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

Doc. 15038
25 January 2020

President's activities between the fourth part of the 2019 Ordinary Session and the first part of the 2020 Ordinary Session

Communication
President of the Assembly

1. Main activities

1.1. President's activities between 26 September and 22 November 2019

1.1.1. 4th part of the 2019 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 30 September – 4 October 2019)

This part session was the culmination of the celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe. At the official ceremony held on 1 October 2019 at the Strasbourg Opera House, in the presence of the President of France, Mr Emmanuel Macron, I retraced the origins of our Organisation and one of its greatest achievements: that of having helped to maintain peace on our continent for the last 70 years. This was made possible inter alia by the political commitment of the States of Europe to forging an ever-closer unity, based on the shared values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In that context, I highlighted the concrete results of our work for the men and women of Europe, who are the main actors and beneficiaries of democracy, such as the abolition the death penalty and the prohibition of torture, the improvement of the living conditions of detainees, the protection of minority rights, gender equality and the prohibition of all forms of discrimination.

In addition, at the ceremony organised by the Parliamentary Assembly, with the participation of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the leaders of the political groups in the Assembly, I emphasised the Assembly's contribution to the construction of our "Common Home" and called on the members of the Assembly to give our Organisation a new political impetus.

The speech given by the President of the French Republic, Mr Emmanuel Macron, was a key moment in our proceedings during the Session week. We all appreciated his plea for pan-European dialogue and his desire to see the Council of Europe play a leading role in rising to the great challenges that face us now and in the future. We have indeed developed the necessary tools to protect our fellow citizens against terrorism while safeguarding their individual rights and freedoms, to defend freedom of expression in the face of the proliferation of hate speech, to respond to the violence in our societies by making our democracies stronger, to protect the right of asylum while responding to the legitimate need to control migration flows, and to build new rights for this age of digital technology and artificial intelligence.

Furthermore, during this part session the Assembly continued to move forward with the work to establish the new complementary procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly in response to the lack of compliance by a member State with its statutory obligations. In particular, we organised a consultation with the participation of the presidents of all the national delegations to the Assembly. Following that consultation, the national delegations were invited to transmit their comments to the secretariat, in writing, by 25 October 2019. In the same context, we held an exchange of views with the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies, as well as a discussion in the Joint Committee.

Lastly, I would like to note that, after this part-session, on 16 October 2019, I received a letter from the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, raising concerns about the fact that the term of office of the members of the Ukrainian delegation ended at the opening of the 2019 fourth part-session of the Assembly. I replied to the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada explaining the relevant provisions of the Statute of the Council of Europe and of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, which provide that "the credentials of the existing delegation shall expire at the opening of the first sitting of the Assembly… following the appointment of the new delegation by the national parliament or competent authority". Indeed, in September 2019, the appointment by the Verkhovna Rada of a new delegation to the Assembly was publicly announced and a list of the members of the delegation has been published on the official website of the Verkhovna Rada. For reference, the exchange of letters is included in an Appendix to this Communication.

1.1.2. OECD Global Parliamentary Network meeting (Paris, 10 October 2019)

On 10 October 2019 I attended the OECD's Global Parliamentary Network meeting, with the members of the ad hoc sub-committee created to participate in that meeting. In my introduction I stressed the need for the Parliamentary Assembly and the OECD to work together to offer the citizens of their member States the genuine prospect of a prosperous and democratic future in a context of sustainable development.

As regards the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, I emphasised the importance of the standard-setting groundwork done by the Council of Europe. Indeed, the 225 conventions of the Council of Europe, many of which are open to OECD members, form a good model reference framework for developing relevant international regulations. I also presented recent Assembly initiatives which tie in with the United Nations 2030 Agenda, such as the #NotInMyParliament campaign to put an end to sexism and harassment in parliaments.

Lastly, on the subject of artificial intelligence, I informed our OECD partners of the initiatives being taken by the Council of Europe to develop a human rights sensitive approach in drawing up legal rules for the use of artificial intelligence and also that the Assembly was preparing several reports on various aspects of the subject.

This was also an opportunity to speak with Mr Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the OECD. We discussed co-operation between the Assembly and the OECD in the fields of fighting corruption and money laundering, migration issues and respecting the human rights of migrants, and also the work the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers are doing on the new complementary procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly in response to the lack of compliance by a member State with its statutory obligations.

1.1.3. Conference of Ministers of Justice on digital challenges for justice (Strasbourg, 14 October 2019)

In my address to the Conference of Ministers of Justice on digital challenges for justice I underlined that the digitalisation of our societies raises considerable ethical, societal and legal challenges, in terms of access to the law and also criminal justice. Referring to the risk of discrimination in the use of artificial intelligence, I stressed the danger of reproducing human prejudices in the data fed into algorithms, concerning a person's gender, race or ethnic origin, or religion, for example. I also raised the issue of 'predictive' justice and artificial intelligence systems designed to help prevent crime. I concluded with a reminder of the work the Assembly is doing on different aspects of artificial intelligence and human rights, particularly in the fields of justice, the labour market, health and the prevention of discrimination.

1.1.4. Participation in the 141st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and working visit to Serbia (Belgrade, 15-17 October 2019)

On 16 October 2019 I took part in a parity debate entitled "#NotInMyParliament: national and regional strategies", organised within the framework of the 141st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. During my address I spoke of the initiatives launched by the Assembly to follow up the conclusions of the joint study carried out by the Assembly and the Inter-Parliamentary Union on sexism, harassment and violence towards women in European parliaments. I encouraged the men and women present to build on the Assembly's #NotInMyParliament campaign, adapting it to the national contexts and applying it in other areas, for example #NotInMyCity, #NotInMyOffice, #NotInMyMinistry and so on. At the same time, I told the participants about the measures taken by some of our national parliaments, including those of Switzerland, Austria, France and the United Kingdom. Lastly, I presented a series of measures that could be taken at the national level, such as conducting national studies similar to that of the Assembly and the IPU or setting up awareness-raising programmes for MPs and parliamentary staff.

On the side-lines of the IPU meeting I met with the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the members of the Serbian delegation to the Assembly. We discussed co-operation between Serbia and the Council of Europe, progress on reforms and the implementation of the remaining post-accession commitments, and the question of regional co-operation in South-East Europe. I also visited the Belgrade Programmes Office of the Council of Europe and informed its staff of the priorities of the Assembly. I thank the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia and the Serbian parliamentary delegation for their help with the organisation of these meetings.

1.1.5. European Conference of Presidents of Parliament (Strasbourg, 24-25 October 2019)

The European Conference of Presidents of Parliament was a major event, bringing together over 60 Presidents and Speakers from the Parliaments of the member States of the Council of Europe and neighbouring countries. The themes chosen for the conference reflected the current political situation and the urgent challenges facing our Organisation. I particularly appreciated the interest shown by the presidents and speakers in these matters and their political commitment to our Organisation and the values it stands for.

