



AS/Per (2025) PV 02

26 January 2026

Standing Committee

Minutes

of the meeting held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

on Friday 21 November 2025

1. Opening of the meeting by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly

Mr Theodoros Rousopoulos, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, **opened** the meeting and welcomed the participants. The priorities of the presidency of the Republic of Moldova were consistent with those of the Assembly and offered opportunities for developing synergies with the Committee of Ministers. The Assembly looked forward to working with the presidency.

Support for Ukraine, including the functioning of its democratic institutions, and ensuring the accountability of the Russian Federation would continue to be top priorities for the Council of Europe. Referring to the recent attacks against the European Convention on Human Rights, the President warned against a hasty attempt to modify the Convention for the sake of short-term political gains. If changes were ever needed, they had to be discussed calmly, thoroughly and democratically. The latest attempt to orchestrate Latvia's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention showed that populism and disinformation constituted serious threats and that there was no room for complacency. The system of protection of women's rights had to be strengthened. In that context, the President reminded that a roundtable on the Istanbul Convention would be held in the afternoon. The call for candidates for the third edition of the Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment had also been launched.

2. Welcome address by Mr Igor Grosu, President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova

Mr Grosu noted that the Republic of Moldova's presidency of the Committee of Ministers coincided with the 30th anniversary of the country's accession to the Council of Europe. The geopolitical context had drastically changed in the last three decades: war had returned to the continent and European values were in danger. Against this background and conscious of the fragility of its democratic institutions, the Republic of Moldova had initiated drastic reforms, managing in record time to build its energy independence, highly investing in education and health, tackling electoral corruption and increasing its presence in the international arena. The choice made by the citizens of Moldova was loud and clear: Europe was their home and the direction in which they were heading. Mr Grosu paid tribute to the resilience of his fellow countrymen and women as well as to the courage and bravery of the Ukrainians and expressed his appreciation for Europe's long-standing support to Moldova.

3. Exchange of views with Mr Mihai Popșoi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe [CM/Inf (2025) 14, CM/Inf (2025) 15]

Welcoming the Standing Committee, **Mr Popșoi** stressed that in the current geopolitical context, the role of the Council of Europe in safeguarding democracy, human rights and the rule of law was more crucial than ever. The presidency of the Republic of Moldova would be guided by three major axes: support for Ukraine and accountability for the crime of aggression committed by the Russian Federation; support for the work on the New Democratic Pact; strengthened response to disinformation, including foreign information manipulation and interference. Moldova's presidency and accession negotiations with the European Union launched in June 2024 were mutually reinforcing the country's national and collective commitment to the core European values. The recent unprecedented hybrid campaign to foster instability and fuel polarisation in the country and undermine the parliamentary elections had failed thanks above all to the resilience of Moldovan citizens. The elections in Moldova had demonstrated that democracy can prevail even under relentless pressure. The Council of Europe's consistent support throughout the country's democratic transformation had been an invaluable tool in building resilience. The Republic of Moldova remained fully committed to advancing Europe's shared values and contributing constructively to the Organisation's agenda.

Ms Bayr commended the resilience of Moldovan citizens and Moldovan authorities' appropriate response to hybrid attacks. She wondered whether such attacks would continue, adapting to their "new" environment, and how countries could co-operate to tackle hybrid attacks and increase their democratic resilience.

The Deputy Prime Minister believed that the Kremlin would adapt and pursue its hybrid attacks. Strength would come from unity. Therefore, Moldova was sharing its experience on tackling malign interference with countries where elections were approaching and remained ready to provide support to any friendly country.

Ms Julhakyan asked about the protection of national courts from possible state interference.

The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that in the last five years, there had been a particular focus on fighting corruption and ensuring the independence of the courts. Moldova had undergone a tedious reform of vetting judges and prosecutors, the results of which were already visible. He dismissed any allegation of state interference in the judiciary.

Ms Gardini asked how the Assembly could support Moldova's European integration process and accelerate reforms in the country.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that by objectively assessing the situation, commending and supporting progress while also pinpointing areas where improvements were needed, the Assembly would be providing the best support to his country.

Mr Bulai asked about the presidency's plans in moving forward with the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine and whether the Council of Europe Development Bank could finance some of the infrastructure projects in Moldova.

