details of the 2018 budgetary reductions for the Assembly. However, I am seeking already now the approval by the Bureau to introduce with immediate effect certain measures affecting also the organisation of work by committees. These measures are outlined below. The aim is to apply these measures consistently with respect to all nine committees.
7. The Assembly may also expect certain cuts in its staff expenditure. I will discuss this question further with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and come back to the Bureau with relevant information in due course.
8. In view of the budgetary situation of the Council of Europe, the Bureau and subsequently the Assembly may be obliged to proceed with a general review of its priorities and working methods in order to respond to the growing financial pressure.

Interpretation during committee meetings

1. Before committee meetings held elsewhere than in Strasbourg during the part-sessions weeks, members and secretaries of national delegations are invited to complete a participation form in which they are also asked to confirm the need for interpretation into the Assembly's working languages (German, Italian, Russian, and until the Rules of Procedure are changed – Turkish). Henceforth, those languages will be cancelled if no request has been received 21 calendar days before the meeting (up until now 14 calendar

days). In addition, secretaries of national delegations will be asked to confirm the need for working languages only when members are sure to attend and cannot express themselves in one of the official languages. An option of passive interpretation of working languages as an alternative will also be further explored.

Interpretation into one of the working languages during committee meetings will need to be confirmed 21 calendar days before the meeting.

Expected savings: € 40 000 (5% of the expenses for 2017)

Translation of committee documents

1. In order to reduce translation costs, the aim is to reduce the length of all committee documents, including expert reports, documents submitted by rapporteurs and explanatory memoranda. Written interventions by experts will be available in their original language only, either in English or French. The same applies for other information documents which are not official committee documents with a reference.

2. Minutes of committee meetings will in principle be limited to five pages. For each item on the agenda there will be a list of those who spoke, a summary of the points discussed and/or a summing-up by the Chairperson.

The length of committee documents will be limited, in particular explanatory memoranda and information documents. Minutes of committee meetings will in principle be limited to five pages.

Expected savings: € 40 000

Committee meetings

1. Whenever possible, committees are invited to reduce the number of meetings held outside part-session weeks. Furthermore, no derogation will be granted to hold any additional meetings outside Strasbourg or Paris (beyond one “annual ticket” meeting) in view of their high interpretation costs. An additional measure might be worth considering – with interpretation for annual committee meetings outside Strasbourg/Paris being limited to English/French and other languages being available only if provided by the hosting Parliament. In general, rules applicable to committee meetings outside Strasbourg/Paris might require reviewing with the aim of reducing their number and frequency.

Whenever possible, committees are invited to hold fewer meetings in 2018.

Expected savings: € 45 000 (3 meetings in Paris less) + € 250 000 (if only English/French interpretation for meetings outside Strasbourg/Paris)

Committee files

1. For committee meetings outside Strasbourg, participants will be asked to print and bring their own files which have been sent to them electronically and which are available on the Assembly’s extranet. No files will be distributed on the spot.

For committee meetings outside Strasbourg, participants will be asked to bring their own files.

Expected savings: € 15 000

Fact-finding visits by committee rapporteurs

1. As from 2018, fact-finding visits by committee rapporteurs funded from the Assembly budget will in principle be limited to one for each report, two in the case of the Monitoring Committee. The duration of such visits should be limited to maximum 2-3 days. Fact-finding visits which have already taken place in the framework of reports currently under preparation will be taken into account in this context. Exceptions may be granted by the Secretary General of the Assembly, after consultation with the relevant committee Chairperson.

Fact-finding visits by rapporteurs will in principle be limited to one per report, two in the case of the Monitoring Committee.

Expected savings: € 15 000

Co-operation activities of the Assembly

1. Co-operation activities of the Assembly (seminars for parliamentarians and/or parliamentary staff) will – in principle – be limited to those for which supplementary financing may be assured (via EU joint programmes, voluntary contributions, including for specific projects such as parliamentary campaigns, etc.).

Co-operation activities of the Assembly are to be reduced.

Expected savings: € 145 000

Conclusion

1. The Bureau is invited to approve the above measures proposed by the Secretary General of the Assembly, with immediate effect. Thereafter, the Bureau may have to review these measures at its meetings in April or June 2018.