The highly interesting debates helped us identify a series of conclusions and recommendations for the attention of the parliaments of our member States, and I should like to go over their main lines in this communication.

Concerning the first theme of the Conference, “Our common European home: the next 70 years”, we called on the parliaments to shoulder their responsibilities and respond jointly and unanimously to the numerous challenges facing our societies, while keeping in mind the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. I also stressed that we must never lose sight of the fact that we are at the service of our fellow citizens, who are the beneficiaries of our concerted action.

The second theme of the Conference was “Implementing the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals: contribution by parliaments”. We urged parliamentarians to actively encourage a broad and inclusive public debate on sustainable development issues and heighten the focus on them, so as to secure the widespread support of the population.

As to the third theme, “Women in politics and in the public discourse”, we declared that it was for parliamentarians to make sure that our institution – Parliament – is exemplary in the fight against sexism, harassment and violence against women, with the aim of encouraging greater involvement of women in the democratic process.

The debates helped to thrash out numerous ideas to advance our plans for a common European architecture for the next 70 years. It is now up to each and every one of us to work towards that goal in preparation for the next European Conference of Presidents of Parliament, which will be held in Greece in 2021.

The Conference was also an opportunity for me to meet with a number of Presidents of Parliaments, with whom I discussed co-operation with the Council of Europe and the global challenges facing our Organisation, for example in implementing the complementary procedure between the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers in the event of a serious breach by a member State of its statutory obligations. I also organised an informal breakfast for the female presidents and vice-presidents of parliament attending the Conference, to discuss sexism, harassment and violence against women. We were able to identify practical steps that both women and men could take to improve the situation in our national parliaments. I hope this initiative will become a tradition at other high-level parliamentary events.

1.1.6. Plenary session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Strasbourg, 29 October 2019)

On 29 October 2019, I made a speech to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, emphasizing the need for synergy between local, regional and national actors in the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and in strengthening our democratic institutions. On the sidelines of the Plenary Session, I met with Anders Knape, President of the Congress.

1.1.7. 2019 World Forum for Democracy: Is democracy in danger in the information age? (Strasbourg, 6-8 November 2019)

In my opening speech at the Forum I highlighted the benefits of the new technologies and how they can make the democratic process more reactive to people’s expectations. I also pointed out the risk of new technologies being misused to generate hate and sexist stereotypes that lead to discrimination. I raised the matter of the

authenticity of information in the face of “fake news”, “alternative facts”, propaganda and deliberate misinformation, as well as the protection of journalists against pressure, intimidation and physical violence. I followed the debates with great interest; it is now for the members of the Assembly who attended the forum to follow up the debates in the work of the relevant committees. On the sidelines of the Forum, I attended the presentation of the work produced by the designers of "Cartooning for Peace".

1.1.8. High-level Conference on Children’s Rights, within the framework of the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 13 November 2019)

Speaking at the first session of the high-level Conference, I highlighted that in their policies the member States of the Council of Europe should make sure that children are considered first and foremost as children and that children’s best interests should guide all decisions concerning them. The debate took the form of an exchange of views moderated by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, with the participation of the Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the European Court of Human Rights. The Secretary General put questions to the participants on various themes. In answer to a question on corporal punishment I said it was for politicians and parliamentarians to show leadership by prohibiting this practice and not let themselves be influenced by the latest survey. I also said that it was important to provide parents with modern educational aids and to make sure they have sufficient time to devote to their children. It is also important that we listen to what children have to say, as the inspiring example of the young climate activist Greta Thunberg has shown.

I also told the participants about the Assembly’s work in the field of children’s rights, explaining that the Assembly was carefully examining means of involving children in parliamentary work. Our Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development is working on these subjects.

1.1.9. Official Visit to Germany (Berlin, 14-15 November 2019)

At the invitation of the President of the Bundestag I went to Germany on an official visit on 14 and 15 November 2019. In the course of my visit I had the honour to meet the President of the Bundestag, the leaders of all the political groups in the Bundestag, the Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and the members of the German delegation to the Assembly. I also had an opportunity to attend a meeting of the Assembly’s Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, and a meeting between the Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers’ Deputies. The context of my visit was particularly symbolic as this year we celebrate both the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe.

At the end of my official visit to Germany, I praised Germany’s exemplary commitment to defending human rights, democracy and the rule of law – the values at the heart of the Council of Europe’s action.

I stressed that, confronted with the “retreat” of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, dialogue and co-operation between all the member States were essential to preserve our shared body of standards.

I share the concerns of my interlocutors about developments in some of our countries, particularly with regard to authoritarian tendencies and the decline of fundamental freedoms. I stressed that to solve these problems we must use all the numerous tools available to us, including the Council of Europe’s conventions, our monitoring mechanisms and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights.

I also suggested that as parliamentarians in our 47 member States we must not hesitate to engage in frank and open dialogue to address the problems that set back the values we defend, in order to preserve the quality of our democracy and the solidity of our institutions, in the interest of our fellow citizens. I welcomed the active commitment of the many members of the German delegation to the Assembly and their contribution to the preparation of important reports in several of our committees.

The visit was also an opportunity to discuss the implementation of the new complementary procedure between the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers in the event of a serious breach by a member State of its statutory obligations, and the need to provide the Council of Europe with adequate financial resources to enable it to fulfil its political mission. With regard to these two matters I welcomed the support shown by Germany – which will chair the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in November 2020 – and I thanked the German Parliament and authorities for their commitment.

In the course of my visit I also took part in a round table discussion on the #NotInMyParliament initiative against sexism, harassment and violence against women, organised in the Bundestag by the German delegation to the Assembly, in which Ms Claudia Roth, Vice-President of the Bundestag, participated. During

the discussion I called on parliamentarians to set an example for our fellow citizens by denouncing and combating any manifestation of sexism, harassment or hate speech, in the first place within our parliaments. The #NotInMyParliament – #NichtInMeinemParlament campaign is one of the concrete means available to us to combat this scourge.

In addition, during the meeting with Ms Franziska Giffey, the Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, I welcomed the initiatives taken by the Government, such as the "Protect women against violence" (*Frauen vor Gewalt schützen*) campaign, the future creation of an Equality Institute and the measures taken to implement the Istanbul Convention. I said that the Assembly was ready to support these initiatives, through the parliamentary network "Women Free from Violence" and the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance.

I should like to thank the Bundestag and the German delegation to the Assembly for the excellent organisation of my visit and for their support with the organisation of the Presidential Committee meeting and the joint meeting of the Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies.

The meeting between the Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies, organised in parallel with my official meetings with the German partners, allowed us to make progress on the implementation of the new complementary procedure between the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers in the event of a serious breach by a member State of its statutory obligations.

1.1.10. Celebration of the 30th anniversary of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, Geneva, 18-20 November 2019)

Speaking at the Conference to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, on 18 November 2019 in Geneva, I pointed out that, in spite of all the official statements, the political determination to protect children's rights is not strong enough. Children are among the groups most vulnerable to poverty, climate change, the migration crisis and armed conflict.

