

Doc. 14857
06 April 2019

Activities of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly between the first and the second part of the 2019 Ordinary Session

Communication
President of the Assembly

1. Main activities

1.1. President's activities between 19 January and 25 February 2019

1.1.1. First part of the 2019 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly (21-25 January 2019)

The 2019 first part-session of the Assembly was an opportunity to continue the dialogue with the Committee of Ministers, in particular within the framework of the Joint Committee and the meeting between the Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies. The participation of the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Mr Timo Soini, was particularly useful and appreciated in this respect. It was agreed to hold the next meeting between the Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies in Paris, on 28 February 2019, and the respective Secretariats were asked to prepare concrete proposals of issues to be discussed.

Furthermore, the visit to Strasbourg of the President of Finland, Mr Sauli Niinistö, was a highlight of the session. During the bilateral meeting, we discussed the issue of the relations between the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe, as well as its implications for the Parliamentary Assembly. I thanked the President of Finland – as well as the Finnish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers – for their commitment and constructive engagement in favour of maintaining dialogue with the Russian Federation. Moreover, I congratulated Finland on giving priority to the issue of gender equality and to combating sexism, harassment and violence against women in the public sphere. I was particularly interested in hearing from the President the information about his role as a champion of the “He for She” movement led by UN Women. In this context, I shared with the President the information about the joint PACE-IPU study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in Parliaments, as well as the Assembly's hashtag initiative #NotInMyParliament.

Moreover, the #NotInMyParliament event held in the Assembly Chamber on 21 January 2019 was an important opportunity to promote the joint PACE-IPU study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in Parliaments. In this context, I would like to thank all those who have participated in this event, as well as those who had their photos taken at the #NotInMyParliament stand in the lobby of the Assembly Chamber. I hope that Parliaments of our member States will join in the movement and organise similar events at home.

Finally, the January 2019 part-session was an opportunity to meet a number of chairpersons of national delegations to the Assembly so as to strengthen ties and co-operation between the Assembly and national parliaments.



1.1.2. Working visit to Strasbourg (28-30 January 2019)

During the visit, I held an exchange of views with the Ministers' Deputies, informing them of the outcome of the Assembly's 2019 first part-session. It was particularly important to hear their views on the strengthening of the mechanisms of institutional co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers.

On 28 January 2019, I met Ms Maria Ubach, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Andorra. We discussed issues of education for democratic citizenship, as well as gender equality. I particularly appreciated the Foreign Minister's support for the Assembly's initiative #NotInMyParliament.

During my visit, I greatly appreciated the possibility of participating in the meeting of women Ambassadors, organised by the Ambassador of Norway, on 29 January 2019. Such meetings provide an excellent opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues in an informal setting.

Furthermore, I continued to discuss with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe the institutional challenges the Organisation is facing.

1.1.3. Working visit to Strasbourg (6-7 February 2019)

During this visit, I was honoured to meet Mr Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain. We discussed the excellent co-operation between Spain and the Council of Europe, Spain's alignment with the United Nations 2030 Agenda, in particular, as regards gender equality, as well as Spain's commitment to multilateralism and international co-operation. In this context, I informed Mr Sánchez of the situation regarding the Assembly's relations with the Russian Parliament, as well as of the intra-institutional dialogue between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly.

This visit also offered the possibility to continue dialogue with the Chairperson of the Ministers' Deputies and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

1.1.4. Working visit to Strasbourg (12 February 2019)

During this visit, I met in particular Mr Stef Blok, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We discussed relations between the Assembly and the Russian Parliament, as well as the relations between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. I seized this opportunity to inform the Minister of the state of discussions between the Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies, seeking his support for this process. Furthermore, we spoke about the follow-up given by the Assembly to the report of the Independent External Investigation Body into the allegations of corruption in the Parliamentary Assembly and I informed Minister Blok of the steps taken in this respect and of the replies received from national Parliaments.

Moreover, during this visit, I had a telephone conference with the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Mr Timo Soini. In particular, we discussed the preparations for the next meeting between the Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies to be held on 28 February 2019 in Paris.

