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Activities of the Assembly's Bureau and Standing Committee (30 January – 19 April 2015)

Progress report
Bureau of the Assembly
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Contents **Page**

1. Introduction 1
2. Activities of the Bureau since the last part-session and decisions not requiring ratification by the Assembly 2
3. Activities of the Standing Committee (Paris, 6 March 2015) 5
4. Decisions of the Bureau requiring ratification by the Assembly 6
Appendix 1 – Institutional representation of the Parliamentary Assembly in 2015 7
Appendix 2 – General Rapporteur on "Ending Immigration Detention of Children" – terms of reference 9
Appendix 3 – Guidelines for the observation of elections by the Parliamentary Assembly 10
Appendix 4 – Adoption of declarations 15

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 30 January 2015, the Bureau appointed me as rapporteur for this report, which covers its activities over the period from the last Bureau meeting of the first part-session of 2015 (Friday 30 January) to the first Bureau meeting of the second part-session of 2015 (Monday 20 April).

The following chapters include the decisions taken at the Bureau meetings of 30 January in Strasbourg and 5 March in Paris. Chapter 2 presents a list of decisions which have either already been ratified by the Standing Committee on 6 March or which do not require ratification. Chapter 3 lists the decisions taken on 5 March that require ratification at the opening of the second part-session of the Assembly.

An addendum to this report will be issued immediately after the Bureau meeting on 20 April, which will also include, in part, decisions to be ratified on the same day. Another addendum will be issued immediately after the Bureau meeting of 24 April. It will include only the decisions to be ratified by the Assembly on the same day, notably the references and transmissions which will have been approved by the Bureau.

The Bureau will hold its next meetings in Strasbourg on Friday 24 April at 8.30 am (during this second part-session), then on Thursday 21 May in Sarajevo. The next meeting of the Standing Committee will also be held in Sarajevo, on 22 May.

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

2.1. Follow-up to Assembly's Resolutions

2.1.1. Follow-up to the first part-session of 2015 (Strasbourg, 26-30 January)

On 30 January, the Bureau approved the following proposals made by the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly:

– Resolution 2028 (2015) on The humanitarian situation of Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons: to seize the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons for a report on "Missing persons during the conflict in Ukraine";

– Resolution 2031 (2015) on Terrorist attacks in Paris: together for a democratic response (urgent debate): to invite the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, the Committee on Culture, Education, Science, Education and Media and the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development to proceed with concrete follow-up proposals to paragraph 18 of this resolution;

– Resolution 2034 (2015) on Challenge of the still unratified credentials of the delegation of the Russian Federation: to refer this issue to the Monitoring Committee for a report on "Reconsideration of sanctions in respect of the delegation of the Russian Federation to the Parliamentary Assembly (follow-up to paragraph 15 of Resolution 2034 (2015))", to be debated during the April 2015 part-session; and to invite the President of the Assembly to consider the setting up of a working group with the participation of the Speakers of the Russian State Duma and the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada or their representatives;

– Resolution 2037 (2015) on Post-electoral shifting in members' political affiliation and its repercussions on the composition of national delegations: to invite the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs to proceed with concrete proposals on the implementation of paragraph 10 of this resolution.

2.2. Status of Ms Nadiia Savchenko with regard to Council of Europe immunity

On 30 January, the Bureau took note of, and declassified, the opinion of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs.

2.3. Standing Committee (Paris, 6 March 2015)

On 30 January and 5 March, the Bureau took note of the draft agenda.

2.4. Second part-session of 2015 (20-24 April)

2.4.1. Draft agenda

On 30 January, the Bureau drew up the preliminary draft agenda. At its following meeting on 5 March, it drew up the draft agenda and decided to invite Ms Helena Dalli, Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties of Malta, to address the Assembly in the context of the debate on Discrimination against transgender persons in Europe (Rapporteur of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination: Ms Deborah Schembri, Malta, SOC). Furthermore, the Bureau decided to include a debate on an Assembly's Opinion on the draft Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism in the draft agenda, subject to receiving a request for a debate under urgent procedure from the Committee of Ministers.

2.4.2. Meeting of the Joint Committee

On 5 March, the Bureau took note of the draft agenda.

2.5. Election observation

2.5.1. Meeting of the Chairpersons of ad hoc committees for the observation of elections (27 January 2015)

On 5 March, the Bureau took note of the conclusions of the meeting.

