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24 June 2024

Activities of the Assembly's Bureau and Standing Committee (24 June 2024)

Progress report

Bureau of the Assembly

Rapporteur: Mr Ian LIDDELL-GRAINER, United Kingdom, European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance

1. Decisions of the Bureau of 24 June 2024 requiring ratification by the Assembly

1.1. Elections by the Assembly during the 2024 June part-session

The Bureau approved the modalities for the elections by the Assembly during this part session as set up in Appendix 1.

1.2. Election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights

The Bureau took note of the report drawn up by the Committee on the election of judges following interviews with candidates for the post of judges in respect of Andorra, Austria, Finland and Serbia, including its recommendation to reject the list as regard Andorra, subject to ratification by the Assembly through the Progress report ([Doc. 16007 Add. 2](#)).

1.3. References and transmissions to committees

The Bureau considered and approved the following references:

- Protecting democracy from disruptions caused by artificial intelligence, Motion for a resolution [Doc. 15978](#): reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report*;
- Proceeds of the crime denounced by Sergei Magnitsky found in Switzerland must not be returned to the presumed perpetrators, Motion for a resolution [Doc. 15981](#): reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*;
- Artificial intelligence and gender equality: risks and challenges, Motion for a resolution [Doc. 15986](#): reference to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for report* and to the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media *for opinion*.

1.4. Issues raised by committees

1.4.1. Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

The Bureau considered and approved the terms of reference of the General Rapporteur on Russian democratic forces (Appendix 2).



1.4.2. Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

The Bureau considered and approved the terms of reference of the Parliamentary Network on the situation of the children of Ukraine (Appendix 3).

1.5. Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau to participate in the European Holocaust Memorial Day for Roma and Sinti (Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland, 2 August 2024)

The Bureau decided to set up an ad hoc committee of the Bureau to participate in the European Holocaust Memorial Day for Roma and Sinti, in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland, on 2 August 2024.

The Assembly is invited to ratify these Bureau decisions.

2. Other decisions by the Bureau

2.1. Third part-session of 2024 (Strasbourg, 24-28 June)

2.1.1. Requests for debates under urgent procedure

The Bureau took note of the requests to hold debates on:

- *Challenges to democracy in Georgia*, tabled by the leaders of political groups, decided to recommend to the Assembly to hold this debate, and to refer the matter to the Monitoring Committee;
- *The urgent need to end the humanitarian disaster and the violations of international law in Rafah*, tabled by Ms Zeynep Yıldız (Türkiye, NR) and 22 members of the Assembly, decided to recommend to the Assembly not to hold this debate.

2.1.2. Requests for current affairs debates

The Bureau took note of the requests to hold debates on:

- *Can the Council of Europe step up its efforts to counter threats to the freedom of expression?*, tabled by the Unified European Left Group, decided to recommend to the Assembly to hold this debate, and appointed Mr Andrej Hunko (Germany, UEL) as the first speaker;
- *War in Gaza: ensuring the release of the hostages, the implementation of an immediate ceasefire and the provision of humanitarian aid*, tabled by the leaders of political groups, decided to recommend to the Assembly to hold this debate, and appointed Mr Piero Fassino (Italy, SOC) as the first speaker.

2.1.3. Draft agenda

The Bureau updated the agenda.

2.2. Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and of the Standing Committee (19 April – 23 June 2024)

The Bureau approved the Progress report ([Doc. 16007](#)).

2.3. Elections observation

2.3.1. North Macedonia – Presidential and parliamentary elections (24 April and 8 May 2024)

The Bureau approved the report by the observation mission ([Doc. 16013](#)).

2.3.2. Bulgaria – early parliamentary elections (9 June 2024)

The Bureau took note of the statement by the observation mission.

2.3.3. Republic of Moldova – Presidential election and Constitutional Referendum (20 October 2024)

The Bureau approved the list of members of the ad hoc committee to observe these elections and appointed Ms Þórhildur Sunna Ævarsdóttir (Iceland, SOC) as its chairperson.

2.3.4. Georgia – Parliamentary elections (26 October 2024)

The Bureau approved the list of members of the ad hoc committee to observe these elections and appointed Mr Iulian Bulai (Romania, ALDE) as its chairperson.

2.4. Extensions of references

The Bureau approved the following extensions of references:

- Interconnections between the Council of Europe and the European Political Community, Motion for a resolution [Doc. 15635](#) (Reference 4687 of 14 October 2022 – validity: 14 October 2024): extension until 14 October 2025;
- Addressing the social and economic effects of sanctions, Motion for a resolution [Doc. 15558](#) (Reference 4664 of 10 October 2022 – validity: 10 October 2024): extension until 10 October 2025.