1.2. President's activities between 26 February and 4 April 2019

1.2.1. Conference on Artificial Intelligence organised in the framework of the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (Helsinki, 26-27 February 2019)

Speaking at the High-Level Conference entitled "Governing the Game Changer – Impacts of artificial intelligence development on human rights, democracy and the rule of law", I called for a more human rights-sensitive approach, so as to assess the implications – and risks – that technological challenges may pose for our democratic institutions, our fundamental freedoms, as well as the rule of law. I believe that the Council of Europe is in a good position to launch the idea and to implement it.

Moreover, I emphasised the Assembly's work on the human rights aspects of artificial intelligence and pointed out that the newly established Sub-Committee on Human Rights Aspects of Artificial Intelligence could provide a platform for political- and expert-level exchanges on new challenges and emerging practices in member States. I also pointed out the need to develop common regulations governing certain aspects of the use of artificial intelligence, emphasising the role that Parliamentarians should play in this process.

In the margins of the Conference, I held a fruitful exchange of views with the representatives of the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. We discussed the issue of the dialogue between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly, the relations with the Russian Federation, as well as the preparations for the Helsinki Ministerial session.

1.2.2. Assembly meetings: Presidential Committee, including a meeting with the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies, Bureau and Standing Committee (Paris, 28 February – 1 March 2019)

On 28 February 2019, the Presidential Committee of the Assembly held an exchange of views with the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies, with the participation of Mr Timo Soini, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Our discussion focused on four issues, including the ways to reinforce dialogue between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly, the Council of Europe's response to situations where member States do not respect their statutory obligations and commitments, the functioning of the Organisation's monitoring mechanisms, as well as the ways to ensure long-term financial sustainability of the Organisation. The involvement of the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General in the discussion was particularly useful and appreciated.

Subsequently, I informed the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee of these discussions.

The Standing Committee meeting of 1 March 2019 was an opportunity to hold an exchange of views on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), as well as on the issue of violence against women in general, with the participation of Ms Feride Acar, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), and Ms Dubravka Šimonović, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. In particular, Ms Acar informed the Standing Committee of the positive impact of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention referring to several examples from the practice of the Council of Europe member States. At the same time, she pointed out that the backlash against the Istanbul Convention had negatively impacted the ratification process. She called on parliamentarians to join forces to put the Istanbul Convention high on the political agenda, counter negative narratives, garner support for its ratification and ensure its implementation in practice.

Ms Šimonović gave a global perspective of the situation regarding violence against women. She shared with the Standing Committee the findings of her thematic report on violence against women in politics, presented to the UN General Assembly in New York, in October 2018. Ms Šimonović highlighted her specific recommendations to parliaments, encouraging them to adopt legislation to protect women in politics against violence, including online violence, and to use their oversight powers to ensure its strict implementation. She also called on parliamentarians to adopt new codes of conduct, stating clearly that there shall be zero tolerance in parliament for sexual harassment, intimidation or any other form of violence against women in politics.

In my concluding remarks, I advocated in favour of an equal society which respects the rights of women and men, and recalled the #NotInMyParliament initiative launched at the end of 2018 to combat sexism and harassment in parliaments and in all spheres of society.

1.2.3. Meeting of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy (Paris, 5 March 2019)

Attending the meeting of the Political Affairs and Democracy Committee, on 5 March 2019, I participated in an exchange of views with the representative of the Finnish Presidency, Ms Nina Nordström, Director for Human Rights Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, within the framework of the preparation of the report on the Role and Mission of the Parliamentary Assembly by Mr Tiny Kox. In my comments, I focused on three issues: streamlining the activities of the Assembly, ensuring follow-up to the texts adopted by the Assembly, and dialogue between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. In particular, I informed the Committee on ongoing discussions between the Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies.

In the margins of the meeting, I met Mr Jean-Marc Séré-Charlet, Deputy Director of the Division for United Nations, international, human rights and francophony organisations, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of France. In particular, we discussed the preparations of the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as well as the dialogue between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly.

1.2.4. 63rd Session of the UN Commission for the Status of Women (New York, 11-14 March 2019)

On 11-14 March 2019, I took part in the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) at the United Nations in New York.

