



Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

AS/Per (2023) PV 04

22 January 2024

Standing Committee

Minutes

of the meeting held in Vaduz

on Tuesday 28 November 2023

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

Mr Tiny Kox, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, **opened** the meeting. He thanked the outgoing Latvian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers and welcomed the incoming Liechtenstein Presidency. The Russian Federation's ongoing war of aggression continued to have dire consequences both within and outside Ukraine. Peace and justice were needed more than ever, including in the Middle East where Hamas' terrorist attack and the military action by the Israel Defence Forces had already taken thousands of lives. The President called on the Assembly's partners in Israel and Palestine to maintain the ongoing ceasefire and restart the peace process with a view to a two-State solution. Referring to the Assembly's crucial role in the lead-up to the Reykjavík Summit and in its successful outcome, he stressed the importance of good co-operation and effective synergy between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly for implementing the Summit's decisions. The human rights protection system had to be strengthened, including by ensuring the full implementation of the European Court of Human Rights' judgments. Combatting violence against women should remain a priority. In this connection, he referred to the [joint statement](#) made on the occasion of his visit to Mexico, welcoming this country's commitment to adhere to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).

2. Opening speech by Mr Albert Frick, President of the Landtag

Mr Albert Frick, President of the Landtag, noted that Liechtenstein's history was marked by reforms that had gradually secured fundamental rights and strengthened democracy. The 1921 Constitution had introduced a wide range of popular rights and direct democracy institutions such as referendum. Contrary to many other European countries, democratic participation was high in Liechtenstein where more than 85% of the population continued to vote in most elections and referenda. The size of the country allowed state institutions to be closer to the people, fostering greater trust in the Parliament and government, as well as to maintain efficiency in policy making. For a geographically small country like Liechtenstein, maintaining good relations with neighbours and foreign partners was very important. Thus, the country's participation in multilateral organisations was of vital importance. Liechtenstein's accession to the Council of Europe in 1978, and to the European Convention on Human Rights in 1982 were milestones in this respect. Council of Europe member States had to do their utmost to safeguard and strengthen their shared values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Assembly played a crucial role in this context as it brought together representatives of national parliaments across Europe and constituted a platform for constructive dialogue. Referring to the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, Mr Frick noted the importance of ensuring accountability, stressing that there could be no peace without justice. Liechtenstein Parliament stood ready to defend Council of Europe's core values and contribute to the efforts in the field of accountability.

3. Exchange of views with Ms Dominique Hasler, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport of Liechtenstein, President of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers

[CM/Inf (2023) 25; CM/Inf (2023) 26]

Ms Dominique Hasler noted that the values defended by the Council of Europe, namely human rights, democracy and the rule of law, were facing multiple threats. The current geopolitical context was in fact characterised by aggressive power politics, anti-democratic tendencies, growing nationalism and disregard for the rule of law and the rules-based international order. The Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine served as a painful example of the culmination of these elements. Liechtenstein would dedicate its presidency to strengthening the core values of the Council of Europe and promoting a future-oriented functioning of the Organisation. Its priorities revolved around the motto "United by our values, towards a better future, for the need of all" and would focus on the implementation of the Reykjavík Summit decisions; strengthening the European Court of Human Rights, including through full, effective and prompt execution of its judgments; continued support for Ukraine, including through advocating for broader membership of the Register of Damage; youth participation; environment; artificial intelligence; and women's rights, including through the promotion of the Istanbul Convention. The Committee of Ministers counted on the active support of the Assembly in implementing these priorities and maintaining the good co-operation between the two statutory organs.

Mr Zingeris asked what measures could be taken to avoid sanctions circumvention and increase the effectiveness of sanctions against Russia.

Mr Schwabe wondered what the Committee of Ministers' approach was on Kosovo's^{*} membership application. He also raised a question about the possible use of the complementary joint procedure against Türkiye and Azerbaijan.

Ms Kravchuk asked what actions were envisaged in relation to abducted Ukrainian children.

^{*}All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

Mr Hunko wondered what role the Council of Europe could play in relaunching the peace process in the Middle East.

Ms Hasler referred to the latest developments concerning the setting up of the Register of Damage, including the recruitment of staff and election of the Register's Board. She reiterated Liechtenstein's commitment to fully implement sanctions against Russia and stressed that overcoming sanctions circumvention would require close co-operation between countries. Regarding Kosovo, she noted that all parties involved in the process had to engage in a constructive dialogue. The Committee of Ministers welcomed the work being carried out by the Assembly in this context and looked forward to its Opinion. The non-execution of the European Court of Human Rights' judgments was undermining the authority and functioning of the human rights protection system and should thus be avoided at all costs. In this context, Ms Hasler reiterated the call for the release of Mr Kavala and noted that the issue would be discussed by the Ministers' Deputies at their upcoming meeting, taking due consideration of the Assembly Resolution 2518 (2023) and Recommendation 2261 (2023). The Council of Europe would continue to support Azerbaijan in fulfilling its member State obligations including through the Action Plan adopted in 2022. The Committee of Ministers was closely following the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Supporting Armenian authorities in coping with the challenges posed by the massive influx of refugees was crucial. Consideration should be given to the possibility of extending confidence-building measures between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The two countries should respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Council of Europe could bring its expertise in addressing the conflict in the Middle East as well as its implications outside the region, including in combatting racism, intolerance and hate speech.

Referring to youth participation, **Mr Moutquin** stressed the importance of ensuring the participation of young people from different backgrounds, including from disadvantaged groups. In the field of environment, he encouraged the presidency to work on the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention). He also raised a question about Liechtenstein's position on same-sex marriage.

Mr Vardanyan asked the presidency's approach to the protection of human rights in geographically small countries, the protection of Armenian cultural identity in Nagorno-Karabakh and frozen conflicts.

Stressing the risks associated with allowing Russian staff to continue working at the Council of Europe, **Ms Kalniņa-Lukaševica** wondered the presidency's stand on this issue.

Ms Hasler stressed the importance of ensuring accountability for the deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children, together with all the other crimes committed by the Russian Federation. As a follow-up to the declaration on the situation of the children of Ukraine adopted at the Reykjavík Summit, a Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine had been set up and would hold its first meeting end of November. The Group's work would be instrumental in identifying action to be taken to address the situation of these children. In the field of youth, important work would be carried out during the presidency to raise awareness of the Council of Europe in schools. A national debate on same-sex marriage was needed prior to any legislation in this field. For geographically small countries, including for Liechtenstein which had no army, respect for human rights and rules-based international order was an existential issue. Protecting cultural identity and addressing frozen conflicts were important issues that needed to be addressed. The situation of Russian staff members was being closely monitored by the Committee of Ministers which had already taken steps in this respect, including changes to the staff regulation and in terms of risk management.

Mr Darko Kaevski, Vice-President of the Assembly, took the Chair.

4. Examination of new credentials

[Doc. 15862]

The Standing Committee **ratified** the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegations of France and Norway.

5. Modifications in the composition of committees

[Commissions (2023) 08, Commissions (2023) 08 Add. revised]

The Standing Committee **approved** the changes in the composition of Assembly committees as set out in document Commissions (2023) 08 and its revised 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 "Spain and the rule of law: current situation" had been submitted by the European Conservatives Group & Democratic Alliance (EC/DA). Two requests for a current affairs debate entitled "Budget and priorities of the Council of Europe and follow-up to the Reykjavík

Summit” and “Spiral of violence and humanitarian crisis in the Middle East: finding a peaceful way out” respectively had also been submitted by the leaders of the political groups.

The Bureau had agreed to recommend holding the current affairs debate on “Budget and priorities of the Council of Europe and follow-up to the Reykjavík Summit” and appointed Ms Ingjerd Schie Schou (Norway, EPP/CD) as the first speaker. It had also agreed to recommend holding the current affairs debate on “Spiral of violence and humanitarian crisis in the Middle East: finding a peaceful way out” and appointed Mr Aleksander Pocij (Poland, EPP/CD) as the first speaker. The Bureau had agreed to recommend not to hold the current affairs debate on “Spain and the rule of law: current situation”.

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

7. **Agenda**

[AS/Per (2023) OJ 03 rev4]

The draft agenda was **adopted**.

