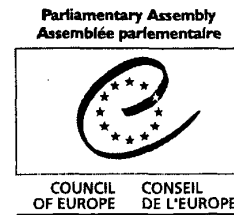


# Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



Doc. 10874  
10 April 2006

## Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee (27 January – 10 April 2006)<sup>1</sup>

Rapporteur: Mr Igor Ivanovski, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Socialist Group

### Part I

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Bureau met on 27 January 2006 in Strasbourg and on 16 March in Paris. The Standing Committee met on 17 March in Paris.

#### 2. FUNCTIONING OF THE ASSEMBLY

##### **A. PROGRESS REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF THE ASSEMBLY AND OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE (27 JANUARY– 10 APRIL 2006)**

2. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau appointed Mr Ivanovski ("the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", SOC) as rapporteur.

##### **B. FOLLOW-UP TO THE 1<sup>st</sup> PART OF THE 2006 ORDINARY SESSION (23-27 JANUARY 2006)**

3. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau:

i. *Resolution 1478 (2006) on "Integration of immigrant women in Europe"*: asked the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population and the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to present proposals to the Bureau for the follow-up to be given to paragraph 9 of this Resolution;

ii. *Recommendation 1734 (2006) on the "Situation in Belarus on the eve of the presidential election"*: in conformity with paragraph 19 of this Recommendation:

a. set-up an ad hoc Committee to take part in the Conference on Belarus to be co-organised by the Assembly and the Czech Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Prague on 22-23 February 2006 composed of the members of the Sub-committee on Belarus of the Political Affairs Committee as well as three members of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and three members of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education;

b. took note of the draft programme of this Conference.

<sup>1</sup> To be completed with the decisions taken by the Bureau during its meeting on 10 April 2006 in Strasbourg

**C. 2<sup>nd</sup> PART OF THE 2006 ORDINARY SESSION (10-13 APRIL 2006)**

4. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau:

i. Request for a debate under urgent procedure:

➤ “*Stop trafficking in women before the FIFA World Cup*”: recommended, in principle, to the Assembly to hold this debate under urgent procedure, subject to confirmation at the Bureau’s meeting on 10 April 2006; proposed to refer the matter to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for report; and agreed to invite Mr Frattini, EU Commissioner on “Justice, Freedom and Security “ as well as Mr Blatter, President of FIFA, to participate in the debate;

ii. Draft agenda:

a. decided to include in the draft agenda the reports of the Political Affairs Committee on “*Follow-up to the Third Summit: Memorandum of understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union*” and of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights on “*Follow-up to the Third Summit: the Council of Europe and the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union*”;

b. adopted the draft agenda;

iii. Draft order of business:

a. decided to propose to the Assembly to hold a joint debate on “*Follow-up to the Third Summit: Memorandum of understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union*” and on “*Follow-up to the Third Summit: the Council of Europe and the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union*” and agreed to invite the President in office of the Committee of Ministers, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and possibly other personalities to take part in it;

b. drew up the draft order of business.

**D. STANDING COMMITTEE (PARIS, 17 MARS 2006)**

5. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau took note of the draft agenda.

6. On 16 March 2006 the Bureau:

i. Request for a current affairs debate submitted by Mr Legendre and others: recommended to the Standing Committee to hold a current affairs debate on “*Freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs*” and chose Mr Legendre (France, EPP/CD) to open the debate;

ii. took note of the updated draft agenda.

7. On 17 March 2006, the Standing Committee:

➤ held an exchange of views with Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg, on the draft report on the relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union;

➤ ratified the credentials of new members of the Assembly submitted by the delegation of Finland, Greece and Iceland;

➤ ratified the changes in the composition of general Assembly committees in respect of the delegations of Finland, Greece, Iceland and the Netherlands;

➤ held a current affairs debate on freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs, introduced by Mr Legendre, Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education;

➤ held an exchange of views on the report on the observation of the elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (25 January 2006) on the basis of the report by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Bureau, presented by Lord Russell-Johnston.

**E. ADOPTED TEXTS**

8. On 17 March, the Standing Committee adopted, on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly, the following texts:

<b>Resolution 1486 (2006)</b>	<b>A dynamic housing policy as an element of European social cohesion;</b>
<b>Resolution 1487 (2006)</b>	<b>The future and regeneration of coalfields in Europe;</b>
<b>Resolution 1488 (2006)</b>	<b>Regrouping land in Central and Eastern Europe;</b>
<b>Resolution 1489 (2006)</b>	<b>Mechanisms to ensure women's participation in decision-making;</b>
<b>Resolution 1490 (2006)</b>	<b>Interpretation of Article 15.a of the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe</b>
<b>Resolution 1491 (2006)</b>	<b>Inclusion in the Assembly's Rules of Procedure of a new Rule on co-operation with the European Parliament</b>
<b>Recommendation 1736 (2006)</b>	<b>Need for international condemnation of the Franco regime</b>
<b>Recommendation 1737 (2006)</b>	<b>New trends and challenges for Euro-Mediterranean migration policies;</b>
<b>Recommendation 1738 (2006)</b>	<b>Mechanisms to ensure women's participation in decision-making;</b>
<b>Recommendation 1739 (2006)</b>	<b>Gender budgeting.</b>

#### **F. REFERENCES AND TRANSMISSIONS TO COMMITTEES**

9. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau approved the following proposals, which were ratified by the Assembly later that day:

a. references:

- **Doc. 10536**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Torosyan and others**  
**Imvros and Tenedos**, to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights for report;
- **Doc. 10799**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Periclous Papadopoulos and others**  
**The need to enhance European air safety**, to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development for information;
- **Doc. 10800**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Cliveti and others**  
**In favour of a Parliamentary Assembly "Equality Prize"**, to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for report at the Standing Committee;
- **Doc. 10801**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Hägg and others**  
**Sexuality education**, to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for information;
- **Doc. 10802**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Hägg and others**  
**Abortion and its impact on women and girls in Europe**, to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for report and to the Social, Health and Family Affairs for opinion;
- **Doc. 10803**  
**Motion for a recommendation presented by Mrs Hägg and others**

*Doc. 10874*

**The spread of HIV/AIDS epidemic to women and girls in Europe**, to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for report and to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee for opinion;

- **Doc. 10808**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Olin and others**  
**Sports and the integration of migrants**, Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population and to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education for information;
- **Doc. 10809**  
**Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Çavuşoğlu and others**  
**The activities of the International Organisation for Migration**, to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population for report at the Standing Committee and to the Political Affairs Committee for opinion;
- **Doc. 10810**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Zapfl-Helbing and others**  
**Securing Employment for Europe's Youth: A Must for Our Common Future**, to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee for information;
- **Doc. 10812**  
**Motion for a recommendation by Mr Randegger and others**  
**The Precautionary Principle**, to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education for report.

10. On 17 March, the Standing Committee ratified the following references and modifications of references proposed by the Bureau:

a. references to committees:

**Reference No.3181      Doc. 10815**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Evin and others**  
**Strengthening of the co-operation between Council of Europe member states**  
**to prevent and tackle health risks linked to the development of pandemics**

Reference to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *for report* at the Standing Committee.

**Reference No. 3182      Doc. 10816**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Sasi and others**  
**The need to conclude the WTO Doha Development Agenda in 2006**

Reference to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *to be taken into account* in the annual report on the OECD.

**Doc. 10822 rev. English only**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Platvoet and others**  
**Relations between the State, Religion and individuals**

To consult the Committee on Culture, Science and Education *on a possible follow-up*.

**Reference No.3183      Doc. 10823**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Veenendaal and others**  
**Energy savings as a way out of Europe's energy crisis**

Reference to the Political Affairs Committee *to be taken into account in the report on "Peril of using energy supply as an instrument of political pressure"*

**Doc. 10824**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs de Zulueta and others**  
**Europe's response to humanitarian disasters**

To consult the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *on a possible follow-up*.