The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that his country was fully committed to fighting against impunity and ensuring accountability. The convention establishing the International Claims Commission would be opened for signature in The Hague in December 2025 under the Moldovan presidency. The Moldovan Government had launched a project to construct a modern penitentiary facility in Chisinau with part of its financing secured as a loan from the Council of Europe Development Bank.

Mr Loucaides asked about the presidency's planned initiatives to implement the provisions of the European Social Charter which would celebrate its 65th anniversary in 2026. Instead of addressing inequalities, poverty and social exclusion, which were amongst the root causes of democratic backsliding, huge resources were being invested in the militarisation of Europe.

The Deputy Prime Minister replied that the European Social Charter system was a priority for the presidency. Most of the older citizens in Moldova were living below the extreme poverty line. Hence, the first piece of legislation passed by the government had increased the minimum pension. There had also been significant efforts to promote children's and women's rights, including through the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Given its precarious security situation, the country had to strike a balance between providing support to those in need and investing in defence and security.

Ms Kluit asked the Deputy Prime Minister to elaborate on the relation between social rights and the New Democratic Pact.

Mr Efstathiou asked how the authorities fought disinformation and guaranteed the freedom of expression at the same time.

Lord Jones also raised the issue of disinformation and asked what additional measures were envisaged to address this phenomenon.

The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that a high-level conference on the revised European Social Charter would be held in March 2026. The presidency was keen on supporting initiatives to consolidate democracy and tackle democratic backsliding. The dichotomy between liberty and security was a real issue. In Moldova's experience, a country that was truly honest about its commitment to democratic values would be able to strike a balance between defending national security and securing democratic freedoms and would not use external threats as an excuse to justify anti-democratic measures. In combating disinformation, some bold decisions had to be made in the short term to mitigate immediate threats. In this context, engaging with citizens, media and international partners, such as the Venice Commission, and getting their feedback were crucial. The entire Moldovan society and independent media had mobilised to combat Russian disinformation. In medium and long term however, sustainable resilience could only be built by increasing media literacy and critical thinking through education. This required time, effort and political commitment.

4. Examination of new credentials

[Doc. 16295]

The Standing Committee **ratified** the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegations of Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

5. Modifications in the composition of committees

[Commissions (2025) 07, Commissions (2025) 07 Add.]

The Standing Committee **approved** the changes in the composition of Assembly committees as set out in document Commissions (2025) 07 and its addendum.

6. Request for a current affairs debate (under Rule 53 of the Rules of Procedure)

The President informed members that a request for a current affairs debate entitled "Citizens' mobilisation in the defence of human rights and democracy: recent developments in Latvia" had been submitted by the leaders of Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe; Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group; Group of the European People's Party; and Group of the Unified European Left.

The Bureau had agreed to recommend holding this current affairs debate and appointed Mr Edmunds Cepurītis (Latvia, SOC) as the first speaker.

The Standing Committee **approved** the proposal of the Bureau.

7. Agenda

[AS/Per (2025) OJ 02 rev3]

The draft agenda was **adopted**.

8. First part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly (26-30 January 2026)

[AS/Bur (2025) 62]

The Standing Committee **took note** of the preliminary draft agenda of the first-part session of the Assembly.

9. References to committees

[AS/Per (2025) 06]

The Standing Committee **ratified** the references proposed by the Bureau (see Appendix 1).

10. Observation of elections

Observation of the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova (28 September 2025)

[Doc. 16296]

Mr Said, Chairperson of the Ad hoc committee of the Bureau, noted that the Republic of Moldova had gone through one of the most heavily targeted elections in Europe, with Russia deploying a full spectrum of hybrid tools, including AI-generated disinformation; crypto-financed vote-buying and cash-based bribery networks; cyberattacks on state systems; and even bomb threats at polling stations abroad. The legal arsenal that the authorities had developed against these tools was welcome but their late introduction in the election process was problematic. The Moldovan institutions had remarkably fought back against interference, working together to raise awareness of disinformation, dismantle some vote-buying schemes and disrupt plans for orchestrated violence. The Moldovan people's exemplary mobilisation had largely contributed to the positive outcome of the elections, which had confirmed the country's European path. This had to be used as an opportunity to increase pluralism and inclusiveness and to anchor Moldova firmly in Europe. International partners and European Union should continue to invest in independent institutions, media and civil society, thus translating the promise of EU integration into concrete benefits that citizens could feel. The Assembly should help ensure that Moldova's achievements would be protected, deepened and shared.

