



Opinion 170 (1993)¹

Application by the Republic of Estonia for membership of the Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly has received a request for an opinion on the accession of Estonia to the Council of Europe ([Doc. 6506](#)) from the Committee of Ministers in pursuance of Statutory Resolution (51) 30 A adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 May 1951.
2. It observes that democratic parliamentary elections were held in Estonia on 20 September 1992 and that they were monitored by an ad hoc committee of the Assembly. Presidential elections were held on the same date.
3. It furthermore observes that the first electoral period covers only three years in the course of which non-citizens, now residing in the country and wishing to apply for Estonian citizenship, will have the possibility of acquiring it. They, like all non-Estonians residing permanently in Estonia, already now enjoy political rights at the local level.
4. The Assembly notes the readiness of Estonia to guarantee the principles of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are embodied in the new constitution approved by a referendum on 28 June 1992. It attaches great importance to the commitment expressed by the Estonian authorities to sign and ratify the European Convention on Human Rights and also to recognise the right of individual applications to the European Commission of Human Rights (Article 25 of the Convention) as well as the compulsory jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights (Article 46 of the Convention).
5. It expects the Estonian authorities to base their policy regarding the protection of minorities on the principles laid down in [Recommendation 1201 \(1993\)](#) on an additional protocol on the rights of national minorities to the European Convention on Human Rights.
6. The Assembly appreciates the contribution made by Estonia to the work of the Council of Europe both at parliamentary level, since its parliament obtained special guest status on 18 September 1991, and at intergovernmental level since acceding to the European Cultural Convention on 7 May 1992.
7. The Assembly considers that Estonia is able and willing:
 - 7.1. to fulfil the provisions of Article 3 of the Statute which stipulates that "Every member of the Council of Europe must accept the principles of the rule of law and of the enjoyment by all persons within its jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms";
 - 7.2. to collaborate sincerely and effectively in the realisation of the aim of the Council of Europe as specified in Chapter I of its Statute, thereby fulfilling the conditions for accession to the Council of Europe as laid down in Article 4 of the Statute.
8. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers, at its next meeting:
 - 8.1. invite the Republic of Estonia to become a member of the Council of Europe;

1. Assembly debate on 13 May 1993 (35th Sitting) (see [Doc. 6810](#), report of the Political Affairs Committee, Rapporteur: Mr Bratinka; and [Doc. 6824](#), opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Rapporteur: Mr Bindig). Text adopted by the Assembly on 13 May 1993 (35th Sitting).



- 8.2. allocate three seats to Estonia in the Parliamentary Assembly.