2.5.2. Kazakhstan: early presidential election (26 April 2015)

On 5 March, the Bureau decided not to observe this election.

2.5.3. Turkey: parliamentary elections (7 June 2015)

On 5 March, the Bureau decided to observe these elections, constituted an ad hoc committee for this purpose composed of 30 members (SOC: 11; EPP/CD: 10; ALDE: 4; EC: 3; UEL: 2) and the rapporteur of the post-monitoring dialogue on Turkey of the Monitoring Committee; and authorised a pre-electoral mission.

2.6. References and transmissions to committees

2.6.1. References to committees

On 5 March, the Bureau considered and approved the following references to committees, which were subsequently ratified by the Standing Committee on the following day:

– Doc. 13678, motion for a resolution, For evenly balanced regions in Europe: consultation of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for a possible follow-up;*

– Doc. 13686, motion for a resolution, The status of former presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly: reference to the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs *to be taken into account in the next report on changes in the Rules of Procedure;*

– Doc. 13687, motion for a resolution, Moratorium on fracking across Europe: reference to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *to be taken into account in the preparation of the report on the exploration and exploitation of non-conventional hydrocarbons in Europe;*

– Doc. 13688, motion for a resolution Voting in diasporas – making it real, transmission to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons *for information;*

– Doc. 13691, motion for a resolution, Human rights compatibility of investor–State arbitration in international investment protection agreements, reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*.

2.6.2. Modification of a reference

– Doc. 13559, motion for a resolution, Foreign fighters in Syria (Ref. 4069 of 3 October 2014): reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report* and to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for opinion.*

2.6.3. Extension of references

On 30 January, the Bureau considered and approved the following extensions of references:

– Doc. 12866, motion for a resolution, Political transition in Egypt (Ref. 3857 of April 2012 – validity 23 April 2015 – extended on 31 January 2014): extension until 30 April 2016;

– Bureau decision, Situation in Belarus (Ref. 3841 of 9 March 2012 – validity: 9 March 2015 – extended on 27 January 2014): extension until 30 April 2016.

At its meeting on 5 March, the Bureau considered and approved the following extensions of references:

– Doc. 13148, motion for a resolution, Protecting patients and public health against undue influence of the pharmaceutical industry (Ref. 3950 of 26 April 2013 – validity: 26 April 2015): extension until 31 January 2016;

– Doc. 13150, motion for a resolution, Effectively combating the adverse consequences of dirty money (Ref. 3952 of 26 April 2013 – validity: 26 April 2015): extension until 26 April 2016;

– Doc. 13123, motion for a recommendation, Promoting city diplomacy in the field of culture (Ref. 3942 of 22 April 2013 – validity: 22 April 2015): extension until 31 October 2015.

2.6.4. Reply after consultation

– Doc. 13400, motion for a resolution, The employment rights of female workers from Eastern Europe: reference to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for report.*

2.7. Election of the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly

On 30 January, the Bureau considered the memorandum prepared by the Secretariat of the Assembly under the instructions of the President, approved the timetable for the election of the Secretary General of the Assembly and asked the President to transmit it to the Committee of Ministers.

2.8. Václav Havel Human Rights Prize

On 30 January, the Bureau took note of the call for nominations for the 2015 edition (deadline 30 April 2015) as well as the memorandum prepared by the Secretary General of the Assembly, containing *inter alia* the calendar of events and a call for candidatures for the renewal of the Selection Panel, and invited members to submit names and CVs of candidates no later than 15 April 2015.

2.9. Fair representation of the opposition in national delegations

On 30 January, the Bureau took note of the letter by the former Chairperson of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, in reply to the Bureau's request to clarify the question of the fair representation of the opposition in national delegations and, in particular, whether a national delegation in which the opposition was not represented amongst full members but only amongst substitutes was in line with the Assembly's Rules of Procedure. The letter indicated that the Committee would continue to consider the matter in the framework of a forthcoming report on "Effective representation and participation in the Parliamentary Assembly of opposition parliamentarians in the member States".

2.10. Issues raised by committees

2.10.1. Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

On 30 January, the Bureau authorised:

– Mr Jean-Marie Bockel (France, EPP/CD), Rapporteur on "The political transition in Tunisia" to carry out a fact-finding visit to Tunisia during the first semester of 2015, in the framework of the preparation of his report;

– Mr José María Beneyto (Spain, EPP/CD), Rapporteur on "The political transition in Egypt", to carry out a fact-finding visit to Egypt during the first semester of 2015, in the framework of the preparation of his report;

– Mr Bogdan Klich (Poland, EPP/CD), Rapporteur on the "Evaluation of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of Morocco", to carry out a fact-finding visit to Morocco during the first semester 2015, in the framework of the preparation of his report.

