



SECRETARIAT

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12 September 2023

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

Synopsis of the meeting held in Paris on 8 September 2023

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, meeting in Paris on 8 September 2023, with Mr Damien Cottier (Switzerland, ALDE) in the Chair, as regards:

- **Possible election of a 2nd Vice-Chairperson** (Owing to the departure of Ms Margreet De Boer (Netherlands, SOC) from the Assembly): postponed the election of 2nd Vice-President of the Committee;
- **Pegasus and similar spyware and secret state surveillance** (*Rapporteur: Mr Pieter Omtzigt (Netherlands, EPP/CD)*): considered a draft report, adopted a draft resolution and unanimously adopted a draft recommendation;
- **Examining the legitimacy and legality of the ad hominem term-limit waiver for the incumbent President of the Russian Federation** (*Rapporteur: Mr Pieter Omtzigt, Netherlands, EPP/CD*): considered a draft report and unanimously adopted a draft resolution;
- **Reference extension request for “Towards a transparency register within the Parliamentary Assembly”** (*Rapporteur: Ms Azadeh Rojhan Gustafsson, Sweden, SOC*): agreed to request the Bureau for an extension of this reference until 30 June 2024;
- **Replies from the Committee of Ministers to recommendations emanating from the Committee:** took note of the replies to the following recommendations:
 - [Recommendation 2236 \(2022\)](#) on “Reported cases of political prisoners in the Russian Federation” adopted at the 1467th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies on 31 May 2023;
 - [Recommendation 2240 \(2022\)](#) on “Preventing vaccine discrimination” adopted at the 1469th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies on 14 June 2023;
- **Hearings during the next meeting:** agreed to hold the following hearings during the October part-session (open to the public if the experts agree), subject to the availability of funds and subject to time constraints in meeting slots allocated to the Committee:
 - **“Reparation and reconciliation processes to overcome past conflicts and build a common peaceful future- the question of just and equal redress”** (*Rapporteur: Lord Richard Keen, United Kingdom, EC/DA*));
 - **“The situation of Human Rights Defenders in Europe”** (*General Rapporteur: Mr Emanuelis Zingeris, Lithuania, EPP/CD*) (with a possible exchange of views with the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Ms Dunja Mijatović (t.b.c.);
 - **“Sanctions of persons on the “Kara-Murza list”** (*Rapporteur: Mr Eerik-Niiles Kross, Estonia, ALDE*);
 - **Joint meeting with the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy and the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons:** with selective representatives of Russian opposition

forces, to be chaired by the President of the Assembly, regarding modalities of any future co-operation with Russian opposition;

- **Implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights – 12th report** (*Rapporteur: Constantinos Efstathiou, Cyprus, SOC*): considered an introductory memorandum and held a hearing with the participation of:

Professor Philip Leach, Professor of Human Rights Law, School of Law, Middlesex University, United Kingdom

Mr Gerald Knaus, Chairman of the European Stability Initiative (ESI), Berlin, Germany;

- **References transmitted to the committee:**

- **Appointment of Rapporteurs for Report:**

- **Commemorating the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine** ([Doc. 15728](#)): postponed the appointment until the next meeting;

- **On private military companies, mercenaries, foreign fighters and their impact on human rights** ([Doc. 15771](#)): postponed the appointment until the next meeting;

- **Appointment of Rapporteurs for Opinion:**

- **Child abuse in Europe: addressing compensation and prevention** ([Doc. 15390](#)) (Re-appointment owing to the departure of the former Rapporteur for opinion Ms Margreet De Boer (Netherlands, SOC) from the Assembly) (Rapporteur for the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development: Mr Pierre-Alain Fridez (Switzerland, SOC): appointed Mr Constantinos Efstathiou (Cyprus, SOC) and heard from him a declaration of no conflict of interests;

- **Safeguarding future rights for future generations** ([Doc. 15513](#)) (Re-appointment owing to the departure of the former Rapporteur for opinion Ms Margreet De Boer (Netherlands, SOC) from the Assembly) (Rapporteur for the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development: Mr Pedro Cegonho, Portugal, SOC): postponed until the next meeting;

- **References transmitted for consultation:**

- **A parliamentary sponsorship programme between the Parliamentary Assembly members and human rights defenders or the politically oppressed** ([Doc. 15752](#)) (reference also transmitted to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy for consultation): postponed until the next meeting;

- **The detention of Julian Assange and its chilling effects on human rights** ([Doc. 15777](#)): agreed to ask the Bureau to send this reference to the Committee for report;

- **References transmitted for inclusion in other reports:**

- **Support for the reconstruction of Ukraine** ([Doc. 15732](#)) (to be taken into account in the framework of the report on “Legal and human rights aspects of the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine” (NB reference also transmitted to the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy for report): the Rapporteur for the aforementioned report, Mr Davor Ivo Stier (Croatia, EPP/CD), agreed to this proposal by the Bureau;

- **Investigation into the illegal surveillance of foreign leaders, political opponents and activists in Poland** ([Doc. 15751](#)) (to be taken into account in the framework of the report on “Pegasus and similar spyware and secret state surveillance” (NB reference also transmitted to the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) for information): the Rapporteur, Mr Pieter Omtzigt (Netherlands, EPP/CD) took the Bureau’s proposal into account prior to the adoption of said report;

- **Legal and human rights aspects of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine** (*Rapporteur: Mr. Davor Ivo Stier (Croatia, EPP/CD)*): held a hearing focusing on the "Wagner group", with the participation of:

Ms Jelena Aparac, Head of Policy, Advocacy and Research, Legal Action Worldwide (LAW), former Chairperson of United Nations Working Group on the use of mercenaries, Geneva, Switzerland
Ms Nathalia Dukhan, Senior investigator focusing on war crimes and transnational criminal organisations, The Sentry, Washington;

- **Other business:**

- **Humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh:** agreed to submit a request to the Bureau for a debate under urgent procedure to be held on this matter during the October part-session 2023 and proposed that a hearing also be held on this subject as a matter of urgency with the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) and the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons;

- **Sub-committees:** agreed to the following proposals:

- **Sub-Committee on Human Rights:** Ms Sunna Aevardóttir (Iceland, SOC) to become titular member;

- **Sub-Committee on the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights:** Ms Florence Reuter (Belgium, ALDE) to replace Ms Sophie Wilmès (Belgium, ALDE), and Mr Saša Magazinović (Bosnia and Herzegovina, SOC) to be added to the waiting list for a titular seat;

- **Sub-Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights:** Mr Saša Magazinović (Bosnia and Herzegovina, SOC) to become a titular member;

- **Statement by the Rapporteur for follow-up for "Transnational repression as a growing threat to the rule of law and human rights"** (*Rapporteur: Sir Christopher Chope, United Kingdom, EC/DA*): took note of the statement by Sir Christopher Chope concerning grave allegations in the press concerning members who had voted in favour of the resolution and recommendation of the aforementioned report during the June part-session 2023;

- **Next meetings:**

- during the Assembly's 4th part-session of 2023 (9-13 October 2023)
- 30 November 2023, afternoon, Paris Office and 1 December 2023, Paris Office

Günter Schirmer, Guillem Cano-Palomares, Eleanor Hourigan

cc: Secretary General of the Assembly
Directors and all staff of the Secretariat of the Assembly
Secretaries of National Delegations and of Political Groups of the Assembly
Secretaries of observer and partner for democracy delegations
Secretary General of the Congress
Secretary to the Committee of Ministers
Directors General
Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
Director of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights
Director of Communication
Permanent Representations to the Council of Europe