

AS/Pact (2026) OJ 03 rev

24 April 2026

Special committee on the New Democratic Pact

Draft agenda

for the meeting to be held in Kristiansand on:

- Monday 4 May 2026 from 1pm to 6pm, and
- Tuesday 5 May 2026 from 9.30am to 3pm

Venues: **Monday – Radisson Blu Hotel Caledonien**
Vestre Strandgate 7, Kristiansand, Norway

Tuesday – Kilden Theatre and Concert Hall
Sjølystveien 2, 4610 Kristiansand

This draft agenda, addressed to full members of the Special Committee and their alternates, is the convocation to the meeting.

Copy to secretaries of delegations and political groups

Meeting documents will be published on [PACE Apps](#) (restricted access)

Monday 4 May 2026 from 1pm to 6pm

1. Agenda

[AS/Pact (2026) OJ 03 rev]

Adoption of the agenda

2. Minutes

[AS/Pact (2026) PV 02]

Approval of the minutes of the meeting held in Strasbourg on 22 and 23 April 2026

3. A bottom-up perspective to strengthen European democracy: local self-government and grass-root initiatives

Exchange of views with the participation of:

- Ms Gunn Marit Helgesen, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe,
- Ms Berit Lindeman, Secretary General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee

4. Democratic innovation and technological threats: bridging local initiatives with European action

Exchange of views with the participation of:

- Mr Konstantinos Koukas, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe,
- Mr Georg Riekeles, Associate Director at the European Policy Centre

5. Other business

6. Next meeting

- Third part-session 2026 of the Assembly (22-26 June 2026)
- Fourth part-session 2026 of the Assembly (28 September-2 October 2026)
- Budapest, 26 October 2026 (*subject to the Bureau's authorisation*)
- Warsaw, 24-25 November 2026

Break

7. Parliamentary Dialogue [4pm] (English only)

Tuesday 5 May 2026 from 9.30am to 3pm

8. Opening of the Kristiansand European Conference: Democracy under pressure: Courage, resistance and responsibility

Conversation with the participation of:

- Mr Mathias Bernander, mayor of Kristiansand,
- Mr Bjørn Berge, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe,
- Ms Lise Selnes, Second Deputy Speaker of the Storting and Head of the Norwegian Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,
- Ms Petra Bayr, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,

Opening speech by Yulia Navalnaya, Russian democracy leader in exile and human rights activist

Panel discussion on “Democratic resilience in an era of war, disinformation and authoritarian pressure”, with the participation of:

- Ms Åsne Seierstad, award-winning Norwegian author,
- Ms Berit Lindeman, secretary general of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee

Break

9. Session I – Democratic preparedness and resilience [11:15am]

Keynote speech by Mr Espen Barth Eide, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs

Followed by a high-level conversation on “The role of the Nordic countries in Europe - with particular emphasis on democracy and security”, with Mr Espen Barth Eide, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mr Lars Røkke Rasmussen, Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs (tbc)

Lunch

10. Session II – Europe’s democratic preparedness: Institutions, leadership and joint response [1pm]

Conversation with the participation of:

- Mr Georg Riekeles, Deputy Director at the European Policy Centre,
- Ms Gunn Marit Helgesen, President of the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities,
- Mr Oleksandr Senkevych, Mayor of Mykolaiv, Ukraine,
- Ms Olha Prokopyshena, Head of the youth delegation from Mykolaiv

Parliamentary conversation on “Which European values should be protected?”

Conversation between European Parliamentarians (tbc)

Break

11. Session III – Democratic renewal - participation, dialogue and new voices [2.15pm]

Session led by Blanke Ark: Young voices from Kristiansand, with the participation of:

- Ms Elina Henttonen from the national dialogue initiative in Finland,
- Mr Helfried Carl, Director, European Capital of Democracy,
- Mr Espen Barth Eide, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs

Final reflections: Key points and lessons for democratic innovation in Europe.