Appendix 4 – Institutional representation of the Parliamentary Assembly in 2018

Body	who represents the Assembly	reference	2018
I. Council of Europe bodies			
European Commission for Democracy through Law Venice Commission	Representatives of the Assembly appointed by the Bureau to attend the sessions of the Commission	Article 2.4 of the Venice Commission Statute (Res CM (2002) 3)	Members: Ms Kyriakides, EPP/CD appointment by the President Mr Vlasenko – EPP/CD (AS/Jur) Substitute: M ^{me} Rojhan Gustafsson – SOC (AS/Jur)
Council on Democratic Elections of the Venice Commission	Representatives of AS/Pol, AS/Jur and AS/Mon approved by the Bureau of the Assembly	Bureau decision of 10 March 2003	Members: Lord Balfe – EC (AS/Jur) Mr Cozmanziuc – EPP/CD (AS/Pol) Mr Kox – UEL (AS/Mon) Substitutes: Ms Beselia – SOC (AS/Jur) Mr Xuclà – ALDE (AS/Pol)
European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity North-South Centre	Two members of the Executive Council – appointed by the Bureau of the Assembly	Article 4.2 (b) of the North-South Centre revised Statute (Res CM (2011) 6)	Members: Ms Günay – EC (AS/Soc) Mr Leite Ramos – EPP/CD (AS/Cult) Substitutes: Mr Gonçalves – EPP/CD (AS/Cult) Mr Schennach – SOC (AS/Soc)
European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance ECRI	Representatives of the Assembly appointed by the Bureau (representatives of the following three committees: AS/Pol, AS/Ega and AS/Cult)	Article 5 of the ECRI Statute (Res CM (2002) 8)	Members: Mr Sorre – NR (AS/Cult) Mr Corlăţean – SOC (AS/Pol) Mr Thiéry – ALDE (AS/Ega) Substitute: Mr Davies – EC (AS/Ega)
Group of States against Corruption GRECO	A representative of the Assembly appointed by the Bureau	CM decision of 717th meeting in 2000 in accordance with Article 7.2 of the Statute of the GRECO	Member: Mr Logvynskyi- EPP/CD (AS/Jur) Substitute: Ms Sotnyk – ALDE (AS/Jur)
Committee for Works of Art	Two members appointed by the Bureau of the Assembly (at present AS/ Cult Committee member and Museum Prize rapporteur)	CM decision of 482nd meeting in 1992	Members: Lady Eccles – EC (AS/Cult) Ms Gambaro – FDG (AS/Cult)
MONEYVAL	A representative of the Assembly appointed by the Bureau	Article 4.1 of Resolution CM/Res (2010) 12	Member: Mr Corlăţean – SOC (AS/Jur) Substitute: Mr van de Ven – ALDE (AS/Jur)
Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property	A representative of the Assembly appointed by the Bureau	STCE n°221 CM(2017)32, Chapter V, Article 23.1	Mr Schennach – SOC (AS/Cult)
II. Other			
EUROPA NOSTRA Pan-European Federation for Heritage	One member (and substitute) to be nominated by the Assembly – to attend the Federation Council meetings as observer	Article 21.4 of the Statute of Europa Nostra	Mr Gryffroy – NR (AS/Cult)

Appendix 5 – Declaration on the Draft Copenhagen Declaration on the European Human Rights system in the future Europe¹

The visionary statesmen who rebuilt Europe from the ruins of the Second World War understood the importance of making states share responsibility for human rights. The system they designed, that of the European Convention on Human Rights, ensures that all States Parties protect the uniformly defined rights of everyone within their jurisdictions, with harmonised national protection mechanisms and a common European control mechanism. The effectiveness of the overall system depends on the proper functioning of each of its constituent elements. This in turn depends primarily on the attitude and conduct of the States Parties.