2.5. Communications

The Bureau took note of the communications by the President of the Assembly, the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe. It held an exchange of views with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

2.6. Meetings elsewhere than Strasbourg and Paris

The Bureau authorised:

- the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media to meet in Edimburg (United Kingdom) on 9 September 2024;
- the Sub-Committee on the Europe Prize of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, to meet in Terrassa (Spain) on 17 October 2024;
- the Sub-Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, to meet in Geneva on 18-19 November 2024;
- the Monitoring Committee to meet in Tirana in November or December 2024 (dates to be confirmed).

Appendix 1 – Organisation of elections by the Parliamentary Assembly during the June 2024 part-session

Introduction

1. On 14 September 2023, and again on 27 November 2023, the Bureau decided that the Assembly would proceed to the election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights and other high-level personalities of the Council of Europe in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 40.11 of the Rules of Procedure, using ballot papers and ballot boxes, and to maintain the practice established since 2020 of having tellers appointed by political groups.
2. Since the January 2024 part-session, these elections have been held in accordance with the standard voting procedure laid down in the Rules of Procedure, by secret ballot with paper ballots, polling booths and ballot boxes; however, the paper attendance sheets have been replaced by a system of verification and electronic signature through the badge of the voting member of the Assembly.
3. On 19 April 2024, the Bureau instructed the Secretariat to organise the elections to be held during the June 2024 part-session in such a way that a possible second round can be held on the same day. On 23 May 2024, the Bureau held an exchange of views on the organisation of elections by the Parliamentary Assembly during the June 2024 part-session. The arrangements described below were agreed.

Terms and conditions

1. At the June 2024 part-session, the Parliamentary Assembly will elect the next Secretary General of the Council of Europe and three judges to the European Court of Human Rights.
2. In order to meet the Bureau's request, the following arrangements have been identified to ensure the possibility of organising a possible second round on the same day:
 - the election of the Secretary General will be held on Tuesday 25 June;
 - the elections of judges to the European Court of Human Rights will be held on Wednesday 26 June;
 - in both cases, votes for the 1st round will be open from 10.05 a.m. to 12.05 noon, and the results will be announced before the sitting adjourns at 1 p.m.
 - votes for a possible second round will be open in the afternoon from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday 25 June for the election of the Secretary General, and from 4.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday 26 June for the election of judges to the Court; the results will be announced before the sitting is adjourned.
3. In order to ensure that all members, entitled to take part in the vote, vote in these elections during a limited timeframe, polling stations will be set up in the Lobby of the Committee of Ministers which provides the necessary space for the installation of sufficient number of polling booths to ensure that the elections can be held within the allotted time.
4. Concerning the election of the Secretary General, the vote will be carried out according to the same terms as for previous elections, namely: the members entitled to vote will be given a single ballot paper presenting the list of the three candidates for the position of General Secretary, in alphabetical order. They will be asked to tick the name of the candidate for whom they are voting. The vote counting will be carried out manually by five tellers duly appointed by the political groups.
5. With regards to the elections of judges to the European Court of Human Rights, the Assembly will have to elect three judges on the same day. Due to the number of elections, another procedure must be put in place. The vote count will be carried out automatically, under the supervision of tellers duly appointed by the political groups. This step will substantially speed up the counting of the three elections which will be held at the same time and will allow a possible second round of one or more of these elections to be held on the same day. As the ballot papers must be compatible with the device that will carry out the automatic counting, these will be individual ballot papers accompanied with a unique barcode. The ballot papers will be arranged in alphabetical order on dedicated tables. Members entitled to vote will be asked to bring three ballot papers for each election. They will then be able to slip their ballot paper into the dedicated envelope. Opaque bins will be available in the polling station to allow members entitled to vote to throw away unused ballot papers.

Conclusion

1. Following discussions at its meetings on 19 April and 23 May, within the framework of its competence for the organisation of the Assembly's part-sessions and plenary sittings, the Bureau of the Assembly is invited to approve the arrangements for the organisation of the elections by the Assembly during the June 2024 part-session.

Appendix 2 – Terms of Reference of General Rapporteur on Russian democratic forces

Denomination: General Rapporteur on Russian democratic forces

Term of office: One year, renewable once

Mandate: The General Rapporteur on Russian democratic forces promotes the coherence of the Assembly's action aimed at building dialogue with Russian democratic forces who share the Council of Europe's values and recognise the territorial integrity of Ukraine in its internationally recognised border, supporting their efforts to bring about a democratic change in Russia.

