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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Activities of the Assembly's Bureau and Standing Committee (11 April – 22 June 2025)

Progress report
Bureau of the Assembly
Rapporteur: Mr Frank SCHWABE, Germany, Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 11 April 2025, the Bureau appointed me as rapporteur for this report, which covers its activities over the period from the last Bureau meeting of the second part-session of 2025 (Friday 11 April) to the pre-session Bureau meeting of the third part-session (Monday 23 June).

The present report includes the decisions taken at the Bureau meetings held on 11 April 2025 in Strasbourg and on 22 May 2025 in Valletta. Chapter 2 presents a list of decisions which do not require ratification. Chapter 3 presents a list of decisions taken by the Bureau on 22 May that require ratification at the opening of the third part-session 2025 of the Assembly.

An addendum to this report will be issued after the Bureau meeting of 23 June, which will also include decisions to be ratified by the Assembly at the opening of the 2025 third part-session. Another addendum will be issued after the Bureau meeting of 27 June. It will only include the decisions to be ratified by the Assembly on the same day, notably the references and transmissions to committees which will have been approved by the Bureau.

The report of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights presenting the conclusions of the committee on the list of candidates submitted by the United Kingdom is published as Addendum 2 to this report.

The Bureau will hold its next meetings on Friday 5 September 2025 in Paris, during the October part-session in Strasbourg, and on 20 November 2025 in Chisinau. The Standing Committee will meet in Chisinau on Friday 21 November 2025.

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

2.1. Follow-up to the second part-session of 2025 (Strasbourg, 7-11 April)

On 11 April, the Bureau heard a statement by the Secretary General of the Assembly and discussed the follow-up to the part-session.

2.2. Standing Committee in Valletta (23 May 2025)

2.2.1. Draft agenda

On 11 April and on 22 May, the Bureau took note of the draft agenda.

2.2.2. Requests for current affairs debates

On 22 May, the Bureau:

– took note of the request by the leaders of the SOC, EPP/CD, ECPA and ALDE groups to hold a current affairs debate on “The need to ensure the survival of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty”, decided to recommend to the Standing Committee to hold this debate, and appointed Mr Emanuelis Zingeris (Lithuania, EPP/CD) as the first speaker;

– took note of the request by the UEL group to hold a current affairs debate on “The role of parliamentarians in safeguarding investment in human rights and democracy amid rising military expenditure”, decided to recommend to the Standing Committee to hold this debate, and appointed Mr Andrej Hunko (Germany, UEL) as the first speaker.

2.3. Third part-session of 2025 (Strasbourg, 23-27 June)

2.3.1. Draft agenda

On 22 May, the Bureau drew up the draft agenda for the third part-session of 2025.

2.3.2. Requests for debates under urgent procedure

On 22 May, the Bureau:

– took note of the request by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination to hold a debate under urgent procedure on “Women’s rights in Europe – Progress and challenges”;

– took note of the request by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development to hold a debate under urgent procedure on “Halting the genocide in Gaza – The Council of Europe must act now”.

2.4. Communications

On 11 April, the Bureau took note of the statement by the President of the Assembly. On 22 May, it took note of the communication by the President of the Assembly.

2.5. References and transmissions to committees

On 11 April, the Bureau considered and approved the references and transmissions to committees as presented in Doc. 16140 Add. 3, ratified by the Assembly the same day.

On 22 May, the Bureau considered and approved the following references and transmissions to committees, which were subsequently ratified by the Standing Committee.

2.5.1. References to committees

– *How to ensure that the Russian Federation implements the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, including paying the compensation awarded*, Doc. 16149, motion for a resolution: reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*;

– *Follow-up to the 4th round of GRECO recommendations relating to parliamentarians,* Doc. 16157, motion for a resolution: reference to the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion;*

– *Equal share of unpaid care work between women and men: a pre-condition to achieving gender equality,* Doc. 16158, motion for a resolution: reference to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for report*;

– *Draft Council of Europe Convention on the Co-Production of Audiovisual Works in the Form of Series*, Doc. 16164, request for an opinion from the Committee of Ministers: reference to the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media *for report*;

– *The promotion of democratic security in Europe through soft power*, Doc. 16178, motion for a resolution: reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report*.

2.5.2. Consultation

– *The urgent need to ensure the survival of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, Doc. 16159, motion for a resolution: transmission to the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media *for consultation.*

2.5.3. Extension of references

On 11 April, the Bureau also approved the following requests for extension of references:

– *Increasing members' active participation in and contribution to the work of the Parliamentary Assembly and its committees,* Doc. 15518, motion for a resolution, reference 4655 of 20 June 2022 (extended on 19 April 2024) – validity: 20 June 2025: extension until 15 October 2026;

– *Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement*, Doc. 15758, motion for a resolution, reference 4747 of 19 June 2023 – validity: 19 June 2025: extension until 19 June 2026;

– *Political consequences of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine*, Bureau decision, reference 4755 of 23 June 2023 – validity: 23 June 2025: extension until 23 June 2026.

2.6. Election observation

2.6.1. Albania: parliamentary elections (11 May 2025)

On 11 April, the Bureau approved the revised list of members of the *ad hoc* committee to observe the elections (Appendix 1).

On 22 May, the Bureau took note of the statement of the delegation.

2.6.2. Poland: presidential election (18 May 2025)

On 11 April, the Bureau approved the revised list of members of the *ad hoc* committee to observe the election.

On 22 May, the Bureau took note of the statement of the delegation and approved the revised list of members of the *ad hoc* committee to observe the election (Appendix 2).

2.6.3. Norway: parliamentary elections (8 September 2025)

On 11 April, the Bureau took note of the invitation and decided not to observe these elections.

2.6.4. Schedule of elections in 2025

On 22 May, the Bureau took note of the revised calendar.

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

On 11 April, the Bureau approved the lists of candidates in respect of France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Republic of Moldova and Switzerland to be forwarded to the Committee of Ministers.

2.8. Election of the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

On 22 May, the Bureau considered anded approved the proposals contained in the memorandum prepared by the Secretariat of the Assembly and ask the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly to transmit the timetable to the Committee of Ministers.

2.9. Composition of committees

2.9.1. Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee)

On 11 April, on the basis of proposals by the European Conservatives, Patriots & Affiliates Group, the Bureau nominated Mr Vladimir Đorđević (Serbia), Ms Susanne Fürst (Austria), Mr Matthieu Marchio (France), Ms Sigríður Á. Andersen (Iceland) and Ms Cristina Gabriella Dumitrescu (Romania) as members.

On 22 May, on the basis of a proposal by the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group, the Bureau nominated Ms Bisera Kostadinovska-Stojchevska (North Macedonia) as member.

2.9.2. Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities

On 11 April, on the basis of proposals by the European Conservatives, Patriots & Affiliates Group, the Bureau nominated Ms Ester Mieli (Italy) and Ms Victoria Tiblom (Sweden) as members.

2.9.3. Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights

On 11 April, on the basis of a proposal by the Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group, the Bureau nominated Mr Mantzos Dimitrios (Greece) as a member.

On 11 April, on the basis of a proposal by the Group of the European People's Party, the Bureau nominated Ms Andrea Eder-Gitschthaler (Austria) as a member and Mr Rónán Mullen (Ireland) as a substitute.

2.10. Issues raised by committees

2.10.1. Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities

On 11 April, the Bureau approved the Terms of Reference for a General Rapporteur on ethical standards and anti-corruption as presented in Doc. 16140 Add. 3, ratified by the Assembly the same day.

2.11. 20th European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies, Vilnius, 15-16 April 2025

On 11 April, the Bureau approved the revised list of members of the *ad hoc* committee of the Bureau to participate in this event (Appendix 4).

2.12. Conference on Envisioning effective public policy to prevent and address cases of missing migrants, Strasbourg, 23-24 April 2025

On 11 April, the Bureau approved the revised list of members of the *ad hoc* committee of the Bureau and appointed Mr Julian Pahlke (Germany, SOC) as its Chairperson (Appendix 5).