The President asked what the most difficult issue had been during the elections, and which stakeholders had been particularly vocal on alerting against misinformation. He also wondered whether the Ad hoc committee members had encountered any kind of hostility.

Mr Said noted that before the elections, there had been serious concerns about the handling of the voting process on the left bank of the Nistru River (Transnistria). In fact, the number of polling stations in this region had been reduced drastically after the presidential elections. Based on the first-hand experience of the Ad hoc committee, he was pleased to confirm that the vote in this region had been orderly. The local NGOs had been very vocal about the misinformation campaigns. The Assembly delegation had been well received by all stakeholders.

As a member of the Ad hoc committee, **Ms Estrela** stressed that the elections had been competitive and offered genuine choice to citizens. Election administrators were professional and committed, procedures had been generally well organised, and no major irregularities had been observed. As for shortcomings, she referred to the misuse of administrative resources and the problem of disinformation campaigns. Ensuring equal access to voting for all citizens of Moldova should be the priority in the next elections.

Mr Said noted that the Central Election Commission (CEC) had dealt with several complaints on the misuse of administrative resources. One of the matters that had been constantly brought to the attention of the Ad hoc committee was the composition of the CEC. Since most of its members were nominated by the government, the CEC's decisions were not considered impartial. Having said that, Mr Said was generally impressed by the work carried out by the CEC.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that the CEC, whose composition was prescribed by law, included the representatives of the opposition, and had worked professionally and independently. Compared to past elections, huge improvements had been made in relation to the use of administrative resources. For example, all ministers, including himself, had been suspended from office for the duration of the campaign. The elections had been democratic and genuinely competitive, notwithstanding the fact that some political parties had distributed cash to voters as part of their

campaign. The CEC's decisions not allowing certain political parties to run in the elections were justified by the imperative of upholding democracy as there was ample evidence on their shady connections with the Kremlin. He also stressed that most of the ballots in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova – and in the polling stations in Moscow – had remained unused. Moldova was doing better than most of the EU-candidate countries, and even than some of the EU member states.

The Secretary General of the Assembly stressed that for the first time, a monitoring exercise for out-of-country voting had been planned for the Moldovan elections due to the potential impact of the diaspora vote on their outcome. Eventually, it could not be organised due to time constraints but would be put in place for the next relevant elections.

Mr Said paid tribute to the members of the Ad hoc committee, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament, and the Council of Europe office in Moldova. He commended the Moldovan authorities for quickly drawing the lessons from the last presidential elections and developing appropriate responses to foreign interference. He was confident that the recommendations of the election observation report aimed at improving the existing electoral framework would be implemented in due time.

The Standing Committee **took note** of the report of the Ad hoc Committee of the Bureau on the Observation of the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova.

11. Equality and Non-Discrimination

Preventing and combating gender discrimination in health

[Doc. 16286]

Presenting her report, **Ms Fabricius** noted that gender discrimination in health was a widespread phenomenon. A reflection of gender discrimination in society, it was amplified by intersectional forms of discrimination related to disabilities, age, origin, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, social status and religion. The lack of research on conditions affecting women and the gender bias of health researchers and practitioners, including in terms of pain felt by women, led to misdiagnosis and lack of treatment. For instance, on average, endometriosis took seven to ten years to diagnose, and no treatment had yet been found to reduce women's pain related with this disease. Men continued to be the norm for medical research, and treatments were designed for them, without due consideration of the specific characteristics and needs of women. With a view to addressing these issues, member states had to invest in gender sensitive health research and treatment, as well as increase gender awareness and training for health practitioners. Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare must be guaranteed. Sexual and gender-based violence in the health sector – between patients and health professionals and among the health professionals themselves – also needed to be tackled.

Ms Kluit asked whether there were strategies to help women get a better position in the healthcare system.