Responsibilities: Taking into account Assembly Resolutions [2433 \(2022\)](#), [2473 \(2022\)](#) and [2540 \(2024\)](#), the role of the General Rapporteur is to:

- *act as a focal point in pursuing a two-way dialogue between the Assembly and Russian democratic forces;*
- *contributes to the activities of the Contact Platform for dialogue with representatives of Russian democratic forces, under the leadership of the President of the Assembly, and deputises for the President when requested;*
- *maintain relations with the Council of Europe organs and bodies conducting work related to Russia; follow their relevant activities, representing the Assembly as appropriate;*
- *work and co-ordinate actions with the other Assembly's General Rapporteurs and rapporteurs;*
- *promote relevant parliamentary initiatives at national level;*
- *follow activities and maintains relations with officials/bodies in Council of Europe member and observer States pursuing dialogue with Russian democratic forces;*
- *follow activities and maintain relations with relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations, the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and with other international governmental and inter-parliamentary organisations;*
- *enhance the external visibility and outreach of the work and role of the Assembly relating to Russia and/or Russian democratic forces, including the follow-up and promotion of adopted resolutions and recommendations of the Assembly; in appropriate cases, make public statements, launch appeals, or propose to do so to the Committee.*

The General Rapporteur on Russian democratic forces periodically reports to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy.

Appendix 3 – Terms of reference of The Parliamentary Network on the situation of the children of Ukraine

Duration: June 2024 – 31 December 2025

In accordance with the Bureau decision of 7 March 2024 to invite the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development to consider the setting-up of a Network on the Situation of the Children of Ukraine in the framework of the follow-up and implementation of paragraph 26 of [Resolution 2529 \(2024\)](#) on “the situation of the children of Ukraine”, the Parliamentary Network on the situation of the children of Ukraine of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe shall be constituted in the June 2024 part-session of the Assembly under the auspices of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development.

The terms of reference of the Network were adopted by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe at its meeting on 3 June 2024 for transmission to the Bureau of the Assembly.

Aim of the Network

1. In accordance with Resolution 2529 (2024), it is the task of the Network to provide support to the Assembly “to continue its role as a facilitator (...) to support the Ukrainian authorities and various international organisations, such as UNICEF, the UNHCR, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other competent United Nations agencies, and the ICRC, in determining the most rapid means to identify and facilitate an effective search for children, with access to as much information as possible about their identity and the conditions of their deportation or forcible transfer by the Russian Federation.”

In particular, as a platform of exchange, the Network should:

- facilitate the coordination between Ukrainian authorities, international organisations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders;
- facilitate the rapid and effective implementation of existing mechanisms and contribute to finding new mechanisms, as appropriate, for the identification, tracing and repatriation of deported Ukrainian children;
- ensure that returned Ukrainian children are smoothly reintegrated;
- promote the protection of the rights of displaced and refugee Ukrainian children;
- ensure promotion and dissemination of Council of Europe standards and of Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU) tools and deliverables;
- support the access of Ukrainian children to education and healthcare, including treatment and psychological support for those affected by war.

Composition of the Network

1. The Network shall be composed of:

1.1. In respect of the 46 member States of the Council of Europe: one member of each national delegation, appointed by the national delegation.

1.2. In respect of the parliaments with Observer or Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: one member of each national delegation, appointed by the national delegation.

1.3. One member each appointed by the following Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly:

- Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy
- Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights
- Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
- Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development
- Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media
- Committee on Equality and Non-discrimination.

- 1.4. One associate member appointed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.
2. The members of the Bureau of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, the chairpersons of political groups and the President of the Assembly, shall be *ex officio* members of the Network.

Working methods of the Network

1. In terms of the application of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, the Network shall be assimilated to a Sub-Committee of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development. All members of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development shall be entitled to attend the Network's meetings.
2. The working languages of the Network shall be English and French.
3. The Network shall hold its first meeting during the 2024 fourth part-session of the Assembly (30 September – 4 October), with the President of the Assembly in the Chair and shall elect its Bureau amongst its members on this occasion.
4. In fulfilling its task set out in paragraph 1 of these terms of reference, the Network shall be inspired by international and European treaties, United Nations declarations and reports, and texts adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly, in particular those related to the war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.
5. The Network may co-operate with parliamentarians and national parliaments outside of Europe, as well as parliamentary networks and regional and international parliamentary assemblies.
6. The Network may rely on the "Bring Kids Back UA" initiative and on information sharing with Ukrainian civil society.
7. The Network shall endeavour to limit its environmental impact.