In addition to attending the plenary sitting of the Commission, I took part in the workshop on how sexism, harassment and violence impacts on women parliamentarians, jointly organised by the Council of Europe, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Finland, as part of the Finnish Presidency. In my statement, I drew attention to the statistics in the joint study by the Parliamentary Assembly and the Inter-Parliamentary Union on this issue. I pointed out that sexism, harassment and violence against women is prevalent in all sectors of life, and parliaments are unfortunately just a microcosm of society.

The discussions at the plenary session and many side-events that I attended were the occasion to send a loud and clear message that sexism, harassment and violence against women is unacceptable. There is a strong willingness to react and raise awareness with clear messages, such as the repeated refrain to 'pushback against the pushback', or the call to recognise unequal pay between women and men as 'the biggest robbery the world has ever seen'.

Furthermore, in my bilateral discussions, I highlighted steps that could be taken to promote the further ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), as well as steps to support the Assembly's initiative, #NotInMyParliament, which is mobilising parliaments to take immediate action to stamp out sexism and violence. I emphasised that this "hashtag initiative" could be adapted for almost any setting: #NotInMyOffice, #NotInMyCity, etc.

During my visit to New York, I was able to discuss these matters, not only with many participants but also with the UN Secretary General, Mr António Guterres, and representatives of many international organisations. Importantly, I was also able to discuss a range of other human rights issues with Ambassadors or their representatives to the UN, thereby situating the backlash against women's rights in the context of a backlash against both human rights and multilateralism.

The list of personalities met during my visit to New York can be found in Section IV. Personalities met below.

1.2.5. Joint meeting of the Presidential Committee and the Enlarged Bureau of the Venice Commission (Venice, 16 March 2019)

This meeting was held within the framework of the co-operation agreement between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Venice Commission. In my statement, I praised the excellent co-operation between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Venice Commission emphasising the fact that the Assembly was one of the "best customers" of the Venice Commission. I thanked the Venice Commission experts for their prompt and professional responses to Assembly requests for opinions. Among other issues, we discussed how better follow-up could be given to Venice Commission opinions, addressing the numerous rule of law challenges in our member States, the follow-up to Assembly Resolution 2251 (2019) on Updating guidelines to ensure fair referendums, as well as co-operation in the field of election observation. Furthermore, I informed the Venice Commission of the situation regarding the relations between the Parliamentary Assembly and the Russian Parliament.

1.2.6. Official visit to Armenia (26-28 March 2019)

At the invitation of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, I visited Yerevan on 26-28 March 2019. Speaking at the end of my official visit, I congratulated the people of Armenia and the authorities for completing a peaceful and democratic political transition which followed a major overhaul of the country's governance system. I noted that it was important that this transition took place peacefully and within the existing constitutional and legal framework.

In this context, I highlighted the need to continue strengthening democratic institutions. This is especially true for Parliament, which now plays a key role in the political process. Therefore, I encouraged the Parliament to totally fulfill its new role, adopting the necessary laws, as well as exercising democratic control over government action. I stressed that all political forces across the board had to fully assume their responsibilities, by engaging in a constructive democratic debate and that the majority bears a special responsibility to respect the rights of the opposition.

Turning to the question of reform, I pointed out that the Government was facing a major political challenge of delivering reform in a number of key areas, such as the independence of the judiciary, penal reform, the fight against corruption, economic empowerment, as well as reform in the social sphere. I assured my Armenian interlocutors at the highest level that they could count on the Council of Europe's support, in particular within the framework of the Action Plan 2019-2022.

Equality between women and men, the empowerment of women, and combating violence against women were also the focus of my discussions. I noted that Armenia made important steps in this field, including the signing, in January 2018, of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

I was encouraged by the authorities' clear statements in favour of the ratification of the Convention and I support the concrete steps being taken in this direction, including the preparation of an Equality Strategy and discussions about improvements to be made to the legal framework governing the protection from and combating of violence against women. The projects of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs aiming at the economic empowerment of women are particularly commendable, as are the efforts of the Ombudsperson and of civil society. In this context, I presented the joint PACE-IPU study on "Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe" and the #NotInMyParliament initiative, encouraging Armenian partners to join in this process and expressing the hope that this initiative would be extended to other sectors, such as the civil service, the economic sector, universities etc.