2.13. Meeting between parliamentarians from the Nordic Council and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Kristiansand, Norway, 4-5 May 2025

On 11 April, the Bureau approved the revised list of members of the *ad hoc* committee of the Bureau to participate in this event (Appendix 6).

2.14. Meeting of the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG), Strasbourg, 12 May 2025

On 11 April, the Bureau approved the list of members of the *ad hoc* committee of the Bureau to participate in this event (Appendix 7).

2.15. Budgetary matters – Analysis of the use made by the Assembly's political groups of their allocations for 2024

On 11 April, the Bureau approved the draft communication submitted by the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities.

2.16. 2025 Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment

On 22 May, the Bureau took note of the list of the three candidates shortlisted.

2.17. Václav Havel Human Rights Prize

On 22 May, the Bureau took note of the prolongation, until 30 June 2025, of the deadline to submit candidatures to the 2025 edition of the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize.

2.18. Meetings elsewhere than Strasbourg and Paris

During the reference period, the Bureau authorised:

– the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination to meet in Valletta on 11-12 September 2025;

– the Network on the situation of the children of Ukraine (Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development) to meet in Kyiv on 9-10 June 2025 (subject to security conditions).

3. Decisions of the Bureau requiring ratification by the Assembly

3.1. Election observations

3.1.1. Republic of Moldova: parliamentary elections (28 September 2025)

On 22 May, the Bureau decided to observe these elections and to set up an *ad hoc* committee composed of 20 members (SOC:6; EPP/CD:6; ECPA:4; ALDE:3; UEL:1), as well as the two co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee, and decided to hold a pre-electoral mission.

3.1.2. Guidelines for the observation of elections by the Parliamentary Assembly

On 22 May, the Bureau approved the revised guidelines, subject to ratification via the Progress report (Appendix 8).

3.2. Issues raised by committees

3.2.1. Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

On 22 May, the Bureau considered and approved the draft Parliamentary Assembly child safeguarding policy, subject to ratification by the Assembly via the Progress report (Appendix 9).

3.2.2. Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

On 22 May, the Bureau considered and approved the Terms of Reference of the General Rapporteur on Roma and Travelers, subject to ratification by the Assembly via the Progress report (Appendix 3).

3.3. 2025 World Forum for Democracy (Strasbourg, 5-7 November)

On 22 May, the Bureau took note of the concept paper and to decide to set up an *ad hoc* committee of the Bureau to participate in the Forum.

3.4. European Holocaust Memorial Day for Roma and Sinti (Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland, 2 August 2025)

On 22 May, 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.

The Assembly is invited to ratify these Bureau decisions.

Appendix 1 – List of members of the ad hoc Committee for the observation of the parliamentary elections in Albania (11 May 2025)

Chairperson / Président

– Mr / M. Simone BILLI (Italy, ECPA / Italie, CEPA)

Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group / Groupe des socialistes, démocrates et verts (SOC)

– Mr / M. Jone BLIKRA, Norway / Norvège
– Mr / M. Cerni ESCALE CABRE, Andorra / Andorre
– Ms / M^{me} Sascha FAXE, Denmark / Danemark
– Mr / M. Pierre-Alain FRIDEZ, Switzerland / Suisse
– Ms / M^{me} Luz MARTINEZ SEIJO, Spain / Espagne *
– Mr / M. Axel SCHÄFER, Germany / Allemagne

Substitutes / Suppléant·es

– Mr / M. Yunus EMRE, Türkiye
– Mr / M. Gerardo GIOVAGNOLI, San Marino / Saint-Marin
– Mr / M. Antonio GUTIERREZ LIMONES, Spain / Espagne
– Ms / M^{me} Bisera KOSTADINOVSKA-STOJEVSKA, North Macedonia / Macédoine du Nord
– Mr / M. Saša MAGAZINOVIĆ, Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosnie-Herzégovine
– Mr / M. Didier MARIE, France
– Mr / M. Perran MOON, United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni
– Mr / M. Christian PETRY, Germany / Allemagne
– Mr / M. Stefan SCHENNACH, Austria / Autriche
– Mr / M. Roberto SPERANZA, Italy / Italie
– Ms / M^{me} Céline THIEBAULT-MARTINEZ, France
– Ms / M^{me} Birute VĖSAITĖ, Lithuania / Lituanie
– Ms / M^{me} Sandra ZAMPA, Italy / Italie

Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD) / Groupe du Parti populaire européen (PPE/DC)

– Ms / M^{me} Borianna ÅBERG, Sweden / Suède
– Ms / M^{me} Linda Hofstad HELLELAND, Norway / Norvège
– Mr / M. Pablo HISPÁN, Spain / Espagne
– Ms / M^{me} Belén HOYO, Spain / Espagne
– Mr / M. Jan Filip LIBICKI, Poland / Pologne
– Ms / M^{me} Denitsa SACHEVA, Bulgaria / Bulgarie

Substitutes / Suppléant·es

– Mr / M. Joseph O'REILLY, Ireland / Irlande
– Mr / M. Chris SAID, Malta / Malte
– Mr / M. Georgios STAMATIS, Greece / Grèce

European Conservatives, Patriots & Affiliates (ECPA) / Conservateurs européens, Patriotes et Affiliés (CEPA)

– Mr / M. Simone BILLI, Italy / Italie *
– Dame Karen BRADLEY, United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni
– Mr / M. Oleksii GONCHARENKO, Ukraine
– Mr / M. Malte KAUFMANN, Germany / Allemagne

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) / Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe (ADLE)

– Mr / M. François BONNEAU, France
– Ms / M^{me} Valentina GRIPPO, Italy / Italie *
– Ms / M^{me} Rian VOGELS, Netherlands / Pays Bas

Substitutes / Suppléant·es

– Mr / M. Mehmet AKALIN, Türkiye
– Ms / M^{me} Yevheniia KRAVCHUK, Ukraine
– Mr / M. Arminas LYDEKA, Lithuania / Lituanie
– Ms / M^{me} Yuliia OVCHYNNYKOVA, Ukraine

Group of the Unified European Left (UEL) / Groupe pour la gauche unitaire européenne (GUE)

– Mr / M. Andrej HUNKO, Germany / Allemagne *

Substitutes / Suppléant·es

– Mr / M. Arnaldo LOMUTI, Italy / Italie

Co-rapporteur·es AS/MON (ex officio)

– Mr / M. Ionuț-Marian STROE, Romania / Roumanie – EPP/CD / PPE/DC
– ZZ

Accompanying person

– Mr Stepan DENEGA, accompanying Mr Jan Filip Libicki

* Pre-electoral mission/mission préélectorale

Appendix 2 – List of members of the ad hoc Committee for the observation of the presidential election in Poland (18 May 2025)

Chairperson / Président

– Mr / M. Iulian BULAI (Romania, ALDE / Roumanie, ADLE)

Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group / Groupe des socialistes, démocrates et verts (SOC)

– Ms / M^{me} Zita GURMAI, Hungary / Hongrie
– Mr / M. Antonio GUTIÉRREZ LIMONES, Spain / Espagne
– Ms / M^{me} Bisera KOSTADINOVSKA-STOJCHEVSKA, North Macedonia / Macédoine du Nord *
– Ms / M^{me} Annick LAMBRECHT, Belgium / Belgique
– Mr / M. Saša MAGAZINOVIĆ, Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosnie-Herzégovine
– Mr / M. Perran MOON, United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni
– Ms / M^{me} Sandra REGOL, France
– Mr / M. Stefan SCHENNACH, Austria / Autriche
– Mr / M Roberto SPERANZA, Italy / Italie

Substitutes / Suppléant·es

– Mr / M. Jone BLIKRA, Norway / Norvège
– Mr / M. Yunus EMRE, Türkiye
– Mr / M. Gerardo GIOVAGNOLI, San Marino / Saint-Marin
– Mr / M. Axel SCHÄFER, Germany / Allemagne

Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD) / Groupe du Parti populaire européen (PPE/DC)