In the face of this alarming situation I affirmed the Assembly's support for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the regional level. As a concrete example I referred to the Council of Europe's Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Lanzarote Convention), which originated in the Assembly: it puts the fundamental principles of the United Nations Convention into practice in a specific instrument.

I was also able to take part in a working group on children's rights in the age of biotechnology. I presented the Council of Europe's work in that field, including the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (Oviedo Convention), and the Assembly's recent report on "Anonymous donation of sperm and oocytes: balancing the rights of parents, donors and children". Based on this report, the Committee of Ministers has asked to examine whether it would be useful and feasible to draft a recommendation or other non-binding legal instrument to help the member States to protect the rights of donor-conceived persons to know their origins, while balancing the interests and rights of the other parties involved in the donation of sperm and oocytes, as well as the interests of society and the obligations of the State. In concluding, I explained that, through this work, the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly were contributing to the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1.2. President's activities between 23 November and 10 December 2019

1.2.1. Participation at the 25th Lisbon Forum (25-26 November 2019)

On 25 November 2019, I represented the Parliamentary Assembly at the 25th Lisbon Forum. I delivered a speech at the plenary session of the Forum focusing on the Council of Europe's quadrilogue mechanisms and I made a few introductory remarks at the opening of one of the Forum's workshops on parliaments' contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

In my addresses, I stressed the need for all stakeholders, including parliamentarians, to continue to work together on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as there is still considerable progress to be made. Among the major projects underway, I mentioned the importance of tackling climate change, combating inequalities between countries and in our societies, achieving gender equality, and the fight against all forms of discrimination.

I reiterated the key role that national parliaments play in this process. In particular, parliaments must provide the necessary political impetus to transform the SDGs into concrete and measurable national policies. Indeed, the SDGs must be incorporated into legislative, budgetary and monitoring work. At the same time, parliamentarians must raise citizens' awareness of the challenges of sustainable development by engaging in an inclusive public debate.

More specifically, I stressed the importance of the SDGs relating to gender equality and children's rights, highlighting the Council of Europe's contribution in these areas. I referred to the Organisation's strategic documents, namely the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 and the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016-2021. These two Strategies pave the way for concerted action by all sectors of our Organisation, enabling each to play an active role in the area of our respective responsibilities.

Lastly, I would like to point out that the opening of the Forum coincided with a symbolic date – the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November). I therefore took this opportunity to call on the participants to support the Parliamentary Assembly's initiative #NotInMyParliament to raise awareness of the need to combat sexism and to prevent and combat harassment and violence against women in parliaments. I explained that this initiative could be adapted and applied to different contexts such as #NotInMyCity, #NotInMyMinistry, #NotInMyUniversity, etc.

In the margins of the Forum, I had the opportunity to have informal discussions with several invited personalities and with the Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs. I would like to thank the organisers of the Forum, in particular the Executive Director of the Council of Europe's North-South Centre, for the excellent way in which my meetings were organised.

1.2.2. Assembly meetings in Strasbourg (Presidential Committee, Bureau, Standing Committee, 27-29 November 2019)

On 28 November 2019, I attended the meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly held in Strasbourg. This meeting provided us with an opportunity to hold a comprehensive exchange of views with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Deputy Secretary General, and to discuss a number of key points, in preparation for the 2020 first part-session. In addition, as part of the campaign of action to combat violence against women, we held an exchange of views on the follow-up to Resolution 2274 (2019) entitled "Promoting parliaments free of sexism and sexual harassment".

In the margins of the Bureau meeting, I took part in the second consultation with the heads of national delegations and the Presidential Committee on the establishment of the new complementary procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly in the event of a serious breach by a member State of its statutory obligations. I informed the participants of the progress made in the discussions between the Presidential Committee and the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies, and of the forwarding to the Assembly by the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of a draft decision on the implementation of this procedure. We then held an exchange of views on the various points of the procedure, based in particular on the 15 written contributions submitted by a number of national delegations and members of the Assembly.

On the side-lines of the official meetings, I met Mr David Zalkaliani, Chair of the Committee of Ministers and Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs. We discussed the priorities of the Georgian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, in preparation for his address to the Assembly's Standing Committee on 29 November 2019.

On 29 November 2019, I chaired the Assembly's Standing Committee, which was held in Strasbourg. Among other things, we held an exchange of views with Mr David Zalkaliani, Chair of the Committee of Ministers and Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs. In my introduction, I assured the Georgian Presidency of the Assembly's full support for the proposed activities. In addition, I stressed the importance of co-operation between the two statutory bodies, which is essential for the setting up of the new joint procedure in the event of a serious breach by a member State of its statutory obligations.

Moreover, in my address, I welcomed the progress made in the fight against sexism, harassment and violence against women over the past two years, thanks to the support of Assembly members and ambassadors for the Assembly's #NotInMyParliament campaign.

Lastly, I would like to applaud the Council of Europe's initiative to illuminate the facade of the Palais de l'Europe building in orange as part of the 16-day campaign to end violence against women. I was personally present at the launch of this initiative, alongside the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

1.2.3. Participation in meetings of the Assembly committees (Paris, 2-4 December 2019)

From 2 to 4 December 2019, I attended the meetings of the following three Assembly committees:

– the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, on 2 December 2019;

– the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, on 3 December 2019;

– the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, on 4 December 2019.

In the discussions with the members of each of the three committees, I stressed the importance of the substantive work that each of them has been carrying out. Without the in-depth knowledge of the issues and the expertise of the members of our committees and their respective secretariats, the Assembly would not be able to play the role of "think tank" by identifying examples of good practice and launching proposals for the drafting of new legal instruments, including new international conventions.

More specifically, with regard to migration issues, I highlighted three issues on which the Committee is currently working on, namely the issue of the disappearance of migrant and refugee children, human trafficking and the discrimination on the basis of religion in retention centres. These issues present real challenges in terms of protecting human rights. I underlined the excellent co-operation between the Committee and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in particular through the UNHCR representation in Strasbourg.

With regard to social affairs, health and sustainable development, I paid tribute to the Committee's work in the medical field, such as trafficking in organs, tissues and cells of human origin, vaccine hesitancy and involuntary addiction to prescription medicines. Referring to the ethical aspects of these issues, I informed the Committee of my participation in a working group on the rights of the child in the age of biotechnology, at the United Nations in Geneva, with particular reference to the issue of anonymity and access to origins – a subject previously covered by the committee in a report drawn up by Ms De Sutter. In addition, I encouraged the Committee to continue its work on the issue of children's rights, which is at the centre of the priorities of the Georgian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. Lastly, I raised the question of our response to climate change in the context of the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The issue of human rights and the environment is one of the priorities of the Georgian Presidency and I have been pushing for the search for synergies in this area.