**Doc. 10826**  
**Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Severin and others**  
**The code for good practices of the political parties**

To consult the Political Affairs Committee *on a possible follow-up*

**Reference No. 3184**    **Doc. 10827**  
**Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Bockel and others**  
**Transfrontier co-operation**

Transmission to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for information*

**Reference No. 3185**    **Doc. 10828**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Illicali and others**  
**Transport policies in Europe**

Transmission to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *for information.*

**Reference No. 3186**    **Doc. 10829**  
**Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Dendias and others**  
**Situation of longstanding refugees and displaced persons in South East Europe**

Reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *for report at the Standing Committee.*

**Doc. 10830**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Eörsi and others**  
**Conflict of interests**

To consult the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities *on a possible follow-up*

**Reference No. 3187**    **Doc. 10831**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Högmark and others**  
**Overcoming remaining obstacles to Economic Development in South-Eastern Europe**

Transmission to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *for information*

**Reference No. 3188**    **Doc. 10832**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Jurgens and others**  
**Freedom of assembly and expression for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons in member States**

Reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights to be taken into account in the report on "Legal recognition of same sex partnerships in Europe"

**Reference No. 3189**    **Doc. 10839**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Hancock and others**  
**With respect to the "Pasat case"**

Reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for report* and to the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring committee) *for opinion*

b. motions postponed from previous meetings of the Bureau:

**Reference No. 3190    Doc. 10573**  
**Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr McNamara and others**  
**Election of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights by the**  
**Parliamentary Assembly**

Reference to the Committee of Legal Affairs and Human Rights *to be taken into account* in the preparation of the report on the "Council of Europe Commissioner of Human Rights – stock-taking and perspective" and to the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities *for information*.

**Reference No. 3191    Doc. 10603**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Berzinš and others**  
**Voting in the Parliamentary Assembly must be made in the spirit of openness,**  
**transparency and accountability**

Reference to the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities *for report* at the Standing Committee.

**Reference No. 3192    Doc. 10634**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Marty and others**  
**Improving the participation of parliamentarians in the work of the**  
**Parliamentary Assembly**

Reference to the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities for report to be debated together with the report on "The institutional Balance at the Council of Europe"

**Reference No. 3193    Doc. 10635**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Walter and others**  
**Access to satellite broadcasting platforms**

Transmission to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education *for information*

**Reference No. 3194    Doc. 10667**  
**Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Legendre and others**  
**Promoting the teaching of European literature**

Reference to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education *for a report* on "Increasing awareness of cultural heritage as part of European identity".

**Reference No. 3195    Doc. 10669**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Ms Wurm and others**  
**Police handling of complaints filed by women**

Reference to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *to be taken into account* in the preparation of the report on the "Parliamentary Campaign to combat domestic violence against women".

**Reference No.3196    Doc. 10697**  
**Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Schmied and others**  
**Preserving the environment by energy savings within the public sector and**  
**the Council of Europe**

Reference to the Political Affairs Committee *to be taken into account* in the report on "Peril of using energy supply as an instrument of political pressure"

**Reference No. 3197    Doc. 10716**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Wodarg and others**  
**Embryonic, Foetal and Post-natal Animal-Human Mixtures**

Reference to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education *to be taken into account* in the preparation of the report on "*the precautionary principle*"

**Reference No. 3198 Doc. 10719**  
**Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr Çavuşoğlu and others**  
**Migration and mobility in the Eurasian Region – Prospects for the Future**

Reference to the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population *to be taken into account* in the follow-up to the first Eurasian Forum on Migration

**Doc. 10725**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Padilla and others**  
**Method for the amendment of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure**

No further action.

**Reference No. 3199 Doc. 10747**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Preda and others**  
**Establishment of a European Institute for Early Warning, Management and Studies of Natural Calamities Crises**

Transmission to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs *for information*

**Reference No. 3200 Doc. 10753**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Bousakla and others**  
**Abduction and "re-education" of Muslim women and children who have become too "Western-minded"**

Reference to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *for report*

**Reference No. 3206 Doc. 10775**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Rigoni and others**  
**Palliative care**

Reference to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee *for report*

**Reference No. 3201 Doc. 10804**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mr Bērziņš and others**  
**Concern over Russian NGO Law Amendments**

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 ongoing monitoring report with respect to Russia

c. request to modify a reference:

**Reference No. 3202 Doc. 10799**  
**Motion for a resolution presented by Mrs Pericleous Papadopoulos and others**  
**The need to enhance European air safety**  
**Reference N° 3172, 27 January 2006**

Reference to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development *for report at the Standing Committee*

d. request to extend a reference:

**Doc. 10106 rev.**  
**Motion for a resolution by Mr Holovaty and others**  
**Institutional balance at the Council of Europe**  
**Ref. 2946 valid until 26 April 2006**

Extension until 1 October 2006.



e. follow-up after consultation:

- Reference No. 3203 Doc. 10714**  
**Motion for an opinion presented by Mr Pourgourides and others**  
**Freedom of religion and other human rights for non-Muslim minorities in Turkey**  
**and**  
**Doc. 10724**  
**Motion for an opinion presented by Mr Mercan and others**  
**The plight of the Turkish Muslim Minority in Western Thrace, Greece**

Reference to the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights *for a single report* on "Freedom of religion and other human rights for non-Muslim minorities in Turkey and for Muslim minorities in Thrace (Western Greece)

- Reference No. 3204 Doc. 10718**  
**Motion for an opinion presented by Mrs Vermot-Mangold and others**  
**Femicides**

Reference to Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men *for report*.

- Reference No. 3205 Resolution 1436 (2005)**  
**Iran's nuclear programme: the need for an international response**

Reference to the Political Affairs Committee *for a new report*.

**G. APPLICATION TO INITIATE A MONITORING PROCEDURE CONCERNING THE MONOPOLISATION OF THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND THE POSSIBLE ABUSE OF POWER IN ITALY**

11. On 27 January, the Bureau decided to postpone the consideration of the motion for a resolution presented by Mr Wodarg and others until after the parliamentary elections in Italy and took note that the Sub-Committee on the Media of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education in close co-operation with the Italian parliamentary delegation, might organise a visit to Italy.

**H. PRIORITIES OF THE ASSEMBLY FOR 2006**

12. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau asked the Chairpersons of the political groups and the Chairpersons of the committees to discuss this matter on the basis of the memoranda prepared by the Secretariat with a view to taking a decision on this at its next meeting.

13. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau asked the Secretariat to prepare a consolidated document for the next Bureau meeting to permit it to take a decision on the matter.

**I. RE-CONSTITUTION OF AD HOC COMMITTEES OF THE BUREAU**

14. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau:

i. Ad Hoc Committee of Chairpersons of Political Groups (Presidential Committee): re-constituted this Ad Hoc Committee;

ii. Ad Hoc Committee on the dialogue with the Parliament of Liechtenstein: took note that the Ad Hoc Committee was re-constituted during the part-session after a written consultation of the Bureau members.

15. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau took note of changes in the composition of the ad hoc Committee on the dialogue with the Parliament of Liechtenstein and was informed by the latter's Chairman that it had adopted conclusions which would be transmitted to the Bureau for a future meeting.

**J. AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PARAGRAPH 5 OF RESOLUTION 1416 (2005) ON THE CONFLICT OVER THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION DEALT WITH BY THE OSCE MINSK CONFERENCE**

16. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau decided to postpone consideration of this matter to its next meeting.

17. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau agreed with the proposals contained in the report of the Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee.

**K. COMPOSITION OF THE MONITORING COMMITTEE**

18. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau:

- i. approved new members as proposed by the political groups for ratification by the Assembly: Mr Abbasov (Azerbaijan, SOC); Mr Hajiyeva (Azerbaijan, EPP/CD); Mr Daubler-Gmelin (Germany, SOC), Mr Foss (Norway, EPP/CD); Mr Gacek (Poland, EPP/CD);
- ii. invited the political groups to take into account regional balance when proposing representatives for the Monitoring Committee.

**L. INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY IN 2006**

19. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau appointed the following representatives for 2006 on the proposals of the President and the competent committees:

- European Commission for Democracy through Law – Venice Commission: Mr Schieder (SOC) and Mr Jurgens (SOC, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights);
- Council for Democratic Elections (of the Venice Commission): Mrs Durrieu (SOC, Political Affairs Committee), Mr Gross (SOC, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights) and Mr Van den Brande (EPP/CD, Monitoring Committee) and as substitutes: Ms Severinsen (ALDE, Political Affairs Committee), Ms Batet (SOC, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights) and Mr Zingeris (EDG, Monitoring Committee);
- European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity – North-South Centre: Mr Sasi (EPP/CD, Committee on Economic Affairs and Development) and Mr Schieder (SOC, Committee on Culture, Science and Education);
- European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance – ECRI: Mrs de Zulueta (SOC, Political Affairs Committee), Mr Cilevics (SOC, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights) and Mr Zingeris (EDG, Committee on Culture, Science and Education);
- Group of States against Corruption – GRECO: Mr. Bartumeu Cassany (SOC, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights);
- European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice - CEPEJ: the President of the Assembly;
- Council of Europe Committee for Works of Art: Mr Legendre (EPP/CD, Chairperson of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education) and Mr O'Hara (SOC, Rapporteur of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education);
- Pan-European Federation for Heritage – Europa Nostra: Mr Zingeris (EDG, Committee on Culture, Science and Education).