– Ms / M^{me} Deborah BERGAMINI, Italy / Italie
– Mr / M. Ricardo CARVALHO, Portugal
– Mr / M. Pablo HISPÁN, Spain / Espagne
– Ms / M^{me} Belén HOYO, Spain / Espagne
– Ms / M^{me} Arusyak JULHAKYAN, Armenia / Arménie
– Mr / M. Joseph O'REILLY, Ireland / Irlande *
– Mr / M. Georgios STAMATIS, Greece / Grèce
– ZZ
– ZZ

European Conservatives, Patriots & Affiliates (ECPA) / Conservateurs européens, Patriotes et Affiliés (CEPA)

– Mr / M. Simone BILLI, Italy / Italie
– Ms / M^{me} Elisabetta GARDINI, Italy / Italie *
– Mr / M. Armen GEVORGYAN, Armenia / Arménie
– Mr / M. Malte KAUFMANN, Germany / Allemagne
– Ms / M^{me} Jessica STEGRUD, Sweden / Suède
– Ms / M^{me} Victoria TIBLOM, Sweden / Suède

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) / Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe (ADLE)

– Mr / M. Iulian BULAI, Romania / Roumanie *
– Mr / M. Alfred HEER, Switzerland / Suisse
– Ms / M^me^ Liliana TANGUY, France
– Ms / M^me^ Lesia ZABURANNA, Ukraine
– ZZ

Substitutes / Suppléant·es

– Ms / M^me^ Lucia PLAVAKOVA, Slovak Republic / République slovaque
– Ms / M^me^ Yuliia OVCHYNNYKOVA, Ukraine

Group of the Unified European Left (UEL) / Groupe pour la gauche unitaire européenne (GUE)

– Ms / M^me^ Sevim DAĞDELEN, Germany, Allemagne

Substitutes / Suppléant·es

– Ms / M^me^ Laura CASTEL, Spain / Espagne *

Co-rapporteur·es AS/MON (ex officio)

– Ms / M^me^ Azadeh ROJHAN, Sweden / Suède – SOC (excused)
– Mr / M. Pieter OMTZIGT, Netherlands / Pays-Bas – EPP/CD

* Pre-electoral mission/mission préélectorale

Appendix 3 – Terms of Reference of the General Rapporteur on Roma and Travelers

Denomination: General Rapporteur on Roma and Travellers

Term of office: One year renewable, subject to a maximum of two years.

Subject: The General Rapporteur on Roma and Travellers ensures the visibility and coherence of the Assembly's action to promote the rights, inclusion and equal treatment of Roma and Travellers across the Council of Europe member States, while combating antigypsyism and discrimination. He or she shall report periodically to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination on the information collected and the action taken.

Responsibilities: The role of the General Rapporteur is to:

– follow activities and maintain working relations with the Office of the Council of Europe Commissioner on Human Rights, the Committee of Ministers and the European Court of Human Rights, as well as with relevant Council of Europe intergovernmental and monitoring bodies dealing with the rights of Roma and Travellers;

– represent the Committee on behalf of the Assembly at the meetings of these bodies where appropriate;

– follow activities and maintain working relations with external bodies and institutions active in the same area, be they governmental or non-governmental organisations;

– follow up on the relevant resolutions and recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly, in particular Resolution 2523 (2023) "Institutional racism of law-enforcement authorities against Roma and Travellers", Resolution 2153 (2017) "Promoting the inclusion of Roma and Travellers" and Resolution 1740 (2010) "The situation of Roma in Europe and relevant activities of the Council of Europe".

Appendix 4 – List of members of the ad hoc Committee of the Bureau to participate in the 20th European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies, Vilnius, 15-16 April 2025

General Rapporteur on Democracy / Rapporteur général sur la démocratie

– Mr / M. George PAPANDREOU (Greece, SOC / Grèce, SOC)

Rapporteur on "Elections in times of crisis" / Rapporteur sur «Elections en temps de crise»

– Mr / M. Damien COTTIER (Switzerland, ALDE / Suisse, ADLE)

Members of the Council for Democratic Elections / Membres du Conseil des élections démocratiques

– Mr / M. Pablo HISPÁN (Spain, EPP/CD / Espagne, PPE/DC)
– Lord BLENCATHRA (United Kingdom, ECPA / Royaume-Uni, CEPA)
– Mr / M. Titus CORLĂŢEAN (Romania, SOC / Roumanie, SOC)

Substitute members of the Council for Democratic Elections / Membres suppléants du Conseil des élections démocratiques

– Mr / M. Michael Georg LINK (Germany, ALDE / Allemagne, ADLE)
– Ms / M^{me} Octavie MODERT (Luxembourg, EPP/CD / PPE/DC)
– Ms / M^{me} Liliana TANGUY (France, ALDE / ADLE)

Members of the Bureau of PACE Network of Elections Observers / Membres du Bureau du Réseau des Observateurs d'Elections

– Lord BLENCATHRA (United Kingdom, ECPA / Royaume-Uni, CEPA), Chairperson / *Président*
– Mr / M. Claude KERN (France, ALDE / ADLE)
– Mr / M. George LOUCAIDES (Cyprus, UEL / Chypre, GUE) – *excused, represented by* / excusé, representé par Mr / M. Andrej HUNKO (Germany, UEL / Allemagne, GUE)
– Mr / M. Didier MARIE (France, SOC)
– Ms / M^{me} Catia POLIDORI (Italy, EPP/CD / Italie, PPE/DC)

Appendix 5 – List of members of the ad hoc Committee of the Bureau to participate in the Conference on Envisioning effective public policy to prevent and address cases of missing migrants, Strasbourg, 23-24 April 2025

Chairperson / Président

– Mr / M. Julian PAHLKE (Germany, SOC / Allemagne, SOC)

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy / Commission des questions politiques et de la démocratie

– Mr / M. Piero FASSINO (Italy, SOC / Italie / SOC)

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development / Commission des questions sociales, de la santé, et du développement durable

– Ms / M^{me} María FERNÁNDEZ (Spain, SOC / Espagne, SOC)
– Mr / M. Pierre-Alain FRIDEZ (Switzerland, SOC / Suisse, SOC)
– Ms / M^{me} Carmen LEYTE (Spain, EPP/CD / Espagne / PPE/DC)

Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons / Commission des migrations, des réfugiés et des personnes déplacées

– Ms / M^{me} Nerea AHEDO (Spain, ALDE / Espagne, ADLE)
– Ms / M^{me} Larysa BILOZIR (Ukraine, ALDE / ADLE)
– Ms / M^{me} Sena Nur ÇELİK KANAT (Türkiye, NR / NI)
– Ms / M^{me} Christiana EROTOKRITOU (Cyprus, SOC / Chypre, SOC)
– Mr / M. Emmanuel FERNANDES (France, UEL / GUE)
– Lord Michael GERMAN (United Kingdom, ALDE / Royaume-Uni, ADLE)
– Ms / M^{me} Meryem GÖKA (Türkiye, NR / NI)
– Mr / M. Oleksii GONCHARENKO (Ukraine, ECPA / CEPA)
– Lord Leslie GRIFFITHS (United Kingdom, SOC / Royaume-Uni, SOC)
– Mr / M. Antonio GUTIÉRREZ LIMONES (Spain, SOC / Espagne / SOC)
– Mr / M. Dimitrios MARKOPOULOS (Greece, EPP/CD / Grèce, PPE/DC)
– Mr / M. Julian PAHLKE (Germany, SOC / Allemagne, SOC)
– Mr / M. Paulo PISCO (Portugal, SOC)
– Mr / M. Gonzalo ROBLES (Spain, EPP/CD / Espagne, PPE/DC)
– Ms / M^{me} Pelin YILIK (Türkiye, NR / NI)
– Ms / M^{me} Sandra ZAMPA (Italy, SOC / Italie, SOC)

Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media / Commission de la culture, de la science, de l'éducation et des médias

– Ms / M^{me} Luz MARTINEZ SEIJO (Spain, SOC / Espagne, SOC)
– Mr / M. José María SÁNCHEZ GARCÍA (Spain, ECPA / Espagne, CEPA)
– Mr / M. Stefan SCHENNACH (Austria, SOC / Autriche, SOC)

Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination / Commission sur l'égalité et la non-discrimination

– Mr / M. Mustafa CANBEY (Türkiye, NR/NI)

– Ms / M^{me} Sandra REGOL (France, SOC)

– Mr / M. Giorgios STAMATIS (Greece, EPP/CD / Grèce, PPE/DC)

Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) / Commission pour le respect des obligations et engagements des Etats membres du Conseil de l'Europe (commission de suivi)

– Mr / M. Yunus EMRE (Türkiye, SOC)

Appendix 6 – List of members of the ad hoc Committee of the Bureau to participate in the meeting between parliamentarians from the Nordic Council and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Kristiansand, Norway, 4-5 May 2025

Chairperson / Président

– Mr / M. Theodoros ROUSOPOULOS

Presidential Committee / Comité présidentiel

– Mr / M. Frank SCHWABE (Germany, SOC / Allemagne, SOC)
– Mr / M. Pablo HISPÁN (Spain, EPP/CD / Espagne, PPE/DC)
– Mr / M. Zsolt NÉMETH (Hungary, ECPA / Hongrie, CEPA)
– Mr / M. Andrej HUNKO (Germany, UEL / Allemagne, GUE)

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy / Commission des questions politiques et de la démocratie

– Ms / M^{me} Ingjerd Schie SCHOU (Norway, EPP/CD / Norvège, PPE/DC) – member / membre
– Mr / M. Stephen GETHINS (United Kingdom, NR / Royaume-Uni, NI) – substitute / suppléant

Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights / Commission des questions juridiques et des droits de l'homme

– Mr / M. Ivan RAČAN (Croatia, SOC / Croatie, SOC) – member / membre
– Ms / M^{me} Olena KHOMENKO (Ukraine, ECPA / CEPA) – substitute / suppléante

Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development / Commission des questions sociales, de la santé, et du développement durable

– Mr / M. Armen GEVORGYAN (Armenia, ECPA / Arménie, CEPA) – member / membre
– Mr / M. Pierre-Alain FRIDEZ (Switzerland, SOC / Suisse, SOC) – substitute / suppléant

Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons / Commission des migrations, des réfugiés et des personnes déplacées

– Mr / M. Oleksii GONCHARENKO (Ukraine, ECPA / CEPA)

Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media / Commission de la culture, de la science, de l'éducation et des médias

– Ms / M^{me} Mia KARAMEHIĆ-ABAZOVIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina, NR / Bosnie-Herzégovine, NI) – member / membre
– Ms / M^{me} Nina KASIMATI (Greece, UEL / Grèce, GUE) – substitute / suppléante

Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination / Commission sur l'égalité et la non-discrimination

– Ms / M^{me} Catia POLIDORI (Italy, EPP/CD / Italie, PPE/DC)

Appendix 7 – List of members of the ad hoc Committee of the Bureau to participate in the meeting of the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG), Strasbourg, 12 May 2025

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy / Commission des questions politiques et de la démocratie

– Ms / M^me^ Miapetra KUMPULA-NATRI (Finland, SOC / Finlande, SOC)

Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights / Commission des questions juridiques et des droits de l'homme

– Ms / M^me^ Zeynep YILDIZ (Türkiye, NR / NI)
– Mr / M. Emanuelis ZINGERIS (Lithuania, EPP/CD / Lituanie, PPE/DC)

Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media / Commission de la culture, de la science, de l'éducation et des médias

– Ms / M^me^ Belén HOYO (Spain, EPP/CD / Espagne, PPE/DC)
– Ms / M^me^ Marijana PULJAK (Croatia, ALDE / Croatie, ADLE)
– Ms / M^me^ Maria-Nefeli VASILEIOU CHATZIIOANNIDOU (Greece, EPP/CD / Grèce, PPE/DC)

Appendix 8 – Guidelines for the observation of elections by the Parliamentary Assembly

A. Elections to be observed

1. For the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (hereafter, the Assembly), the observation of elections plays an important role in the assessment of the democratic governance and the overall political situation of the country in question. In practical terms this entails the observation of elections or referenda in any state where any of the following circumstances apply: it has applied for membership of the Council of Europe; its parliament has requested or enjoys special guest status or partner for democracy status with the Assembly; it is subject to the monitoring procedure or to the post-monitoring dialogue. If the Assembly receives an invitation, the Bureau may also decide to observe elections/referenda in other states when exceptional circumstances have been brought to its attention.

2. Observation of parliamentary and presidential elections as well as of referenda in an applicant state or a state under the monitoring procedure, or post-monitoring dialogue, and parliamentary elections in states where the parliament enjoys special guest status or partner for democracy status, is an inalienable right of the Assembly.[1] A state's lack of cooperation with the Assembly, or its refusal to accept an election observation mission from the Assembly may give rise to a debate at the part-session or Standing Committee meeting following the elections in question. It may result in the freezing of the application procedure, the withdrawal of special guest status or partner for democracy status or the challenging of the credentials of the national delegation concerned.

3. The observation of regional and local elections is the responsibility of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (the Congress). If the Assembly receives an invitation to observe such elections and the Bureau decides to observe them, the Assembly ad hoc committee shall be part of any election observation mission the Congress may deploy. A report on these elections by the Congress, sent to the President, should be referred, via the Bureau, to the Monitoring Committee.

B. Ad hoc committees

4. Once the Bureau has decided to observe an election, it sets up an ad hoc committee consisting in general of up to 40 members following proposals by the political groups, on the basis of the D'Hondt system, on the understanding, however, that each political group shall be represented.

5. The ad hoc committees include *ex officio* any country-specific rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee or of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy already appointed. Rapporteurs are not included in the quotas allocated to the political groups and shall not be appointed chairpersons of the ad hoc committees. The rapporteurs have a special responsibility to participate during the whole mission due to their specific competence that is of utmost importance for the mission as a whole.

6. The Bureau may also decide to send a pre-electoral mission around one month before the observation mission. The pre-electoral delegation consists of one representative per political group, and the country-specific rapporteurs mentioned in paragraph 5.

7. The Bureau may also decide to conduct a post-electoral mission if the post-electoral context so requires (e.g.: results disputed, elections marred by irregularities, post-electoral political and/or institutional crisis). The membership of the post-electoral delegation is generally identical to that of the pre-electoral delegation.

8. The Bureau may also decide to establish an ad hoc Committee, in the form of an Election Assessment Mission, normally composed of one member from each political group, but never less than three members, in order to guarantee a minimum political and geographical balance. The Election Assessment Mission will report its findings in the form of a memorandum by its Chairperson to the Bureau. No pre-electoral mission will be conducted. In the event that three members cannot be identified for an assessment mission, the mission shall be cancelled.

9. When there is an election with two rounds, the composition of the delegation for the observation of the second round should, in general, be identical to that of the pre-electoral delegation.

10. In accordance with article 15 of the co-operation agreement signed on 4 October 2004 between the Assembly and the Venice Commission, one or more representatives of the Venice Commission may be invited to join the Assembly's election observation mission as legal adviser(s).

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1. However, this should not be seen as an obligation for the Assembly.

11. The election observation delegation is composed of the members of the ad hoc committee, representative(s) of the Venice Commission and the members of the Assembly and Venice Commission secretariats. The chairperson of the ad hoc committee is the "Head of Delegation".

12. Once the Bureau has decided to set up an ad hoc committee, the Assembly's secretariat contacts the secretariats of the political groups and asks each group to appoint the members and substitutes of the observation mission. Each political group sends its list of members and substitutes to the secretariat of the Assembly no later than 2 working days prior to the meeting of the Bureau where the list of the ad hoc committee will be approved.