Finally, on equality and non-discrimination issues, I welcomed the committee's continued commitment to promoting gender equality. The Committee's work on the promotion and implementation of the Istanbul Convention, and its support for the #NotInMyParliament campaign to combat sexism, harassment and violence against women, have been essential in strengthening the Assembly's action in this field. In addition, I stressed the importance of the Committee's work in the field of combating all forms of discrimination and protecting the rights of minorities and minority and regional languages. Lastly, I expressed my support for the work of the Parliamentary Network Women free from violence and the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance, which are effective ways of promoting the exchange of experiences and good practices among parliamentarians.

I would like to thank the Chairs of the three committees concerned for giving me the opportunity to take part in these exchanges of views.

1.3. Presidents' activities between 11 December 2019 and 24 January 2020

1.3.1. Assembly meetings (Presidential Committee and Bureau) (Paris, 12-13 December 2019)

The meetings of the Assembly's Presidential Committee and Bureau were an opportunity to discuss the preparations for the January 2020 part-session of the Assembly. In particular, we drew up the agenda of the part-session which includes several important debates, in particular, regarding the complementary joint procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly in response to a serious violation by a member State of its statutory obligations, the functioning of democratic institutions in Poland, as well as the reported cases of political prisoners in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, we took note of the information on the expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the 2020 financial year and, further to requests by several members of the Assembly, modified the agenda of the Assembly's 2020 second part-session, to accommodate the travel imperatives of members celebrating Orthodox Easter.

1.3.2. Meeting of the Sub Committee on External Relations of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy (Rovaniemi, Finland, 16 December 2019)

On 16 December 2019, I participated in the meeting of the Sub Committee on External Relations of the Assembly's Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, organised in Rovaniemi (Finland), at the invitation of the Finnish Parliament. The meeting was devoted to the issue of international co-operation in the Arctic region, looking into responses to the challenges of climate change and sustainable development.

At the opening of the meeting, I praised the Finish Parliament for the initiative which was an opportunity to learn more about the Arctic co-operation model. Indeed, it brings together a very diverse group of States, with very different interests, and visions. I particularly appreciated the quality of the discussion, which included contributions from parliamentarians represting the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, academic experts, as well as representatives of the Arctic Council and of our observer State – Canada.

The comprehensive debate clearly demonstrated that while global problems do not necessarily originate in the Arctic, they often have a greater impact on this region. Global warming and threats to biodiversity were mentioned among the biggest challenges facing the region. Furthemore, our discussion focused on the human dimension of co-operation in the Arctic.

Against this backdrop, participants emphasised the role of parliamentarians in addressing the challenges facing the region by raising awareness of the situation in the Arctic, by proposing legislation, by holding their governments to account for their actions and for the implementation of laws and international commitments, as well as by creating a bridge between people and institutions.

The "Arctic co-operation spirit" was mentioned as an important asset of the co-operation model that exists in the Arctic where decision-making is based on the principle of consensus.

I would like to thank the Finnish Parliament and the city authorities of Rovaniemi for the excellent organisation of the meeting and for their hospitality.

1.3.3. Working visit to the Russian Federation and participation in the 3rd International Conference "Human Rights on the Euro-Asian Continent: Exchange of Good Practices between Ombudspersons" (Moscow, 17-18 December 2019)

On 17-18 December 2019, I paid a working visit to Moscow (Russian Federation), where I met the President of the State Duma, Mr Vyacheslav Volodin, the Chairperson of the Federation Council, Ms Valentina Matvienko, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Russian Federation, Ms Tatiana Moskalkova, as well as representatives of civil society. Moreover, I addressed the 3rd International Conference "Human Rights on the Euro-Asian Continent: Exchange of Good Practices between Ombudspersons" and delivered a lecture devoted to the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe at the Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO).

During my meetings, I discussed co-operation between the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe, in particular the implementation at national level of the European Convention on Human Rights, the new joint complementary procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly in the event of a serious breach by a member State of its statutory obligations, as well as the strengthening of legislation of the Russian Federation in the field of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

More specifically, I highlighted the importance and impact of the Russian Federation's co-operation with the Council of Europe. Indeed, like any member State, the Russian Federation has brought to the Council of Europe its legal practice but also new initiatives, notably in the field of legal co-operation. At the same time, the Russian Federation's legislation and the case-law of national courts have also been enriched by the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. In this context, I encouraged co-operation between the Russian Federation Parliament and the Assembly on matters of common interest, as well as on the issue of human rights in the Russian Federation. The latter is particularly important, as demonstrated by my discussions with civil society which focused on a number of outstanding issues and concerns regarding the situation of civil society and the effects on the so-called "foreign agents legislation", political pluralism and elections, impunity for human rights violations, as well as the prevention and combating of violence against women and domestic violence in the Russian Federation. I emphasised the need for further progress in the implementation of Council of Europe human rights standards and of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

The issue of combating violence against women and domestic violence was one of the transversal subjects of my meetings. As demonstrated by the case-law of the European Court on Human Rights, it is clear that the Russian Federation's legislation must be changed to create legal mechanisms to prevent and combat violence, as well as to protect the victims. I welcomed the ongoing public debate on this issue and encouraged the Parliament to continue current legislative work, offering Council of Europe expertise and examples of good practice that could be provided by the Assembly, including through the parliamentary network "Women Free From Violence".

Addressing the Euro-Asian Ombudspersons' conference, I highlighted the need to ensure national implementation of international human rights standards, describing the European Human Rights Protection System as one of the most effective international mechanisms of human rights protection, in terms of numbers of people who benefit from it every day and in terms of the highest compliance rates that international law has ever seen. I encouraged Ombudspersons from across the Continent to apply and draw inspiration from human rights standards developed by the Council of Europe in their activities. In this context, I encouraged peer-to-peer exchanges in this process, including through the Euro-Asian Alliance of Ombudspersons.

At the end of my visit, I delivered a lecture to the students and professors of the Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO), highlighting the Council of Europe's achievements over the past 70 years, the challenges the Organisation has to face and encouraging the Russian Federation authorities to continue co-operation with the Council of Europe, in particular, to address in a frank and open dialogue outstanding human rights issues and concerns. Among the challenges that require an urgent and common response, I mentioned specifically the conflict in Ukraine. Indeed, the Assembly is strongly committed to supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognised borders and I encouraged all actors to take further steps to uphold international law and to promote peace and co-operation in Europe.

I would like thank the Russian Federation Parliament and the Office of the Russian Federation Human Rights Commissioner for the excellent organisation of my visit to Moscow.

1.3.4. Presidential Committee meeting and joint meeting of the Presidential Committee with the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies (Paris, 16 January 2020)

At this meeting, the members of the Presidential Committee and the members of the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies discussed two documents, the first, a draft decision of the Ministers' Deputies on a *New complementary procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly in response to a serious violation by a member State of its statutory obligations*, and the second, the report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, on a *Complementary joint procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly in response to a serious violation by a member State of its statutory obligations.*

The discussions were fruitful, and it was acknowledged that the positions in the two documents largely mirror one another and form a good basis for ultimately reaching agreement on the new complementary joint procedure to be adopted.

