

Nyt fra Europa rådet

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Vinter-sessionen i Den Parlamentariske Forsamling (Strasbourg 24.-28. januar):

Viktor Yushchenko: democratic changes in Ukraine 'irreversible'

[25/01/05] Addressing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe today, Viktor Yushchenko said that, as President, he would do everything within his power to ensure that the democratic changes in his country were irreversible. Emphasising that the holding of above-board elections had opened the way for a new Ukrainian society - one which was open, democratic and European - the new President thanked the Parliamentary Assembly for helping streamline the process of amending Ukraine's Constitution and hailed the work of its monitoring co-rapporteurs Mrs. Hanne Severinsen and Mrs. Renate Wohlwend. Ukraine would honour its commitments to the Council of Europe, he said.

President Saakashvili unveils plan for South Ossetian autonomy

[26/01/05] President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia, speaking to the plenary Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly this morning, unveiled a plan for autonomy in South Ossetia involving a local executive and parliament with control over economic policy, culture and education and what he called "a voice in the national structures of government". He promised to protect language rights in the region and offered compensation for people who lost property in the 1990-1992 conflict, help for returnees and the full payment of pension arrears. Mr Saakashvili also asked for the help of the Council of Europe as a mediator, and described Russia as a constructive partner for peace. "Today we have committed on paper an offer that forms the basis for a lasting and just settlement," said Mr Saakashvili, who last addressed PACE a year ago on coming to power. "The time has come to end divisions between peoples."

Assembly wants the Third Summit to provide Council of Europe with a clear political mandate for the coming years

Strasbourg, 26.01.2005 – The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) wants the Third Summit of Council of Europe Heads of State and Government, to be held in Warsaw on 16 and 17 May 2005, to define the Council of Europe's place in the European institutional landscape and to "provide the Organisation with a clear political mandate for the coming years".

The members of the Assembly, who adopted a list of proposals for the Organisation's executive body, want the Heads of State of the 46 member states to draw up a precise definition of the Council of Europe's place in the European architecture and of "the procedures governing its co-operation with the European Union, the OSCE, NATO, the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies and sub-regional mechanisms".

In the Assembly's view, "the European Union should consider the Council of Europe as a privileged framework to develop and implement its neighborhood policy with its partners". Furthermore, the EU should, in order to foster the creation of a common European legal area, be invited to accede to all the Council of Europe Conventions open to it.

French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier, who took part in the debate, said the Third Summit should be about "vigilance on democracy and human rights, co-operation with the European Union and openness towards the outside world".

The text, adopted on the basis of the proposals of rapporteur Konstantin Kosachev (Russia, EDG), points out that the Council of Europe's main mission under its Statute is to ensure respect for values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Summit should reaffirm all the member states' attachment to these common values, and should recognise that these are the fields in which the Organisation excels.

The members of the Assembly called for a strengthening of the Council of Europe's system of conventions through the preparation of a collection of its core conventions and the setting of deadlines for these to be ratified by all the Council of Europe member states which have not yet done so.

PACE expects the Summit to instruct the Council of Europe to draw up a comprehensive convention against terrorism and other measures in response to the terrorist threat. It would also like a pan-European campaign against domestic violence to be run in 2006.

Finally, the Assembly called on Council of Europe member states' national parliaments to hold debates on the Third Summit "in order to give political impetus to the run-up to the Summit and to ensure that the Summit generates the necessary political impact".

René van der Linden from the Netherlands new Assembly President

Strasbourg, 24.01.2005 – René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD) was today unanimously elected President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Strasbourg-based Council of Europe (PACE) for a mandate of one year, twice renewable. He succeeds Peter Schieder (Austria, SOC) as the 23rd President of the Assembly since its creation in 1949. He is the second Dutchman to fill this post.

In his inaugural speech, Mr van der Linden said his priorities as PACE President would be increased co-operation with other international organisations, particularly the EU, UN and OSCE, making the Assembly's work even more relevant to Europe's citizens, and achieving a successful Third Summit of Heads of State and Government (Warsaw, Poland, 16-17 May).

The new President called on the EU to make better use of the Council of Europe, with its 46 member states, stressing that this could make the EU's neighbourhood policy much more effective. He also called for EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights with a view to creating a common European legal area. The Council of Europe's core business - human rights, democracy, the rule of law and social cohesion - made it first and foremost a pan-European community of values that can further peace and stability on the continent, he said.

Mr van der Linden warned against new dividing lines in Europe, a return to old East-West antagonisms and increasing racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance. He underlined that even better use of the Council of Europe should be made as a forum for inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue.

René van der Linden, who is a member of the Christian Democratic Party (CDA) in the Netherlands, was born in Eys-Wittem on 14 December 1943. He is married and has three children.

After his international administrative studies at the Economics Faculty in Tilburg, he began working for the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in 1971. Following a period in the cabinets of two European Commissioners (1973-1977), he became a member of the Second Chamber of the Netherlands Parliament, the States-General (1977-1986 and 1988-1998), also serving as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs with responsibility for European affairs (1986-1988). Mr van der Linden has been a member of the First Chamber of the States-General since 1999.