Finally, I thanked the Armenian authorities and the City of Yerevan for inaugurating Europe Square in the Armenian capital, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe.

The list of personalities met during my visit to Armenia can be found in Section IV. Personalities met below.

1.2.7. Meeting of the Presidential Committee with the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies (Helsinki, 3 April 2019)

On 3 April 2019, the Presidential Committee held an exchange of views with the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies, with Mr Timo Soini, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland and with the participation of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Following this meeting, the members of the Presidential Committee were received by Mr Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland.

1.2.8. Participation in the 36th Plenary session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Strasbourg, 4 April 2019)

On 4 April 2019, at the invitation of the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, I addressed the members of the Congress on the occasion of its 36th Session. My speech focused on the role and future of our organisation on the eve of its 70th anniversary. I therefore emphasised the importance of dialogue and co-operation in overcoming the challenges we face and pursuing the goal at the heart of our organisation: the building of a common area of protection and promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. In this context, I expressed appreciation of the role of local and regional representatives in meeting today's challenges and the added value of the territorial dimension of European democracy.

My participation in the Congress was also an opportunity to meet with its President, Mr Anders Knappe. At this meeting, we discussed the budgetary situation of the Council of Europe, relations with the Russian Federation, as well as the synergies that the Assembly and the Congress could develop further in two areas in particular: the contribution to the achievement of the sustainable development goals, and the fight against violence against women. In this context, I invited the President of the Congress to support my initiative #NotInMyParliament and to promote similar actions, such as #NotInMyCongress, #NotInMyCity, #NotInMyRegion.

2. Speeches

- Opening speech of the First part of the 2019 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 21 January 2019)
- Speech at the Presentation of the initiative #NotInMyParliament (Strasbourg, 21 January 2019)
- Speech at the ceremony commemorating the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Institution of the Commissioner of Human Rights (Strasbourg, 22 January 2019)

- Speech on the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust (Strasbourg, 23 January 2019)
- Speech at the ceremony of New Year's wishes by the Mayor of the City of Strasbourg (Strasbourg, 23 January 2019)
- Speech on the occasion of the launch of the book "A Certain Idea of Justice" by Mr Dick Marty, honorary member of the Assembly (Strasbourg, 24 January 2019)
- Speech at the high level Conference on Artificial Intelligence "Governing the Game Changer – Impacts of artificial intelligence development on human rights, democracy and the rule of law", organised in the framework of the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (Helsinki, 26-27 February 2019)
- Introductory speech to the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly (Paris, 1 March 2019)
- Introductory statement at the side-event "Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians" organised in the margins of the 63rd Session of the UN Commission for the Status of Women (New York, 12 March 2019)
- Speech at the informal lunch hosted by Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Permanent representative of Switzerland to the United Nations (New York, 14 March 2019)
- Introductory words at the meeting of the Presidential Committee with the Enlarged Bureau of the Venice Commission (Venice, 16 March 2019)
- Speech on "Democracy, a value to be reinforced" at the annual Forum of La Planta (Lycée-Collège de la Planta, Sion, Valais, 25 March 2019)
- Statement at the opening of the plenary session of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia (Yerevan, 27 March 2019)
- Introductory remarks at the Round table on Gender equality co-organised by the Office of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Council of Europe Programme Office in Armenia (Yerevan, 28 March 2019)
- Statement at the Ceremony of the inauguration of the Europe Square in Yerevan (28 March 2019)
- Speech at the 36th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Strasbourg, 4 April 2019)