2.10.2. Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

On 30 January, the Bureau authorised Mr Luc Recordon (Switzerland, SOC) to participate in the 7th World Water Forum in Daegu-Gyeongbuk (Republic of Korea) between 12 and 17 April 2015, at no cost to the Assembly.

2.10.3. Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

On 5 March, the Bureau authorised Ms Tineke Strik (Netherlands, SOC), Rapporteur on "Countries of transit: meeting new migration and asylum challenges" to carry out a fact-finding visit to Morocco in March 2015, in the framework of the preparation of her report.

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

On 30 January, the Bureau drew up the list of candidates for the CPT in respect of Slovenia, which it forwarded to the Committee of Ministers.

2.12. Meetings elsewhere than Strasbourg and Paris

On 30 January, the Bureau authorised the following meetings:

– Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, to meet in The Hague (Netherlands) on 11-12 March 2015;

– Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, to meet in Istanbul (Turkey) on 26-27 March 2015;

– Sub-committee on Co-operation with non-European countries of origin and transit (Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons), to meet in Lagos (Portugal) on 30-31 March 2015;

– Ad hoc sub-committee of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons to visit refugee camps of Ukrainians in the Russian Federation in April-May 2015 (subject to receiving an invitation from the host authorities of the Russian Federation);

– Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, to meet in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) on 9-10 June 2015.

On 5 March, the Bureau took note of the absence of an invitation letter to the ad hoc sub-committee of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons to visit refugee camps of Ukrainians in the Russian Federation and invited the Committee to reconsider how to ensure the follow-up to Assembly Resolution 2028 (2015) on The humanitarian situation of Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons.

2.13. Institutional representation of the Parliamentary Assembly in 2015

On 30 January, the Bureau approved the appointments as set out in Appendix 1.

2.14. Participation of members in Parliamentary Assembly plenary sessions and committee meetings

On 5 March, the Bureau approved the proposals contained in paragraph 47 of the information memorandum indicating the measures to be taken in respect of delegations with low participation rates under Rule 44.10 of the Rules of Procedure and paragraph 7.2 of Resolution 1583 (2007).

2.15. General Rapporteurs

On 5 March, the Bureau approved the terms of reference of a General Rapporteur on “Ending Immigration Detention of Children” (Appendix 2), which were subsequently ratified by the Standing Committee.

2.16. Appointment of Assembly representatives for official activities

On 30 January, the Bureau appointed:

– Mr Cesar Florin Preda (Romania, EPP/CD) to participate in the annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization, organised jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament in Geneva (Switzerland) on 16-17 February 2015;

– Ms Doris Barnett (Germany, SOC) to participate in the Winter meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Vienna on 18-20 February 2015, at no cost to the Assembly;

– Mr Robert Walter (United Kingdom, EC) to participate in the 132nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Hanoi on 28 March-1 April 2015, at no cost to the Assembly.

3. Activities of the Standing Committee (Paris, 6 March 2015)

The Standing Committee held an exchange of views with Mr Michael Georg Link, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR).

It ratified the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegations of Armenia, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, and approved changes in the composition of Assembly committees.

The Standing Committee took note of the draft agenda of the second part-session of the Assembly (20-24 April 2015) and ratified the references and transmissions proposed by the Bureau contained in Chapter 2.6.

It also ratified the terms of reference of a General Rapporteur on "Ending Immigration Detention of Children".

Finally, it adopted the following texts on behalf of the Assembly:

– Resolution 2040 (2015) on Threats to the rule of law in Council of Europe member States: asserting the Parliamentary Assembly's authority;

– Resolution 2041(2015) and Recommendation 2065 (2015) on European institutions and human rights in Europe;

– Resolution 2042 (2015) on Ensuring comprehensive treatment for children with attention problems;

– Resolution 2043 (2015) on Democratic participation for migrant diaspora;

– Resolution 2044 (2015) and Recommendation 2066 (2015) on Student mobility.