On 12-13 April 2018, in Copenhagen, the Danish chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers will hold a High Level Conference on the European Human Rights system in the future Europe. A first draft declaration was issued on 5 February 2018. Whilst this draft contains welcome expressions of commitment to the Convention system, its negative tenor risks undermining human rights protection in Europe. As detailed in the attached comments, the draft declaration puts into question:

- The universality of the rights protected by the Convention;
- The independence of the European Court of Human Rights, free from political influence;
- The scope of the Court’s jurisdiction over all matters concerning interpretation and application of the Convention;
- The States Parties’ unconditional obligation to implement the Court’s judgments.

The Committee of Ministers should continue to focus on the main challenges to the Convention system, namely the Court’s case-load and its principal cause, which is inadequate national implementation of the Convention in many States.²

Comments on the draft Copenhagen Declaration

The visionary statesmen who rebuilt Europe from the ruins of the Second World War understood the importance of making states share responsibility for human rights.³ The system they designed, that of the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention), ensures that all States Parties protect the uniformly defined rights of everyone within their jurisdictions, with harmonised national protection mechanisms and a common European control mechanism. These essential goals are achieved through a primary obligation on States Parties to respect the rights of everyone within their jurisdiction (article 1) and provide remedies for violations (article 13); under the supervision of an independent European Court of Human Rights (the Court) (article 19), competent in all matters of interpretation and application of the Convention (article 32), adjudicating on cases brought by states (article 33) or individuals claiming to be victims (article 34) on a subsidiary basis, following exhaustion of domestic remedies (article 35); with the States Parties bound to implement the judgments of the Court, under the collective supervision of the Committee of Ministers (article 46). The effectiveness of the overall system depends on the proper functioning of each of these constituent elements, which in turn depends primarily on the attitude and conduct of the States Parties, whose joint creation this system was and to whose overall advantage it operates.

On 12-13 April 2018, in Copenhagen, the Danish chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers will hold a High Level Conference on the European Human Rights system in the future Europe. A first draft declaration was issued on 5 February 2018. Whilst this draft contains welcome expressions of commitment to and support for the Convention system, its negative tenor and much of its content risk damaging the system’s core structure and undermining human rights protection in Europe.

One of the purposes of the Convention is to establish a catalogue of universal human rights, derived from the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, for special, regional protection according to uniform interpretation and application. Certain provisions of the draft Copenhagen Declaration, however, may undermine this universality, allowing for rights to be relativized by reference to national considerations,⁴ including the vagaries of political interest and influence,⁵ and permitting incoherent implementation of the Convention across States Parties.⁶

1. Submitted by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights.

2. The Danish chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers issued a revised draft declaration on 6 March 2018. As this document has been classified as “restricted”, its contents are not known and it is not possible to comment upon them.

3. See the preamble of the Convention: “The Governments signatory hereto..., Being resolved ... to take the first steps for the collective enforcement of certain of the rights stated in the Universal Declaration”.

Uniform interpretation and application of Convention rights and collective enforcement of decisions on complaints hinge upon the Court's role as an independent judicial decision-making body. Several provisions of the draft declaration are inconsistent with proper respect for the Court's judicial function,⁷ in particular that it decides cases on the basis of submissions made by parties to proceedings and the applicable law, and not of political views expressed by various loosely defined actors in other fora.⁸ The proper way for a non-respondent State or any other actor to seek to influence the Court's judicial decision-making is through the existing possibility of third-party intervention.

The draft declaration appears to suggest limitations on the jurisdiction of the Court that are inconsistent with the provisions of the Convention. Through repeatedly highlighting one aspect of subsidiarity, the draft declaration gives the impression that the Court's role should be essentially deferential, or even subordinate to that of national authorities.⁹ It also purports to state as legal fact an unduly limited approach to definition of Convention rights, with the apparent intent to restrict the Court's exercise of its interpretative jurisdiction.¹⁰ The States Parties should scrupulously respect the Court's supervisory jurisdiction over application and interpretation of the Convention.

Several provisions of the draft declaration seek to place particular restrictions on the Court's jurisdiction in relation to certain types of case. This is especially so in relation to immigration and asylum cases, whereas there is nothing in the Convention to suggest they should be given special treatment; indeed, such an approach may encourage or facilitate discriminatory treatment at national level, which is prohibited under article 13.¹¹ The draft declaration even appears to suggest that inter-state cases, which historically have addressed some of the most serious and widespread violations, and cases arising from conflicts between States Parties, despite the maintenance of peace being a core concern of the Convention,¹² should no longer be dealt with by the Court.¹³ In other respects, the draft declaration appears inconsistent, at one point implying that widespread, structural or systemic problems are 'core business' for the Court,¹⁴ whilst at another suggesting that the Court is inherently unable to provide individual justice in such cases.¹⁵

If the Court's judgments are not respected by the States Parties, the Convention control mechanism becomes ineffective and the Convention system loses most of its added value. States have accepted an unconditional obligation to implement Court judgments, yet the draft declaration seems to make this core principle subject to

4. "... rights being protected predominantly at national level by State authorities in accordance with their constitutional traditions and in light of national circumstances" (paragraph 14).

5. "In matters of general policy, on which opinions in a democratic society may reasonable differ widely, the role of the domestic policy-maker should be given special weight" (paragraph 23).

6. "Consistency in the application of the Convention does not require that States Parties implement the Convention uniformly" (paragraph 57).

7. "an ongoing constructive dialogue between States Parties and the Court on their respective roles in applying and developing the Convention" (paragraph 31). Compare article 32(2) of the Convention: "In the event of dispute as to whether the Court has jurisdiction, the Court shall decide."

8. "The development of the rights and obligations set out in the Convention by the Court should go hand-in-hand with an ongoing dialogue in which States Parties and their populations are appropriately involved, including civil society" (paragraph 32); "States Parties to discuss the general development of areas of the Court's case law of particular interest to them and, if appropriate, adopt texts expressing their general views" (paragraph 41); "hold a series of informal meetings of States Parties before the end of 2019, where relevant developments in the jurisprudence of the Court can be discussed, with input of other relevant actors" (paragraph 42).

9. "The Court ... should not take on the role of States Parties whose responsibility it is to ensure that Convention rights and freedoms are respected and protected at national level" (paragraph 22); see also paragraph 24.

10. "The scope of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Convention is defined within the text of the relevant provisions, as interpreted reasonably in the light of their object and purpose in accordance with the interpretive principles of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties" (paragraph 55).

11. "the Court should not act ... as an immigration appeals tribunal, but respect the domestic courts' assessment of evidence and interpretation and application of domestic legislation, unless arbitrary or manifestly unreasonable" (paragraph 25); "When examining cases related to asylum and immigration, the Court should ... avoid intervening except in the most exceptional circumstances" (paragraph 26).

12. See the preamble: "Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is the achievement of greater unity between its members... Reaffirming their profound belief in those fundamental freedoms which are the foundation of justice and peace in the world".

13. "the establishment of separate mechanisms or other means to deal with inter-State cases as well as individual communications stemming from a conflict between two or more States Parties" (paragraph 54.b)).

14. "where the Court can focus its efforts on identifying serious or widespread violations, systemic and structural problems" (paragraph 4).

15. "the number of people affected is such that a solution on an individual basis at international level is unrealistic" (paragraph 13).

their 'acceptance' by national actors, including the governments that represent the state in the Convention system.¹⁶ National authorities must implement Court judgments as a matter of basic respect for the rule of law, including the principle *pacta sunt servanda* ('agreements must be kept').

Recommendations to the Committee of Ministers

The Committee notes that the forthcoming Copenhagen Conference forms part of a series, beginning at Interlaken (2010) and continuing at Izmir (2011), Brighton (2012) and Brussels (2015). Until now, the main focus of the resulting declarations has been the Court's case-load and its principal cause, which is inadequate national implementation of the Convention in many States. These should remain the targets of inter-governmental work, which should build on the many expert reports adopted over the past eight years by promoting implementation of their recommendations, conducting co-operation activities that address the main weaknesses found in Court judgments and ensuring that the Court is sufficiently resourced to discharge its function, including through an extraordinary injection of funds to allow it to absorb its backlog of applications.

16. "the ensuing acceptance [of the Court's judgments] by all actors of the Convention system, including governments, parliaments, domestic courts, applicants and the general public as a whole, is vital for ensuring the authority and effectiveness of the Convention system" (paragraph 56).