8. **First part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly (22-26 January 2024)**

[AS/Bur (2023) 59]

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

9. **References to committees**

[AS/Per (2023) 13]

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

10. **Current affairs debate on “Budget and priorities of the Council of Europe and follow-up to the Reykjavík Summit”**

Introducing the debate, **Ms Schou** welcomed the Committee of Ministers’ recent decision to increase the Council of Europe’s budget for the first time since 2007. At the Reykjavík Summit, the Heads of State and Government had given a new political direction to the Organisation, redefining its role and place in the European multilateral architecture. They had shown their commitment to make it more relevant and agile, while pledging to ensure its financial sustainability. This political pledge had been translated into concrete action with the adoption of the Programme and Budget 2024-2027 which included a substantial budget increase, with additional resources being allocated to the priority areas including the European Court of Human Rights, the implementation of the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy, and environment. This offered an opportunity to further improve the Council of Europe, making it more resilient and result oriented. The increase in the Assembly’s budget would contribute to strengthening the parliamentary contribution to implement the Summit’s decisions. Building upon the Summit’s decisions, with a new political impetus, redefined priorities and additional resources, the Council of Europe had a real chance to make a difference for 700 million Europeans.

The Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, **Mr Bjørn Berge**, noted that the Summit had been instrumental in creating a momentum which had inspired the Committee of Ministers’ recent decision to increase the budget. The Council of Europe now had the means to address the many challenges that were undermining European values and standards. The Register of Damage, the discussions on a Special Tribunal for the crime of aggression, a comprehensive compensation mechanism and the situation of the Ukrainian children needed to be further developed. The Reykjavík Principles for Democracy were key to address democratic backsliding and needed urgent implementation. In this connection, the Assembly’s newly created General Rapporteur on democracy was welcome. The implementation of the European Court of Human Rights’ judgments was another area where resolute action was needed. Financing of co-operation programs and Action Plans through the ordinary budget was being envisaged to ensure their sustainability. Work on increasing efficiency and relevance of the Organisation would continue.

Mr Schwabe thought that the Reykjavík Summit’s success would depend on the effective implementation of the decisions taken, especially those concerning the Russian Federation’s war of aggression against Ukraine. The work carried out in the field of climate change, artificial intelligence and execution of the European Court of Human Rights’ judgments would also be instrumental in determining the future success of the Summit. The policy of increasing the budget and the efficiency of the Organisation should continue.

Mr Daems proposed the introduction of key performance indicators to measure the impact and efficiency of the Council of Europe’s work. Introducing these indicators in the field of human rights and democracy may be complex, but it was necessary.

Mr Hunko noted that the Council of Europe's fundamental contribution to European co-operation, in particular by the Convention-based human rights protection system, was undeniable. The decision to increase the budget was confirmation that the Organisation was on the right track.

Ms Schou reiterated that much work was ahead, stressing that the budget increase had provided the stamina to go forward and deliver both within the Organisation and at the level of politicians.

Mr Berge explained that an assessment of the implementation of the Summit's decisions would be carried out mid-2024 to ensure proper follow-up.

The President recalled that a special webpage on the Assembly's follow-up to the Summit would be launched in the upcoming days.

11. Event on the Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment

Within the framework of the Event on the Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment, the Standing Committee **held** an interactive panel discussion moderated by Ms Mariia Mezentseva, Chairperson of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly, with the participation of Mr Tiny Kox, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; Ms Bernadette Kubik-Risch, Equal opportunities expert, Liechtenstein; Mr Wilfried Marxer, President of the Association for Human Rights, Liechtenstein; and Ms Rósa Björk Brynjólfssdóttir, member of the Selection Panel of the Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment, Office of the Prime Minister of Iceland, followed by an exchange of views [See [Verbatim records](#)].

12. Current affairs debate on "Spiral of violence and humanitarian crisis in the Middle East: finding a peaceful way out"

The Standing Committee observed a minute of silence for the victims.

Opening the debate, **Mr Pocij** summarised the dire situation in the Middle East following Hamas' terrorist attack on 7 October 2023 and the subsequent war launched by Israel, referring to the death toll on Israeli and Palestinian sides, the situation of Israeli hostages, the destruction and humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the ongoing ceasefire. The conflict had had an impact across the world, leading to an increase in antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents. Despite years of violence, disjointed narratives of Israelis and Palestinians about the conflict and their individual tragedies, there were still those who were calling for peace. The Assembly should support their voices, reiterate its call for a two-State solution, a humanitarian approach alongside the necessary fight against terrorism, and confidence-building measures targeting youth on both sides so that the possibility of peace was not forgotten forever. The Assembly could offer a platform for dialogue to the members of the Knesset and the Palestinian National Council.