Echoing the conclusions of the report, **Ms Laković** reiterated that gender inequality in health was real; women's pain was ignored, their symptoms were taken lightly, and their diagnosis often came late. Diseases that mostly affected women were under-researched and they were missing from many clinical trials. This all led to preventable suffering and health gaps that no modern society should accept. The draft resolution, which she fully supported, offered a useful roadmap to ensure equal access to health for women, as well as other groups suffering from discrimination and stigma.

Ms Fabricius noted that while all European countries had to make huge improvements in terms of women's health, some countries had chosen to focus on one specific women's health issue, such as endometriosis (France) or menopause (United Kingdom). Others had established a research team about women's health (Norway) or a research centre prioritising women's health (Denmark). The fact remained however that only 4% of global funding for research was devoted to women's health. Yet, all hope was not lost, and the potential economic impact of improving women's health was starting to be understood.

Ms Çelenk, third vice-chairperson of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, stressed that gender discrimination in health was a serious issue that required courageous political action and significant investment in research. Awareness-raising campaigns with strong clear messages, including among health practitioners to combat unconscious gender bias, could start changing mindsets. She praised the rapporteur's work and commitment and invited members to support a report that not only denounced gender discrimination and violence in healthcare but also called for immediate action with concrete recommendations.

The Standing Committee **unanimously adopted** the resolution "Preventing and combating gender discrimination in health" [Resolution 2631 (2025)].

12. Current affairs debate on “Citizens’ mobilisation in the defence of human rights and democracy: recent developments in Latvia”

Introducing the debate, **Mr Cepurītis** stressed that the Latvian Parliament's initial decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention should have never happened, as it was fast-tracked, not justified by facts, and was condemned by civil society. He paid tribute to the urgency with which numerous parliaments, governments and the President of the Assembly had reacted to this decision, which had had a lot of impact both within the walls of the parliament and in the Latvian society. But above all, it was the exceptional mobilisation of the Latvian society that had led the parliament to finally decide to pass the question to the next parliament. Thousands had gone to the streets to defend not only the convention and the victims of domestic violence, but also Latvia's European path. Digital direct participation tools (via collection of signatures) had also had a huge impact on the outcome. There had also been a genuine effort to discredit the narratives developed, spread and financed by Russia. Latvia's case clearly demonstrated the civil society's key role in safeguarding human rights.

Ms Beate Jonite, Head of policy and advocacy of MARTA Centre in Riga and head organiser of the mobilisation in support of the Istanbul Convention, said that Latvians had made history by standing up for human rights and democracy in such high numbers. Since the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, there had been more and faster policy changes and practical improvements for victim protection and prevention of violence than there had been in the past 20 years. Therefore, the proposal to withdraw from the Convention had come as a shock: it was clear from the start that this was a reckless move to emotionally divide the Latvian society and bolster individual political ambitions. Ms Bonite then elaborated on the way civil society organised the mobilisation campaign against the withdrawal, stressing the strong sense of unity among all stakeholders. The campaign's focus had gradually shifted from the Convention towards the more general question of the direction the country was taking. The protests had also moved into the mainstream, symbolising a broader societal awakening and a collective refusal to abandon the principles that underpin a democratic nation. As a result, political parties had reached a consensus to defer any further decisions regarding the Convention to the next parliament. While this outcome was to be welcome, activists as well as politicians supporting the Convention were subject to harassment, and even rape and death threats. There was also a widespread attack on civil society. Latvia's experience offered an important lesson for Europe: investing in civic resilience and youth engagement and ensuring transparent policy making were essential safeguards for human rights.

Mr Stamatis stressed the important legacy of the Istanbul Convention. Parliamentarians had the duty to support the Latvian people, encourage the Latvian human rights defenders and civil society, and fight against similar attempts to attack the Istanbul Convention in other European countries.

Mr Graf warned against political influence imposed from outside, in particular prior to elections. The Istanbul Convention was not supported by all Council of Europe member states. Some definitions and concepts of the convention had to be clarified, and a genuine discussion was needed at domestic level. He also called for caution against accusations of disinformation campaigns orchestrated from outside.