A member of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly since 1989, he was Chairperson of the Assembly's EPP/CD group (1999-2005), Chairperson of the Dutch delegation and a member of the Political Affairs and Monitoring Committees as well as of the Sub-Committees on the Middle East, Cultural Heritage and Science and Ethics.

PACE elects its Vice-Presidents

Strasbourg, 24.01.2005 – The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) today elected its Vice-Presidents:

Fatima ABURTO BASELGA – Spain;	Giorgi ARVELADZÉ - Georgia
Claudio AZZOLINI – Italy;	Miroslav BENEŠ - Czech Republic
Rudolf BINDIG – Germany;	Mikko ELO - Finland
Jean-Charles GARDETTO – Monaco;	Marcel GLESENER - Luxembourg
Tadeusz IWŃSKI – Poland;	Tony LLOYD - United Kingdom
Tito MASI - San Marino;	Frano MATUŠIĆ - Croatia
Mikhail MARGELOV – Russia;	Murat MERCAN - Turkey
Elsa PAPADIMITRIOU – Greece;	Jeffrey PULLICINO ORLANDO - Malta
Bernard SCHREINER – France;	Hanne SEVERINSEN - Denmark
Zoltán SZABÓ – Hungary;	Vacant seat Moldova

Forsamlingens vedtagelser under vinter-sessionen

RES 1415	Honouring of obligations and commitments by Georgia
RES 1416 + REC 1690	The conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference
RES 1417 + REC 1691	Protection of human rights in Kosovo
RES 1418 + REC 1692	The circumstances surrounding the arrest and prosecution of leading Yukos executives
REC 1693	The Third Summit
RES 1419	Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)
RES 1420	Prospects for peace in the Middle East
OPI 253	Draft Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking in human beings
RES 1421 + REC 1694	Relations between Europe and the United States
RES 1422	Europe and the Tsunami Disaster
OPI 254	Draft Convention on laundering, the financing of terrorism, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds from crime
OPI 255	Draft Convention on the prevention of terrorism
RES 1423	What solutions to Europe's unemployment
RES 1424	Boosting social cohesion and employment: more and better jobs
RES 1425	Revision of the terms of reference of Assembly committees

Human Rights Court President calls for speedy ratification of new Protocol

Speaking at the European Court of Human Rights' annual press conference, held this morning in Strasbourg, the Court's President Luzius Wildhaber called on Council of Europe member States to ratify Protocol No. 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights as rapidly as possible, so that the Protocol can enter into force at an early date.

"I believe it to be of the utmost importance that the member States of the Council of Europe ratify the Protocol as rapidly as possible. We believe that the Protocol does provide helpful procedural tools to enable the Court to further streamline its procedures and speed up its adjudication of cases. We see the Protocol in particular as inviting the Court to devote more of its resources to substantial cases, so as to ensure that efficient filtering out of inadmissible cases is not achieved at the expense of the cases which raise real human rights issues, cases which contribute to strengthening human rights protection across Europe and developing human rights jurisprudence. It is these cases which the Court should be concentrating on, and by reducing the judicial input for plainly inadmissible cases and for straightforward well-founded cases Protocol No. 14 helps us to do that."

Protocol No. 14, which amends the Convention system, is intended to guarantee the Court's long-term effectiveness by optimising the screening and processing of applications. Opened for signature on 13 May 2004, it has so far been signed by 32 countries and ratified by six of those. It will enter into force once ratified by all the States party to the Convention.

The annual statistics published today show that the Court delivered 718 judgments in 2004, of which 588 gave rise to a finding of at least one violation of the Convention. The Court also declared inadmissible a total of 20,348 applications. The number of cases terminated increased by around 17.5% compared with 2003. In addition, it is estimated that the annual number of applications lodged with the Court rose to about 45,000 in 2004, an increase of approximately 16%.

Afgørelse i nordiske menneskerettighedssager

25. januar Enhorn v. Sweden (no. 56529/00): violation of Article 5 § 1 (right to liberty and security).

25. januar Razaghi v. Sweden (no. 64599/01): sagen slettet, da udvisningen af Ali Reza Razaghi er trukket tilbage.

Møder i februar 2005

(hvor intet andet er nævnt, holdes mødet i Strasbourg)

- 2. International launch of the decade of Roma inclusion (Sofia)
- 2. Ministerkomitéen
- 7.-9. Ministerkomitéen
- 18. Møde mellem Europarådet, OSCE og FN
- 23. Ministerkomitéen
- 24.-25. Ministerkonference: Ministre med ansvar for lokale og regionale myndigheder (Budapest).
Temaer: Delivering good local and regional government; Challenges and priorities in the field of local and regional democracy; Results of the work carried out since the last Ministerial Conference, with particular reference to the legal instrument on regional self-government.

Europarådet holder sit tredje topmøde for medlemsstaternes stats- og regeringschefer den 16.-17. maj i Warszawa. Jeg opretter allerede nu en liste over interesserede, nordiske journalister. Send venligst en e-mail, hvis du ønsker at få tilsendt information om forberedelserne.

"Nyt fra Europarådet" udgives 11 gange om året af

Europarådets pressekorrespondent i de nordiske lande

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