3. Press releases

- Re-elected, the President reiterates the statutory responsibility of all Council of Europe actors (21 January 2019)
- Proportionally, more women in PACE's national delegations than in national parliaments (21 January 2019)
- Sexism, harassment and violence against women: #NotInMyParliament (21 January 2019)
- "Holocaust remembrance must continue to guide our efforts" (23 January 2019)
- President welcomes ratification of 'name deal' (25 January 2019)
- Artificial intelligence: "we need a human rights-sensitive approach" (27 February 2019)
- President calls for action to end violence against women (8 March 2019)
- Officially recognising victims of terrorism at international level (11 March 2019)
- PACE President, at the UN, urges "a pushback against the pushback" on gender equality (15 March 2019)
- President praises the good functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia (27 March 2019)
- President congratulates Armenian people and authorities on peaceful political and democratic transition (29 March 2019)
- President hails local and regional authorities as "guardians of grassroots democracy" (4 April 2019)

4. Personalities met

4.1. First part of the 2019 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly (Strasbourg, 21-25 January 2019)

- Ms Petra De Sutter, Chairperson of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, Belgium
- Mr Andrius Kubilius, candidate to the post of Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Lithuania),
- Ms Asako Osaki, Policy and advocacy expert specializing in gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women and men (Japan)
- Ms Dora Bakoyannis, candidate to the post of Secretary General of the Council of Europe, member of the Greek delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly
- Mr Emin Huseynov, Co-founder, Institute for reporters' Freedom and Safety (Azerbaijan)
- Mr Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers
- Mr Yuri Dzhibladze, President, Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Ms Olga Zakharova, Director, Freedom Files Analytical Centre, Mr Konstantin Baranov, Board member, International Youth Human Rights Movement, and Mr Andrey Yurov, Council member, International Civic Initiative for OSCE (ICI OSCE), academic advisor, International School of Human Rights and Civil Actions (Russian Federation)
- Ms Maria Tomak, Coordinator, Media Initiative for Human Rights (Ukraine)
- Mr Volodymyr Arieu, Chairperson of the Ukrainian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly
- Mr Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland
- Mr Bouras Djamel, 3rd Vice-President of the Pan-African Parliament
- Mr Ruben Rubinyan, Chairperson, and members of the Armenian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly
- Mr Lamberto Zannier, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
- Ms Maryvonne Blondin, member of the French delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly
- Ms Selin Sayek Böke, Mr Haluk Koç, Mr Yunus Emre, Mr Ahmet Ünal Çeviköz, CHP-SOC members of the Turkish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly
- Ms Amina Bouayach, President of the Moroccan National Council for Human Rights
- Mr Hişyar Özsoy and Ms Feleknaş Uca, HDP members of the Turkish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly, as well as Mr Ertuğrul Kürkçü, honorary member of the Assembly
- Mr Marian Lupu, Chairperson of the Moldovan delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly
- Mr Dick Marty, honorary member of the Parliamentary Assembly
- Mr Oleh Liashko, member of the Ukrainian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly
- Local journalists
- Ms Helen Keller, Judge (Switzerland) at the European Court of Human Rights

4.2. Working visits to Strasbourg (28-30 January, 6-7 and 11-12 February 2019)

- Ms Maria Ubach, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Andorra
- Mr Romain Goetz, illustrator
- Members of the Ministers' Deputies
- Ms Satu Mattila-Budich, Chairperson of the Ministers' Deputies
- Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- Mr Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain
- Ms Aigul Kusan, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Belgium

- Mr Michele Giacomelli, Permanent Representative of Italy to the Council of Europe
- Mr Mendel Samama, Rabbi, CIBR (Lower Rhine Jewish Consistory)
- Mr Stef Blok, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

4.3. Conference on Artificial Intelligence organised in the framework of the Finnish Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (Helsinki, 26-27 February 2019)

- Mr Antti Häkkänen, Minister of Justice, Finland
- Ms Tiina Astola, Director General, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, European Commission
- Mr Paul Mahoney, Former Judge of the European Court of Human Rights
- Mr Georg Stawa, Former President of the Council of Europe European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)
- Ms Clara Neppel, Senior Director of the European Office, IEEE
- Mr Tuomas Pöysti, Chancellor of Justice, Finland
- Mr Tõnis Saar, Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice, Estonia
- Mr Pekka Puustinen, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
- Ms Nina Nordström, Director for Human Rights Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland

4.4. Assembly meetings: Presidential Committee (including a meeting with the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies), Bureau and Standing Committee (Paris, 28 February – 1 March 2019)

- Mr Timo Soini, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Ms Feride Acar, President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)
- Ms Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, United Nations
- Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

4.5. Meeting of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy (Paris, 5 March 2019)

- Ms Nina Nordström, Director for Human Rights Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
- Mr Jean-Marc Séré-Charlet, Deputy Director, Division United Nations, international, human rights and francophony organisations, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, and Mr Nathan Jobert, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

4.6. 63rd Session of the UN Commission for the Status of Women (New York, 11-14 March 2019)

- Mr António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations
- Ms Nina Nordström, Director for Human Rights Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland
- Ms Purna Sen, UN Women Executive Coordinator and Spokesperson on Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Discrimination
- Ms Gabriela Cuevas Barron, President, Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Mr Päivi Sillanaukee, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland
- Mr Charles Ramsden, Chairperson, Gender Equality Commission, Council of Europe
- Ms Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, United Nations

- Ms Jane Connors, Victims' Rights Advocate, United Nations
- Mr Andrew Gilmour, Head of Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in New York
- Ms Ninette Kelley, Director of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Liaison Office in New York
- Mr Omar Abdi, Deputy Executive Director, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
- Mr Markus Börlin, Ambassador and Consul General of Switzerland in New York, former Swiss Ambassador to the Council of Europe
- Members of Human Rights Watch (URW): Mr Kyle Knight, LGBT Division, Ms Nisha Varia, Women's Rights Division, Mr Philippe Boloignon, Deputy Director for Global Advocacy, Mr Michael Bochenek, Children's Rights Division, Ms Catherine Pilishvili, Europe and Central Asia Division Associate
- Dr Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations
- Ambassadors of Permanent Missions to the United Nations of member States of the Council of Europe

4.7. Joint meeting of the Presidential Committee and the Enlarged Bureau of the Venice Commission (Venice, 16 March 2019)

- Mr Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission, Council of Europe

4.8. Working visit to Strasbourg (19 March 2019)

- Mr Toma Galli, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Croatia to the Council of Europe
- Ms Elena Jimenez, member of the Board, and Mr Miquel Castres, lawyer, Òmnium Cultural International Team, Spain
- Mr Panayiotis Beglitis, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Greece to the Council of Europe
- Mr Rafael Ribó, Ombudsman of Catalonia, Spain, and Ms Judith Macaya, Director of the Private Office and of Communication of the Ombudsman

4.9. Meeting in Bern, Switzerland (20 March 2019)

- Mr Manuel Manonelles Tarragó, Delegate of the Government of Catalonia, Spain, in Switzerland

4.10. Conference on the Council of Europe in Valais, Switzerland (Sion, 25 March 2019)

- Former Ambassador Georges Martin, Switzerland
- Mr Jean-Claude Rennwald, former Member of the National Council, Switzerland.

4.11. Official visit to Armenia (26-28 March 2019)

- Mr Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Armenia
- Mr Ararat Mirzoyan, President of the National Assembly, Republic of Armenia
- Heads of "My step", "Prosperous Armenia", "Bright Armenia" Factions, as well as Chairs of the Standing Committees on European Integration, Foreign Relations, Human Rights and Public Affairs, State and Legal Affairs
- Mr Ruben Rubinyan, Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly, Head of the Armenian Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly
- Ms Zaruhi Batoyan, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Republic of Armenia

- Mr Armen Sargsyan, President, Republic of Armenia
- Mr Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister, Republic of Armenia
- Mr Arman Tatoyan, Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia and Civil Society representatives
- Mr Stefano Lazzarotto, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Switzerland in the Republic of Armenia
- Ambassadors of Council of Europe Member States in Armenia and representatives of International Organisations

4.12. Meeting of the Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies (Helsinki, 3 April 2019)

- Mr Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland
- Mr Timo Soini, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Members of the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies

4.13. Working visit to Strasbourg (Strasbourg, 4 April 2019)

- Mr Andreas Knape, President, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe
- Mr Christian Meuwly, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Council of Europe