**M. APPOINTMENTS OF ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES FOR OFFICIAL ACTIVITIES**

20. On 27 January 2006, in reply to formal invitations, the Bureau took the following decisions:

- Conference launching the "Adriatic Euroregion" initiative, Venice, 6 February 2006: Mr Guber (Italy, EPP/CD) and Mr Crema (Italy, SOC);

- Seminar "Developing a protective framework for children: the role of Parliaments", Hanoi, 15-17 February 2006: asked the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee to appoint a representative (no cost to the Assembly);
  - Unidem seminar, Bucharest, 17-18 February 2006: Lord Russell-Johnston (United Kingdom, ALDE);
  - High level experts forum "Montenegro in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", Sveti Stefan, 19-21 February 2006: Mr Budin (Italy, SOC);
  - Hearing on "Promoting Stability and Democratisation in our Neighbourhood: What Role for the EU in the South Caucasus", Brussels, 22 February 2006: Mr Eörsi (Hungary, ALDE) and Mr Severin (Romania, SOC);
  - General meeting of the National Associations of Local Authorities of CoE member states, Strasbourg, 23-24 February 2006: Mr Dorić (Croatia, ALDE);
  - Congress "North South Mediterranean Dialogue: A shared vision of the future", Algiers, 24-26 February 2006: Mr Azzolini (Italy, EPP/CD);
  - Gender Equality: Making a Difference through Parliament, New York, 1 March 2006, asked the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to appoint a representative;
  - Conference of Speakers of Parliaments of SEECP member states, Athens, 16-18 March 2006: a member of the Greek delegation (no cost to the Assembly);
  - 18<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Crans Montana Forum, Zagreb, 5-7 April 2006 and Monaco, 22-25 June 2006: Mr Mimica (Croatia, SOC);
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC member states (PUIC), Istanbul, 12-13 April 2006: a member of the Turkish delegation (no cost to the Assembly);
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership meeting, Helsinki, 4-5 May 2006: a member of the Finnish delegation (no cost to the Assembly);
  - NATO Spring Session, Paris, 26-30 May 2006: Mrs Severinsen (Denmark, ALDE);
21. On 16 March 2006, in reply to formal invitations, the Bureau took the following decisions:
- Mr Miutescu (Romania, ALDE): 3<sup>rd</sup> Intercultural forum "Promoting Intercultural dialogue between generations", Bucharest, 17-18 March 2006 (no cost to the Assembly);
  - Ms Brasseur (Luxembourg, ALDE): 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial seminar on "Teaching remembrance: cultural heritage – yesterday and tomorrow", Prague and Terezin, 24-25 April 2006;
  - Member of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs: Conference on "Environmental Challenges, in the Actual Context", Bucharest, 27-28 April 2006.

**N. REPORTS BY ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES ON THEIR PARTICIPATION AT OFFICIAL ACTIVITIES**

22. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau took note of the following reports and decided to transmit these reports to the competent committees for follow-up:
- report by Ms Papadimitriou, Conference: "Water Management: A Shared Responsibility", Strasbourg, 20-21 October 2005 (to the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs);
  - report by Lord Russell-Johnston, Conference on the Declaration of principles for international election observation and the Code of Conduct for International election observers, New York, 27 October 2005 (to the Political Affairs Committee);

- report by Mr Flynn, Commonwealth of Independent States conference on Problems of International Cooperation in combating drugs, St. Petersburg, 10 November 2005 (to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee);
- report by Mr Sasi, Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Hong Kong, 12-15 December 2005 (to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development).

23. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau took note of the following reports and decided to transmit these reports to the competent committees for follow-up:

- report by Mr Kirilov, Parliamentary meeting "The Parliaments on the Way to Lisbon", Brussels, 31 January – 1 February 2006;
- report by Mr de Puig, Conference "uniteagainstracism", Barcelona, 1 February 2006;
- report by Mr Gubert, Conference for the launching of the Adriatic Euro-Region, Venice, 6 February 2006;
- report by Lord Russell-Johnston, OSCE Winter Meeting, 23-24 February 2006.

**O. MEETINGS ELSEWHERE THAN IN STRASBOURG AND PARIS**

24. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau authorised the following meetings:

- Sub-Committee on International Economic Relations (of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development): Geneva, 14 March 2006;
- Sub-Committee on Health (of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee): Brussels, 7 March 2006;
- Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee: Stockholm, 18 – 19 May 2006;
- Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population: Brussels, 20 – 21 March 2006;
- Ad hoc Sub-Committee (of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population): Brussels, 23 March 2006;
- Ad hoc Sub-Committee (of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs): Mexico, 16-22 March 2006, on the occasion of the Fourth World Water Forum.

25. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau authorised the following meetings:

- Sub-Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs): Constanta, 30 March 2006;
- Ad Hoc Sub-Committee (of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee): Monaco, 4-5 April 2006;
- Sub-Committee on Crime Problems and the Fight against terrorism and Sub-Committee on Rights of Minorities (of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights): The Hague, 27-28 April 2006;
- Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and Sub-Committee on Crime Problems and the Fight against Terrorism and Sub-Committee on Rights of Minorities: Budapest, 17-18 May 2006;
- Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe: Budapest, 19 May 2006;
- Sub-Committee on Refugees (of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population): Lisbon, 18-19 May 2006;
- Sub-Committee on International Economic Relations (of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development): Riga, 15-17 June 2006.

### 3. RELATIONS WITH OTHER BODIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

#### A. COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

##### ❖ Meeting of the Joint Committee (Wednesday 12 April, 6.30 pm)

26. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau agreed to include the following topics on the draft agenda:

- Relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union;
- Co-operation between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly in the implementation of the Juncker report;
- Council of Europe budgetary prospects for 2007;
- Relations with Belarus.

#### B. EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF TORTURE AND INHUMAN AND DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT (CPT)

27. On 27 January 2006 the Bureau, drew up the lists of candidates in respect of Estonia and Ireland in the following order of preference:

##### i. Candidates in respect of Estonia:

- 1/ Mr Andres LEHTMETS
- 2/ Mr Arno ADAMSOO
- 3/ Mrs Eve LIBLIK

##### ii. Candidates in respect of Ireland:

- 1/ Mr Tim DALTON
- 2/ Mr Michael J. MELLETT
- 3/ Mrs Valerie BRESNIHAN

iii. France and Ukraine: decided to ask each parliamentary delegation to submit a new list of candidates including candidates of both genders;

iv. Bosnia and Herzegovina: decided to ask the parliamentary delegation to submit a new list of candidates as none of the candidates fulfils the minimum requirements.

### 4. RELATIONS WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

#### A. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

28. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau endorsed a position paper prepared by the President on relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union (contribution to the report by Mr Juncker).

#### B. PACE 2005 CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE PARLIAMENTARY TROIKA ON THE STABILITY PACT FOR SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

29. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau decided to postpone the consideration of the memorandum prepared by the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly on this matter;

30. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau took note of a memorandum prepared by the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly;

**C. CONFERENCE ON EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANISM: HISTORY AND THE PRESENT (ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RUSSIAN STATE DUMA) (SAINT PETERSBURG, 28 APRIL 2006)**

31. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau:

- i. authorised the Sub-Committee on external relations of the Political Affairs Committee to represent the Assembly at this conference;
- ii. was informed that the President would send a joint invitation letter with Mr Mironov, President of the inter-parliamentary Assembly of the CIS.

32. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau took note of the draft programme of the conference, co-organised with the Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS.