1.3.5. General remarks: Dialogue and responsibility – safeguarding human rights and promoting equality in the Council of Europe's "Common Home"

This is my last communication to the Bureau of the Assembly. I would like, in this context, to formulate some general observations.

I was elected President of the Assembly just as the Council of Europe was undergoing a period of political and institutional crisis, and when the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law were in general retreat in the face of the challenges posed by authoritarian, populist and nationalist movements.

The crisis within our Organisation was triggered, on the one hand, by the prolonged non-participation of one of our member States – the Russian Federation – in the Assembly's activities. This was set against the background of the continuing tension arising from the conflict in Ukraine and the Russian Federation's role in that connection. The situation deteriorated further in July 2017 when the Russian Federation suspended payment of its budgetary contribution.

On the other hand, at the institutional level, it became increasingly clear over time that there was a growing need for a meaningful dialogue between the Council of Europe's two statutory bodies: the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. This need was highlighted by the differing ways in which the two

bodies responded in 2014 to the serious violation of international law by the Russian Federation. Both bodies firmly condemned the violation in their respective decisions, but they then chose to react in different, and even contrasting, ways.

Also, during this period, the Assembly had to deal with an unprecedented ethical crisis arising from serious allegations of corruption, a crisis that has certainly had repercussions on the Council of Europe as a whole.

As we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe, we had to demonstrate that we were up to the ambition and commitment of those who had founded our Organisation from the ashes of the Second World War, the greatest human and moral tragedy that humanity has ever experienced.

In passing on the presidential torch to my successor I would like to review the various activities we have undertaken together to deal with these problems.

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During this complex period, we had to find a way to renew dialogue between various stakeholders, re-establish full consistency between the Organisation's two statutory bodies and guarantee the future of the European Convention on Human Rights and the entire Convention system. There was an urgent need to provide the Organisation with effective means of achieving its statutory aim of greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage: democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Given the wide range and depth of the tensions and divisions we faced, my task as President of the Assembly was not an easy one. Above all, we had to re-establish a certain minimum mutual understanding and trust so that we could focus on what unites us, namely our attachment to the values we set out to defend, and our shared responsibility for ensuring that the European Convention Human Rights system, which safeguards the fundamental rights and freedoms of some 830 million fellow citizens, continues to function effectively.

My activities benefited from the work of the ad hoc Committee of the Bureau, skillfully chaired by my predecessor, Mr Michele Nicoletti, and composed of representatives of all Council of Europe member States. I was also able to draw on the work of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy and the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs. Moreover, in my efforts to re-establish dialogue within our Organisation and between our member States, I have had the loyal and committed support of the presidents of political groups, members of the Assembly's Bureau and chairs of the various national delegations.

This enabled me to undertake frank and far-reaching discussions with the Committee of Ministers, both in the Joint Committee and, in a more restricted setting, between the Presidential Committee of the Assembly and the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies, with the participation of Mr Thorbjørn Jagland and Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić, respectively the former and current secretaries general of the Council of Europe. In this context, I have benefited greatly from the support of the successive Finnish, French and Georgian presidencies of the Committee of Ministers.

At the same time, it was also necessary to re-establish contacts and strengthen our relations with the parliamentary representatives of the Russian Federation. Following initial discussions with the Chairperson of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and with the support of the Presidential Committee, I started informal consultations with the representatives of the State Duma and the Federation Council on a restricted and confidential basis in order to clarify their position and seek possible ways forward.

The Committee of Ministers' 129th session in Helsinki (Finland) on 17 May 2019 was a pivotal event in the dialogue process. The strengthening of mutual understanding between all the stakeholders enabled the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers to adopt mutually consistent decisions that clearly reaffirmed the principle that all Council of Europe member States were both entitled and obliged to participate, on an equal footing, in the Organisation's two statutory bodies. Furthermore, the two statutory bodies agreed to co-operate in establishing a complementary joint Committee of Ministers/Assembly procedure for reacting to serious violations by a member State of its statutory obligations. Lastly, bearing in mind the particular context of the Council of Europe's 70th anniversary and the election of the Secretary General scheduled for June 2019 in the Assembly, the two statutory bodies stressed the importance of ensuring that the parliamentary delegations of all the member States, with no exceptions, took part in the June 2019 part-session.

These mutually consistent decisions enabled the Assembly to clarify the application of its Rules of Procedure and to invite – as an exception to the rules in force – the parliaments of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Russian Federation to submit their credentials during the June 2019 part-session. The Parliament of the

Russian Federation used this opportunity to submit its delegation's credentials. These were examined by the Assembly, which, following challenges on both substantive and procedural grounds, ratified them, with no restrictions on or suspension of the rights of the delegation's members.

The decision, backed by a large majority of Assembly members, provided a solution to the political and institutional crisis. The Assembly was guided by two main aims, namely reaffirming the need to protect human rights and the rights of all European citizens and opening up new avenues for co-operation between the 47 member States to settle the problems behind the political and institutional crisis and prevent their future recurrence. It must also be emphasised that ratification of the Russian Federation delegation's credentials in no way amounted to a blank cheque: several practical demands were made to the Russian authorities, in particular concerning the release of the Ukrainian sailors detained after the Kerch Strait incident, co-operation with the international investigation into the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH-17 and guaranteed access for human rights monitoring bodies to territories where the Russian Federation is conducting operations. Some of these demands have since been met and there has been a resumption of co-operation between the Assembly and the Russian Federation parliament on sensitive human rights-related issues. I am therefore convinced that we are on the right path.

However, this is certainly not the time to rest on our laurels. Even if the worst of the crisis has passed, the consequences and its effects are still being felt. Some national delegations have expressed their disagreement with the decisions taken by the Assembly in June 2019. Their point of view has to be taken into account and this is one of the major challenges the Assembly now has to face. We must heal the divisions that have been created so that the spirit of dialogue and co-operation within the Council of Europe's "Common Home" can be fully restored. We must not – and cannot – back down on our support for Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, or on our condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea. We must proceed, step by step and through dialogue, towards a solution, so that we can all work together in re-establishing peace and co-operation on our continent. Each member of the 47 parliamentary delegations must contribute to this process.

It is equally important to give further impetus to the Assembly's dialogue with the Committee of Ministers, and with the other Council of Europe bodies. The Assembly must re-establish its role as a statutory body in its own right and as a pan-European forum for dialogue within the Council of Europe's institutional structure. Having regard to our respective powers and responsibilities, we must each of us contribute to securing the Council of Europe's statutory objectives. I therefore wish to encourage closer interaction with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Committee of Ministers and the intergovernmental sector, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the Commissioner for Human Rights and the numerous monitoring bodies that form part of our Organisation and help to keep alive the entire European Convention Human Rights system.