Ms Fresko-Rolfo noted that the case of Latvia illustrated the importance of civil mobilisation in defending human rights. The Istanbul Convention was an efficient tool in the fight against violence against women and had led to substantial progress in countries in terms of, *inter alia*, victim protection, awareness raising, and the issue of consent. The Assembly should express its concern about any similar attacks on the Convention.

Ms Çelenk noted that the Latvian experience closely echoed earlier cycles against the Istanbul Convention observed in Türkiye and episodically in Poland. Despite the very different political and social contexts in these three countries, the terminology, narratives and even misconceptions mobilised against the Convention were strikingly similar. The Convention had become a convenient political instrument not because it posed a genuine threat to family values but because women's rights remained one of the most easily weaponised arenas in populist politics. Türkiye's post-withdrawal experience should serve as a warning: research indicated that withdrawal had contributed to an environment of impunity and coincided with a rise in the severity of violence in the country.

Mr Bulai praised the Latvian experience highlighting the work, determination and capacity of civil society to mobilise thousands of people. The Istanbul Convention was about saving lives and should not be weaponised for political gains.

Ms Bayr praised the civil society engagement and the courage of the Latvians who resisted the populism and ignorance. Had the mobilisation failed, this would have weakened not only the protection of women and girls in Latvia, but also the credibility of the Council of Europe, and the international legal order in general. She warned that similar attempts to misuse the Istanbul Convention for political gains could happen in other countries.

Ms Vésaité said that gender equality and women's rights were under attack from rising far right extremism and the anti-gender movement across Europe. Latvian Parliament's attempt to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention indicated that Europe's democratic values were under serious threat. The Council of Europe should strongly support the strengthening of European mechanisms for combating discrimination and the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

Lord Jones reminded that violence against women was not part of the traditional family values which the reactionaries attacking the Istanbul Convention were claiming to defend. A society that condoned or ignored violence against women could not be a healthy functioning society. As Latvia's case had shown, reactionary politics and movements could be defeated by the sheer will of the people.

Ms Modert added that it was now clear that Europe's common values could not be taken for granted and should be carefully protected against similar attacks.

Ms Estrela said that despite Portugal being the first country to ratify the Istanbul Convention, many Portuguese women continued to be murdered by their partners. She was concerned about the increasing violence against women on social media and called for the adoption of appropriate laws to address this worrying phenomenon.

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe highlighted the importance of the Istanbul Convention, which had had a concrete positive impact on people's daily lives. As a former member of the Swiss Government, he had personally witnessed the changes that had resulted from the ratification and implementation of the Convention. The situation in Latvia should be analysed within the context of growing pressure on international law and multilateral organisations. Foreign interference did not only relate to elections, but it also concerned other elements of public discussion like in the case of the Istanbul Convention. In view of the upcoming elections in Latvia, everything must be done to avoid going back to the same discussions during the campaign, bearing in mind that the Convention was about protecting women and girls from violence and there was no disagreement that such protection was needed.

Ms Jonite said that the discussion around the Istanbul Convention had very much focused on the terms used in the Convention and their meanings, not on whether violence against women was something acceptable or not. Therefore, the Council of Europe could intensify work on explaining the terms of the Convention and their interpretation.

Closing the debate, **Mr Cepurītis** said that most of the Latvian society had welcomed the interest shown to their country as a member state of the Council of Europe. The best course of action against disinformation was to take a strong stance, state the facts and work on a communication strategy. There had been a great sense of unity during the protests, which had given visibility and popularity to the Convention. This was a legacy that had to be celebrated.

13. Rules, Ethics and Immunities

a. Identifying and managing conflicts of interest in the Parliamentary Assembly

[Doc. 16287 and amendments]

Mr Vlasenko, rapporteur, stressed the importance of Assembly members having a common understanding of what was expected of them in dealing with potential conflicts of interest in the context of their work in the Assembly. The draft resolution contained four key proposals: to improve definitions for identifying a conflict of interest; to have clear guidance for identifying and managing conflicts of interest; to introduce a system whereby members can turn to the Council of Europe's Ethics Officer and the Secretary General of the Assembly for confidential advice to assist them in identifying and managing conflicts of interest; to simplify the text of the code of conduct to reduce the repetitions and to clarify the core obligations on members. Referring to the four amendments tabled to the draft resolution, Mr Vlasenko said that he agreed with their philosophy but not with their wording. Moreover, the resolution should not be overloaded with such detailed formulations. These specific issues could be addressed in the forthcoming guidance.

Mr Graf asked for clarification on the procedure for the consideration of amendments.

The President explained that the first signatory of the amendments was not present, but that Mr Graf could move the amendments instead.

Ms Modert supported the rapporteur's proposal to deal with the specific issues in the upcoming guidance.

Reiterating his arguments, **Mr Vlasenko** said that he would speak against the amendments.

Echoing the rapporteur, **Mr Efstathiou**, Chairperson of the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities stressed the importance of Assembly members having a shared understanding of the ethics and integrity framework that applied to them. Mr Vlasenko's work followed on from Resolution 2596 (2025) "Respect for the rule of law and the fight against corruption within the Council of Europe" and provided much needed clarity for members on how to identify and manage interests – and potential conflicts of interest – within the Assembly. This was essential for the credibility and public trust in the work of the Assembly.

Mr Graf moved amendments 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Mr Vlasenko was against all four amendments.

Amendments 1, 2, 3 and 4 were rejected.

The Standing Committee **unanimously adopted** the resolution “Identifying and managing conflicts of interest in the Parliamentary Assembly” [Resolution 2632 (2025)].

b. Modification of various provisions of the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure

[Doc. 16292 and amendment]

Ms Tiblom, rapporteur, explained that the modifications proposed in the draft resolution related to: 1) gender representation (follow up to Resolution 2394 (2021)) 2) technical changes (*inter alia*, to better reflect current practices) 3) change in the mandate of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons (which would become the Committee on Migration, International Protection and Economic Co-operation). The one amendment tabled on behalf of the Committee aimed at harmonising the approach to the *ex officio* presence of the chairpersons of political groups in committees (thus extending their presence to all thematic committees).

Ms Kluit thought that the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development she was chairing could not fulfil its mandate without due consideration of issues related to economic co-operation. Thus, it should continue to work with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB).

Mr Graf argued that certain delegations would have great difficulties in fulfilling the gender quotas proposed in the draft resolution.

As the chairperson of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, **Mr Bulai** welcomed being included as an *ex officio* member in all thematic committees and looked forward to contributing to their work.

Ms Modert welcomed the gender representation requirements contained in the report.

Ms Tiblom hoped that the new rules on gender representation would not create difficulties for delegations and stressed that the new mandate of the Migration Committee had been carefully thought through taking due consideration of the relevant committees’ workload.

The Secretary General of the Assembly confirmed that the Social Affairs Committee would continue to work with the OECD, EBRD and CEB. The change in the mandate of the Migration Committee related to the Assembly’s institutional dialogue.

Ms Kluit was satisfied with this clarification.

Mr Efstathiou, Chairperson of the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities, stressed that the report was the result of intensive discussions and a careful reflection in the Committee and thanked members for their active contribution to the outcome.

In accordance with Rule 34.11, the one amendment to the draft resolution unanimously approved by the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities has been declared as definitively approved.

The Standing Committee **adopted** the resolution “Modification of various provisions of the Assembly’s Rules of Procedure” as amended [Resolution 2633 (2025)].

c. Increasing members’ active participation in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly

[Doc. 16293 and amendments]

Ms Bayr, rapporteur, stressed that the Assembly had been founded on the idea that elected parliamentarians should play a central role in shaping a multilateral space committed to defending human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In the current geopolitical context, it was more important than ever to strengthen the Assembly’s capacity to safeguard these shared values. The dual mandate entrusted to each member of the Assembly – as national parliamentarians and as members of the Assembly – carried responsibilities: ensuring that national viewpoints were brought into European conversations, and returning home ready to explain, promote and support the work of the Council of Europe. To meet these responsibilities, the Assembly’s internal procedures must continue to evolve. Building on earlier reforms, the draft resolution was putting forward several concrete measures to enhance the Assembly’s functioning and improve its transparency and visibility. The two amendments tabled on behalf of the Committee intended to offer further clarification and better harmonise the overall set of proposed rule changes.

Lord Jones welcomed the report and agreed with its recommendations. The opportunity for members to participate remotely in meetings should be exceptional as the collegiality built by people meeting in person was key to effective work. A detailed induction process, including (online) seminars, would be of great help for members joining the Assembly. An optimisation of the online tools available to members was also needed.

Ms Estrela also welcomed the report. She referred to the youth parliament programme introduced by the Portuguese Parliament to promote civic education and democratic participation among students aged 10 to 18. In the framework of this programme, young deputies were given the opportunity to debate a topic chosen by them with members of parliament and adopt recommendations. These were then formally sent to the parliament's Committee on Education, ensuring that young people's voices were heard and considered in the legislative process. It was an excellent way to promote participatory democracy and bring young people closer to parliamentary life, and other national parliaments should introduce similar programmes.

Mr Graf agreed that the visibility of the Assembly should be increased. In Austria, many people did not know the difference between the Assembly and the European Parliament, and generally did not know the Council of Europe. While he disagreed with the recommendation to reduce the speaking time, he welcomed the idea of introducing a reporting system on the activities of the Assembly, which could help increase visibility.

The President reminded that upon his election, he had committed to make visibility one of its priorities. The first year of his presidency, the Assembly's visibility in the international media had increased by 60%. Today, that number had gone up to 195%. This was a collective achievement, and he was confident that this positive trend would continue during the upcoming presidency.

Ms Bayr thanked members for their support and comments. Reducing the speaking time meant that more members would be able to take the floor during a debate, increasing engagement. In the Foreign Affairs Committee which she was chairing, Ms Bayr was encouraging an informal exchange between members of parliament who were active on the international scene, including members of the IPU and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Mr Efstathiou, Chairperson of the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities, stressed that members' active participation was central to the quality of democratic debate. During the preparation of the report, the Committee had had fruitful discussions, which the rapporteur had integrated into her report.

In accordance with Rule 34.11, the two amendments to the draft resolution unanimously approved by the Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities have been declared as definitively approved.

The Standing Committee **unanimously adopted** the resolution "Increasing members' active participation in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly" as amended [Resolution 2634 (2025)].

14. Other business

N.A.

15. Next meeting

The Standing Committee **decided** to hold its next meeting in Monaco on 22 May 2026.

The President expressed his gratitude to everyone who made the meeting possible.

The President closed the meeting at 15:30.

APPENDIX 1

References to committees

1. **Advancing a shared European vision through arts and leadership education**[Doc. 16132](#)**Motion for a resolution tabled by Ms Yelyzaveta Yasko (Ukraine, EPP/CD) and other members of the Assembly**Reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *to be taken into account in the preparation of the report on "The promotion of democratic security in Europe through soft power"*2. **Need to protect election observers**[Doc. 16241](#)**Motion for a recommendation tabled by Mr Claude Kern (France, ALDE) and other members of the Assembly**Reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report*3. **On the road to parity: supporting young women in politics**[Doc. 16256](#)**Motion for a resolution tabled by Ms Aysu Bankoğlu (Türkiye, SOC) and other members of the Assembly**Reference to the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination *for report*4. **Baltic Sea security challenges**[Doc. 16262](#)**Motion for a resolution tabled by Ms Agnieszka Pomaska (Poland, EPP/CD) and other members of the Assembly**Reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report*5. **Democracy, rule of law, and inclusive dialogue in Türkiye in light of the current political situation**[Doc. 16263](#)**Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Max Lucks (Germany, SOC) and other members of the Assembly**Reference to the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) *to be taken into account in the preparation of the report on "The honouring of obligations and commitments by Türkiye"*6. **Media freedom in decline in Albania**[Doc. 16264](#)**Motion for a resolution tabled by Ms Albana Vokshi (Albania, EPP/CD) and other members of the Assembly**Reference to the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) *to be taken into account in the preparation of the report on the "Post-monitoring dialogue with Albania"*7. **Restricting citizenship rules: social cohesion and human rights at stake**[Doc. 16274](#)**Motion for a resolution tabled by Lord Michael German (United Kingdom, ALDE) and other members of the Assembly**Reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons *for report*8. **Safeguarding creativity and education in the age of generative artificial intelligence**[Doc. 16275](#)**Motion for a resolution tabled by the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media**Reference to the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media *for report*

9. 65th anniversary of the European Social Charter

Doc. 16284

Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr George Loucaides (Cyprus, UEL) and other members of the Assembly

Reference to the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development *for report*

**10. European Convention on Human Rights: 75 years and beyond
Bureau decision**

Reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report*

APPENDIX 2

List of participants / Liste des participants

President of the Parliamentary Assembly / Président de l'Assemblée parlementaire

Mr Theodoros ROUSOPOULOS

Chairpersons of Political Group / Présidents de groupe politique

Mr Iulian BULAI	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) / Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe (ADLE)
Mr George LOUCAIDES	Group of the Unified European Left (UEL) / Groupe pour la gauche unitaire européenne (GUE)

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Mr Constantinos EFSTATHIOU Cyprus / Chypre

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Présidente de la Commission sur l'élection des juges à la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme**

Ms Petra BAYR Austria / Autriche

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Ms Petra BAYR Austria / Autriche

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Mr Ion GROZA	Republic of Moldova / République de Moldova
Mme Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO	Monaco
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Mr Edmunds CEPURĪTIS	Latvia / Lettonie
Ms Katalin CSÖBÖR	Hungary / Hongrie
M. Emmanuel FERNANDES	France
Mr Niklaus-Samuel GUGGER	Switzerland / Suisse
Mme Octavie MODERT	Luxembourg
Mr Georgios STAMATIS	Greece / Grèce

Invited personalities / Personnalités invitées

Mr Igor GROSU, President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova / Président du Parlement de la République de Moldova

Mr Mihai POPȘOI, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe / Vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Affaires étrangères, Président du Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe

Expert / Experte

Ms Beata JONITE, Head of Policy and Advocacy, MARTA Centre, Latvia / Responsable des politiques et du plaidoyer, Centre MARTA, Lettonie

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Ms Denise O'HARA	EPP/CD / PPE/DC
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Ms Maria BIGDAY	ALDE / ADLE
Ms Anna KOLOTOVA	UEL / GUE

Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General / Cabinet du Secrétaire Général et du Secrétaire Général adjoint

Mr Alain Berset	Secretary General of the Council of Europe / Secrétaire Général du Conseil de l'Europe
Ms Julie MEYLAN	Adviser, Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe / Conseillère, Cabinet du Secrétaire Général et du Secrétaire Général adjoint du Conseil de l'Europe
Ms Natacha De ROECK	Adviser, Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe / Conseillère, Cabinet du Secrétaire Général et du Secrétaire Général adjoint du Conseil de l'Europe

Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly / Secrétariat de l'Assemblée parlementaire

Ms Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU	Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly / Secrétaire Générale de l'Assemblée parlementaire
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Ms Louise BARTON	Director of Committees - Inclusive and Sustainable Societies and Co-operation / Directrice des commissions - Sociétés inclusives et durables et de la coopération
Mme Valérie CLAMER	Head of the Table Office, Information Management and Events Department / Cheffe du Service de la Séance, de la gestion de l'information et des événements
Mr Sergey KHRYCHIKOV	Head of the Private Office of the President of the Assembly / Chef du Cabinet du Président de l'Assemblée
Mme Isild HEURTIN	Head of the Bureau of the Assembly / Cheffe du Bureau de l'Assemblée
Ms Ayşegül ELVERİŞ	Head of the Secretariat of the Standing Committee / Cheffe du Secrétariat de la Commission permanente
Mr Angus MACDONALD	Deputy to the Head of the Communication Division / Adjoint au Chef de la Division de la communication
Mr Gaël MARTIN-MICALLEF	Secretary, Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons / Secrétaire, Commission des migrations, des réfugiés et des personnes déplacées
Mr Vladimir VUKICEVIC	Senior Project Officer of the Parliamentary and Electoral Cooperation Division / Conseiller principal de projet de la Division de la coopération parlementaire et électorale
Mme Martine MEYER	Administrative assistant of the Standing Committee / Assistante administrative de la Commission permanente
Mme Aurélie HAUG	Assistant of the Standing Committee / Assistante de la Commission permanente
Mme Nadia EBEL	Assistant of the Bureau / Assistante du Bureau