**5. EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND POLITICAL MATTERS**

**A. CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN**

33. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau heard a statement by Mr Kuanysh Sultanov, Head of the Committee on social-cultural Affairs of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who presented the annual report on the progress achieved in the promotion of the principles stated in the co-operation agreement with the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

34. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau heard a statement by Mr Kopeyev, Deputy Speaker of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and held an exchange of views on its basis.

**B. CONFERENCE ON BELARUS (PRAGUE, 22-23 FEBRUARY 2006)**

35. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau:

- i. took note of the programme, list of participants and joint statement of the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic;
- ii. took note of a press release by the President entitled: "Stop intimidation of the Belarus opposition".

**6. BUDGETARY QUESTIONS**

36. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau:

- i. heard a statement by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe;
- ii. held an exchange of views on this matter;
- iii. asked the Secretary General of the Assembly to prepare, in consultation with Mr Wille, Rapporteur of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development for this issue, concrete proposals concerning the expenditure of the Assembly in 2007, to be considered at its next meeting.

**7. ELECTIONS**

**A. ELECTIONS TO THE PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (25 JANUARY 2006)**

37. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau approved the report of the ad hoc Committee which observed these elections.

**B. ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE (26 MARCH 2006)**

38. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau:

- a. approved the composition of the ad hoc Committee which will observe these elections and appointed Mrs Wohwend (EPP/CD) as Chairperson of the ad hoc Committee;

b. decided to increase the number of members of the Ad hoc committee to 50 according to the D'Hondt system;

c. authorised a pre-election mission composed of five members, one from each political group, who are at the same time members of the Ad Hoc Committee.

39. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau took note of the memorandum prepared by Mrs Wohlwend, Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee, on the pre-election mission to Ukraine carried out from 28 February to 2 March 2006.

**C. PARTIAL RE-RUN OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN AZERBAIDJAN (13 MAY 2006)**

40. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau:

a. took note that the Ad Hoc Committee for the observation of the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan was re-constituted during the part-session after a written consultation of the Bureau members and re-appointed Mr Platvoet (UEL) as Chairperson;

b. authorised a pre-election mission composed of five members, one from each political group, who are at the same time members of the Ad Hoc Committee;

41. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau took note of a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan stating that the partial re-run of parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan would take place on 13 May 2006 and inviting the Council of Europe to observe these elections.

**D. REFERENDUM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MONTENEGRO (SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO) (SUMMER 2006)**

42. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau agreed to observe this referendum subject to a formal invitation.

**8. OTHER MATTERS**

**A. LETTER FROM MR ANDRIS BERZINS, CHAIRMAN OF THE LATVIAN DELEGATION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

43. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau took note of the letter from Mr Berzins concerning the post-monitoring dialogue with Latvia and agreed to take it up formally at its next meeting.

**B. REVISION OF THE AIDE MEMOIRE CONCERNING THE REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AT THE CHARGE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE BUDGETS**

44. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau approved the revision of this document.

**C. VISIT BY RAPPORTEUR**

45. On 16 March 2006 the Bureau authorised a fact-finding visit by Mr Iwinski to Kazakhstan in May/June 2006 in his capacity as rapporteur on the situation in that country.

**D. GRANTING OF THE TITLE OF "HONORARY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ASSEMBLY"**

46. On 27 January 2006, the Bureau awarded the title of "Honorary Secretary General of the Assembly" to Mr Bruno Haller.

**E. COMMUNICATIONS**

47. On 16 March 2006, the Bureau took note of the communications of the President, the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly.

**Appendix**

**Speech by Mr Sultanov K.S. – Chairman,  
Committee for Social and Cultural Development,  
Senate of Parliament, Republic of Kazakhstan**

**First Report of Parliament  
of the Republic of Kazakhstan at PACE session  
Strasbourg, January 27, 2006**

**INTENSIFICATION OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES IN KAZAKHSTAN**

Esteemed Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen!

Allow me to express my gratitude for giving me an opportunity to speak from this high rostrum of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe with a report on intensification of democratic processes and reforms carried out in Kazakhstan during 14 years of state independence

In April 2004, a most important Agreement on Co-operation between the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was signed. Our country was among the first in the Central Asia region to institutionalize relations with such prestigious parliamentary institution as PACE.

The fundamental principle of our Constitution, incorporated in its provisions, proclaims that the supreme values for Kazakhstan are «people, their life, their rights and freedoms ... Human rights and freedoms belong to each person from birth, are recognized as absolute and inalienable and determine the content and enforcement of laws ...». The Parliament of Kazakhstan has ratified almost 50 international agreements in the sphere of observance and protection of human rights.

For Kazakhstan, a country with a pronounced poly-ethnic and multi-culture composition of the population, the problem of achieving and strengthening social stability, harmonization of interests of individuals, social groups, public associations, political parties and the state as a whole is linked with the task of finding optimum forms of political management. In Kazakhstan, it is primarily based on the laws reflecting the main provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international UN covenants on human rights and other fundamental international instruments.

The Constitution of Kazakhstan is recognized by the world international organizations as meeting the main goals of a democratic society. I should like to point out that we took the French constitutional model as a basis.

The two-house (Senate and Mazhilis) Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan represents the country's legislative power. The Constitution vests it with the authority to approve the country's budget and monitor its execution. The Parliament, by the majority of votes, grants its consent for the appointment of the Prime Minister and Chairperson of the National Bank, it is entitled to vote non-confidence to the Government, insist on its resignation, and may request dismissal of any minister. Factions of political parties are represented in the Parliament. The Parliament is entitled to introduce amendments into the country's Constitution. Members of the Government regularly report to the Parliament Houses. The Senate elects judges of the Supreme Court, grants its consent to the appointment of the Prosecutor General and the Chairperson of the Committee for National Security; the Constitutional Council and the Accounts Committee are formed on a parity basis by the President, Senate and Mazhilis, while the Central Election Committee is elected by Mazhilis.

Kazakhstan has achieved important results in liberalizing political life by improving legislation. In particular: 1) freedom of speech has been secured in Kazakhstan, there is no censorship; non-government mass media have been created and function (over 80%); 2) the institution of Ombudsman on human rights has been founded; Kazakhstan has acceded to the international conventions on human rights; 3) Kazakhstan has secured freedom of religion, it consistently pursues the policy of inter-confession concord and equality of religions. We provide for peaceful co-existence of 46 religious confessions and fight religious extremism. The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions held in Astana has become a convincing proof of the growing peacemaking potential of our country; 4) a moratorium on capital punishment has been introduced in Kazakhstan; 5) there exist political pluralism and a multi-party system: any citizen of Kazakhstan may freely join any public or political associations; 6) civil society institutions and structures have



been created and function, including more than 5 thousand NGOs; 7) Kazakhstan has built a foundation of an independent judicial system, the rule of law is consistently maintained. The public acquires more and more trust in the judicial system.

Extensive law-making has resulted in a high level of the political system modernization. I should like to quote here **Mr. Solomon Passy**, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office : "in recent years, major progress has been achieved in the Kazakhstan democratic reforms".

Starting from 1995, the Constitutional law «On Elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan» has been in force. It meets the main principles of suffrage as formulated in the Copenhagen document. However, this law is not a dogma and undergoes evolution. The 2005 Elections of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2004 and 2005 Senate and Mazhilis elections, etc., were conducted in full conformance with the provisions of this law. Necessary amendments and additions were introduced into the law in 2004 and 2005.

We have compiled a comparative table containing the results of legislative efforts undertaken upon the Evaluation (recommendations) of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights under the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) of the Constitutional law «On Elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan» of August 24, 2004. We have included all articles listed in the Evaluation (Appendix 1).

The Presidential elections conducted in December 2005 showed that a new legislative model for organizing and conducting elections has been built in the republic. This is testified by: running of five candidates, extended access to monitoring elections not only for local but also for a large number of international observers (more than 1.5 thousand observers from 27 countries of the world); regular TV broadcasting of the election campaign clips of all candidates; publication of electoral registers and adopted decisions in the Central Election Committee web-site, showing a professional approach to election processes; utilization by all election process participants of the entire spectrum of legitimate election campaign methods; budgets were allocated to all candidates for publicizing their programs in mass media.

Almost 1500 international observers worked at polling places, more than 400 mass media representatives were accredited. The CIS mission alone was represented by ten OSCE member-states. All sittings of election committees at all levels were held openly, sometimes with the participation of observers and mass media.