4. Decisions of the Bureau requiring ratification by the Assembly

4.1. Dates of Assembly part-sessions (2016 - 2019)

On 30 January, the Bureau considered and revised a memorandum prepared by the Secretary General of the Assembly and decided to come back to the issue at its next meeting, after having consulted national delegations on the proposed dates.

On 5 March, the Bureau:

– decided to modify the dates for the fourth part-session of 2016 to 10-14 October;

– approved the following dates for the part-sessions for the years 2017-2019:

- 2017: 23-27 January, 24-28 April, 26-30 June, 9-13 October;
- 2018: 22-26 January, 23-27 April, 25-29 June, 8-12 October;
- 2019: 21-25 January, 8-12 April, 24-28 June, 30 September- 4 October.

4.2. Election observation

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

On 5 March, the Bureau considered and approved the amendments to the Guidelines proposed at the meeting of the Chairpersons of ad hoc Committees for the observation of elections (27 January 2015), subject to ratification by the Assembly (Appendix 3).

4.3. The adoption of declarations by committees

On 30 January, the Bureau took note of the opinion of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs and decided to come back to the issue at its next meeting with a view to approving the Guidelines contained therein, to be subsequently submitted for ratification by the Assembly.

On 5 March, the Bureau considered, revised and approved the Guidelines contained in the opinion of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, to be ratified by the Assembly (Appendix 4).

The Assembly is invited to ratify these Bureau decisions.

Appendix 1 – Institutional representation of the Parliamentary Assembly in 2015

Body	who represents the Assembly	reference	2014	2015 nominations
I. Council of Europe bodies				
European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission)	Representatives of the Assembly appointed by the Bureau to attend the sessions of the Commission	Article 2.4 of the Venice Commission Statute (Res CM (2002) 3)	Members: Mr Mignon, EPP/CD appointment by the President Mr Chope – EDG (AS/Jur) Substitute: Mr Díaz Tejera – SOC (AS/Jur)	Members: Mr Mignon, EPP/CD appointment by the President Mr Díaz Tejera – SOC (AS/Jur) Substitute: Lord Tomlinson – SOC (AS/Jur)
Council on Democratic Elections of the Venice Commission	Representatives of AS/Pol, AS/Jur and AS/Mon approved by the Bureau of the Assembly	Bureau decision of 10 March 2003	Members: Ms Durrieu – SOC (AS/Pol) Mr Gross – SOC (AS/Jur) Mr Jordi Xuclà – ALDE (AS/Mon) Substitutes: Ms Khidasheli – ALDE (AS/Pol) Mr McNamara – SOC (AS/Jur)Ms de Pourbaix-Lundin – EPP/CD (AS/Mon)	Members: Ms Durrieu - SOC (AS/Pol) Mr McNamara – SOC (AS/Jur) Mr Xuclà – ALDE (AS/Mon) Substitutes: Ms Khidasheli – ALDE (AS/Pol) Mr Beneyto – EPP/CD (AS/Jur) Mr Kox – UEL (AS/Mon)
European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)	Two members of the Executive Council - appointed by the Bureau of the Assembly	Article 5.1(b) of the North-South Centre Statute (Res CM (1993) 51)	Members: Ms Blondin – SOC (AS/Soc) Sir Roger Gale – EDG (AS/Cult) Substitutes: Mr Schennach – SOC (AS/Soc) Mr Costa Neves – EPP/CD (AS/Cult)	Members: Ms Blondin – SOC (AS/Soc) Mr Denemeç - EC (AS/Cult) Substitutes: Mr Schennach – SOC (AS/Soc) Mr Costa Neves – EPP/CD (AS/Cult)
European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)	Representatives of the Assembly appointed by the Bureau (representatives of the following three committees: AS/Pol, AS/Ega and AS/Cult)	Article 5 of the ECRI Statute (Res CM (2002) 8)	Members: Ms Gillan – EDG (AS/Pol) Mr Valen – UEL (AS/Ega) Mr Chaouki – SOC (AS/Cult) Substitutes: - (AS/Pol) Mr D. Davies - EDG (AS/Ega) - (AS/Cult)	Members: … (AS/Pol) Mr Cilevičs - SOC (AS/Ega) Mr Le Borgn' – SOC (AS/Cult) Substitutes: … (AS/Pol) Mr Santerini - NR (AS/Ega) … (AS/Cult)
Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)	A representative of the Assembly appointed by the Bureau	CM decision of 717th meeting in 2000 in accordance with Article 7.2 of the Statute of the GRECO	Member: Mr Neill – EDG (AS/Jur) Substitute: Mr Sasi – EPP/CD (AS/Jur)	Member: Mr Neill – EC (AS/Jur) Substitute: Mr Sasi – EPP/CD (AS/Jur)

Body	who represents the Assembly	reference	2014	2015 nominations
CE Committee for Works of Art	Two members appointed by the Bureau of the Assembly (at present AS/Cult Committee member and Museum Prize rapporteur)	CM decision of 482nd meeting in 1992	Members: Baroness Eccles – EDG (AS/Cult) Ms Marjanović - SOC (AS/Cult)	Members: Baroness Eccles – EC (AS/Cult) … (AS/Cult)
MONEYVAL	A representative of the Assembly appointed by the Bureau	Article 4.1 of Resolution CM/Res (2010) 12	Member: Mr Omtzigt – EPP/CD (AS/Jur) Substitute: Mr Hübner – NR (AS/Jur)	Member: Mr Omtzigt – EPP/CD (AS/Jur) Substitute: Mr Hübner - NR (AS/Jur)
II. Other				
EUROPA NOSTRA Pan-European Federation for Heritage	One member (and substitute) to be nominated by the Assembly - to attend the Federation Council meetings as observer	Article 21.4 of the Statute of Europa Nostra	Mr Nicolaides - SOC (AS/Cult) Chairperson of the sub-committee on Culture, Diversity and Heritage	… (AS/Cult)

Appendix 2 – General Rapporteur on "Ending Immigration Detention of Children" – terms of reference

Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons

Denomination: General Rapporteur on Ending Immigration Detention of Children.

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

Subject: the general rapporteur on Ending Immigration Detention of Children is mandated to intervene in matters relating to the Global End Immigration Detention of Children Campaign.

Responsibilities: the general rapporteur will contribute to raising awareness in Council of Europe member states on the need to end immigration detention of children and to adopt alternatives to detention that fulfil the best interests of the child and allow children to remain with their family members and/or guardians in non-custodial, community-based contexts while their immigration status is being resolved. He/she shall report periodically to the Committee on the information collected and the action taken.

The general rapporteur will also ensure the political co-ordination of the PACE End Immigration Detention of Children Campaign.

In addition, the role of the general rapporteur on End Immigration Detention of Children is to:

– follow activities and maintain working relations with relevant Council of Europe intergovernmental and monitoring bodies dealing with children's rights and migration detention issues;

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

– contribute to promoting visibility of the PACE campaign through different communication channels (websites, mailing lists; Facebook page, Twitter account);

– follow up Assembly Resolution 2020 (2014) and Recommendation 2056 (2014) on "The alternatives to immigration detention of children".

Appendix 3 – Guidelines for the observation of elections by the Parliamentary Assembly

Bearing in mind the objectives and the political nature of the Parliamentary Assembly's observation missions as well as the problems deriving from the past co-operation arrangements with other international institutions, the following Guidelines were adopted by the Bureau of the Assembly on 24 May 2004 and updated by the Bureau on 7 October 2005, 16 November 2006, 23 May 2007, 8 October 2010, 27 January 2012, 29 June 2012, 17 December 2012, 6 March 2014 and **5 March 2015**.

A. Elections to be observed

1. For the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the observation of elections plays an important role in the assessment of the overall political situation of the country in question. In practical terms this entails the systematic observation of elections in any state whose parliament has requested or enjoys special guest status, partner for democracy status, which has applied for membership, or is subject to the monitoring procedure.

2. Observation of parliamentary and presidential elections as well as of referenda in an applicant State or a State under the monitoring procedure should be an inalienable right of the Assembly. A State's lack of cooperation with the Assembly, its refusal to accept an election observation mission from the Assembly should give rise to a debate at the part-session or Standing Committee meeting following the elections in question. It may result in sanctions, such as a freezing of the application procedure or the challenge of the credentials of the national delegation concerned on the basis of Rule 8.2.b.(lack of cooperation under the Assembly's monitoring procedure).

3. The Bureau may also decide to observe parliamentary and/or presidential elections, as well as referenda, in a State that is subject to the post-monitoring dialogue.

4. 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 cooperate with the election observation mission the Congress may deploy. A report on these elections by the Congress, sent to the President, should be referred, on a Bureau's proposal, to the Monitoring Committee.

5. The Bureau of the Assembly may decide to observe elections in other States when exceptional circumstances have been brought to its attention.

B. Elections as a process

1. In conducting election observations, the Assembly shall proceed from the understanding that an election is not a one-off exercise, but rather a continuous process involving several stages, all of which need to be analysed in order to assess an election. The timeline, below, based on various Venice Commission documents, shall serve as an aid in the assessment process.

2. The process starts with the elaboration of electoral legislation. The quality of that legislation is a major, although not the unique criterion to assess an election.

3. Electoral legislation should not be subject to constant change. According to Venice Commission recommendations, "the fundamental elements of electoral law… should not be open to amendment less than one year ahead of an election, or should be written in a constitution or at a level higher than ordinary law."[1] In certain circumstances, exceptions to the one year rule could be accepted, namely where there is a need to rectify, through legislation, unforeseen problems or to provide redress to violations of internationally recognised rights where they had been built into the electoral law.

4. The second stage starts with the date when an election is called. That date, in normal circumstances involving regular elections, should be reasonably distant from the voting day to allow all political stakeholders to prepare for an electoral contest.

5. The third stage starts with the opening of the electoral campaign.

6. The fourth stage is the voting day proper, and the vote counting.

7. The next stage is the declaration of results of an election, followed by a complaints period stage.

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1. Venice Commission (CDL-AD(2010)037).

C. Regarding observation and co-operation in the field

1. Considering the role played by OSCE/ODIHR in the field, the Assembly should stress the political objectives of its participation in the observation process: full respect of Council of Europe values and standards. This should be possible thanks to the Assembly's comparative assets such as the high political level of its delegations and the experience of its members.

2. Practical assistance to Assembly delegations to observe the elections, particularly the organisation of the programme for the observation mission, should be provided by the national parliament, in order to supplement properly the programme for short-term observers organised by OSCE/ODIHR.

3. Co-operation with OSCE/ODIHR and other international organisations will be continuous during the observation process in order to ensure, in so far as possible, that assessments of the elections do not differ. However, if, after the election, a joint final assessment cannot be achieved in the framework of the IEOM, the Assembly's ad hoc committee reserves itself the right, to hold -if necessary- its own press conference and issue a separate press release containing its own assessment. In this respect, it is essential that the Assembly's ad hoc committee, when organising briefings, invites the OSCE/ODIHR. Reciprocity is expected in briefings organised by OSCE/ODIHR.

D. Regarding the practical organisation of the observation

1. On the basis of past experience, the following rules will be applied:

i. the Assembly will observe elections mentioned in Section A above (any refusal to send an invitation will constitute an evaluation criterion in itself);

ii. the Assembly observers will receive accreditation from the Central Electoral Commission; the national parliament concerned will be responsible for facilitating the issuing of this accreditation;

iii. the ad hoc committees will cover a geographical area of the country which is as wide as possible when observing elections. Members of the ad hoc committee must be ready to accept deployment beyond the capital city of the country in which the elections are observed.

iv. the membership of ad hoc committees for elections will vary between 5 and 40 members and include any already appointed rapporteurs of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and the Monitoring Committee for the country concerned; in special cases the Bureau can decide to increase this number. The composition of the ad hoc committees is determined according to an appointment system taking into account the numerical size of the political groups on the understanding that each political group should be represented;

v. while rapporteurs for the monitoring of, or post-monitoring dialogue with, a given country should be encouraged to join an ad hoc committee to observe an election in that country, they should not be appointed chairpersons thereof. This is to ensure a distinction between election observation as such and monitoring and post-monitoring dialogue in the context of which the findings of an ad hoc committee are followed up. **Rapporteurs for the evaluation of the partnership for democracy of a given parliament should be encouraged to join the relevant ad hoc committee to observe election; however, they should not be appointed chairpersons thereof.** Where the said rapporteurs join an ad hoc committee to observe an election, their participation in the ad hoc committee shall be *ex officio*, and they shall not be included in the quota allotted to their political group within the meaning of paragraph iv;

vi. the Chairmanship of the ad hoc committees shall rotate between political groups to ensure, generally, an overall political balance over a 12-month period. The committee chairs shall not be nationals of neighbouring countries of the country where elections are being observed;

vii. a standard programme will be established for observation missions: three days for political meetings (organised by the national parliament), one day for the elections themselves (with cars, guides and interpreters paid for by the Assembly), one day for evaluation/assessment and the press conference;

viii. where the Bureau deems it necessary, a pre-electoral and/or a post-electoral 5-member cross-party mission may be dispatched;

ix. to enhance the mission's public profile, the ad hoc committees will be referred to as "delegations" headed by a "leader of the delegation" appointed by the Bureau;

x. while every effort should be made to ensure a political balance of ad hoc committees to observe elections, in the event when some political groups fail to come up with candidates while others put forward more candidacies than they are entitled to, the principle of a political equilibrium may be foregone in the interests of having a strong presence of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe during election observation. In such circumstances, a notification by the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly will suffice;

xi. political groups should bear it in mind that any appointment to an ad hoc committee to observe elections should aim to ensure the principle of gender balance of such a committee. Political groups should endeavour to include, in the list of representatives appointed, members of the under-represented sex in the same percentage as is present in the group;

xii. political groups should bear it in mind that any appointment to an ad hoc committee should respect fair geographical representation and be based on the candidate's express capability, language-wise, to meaningfully participate in the work of the mission, in particular, given that on the spot the Council of Europe only provides interpretation to and from English or French. It should be pointed out that English is the de facto working language of the OSCE/ODHIR election observation missions. At internal meetings of the ad hoc committees, in addition to the members, the only persons authorised to participate are 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;

xiii. members of an ad hoc committee are encouraged to plan their travel arrangement in a way that would allow them to participate in the briefings in their entirety, to observe on election day and to participate in the ad hoc committee 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;

xiv. members of the ad hoc committee should be aware that as far as the funding of their participation in the work of the ad hoc committee is concerned, Article 38 of the Statute of the Council of Europe shall apply ("*Each member shall bear the expenses of its own representation in the Committee of Ministers and in the Parliamentary Assembly*");

E. Local staff

1. Staff recruited locally by the Council of Europe for the specific purposes of a pre-electoral, electoral or post-electoral mission (eg interpreters, drivers) are expected to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest by signing a written statement and not to take any action which would cause damage to the reputation and integrity of the mission.

F. Conflict of interest and code of conduct of members of ad hoc committees

1. 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 appended to Resolution 1903 (2012).

2. In particular, members of ad hoc committees, in the accomplishment of their pre-electoral, electoral or post-electoral duties, shall avoid conflicts between any actual or potential economic, commercial, financial of other interests on a professional, personal or family level and their election observation activity in the country concerned; if a member is unable to avoid such a conflict of interest it should be disclosed.

3. Members shall not request or accept any fee, compensation or reward intended to affect his or her conduct as a member of an ad hoc committee. They shall avoid any situation that could appear to be a conflict of interest or receiving an inappropriate payment or gift.

4. All candidates for membership of an ad hoc committee, at the time of putting forward their candidacy shall make a written declaration regarding the absence or otherwise 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. In accordance with paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct, they shall also register with the Secretariat of the Assembly any gifts or similar benefits (such as travel, accommodation, subsistence, meals or entertainment expenses) of a value in excess of 200 euros that they have accepted in the last twenty four months from the authorities of the country concerned, either directly or indirectly.

5. The aforementioned declarations shall be made available to the Bureau when it approves the composition of an ad hoc committee. Failure to sign such declarations shall disqualify the member concerned from being appointed to the ad hoc committee in question.

6. Members of an ad hoc committee shall refrain from engaging in public statements interviews, press conferences or communications via social networks which could contradict or conflict with the final assessment made by the ad hoc committee. This applies at all stages of the process: during the pre-electoral period, including in the context of a pre-electoral mission, during and following the election day, including in the context of a post-electoral mission.

7. Members of an ad hoc committee shall abstain from engaging in public activities which could appear to interfere in the electoral process or could be considered as partisan. This applies at all stages of the process: during the pre-electoral period, including in the context of a pre-electoral mission, during and following election day, including in the context of a post-electoral mission.

8. Additionally, the provisions stipulated in the Code of Conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly (Resolution 1799 (2011) shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to chairpersons of ad hoc committees over and above the provisions of the Appendix to Resolution 1903 (2012).

9. Alleged breaches of paragraphs 18-21 and 23-25 above shall be dealt with in the manner prescribed in paragraphs 17 to 20 of the appendix to Resolution 1903 (2012).

G. Election observation reports

1. The Chairperson of an ad hoc committee shall draft a report on the election observation mission, which is submitted to the Bureau and subsequently to the Assembly as part of the progress report of the Bureau.

2. This report shall be based on the information received during the meetings held during the mission, in line with the press release and preliminary findings and conclusions of the International election observation mission (IEOM), and take into account the comments and assessments of members of the ad hoc committee regarding election day made during the ad hoc committee's meeting on the day following the vote or in written form within a deadline fixed by the Chairperson, as well as relevant documents of the Monitoring Committee, the Venice Commission and other reliable sources. In principle, all members of the ad hoc committee shall be consulted on the draft before the report is issued.

H. Form of Election Observation by the Assembly

1. The observation of elections by the Assembly can take place in one of the following three forms upon decision of the Bureau.

a. *Election Observation Missions*. These take the form of an ad hoc Committee set up for this purpose. The size may vary from 5 to 40 members, Committees are composed on the basis of proposals by the Political Groups taking into account the D'Hondt rule. The Chairperson of the ad hoc Committee is appointed by the Bureau of the Assembly. Chairmanship rotates between political groups. Election Observation Missions issue a statement of their findings immediately following the elections, where applicable in the framework of an IEOM. A pre-electoral mission shall be conducted following a Bureau's decision.

b. *Election Assessment Missions*. These take the form of an ad hoc Committee specifically set up for this purpose. Election Assessment Missions are normally composed of five members, but never less than three members, in order to guarantee a minimum political and geographical balance of the ad hoc Committee. The Chairperson of the ad hoc Committee is appointed by the Bureau. Chairmanship rotates between political groups. The ad hoc Committee will report its findings in the form of a memorandum by its Chairperson to the Bureau. No pre-electoral mission will be conducted.

c. *Presence on the Occasion of Election* of Assembly members during and/or just before an election without a formal observation or assessment of it. Accordingly, the Bureau does not set up an ad hoc committee but decides on the dates of the mission. These missions are normally composed of the country rapporteur(s) of the Monitoring Committee or the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy. In exceptional cases, the Bureau can appoint one of its members to participate in these missions. This mission will report their findings in the form of a memorandum to the Bureau.

2. Election Observation Missions for which less than five members are identified shall be considered as Election Assessment Missions. In the event that three members cannot be identified for an assessment mission, the mission shall be cancelled. Time allowing, the possibility of ensuring a presence could then be considered by the Bureau of the Assembly.

Appendix 4 – Adoption of declarations

The following Guidelines were approved by the Bureau of the Assembly on 5 March 2015.

1. With regard to declarations as a communication tool of the Assembly:

1.1. the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, who "shall represent the Assembly in its external and international relations", shall act as the spokesperson of the Assembly; he or she alone shall speak on behalf of the Assembly, in particular on topical questions which require a quick reaction or for which several committees are responsible;

1.2. Committee chairpersons, rapporteurs and general rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly may, in line with the Assembly's communication policy, speak on subjects for which the committee/rapporteur concerned is responsible provided that the President of the Assembly has not already taken a position; they may not substitute their assessment for that of the Assembly.

2. With regard to declarations as a decision-making instrument of the Assembly:

2.1. a declaration must be formally approved by, and on behalf of, an official body of the Parliamentary Assembly, i.e. the Bureau, the Standing Committee or a committee;[2]

2.2. a declaration must concern a subject which comes within the competence of the Council of Europe and falls within the remit of the body which produces it;

2.3. by analogy with a written declaration or a motion for a text presented by members of the Assembly, it might be useful to prescribe the form of declarations (presentation in both official languages and maximum length of 300 words);

2.4. out of a concern for transparency, examination and approval of a declaration must comply with the rules below:

2.4.1. it must be included on the agenda for examination and approval at the latest when the committee, Bureau or Standing Committee adopt the agenda at the beginning of the meeting;

2.4.2. the draft must be distributed in the same conditions in terms of form and deadline, as any other document (Rule 47.5 for a committee, Rule 17.6 for the Standing Committee), except in urgent situations at the request of the President of the Assembly (for the Standing Committee and Bureau) or the chairperson of the committee concerned;

2.4.3. approval must be by the majority of votes cast, subject to the requisite quorum (by analogy with the procedure laid down for the adoption of motions for texts by committees – Rule 25.2);

2.5. declarations are not motions for texts (Rule 25) and may not be referred to committees for a report or be debated in the Assembly.

2. Sub-committees do not have a decision-making remit and should therefore not be entitled to approve declarations.