Mr Schwabe noted that the difficulty of the conflict resided in the fact that both sides' respective legitimate positions were difficult to reconcile. A solution could be found only if the two sides would be willing to reconsider these positions. The situation in the Middle East had had a serious impact all over the world. The Assembly should encourage dialogue between the two sides of the conflict and reiterate its call for a two-State solution.

Mr Cottier expressed concern over the possible further escalation of the conflict. The situation was deplorable both for Israelis and Palestinians and everyone's suffering should be acknowledged. Israel had the right to defend itself and had to respect international humanitarian law at the same time. Civilian population on both sides had to be protected. The Assembly should do everything in its power to bring peace to the region.

Mr Hunko joined the previous speaker in repeating the Assembly's duty to do everything in its power to contribute to resolving the conflict. The ongoing fragile ceasefire should be extended. There should be an international conference to resolve the conflict in view of a two-State solution.

Mr Bismuth, member of the Israeli observer delegation to the Assembly, pointed out that Israel had been shaken to the core by the Hamas' terrorist attack. A country which had been established with the promise of being a safe haven for the Jewish people had seen hundreds of its citizens being killed, injured, raped and kidnapped. He strongly criticised the parallel made between Israel and Hamas, stressing among other things that Israel had withdrawn from Gaza and signed the Oslo Accords, whereas Hamas' main objective remained the destruction of Israel. Israel was fighting Hamas with due respect for international law as it was doing everything to avoid the death of civilians. No country would accept to live next to an enemy like Hamas. Therefore, the war would continue until Hamas was eliminated.

Mr Sabella, Chairperson of the Palestinian Partner for democracy delegation, focused his intervention on the possible outcome of the ongoing crisis and international partners' contribution to the process. In the short and medium term, it

would be unrealistic to expect a permanent ceasefire. Once a relatively stable truce would have been achieved, political sacrifices and compromises would be needed on both Israeli and Palestinian sides to start talking about peace. The question of who would govern Gaza had to be solved. There was no room for political stalemate. A permanent political solution had to be found so that the tragedy which the Israelis and Palestinians were going through since 7 October would not be vain.

According to **Mr Zingeris**, it was likely that the Russian authorities had been informed about the Hamas' attack before it took place. Israel had the right to defend itself and clean the Gaza strip from the terrorist organisation Hamas. Mr Zingeris also warned against antisemitic demonstrations which denied Israel's right to exist.

Mr Moutquin thought that the Assembly could not remain silent about the Middle East conflict. Its guiding principle in this conflict - as for all the ongoing and past conflicts where it had raised its voice - was respect for international humanitarian law. It must condemn Hamas' atrocious attack as it must also think of the thousands of civilians in Gaza, including children. Terror could not justify terror. There was a need to look at the broader political context including 17 years of blockade of the Gaza strip, the expulsion of Palestinians from their historical land, the non-recognition of Israel by the terrorist organisation Hamas, the rise of extreme right in Israel, and settlers' violence in the West Bank.

Mr Jensen welcomed the ongoing ceasefire, the release of hostages and the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, which could breathe new energy into negotiations for a lasting peace in the long run. Council of Europe member States and the Assembly must encourage negotiations and contribute to ending violence in the region, which had had dangerous consequences throughout the world, especially the rise of antisemitism.

Mr Gutiérrez Limones expressed solidarity with Israel, condemned the Hamas' attack and demanded the release of all hostages. Recalling that Spain also had to fight against terrorism for years, he stated that Israel had the right to defend itself with due respect for international law. A permanent ceasefire was needed, as well as a humanitarian corridor for the people of Gaza. As the oldest international organisation promoting human rights and peace, the Council of Europe should not remain silent in the face of thousands of civilians being killed in Gaza, including children. It had a fundamental role to play and should commit to put an end to the conflict.

Mr Grass stressed that the international community, including the Council of Europe, should contribute to finding a lasting solution to the conflict.