At a meeting (November 2, 2005) with Mr. N.Abikayev, Senate Chairman, Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Alejo Vidal-Quadras Roca, the First Vice-Chairman of the European Parliament stated: «Having got acquainted with the election campaign programs of candidates for Presidency I can say that the opposition programs are much too aggressive by the European standards, which can not be called constructive, however this proves the existence of freedom of speech and a high level of democratization in the country».

Generally, it should be noted that the Presidential elections in Kazakhstan were held in a quiet atmosphere and in strict accordance with the law. The belief and hope for strengthening stability and further prosperity of the country brought people to the polling places bringing the rate of voting to 76.8%. This is an indicator of the political activity of people in Kazakhstan.

Jacques Chirac, the French President, in his letter to the state leader N.Nazarbaev noted that «France evaluates the changes introduced from 1991 as important and decisive. Acting in ambiguous and complicated conditions, your country has embarked on an irreversible path of building a state which, along with its faithfulness to national values and long history, declares its commitment to universal principles of democracy and a law-governed state. Within 15 years, Kazakhstan has become a country of stable institutions and dynamic economy. I welcome your firm commitment to continued reforms which you regard as necessary for strengthening your country in the modern world and securing its high purposes on the international arena».

The quality of the election process has been enhanced, while the activity of the candidates for the country's highest post has become more intensive. Voting with the "Silau" electronic system has again demonstrated the commitment of Kazakhstan to democratization of society through modern political procedures. Even the election process should keep pace with the technological development. Citizens could make use of electronic panels, the share of which constituted 15%, along with the traditional ballot papers.

One should note the constructive work of the observers' missions who gave an objective evaluation of the recent elections. Peter Lilly, a UK Parliament member, when presenting the final conclusion of the

British mission of observers at a press-conference in Astana, stated: «The high level of support for President N.Nazarbaev should not be perceived as a pretext for doubting the election integrity».

Tadeusz Iwinski, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe indicated a number of violations in the course of the recent Presidential elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan. In particular, that «high attendance by voters resulted in overcrowding of the voting places which, in some cases, threatened the protection of secret voting». However, such was the actual attendance of voters and their firm wish to vote for their candidate.

The delegation of US observers consisting of Robert Barry, Sarah Carey, Charles Melancon, Frederick Starr, Douglas Townsend and Daniel Witt made a joint statement which concluded as follows: «... the election represents a considerable step forward in the movement of Kazakhstan along democratic development and political reforms. We were pleased to note that three main candidates called for extending the principles of appointing by election to lower state management levels. On the basis of this election, we hope that Kazakhstan, a doubtless regional leader in the area of economic and political reforms, will maintain its leading position in conducting further political reforms».

The recent election was highly estimated by numerous observers, including Vladimir Pekhtin, coordinator of the group of observers from the CIS Inter-parliament Assembly, Zhang Deguang, the SCO Executive Secretary, the group of international independent observers from Ukrainian Parliament, etc. L.Baiseitova, head of the Kazakh opposition office abroad, stated: «One can state for sure that, for the first time in the Kazakhstan history, presidential election was conducted on an alternative basis and became legitimate, since an opposition candidate took part in it. I have to acknowledge that Nazarbaev has won ..., people trust him rather than the opposition candidate».

Alexander Tsinker, Director of the Institute of East European and CIS Countries (Israel) said that «Forcing democracy in general on any country is a very dangerous process. As a representative of Israel, I say this in many countries: had Israel complied with all the requests from all international organizations, starting with the UN and up to the OSCE, I would hardly represent the state now because it would not exist. Each state must listen to what is said by others. But each state must live with its own mind».

On the voting day, December 4, 2005, Bruce George, head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, stated: «I have taken part in a lot of elections. But I have never seen so many operators with TV cameras and newspaper photographers. This means that the Kazakhstan election is going to be well covered by the press. In Great Britain, for instance, TV channel operators are not allowed to the voting place premises». Struan Stevenson, head of the European Parliament delegation, noted: «There is no doubt, in particular, about the election results and in the ability of Nursultan Nazarbaev to win exclusively by the votes which were cast in his favour... The conduct of presidential election, as compared with the last year parliament election, has considerably improved. The election process was peaceful and calm». This is only a small part of statements, conclusions and assessments of the election of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Thus, most observers are unanimous in their opinion and have unambiguously defined the recent election of the President as legitimate. On this occasion, the state Leader has received and continues to receive numerous congratulations from heads of states, leaders of political and international and public organizations. For example, Josep Borrell Fontelles, President of the European Parliament, stated in his congratulation of N.Nazarbaev: «Your re-election is a memorable moment in the history of your country from the moment of acquiring its independence and an important event for the entire Central Asia region. I should like to underline that the European Parliament fully supports intensification of democratic processes in your country», and expressed his best wishes and hope for strengthening cooperation between Kazakhstan and the European Parliament.

We are grateful to the OSCE mission for their wish to assist Kazakhstan in accelerating certain democratic processes. In this connection, it should be noted that the Parliament of Kazakhstan has undertaken and continues to undertake appropriate measures along the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, both upon the results of 2004 Majilis election and the 2005 Presidential election, which are presented in the form of a comparative analysis (appendices 2 and 3). I am sure that the insignificant violations of the election legislation, which have taken place, will get a proper legal assessment by the country's Parliament and will serve as basis for further improvement of the respective laws.

\* \* \*

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen!

The issues of combating corruption are given especially great attention to in the law-making activity. Therefore, the anti-corruption laws are being improved to strengthen the accountability and public monitoring of state agencies at all levels. Kazakhstan was among the first post-Soviet countries to adopt the law «On Combating Corruption» and to accede to international conventions. The State Program of Combating Corruption for 2006-2010 is being developed, based on building a multi-tier national anti-corruption system. The 2000 Law «On Civil Service» prescribes a special procedure of employing people for civil service as a result of a contest. The adopted Code of Honour, in the opinion of the international non-government organization «Transparency International», may help restrain conditions for corruption offences.

\* \* \*

Parliament members directly participate in elaboration of the State Program of Stage-by-Stage Reform and Introduction of Local Self-government in Kazakhstan.

The draft law «On Local Self-government» has become a widely discussed topic in the regions, at conferences and «round tables».

\* \* \*

The development of the non-government sector is one of priority lines of the public life democratization in the country. The sector includes public associations, foundations, non-government non-profit institutions and other organizations. At present, there function more than 5 thousand NGOs in Kazakhstan (including 300 NGOs with foreign participation), which is 40 times as many as in 1995. Today, «the third sector» employs around 35 thousand people full-time, and up to 50 thousand part-time (consultants, experts); there are more than 100 thousand volunteers. The Parliament renders efficient assistance to non-government organizations. This is testified by the adoption of the laws «On Public Associations», «On Non-profit Organizations» and «On State Social Order». The adoption of the Concept of State Support to Non-government Organizations in the Republic of Kazakhstan is a memorable event in the non-government sector development.

\* \* \*

The National Program of Political Reforms envisages **further development of the civil society** as one of its priorities. A standing Civil Forum has been founded to this end, **aimed** at consolidation of the NGO sector and its constructive interaction with state agencies and the business sector. At the same time, it should be noted that such institutions as the Confederation of Non-government Organizations and the Civil Alliance have already been founded and function, pursuing a consolidated state policy in the area of democratic reforms.

At present, councils for cooperation with NGOs under local executive agencies operate in the country. Numerous state power agencies render extensive information, organizational, technical and consultancy support to NGO initiatives. Local NGOs work along 12 main lines. These are mostly children and youth, medical and human rights organizations, as well as various associations for supporting local public initiatives. Also, the Concept of the Civil Society Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2006-2011) has been worked out. The Concept was adopted at the 2nd regular Civil Forum which also worked out recommendations for the coming period.

\* \* \*

The Republic fully supports art. 9.1 of the Document of **the Copenhagen Meeting on Human Dimension** - «The right to free expression of convictions includes the freedom of sticking to one's convictions, as well as freedom to obtain and disseminate information and ideas...» and art. 24 «The member states shall ensure that the exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms ... may not be subject to any limitations, except as provided by the legislation, and meet their obligations under international law».

The first laws of the sovereign Kazakhstan included the law «On Press and other Mass Media» and the law «On Mass Media» (1999). Today, all elements of the information market have been shaped; as of November 1, 2005, there function 2110 mass media, including 1325 newspapers, 590 magazines, 184 TV and radio companies, 11 information agencies. The absolute majority of them are private.

By the rate of mass media development we are considerably ahead of most Central Asia and Transcaucasia countries. At present, there are **314** social and political, **1029** information, **198** advertising, **172** scientific, **28** ladies', **41** youth, **39** children's, and **37** religious mass media in the Republic. The newspapers and magazines are published and programs are broadcast in 11 languages which, apart from Russian and Kazakh, include Ukrainian, Polish, English, German, Korean, Uigur, Turkish, Dungan and others. The national mass media get state financial support.

The media market is widely represented by foreign press as well: **2389** foreign mass media are distributed in the country. Russian mass media, BBC programs, Deutsche Welle, the radio «Svoboda», Polish channel «Polonia» are popular in Kazakhstan; more than 80 representatives of foreign mass media from twenty world countries are accredited, including such major information agencies as the «BBC», «Associated Press», «Interfax», «France Press», «Xinhua», «Reuter», «ITAR-TASS», «Bridge News», etc. The national electronic press now is represented by 9 TV channels and 4 radio channels. In Kazakhstan regions, there operate 85 electronic mass media, which is 30 % more than in 2000.

Such public associations protecting the rights of journalists as the Congress of Kazakhstan Journalists, the Union of Kazakhstan Journalists, the Association of Kazakhstan TV and Radio Broadcasters, and offices of such international organizations as OSCE, International Bureau on Human Rights, «Internews network» and others fruitfully work in the country. The Eurasian media forum which is an important international media initiative has become an imperative of our era. Its aim is to support professional development of Eurasian mass media and dissemination of information on characteristic features of the Eurasian region development.

\* \* \*

12 political parties officially function in Kazakhstan. The current legislation provides ample opportunities for creating new parties in future as well. The Kazakhstan parties, by formulating their proposals, lobbying and fostering their implementation, have become a real factor of the Republic's public life. Their role is also important in maintaining civil peace and concord, which is a key task of today. While in 1990s, according to social poll results, parties enjoyed the trust of 15-20% of the population, during the recent two years this figure grew up to 50%, which testifies to a positive tendency in the development of the Kazakhstan political system.

Starting from November 2004, the National Commission on Issues of Democracy and Civil Society, composed of Parliament deputies, leaders of political parties, ministries and public organizations, operates in the country. During a short period of time, the Commission has become a mechanism for defining efficient ways to modernize the society and its political sphere, a designer and conductor of various legislative initiatives.

\* \* \*

Today, our country is a signatory of more than 20 multilateral international conventions regulating various aspects of human rights, among them are the International conventions on the rights of the child, on elimination of all forms of discrimination with regard to women, against torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, Geneva humanitarian conventions, and others. The ratification by the Parliament of the International conventions on civil and political rights and on economic, social and cultural rights in autumn 2005 has become an important step forward by Kazakhstan on the way to develop democracy and civil society. The key institutions of democracy and civil society have been formed. The institution of Ombudsman on human rights, protecting individuals, operates successfully and its priority task is to protect the rights of such socially vulnerable population groups as children, women, senior persons, disabled persons, the persons held at penitentiary institutions, representatives of national minorities.

We have elaborated a draft Plan of Government Measures to Combat and Prevent Criminal Human Trafficking for 2006-2008. The Parliament has adopted the laws «On Introducing Amendments and Additions into Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Issues of Combating Human Trafficking» and «On Ratification of the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution by Others».

Amendments and additions have been introduced into the laws aimed at decriminalization of a number of articles in the Criminal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Penal Code. They establish additional ground for early discharge of convicts who started to repent, introduce a new type of punishment, i.e. limitation of liberty, establish the rights of convicts for social security. The work on the transfer of detention facilities under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice has been completed. We have legalized the

institution of public monitoring, which allows regular monitoring of the penal system institutions by non-government organizations. A Public Supervisory Council under the Ministry of Justice has been formed, consisting of law scholars, representatives of international and local non-government organizations, has been created.

Special attention is being paid to the protection of rights of under age children. We have acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and adopted the Law «On the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Kazakhstan». Special attention is being paid to the observance of the citizens' constitutional right to free secondary education, the requirement of the legislation on registering orphan children and the children left without parents' care, and the protection of their rights, including property rights. The living conditions for orphans at children's homes are being improved. Many orphan children have found comfort and warmth of family life in newly created family-type children's villages.

Kazakhstan is a poly-ethnic state and a successor to century-long spiritual and cultural traditions. My fellow-countrymen who represent more than 125 nationalities and 46 confessions are creating the foundation for sovereignty in common effort. Inter-nation concord is a result of careful work of the state supported by institutions of the civil society during all these years. We have managed to create an optimum model of interrelations among all ethnic groups of the country's population. It is based on mutual understanding and mutual respect, patriotism and civil responsibility for the fate of the country among representatives of all ethnic groups living on this ancient land. We have created a unique public political institution, i.e. the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan. Our experience has got recognition at the highest international level. Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, has called it a successful model of inter-ethnic interaction which may be recommended to countries of the planet as a practical embodiment of the civil peace formula in a multi-national society. It has been positively assessed by the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, the Council of Europe, political and religious leaders, and public figures of numerous countries of the world. This makes us obliged to do still more.

It is on this land that the idea was born to convene the Congress of World and Traditional Religions. The 1st Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions (September 23 –24, 2003) took place in Astana on the initiative of President N.Nazarbaev. More than one hundred and twenty envoys of seventeen religions of the world came to the capital of Astana. The Forum demonstrated the ability of spiritual leaders to conduct a constructive dialogue for the sake of peace and concord among nations of the planet. The Congress has become a concrete contribution of Kazakhstan into elimination of threat of a religious confrontation which spreads across the world. The Congress participants highly praised the level of spiritual concord in the Kazakh society and supported the intention of this country to become a territory of inter-confession peace and a bridge for interaction of the world religions and a dialogue of civilizations.

The rights and freedoms proclaimed by the Constitution can not be realistically guaranteed without their proper judicial protection, therefore courts play a role of enormous importance. It is the court, by settling disputes, that supports and strengthens the regime of the rule of law in the state as a separate and independent branch of power. Today, the courts have become more accessible and open for the society, citizens trust them more and more, which is testified by a considerable growth of the number of people applying to court for the protection of their rights and legitimate interests in recent years. The institution of jury has been introduced. In order to ensure a more complete and qualified protection of the citizens' rights, the role of defence lawyers in the judicial process is being strengthened by law.

The policy of cancelling the capital punishment in the Republic is being implemented by stages. Initially, it was manifested in limiting the application of the death penalty. A comparison of the national legislation with that of other states of Europe and the East shows that the number of crimes punishable by the death penalty in Kazakhstan is considerably lower. What is important is that in all sanctions entailing capital punishment, life imprisonment or imprisonment up to 25 years is allowed as an alternative. Additionally, the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan defines the categories of persons who may not be sentenced to death. They include women and men who, by the moment of passing the court verdict, have reached the age of 65. No death penalty may be applied with regard to the persons who committed crimes at the age under 18. The legal norms for sentencing to death and executing the penalty fully meet the existing international regulations and recommendations included into the final Declaration of the First World Congress against the Death Penalty (Strasbourg, June 22, 2001) and Resolution 1253 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe «Abolition of the Death Penalty in Council of Europe Observer States» (Strasbourg, June 25, 2001).

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen!

Creation of an efficient **system of social protection** of the population and protection of human rights is a most important task for any democratic state. At the initial stages of strengthening Kazakhstan statehood, the first important steps in the area of social protection of the population were made within the framework of the long-term Strategy of State Development up to 2030. Such measures provided for positive changes in the issues of labour protection, fighting poverty and unemployment, and development of social partnership.

Today, state and industry programs are the main instruments for implementing the state socio-economic policy. All in all, there are 91 programs, for which the amount of 6.9 billion dollars was allocated in the budget. In 2006, the absolute figure of budget expenses for the social sphere is 4.8 billion US dollars (a growth of 128% as compared with 2005). The following budget expenses are planned for 2006: **education** - 760 million dollars (146%); **health protection** - 619 million dollars (138%); **social protection and assistance** - 3.1 billion dollars (123%). The share of expenses for social and cultural sphere in the total budget expenses grows with every passing year and constitutes 41.7%.

While during the last 10 years (1994 - 2004) the minimum salary grew 54 times over, as a result of the measures being undertaken, during the period of 1994 - 2005, this growth constitutes 75 times over, if we take into account the salary growth in 2005. During the period of 2000-2005, the minimum salary has grown 3.4 times over. Moreover, during the period from 1999 to 2005 the following indices have grown: mean monthly salary - 2.6 times over; minimum pensions - 3 times over; subsistence minimum - 2.3 times over; average amount of state allowances - 3 times over.

It should be noted that, at present, salaries in Kazakhstan are among the highest in the CIS, as of November 1, 2005, they equal 282 dollars, in Kyrgyzstan they equal 64, Tajikistan - 33 dollars, Belarus - 231, Ukraine - 166, Azerbaijan - 126, Moldova - 110, Armenia - 111 US dollars.

Starting from 1998, Kazakhstan was the first among the CIS countries to introduce a cumulative pension system - the only type of old age pension based on the principle of savings, without solidarity among the participants.

During the period from 1995 to 2005, the average pension has grown almost five times over, and its minimum amount 25 times over. In conformance with the Program of Further Intensification of Social Reforms in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2005-2007, further development of the pension system is aimed at creating a three-tier pension system: the first tier is the state basic pension for all citizens of the Republic; the second tier constitutes pensions from the solidarity system (national budget) and cumulative pension funds, i.e. mandatory pension taxes; and the third tier is additional payments from voluntary and professional voluntary pension contributions. In future it is planned to increase the amount of basic pension to the level of 75% of the subsistence minimum. While before implementing such measures Kazakhstan was ahead of all CIS countries by the minimum pension and was at the level of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus with regard to average pension, starting from July 1, 2005, Kazakhstan became first among the post-Soviet states by the pension level. It should be noted that, from the moment of introducing state allowances in 1998, their types (currently, 34 types) and amounts grow with every passing year.

However, there are still numerous problems in the social sphere. Just at present, the issues of combating poverty and reducing unemployment have become most acute. In reducing poverty and unemployment, the main aim is to create conditions for economic growth and productive employment on the basis and primarily by economy diversification and innovative industrial development, an active policy on the labour market and increase of income of the population, access for the poor to the services of health protection and education, improvement of targeted social protection and efficiency of state management. To this end, special attention is paid in the country to the investment policy and development institutions. The Bank of Development, Innovation and Investment funds, the National Fund, centers, clusters (such as «Cotton»), free economic zones, etc., have been created and function.

By 2012, we plan to increase the GDP in Kazakhstan approximately 2.5 times over, i.e. from 3.4 up to 8-9 thousand dollars per head of population, pensions - 2 times over, social allowances and stipends - 2.5 times over. We are going to step up expenses for education and science 3 times over, and in 2012 they will amount to 6.4 billion dollars. Expenses for health protection will be more than tripled and amount to more than 4.7 billion dollars.

Kazakhstan integration into the world community is based on common practice of concluding international agreements which now amount to over 5 thousand, including more than 600 ratified by the Parliament.

Kazakhstan has established diplomatic relations with more than 130 states, is member of 70 international organizations, runs more than fifty diplomatic offices and consular institutions abroad. The country's Parliament has now established cooperation with parliaments of more than 40 foreign states. The status of observer in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, granted to the country's Parliament, has become a memorable event in the process of establishing a dialogue with NATO.

While following the path of peace and mutual understanding, demonstrating its strive for cooperation and strengthening trusting and equal relations with all countries, Kazakhstan pays special attention to its cooperation with the European Union. This is also necessitated by the geographic location of our country on the Eurasian continent.

Kazakhstan's commitment to the ideals of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and disarmament is undoubted. In this context, the assumption by Kazakhstan of the status of a state free from nuclear weapons is of great importance. We have given to the world an unprecedented example of a voluntary renunciation of them.

Kazakhstan was among the first countries to embark on the path of getting rid of mass destruction weapons.

The Parliament constantly works on shaping and improving the legal basis for fighting terrorism and extremism. We gradually improve legislation in the area of fighting terrorism and extremism. The Law «On Fighting Terrorism» has been in effect in Kazakhstan from 1999. A number of amendments and additions have been introduced into the criminal and criminal procedure laws and the legislative acts on the issues of the national security.

To this end, preventive efforts are being made to neutralize the activity of terrorist operations. For example, in autumn 2004, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Kazakhstan prohibited the activity on the territory of Kazakhstan of 11 organizations whose involvement in terrorist acts had been proved («Al-Kaeda», «Asbat Al-Ansar», «Moslem Brothers», «Boz Gurd», «Jamaat Mojahed in Central Asia», «Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan», «Islamic Party of Eastern Turkestan», «Kurd People's Congress», «Lashkar-I-Taiba», «Taliban», «Society of Social Reforms», «Hizb-ut-Tahrir»).

Kazakhstan's efforts are aimed at an active interaction with the OSCE within the framework of fighting terrorism. This is exemplified by strengthening international legal cooperation in fighting modern challenges within the «OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century». To this end, the national laws in this area are being improved.

The idea of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA) initiated by the country's President carries great potential. One of its main tasks is a practical implementation of the principle of peaceful settlements of disputes and confidence-building measures in the military and political dimension. Another task, which is equally important, is combining diplomatic efforts in order to outlaw on the political level the destructive activity of terrorists and create conditions for strengthening mutual trust and fruitful cooperation.

Within the several recent years Kazakhstan purposefully conducts negotiations, exchanges delegations, organizes meetings of leaders of the Parliament Houses, Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of this country with leaders of the Council of Europe (CE) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the issues of cooperation with Kazakhstan.

Cooperation with PACE opens for Kazakhstan an opportunity to borrow most extensive European experience on the development of local self-government, education, culture, and environment protection. Very important is the prospect of obtaining consultancy assistance from qualified PACE experts in various areas of law-making. Moreover, the development of relations with PACE facilitates the promotion in this country of the principle of parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, respect of human rights, and ensuring the regional security. The European Commission supports the process of reform which bear a constructive nature. We are always open for discussing the principle of democratization and security.

In future, we ought to concentrate on the so-called «three whales»: development of civil society institutions, building of a stable political party system and prioritizing of the social policy. In this connection, the Parliament of Kazakhstan will have to do a lot of work on shaping a modern and efficient legislative basis fostering progress and extending democracy.

I thank you for attention and wish you every success.

## **Part II**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Bureau met on 10 April 2006 in Strasbourg.

### **2. FUNCTIONING OF THE ASSEMBLY**

#### **A. 2<sup>nd</sup> PART OF THE 2006 ORDINARY SESSION (10-13 APRIL 2006)**

2. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau:
  - i. Requests for debate under urgent procedure:
    - “*Stop trafficking in women before the FIFA World Cup*”: confirmed its recommendations to the Assembly to hold this debate under urgent procedure and to refer the matter to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for report;
    - “*Cheated presidential elections of 19 March 2006 and the aftermath in Belarus*”: recommended to the Assembly to hold this debate under urgent procedure and to refer the matter to the Political Affairs Committee for report;
  - ii. updated the draft order of business;
  - iii. proposed to limit the speaking time on Monday 10 April, the afternoon of Tuesday 11 April and on Thursday 13 April to 4 minutes; and on Tuesday 11 April in the morning to 3 minutes except for the leaders of political groups and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, who will be limited to 4 minutes;
  - iv. authorised the Sub-Committee on the Middle-East to meet exceptionally at the same time as the plenary sitting on Monday 10 April 2006, from 6 to 7.30 pm;
  - v. proposed to add the item, the 116th Session of the Committee of Ministers to the draft agenda of the Joint Committee, which will take place on Wednesday 12 April 2006 at 6.30 pm;
  - vi. Election of a judge to the European Court of Human Rights with respect to Liechtenstein: took note that the Sub-Committee on the election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights would only interview the candidates on Monday 10 April in the afternoon (at 1.30 pm) and agreed to the consultation of Bureau members on this matter.

#### **B. PROGRESS REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF THE ASSEMBLY AND OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE (27 JANUARY– 10 APRIL 2006)**

3. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau approved the Progress Report of the Assembly and of the Standing Committee covering the period from 27 January to 10 April 2006.