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As a political body, the Assembly has not been spared the wave of ethical crises afflicting democratic institutions. In practical terms, this took the form of serious allegations of corruption within the Assembly, reported by various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and highlighted by the Independent Investigation Body (IBAC) set up by the Assembly in 2017. My duty in this matter was to ensure that decisions taken by the Assembly on the basis of the independent body's report were properly implemented and that the facts and allegations appearing in the report were appropriately followed up at national level.

I have made scrupulous efforts to ensure that implementation of our code of conduct – as revised on the basis of recommendations of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) – and the declaration of interests system is properly monitored.

As part of my follow-up to the IBAC report, in all my official visits and meetings, I have also always encouraged national parliaments and the relevant authorities to take appropriate measures to deal with allegations of corruption, which includes examining the individual cases mentioned in the report. I have received 26 replies from different national parliaments on their response to the IBAC report. But work on the follow-up is far from over and I urge national parliaments to keep up their efforts in this regard.

Most importantly, our joint efforts have helped to re-establish a culture of transparency and ethics in the Assembly. The educational impact of the measures taken has been fundamental. Here again, we have lived up to our responsibilities and have reacted firmly and with determination to these shameful violations of our rules of conduct, which has also enabled us to restore the Assembly's reputation and credibility. I am therefore reasonably optimistic about the future.

* * *

One aspect of our joint activities over the last 18 months to which I must draw attention is the real and visible progress we have made in promoting equality between women and men in our Assembly, as well as in our member States and beyond.

Equality between women and men is one of the founding principles of democracy. Without equality societies cannot develop their full potential, because inequality is incompatible with a healthy and firmly rooted democracy. It is unacceptable and harmful to exclude half of the population from the decision-making process and deny them the opportunity to use their talents and capabilities to the full.

Equality between women and men has been the guiding principle of my entire parliamentary career. I have therefore made it one of the priorities of my role as President of the Assembly and I am supremely grateful to all those who have stood by me and supported me in these endeavours.

I started by informing the Assembly of practical day-to-day steps that could be taken to make such equality more of a reality, for example by using gender-sensitive language in our reports, documents, speeches and letters. I have also called for greater account to be taken of equality in the appointment of chairpersons and rapporteurs of Assembly committees and in the choice of experts to assist in our meetings and hearings.

Moreover, taking as my starting point the study of European parliaments conducted jointly by the Assembly and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I launched the #NotInMyParliament campaign to counter sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments, involving both members of parliament and parliamentary officials. My campaign immediately attracted broad support from members of the Assembly and national parliaments. Over the last 18 months we have held several #NotInMyParliament events, both in Strasbourg and in the French, Finnish, German and Swiss parliaments. The logo has been translated into several of our member States' languages, including the Assembly's five working languages. The campaign has grown in scale and I would particularly thank all those who have contributed to it by passing on its message in their public statements, on social media or simply in photos showing the #NotInMyParliament logo. The support of the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General has been particularly important in this regard. The Council of Europe must demonstrate to our member States its firm commitment to opposing violence against women and promoting equality.

The #NotInMyParliament campaign can also be adapted to and adopted in other spheres of activity, such as #NotInMyCity, #NotInMyMinistry, #NotInMyAdministration, #NotInMyUniversity and so on. I therefore urge all Assembly members to assist with this dissemination process, insofar and for as long as this – unfortunately – remains necessary.

Nevertheless, while we have made real progress in the field of equality, much still remains to be done before we achieve genuine 50/50 parity. I firmly believe here that equality must continue to be one of the priorities for the Assembly's work in the coming years. As guardian of the principles of democracy and human rights, the Assembly must set an example to national parliaments by ensuring that greater account is taken of equality in the operation of all its bodies, including the Presidential Committee, the Bureau, the committees and ad hoc committees. As well as awareness-raising and declarations of intent, we must consider strengthening our Rules of Procedure to transform the principles of equality into legally binding requirements. I am therefore counting on the Assembly's committees on Equality and Non-Discrimination and on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to come up with new proposals on this subject.

* * *

In conclusion, I wish to thank most sincerely each and every member for their commitment to the Assembly's activities. As members of parliament, we know how difficult it is to combine our national parliamentary responsibilities with an international parliamentary role. Yet, our work in Strasbourg very often has a direct impact on our national activities, above all when we are dealing with topical issues of particular social relevance. Examples might include the human rights aspects of digitisation and the use of artificial intelligence, sustainable development and climate change, as well as numerous other topics. Our dual mandates as national and European members of parliament mean we are responsible for upholding fundamental rights and freedoms and ensuring that our fellow citizens' interests are protected, both domestically and at the supranational level. Our work therefore deserves the full appreciation and support of our colleagues at national level. It adds a further dimension to parliamentary debate and enables us to draw on international experience and good practices in terms of enacting the most appropriate legislation and seeking progress in the fields of democracy and protection of human rights. I therefore call on the parliaments of the 47 member States to provide Assembly members with the opportunity and the necessary means to fulfil their European parliamentary role. This will enable them to represent in a responsible way the interests of 830 million Europeans in the Council of Europe's "Common Home".

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Council of Europe Secretariat, in particular those working in the Secretariat of the Assembly, for their support and excellent work in the service of the Organisation.

2. Speeches

– Opening speech of the 4th part of the 2019 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 30 September 2019)

– Speech delivered at the ceremony of award of the 2019 Václav Havel Human Rights Prize (Strasbourg, 30 September 2019)

– Speech delivered at the ceremony of illumination in pink of the Palais to mark the breast cancer awareness events at the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 30 September 2019)

– Laudatio at the ceremony of awarding of the title of «Honorary member» to outgoing Assembly member Gerardo Giovagnoli (San Marino, SOC) (Strasbourg, 30 September 2019)

– Speech delivered at the ceremony of celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe (Opera of Strasbourg, 1st October 2019)

– Speech delivered at the ceremony of the 70th anniversary of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 3 October 2019)

– Speech delivered at the ceremony of plantation of a European oak tree organised by the International Association of Former Council of Europe Staff Members (AIACE) on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 4 October 2019)

– Speech delivered at the meeting of the Global Parliamentary Network of the OECD (Paris, 10 October 2019)

– Speech delivered at the opening of the Conference of Ministers of Justice of the Council of Europe – “Digital challenges to justice in Europe” (Strasbourg, 14 October 2019)

– Statement delivered at the parity debate #NotInMyParliament: national and regional strategies on the occasion of the 141th Assembly of the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) (Belgrade, 16 October 2019)

– Speech delivered at the opening of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament (Strasbourg, 24 October 2019)

– Conclusions delivered at the closing of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament (Strasbourg, 25 October 2019)

– Speech delivered at the 37th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 29 October 2019)

– Video message at the ceremony celebrating the 30th anniversary of The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) (Strasbourg, 4 November 2019)