Mr Vardanyan noted that most countries invested their money in financing wars, instead of peace. The conflicts of today, in Europe and in the Middle East, were the result of inadequate responses of the past, of compromises made between values and real politics. Israel had the right to defend itself. In doing so, it should respect international humanitarian law.

Ms Mezentseva argued that Hamas could have never operated without Iran's military support and Russia's strategical support. While she agreed that civilians should not be punished for Hamas' attack, she stressed that Israel had the right to defend itself and destroy Hamas.

Mr Pocij reiterated that peace was the only solution and that the Assembly should contribute to it. If decades-long conflicts of the past could have been solved, then the Middle East conflict could also be solved.

13. Observation of elections

[Doc. 15861]

Ms Clapot, Chairperson of the Ad hoc committee of the Bureau on the Observation of the parliamentary elections in Poland (15 October 2023) noted that the latest elections had been critical for determining the country's future in terms of democratic integrity, personal freedoms, and foreign policy, including Poland's relationship with the European Union and the Council of Europe. The election results had reflected a profound shift with the ruling party losing its majority in the parliament. The political landscape leading up to the election had been marred by extreme polarisation, a confrontational campaign environment and last-minute changes to electoral legislation that had eroded public trust in institutions. The ruling party had had a disproportionate influence over state resources and public media. The organisation of a referendum in parallel to the elections was problematic. The high voter turnout (74.4%) indicated a strong civic engagement. The main shortcoming concerned the secrecy of the ballot. Ms Clapot also referred to problems with the accreditation of observers which had eventually been solved. The Ad hoc committee had recommended, among other things, to insulate the electoral process from hasty and last-minute legislative changes, to review the regulations concerning voting abroad, and to rectify the compromised secrecy of vote.

Mr Pocij thought that the high voter turnout was proof that people had had enough of a government that disregarded democratic principles, violated women's rights and consistently cut back on freedoms. Poland had demonstrated that it was possible to reverse democratic backsliding.

Mr Schennach expressed his admiration of Polish people's determination to turn things around. They had waited calmly for hours outside polling stations, including voters abroad for whom the voting process had been made particularly burdensome. Problems with the accreditation of observers were deplorable and should be avoided in the future.

Mr Hunko joined the previous speaker in expressing his admiration of the Polish voters who now had had a first-hand experience of being able to collectively influence a process. He also came back to the problems with accreditation. This was a politically motivated blockage and similar instances should be avoided at all costs.

Mr Bulai praised Ms Clapot for her work which she had carried out in particularly challenging circumstances. He also welcomed the election results which inspired hope for Poland's future in terms of democracy and the rule of law. He called on the Polish government to stop buying time and delaying the constitution of a new majority government.

Mr Schwabe referred to his experience of observation of elections in Türkiye where the public media was entirely controlled by the government. This left almost no chance to the opposition to have a successful outcome in the elections. Hence, the problem of the misuse of media for electoral purposes should be addressed. The dangerous pattern of obstructing the work of electoral observation missions should be tackled.

Ms Clapot thought that no matter the obstacles to election observation missions, democracy would win. Joining Mr Bulai, she asked Polish authorities to recognise the results of the election and act accordingly.

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

14. Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development **Heritable genome editing in human beings**

[Doc. 15855]

Mr Schennach, Rapporteur, recalled that in 2017, the Assembly, based on a report on "The use of new genetic technologies in human beings" by Ms Petra De Sutter, had concluded that advances in genome editing were bound to result in germline interventions in human beings. This prediction has been materialised a year later, with the birth of two twin girls whose genes had been modified. The act had been strongly criticised worldwide and had led to renewed calls for a worldwide moratorium on establishing a pregnancy with germ line cells or human embryos having undergone intentional genome editing of their nuclear DNA. In 2017, the Assembly had also stressed that deliberate germline editing in human beings would cross a line viewed as ethically inviolable. Recently, clarifying Article 13 of the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (Oviedo Convention), the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO) had noted that any intervention that seeks to modify the human genome may be carried out only for preventive, diagnostic or therapeutic purposes – and gametes, embryos or their precursors that have been subject to such an intervention may not be used for the purposes of procreation. Yet, there had been a noticeable push by many scientists for a "translational pathway" to be developed, namely the opening of clinical trials when certain minimum standards for heritable human genome editing are met in the future. Mere technical possibility should not lead to the acceptance of a technology. In view of the human rights and ethical implications involved, member States should embrace a clear and total prohibition of establishing a pregnancy with germ line cells, their precursors, or human embryos having undergone intentional genome editing of their nuclear DNA. A broad and informed public debate on heritable genome editing in human beings should also be promoted.