#### **C. FOLLOW-UP TO THE CURRENT AFFAIRS DEBATE ON “FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND RESPECT FOR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS” (STANDING COMMITTEE, PARIS, 17 MARCH 2006)**

4. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau:
  - i. proposed to refer this matter to the Committee on Culture, Science and Education for report;
  - ii. agreed to hold the debate on this matter at the June 2006 part-session and to invite Mr Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain, and Mr Erdogan, Prime Minister of Turkey, to address the Assembly on this occasion.



**D. PRIORITIES OF THE ASSEMBLY FOR 2006**

5. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau approved the priorities for the Assembly for 2006 on the basis of the appended document.

**3. BUDGETARY QUESTIONS**

6. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau took note of the document prepared by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on "Priorities for 2007 – Budgetary implications" and supported the first option contained therein.

**4. ELECTIONS****A. *PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE (26 MARCH 2006)***

7. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau approved the report of the ad hoc committee which had observed these elections.

**B. *PARTIAL RE-RUN OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN AZERBAIDJAN (13 MAY 2006)***

8. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau:

- i. took note of the letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe, stating that the partial re-run of these elections would take place on 13 May 2006 and inviting the Council of Europe to observe it;
- ii. decided to reduce the number of members of the ad hoc committee which will observe these elections to 20 (7 SOC; 6 EPP/CD; 3 ALDE; 3 EDG; 1 UEL, in accordance with the D'Hondt method).

**C. *REFERENDUM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MONTENEGRO (SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO) (21 MAY 2006)***

9. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau:

- i. took note of the letter from the President of the Parliament of the Republic of Montenegro, stating that the referendum would take place on 21 May 2006 and inviting the Council of Europe to observe it;
- ii. set up an Ad Hoc Committee to observe this referendum composed of 20 members (7 SOC; 6 EPP/CD; 3 ALDE; 3 EDG; 1 UEL, in accordance with the D'Hondt method).

**D. *PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN "THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (SUMMER 2006)***

10. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau:

- i. agreed to observe these elections subject to a formal invitation;
- ii. set up an Ad Hoc Committee to observe these elections composed of 20 members (7 SOC; 6 EPP/CD; 3 ALDE; 3 EDG; 1 UEL, in accordance with the D'Hondt method).

**E. *PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN MEXICO (2 JULY 2006)***

11. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau:

- i. took note of the letter from the President of the Mexican Federal Electoral Institute inviting the Assembly to observe these elections;
- ii. agreed to observe these elections.

5. **OTHER MATTERS**

A. **COMMUNICATIONS**

12. On 10 April 2006, the Bureau took note of the communications of the President, the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Secretary General of the Assembly.

## Appendix

### Priorities for the Assembly for 2006

as adopted by the Bureau of the Assembly on 10 April 2006

#### A. Introduction

1. In his first speech in front of the Assembly, in January 2005, following his election, the President declared that one of his priorities was to ensure that all Assembly work, in particular its reports and debates, contribute to the Council of Europe's "core business": democracy, human rights, the rule of law, cultural diversity and social dialogue. He pointed out that it was important to achieve more coherency in the Assembly's work in order to increase the impact of its recommendations and resolutions in member states and enhance the credibility and visibility of the Assembly. These issues were discussed by the Bureau during the course of 2005 and it was decided to ask each committee to discuss its priorities for 2006 and to inform the Bureau of the results before the end of 2005.

2. The President therefore sent a letter, dated 13 October 2005, to the Chairs of the Assembly committees, in which he asked each committee to decide on the matters that it considered to take priority for 2006 in the light of its work programme and of new problems and challenges in the areas for which it was responsible. Of course, such a request did not intend to prevent committees to deal with unforeseen and unpredictable issues, in the form of urgent debates.

3. Further to discussions in the committees, all the committee Chairs sent their replies to the President before the end of 2005 (cf. doc AS/Bur (2005) 05). A preliminary discussion was held at the Bureau meeting on 9 January 2006, at which the Secretariat was asked to prepare a detailed analysis of the replies (cf. doc AS/Bur (2006) 15 rev.).

4. By and large, the committees indicated that they had used their terms of reference and current activities as a basis for establishing their priorities. Most of them stressed, however, that their proposals were not exhaustive and that, in accordance with their terms of reference, they reserved the right to take the initiative of addressing other subjects in the light of any new developments. Some also thought it was difficult to set priorities solely for 2006, and established their priorities for 2006 and 2007. The Bureau agreed with all these points.

5. It should be remembered that, after the adoption by the Assembly, in June 2005, of its Recommendation 1712 (2005) on "*Follow-up to the Third Summit*", the Bureau asked the committees to study the decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government in the respective areas for which they were responsible, to reconsider their work programmes in order to bring them into line with the priorities established at the Summit, and to suggest to the Assembly specific ways of helping to put them into practice.

6. A look at the priority topics suggested by the committees shows that they have broadly taken account of the Bureau's above-mentioned invitation. Most of the topics are linked to the five main tasks of the Organisation, as set out in the Action Plan drawn up at the Third Summit. These tasks are the following: promoting common fundamental values: human rights, the rule of law and democracy; strengthening the security of European citizens; building a more humane and inclusive Europe; fostering co-operation with other international and European organisations and institutions; and implementing the Action Plan – a transparent and efficient Council of Europe.

7. These main tasks were used as a criterion for classifying the Assembly's priorities. On the basis of document AS/Bur (2006) 15 rev, the President then asked the Secretariat to make proposals in order to establish a list of around ten priorities for the Assembly for the year 2006. (cf. doc AS/Bur (2006) 26).

8. In the course of their meetings, held between January and March 2006, all the Assembly's committees included a point concerning priorities on their agendas. Further to the discussions held within the committees, they provided the President with concrete amendments for the priorities set out in document AS/Bur (2006) 26. The Secretariat then assembled all the amendments and produced the document AS/Bur (2006) 26 rev, discussed at the Bureau meeting on 16 March 2006. During that meeting, the Secretariat was entrusted with the task of drawing up this memorandum to present to the Bureau at its meeting on 10 April 2006 with a view to taking a decision on this question.

9. In part B, this consolidated document sets out the priorities of the Assembly for 2006, to a large extent taking into account the amendments proposed by the committees.
10. It should be stressed that the priorities for the Assembly for 2006 should be seen as guidelines for the work of the committees and not in any way as limiting their scope for initiative.
11. The Bureau is therefore invited to formally establish the Assembly's priorities for the year 2006 on the basis of the proposals contained in part B of this document.

## **B. Priorities of the Assembly for 2006**

### **I. Promoting common fundamental values: human rights, rule of law and democracy**

- . Reinforcing and expanding the protection of human rights in close association with civil society
- . Strengthening democracy, good governance and the rule of law in member states (democratic stability, freedom of expression and information, combating corruption and organized crime, fighting against discrimination, reinforcing local and regional democracy)
- . Strengthening the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, including national and other minorities, migrants, refugees and displaced persons
- . Ensuring compliance with the obligations and commitments entered into by member states
- . Reinforcing the role of the Council of Europe as a forum for political dialogue within and among member states
- . Promoting fundamental European values in neighbouring areas

### **II. Strengthening the security of European citizens**

- . Responding to common threats to Europeans (terrorism; trafficking in human beings; violence against women and children ...)
- . Contributing to the prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts and crises threatening the security of Europeans
- . Promoting sustainable development (climate, water, energy, pollution...)

### **III. Building a more humane and inclusive Europe**

- . Guaranteeing social cohesion and public health
- . Developing intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, protecting cultural diversity and strengthening the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance
- . Promoting education for democratic citizenship in Europe
- . Contribute to the management of migratory flows

### **IV. Fostering co-operation with other international and European organisations and institutions**

- . Strengthening relations with the European Union, the OSCE, the OECD, the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies

### **V. Implementing the Action Plan – a transparent and efficient Council of Europe**

- . Redefining inter-institutional relations

**C. Conclusions**

11. Once the priorities have been established, the committees could find in each one of these topics, taking into account their terms of reference, specific subjects which could, subject to a reference by the Bureau, give rise to reports.

12. Moreover, by establishing these priorities, the Bureau should be better able to carry out its primary task, that of coordinating the activities of the Assembly and its committees (article 12 of the Rules of Procedure), and in particular, establishing the schedule for the presentation of reports during the part-sessions, grouping reports - possibly according to themes - inviting personalities, with sufficient notice, to participate in debates and to establish guidelines for the new references to committees.