13. In making appointments to an ad hoc committee for election observation, political groups must exercise due diligence, ensuring appropriate, impartial and skilled members for such missions. In particular, political groups must respect:

– the principle of gender balance having regard to gender membership of their respective groups;

– the principle of fair geographical representation;

– the need for the candidate to participate meaningfully in the work of the mission, having regard to the candidate's linguistic capability, given that, in situ, interpretation is only provided to and from English or French[2];

– the prohibition on members observing elections in their own country;

– the prohibition on appointing members who took part in non-official missions conducted for the purposes of observing elections or in connection with elections in the country concerned and which were sponsored by or undertaken at the invitation of a State, a parliamentary, governmental or non-governmental organisation, association, foundation or any other natural or legal person, which includes any mission that would contradict with the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, including the principle of impartiality.

14. While every effort should be made to ensure the political balance of ad hoc committees observing elections, in the event that certain political groups fail to come up with sufficient candidates while other groups have waiting lists, the principle of a political equilibrium may be foregone in the interests of having a strong presence of the Assembly during the election observation. In such circumstances, a notification by the Secretary General of the Assembly will suffice.[3]

15. The Bureau approves the composition of the ad hoc committee and appoints its chairperson ("Head of Delegation") and vice-chairperson ("Deputy Head of Delegation") from among the members (of the pre-electoral mission when applicable) (with the exception of the *ex officio* rapporteurs – *see paragraph 5 above*). The Chairperson and vice-chairperson shall be neither nationals of a neighbouring country nor members of a friendship group in their national parliament of the country where elections are being observed. The Chairperson should have participated in at least two election observation missions of the Assembly. The role of the vice-chairperson will be strictly limited to replace the chairperson in case s/he is not able to fulfil his/her duties.

16. If a pre-electoral mission is decided, the nominated chairperson is considered as the representative of his/her political group in the pre-electoral mission. The secretariats of the other political groups shall communicate the names of their representatives for the pre-electoral mission.

17. The chairmanship of ad hoc committees shall rotate between political groups to ensure an overall political balance over a calendar year. The same political group shall not chair two consecutive election observation missions in a given country.

18. At internal meetings of the ad hoc committees, in addition to the members, the only persons authorised to participate are the members of the Council of Europe secretariat. In exceptional cases, ad hoc committee members may be accompanied at internal meetings of ad hoc committees by interpreters, subject to prior approval by the Head of Delegation.

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2. Furthermore it should be noted that English is the de facto working language of international election observation missions.

3. Political groups should appoint members who can definitely participate in the election observation mission; last-minute cancellations should remain exceptional because replacements are often impossible to find.

C. Conflict of interest and code of conduct of members

19. Members of ad hoc committees for the observation of elections shall abide by the provisions of the Code of Conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe as well as the Code of Conduct for International Election Observation Missions (IEOM). Additionally, the provisions of the Code of Conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to chairpersons of ad hoc committees. Any alleged violation of the above-mentioned provisions will be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraphs 18 to 27 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Parliamentary Assembly.

20. All candidates for membership of an ad hoc committee, at the time of putting forward their candidacy, shall make a written declaration of any actual or potential conflict of interest concerning them or members of their families, whether related directly or indirectly and/or with whom they are in regular contact, in connection with the country concerned by an election observation (see appendix 2).

21. All members of an ad hoc committee shall sign a written declaration confirming their knowledge and obligation to respect the Code of conduct for International Election Observation Missions. The aforementioned declarations shall be made available to the Bureau when it approves the composition of an ad hoc committee. Failure to sign such declaration**s** shall disqualify the member concerned from being appointed to an ad hoc committee.

D. Elections as a process

22. An election and its observation do not concern the polling day only, but a process involving several stages, all of which need to be analysed and evaluated in order to assess the entire electoral process[4].

23. The process starts with the assessment of the electoral legislation. The quality and predictability of the electoral legislation is a major criterion to assess an election. This assessment relies in particular on legal opinions that the Venice Commission has adopted on the legislation in question. The application of electoral legislation in good faith is also a criterion for evaluating an election.

24. The second stage starts with the date when an election is called. In normal circumstances, involving regular elections, that date should be reasonably distant from the polling day in order to allow all political stakeholders to prepare for an electoral contest. The third stage starts with the opening of the electoral campaign. The fourth stage is the polling day, which includes the opening of the polling stations, the voting itself, the closing of the polling stations, the vote counting and the tabulation. The final stage is the declaration of results of the election, followed by a period where complaints may be lodged.

25. In assessing all stages of the electoral process, due attention should be given to the gender perspective, especially in terms of participation, balanced representation and the right to take part in the electoral process, as regards both voters and candidates, without being subjected to sexist hate speech, sexist acts or sexual harassment.

E. Co-operation in the field with the Assembly's partner organisations

26. Usually, the Assembly observes elections as part of an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM), which may include the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The modalities of cooperation within the IEOM shall be established by an Agreement between the organisations concerned. The Head of Delegation of the Assembly assisted by the representative(s) of the Venice Commission represents it at meetings of Heads of delegation within the framework of the IEOM.

27. Co-operation with other international organisations within the framework of the IEOM should be continuous during the observation process, including for the organisation of the programme of the mission, in order to ensure, in so far as possible, that assessments of the elections do not differ. To ensure good and smooth co-operation, Heads of delegations should cooperate as early and regularly as possible in the course of the observation missions. In the case of a pre-electoral mission, the Assembly delegation shall meet with the OSCE/ODIHR mission in the country (if already deployed).

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4. As described in various Assembly and Venice Commission documents*, see inter alia:* the code of Good Practice in electoral matters (CDL-AD(2002)23rev), the report on the timeline and inventory of political criteria for assessing an election (CDL-AD(2010)037).

28. In case the OSCE/ODIHR long term observation mission is not deployed, the Assembly should consider whether conditions allow for meaningful election observation before sending its own mission.

F. Conduct and practical organisation of the observation

General aspects:

29. The practical organisation of observation missions is ensured by the Assembly secretariat in consultation with the Head of Delegation. Members of the Assembly and the Venice Commission secretariats advise the Head of Delegation and other members of the ad hoc committee in fulfilment of their responsibilities.

30. The national parliament of the country observed shall be invited to provide assistance with regard to the organisation of the programme of the pre-electoral and post-electoral missions, as well as the accreditations and visas for all members of the delegation, in due time, including for the observation of out-of-country voting and early voting if necessary, on the basis of a decision by the Bureau. The relevant authorities shall ensure the freedom of movement and security of all members of the delegation throughout the territory.

31. The financing of the participation of members of ad hoc committees in the work of these committees shall be borne by the respective national parliaments of the members.

Pre-electoral missions:

32. The pre-electoral mission, if so decided by the Bureau, consists of two to three days of on-site meetings, usually in the capital city. Depending on the circumstances, meetings and visits elsewhere may be organised.

33. The main aims of a pre-electoral mission are to assess: the election legislation and its application, including the availability of appeals; the political situation; the arrangements for the election campaign; and coverage of the election campaign by the media, the administration of the election and the work of the election authorities. For this purpose the delegation shall meet with the OSCE/ODIHR mission – if one is present – and representatives of the international community; representatives of media and NGOs; the leaders of the main political parties and/or the presidential candidates; and, with representatives of the national authorities involved in the electoral process.

Election Observation missions:

34. In general, a mission lasts four to five days including: internal briefings of the delegation and joint briefings with any partner organisations; observation of the opening of polling stations, voting, vote counting and reporting of results; debriefing of the delegation following polling day and the press conference.

35. Members of the delegation shall refrain from engaging in public statements, interviews, press conferences or communications via social networks which could contradict the final assessment made by the ad hoc committee. They shall also refrain from engaging in public activities which could appear to interfere in the electoral process or could be considered as partisan, including meetings with national authorities and/or political actors outside the official programme of the election observation mission. The above provisions apply at all stages of the process from the moment of appointment to the ad hoc committee until the statement of the election observation mission is published. The same applies to post-electoral missions.