Mr Moutquin, the Chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, extended his thanks to the CDBIO and its secretariat for their valuable support in the preparation of the report. He stressed that the ongoing discussions around "translational pathway" had obliged the committee to come back to the issue that it had already addressed back in 2017. The pressure to allow genetically modified babies to be born had to be fought because from a human rights perspective, heritable genome editing was as dangerous as human cloning.

The Standing Committee **unanimously adopted** the recommendation "Heritable genome editing in human beings" [Recommendation 2264 (2023)].

15. Equality and Non-Discrimination **Institutional racism of law enforcement authorities against Roma and Travellers**

[Doc. 15856]

Mr Grin, Rapporteur, noted that police brutality against Roma and Travellers, including inhuman and degrading treatment, torture, and excessive use of force and violence resulting in some cases in the victim's death, was still common in Europe. Institutional racism did not imply that every individual working within the police force was racist but referred to the discriminatory effects of the functioning of law enforcement, which were first and foremost the result of

the policies and practices that it applied. Systematic stops of caravans and the criminalisation of begging or of the illegal occupation of land punished Roma and Travellers who were already victims of discrimination and increased their distrust of the authorities. The responses provided were often inadequate when these populations were victims of criminal offences as no effective investigation was carried out to help elucidate the facts. Discrimination in access to justice further worsened this situation and deprived the victims of abuse of adequate remedy. The draft resolution called on member States to ensure that offences motivated by antigypsyism and anti-nomadism are covered by criminal law and that antidiscrimination legislation applies to law enforcement authorities. Effective remedies for victims of police violence and independent mechanisms with sufficient resources to effectively investigate complaints and punish offenders were needed. The composition of law enforcement authorities must reflect social diversity and their members must follow human rights training. Action of non-governmental organisations promoting the access of Roma and Travellers to justice must be supported. Frameworks for dialogue and co-operation between law enforcement authorities and Roma and Travellers should be created, and stereotypes and prejudice within the wider community overcome.

Mr Moutquin stressed the importance of giving a specific attention to combatting institutional racism within the police. He supported the conclusions of the report and the recommendations therein, including the need for training, awareness raising and protection of whistle-blowers.

Ms O'Loughlin noted that Ireland was working on improving the way police deals with different communities, including Roma and Travellers. There was a focus on developing diversity within the police force which had led to a welcome increase in the number of staff from minority backgrounds, including traveller background. There was also an internship program which had brought young people from this background into spend time within the police force, and a special education module in the training centres for Garda. These could be used as examples of good practice in combatting institutional racism of law enforcement authorities.

Mr Bulai stressed that in Romania, there was a real problem of institutional racism against Roma and welcomed that the issue was addressed in a specific report. Recalling that Mr Grin was soon leaving the Assembly, he thanked him for his dedication as one of its leading members since 2016 and for standing for the values of the Council of Europe.

Mr Zingeris paid tribute to Mr Grin's work as an Assembly member.

In replying to the debate, **Mr Grin** stressed the importance of training the police and the importance of dialogue. In his constituency where problems with Travellers had arisen, hiring a professional mediator had contributed to creating a climate of trust. A healthy democracy should protect the rights of all communities, including Roma and Travellers.

Ms Mezentseva, the Chairperson of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, thanked Mr Grin for putting forward the human rights issues related to Roma and Travellers and paid tribute to his work as an Assembly member.

The Standing Committee **unanimously adopted** the resolution "Institutional racism of law enforcement authorities against Roma and Travellers" [Resolution 2523 (2023)].

16. Other business

Mr Cottier paid tribute to Mr Grin and thanked the Liechtenstein delegation for the organisation of the meeting.

17. Next meetings

The President announced that the decision on a possible March meeting would be taken in the upcoming days.

The Standing Committee **decided** to hold its May meeting in Vilnius (Lithuania), on 24 May 2024.

The President expressed his gratitude to everyone who made the meeting possible and gave his sincere thanks to the delegation of Liechtenstein, especially to its Chairperson, Ms Franziska Hoop, for their warm welcome and hospitality in Liechtenstein.

Mr Bulai, Mr Rousopoulos, Ms Mezentseva, Mr Zingeris, Mr Pocij, Mr Daems and the Secretary General of the Assembly paid tribute to the President, thanking him for his leadership, integrity and wisdom throughout the challenging two years of his presidency.

The President closed the meeting at 17:30.

APPENDIX 1

References and transmissions to committees

A. REFERENCES TO COMMITTEES

1. Tools to prevent and address transnational repression

[Doc. 15847](#)

Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Constantinos Efstathiou and other members of the Assembly

Transmission to Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for information*

2. Strengthening democracy through participatory and deliberative processes

[Doc. 15848](#)

Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr George Papandreou and other members of the Assembly

Reference to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy *for report*

3. The Council of Europe Development Bank: implementing the Reykjavík Declaration

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

APPENDIX 2

List of participants / Liste des participants

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

Mr Tiny KOX Netherlands / Pays-Bas

Chairpersons of Political Groups / Présidents des groupes politiques

Mr Frank SCHWABE	Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group (SOC) / Groupe des socialistes, démocrates et verts (SOC)
Mr Aleksander POCIEJ	Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD) / Groupe du Parti populaire européen (PPE/DC)
Mr Bulian BULAI	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) / Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe (ADLE)
Mr Andrej HUNKO	Group of the Unified European Left (UEL) / Groupe pour la gauche unitaire européenne (GUE)

Vice-Presidents of the Assembly / Vice-président-e-s de l'Assemblée

Ms Edite ESTRELA	Portugal
Ms Ingjerd Schie SCHOU	Norway / Norvège
Mr Reinhold LOPATKA	Austria / Autriche
Mr Antonio GUTIÉRREZ LIMONES	Spain / Espagne
Ms Olena KHOMENKO	Ukraine
Mr Ionuț-Marian STROE	Romania / Roumanie
Ms Sibel ARSLAN	Switzerland / Suisse
Mr Markus WIECHEL	Sweden / Suède
Mr Darko KAEVSKI	North Macedonia / Macédoine du Nord
Ms Elisabetta GARDINI	Italy / Italie

Chairpersons of National Delegations / Président-e-s de délégations nationales

Mr Reinhold LOPATKA	Austria / Autriche
Mr Samad SEYIDOV	Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan
Mr Rik DAEMS	Belgium / Belgique
Mr Saša MAGAZINOVIĆ	Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosnie-Herzégovine
Mr Mogens JENSEN	Denmark / Danemark
Ms Liisa-Ly PAKOSTA	Estonia / Estonie
Mr Irakli CHIKOVANI	Georgia / Géorgie
Mr Frank SCHWABE	Germany / Allemagne
Mr Bjarni JÓNSSON	Iceland / Islande
Ms Fiona O'LOUGHLIN	Ireland / Irlande
Ms Elisabetta GARDINI	Italy / Italie
Ms Zanda KALNIŅA-LUKAŠEVICA	Latvia / Lettonie
Ms Franziska HOOP	Liechtenstein
Mr Emanuelis ZINGERIS	Lithuania / Lituanie
Mr Gusty GRAAS	Luxembourg
Mr Darko KAEVSKI	North Macedonia / Macédoine du Nord
Ms Ingjerd Schie SCHOU	Norway / Norvège
Ms Edite ESTRELA	Portugal
Mr Damien COTTIER	Switzerland / Suisse
Ms Mariia MEZENTSEVA	Ukraine

Chairperson of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights / Président de la Commission des questions juridiques et des droits de l'homme

Mr Damien COTTIER Switzerland / Suisse

**Chairperson of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development /
Président de la Commission des questions sociales, de la santé et du développement durable**
M. Simon MOUTQUIN Belgium / Belgique

**Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons /
Président de la Commission des migrations, des réfugiés et des personnes déplacées**
Mr Theodoros ROUSOPOULOS Greece / Grèce

**Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media /
Présidente de la Commission de la culture, de la science, de l'éducation et des médias**
Ms Yevheniia KRAVCHUK Ukraine

**Chairperson of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination /
Présidente de la Commission sur l'égalité et la non-discrimination**
Ms Mariia MEZENTSEVA Ukraine

Rapporteurs of the Committees / Rapporteur-e-s des commissions

Mr Jean-Pierre GRIN Switzerland / Suisse
Mr Stefan SCHENNACH Austria / Autriche

Ex-officio members of the Bureau / Membres ex-officio du Bureau

Ms Franziska HOOP Liechtenstein
Ms Zanda KALNIŅA-LUKAŠEVICA Latvia / Lettonie
Mr Emanuelis ZINGERIS Lithuania / Lituanie
Mr Gusty GRAAS Luxembourg

Other members of the Parliamentary Assembly / Autres membres de l'Assemblée parlementaire

Mr Peter FRICK Liechtenstein
M. Alain MILON France
Mr Alexander RYLE Denmark / Danemark
Mr Vladimir VARDANYAN Armenia / Arménie

Other delegation / Autre délégation

Mr Enis KERVAN Assembly of Kosovo* / Assemblée du Kosovo*

Invited personalities / Personnalités invitées

Mr Albert FRICK President of the Landtag / Président du Landtag
Ms Dominique HASLER Minister of Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport of Liechtenstein,
President of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers /
Ministre des Affaires étrangères, de l'Éducation et des Sports du
Liechtenstein, Présidente du Comité des Ministres du Conseil de
l'Europe
Ms Bernadette KUBIK-RISCH Equal opportunities expert, Liechtenstein / Experte en égalité des
chances, Liechtenstein
Mr Wilfried MARXER President of the Association for Human Rights, Liechtenstein /
Président de l'Association pour les droits de l'homme,
Liechtenstein
Ms Rósa Björk BRYNJÓLFSDÓTTIR Member of the Selection Panel of the Vigdís Prize for Women's
Empowerment, Office of the Prime Minister of Iceland / Membre du
jury de sélection du Prix Vigdís de l'empouvoirement des femmes,
Cabinet de la Première ministre de l'Islande

*All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo / Toute référence au Kosovo, que ce soit à son territoire, à ses institutions ou à sa population, doit se comprendre en pleine conformité avec la Résolution 1244 du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies et sans préjuger du statut du Kosovo.

Secretaries of Political Groups / Secrétaires des groupes politiques

Ms Francesca ARBOGAST	SOC
Ms Denise O'HARA	EPP/CD / PPE/DC
Ms Maria BIGDAY	ALDE / ADLE
Mr Tom VAN DIJCK	ALDE / ADLE
Ms Anna KOLOTOVA	UEL / GUE

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

Mr Bjørn BERGE	Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe / 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 de la Secrétaire Générale et du Secrétaire Général adjoint du Conseil de l'Europe

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

Ms Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU-TSOVILIS	Secretary General / Secrétaire Générale
Ms Louise BARTON	Director of Committees - Human Dignity and Sustainable Development / Directrice des commissions - Dignité humaine et développement durable
Mme Valérie CLAMER	Head of the Table Office, Information Technologies and Events Department / Cheffe du service de la Séance, des technologies 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
Ms Penelope DENU	Head of the secretariat of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination / Cheffe du secrétariat de la commission sur l'égalité et la non-discrimination
Mr Francesc FERRER	Head of the Communication Division / Chef de la Division de la communication
Mme Isild HEURTIN	Head of the Secretariat of the Bureau of the Assembly / Cheffe du secrétariat du Bureau de l'Assemblée
Ms Ayşegül ELVERİŞ	Deputy Head of the Table Office, Information Technologies and Events Department / Cheffe adjointe du Service de la Séance, des technologies de l'information et des événements
Ms Greta FAGGIANI	Co-Secretary of the Bureau of the Assembly / Co-secrétaire du Bureau de l'Assemblée
Mme Rachel MOREL	Principal administrative assistant of the Table Office / Assistante administrative principale du Service de la Séance
Mme Martine MEYER	Administrative assistant of the Standing Committee / Assistante administrative de la Commission permanente
Mme Anne GAREL	Assistant of the Bureau / Assistante du Bureau