– Speech delivered at the 2019 World forum for Democracy (Strasbourg, 6 November 2019)

– Video message at the parliamentary conference «Human rights and democracy in the digital era: which guarantees for personal data and which response to hate speech and disinformation on the internet?» (Paris, Senate, 14 November 2019)

– Presentation speech of the campaign #NotInMyParliament at the German Bundestag (Berlin, 14 November 2019)

– Speech delivered at the opening ceremony of the conference celebrating the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Rights of the Child (Geneva, 18 November 2019)

– Speech delivered at the conference celebrating the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Rights of the Child – Working group 6 – The rights of the child in the biotechnological era (Geneva, 19 November 2019)

– Speech delivered at the Session entitled: "A perspective from the Council of Europe quadrilogue” of the 25th Lisbon Forum (Lisbon, 25 November 2019)

– Opening speech of the workshop organised by the Assembly entitled: «Parliaments ‘contribution to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Focus on gender equality and children’s rights» in the framework of the 25th Lisbon Forum (Lisbon, 25 November 2019)

- Video message to support the project of an Observatory on history teaching in Europe (Strasbourg, 28 November 2019)
- Speech to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women at the ceremony of lighting in orange of the Palais de l'Europe (28 November 2019)
- Opening speech to the Standing Committee (Strasbourg, 29 November 2019)
- Speech at the exchange of views with the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons (Paris, 2 December 2019)
- Speech at the exchange of views with the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development (Paris, 3 December 2019)
- Speech at the exchange of views with the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination (Paris, 4 December 2019)
- Speech at the 3rd International "Human Rights Protection in Eurasia: Exchange of Best Practices Among Ombudspersons" (Moscow, 17 December 2019)
- Speech at the Institute of International Relations (MIGMO) (Moscow, 18 December 2019)

3. Press releases

- President reacts to shooting in Halle, Germany (9 October 2019)
- Council of Europe and OECD must 'work in concert' to build a democratic and prosperous future (10 October 2019)
- Syria: PACE President calls on Turkey to put an end to the military operation (12 October 2019)
- Liliane Maury Pasquier: 'The digitisation of our societies goes to the very heart of democratic functioning' (14 October 2019)
- 'The Council of Europe needs the continuing commitment of the Assembly and the Congress' (29 October 2019)
- Opening the World Forum for Democracy, PACE President sets out the challenges faced by democracy in the information age (6 November 2019)
- Children's rights conference: 'it's time to put the human being at the heart of society' (13 November 2019)
- President ends official visit to Germany with praise (15 November 2019)
- Rights of the Child: 'greater political will is needed' (18 November 2019)
- Joint statement: 'Sexual abuse of children ruins lives' (18 November 2019)
- Council of Europe leaders note success of Istanbul Convention, but warn of challenges ahead (22 November 2019)
- International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: Council of Europe leaders note success of Istanbul Convention, but warn of challenges ahead (25 November 2019)
- Liliane Maury Pasquier: 'Let's stay engaged to make the UN 2030 Agenda a success' (25 November 2019)
- Illumination of the Palais to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (28 November 2019)
- Joint statement regretting Slovak Parliament's opposition to ratifying the Istanbul Convention (2 December 2019)
- Human Rights Day: Council of Europe leaders highlight 70 years of the European Convention on Human Rights (9 December 2019)
- PACE President: to preserve the values of our 'Common Home' we must get back to the basics (18 December 2019)
- President Liliane Maury Pasquier's New Year wishes for 2020 (31 December 2019)

4. Personalities met

4.1. Fourth part of the 2019 Ordinary session (Strasbourg, 30 September – 4 October 2019)

– Representatives of 3 candidates to the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize 2019

– Ms Emilia Slabunova, President of the Russian Federation Yabloko Party

– Ms Amélie de Montchalin, Minister of State for European Affairs attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, in charge of European questions, representing the French Presidency to the Committee of Ministers

– Mr Christian Leffler, Deputy Secretary General, EEAS

– Ms Tamar Chugoshvili, President, Georgian delegation

– Mr Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey

– Mr Emmanuel Macron, President of France

– Representatives of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum

– Mr Jean-Paul Lehners, President, ECRI

– Ms Gulnara Akhundova and women journalists and human rights defenders (in the framework of the Council of Europe campaign against sexism)

– Mr Oleg Sentsov, Ukrainian filmaker, and human rights defender for Ukraine, Turkey and Kazakhstan

– Mr Gilbert Flam, President of the Committee for European and International Affairs of the League against Racism and Anti-Semitism

– Mr Antonio Gutiérrez, President of the Spanish delegation

– Mr Takamasa Sato, Ambassador, Permanent Observer, Consul General of Japan

– Ms Haidara Aichata Cisse, Vice-President of the Panafrican Parliament, Parliament of Mali

– Mr Erik Laursen, Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the Counci of Europe

– Mr Rasmus Lumi, Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the Council of Europe

– Journalists from the local media

– Members of the Association of retired staff members of the Council of Europe (AIACE)

– A group from the Youth Parliament of the City of La Chaux-de-Fonds (Switzerland)

4.2. Meeting of the Global parliamentary network of the OECD (Paris, 10 October 2019)

– Mr Angel Gurría, Secretary General, OECD

– Mr Anthony Gooch, Director of Public Affairs and communication, OECD

– Mr Jean-Christophe Dumont, Head of the International Migration Division in the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD

– Mr Dragos Kos, President, OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions

4.3. Conference of Ministers of Justice on digital challenges for justice (Strasbourg, 14 October 2019)

– Ms Nicole Belloubet, *Garde des Sceaux*, Minister of Justice of France

– Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

– Mr Linos-Alexandre Sicilianos, President, ECHR

– Mr Jean-Baptiste Mattei, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the Council of Europe

4.4. 141th Assembly of the Interparliamentary Union and working visit to Serbia (Belgrade, 15-17 October 2019)

– Mr Jean-Louis Falconi, Ambassador of France to Serbia
– Mr Ivica Dačić, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia
– Ms Maja Gojković, President of the National Assembly of Serbia
– Mr Philippe Guex, Ambassador of Switzerland to Serbia
– Ms Aleksandra Tomić, Head of delegation and members of the Serbian delegation to the PACE
– Mr Tobias Flessenkemper, Head of the Belgrade Programmes Office, and the staff of the Office