36. Members of the delegation may ask questions of election officials, political party representatives and other observers inside polling stations and may answer questions about their own activities, as long as they do not obstruct the election process. In answering questions they should not seek to influence the election process. They may ask and answer questions of voters but shall not ask them how they voted. They may bring irregularities, fraud or significant problems to the attention of relevant election management bodies, unless this is prohibited by law, and shall do so in a non-obstructive manner.

37. The Head of Delegation shall ensure that the delegation will cover as wide as possible a geographical area of the country when observing the elections. Members of the delegation shall be ready to accept deployment outside of the capital city of the country where the elections are being observed. Members of the PACE election observation delegations may be requested to observe out-of-country voting in their country of residence, subject to a decision by the Bureau and according to the conditions laid down by it.

38. Members are entirely free to carry out their observation as they see fit on polling day within their area of deployment: they should not disclose their itinerary nor the polling stations they intend to visit. However, for security reasons, some areas or regions may be restricted. Members should follow security measures and recommendations put in place by OSCE/ODIHR security officers and/or the Council of Europe Security department. Members must not incur unnecessary or unjustified risks for themselves or for others

39. Members of the delegation shall plan their travel arrangements in a way that will allow them to participate in the briefings in their entirety, to observe on polling day (opening, voting, vote count and tabulation of results) and to participate in the delegation debriefing on the morning following the elections. It is understood that those members who are unable to attend the debriefing in the capital because they were deployed outside it, may report their conclusions by phone or by e-mail. Heads of delegation shall make their travel arrangements taking into account the press conference which usually takes place in the afternoon of the day following polling day.

Post-electoral missions:

40. The organisation of post-electoral missions, if so decided by the Bureau, is similar to that of pre-electoral missions, due account being taken of the post-electoral context and developments.

G. Election observation reports and statements

Pre-electoral missions:

41. Following a pre-electoral mission and before leaving the country, the members of the pre-electoral mission shall publish a statement based on the reports and relevant documents of the Council of Europe and information received from different interlocutors. The statement should cover, amongst others, the following aspects: legal framework; political context; election administration; voters, party and candidates registration; election campaign, campaign financing and media, gender equality and non-discrimination. No press conference shall be organised following such a mission.

Election observation missions:

42. In the framework of an International Election Observation Mission, a joint preliminary statement is issued and presented during a joint press conference which takes place on the day following polling day. This statement is discussed and prepared jointly by all Heads of delegations in the field. When preparing the Assembly's contribution to the joint statement, the Head of delegation shall take into account key aspects raised by members of the delegation, including during the debriefing following polling day.

43. If the Assembly's usual partner organisations in IEOMs do not deploy an observation mission, the ad hoc committee shall issue a statement covering the pre-electoral period and the polling day. It shall be based on the findings and statement of the pre-electoral mission (if applicable), on the information received during the meetings held during the mission, as well as on relevant documents of the Council of Europe and other reliable sources. Such a statement whose draft is prepared under the authority of the Head of delegation, shall be discussed and approved at the debriefing of the delegation immediately following the polling day.

44. Following the election observation mission, the Head of delegation shall draft a report which is submitted to the Bureau for adoption and subsequently to the Assembly or to the Standing Committee as part of the progress report of the Bureau.

45. This report shall be based on the information received during the meetings held during the IEOM with various interlocutors, in line with the press release and preliminary findings and conclusions of the IEOM. It should take into account the comments and assessments of members of the delegation regarding polling day made during the delegation's debriefing following polling day, as well as relevant Council of Europe documents and other reliable sources (e.g. OSCE/ODIHR). All members of the ad hoc committee shall be consulted on the draft before it is issued within a deadline fixed by the Head of delegation.

46. The final report should also cover the following aspects: polling day and results; complaints and appeals.

Post-electoral missions:

47. Following a post-electoral mission, and before leaving the country, the members of the post-electoral mission may publish a statement on their findings focusing on the post-electoral issues and based on reports and relevant documents of the Council of Europe and information received from different interlocutors and other reliable sources. No press conference shall be organised following the mission.

Appendix 9 – Parliamentary Assembly child safeguarding policy

I. Introduction and background

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (the Assembly) is committed to promoting, developing, and protecting the rights of the child. The Assembly is convinced that to do this work effectively, it needs to listen to the children themselves, and to act upon their comments and suggestions.

2. The Assembly's undertaking to promote child participation is in line with relevant international standards and is part of a common trend in international and regional organisations. Child participation is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; also, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges children's right to participation as an essential part of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The EU and the Council of Europe Strategies on the Rights of the Child, as well as the European Commission's European Child Guarantee emphasise the importance of child participation.

3. The Assembly notes that working with children requires the existence of rules and procedures, to ensure that no harm is done to the wellbeing of the children concerned. The Assembly welcomes the drafting of the Organisation-wide safeguarding policy, which is currently under way. The present text is based on the Child safeguarding policy of the Council of Europe Children's Rights Division. It will be either replaced or revised as required once the new Child safeguarding policy of the Council of Europe enters into force.

4. This policy also reflects the experience gained through the piloting of child participation during the preparation of reports on "The right to be heard – Child participation: a foundation for democratic societies" (Rapporteur: Baroness Massey, United Kingdom, SOC, 2022) and on "Inaction on climate change – a violation of children's rights" (Rapporteur: Ms De Temmerman, France, ALDE, 2021) but also the lessons learnt through the child consultation workshop on age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education held in Rome in December 2024.

5. The legal basis for the Assembly's Child Safeguarding Policy is provided by paragraph 8 of Resolution 2414 (2022)[5] on "The right to be heard: child participation, a foundation for democratic societies", which outlines the following:

> *8. The Assembly undertakes to put child participation in practice in its own work as follows:*
>
> *8.1. consult children, who have diverse backgrounds and thus are representative of our societies, in the preparation of the Assembly reports that concern them, in an appropriate way and with due respect to child safeguarding procedures, for example through written consultations, participation in hearings, focus groups and parliamentary networks; give children a voice in the debate of Assembly reports that concern them, for example by inviting a child representative to take the floor in the debate of the report in plenary or in the Standing Committee, and provide children with feedback on how their contributions were used and what impact they may have had;*
>
> *8.2. monitor Assembly reports for compliance with the rights of the child and child participation;*
>
> *8.3. pay particular attention to the participation of children in situations of vulnerability;*
>
> *8.4. support systematic information sharing and synergies with other Council of Europe bodies, international and European institutions, such as UNICEF, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament, and with the voluntary sector;*
>
> *8.5. consider facilitating annual reviews of child participation in parliaments, with the support of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) and with Eurochild.*

II. Policy statement

6. The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Children (2022 – 2027) calls on States to uphold the human rights of children by protecting them from all forms of violence and discrimination, respecting their rights to education and encouraging child participation. The Assembly is committed to conducting its activities in full compliance with the rights of the child. Furthermore, it commits to protecting children from harm and ensuring the children's right to protection is fully realised.

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5. https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29686/html

III. Aim and scope of the policy

7. The aim of the PACE Child Safeguarding Policy is to:

– prevent and minimise the risk of harm that may be caused to children, because of actions or neglect by staff, volunteers and interns, parliamentarians, experts and third parties hired for the activities the protection of children, who are involved in the work of the Assembly;

– create a safeguarding framework to be applied when the Assembly organises activities for or involving children;

– protect the PACE's reputation.

8. The policy applies directly to all staff of the Assembly, whether permanent, temporary, seconded or interns, to parliamentarians, volunteers, experts and contracted third parties who perform tasks under the activities for and with children implemented by the Assembly. They must be fully aware of this Policy and sign the Statement of commitment to the Parliamentary Assembly's Child Safeguarding Policy before participating in the activity. See Annex 2.

9. This Policy applies in all Council of Europe premises, as well as any other place in which Secretariat members may find themselves in connection with their work for the Organisation, and any place in which Parliamentary Assembly's activities occur. It also applies to online activity, including the use of social media.

10. The Policy covers all children who are involved in, or otherwise impacted by, the Parliamentary Assembly's activities in any way. This includes any children with whom Secretariat members or other relevant persons are in contact, by whatever media; as well as any children who visit the Organisation's premises, attend an event organised by the PACE or which takes place in the context of its activities; and children who otherwise participate in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities. It also covers any children whose personal data is processed or whose image or story is shared by the Organisation. The Policy applies at all times, both within and outside working hours.

11. The policy must be read in conjunction with other internal legal texts of the Council of Europe that govern the conduct of Secretariat members and other individuals involved in the Organisation's activities, including the Staff Regulations and Rules, and the Organisation's ethical framework, as well as the Code of Conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Regulation on the protection of personal data. These internal texts of the Council of Europe require the Organisation's staff members to base their professional conduct on a set of ethical values and include prohibitions on actions that could harm children.

IV. Principles

12. In its work and activities for and with children, the Assembly respects the following general principles:

Best interests of the child

In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. This includes considering their age, sex, other characteristics, needs, cultural background or any other factor that may contribute to causing harm; as well as their views on any given situation.

Informed consent

Throughout the whole child participation process, children and their parents should be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about the activity and their rights and should express their informed consent.

Do no harm principle

In line with the International Child Safeguarding Standards[6], the "do not harm" principles refer to minimising any harm that may be caused inadvertently because of activities of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. It entails putting in place measures to prevent harm; assessing and mitigating risks of harm; and ensuring that, in the event that harm occurs, appropriate actions are taken to minimise its impact and to follow up appropriately with all those involved.

6. International Child safeguarding developed by Keeping Children Safe is available here: https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/KCS-ICS-Standards-EN-2024.pdf

Right to be protected

Children have an inherent right to protection from violence and suicide. Development should be interpreted in its broadest sense, embracing the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, psychological and social development.

The right to be heard

Involving children in decision-making at individual, family, organisation and policy level in society is key to realising their rights. Children should be empowered to understand and enjoy their rights. They should be made aware of what is acceptable and what is not and what they can do if there is a problem or a concern.

Non-discrimination

The rights of the child apply to all children without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his/her parent's or legal guardian's race[7], colour, sex, age, state of health, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other status.

Transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability are essential to ensure that poor practice can be addressed appropriately, potentially abusive behaviour challenged, and best practice promoted.

Data protection

All processing of personal data of children, including in communication and media activities, should be conducted in line with the Regulation outlining a data protection system for personal data files in the Council of Europe (CM(89)70) of 20 March 1989.

V. Child safeguarding relevant definitions

13. For the purposes of this child safeguarding policy, the following definitions apply.

Child – based on Article 1 of the UNCRC[8] and Article 3 of the Lanzarote Convention[9], a child means any person below the age of eighteen years.

Child safeguarding – all measures adopted to keep children safe, prevent and respond to harm possibly caused to them as a result of their involvement in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities. Child safeguarding includes both preventive actions to minimise the risks of harm occurring, and responsive actions to ensure that incidents which may happen are appropriately handled.

Child abuse/harm – any conduct or absence of conduct which harms children or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development directly or indirectly. Child abuse can be physical, sexual and/or psychological in nature.

Parliamentary Assembly's activity – any debate of Assembly reports, either in plenary or in the Standing Committee, meetings (e.g. hearings, focus groups, side events), written or oral consultations, interviews conducted as part of fact-finding visits, social function, publication and communication, both online and in person, organised by the Parliamentary Assembly, both in all Council of Europe premises and in any place where Parliamentary Assembly's activities may occur.

Secretariat of the Assembly – any permanent and temporary staff contracted in accordance with the Council of Europe Staff Regulations[10] as well as seconded officials and interns, who work for the Assembly.

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7. In this Policy as in other Council of Europe documents, the term "race" is used in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as "belonging to another race" are not excluded from protection against discrimination.
8. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989. Available at: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx
9. Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention), 2007. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/1680084822
10. Staff Regulations – Current version in force from 1 January 2023. Available at: https://search.coe.int/intranet?i=0900001680782c27

Parliamentarian – any member of the Parliamentary Assembly being representative or substitute from national delegations from member States, special guests, observers, partners for democracy or other delegations.

Person involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities – any natural or legal person who participates or is otherwise involved in the activities organised by the Assembly.

VI. Guidelines for conduct

a. Code of Conduct for adults involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities for and with children

14. Adults participating in activities involving children should:

– Respect and value children as full human beings and rights' holders. Respect towards children in the context of activities should include:
  - Always informing and engaging with children in ways that are appropriate and understandable to them;
  - Enable children to express themselves as they can, without patronising or otherwise showing any form of disrespect;
  - Avoid unnecessary or unconstructive criticism and adopt an encouraging attitude;
  - Ensure anonymity of children's views and act in a way that prevents all forms of retaliation against children (even after they have returned home/to their local context).

– Comply with all relevant laws concerning the protection of children in the country where the activity takes place, while respecting international legal standards;

– Have full regard to the principles outlined in this policy;

– Treat children and young people fairly and respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation;

– Be careful about perception and appearance in their language, actions and relationships with children; their behaviour should demonstrate respect for children and their rights. See Annexes 4 and 5 if you are a speaker or an interpreter during an event involving children;

– Use positive, non-violent methods to manage children's behaviour;

– Where possible and practical, follow the 'two-adult' rule, wherein two or more adults supervise all activities that involve children, and are always visible and present;

– Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns;

– Take appropriate action as required where they become aware or suspect that a child has experienced or is experiencing abuse. See Annex 6 for a template of a reporting incident form;

– Cooperate in child safeguarding related investigations (internal and external) and take steps to make available any documentary or other information necessary for the completion of the investigation.

15. Adults participating in activities involving children should not:

– Spend excessive time alone with children away from others;

– Take children to their home, especially where they will be alone with them;

– Contact children with direct messages on their phone, email or on their social media accounts, unless there is an explicit agreement and consent given by the child to be contacted on matters related to the event;

– Ask children to become their "friends" and "/or "followers" on social media;

– Share personal information, including their photos with children;

– Express opinions in such a way that might put children in an uncomfortable situation;

– Hug in general and touch children in a manner which might be considered intrusive and uncomfortable;

– Use any physical forms of punishment on a child, psychological and/or sexual violence, neglect or any types of violence on a child;

– Discriminate against, show different treatment toward, or favour children to the exclusion of others; stigmatise children (for example, based on gender, race, ability, class, or another factor);

– Expose children to hazardous work and illegal activities, such as the consumption of various drugs or alcohol, spending time out very late in the night, using unsafe means of transportation, etc.;

– Ignore a situation where a child is experiencing or is at risk of harm. Adults should take appropriate action;

– Distribute children's photos, videos, stories and statements or their private contact details in any form and on any communication channels, including social media channels. Any use of children's photos, videos, stories and statements can only be distributed upon consent of the children and their parents or legal guardian. See Annex 1;

– Violate children's other rights (for example, their right to privacy, to information and to participate in decisions concerning them).

b. Guidelines for using images and stories about children

16. The Council of Europe norms on the protection of privacy and of data protection shall apply to the use of images and stories about children.

17. When developing and using photos or videos featuring children involved in the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly, the following principles should be respected:

– **Informed consent:** Permission should always be sought from the children themselves before taking images. To the greatest extent possible, the organisation should acquire informed consent of the child, the child's parent or legal guardian, and/or the institution responsible for the child, before using any photo or video for publicity, fundraising, awareness raising, or any other purpose. The purpose should be made clear to the consent giver. See Annex 1 on various consent forms for children participating in event and their parents or legal guardians.

– **Privacy:** Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child within a country and cause them to be put at risk should not be used in any form of communication for general or public purposes. Geotagging of images should be disabled when taking photographs.

– **Security:** Information about children's lives and images of children (including information stored on a computer) should be kept in secure files. Access to these should be limited to those who need to use them during their work.

– **Portrayal:** Images of children should portray the children in a dignified and respectful way. The image should not shame or embarrass a child and should be presented in context.

c. Guidelines for child participation in the activities of the Assembly

18. For child participation to be meaningful, the specific needs of children should be considered and accommodated for to the extent possible throughout the activity. See Annex 7 on issues which need to be considered when deciding about child participation and consultation events.

19. For the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly which involve participation of children, the principle of **"do no harm"** and **"best interest of the child"** should apply. Special attention should be paid to the particularly vulnerable groups of children (e.g. children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children in care, Roma[11] children, children on the move or otherwise affected by migration, and children from minorities).

Initiating an activity

20. Meaningful participation starts at consultation on the activity concept. The possibility of child participation and the form in which it would be conducted should be considered during the initiation phase of the activity.

21. When inviting children to participate in an activity, they should be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and to have their views given due weight. They should be informed on how this participation will take place, its scope, purpose and

11. The term "Roma" used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale, and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

potential impact and should give their informed consent. See Annex 1 on various consent forms for children participating in event and their parents or legal guardians. Children should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.

Planning an activity

22. The children's involvement in the activity should be considered based on their potential or actual vulnerability. The methods of engagement and stage of involvement of children throughout the activity should be outlined.

23. Participation should be inclusive, avoid existing patterns of discrimination, and encourage opportunities for marginalised children, to be involved. Children are not a homogenous group, and participation should provide for equality of opportunity for all, without discrimination on any grounds.

24. Potential risk situations during the planning phase are linked to communication with children. This is generally done through intermediary organisations that represent the interests of children or organisations run by children. A safeguarding risk assessment about child safeguarding must be included in the planning phase of any activity involving children.

Implementing an activity

25. Environments and working methods should be adapted to children's evolving capacities. Adequate time and resources should be made available to ensure that children are adequately prepared and have the confidence and opportunity to contribute their views. Consideration should be given to the fact that children will need differing levels of support and forms of involvement according to their age and evolving capacities. All individuals involved in the activities should be made aware of the "Code of Conduct for adults involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities for and with children" under subchapter VI a. of this document.

26. Potential risk situations during the activity include direct interaction with children when they are participating in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities. Organisations representing the interest of children, Secretariat of the Assembly, as well as members or the Parliamentary Assembly and other participants in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities are key groups involved.

27. The Parliamentary Assembly collaborates with expert organisations and individuals when organising child participation activities. These partnerships ensure that sound knowledge and best practice in supporting children to cooperate and communicate in a respectful manner is available. Furthermore, measures are in place to mitigate any risks of potential peer-to-peer safeguarding incidents.

Involving third parties

28.Parliamentary Assembly's activities may include activities where specific tasks are performed by third parties, either through service contracts or grant agreements. Specific risks are involved in the contracting of third parties and therefore the Secretariat of the Assembly should adopt preventive measures to minimise any risk.

29. Any member of the Secretariat of PACE involved in the organisation of Parliamentary Assembly's activities with and for children should, to the extent possible, take measures to ascertain the good character of adults encountering children in the context of activities. When risks are assessed as important, the Secretariat of PACE may request individuals involved in child participation activities to provide their criminal record.

Closing an activity

30. The experiences with child participation should be part of the documentation of lessons learned during the activity.

31. Reports on the activities should include information on the preparation of the activity, the results of the child participation and how it impacted on the outcomes of the activity.

32. Children should be informed as to how their views have been interpreted and used and, where necessary, provided with the opportunity to challenge and influence the analysis of the findings. Children are also entitled to be provided with clear feedback on how their participation has influenced any outcomes. Wherever appropriate, children should be given the opportunity to participate in follow-up processes or activities. Monitoring and evaluation of children's participation should be undertaken, where possible, with children themselves.

Evaluating an activity

33. When appropriate, the final evaluation report should contain information on how the child participation was conducted and its impact on the outcomes of the project. The lessons learned should include child safeguarding as a factor of the evaluation.

VII. Reporting and responding to issues of concern

34. All individuals covered by this policy should be informed about the steps to take and whom to contact when concerns arise regarding the safeguarding of children.

35. All children involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities should be informed in a child-friendly manner about the child safeguarding policy.

36. A child safeguarding report should be made in the following instances that occur in the framework of the Parliamentary Assembly's activities:

– a potential case of abuse is observed or suspected;

– an allegation of abuse is being made;

– a child discloses abuse;

– a breach of the policy is reported or observed.

37. The reporting process should be as follows: informing the Head of Secretariat of the relevant Committee directly, in writing, of child protection concerns. If a child is in immediate danger, the Head of the Secretariat should directly contact the police and/or local child protection services as required by national law. The secretariat of PACE and the partners in the activity's implementation will extend full cooperation with competent national authorities to facilitate investigation, criminal and other proceedings as appropriate.

38. The identity of a person reporting information or co-operating with the investigation shall not be disclosed, unless expressly authorised by him or her, or where the conduct of a fair procedure so requires.

39. The organisation guarantees that there will be no retaliation or negative consequences for anyone who reports concerns or allegations in good faith. This includes protecting children and staff members who report issues from any form of retaliation or discrimination.

VIII. Misconduct

Misconduct by staff members

40. All staff members are bound by the Staff Regulations and Rules as well as the Ethical Framework of the Organisation. Misconduct by staff members of the Assembly may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Misconduct by trainees

41. Trainees are required to observe the relevant principles, rules and values of the Council of Europe (including the protection of human dignity[12]), and confidentiality.

42. When an activity which they participate in or observe involves or concerns children, trainees shall also be required to observe and comply with the child safeguarding policy. Any misconduct regarding the "Code of Conduct for adults involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities for and with children" under subchapter VI a. of this document will be examined and appropriate action taken, including the potential termination of the traineeship.

Misconduct by experts

43. Experts who fail to adhere to the "Code of Conduct for adults involved in the Parliamentary Assembly's activities for and with children" under subchapter VI a. of this document should not be allowed to participate in activities involving children.

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12. Rule No. 1292 of 3 September 2010 on the protection of human dignity at the Council of Europe. Available at: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=1663919&Site=COE&direct=true

Misconduct by contracted third parties

44. The Council of Europe will not contract with third parties who fail to adhere to the “Code of Conduct for adults involved in the Parliamentary Assembly’s activities for and with children” under subchapter VI a. of this document.

45. Any person participating in the Parliamentary Assembly’s activities or implementing activities with support from the Organisation, including contracted third parties, are required to observe the relevant principles, rules and values of the Council of Europe (including the protection of human dignity[13]), and confidentiality.

Misconduct by children

46. The Parliamentary Assembly is ready to ensure that incidents between children are treated with urgency, in a non-violent and respectful manner. In the case of minor or first-time incidents, children will be reminded by their accompanying adults to adapt their behaviour to the agreed Code of Conduct for children. See Annex 3. This gives children the opportunity to reflect and plan how they can behave differently, with the support of the accompanying adults. If children continue to breach the expected Code of Conduct after the first reminder, or if their behaviour is more serious, they will be given a formal warning by their accompanying adult. Adults will also decide whether further action should be taken, such as restricting their participation in some activities or removing them from all activities altogether. If necessary, they will make a record of what has happened and, if appropriate, inform the children's parents or legal guardians.

X. Implementation, monitoring and review of the policy

47. The Child Safeguarding Policy shall apply to all activities organised by the Parliamentary Assembly as of … 2025 (approval by the Bureau). All activities organised for and with children must ensure fully compliance with this policy, including by using the safeguarding tools in the Annexes of the Policy.

48. The Child Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Changes in international best practices or legal requirements will be reflected in the policy. The Assembly will seek regular feedback from children involved in decision-making processes to assess their experiences and identify areas for improvement in safeguarding measures.

Sign-off:

This Child Safeguarding Policy was approved by:

[Approving Body Name]

Signature: _____ on [Date]

Name: [Name], Title: [Title]

13. Rule No. 1292 of 3 September 2010 on the protection of human dignity at the Council of Europe. Available at: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=1663919&Site=COE&direct=true