

SECRETARIAT

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## To the members of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

### Synopsis of the meeting held in Yerevan on 9-10 December 2024

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, meeting in Yerevan on 9-10 December 2024, with Mr Pablo Hispán (Spain, EPP/CD), Second Vice-Chairperson, in the Chair, as regards:

- on Monday 9 December 2024 at 10am,
  - **Welcoming address:** heard a welcoming address by H.E. Mr Alen Simonyan, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, and an opening statement by Mr Ruben Rubinyan, Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia and Chairperson of the Armenian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; then heard a statement by video by Mr Theodoros Rousopoulos, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe followed by a statement by Ms Despina Chatzivassiliou-Tsovilis, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
  - **Legal and humanitarian aspects related to Azerbaijan's military operation in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the refugee situation in Armenia:** held a hearing with the participation of:  
  
Mr Yeghishe Kirakosyan, Representative of the Republic of Armenia before the International Court of Justice  
Ms Anahit Manasyan, Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia  
Ms Mariam Poghosyan, forcibly displaced civilian from the Nagorno-Karabakh region  
  
then held an exchange of views on the refugee situation with Ms Monica Sandri, Representative ad interim, UNHCR Armenia;
  - **Implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights – 12th report:** held a hearing related to Armenia with the participation of:  
  
Mr Yeghishe Kirakosyan, Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the European Court of Human Rights  
Ms Arpi Harutyunyan, Justice and Human Rights Portfolios Manager, Democracy Development Foundation  
Ms Araks Melkonyan, President, "The Protection of Rights without Borders" Non-Governmental Organisation;

– **References transmitted to the committee:**

**Appointment of Rapporteurs:**

- Draft Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer (subject to the request from the Committee of Ministers and reference to the committee for opinion): in anticipation of this request, appointed Mr Vladimir Vardanyan (Armenia, EPP/CD) and heard from him a declaration on absence of conflict of interest;

**Appointment of Rapporteurs for opinion:**

- Bürgenstock summit on peace in Ukraine: paving the way (Rapporteur of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy: Mr Damien Cottier (Switzerland, ALDE)): appointed Ms Olena Khomenko (Ukraine, EC/DA) and heard from her a declaration on absence of conflict of interest;
- Support for political negotiations to enforce exchange and release of prisoners of war (Rapporteur for the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy: Ms Yelyzaveta Yasko (Ukraine, EPP/CD)): appointed Ms Rian Vogels (Netherlands, ALDE) in absentia (subject to her declaration on absence of conflict of interest at a future meeting);

**Call for a Rapporteur:**

- Threats to life and safety of journalists and human rights defenders in Azerbaijan

**Call for a Rapporteur for opinion:**

- Journalists matter: the need to step up efforts to liberate Ukrainian journalists held in captivity by the Russian Federation (Rapporteur for the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media: Ms Yevheniia Kravchuk (Ukraine, ALDE);

**For information:**

- Role of the Council of Europe in countering the sanctions' evasion and creating a Register of entities assisting the Russian Federation in circumventing restrictive measures: took note of the reference sent to the committee by the Bureau for information;

– **Private military companies, mercenaries, foreign fighters and their impact on human rights** (Rapporteur: Mr Andrea Orlando, *Italie, SOC*): considered a draft report, agreed to change the title of the report to “Addressing risks to human rights and the rule of law posed by mercenaries and private military companies: a call for comprehensive regulation” and unanimously adopted a draft resolution and a draft recommendation;

– **Proceeds of the crime denounced by Sergei Magnitsky found in Switzerland must not be returned to the presumed perpetrators** (Rapporteur: Ms Lesia Vasylenko, *Ukraine, ALDE*): in the absence of the Rapporteur considered an introductory memorandum and held an exchange of views with Mr Andreas Gross, former member of the Parliamentary Assembly and former Rapporteur on “Refusing impunity for the killers of Sergei Magnitsky”; agreed to the Rapporteur’s request to carry out a fact-finding visit to Bern, and to organise a hearing with experts at a forthcoming meeting, both subject to the availability of funds;

– **Regulating foreign influence: best practices and European standards:** held a hearing with the participation of:

Mr Julien Mousnier, Director of Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy at Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, European Commission (online)

Mr Giorgi Oniani, Deputy Executive Director at Transparency International, Georgia;