4.5. European Conference of Presidents of Parliament (Strasbourg, 24-25 October 2019)

– Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
– Mr Meuwly, Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Council of Europe
– Mr Ogtay Asadov, President, Milli Mejlis, Azerbaïjan
– Ms Meritxell Batet Lamaña, President, Congress of Deputies, Spain
– Mr Ivan Brajovic, President, Parliament, Montenegro
– Ms Marina Carobbio Guschetti, President, National Council, Switzerland
– Mr Richard Ferrand, President, National Assembly, France
– Ms Zinaida Greceanii, President, Parliament, Republic of Moldova
– Ms Borjana Kristo, Vice-President, Chamber of Representatives, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Mr Nikola Spiric, Deputy, Chamber of Peoples, Bosnia and Herzegovina
– M. Gérard Larcher, President, Senate, France
– Mr Arat Mirzoyan, President, National Assembly, Armenia
– Mr Gramoz Ruçi, President, Parliament, Albania
– Mr Mustafa Şentop, President, Grand National Assembly, Turkey
– M. Askar Shakirov, Vice-President, Senate, Kazakhstan
– M. Demetris Syllouris, President, Chamber of Representatives, Chypre
– Mr Constantine Tassoulas, President, Parliament, Greece
– Ms Tone Wilhelmsen Trøen, President, Storting, Norway
– Mr George Tsereteli, President, Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE
– Mr Vyacheslav Volodin, President, State Duma, Russian Federation
– Mr Dejan Židan, President, National Assembly, Slovenia

4.6. 37th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Strasbourg, 28-29 October 2019)

– M. Anders Knape, President of the Congress of local and regional Authorities

4.7. World forum for Democracy 2019 (Strasbourg, 6-8 November 2019)

– Mr Zoran Jankovic, Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the Council of Europe
– Mr Alain Berset, Head of the Federal Department of the Interior, Switzerland
– Mr Domhnall O'Sullivan, journalist at Swissinfo

4.8. High level Conference on children's rights, in the framework of the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 13 November 2019)

– Ms Majat Maalla M'jid, United Nations Special Representative on violence against children

4.9. Official visit to Germany (Berlin, 14-15 November 2019)

– Dr Anton Hofreiter, President of the Parliamentary Group the greens (Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen), and Mr Frithjof Schmidt, member of the Bundestag and of the German delegation to the Assembly

– Mr Jochen Steinsilber, Head of the division "Global politics and development" of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

– Mr Andreas Nick, member of the Bundestag, Head of the German delegation, and members of the German delegation to the Assembly

– Ms Claudia Roth, Vice-President of the Bundestag, and Ms Thorhildur Sunna Ævarsdóttir, Head of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

– Mr Wolfgang Schäuble, President of the Bundestag

– Dr Dietmar Bartsch, President of the Parliamentary Group Die Linke, and Mr Andrej Hunko, member of the Bundestag, Vice-President of the Group of European United Left of the Assembly

– Dr Rolf Mützenich, President of the SPD Parliamentary Group, and Ms Gabriela Heinrich, member of the Bundestag, Vice-President of the Group

– Mr Christian Lindner, President of the FDP Parliamentary Group

– Mr Ralf Brinkhaus, President of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group, and Mr Andreas Nick, member of the Bundestag, member of the German delegation to the Assembly

– Ms Franziska Giffey, Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

– Dr Norbert Röttgen, President of the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Bundestag

– Ms Beatrix von Storch, Vice-President of the AfD Parliamentary Group

– Ms Antje Leendertse, State Secretary to the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs

– Members of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy of the Assembly

– Members of the Presidential Committee

– Members of the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies

– Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

4.10. Participation in the 25th Lisbon Forum (Lisbon, 24-25 November 2019)

– Commander Nazim Ahmad, Diplomatic Representative of the Ismaili Imamat to the Portuguese Republic

– Ambassador Manuel Montobbio, Permanent Representative of Spain to the Council of Europe, Chair of the Executive Committee of the NSC

– Mr Fernando Medina, Mayor of the City of Lisbon

– Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

– Ms Ana Paula Zacarias, Secretary of State for European Affairs, Government of Portugal

– Mr Jorge Sampaio, former President of the North South Centre, Special guest on the 25th Lisbon Forum and 30 years of the North South Centre

– Ms Gunn Marit Helgesen, President of the Chamber of Regional Authorities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

– Ms Anna Rurka, President of the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations

– Mr Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Under-Secretary General, High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations

– Mr Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

– Ambassador Meglena Kuneva, Head of the European Union Delegation to the Council of Europe

– Mr Paul Bekkers, Director of the Office of the Secretary General of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

– Mr José Caroço, Executive Director of the North-South Centre

4.11. Assembly meetings (Presidential Committee, Bureau, Standing Committee, Strasbourg, 28-29 November 2019)

– Mr Jean-Baptiste Mattei, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the Council of Europe

– Ms Amélie de Montchalin, Secretary of State to the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, responsible for European Affairs

– Mr Piotr Tolstoy, Chairperson of the delegation of the Russian Federation to the Assembly

– Mr David Zalkaliani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

4.12. Participation in the meetings of Assembly Committees (Paris, 2-4 December 2019)

– Mr Killion Munyama, Vice Chairperson of AS/Mig, and members of the Committee

– Mr Stefan Schennach, Chairperson of AS/Soc, and members of the Committee

– Ms Elvira Kovács, Chairperson of AS/EGA, and members of the Committee

4.13. Participation in the meeting of the Sub Committee on external relations of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy (Rovaniemi, Finland, 15-16 December 2019)

– Mr Heikki Autto, MP, Chairperson of the Rovaniemi City Council

– Mr Kimmo Kiljunen, Chairperson of the PACE Finnish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly

– Mr Timo Koivurova, Research Professor, Director of the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland

– Mr Eirik Sivertsen, Chairperson of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, Member of the Norwegian Parliament

– Ms Satu Hassi, Vice-Chairperson of the Finnish delegation, Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

– Mr Einar Gunnarsson, Ambassador Arctic Affairs, Chairperson of the Senior Arctic Officials, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland

– Ms Torill Eidsheim, OSCE PA Special representative on Arctic Issues, Member of Norwegian Parliament

– Mr Bruce Forbes, Research Professor, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland

– M. Jason Tolland, Ambassadeur du Canada to Finland

– Ms Outi Snellman, Vice-president, University of the Arctic (UArtic), Director of International Relations of the University of Lapland

4.14. Working visit to the Russian Federation and participation in the 3rd International Conference "Human Rights on the Euro-Asian Continent: Exchange of Good Practices between Ombudspersons" (Moscow, 17-18 December 2019)

– Ms Tatiana Moskalkova, Human Rights Commissioner of the Russian Federation

– Mr Vyacheslav Volodin, Speaker of the State Duma

– Ms Valentina Matvienko, Chairperson of the Federation Council

– Representatives of the civil society

– Mr Yves Rossier, Ambassador of Switzerland to the Russian Federation

– Mr Artem Malgin, Vice-rector for general issues and international co-operation, MGIMO University, and Ms Tamara Shashikhina, Director of the European Studies Institute

– Students of the Moscow State University of International relations (MGIMO-University)

– Members of the parliamentary delegation of the Russian Federation to the Parliamentary Assembly

4.15. Working visit to Strasbourg (6-8 January 2020)

– Ms Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

4.16. Presidential Committee meeting and joint meeting of the Presidential Committee with the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies (Paris, 16 January 2020)

– Members of the Presidential Committee

– Members of the Bureau of the Ministers' Deputies