



Newsletter of the EPP/CD Group in the Parliamentary Assembly of the
Council of Europe

June 2009

Parliamentary Assembly

The Parliamentary Assembly met in Strasbourg from 27 – 30 April .

During a short but extremely intense week, the Assembly adopted reports on

- ❖ The protection of human rights in emergency situations (Rapporteur Mr Holger Haibach, CDU, D)
- ❖ The situation of human rights defenders in Council of Europe member states (Rapporteur Mr Holger Haibach, CDU, D)
- ❖ Honouring of obligations and commitments by Serbia
- ❖ Action to combat gender-based human rights violations, including abduction of women and girls
- ❖ Women in prison (Rapporteur for opinion Mrs Gultakin Hajibayli, Indep, Azerbaijan)
- ❖ Annual activity report 2008 by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights; followed by a Statement by Mr Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
- ❖ Growing food and fuel
- ❖ Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee (Rapporteur Mr Joachim Hörster CDU, D) including a report on the Assembly's observation of presidential elections in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (22 March 2009 and 5 April 2009) presented by Ms Marietta de Pourbaix-Lundin (MOD, Sweden), President of the election observation mission)

The Assembly heard the regular Communication from the Committee of Ministers presented by Mr Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers and was addressed by

- ✓ Mrs Tarja Halonen, President of Finland and
- ✓ Mr José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Government of Spain.

The Assembly held a lengthy joint debate on two reports following-up on to debates held in January :

- the Follow-up given by Georgia and Russia to Resolution 1647 (2009) (Co-Rapporteur Mr Luc Van den Brande (CD&V, B) and
- The humanitarian consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia: Follow-up given to Resolution 1648 (2009) (Rapporteur Mrs Corien W.A. Jonker, CDA, NL)

The Assembly held debates under urgent procedure on

- the functioning of democratic institutions in Moldova (Co-rapporteur Mr Egidijus Vareikis (TS/LK, Lithuania) and
- “Draft Protocol No. 14 bis to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

Election of the Council of Europe Secretary General

Following the decision taken by the Ministers’ Deputies (Ambassadors) in the week prior to the Assembly to transmit a list of just two names (of the four candidatures presented by governments of Member States) to the Assembly for the election of the Council of Europe Secretary General, the Parliamentary Assembly held an emergency debate during its April session and adopted (Resolution 1665 (2009)) on ***‘The election process for the Secretary General of the Council of Europe’*** on 29 April.

This Resolution was aimed at ensuring that when the Parliamentary Assembly met on 22/23 June to elect the new Secretary General of the Organisation at arguably one of the most crucial times in its history, the Assembly would be in a position to choose from amongst the widest possible list of candidates. The Resolution was adopted by a majority of 158 votes in favour, 1 vote against and 11 abstentions representing all political groups and national delegations.

The Committee of Ministers met on 12 May and decided to transmit to the Parliamentary Assembly a list of two candidates for election to the post of Secretary General, despite the request clearly contained in the April Resolution and despite the ruling by the Assembly Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs that the 1956 Rules had not been respected. The Standing Committee, statutorily the Assembly between plenary sessions, met in Ljubljana on 29 May last and, following a lengthy debate on the matter, adopted a Statement. The debate took place in the presence of Mr Samuel ŽBOGAR, Foreign Minister of Slovenia and President in office of the Committee of Ministers. The Statement underlines the necessity for the new Secretary General of the Council of Europe to enjoy the support and confidence of two of the most important organs of the Council – the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers and the wish of the Assembly to select a Secretary General from the widest possible list of candidates representing a variety of political orientations.

It is to be hoped that the Committee of Ministers will engage in real and meaningful consultations with the Parliamentary Assembly, as the 1956 rules

require, prior to the June Assembly session in order to facilitate the election of the new Secretary General. The term of office of the current Secretary General comes to an end on 31 August 2009.

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A number of events have taken place across the continent in recent weeks to mark the **60th anniversary of the Council of Europe**.

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The 29 May Standing Committee held in Ljubljana adopted reports on :

- ✚ Budgets of the Council of Europe for the financial year 2010
- ✚ Expenditure of the Parliamentary Assembly for the financial year 2010
- ✚ Protecting financial aid granted by Council of Europe member states to poor countries against financial funds known as “vulture funds”
- ✚ Ban on cluster munitions (Rapporteur for opinion M Holger Haibach, CDU, D)
- ✚ The rights of today’s girls: the rights of tomorrow’s women (Rapporteur Mrs Ingrida Circene (New Era, LV)
- ✚ Sexual violence against women in armed conflict (Rapporteur Mrs Miet Smet, CD&V, B)

The Standing Committee was addressed by Mr Pavel Gantar, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (Državni Zbor) and Mr Samuel Žbogar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The Slovene Presidency of the Committee of Ministers continues until November 2009.

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The Parliamentary Assembly will meet in Strasbourg from 22 – 26 June 2009 and is scheduled to debate reports on :

- ✓ Situation in Belarus (Rapporteur for opinion Mr Christos Pourgourides (DR, CY)
- ✓ The activities of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in 2008: reinforcing economic and democratic stability; followed by a Statement by Mr Thomas Mirow, President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- ✓ The challenges of the financial crisis to the world economic institutions (Rapporteur Mr Kimmo Sasi (KOK, SF)
- ✓ Reconsideration on substantial grounds of previously ratified credentials of the Ukrainian delegation

- ✓ Europe's forgotten people: protecting the human rights of long-term displaced persons
- ✓ The functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia (Co-rapporteur Mr Georges Colombier (UMP, France))
- ✓ Lobbying in a democratic society (European Code of conduct on lobbying) (Rapporteur Mr José Mendes Bota (PSD, P))
- ✓ The funding of public service broadcasting
- ✓ Renewable energies and the environment (Rapporteur Mr Jean-François Le Grand (UMP, F))
- ✓ Nuclear energy and sustainable development (Rapporteur for opinion Ms Anna Lilliehöök (MOD, S))
- ✓ Establishment of a "Partner for democracy" status with the Parliamentary Assembly (Rapporteur Mr Luc Van den Brande (CD&V, B))
- ✓ History teaching in conflict and post-conflict areas .
- ✓ The urgent need to combat so-called "honour crimes"
- ✓ Draft Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the Right to Participate in the Affairs of a Local Authority
- ✓ Draft Protocol No. 3 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning Euroregional co-operation groupings (ECGs)

The Assembly will hold its annual debate on the state of human rights in Europe: the need to eradicate impunity and the state of human rights in Europe and the progress of the Assembly's monitoring procedure and hear Statements by

- Mr Antonio Cassese, President of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, former President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia;
- Mrs Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;
- Ms Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International; and
- Ms Holly Cartner, Director for Europe and Central Asia, Human Rights Watch

The Assembly will welcome

- ✚ Mr Theo-Ben Gurirab, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- ✚ Mr Samuel Žbogar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers
- ✚ Mr Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe; and
- ✚ Mrs Mary McAleese, President of Ireland

and is expected to elect a judge to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to San Marino

European Elections :

We congratulate our many current and former members who participated in recent elections to the European Parliament and congratulate particularly EPP/CD Group Vice President, Mrs Nadezhda MIHAYLOVA, elected to the Parliament in Bulgaria.

For regular updates please log-on to the Group Website (www.epp-cd.eu).

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