- **Ensuring better protection of whistle-blowers in Europe** (*Rapporteur: Ms Anna-Kristiina Mikkonen, Finland, SOC*): held a hearing with the participation of:

Ms Anna Myers, Executive Director, Whistleblowing International Network, United Kingdom  
Ms Vigjilence Abazi, Assistant Professor of European Law, University of Maastricht;

- **Other business**

- Requests for extension of references:

- “Threats to life and safety of journalists and human rights defenders in Azerbaijan”: agreed to request the Bureau for an extension until 31 December 2025;
    - “Legal aspects of the accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights” (*Rapporteur: Mr Titus Corlăţean, Romania, SOC*): agreed to ask the Bureau for an extension until 30 June 2025;

- Appointment of a representative for the World Congress on Enforced Disappearances (15-16 January 2025 in Geneva): appointed Mr Constantinos Efstathiou (Cyprus, SOC) to participate on behalf of the President of the Assembly, subject to the availability of funds;

- **on Tuesday 10 December 2024 at 10am,**

- **International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, 9 December** : instructed the secretariat to submit at a future meeting a draft motion for a resolution on the obligation under the 1948 Genocide Convention on States to prevent and punish genocide and held a hearing with the participation of:

Mr Luis Moreno Ocampo, former Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court  
Ms Edita Gzoyan, Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation;

- **Opinion on the Draft Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer** (*Rapporteur: Mr Vladimir Vardanyan, Armenia, EPP/CD*): held a hearing with the participation of:

Dr. Christoph Henrichs, LL.M., German Federal Ministry of Justice, Head of Section "International Law, Law of International Organisations", Chair of the Committee of Experts on the Protection of Lawyers (CJ-AV) tasked with drafting of the Convention (online)  
Mr Laurent Pettiti, President of the French Bar Delegation in Brussels, Representative of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)  
Mr Arnold Vardanyan, member of the Armenian Chamber of Advocates;

- **Legal and human rights aspects of the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine** (*Rapporteur: Mr Eerik-Niiles Kross Estonia, ALDE*): in the absence of the Rapporteur considered an introductory memorandum, agreed to hold a hearing during the January part-session (open to the public should the experts agree) focusing on the issue of missing Ukrainian POWs and civilians and authorised the Rapporteur to conduct a fact-finding visit to Kyiv, both subject to the availability of funds;

- **Committee of experts on the protection of the environment through Criminal Law (PC-ENV)**: heard an update by the committee’s representative, Mr Constantinos Efstathiou (Cyprus, SOC);

- **Hearings during the next meeting**: agreed to holding the following hearings, subject to the availability of funds, and that they be open to the public (should the experts agree):

- “Proceeds of the crime denounced by Sergei Magnitsky found in Switzerland must not be returned to the presumed perpetrators” (*Rapporteur: Ms Lesia Vasylenko, Ukraine, ALDE*)
  - “Legal and human rights aspects of the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine” (*Rapporteur: Mr Eerik-Niiles Kross (Estonia, ALDE)*), focusing on missing Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilians;
  - A joint hearing with the Monitoring Committee on the implementation of judgments of the ECtHR by Türkiye in preparation of the report on “Implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights – 12th report” (*Rapporteur: Mr Constantinos Efstathiou, Cyprus, SOC*);

- **Next meetings:** took note of the forthcoming meetings and confirmed the meeting on 3 March 2025 in Paris;

*Plenary Committee:*

- during the Assembly's 1<sup>st</sup> part-session 2025 (27-31 January 2025)
- 3 March 2025, Paris Office
- during the Assembly's 2<sup>nd</sup> part-session of 2025 (7-11 April 2025)
- 13 May 2025, Paris Office (t.b.c.)
- during the Assembly's 3<sup>rd</sup> part-session of 2025 (23-27 June 2025)
- 8 September 2023, Paris Office (t.b.c.)
- during the Assembly's 4<sup>th</sup> part-session of 2025 (29<sup>th</sup> September – 3 October 2025)
- 10 December 2025, Paris Office (t.b.c.)

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Günter Schirmer, Guillem Cano-Palomares, Rafał Sokół

cc:

Secretary General of the Assembly

Directors and all staff of the Secretariat of the Assembly

Secretaries of National Delegations and of Political Groups of the Assembly

Secretaries of observer and partner for democracy delegations

Secretary General of the Congress

Secretary to the Committee of Ministers

Directors General

Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Director of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights

Director of Communication

Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe