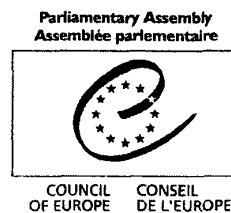


**Parliamentary Assembly**  
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**2006 ORDINARY SESSION**

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(Second part)

**REPORT**

Twelfth sitting

Wednesday 12 April 2006 at 10 a.m.

In this report:

1. Speeches in English are reported in full.
2. Speeches in other languages are summarised.
3. Speeches in German and Italian are reproduced in full in a separate document.
4. Corrections should be handed in at Room 1059A not later than 24 hours after the report has been circulated.

The contents page for this sitting is given at the end of the verbatim report.

*Mr van der Linden, President of the Assembly, took the Chair at 10 a.m.*

THE PRESIDENT. – The sitting is open.

### **1. Minutes of proceedings**

THE PRESIDENT. – The minutes of proceedings of the tenth sitting have been distributed.

Are these minutes agreed to?

*The minutes are agreed to.*

### **2. Written declarations**

THE PRESIDENT. – In accordance with Rule 53 of the Rules of Procedure, two written declarations have been printed.

Written declaration No. 376 on ending all forms of human trafficking, Document 10886, has been signed by 101 members.

Written declaration No. 378 entitled "United against the threat of terrorism", Document 10893, has been signed by 149 members.

Any Representative or Substitute may add his signature to these written declarations in the Table Office, Room 1083. If any names are added, the declarations will be distributed again two weeks after the end of the part-session, with all the accumulated signatures.

### **3. Organisation of debates**

THE PRESIDENT. – The first item of business this morning will be a debate under urgent procedure called, "Stop trafficking in women before the FIFA World Cup". There are 27 speakers. We will have to interrupt the list of speakers in this debate at about 11.50 a.m. to allow time for replies and the vote.

At 12 noon, Mr Ungureanu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania, representing the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, will present the communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly. Mr Ungureanu will then answer parliamentary questions for oral answer; 20 questions have been tabled.

Are these arrangements agreed to?

*They are agreed to.*

### **4. Stop trafficking in women before the FIFA World Cup**

THE PRESIDENT. – The first item of business this morning is the debate under urgent procedure on "Stop trafficking in women before the FIFA World Cup", presented by Mrs Vermot-Mangold on behalf of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Document 10881).

The list of speakers closed yesterday at 6.30 p.m. and 27 names are on the list. No amendments have been tabled.

I remind you that we have already agreed that in order to finish by 12 noon, we shall interrupt the list of speakers at about 11.50 a.m. to allow time for the reply and the vote.

I call Mrs Vermot-Mangold, rapporteur. You have eight minutes.

Mrs VERMOT-MANGOLD (*Switzerland*) said that in the last few years the opening of Europe's eastern borders had meant that trading in women had increased immensely. Annually, around 120 000 women and girls entered the European market. The reasons for the trafficking of women included the precarious situation of the labour market, growing poverty and discrimination against women. There were no reliable figures of the profits to be made, but it was likely to be several billion dollars. The gains from trafficking were enormous.

It was necessary to take a particularly close look at major events such as the football World Cup. There were 12 host cities in Germany with about 3 million spectators. Shrewd businessmen would use that opportunity to offer cheap sex provided for in specially built brothels to which women would be dragged. During the 2006 World Cup some 30 000 to 60 000 women were likely to be imported as sex slaves. Most of those would not be travelling voluntarily to Germany, but would have been attracted by false promises of jobs. They would be forced into prostitution with no opportunity to acquire legal papers or any kind of assistance. They would be subjected to threats, abuse, violence and rape. Everyone was responsible for their situation, including the consumers.

The most important protagonist in relation to the World Cup was FIFA, which had tried to project a positive image, but which also had to be aware of the problems of trafficking. FIFA had been approached about the problem, but in vain. She had received a letter from the President of FIFA saying that the football authorities had a duty to send a clear message about the dangers of society, but he did not consider trafficking to be one of those dangers. He had said that Germany had seized control of the problem and that prostitutes should simply be sent home. He had failed to recognise that the trafficked women needed protection. She appreciated that FIFA could not act alone, but had expected that they would have taken up the issue. FIFA saw its responsibilities as lying only inside the stadiums, not outside. That was completely wrong.

Many instruments could be used against trafficking in women, including a Council of Europe convention which demanded full protection for the victims of trafficking. Those victims should enjoy a stay of deportation and be protected from reprisals if they returned to their home country. Such protection of victims had to be the main priority, but it was also necessary to pursue the perpetrators. Just 26 countries had signed the convention and Moldova had been the only one to ratify it. That was too small a number. The Council of Europe needed to ensure that everyone ratified the convention as soon as possible.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). – Thank you, Mrs Vermot-Mangold. I call Mr Mendes Bota, on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party.

Mr MENDES BOTA (*Portugal*) said that he wished to protest against the attack on women's dignity. In the 1972 Olympics, the Bavarian authorities had banned prostitution. However, it seemed that in 2006 prostitution in Germany would massively increase. Up to 60 000 new prostitutes might come into the country. The host cities claimed to have taken a pragmatic response by creating new luxury brothels, some of which would be placed right outside the stadiums. The football World Cup was set to be the most notorious occasion in history in that regard. The Council of Europe had to clamp down on the situation. The profits of trafficking never reached the pockets of the female victims. There was a conflict here between money and morals; a conflict between the champions of human rights and the new form of modern slavery. The sex industry accounted for annual profits of 12 billion dollars, none of which went to the women themselves.

When would Europeans stop treating women as a commodity? The trade in prostitution could not be treated as a simple case of supply and demand. It was necessary to make consumers more responsible. The Council of Europe had a duty to stamp out trafficking, but could not achieve that when Moldova was the only country to have ratified the convention. He intended to do whatever he could to address the shameful situation.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. The next speaker is Mrs Bargholtz on behalf of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

Mrs BARGHOLTZ (*Sweden*). – It is wonderful to hear that the previous speaker is so engaged in the fight against prostitution and trafficking. We need men to speak on this issue.

I thank the rapporteur for an important report and I stress the importance of all countries ratifying the Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Many people were upset to hear the news that brothels are being built in Germany in preparation for the World Cup. That country's biggest brothel, which has 70 rooms and a capacity to accept 600 customers a day, was opened in Berlin a short time ago. Women's organisations fear that the victims of trafficking in human beings will end up in such brothels.

The issue of prostitution must be taken up at a European level with the utmost commitment and seriousness. Some people think that prostitution is an issue for member states to decide for themselves, but I argue that it is a matter for the Council of Europe. The Council must take the initiative in undertaking

a comprehensive evaluation of prostitution and its influence on the trafficking in human beings, organised crime and gender equality between men and women. The initiative should examine whether a European law on the purchase of sexual services would be of value to Europe.

As long as there is a demand for prostitutes, there will be a supply. The forces of market economics are far too powerful. For that reason, any such demand must be combated. According to the EU's police agency, Europol, the sex trade is one of the most lucrative activities for organised crime. Such criminality threatens the open society that we in the Council of Europe wish to defend.

Prostitution was legalised in Germany some years ago, and brothels have been legal in the Netherlands since the late 1990s. Few native German or Dutch women dream of a life of prostitution. The sex industry has a problem with recruitment and a consequence of that is that most prostitutes come from poor countries. Many are residing in countries illegally. A not insignificant number have been brought here against their will by traffickers in human beings.

A common notion is that legalisation removes a black market, but the very opposite is the case. In 1984 prostitution was legalised in the federal state of Victoria in Australia. Before legalisation there were an estimated 70 brothels in the state. Today there are some 100 legal and 400 illegal brothels. Since the state gives the signal that it is okay to buy sex, more "normal" men do it. The consumption of prostitution has increased.

Legislation creates a market. It is lucrative and attracts criminals who are not interested in running the activity legally. Few Australian women wish to work in the sex industry and for this reason those who prostitute themselves are predominantly poor foreign women. They end up in illegal brothels, without documents. Many are victims of trafficking in human beings.

We must begin to say clearly and explicitly that legalisation creates a demand and forces a supply into being. In the demand category, you tend to get men. In the supply category, you tend to get women. I am convinced that this influences the way in which men regard women.

Prostitution feeds organised crime, which recognises no national borders and contributes to the violation of human rights. For this reason the issue is of urgent concern to the whole of Europe.

I hope that in the future we can say to our sons and daughters that football brothels and the trafficking of human beings belong to European history. But for that to happen, we must first put prostitution on the agenda for discussion at the Council of Europe. So let's do it.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I call Mr Evans, on behalf of the European Democratic Group.

Mr EVANS (*United Kingdom*). – I congratulate the rapporteur on obtaining this particularly important debate.

What is the definition of the trafficking of women as separate from the definition of prostitution? Amnesty International defines it as "modern day slave trading. It involves transporting people away from the communities they live in by the threat or use of violence, deception or coercion so they can be exploited as forced or enslaved workers."

The World Cup is one of the major sporting events in the world, ranking alongside the Olympics as a major crowd pulling event. We have the Olympics in London in 2012 and we must do all we can to ensure that the United Kingdom stamps out this evil trade.

As the rapporteur said, the World Cup is expected to attract 3 million visitors to Germany between 9 June and 7 July. Hundreds of thousands of extra workers in hotels, refreshments and cleaning, as well as journalists, will be descending on German towns. It is expected that 100 000 English fans will make the journey and, with 32 teams playing, many thousands of fan will be expected. People will want to be where the action is even if they cannot get tickets.

One service that we must stop people being able to use is trafficked women and children. Human trafficking is estimated to be worth between \$5 billion and \$7 billion a year. The London metropolitan police estimates that trafficked women are forced to see up to 30 or 40 clients a day. This is a fundamental abuse of human rights. It takes away liberty, security, dignity, privacy and the right to self-determination.

The International Office for Migration estimates that the number of women and children trafficked across international borders each year is between 700 000 and 2 million. Women come from all parts of the world – from Asia, Africa, South America and eastern Europe. The International Office for Migration in Rome estimates that between 2 000 and 6 000 women are trafficked into the Italian sex industry each year.

The United Kingdom abolished the slave trade in 1807. The fact that, 200 years later, we are talking about the forced transportation and degradation of women into sex slavery is a shame on us all. It is one of the fastest growing criminal activities in the world.

Health officials in Berlin are preparing for an influx of football supporters and will give out 100 000 condoms and leaflets offering men advice on safe sex but what about action on the safety of women who are forced into sex?

The United Kingdom is sending 79 police officers to Germany in order to root out British soccer hooligans and thugs who are more interested in fighting than football. Those officers will help German police with intelligence and surveillance to detect and remove known soccer thugs. If such co-operation is already taking place, why cannot we have international co-operation to close down the trafficking of women and to arrest the slave trade merchants who deal in people's lives and misery?

I finish with a quote from an Albanian victim who is now 21. "The traffickers took my clothes off. I was screaming. They then started to rape me in turn. I was a virgin before then. I fell unconscious. I was kept in a room with no toilet. I would just go on the floor. The three men who had raped me the first time would come into the room and do what they wanted to me. I stopped screaming as I thought that no one would hear me. After a month, two men that I hadn't seen before came to the house. They paid money to the other men and took me with them. The exchange of money took place in front of me. When we arrived I was raped by them. While I was staying there they would bring friends who would rape me."

The call must go out from the Council of Europe that we must join together to kill this evil trade and stop it in its tracks now. The World Cup will provide us with an opportunity to work together to detect the traffickers and haul them before the courts. They must be brought to justice. The victims, the women, deserve nothing less.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I call Mr de Puig on behalf of the Socialist Group.

Mr DE PUIG (*Spain*) said that when he read the report he wondered if he was really living at the beginning of the 21st century. It was unbelievable to read about exploitation, abuse, trafficking, forced sex and the rest. The World Cup was a major world event and everybody was excited by it. However, alongside the preparations for the World Cup, preparations were also being made for big business. In the business of sexual exploitation, businessmen were making preparations to earn vast sums of money and they were unscrupulous about that. It was not possible to remain silent in the face of such exploitation. The Socialist Group had been very moved by the report and felt that the situation was intolerable. Members should do all that they could both in the Assembly and as members of national parliaments to prevent, or at least curb, the madness. He said that it was a question of markets and that particular market led to substantial profits. That immorality led on the one hand to abuses of people and on the other to profits of billions of euros. It was important therefore to be clear that first and foremost the situation boiled down to a question of money.

He condemned the consumers of sexual services. From a moral point of view their use of exploitative sexual services was unacceptable, but also, from a civic point of view, he wondered what example they were setting for young people. Children would watch the world cup but alongside the stadiums they would see sexual supermarkets. The Socialist Group fully supported the report, but it was not enough in itself. Members must lobby their own governments and sound the alarm.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I call Mr Platvoet on behalf of the Group of the Unified European Left.

Mr PLATVOET (*Netherlands*) thanked the rapporteur for the speed and quality of the report. It was obvious that FIFA increasingly recognised its social responsibilities, for instance, with regard to child labour. Mr Blatter, the President of FIFA, had made a statement condemning the trafficking of women to Germany for the World Cup. Another example was that in The Netherlands the top clubs would provide job opportunities for unemployed youths. The debate should not be reduced to a debate about whether or

not prostitution should be legal, but rather it should concern excesses in prostitution, of which trafficking was the most extreme.

The report rightly called on all states to ratify the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. However, that would come too late to make a difference at the World Cup. He was pleased that in Moldova, one of the countries from which women were trafficked, there was an initiative to inform them of the dangers of traffickers who would approach them with stories of good jobs being available in the catering industry in Germany. He hoped that more countries would take similar initiatives as a matter of urgency. It was also important that during the World Cup in Germany controls and monitoring of the women involved in prostitution should be stepped up. The police in the towns that were hosting matches should check the status of the women working there to make sure they had not been trafficked.

He reminded the Assembly that in 1974, Holland reached the final of the World Cup. There was a story that they lost because they were visited by prostitutes the previous evening. He would never know if this was true, but he hoped this time for a fair game.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I, as President, was very pleased to see that four of the speakers on behalf of the political groups were men who took a firm stand against these practices. That shows good initiative by the committees and I praise the chairpersons. I call Mrs Ahlqvist.

Mrs AHLQVIST (*Sweden*). – I thank Mrs Cliveti for fighting for this urgent debate on trafficking in women, and Mrs Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold for this excellent report.

It is a shame for the Council of Europe that not all people in Europe protest loudly against trafficking in women and, now, against the fact that thousands of poor young girls and women from east and central Europe, and even from other parts of the world, are being lured to Germany on the pretext of getting a job, but instead are forced into metal garages or sex huts to satisfy sex-hungry football supporters.

In 1981 the United Nations adopted a convention against all discrimination against all women, CEDAW. It says that member states must do all that they can to prevent all forms of trafficking in women. Germany and another 179 of the UN's 191 member states have ratified CEDAW. The European Union has adopted a law that says that all 25 member states have to work against trafficking in women, and the EU has decided on an eight-year jail sentence for rough trafficking.

What will happen in Germany this summer is a crime against those conventions and laws, but no UN convention and no law in the world can change people's attitudes and values. Trafficking is caused not only by poverty and unemployment, but by men's views about women and girls, and to change those we need more than laws. All politicians and NGOs, and all other fair people, have to work to change those attitudes, which cause the pimps to become excited, looking forward to gaining many football supporters as clients.

We have to tell all people in Europe about this modern form of slavery. Young girls have no ability to do so, and they have no power to change their situation.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. Mrs Mikhailova is not here, so I call Mrs Hägg.

Mrs HÄGG (*Sweden*). – The concept of human rights includes the rights of both men and women to freedom and security. The UN's general declaration of human rights provides no exception regarding the rights of women. Similarly, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms issued by the Council of Europe in 1950 cannot be compromised. All nations have a responsibility to protect their citizens. Uncomfortable attitudes do not give states a reason not to act; such attitudes are meant to be fought.

I welcome the report. That we are here today shows not only that prostitution, slavery and trafficking give mounting cause for concern in our societies, but that there is a clear connection between prostitution and human trade. It also shows that more and more politicians are ready to take part in the debate and to act against prostitution and sex slavery.

This year, the football world championship will take place in Germany, an arrangement that causes enormous interest throughout the world. Many people will travel to Germany for that festive occasion, but not everybody will come primarily for the sake of football. Unfortunately, the event will lead

to an acute increase in the number of prostitutes, which in turn means that many women and young girls will become victims of sex slavery. They will be victimised, and we are responsible. Is that something that the first female Bundestag Chancellor, Angela Merkel, is prepared to defend, or will she take a stand against it?

When Madeleine Albright, the former US Secretary of State who has roots in the Czech Republic, visited the Swedish capital, Stockholm, a while ago, she said, "There's a special place in hell for women who don't help each other." Those are words of wisdom that should be pondered by women in the sports world and with responsibility for the world championship, as well as by politicians in Germany, including Angela Merkel.

Sports figures are role models as much as politicians are, but we must ask ourselves whether the leaders and sponsors of sports arrangements take their share of responsibility for important issues such as human trade. Unfortunately, it seems that remaining silent and turning the other cheek is customary for many of them. Such behaviour and lack of integrity is unworthy of those involved and interested in sports. That goes for policy makers, too. In Germany and other countries where girls are tricked into prostitution with the promise of work and a brighter future politicians can and must act.

The connection with organised, international crime and the fact that profits from the sex industry finance terrorist activities are strong arguments why more of us should ponder Europe's responsibility in the fight against prostitution and human slavery. We have a responsibility to implement CEDAW, as well as the United Nations convention on women's rights, which celebrates its 20th birthday this year. In addition, we must ratify and implement the Council of Europe's 2005 convention on human trade. The convention excuses neither football nor the country of Germany from responsibility to act against the subjugation of women.

Men's violence against other men during and around sports events has led to preventive measures being taken in the world of sport as well as in general society. But when it comes to men's violence against women, sexual violence, very few people take action or even acknowledge the problem. FIFA, for instance, looks the other way.

Since I first raised this question in the Swedish Parliament, almost everybody in my country has taken sides. Social Democratic Women has printed clothing bearing the clear message, "Football – YES, Prostitution – NO".

Finally, I would like to pose a question to the sponsors of sports events, commercial and otherwise: do you really want your organisations to continue to be connected with the human slave trade? Your brand name is at risk, and you would be wise to speak out loudly against the abominable acts that take place in the names of sports and, ultimately, in the name of your company's integrity.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I call Mr Hancock.

Mr HANCOCK (*United Kingdom*). – I, too, congratulate the rapporteur and those who have spoken so far, particularly my colleague Mr Evans, who I thought eloquently presented the facts of the case and the reasons why something ought to be done.

There is a famous quote from Irish literature. Samuel Beckett wrote: "The sun, having no alternative, shone on the nothing new." That is where we are today, is it not? There is nothing new about the issue that we face. Trafficking has long been with us, and this Assembly has had any number of debates about it. The rapporteur herself stated eloquently that she was convinced that the Council of Europe conventions answer the main concerns. Those conventions already exist, but as nearly every speaker has said, not a single country has decided to ratify them.

Why? Is the issue of trafficking so well known, so well documented, that member states of this Organisation – which lauded itself yesterday before our colleagues in the European Union, saying "We know best, and human rights are what we deal with properly" – have chosen to ignore the need to ratify the convention? That is an indictment of this Chamber and of the parliaments that send us here. They have failed to do the right thing by all those people – not just those who the report suggests will be trafficking across Europe as we speak, but those who have already undergone the pain, the suffering, the evilness of what is being perpetrated on them.

I do not seriously believe that we are suggesting, as the report could suggest, that FIFA is some glorified pimp and that the German state is sitting back and allowing this to happen. I do not believe for one minute that the German authorities, and the authorities in any of the states where the games will be played, are not aware of the situation, and will not take appropriate steps if they can find the perpetrators of trafficking.

But that is not the answer, is it? At the end of the day, the World Cup will have gone away and, as Nigel Evans said, the next great sporting jamboree will be in Beijing, followed by events in other countries, including my own. This continues to circulate. There has to be a long-term solution, a solution which is in the hands, once again, of member states. If every girl who was interviewed by the German police was offered an amnesty and a safe haven in a member state other than her own country, and if she gave evidence or simply wanted to leave the trade, would that not be one way in which we could demonstrate our commitment to give these young women about whom we claim to care so much the future that we talk about but do little to provide?

If we are really serious about the trade of trafficking, why do we not ask the German state authorities to provide documentary evidence in the form of a video film or a DVD? A website could photograph every man who visits and publish the photographs on the Internet. They could be seen, not at the game but at the Eros centre. What would the reaction be?

If we are really serious about trafficking, we must tackle it in many ways. We must offer a safe haven. We must take away the reason for trafficking – the demand that people place on traffickers to supply ever younger women to replace those who have been through the system. If we do not do that, we shall have another debate, and, as Samuel Beckett said, tomorrow the sun will have no alternative but to shine down on the same awful normality of our knowing about something but ignoring it.

Ratification should be a first step. I hope that the German authorities will heed what has been said here, and do what they know is the right thing. At the end of the day, however, none of us has an excuse. All our governments and states are guilty first of not supplying an alternative for these women and doing too little for them, secondly of not tackling the demand issue, and thirdly of not tackling the trafficking by signing the convention. The sooner we do that the better.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I call Mr Lintner.

Mr LINTNER (*Germany*) said that he was the first German Representative to speak in the debate. Germany shared the concern of the Council of Europe about the issue. There was evidence that forced prostitution was on the increase. Germany was using experience gained elsewhere to combat the problem. However, there was no proof that the figure of 60 000 women likely to be forced into prostitution in time for the World Cup was correct. He did not wish to minimise the problem, but nor should it be over-dramatised.

Since 1997 Germany had had a federal working group on the trafficking of women. That was helping to ensure that the central requirement set down in the report was met. One of the important things that Germany had done was to ensure that women who fell victim to trafficking were treated as victims rather than as illegal aliens by the German authorities. He wished to correct the rapporteur: women would not simply be exported from Germany, they would have the opportunity to stay in the country for four weeks and would receive care, including that provided by psychologists. In Germany there was a single telephone number that could be called in any emergency. Everyone knew what it was: 110. Now even anonymous calls could be traced, which meant that people did not have to give their name. Flyers with the number on it had been printed in preparation for the World Cup. There was a campaign group in Germany which aimed to put a stop to forced prostitution. That group had helped to raise awareness of the issue in the general population. The German Football Association was also committed to tackling the problem.

However, the Council of Europe should not just look to Germany. Many of the customers who generated a demand for trafficked women came from abroad. The problem required other countries to co-operate with the German authorities. There was also a reference in the report to the naiveté of female victims of human trafficking. He was happy that Moldova was taking steps to address that aspect of the problem.

(*Mr Arzilli, Vice-President of the Assembly, took the Chair in place of Mr van der Linden.*)

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). – Thank you, Mr Lintner. I call Mrs Smirnova.



Mrs SMIRNOVA (*Russian Federation*) said that the Assembly was looking into this issue in an urgent debate. That demonstrated the complexity and topicality of the problem. She thanked the rapporteur for her tenacity in getting the debate on the agenda. That had probably not been easy. She also thanked everyone who had assisted the rapporteur in getting the matter on the agenda. The Assembly was discussing trafficking in the context of the World Cup, but that was simply a reason to bring the issue once again to the fore and to draw the attention of members of parliament, governments and citizens to its importance. Although some people had said that it was not an urgent issue, she was convinced that it needed to be kept in the limelight. It raised issues connected with the future of the countries involved. The trafficked women would be mothers in the future; she asked what would become of these women and their children.

It was sometimes said that legitimate prostitution was all right, that prostitutes from abroad were just cheaper. The Assembly had to say "no" to all prostitution, and all trafficking in human beings.

Civil society and NGOs had to take the matter on and do their best to raise awareness in the minds of young people. Governments had to support these NGOs. Religious organisations could also play a major role, because prostitution was the result of spiritual poverty. The church could play a role in moral and spiritual education.

*(Mr Kosachev, Vice-President of the Assembly, took the Chair in place of Mr Arzilli.)*

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you, Mrs Smirnova. I call Mrs Rupprecht.

Mrs RUPPRECHT (*Germany*) was delighted that the issue of trafficking was the subject of an urgent debate because it was a perennial problem which needed to remain on the agenda. Trafficking was a form of organised crime and the Council of Europe had to do everything in its power to fight it. There was also a need to consider the issue of women who were trafficked for forced marriage, forced labour etc. It was necessary to have internationally effective strategies to combat the phenomenon. One could only take measures against a thing by naming it.

Germany had taken a number of measures since 1997 to tackle the problem. Although the current focus was on the football World Cup, it would have been too late in the day to tackle the problem had efforts only just begun. Germany had been acting on the problem since 1997. The Council of Europe convention stated that it was necessary to stamp down on the problem. Since 2005, Germany had had a law against all forms of trafficking on its statute books; it had already taken the necessary legislative steps. There were only a few short weeks until the World Cup, but it was necessary to ensure that women would be prepared to testify. The measures described by Mr Lintner would be effective. Germany was not a totalitarian state and could not close its borders, but it could provide more police, raise awareness, provide multilingual advisers and make best use of its NGOs.

Germany would very much have liked to learn from other countries the lessons of similar situations in order that a repetition of mistakes might be avoided. She hoped that they would all join together in the fight.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you, Mrs Rupprecht. I call Mr Arnaut.

Mr ARNAUT (*Portugal*) congratulated the rapporteur on her comprehensive report. An unacceptable and immense human tragedy was evolving. Sport had begun with a social dimension promoting an image of solidity; that image had to be maintained. He cited other examples of sporting events where the mass trafficking of women had been avoided. He had been the minister responsible for organising the European Championships in Portugal where many proactive efforts had been made in that regard. It was also necessary for the sporting authorities to play a more proactive role. The emergency helpline number given by the German authorities was not enough. The women concerned were working in inhuman conditions and would not even know that this number existed. The Council of Europe had to denounce the tragedy; otherwise the football World Cup would create a precedent for all future sporting events. It was not enough simply to condemn the situation in the Hemicycle; members had to closely monitor the events that would take place. Parliamentarians also needed to start a campaign of awareness through the media.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. The next speaker is Mrs Graf.

Mrs GRAF (*Germany*) thanked the rapporteur whose important report had taken on board points which many members of the German Bundestag had been making for some time. There was a need to think about the reasons why women were trafficked and the rapporteur had correctly pointed out that the major reasons were poverty and unemployment. A number of German NGOs were working to raise awareness amongst women. The European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe were also involved. Germany had signed the Council of Europe convention in December and was preparing for its ratification along with a number of other conventions.

She also pointed out that Germany's criminal code had been amended in 2005: the sentence for pimping had been increased to five to ten years. That was a heavy penalty, but penalties were not enough; it was also necessary to do more to bring the perpetrators to court.

There was a stay of deportation in Germany but she hoped that it would be possible to extend the thirty-day reflection period for women who were thinking of testifying against traffickers. The law on the protection of victims was also very important; victims had a right to participate in court cases against the perpetrators.

The emergency helpline was a sound measure, but it was also necessary to campaign to raise public awareness. Everyone had to be aware of what they were doing if they went to these women; although it was not possible to criminalise every consumer. It was also necessary to bring about improvements in the conditions of those prostitutes working legally and voluntarily. Germany had done a lot to improve the situation.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I now call Mr Østergaard.

Mr ØSTERGAARD (*Denmark*). – It is a pleasure to take part in a debate in which so many colleagues have shown their commitment to combating trafficking. Trafficking is a disease for which there is only one cure – zero tolerance and a rigorous investigation of the perpetrators who make their fortunes out of the misfortune of the women lured or forced into prostitution.

Critics of the title of this debate have drawn attention to the many resolutions passed on this topic. The Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings is the most prominent. Some may say that this debate undermines the serious work against trafficking that has already taken place. Resolutions and conventions should be implemented no matter which sporting event is in the public eye. But is this not exactly the right time to deal with the issue?

The report highlights a smoking gun in relation to the World Cup. Could this debate not be the vehicle we need for this issue to get the attention it deserves? Who will we serve if we do not exploit this opportunity to the full? It will certainly not be the women who will work in the newly built deluxe brothels in the host cities.

One might become discouraged if we looked at the track record of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, but for the sake of these women we must not become discouraged. Some 10% of Danish males buy sex, and that figure probably also applies to male football fans. We must therefore not just pass another resolution but take matters into our own hands.

Let us promise that, before the World Cup kicks off on 9 June, we will have exhausted all the opportunities to use our local media to communicate directly with football fans to ensure that they are aware of the dire human consequences should they choose to buy sex while attending the World Cup. Let us also promise that before 9 June each and every one of us will have confronted our own governments about the failure to ratify the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Let us get government timetables for ratification on the record. Let us exploit to the full the limelight surrounding the FIFA World Cup, so that by 9 July we not only have a winner of the World Cup but have also prevented thousands of women from losing out tragically.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. As Mrs Durrieu does not appear to be here, I call Mr Greenway.

Mr GREENWAY (*United Kingdom*). – I have long argued that not enough is being done to combat the trafficking of women, mostly young girls, into enforced prostitution. It is an evil that disfigures and discredits our continent and we have a unique opportunity and responsibility to urge stronger action to combat what can only be described as modern day slavery. Personal freedom is stolen, the rule of law ignored and human rights violated on a truly wicked scale.

Every one of those young women is the daughter, granddaughter, sister or girlfriend of men living somewhere in this continent, men from a country that is almost certainly represented in this Assembly.

Why has this appalling phenomenon been allowed to flourish to the scale we have heard about in this debate? The authorities simply are not taking the issue seriously enough. Are the police and border controls unable to fathom who controls the trade? Do they never think to ask who the girls are and where they are going when they cross borders?

Non-governmental organisations attending seminars held by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population have pointed out that there is corruption at borders but that because of Schengen, once the girls are in, there is no problem. They can go where they wish or be taken where others may wish.

I do not recall the proposed construction of service boxes, brothels by any other name, forming part of the German bid to stage the World Cup in 2006, a bid that defeated the bid from my own country, England. I cannot believe that we would have sanctioned such action and there must be no repeat when the Olympics are held in London in 2012.

Those responsible would argue that these arrangements are a sensible and practical response to an inevitable dynamic when 3 million young men converge on a country with liberal attitudes to the sex trade, and to the prospect that some women who voluntarily chose to prostitute themselves would be attracted by the prospect of easy trade in Berlin, Munich or Frankfurt. This is a naïve response. The state-provided brothels will attract the organised gangs who traffic women. They will not be in the Eros Centre. They will be in flats and apartments in residential areas.

The German authorities, however unwittingly, have sent a signal that there will be easy trade for the men seeking to buy sex and for the men providing the women to satisfy their expectations. What a sick and squalid prospect. This is as close as you could get to state-sponsored slavery and misery and this Assembly should seek with one voice to reject such a depraved and defeatist approach.

But, colleagues, we are faced with the practical reality that in less than two months, this is going to happen. So what can be done? First, we should discourage the participation by men, and my colleague Mr Hancock made some interesting suggestions. Also, not all the football world has been silent. The Arsenal goalkeeper Jens Lehmann has said that fans should stay away from those women. We need more like him to speak up.

Secondly, we should demand that the German authorities do not just manage the problem but take decisive action to determine who these girls are, where they come from and who controls them, and prosecute the traffickers with vigour.

Thirdly, all countries should adopt the Council of Europe convention. I am ashamed that my government has not done so. They think that doing so would encourage more women to come to Britain, but if every member state signed the convention, the argument would fail.

Finally, in the longer term we need to remove the stigma of being classed as an illegal or irregular migrant because it is the fear of the authorities that allows the traffickers to hold these women in their grip.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. The next speaker is Mr Kucheida.

Mr KUCHEIDA (*France*) said that between June and July 2006 the 10th World Cup would take place in Germany and millions of fans would flock to German cities. However, tens of thousands of prostitutes would also go there to offer their services. Germany had legalised prostitution in 2002 in order to give the women involved labour rights and access to social security, although it was arguable that in the process they had created more prostitution.

The main problem facing the World Cup was the expected increase in illegal prostitution from eastern Europe and elsewhere. Many of the women involved were hoping for jobs in the catering sector only to find that they were forced to prostitute themselves. The reasons for this were cultural and related to their countries of origin. They included high levels of unemployment and poverty, political instability, the marginalised status of women in societies that were falling apart and limited opportunities for legal immigration. To combat trafficking one must combat poverty, illiteracy and the criminal networks behind prostitution.

States should not turn a blind eye to the problem. He urged all states to sign the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Only 25 had done so thus far and his own country, France, was among those which had not signed, even though trafficking had been illegal in France since the end of the Second World War. There was an urgent need to act, including passing relevant laws, taking a firm position with FIFA and encouraging the footballers and their teams – who were in a position to reach out to the public – to take a stand. After the World Cup it would be too late, but members could not say that they did not know about the problem.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I call Ms Christoffersen.

Ms CHRISTOFFERSEN (*Norway*). – Dear colleagues, I thank the committee and the rapporteur for this opportunity to express our aversion to trafficking in women and children for sexual slavery on the occasion of the FIFA World cup in Germany. I am also pleased that the European Socialist Party addressed Mr Barroso on women's day and urged him to take action as President of the European Commission under the headline, "*Feiern Sie die Weltmeisterschaft mit. Aber kämpfen Sie gegen sexuelle Sklaverei.*" Women and children are waiting for the European Council's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings to be implemented. I am therefore pleased to say that Norway is preparing the legal ground for ratification of the convention, probably some time this summer.

In Norway today, buying and selling sex among adults is not forbidden. However, our criminal law contains two separate paragraphs concerning prostitution and trafficking. Pimp activities are forbidden. You are not allowed to promote the prostitution of others. It is against the law to let premises for the purpose of prostitution, even if that is owing to carelessness. People may also be punished if they offer, promote or demand prostitution through public announcement.

The legal rules against trafficking were adopted three years ago and were followed by a plan of action that will run until 2008. In February, the Supreme Court sentenced two Estonian citizens to three and five years in prison for being part of organised trafficking. One took part in transporting women to Norway, and the other owned the apartment where the prostitution took place. That shows the same pattern that exists everywhere else in Europe – men from western countries exploiting women and children from eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. I am ashamed of my fellow citizens. But this tells us that the only way to fight trafficking is to undertake the political fight to secure proper and fair living conditions everywhere.

Besides being a politician, I am a member of the football board in my home town. Our team plays in Norway's second division. In that respect, the president of FIFA is my representative, and I am therefore very disappointed by his attitude. I accept that FIFA has no jurisdiction outside stadiums, but that does not give it the right not to have an opinion. Mr Blatter says that he recognises "in particular football's pivotal role as a catalyst whose messages oppose the ills which undermine society worldwide". Well, Mr Blatter, what could be worse than slavery?

To try to alleviate some of the bad impression made by our top leader, I will raise this issue in my own football club as soon as I get home, urging our supporters who will go to Germany this summer not to take advantage of victims of trafficking. I also want my board to contact the Norwegian football association and will urge it to tell Mr Blatter that his complacency feels embarrassing. The whole idea of football as entertainment and friendly competition between equal partners is abused by its being connected to trafficking. As FIFA President, he should be the first to know that. Let us celebrate the World cup. Let us fight sexual slavery.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I call Ms Vésaitė.

Ms VĖSAITĖ (*Lithuania*). – Nearly a year ago, the Council of Europe signed the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. We can adopt tens of similar documents but nothing will happen without practical implementation. I regard today's resolution as a practical step to combat an evil of the 21st century.

World sporting events, particularly the World cup, are not compatible with the shameful practice of modern slavery. The Assembly will today send a clear message to the world's media, to the organiser of the World Cup, to the German Government, to the local authorities of 12 German cities, to the consumers, and even a message to the networks of traffickers that they must stand away from the event.

I believe that members of the Assembly will ask their national football leagues and famous footballers to join the "Red card to forced prostitution" campaign. I am also ready to support the initiative suggested by previous speakers for discussing the problem of prostitution in this Assembly. That could be a method of solving the problem of trafficking human beings. I also believe that we as parliamentarians from the European community must urge our governments and fellow members of European parliaments to sign and ratify the Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings as soon as possible.

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most serious crimes against human rights. We must defend human rights every day. Adoption of the resolution will be a proper and most welcome practical step to combat this evil internationally.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I call Mrs Čurdová.

Mrs ČURDOVÁ (*Czech Republic*). – Dear colleagues, from June to July 2006, 12 German cities will host the World cup. About 3 million fans, mostly men, will attend this sporting event. That sounds fine until we add the following figure: approximately 40 000 women will be imported to Germany to provide sexual services to those fans.

The sex industry in Germany was legalised and regulated four years ago but the legal prostitution districts will be too small for so many sport and sex tourists. Private sex entrepreneurs are ready to make as much profit as possible. Such a rise in the commerce of women's bodies cannot be met only by women from Germany and other European Union countries, so many women trafficked into Germany come from developing countries. Many are unable to speak the language of the country and are unaware of their rights or of ways to get help and escape those exploiting them.

We must say no to those activities. We must fight forced prostitution and trafficking in human beings. Women's bodies are not some kind of commodity to be bought and sold. We should make no distinction between voluntary and forced prostitution because, legal or not, it means sexual exploitation in which women are physically and psychologically harmed. It is a violation of women's human rights and their fundamental freedoms.

All the countries participating in the football World Cup, and not only those countries, should publicly dissociate themselves and their teams from the background of prostitution. Football team members and public figures should also publicly state their opposition to this exploitation of women. There should be stronger border control during the World Cup for citizens from countries that are often the origin of trafficking. We should also try to provide legal aid and safe houses for women who might be trafficked into the EU.

Trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes and forced prostitution must not be seen as the problem of Germany and the World Cup. The World Cup only emphasises the problem, which must be seen in a European-wide and worldwide context. We must find ways to protect the victims, prosecute responsible criminals and make the public aware of the problem. Everybody must be made aware that there is no place in our society for any violation of human rights. We must show the red card to forced prostitution, and then we can prevent it not only during the upcoming World Cup but more widely.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. We have ten minutes of our debate left and three more speakers on the list, so if they use less than their five minutes, we will be able to conclude the list. I call Mrs Wurm.

Mrs WURM (*Austria*) wanted to highlight the plight of some individual cases. If a child complained about a pain in the arm, it would be investigated. It might be discovered that someone had stabbed their cigarette out on the arm because the child had stolen something. Perhaps some of the victims of forced prostitution had stolen something too. No matter what the fault was, nobody deserved to be treated in that way. To take another example, a women working as a prostitute in Austria may have come from Romania where perhaps she had been employed as a saleswoman and been approached by a third party who offered her a great career opportunity in Austria. On arrival, the opportunity turned out in fact to be prostitution. A description had been heard of the tiny locked room where a woman forced into prostitution had been kept.

Many victims had hopes of a better life when they left their home countries. In one case, someone went abroad to dance but on arrival was asked to accompany a man to the cinema. However, the couple did not go to the cinema, but, against the woman's will, had sex in a room. Another woman had described how all the men she encountered had been cruel to her and how the female owner of the club where she

worked beat the girls, one of them until she bled. She asked whether this situation could be acceptable in Europe.

It was an open secret that modern slavery was taking place before the eyes of the world. In some villages in Moldova there were hardly any women left because they had all followed false promises of a new life. Once taken into prostitution, women lost all self-esteem and even their human dignity. Prostitution was a multi-billion euro business. In order to tackle it, the Council of Europe would have to be brave. She asked all the countries present to ratify the convention before them. Everyone should take the legal steps necessary to prevent the continuation of human trafficking.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I call Mr MacShane.

Mr MacSHANE (*United Kingdom*). – This has been a very good debate. I hope that it will be reported in the press because what we are discussing is a fusion of modern capitalism and modern criminality. Make no mistake – the justification for opening what in effect are modern-day forced labour camps for trafficked women in Germany shames all of Europe, not just the German authorities who took that decision. It also shames FIFA, which has failed to denounce it in the clearest terms.

We are talking about modern slavery. We are talking about international criminal gangs who traffic women, children, drugs, guns and money. Our failure to tackle that robustly tells them that the world sits back and allows that new form of slavery and international criminality to develop in the name of making money and serving men's sexual needs. English football fans drink so much that I am not sure that they will be able to take advantage of this offer from Germany – I hope in any case that they do not.

We need to look not only at the supply side, which we have been debating today, but at the demand side. It is no use criticising the pimps and gangmasters, or deploring and condemning what these young girls have to do. We have to acknowledge that a man who wants to buy sex creates this problem. I am glad that in Britain at least we are now saying that if someone has sex with a woman trafficked into the United Kingdom – a young girl from eastern Europe, Asia, Africa or wherever who has been beaten, intimidated and perhaps even tortured into providing that service for her capitalist boss – that act of sex is an act of violence and we call it rape. We are looking now to change the law so that it is not the women who are arrested during raids on brothels but the men. I share the views of colleagues who say that it is time to name and shame the men and to make them face their responsibilities.

I have to report with deep shame that my country is so far refusing to sign the Council of Europe convention. The British press sometimes describe it as a European Union directive, because they do not know the difference between the European Union and the Council of Europe. In my country, if anything is described as a European Union directive, most of the Conservative Party and all the press say that it is an evil thing. I ask my Conservative colleagues to explain that the Council of Europe is not the European Union.

We will campaign to see the convention signed and then ratified. I hope, however, that from today many more people will take the issue up with their football teams, with FIFA and with the German Government. It is a mark of Europe's shame that we will formally allow slavery and forced labour – because that is what sex with a beaten, intimidated trafficked woman is – to take place on the soil of Europe this summer.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. I call Mrs Stoitsits.

Mrs STOISITS (*Austria*) wished to point out two aspects of the problem. It was commendable that the Council of Europe did not just talk about such issues, but actively applied the convention in question. It was good to have the opportunity to debate the subject. By so doing, the Council of Europe was more active than many national parliaments and governments had been. There was time before the World Cup for individual countries to run information campaigns to highlight the problems faced by women, usually from central Europe or Africa, who had been forced into prostitution. It was not illegal to buy sex, but if sex was forced then it became a crime. Every man that attempted to buy sex should be made aware that, in all likelihood, the women in question had been forced to comply with his wishes. She agreed with the proposals in the report and hoped that the rapporteur's efforts would see the light of day. The Council of Europe should do everything in its power to halt forced prostitution. All the countries participating in the World Cup already knew about the issue. Austria was not participating because its men were not good at football, but there would be many Austrians travelling to Germany as spectators.

THE PRESIDENT. – That concludes the list of speakers.

I call Mrs Vermot-Mangold, rapporteur, to reply. She has four minutes.

Mrs VERMOT-MANGOLD (*Switzerland*) said that the debate had been lively and intelligent. The Council of Europe was right at the heart of human rights issues including those involving the violation of women. Mr Hancock had said that there was nothing new under the sun. She agreed: for years the Council of Europe had been fighting against what was a modern form of slavery, but the war was not yet over. Women were bought and sold in service of their clients. It was not acceptable simply to say that the issue would be tackled. The problem needed to be addressed at its root; misery, poverty and illiteracy needed to be fought in the countries where the women came from. It was all very well to tackle organised crime on a small scale, but trafficking was an industry that involved billions of euros. She wondered what happened to all that money. She wondered also how it would be possible to find the big players behind it. Human trafficking was linked to arms smuggling amongst other things. When they returned home, every representative should ask their government to sign and ratify the convention. She begged them to do that and said that it was necessary. She thanked Moldova for ratifying the convention. One of the smallest and poorest countries had set an excellent example.

THE PRESIDENT. – Does the chairperson of the committee, Mrs Cliveti, wish to speak? You have two minutes.

Mrs CLIVETI (*Romania*) said that the urgent debate had provided the opportunity to discuss an important impending problem. The World Cup would result in tens of thousands of women falling victim to human trafficking. It should not be possible to remain insensitive to this issue. She thanked the rapporteur for an excellent report. She thanked the men and women who had spoken: she noted that, out of 24 speakers, exactly half of them had been men and half of them had been women. She was pleased to note this gender partnership. She believed that the Council of Europe had the opportunity to react and an obligation to do so. She encouraged everyone present to personally commit themselves to persuading their governments to sign and ratify the convention.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you, Mrs Cliveti.

The debate is closed.

The Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men has presented a draft resolution. No amendments have been tabled.

We will now proceed to vote on the draft resolution contained in Document 10881.

The vote is open.

*The draft resolution in Document 10881 is adopted.*

*(Mr van der Linden, President of the Assembly, took the Chair in place of Mr Kosachev.)*

### **5. Communication from the Committee of Ministers**

THE PRESIDENT. – We will now hear the presentation by Mr Ungureanu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania and Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers, of the communication on its activities.

This will be followed by parliamentary questions for oral answer. The list of written questions has been circulated – Document 10883.

I now welcome Mr Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers.

Minister, it is a pleasure to welcome you amongst us again.

Yesterday, alongside your Prime Minister, Prime Minister Juncker of Luxembourg and Chancellor Schüssel of Austria, you assisted in and witnessed an historic debate on the relationship between the Council of Europe and the European Union. Your Prime Minister made very constructive and forward-looking proposals, in particular regarding the follow-up to Prime Minister Juncker's report. The statement by your Prime Minister contained concrete proposals and lived up to the expectations of the Assembly.

On behalf of the Assembly, I would like to thank the Romanian Chair for this very positive spirit of co-operation.

Mr Juncker provided us with an excellent report and concrete recommendations. Political leaders of the two institutions demonstrated their political support. They recognised the important role of the parliamentary dimension in negotiating a future agreement on co-operation between our two organisations.

We hope that the absence of the Assembly in the last quadripartite meetings will not be repeated.

The Assembly deserves its central role in this co-operation, not least because it initiated the 3rd Summit of our Organisation, contributed substantially to the summit through the report of Mr Kosachev and proposed Mr Juncker as rapporteur on future relations between the two organisations.

Our common challenge now is successfully to implement the concrete proposals put forward by Prime Minister Juncker in his report.

Let us rise together to this challenge.

Minister, you have the floor.

Mr UNGUREANU (*Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers*). – Mr President, distinguished members of the Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, I am truly delighted to be here again. I remember we had a most substantial discussion the last time I appeared before the Assembly and I am convinced that this will be the case again this time. Although it has been barely ten weeks since my previous report, I can say that the Committee of Ministers had quite a substantive agenda and we have pursued relentlessly our priorities in various fields. An extensive overview is reflected in the written communication that you have received. I assume you are all aware of its contents. I will therefore only point out the main chapters and activities.

Bearing in mind the decisions of the Warsaw Summit, the work carried out by the Committee since January focused on the following top political priorities: relations of the Council of Europe with the European Union; stepping up action in support of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights, in order to promote democratic stability in Europe; strengthening the Council of Europe's human rights system; and fostering intercultural dialogue. Allow me to dwell upon each of these topics briefly.

As I said in my previous report, I underline again that, in the Committee of Ministers, we share a common desire to establish an authentic, mutually rewarding framework of co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union. Based on this positive and practical approach, the work of the Committee had its primary focus on the future Memorandum of Understanding with the European Union.

It would be fair to say that the Romanian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers has followed this topic extremely closely, with a view to being successful. In Strasbourg, we held intensive consultations with a view to building on the text provided as a working base by the European Union in 2005. Our declared goal was to supplement this text and, as far as possible, enrich it with the various contributions received from the Secretary General and from the non-EU member states. Let me confess that I am optimistic about achieving a proper result, a compromise in the good sense of the word, by the end of the Romanian chairmanship.

First, there has been ongoing political co-ordination among the two organisations. I, myself, as Chairman-in-Office, have conducted several high-level meetings with Council of Europe and European Union officials on the actual state of play between the two organisations and where we go from here. The quadripartite meeting held in Strasbourg on 15 March was an important stage in the discussions. At the meeting, which was particularly constructive, the Romanian chair and the Secretary General for the Council of Europe, the Austrian presidency and the European Commission for the European Union, expressed determination to conclude as quickly as possible a substantive memorandum of understanding, giving tangible form to the creation of a new framework for enhanced co-operation and partnership between the two organisations. We meant to give effect to the undertakings made at the Warsaw Summit, while expanding existing co-operation to all areas where it will bring added value to both organisations. I cannot say why you were missing at the quadripartite meeting, but your absence was not due to the Romanian side. The high-level representatives of the organisations called for negotiations to progress rapidly, in a positive spirit, taking into account the achievements, specificities and prerogatives of each institution.



Secondly, we all heard yesterday Prime Minister Juncker's presentation on the future relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union. You have also heard the Prime Minister of Romania when he reacted to Prime Minister Juncker's proposals and said that "Romania would be working, until the end of its term, to ensure proper implementation of these proposals". He first referred to the memorandum of understanding, which he said should be "a political document, aiming at the establishment of effective consultation and co-operation machinery, based on true partnership". He also asked me to propose at the next session of the Committee of Ministers the setting-up at ministerial level of a monitoring group on the Juncker report as a whole. This group would include the troika of the Committee of Ministers at ministerial level – the chair, and the two vice-chairs – the Secretary General and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly thus showing that we pay due respect to all the members of the national parliaments represented here.

I am determined fully to take advantage of Jean-Claude Juncker's political vision in the process of conducting the future negotiations on the Memorandum of Understanding. We are all confident that the guidelines and the valuable ideas of this report will undoubtedly give a decisive boost to the partnership between the two organisations.

Thirdly, the Romanian chair appreciated the messages expressed on the position paper of the Parliamentary Assembly issued at the latest meeting of its Standing Committee on 17 March. Let me assure you that due regard will be given to the proposal on strengthening the parliamentary dimension of co-operation between the two organisations. The more so that I feel the need to have both assemblies involved in the political decision-making process.

Bearing in mind the valuable contribution that the Parliamentary Assembly can bring to the negotiations on the substance of the memorandum, we are looking forward to hearing the report drafted by Mr Konstantin Kosachev, which is due to be presented tomorrow. I will follow these developments closely.

All these aspects are leading to a substantial number of contributions that need to be taken into consideration when advancing with the negotiations on the memorandum in good faith, and having in mind the need to reach a conclusion in good time.

But before I move on to the next topic, allow me to share with you the manner in which we, the Romanian chairmanship in office, intend to proceed, in view of our objective to possibly conclude the negotiations on the Memorandum of Understanding by the end of our chairmanship.

Romania intends to present her negotiating partners with a revised draft of the memorandum, which will reflect all the above-mentioned contributions. This text will be used by the Chair of the Committee of Ministers as a basis for moving ahead with the consultations with all interested stakeholders. They will aim at achieving a common position on the outstanding sensitive issues, such as the relations between the Council of Europe and the future EU Fundamental Rights Agency as well as the creation of a single European legal space.

Romania will do everything to reach consensus on the draft text during its term of office in the Committee of Ministers. It is my personal expectation – I underline this – that from both the Council of Europe and EU side, a flexible and constructive approach will be worked out.

As I have said before and consistently emphasised, the Romanian chairmanship will keep a pragmatic hold on the negotiations and will continue to channel the institutional efforts of both organisations so as to have a final text before mid-May.

Let me reaffirm the priority given by the Committee of Ministers to the effective support and promotion of democracy, good governance and democratic stability within the European space.

Allow me to give you a few highlights of the most important political moments followed by the Committee, as I believe that they are also of concern to the Assembly.

The Romanian chairmanship finds most regrettable that serious and repeated violations of fundamental rights and freedoms continue to persist in Belarus. The presidential elections of 19 March failed to meet international standards for free and democratic elections. After this electoral exercise, what stands out before the international community is the continued attitude of the authorities to distance the country from the community of democratic European states. The Belarus question will remain an important

issue for the Committee of Ministers in the forthcoming weeks, particularly in the context of the preparation, now in progress, of a reply to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1734.

The second electoral moment in the reporting period was the parliamentary elections in Ukraine on 26 March. As anticipated, the authorities and the population proved their political maturity and conducted free and fair elections, under the close scrutiny of the Council of Europe and the OSCE. We need now to ensure that the Council of Europe's efforts to support the democratic reform process in Ukraine are continued.

In the months to come, the Council of Europe will have to stay as close as possible to the western Balkans. The times are crucial for democratic stability in the region and for the future of Europe. The Committee of Ministers examined in February the Secretariat's 10th report on compliance by Serbia and Montenegro with its obligations and commitments and the implementation of the post-accession co-operation programme, covering the period from October 2005 to January 2006.

We welcomed the constant progress made in a number of fields, particularly the signature and ratification of Council of Europe conventions and the passing of specific legislation, in which the commitments were almost entirely honoured. At the same time, the Committee invited the authorities of Serbia and Montenegro to step up their efforts to honour the broader, longer-term commitments that had not yet been fulfilled, namely completing the constitutional reform as soon as possible, ensuring the independence of the judicial system, advancing with decentralisation, building democratic institutions and co-operating fully and effectively with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

The ongoing discussions on the future status of Kosovo and the referendum to be held on 21 May on the independence of Montenegro will prepare the Council of Europe for a self-evaluation exercise. The Council will have to project its role to be played, in close liaison with the other international bodies active in the field in order to ensure, as it has for several years, that democratic standards are implemented in the region. The Romanian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers will remain particularly vigilant in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen, since we are talking about democracy and shared values within the Council of Europe framework, we admit that regional and transborder co-operation is an area deserving particular consideration. It can make an important contribution to the achievement of our objectives. In this context, I want to take the opportunity to commend the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the local authorities in the Black Sea area for embracing a truly visionary and innovative project to create a Black Sea Euroregion. The official launch of the process took place in Romania, at the end of March.

Joining the local authorities in this endeavour, the governments of the participating states adopted a political declaration fully endorsing the creation of a Black Sea Euroregion. They emphasised the historical geopolitical importance of the region and committed themselves to promote co-operation among the Black Sea countries at local and regional level, with the objective of strengthening democratic stability, promoting good governance and supporting sustainable development. I sincerely hope that the Russian Federation will judge this initiative on its merits and decide to join the states already on board. I am confident that the honourable members of the Parliamentary Assembly will afford this project the same support as they granted to the creation of the Adriatic Euroregion.

In the same logic of inter-regional co-operation, the Committee of Ministers followed up the joint proposal by the Russian Federation and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, to set up a Council of Europe centre for inter-regional and cross-border co-operation in the form of an enlarged partial agreement based in St Petersburg. Intensive discussions on this topic are under way and a report will be presented at the 116th session of the Committee of Ministers.

In terms of stepping up Council of Europe action in the field of democracy, one of the priorities of the Committee in the reporting period was to go further with consolidating the process of the Forum for the Future of Democracy. Our efforts have led to the adoption of important decisions on the subject, which provide both a conceptual basis for the future work of the forum and also clear perspectives for 2006 and 2007.

The protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities has remained on the agenda in the reporting period. It is to be noted that the opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention on the implementation of the Framework Convention in Kosovo, the legal basis for which is the agreement signed in August 2004 between the Council of Europe and the United Nations

Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), was presented to the Rapporteur Group on Human Rights in February.

The Romanian chairmanship will continue to attach great importance to the topic of national minorities and to pay special attention to the situation of Romanian minorities in neighbouring countries. In this regard, the Romanian chairmanship has pledged active support for the work relating to the rights of persons belonging to the Roma minority. Bucharest will host a meeting of the Group of Specialists on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers on 2 and 3 May. The group is preparing a recommendation for the Committee of Ministers on policies towards Roma and travellers. The possibility to put together a solidarity fund for Roma and measures to assist Roma, returnees, refugees and IDPs in Kosovo are currently being examined.

At the same time, a follow-up conference to the one held in Warsaw last October, on the Implementation and Harmonisation of National Policies on Roma, Sinti and Travellers – “Guidelines for a Common Vision”, will be held in Bucharest on 4 May. The conference is co-organised by the government and the National Agency for Roma. We are pleased to place the event under the auspices of the Council of Europe, the European Roma and Travellers Forum, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, as Chair-in-Office of the OSCE, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, the European Commission, the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Austrian Presidency of the European Union and the Project on Ethnic Relations.

Mr President, respect for human rights in the Council of Europe member states and the strengthening of the human rights protection system established by the European Convention on Human Rights are a top priority for the Romanian chairmanship. We have, therefore, continued the efforts to promote the ratification of Protocol No. 14, whose purpose is to make the Convention enforcement system more effective. There have been 11 new ratifications since the beginning of this year, which is an encouraging sign, bringing the total number of ratifications to 32.

In connection with its function of supervising the execution of European Court of Human Rights judgments, the Committee of Ministers works to ensure that all citizens of Europe enjoy fully the rights and freedoms afforded by the Convention.

Unfortunately, that is not always the case. The *Ilaşcu and Others* case against the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation continued to be considered at each meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, with unfortunately no end in sight. After constantly deploring the excessive prolongation of the unlawful and arbitrary detention of the applicants still in prison, a third interim resolution was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 1 March 2006. The Romanian chair put the issue on the agenda of the quadripartite meeting between the Council of Europe and the European Union. We stressed once again that compliance with the judgments of the Court is unconditional and insisted on the immediate release of the applicants. We firmly hope that this will take place soon.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the fourth main thrust of the Committee of Ministers' action since January stems both from the Warsaw Summit decisions and from more recent topical developments. It consists of the Council of Europe's efforts to foster intercultural dialogue. Over the last months, hard work has been conducted and significant progress made in implementing the strategy for developing intercultural dialogue, adopted in Faro at the end of 2005. This has led, just a few days ago, to the official launch of the work on the future Council of Europe White Paper on intercultural dialogue. This will be an innovative and open process involving all relevant partners, both within and outside the Organisation, on the basis of the guidelines adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 April.

The international tensions caused by the satirical cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed only served to underline the urgency and importance of the subject. In this connection, the Romanian chairmanship found the statements published by the Secretary General and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, on 6 and 9 February, particularly relevant.

In the context of our Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, we also hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Council of Europe Intercultural Forum in Bucharest on 17 and 18 March. Experts on culture and education from the states parties to the European Cultural Convention came together to discuss the subject of promoting intercultural dialogue between generations.

*(Continued in translation)*

Mr President, to conclude, allow me to share a few personal comments with you and the distinguished members of this Assembly. As you know, this is the last time I shall be addressing you as Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and I want to thank you for the constant and valuable support you have given me during my term of office. We have done some excellent work on many issues, but we still have a great deal to do.

The Parliamentary Assembly's support is needed to carry through the inter-regional co-operation project in the Black Sea basin. At the end of March we held a meeting of leaders of the Black Sea basin countries in Constanta and I am pleased to have succeeded in launching the Black Sea Euroregion. This initiative must move forward. As in the case of the Adriatic Euroregion, direct and sustained co-operation between the regional authorities bordering the Black Sea in geographical or economic terms will bear fruit, leading to progress and strengthening the democratic values to which we are committed.

Lastly, I attach very special importance to the subject of condemning communism as a repressive regime. This Assembly's adoption of Resolution 1481 gave fresh impetus to the plans to condemn this 20th century nightmare. Romania has announced that before the end of this year it will hold an international conference on the crimes of communism, which will be open to researchers and policy makers. I rely on your support to carry this project through and I know you agree when I assert that awareness of history is one of the prerequisites for preventing similar crimes from being repeated in the future.

Before concluding, I should like to mention the approaching session of the Committee of Ministers, which will have a substantial agenda. Mr President, I look forward with interest to sharing the Parliamentary Assembly's view of the Council's plans for the near future with the Committee members during the formal session on 19 May.

Thank you for your attention. I am now ready to answer your questions.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you Minister, for your very valuable speech. I wish to pick up on one sentence. You said that you wished to conclude the report on co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union in due time. We agree fully with that, but the content is more important to the Assembly than the time scale is. I encourage you to take that into account.

I remind the Assembly that the Minister will answer questions only from those members who are present.

Twenty questions have been tabled. They are contained in Document 10883 and will be taken in the order in which they have been published, apart from those questions which have been grouped together for answer: 3, 9, 14 and 18 relating to the Black Sea Euroregion, and questions 5 and 10 relating to Azerbaijan.

The first question is tabled by Mr Platvoet. Everyone who has tabled a question has the right to ask an additional question and has thirty seconds.

*"Question No. 1:*

Mr Platvoet,

Noting that the Parliamentary Assembly adopted in June 2005 Resolution 1444 on the protection of European deltas;

Noting that the resolution stressed the need to ensure the preservation of the biological, ecological and scientific potential of European river deltas, which are areas particularly sensitive to environmental changes;

Noting that, in particular, the Assembly expressed its concern on the building, by Ukraine, of a deep sea navigable waterway through the Danube delta, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of Europe's finest natural sites,

To ask the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers,

What action has the Committee of Ministers taken to encourage Ukraine to respect the international treaties and conventions to which it is a party and to stop endangering the Danube delta."

Mr UNGUREANU. – The question on the proposed navigable waterway through the Bâstroe estuary of the Danube Delta, Ukraine, has been followed closely by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. That Committee's recommendation on the matter was brought to the attention of the Committee of Ministers last April.

The Committee of Ministers welcomed the interest shown by the Standing Committee in preserving the high biological value of the Danube and avoiding any possible adverse environmental impact on this site of European importance.

At that time, the Committee of Ministers encouraged the states sharing the Danube Delta to engage in constructive dialogue, with the participation of relevant international organisations and NGOs, for the conservation of the Delta. It also encouraged implementation of the recommendation, which called for further information and impact assessments before the project was proceeded with.

It would seem that the project will be clarified and refined on the basis of an assessment of its impact on the environment. The Bern Convention will continue to follow this matter closely and will keep the Committee of Ministers informed of any developments.

In order to promote full implementation of Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1444, Romania has repeatedly requested Ukraine to present the risk assessment for the second phase of the project, to respect the recommendations of international organisations and to refrain from starting the works until the conclusions on the trans-border impact has been comprehensively evaluated.

Démarches have been pursued both on a bilateral basis – through exchange of messages at the level of president and consistent diplomatic démarches, as well as multilateral: within the framework of the Commission for protection of the Danube river against pollution; the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, which is a permanent committee monitoring the Bâstroe question; the Ramsar Convention, which in 2005 adopted a resolution with content similar to that of the Resolution 1444; and the ESPOO convention regarding the risk assessment on the environment in the trans-border context. Within this framework, a special international commission including Romanian, Ukrainian and Dutch experts, is assessing the trans-border impact of the Bâstroe channel project. Next month, the commission will pay a visit to the Danube Delta, both in Romania and Ukraine. The Romanian side is actively co-operating to have the report issued in June this year.

Moreover, in February, an international conference was organised in Odessa, Ukraine, bringing together Moldova, Ukraine and Romania as well as relevant international organisations, including the Council of Europe, and non-governmental organisations to work towards a shared vision for the conservation and sustainable development of the Danube Delta.

We intend consistently to continue high-level contacts with Ukraine on this matter and, in that regard, we have already proposed to host a follow-up meeting of the Odessa Conference later this year.

THE PRESIDENT. – Mr Platvoet, would you like to ask a supplementary question? You have thirty seconds.

Mr PLATVOET (*Netherlands*). – I understood from what you said, Mr Ungureanu, that the Ukrainian authorities are willing to carry on with the assessment and to share in the conclusion. Is that the case?

THE PRESIDENT. – Mr Ungureanu, you have the floor to reply.

Mr UNGUREANU. – Are you asking me, Mr Platvoet, whether you have interpreted my words correctly?

Mr PLATVOET (*Netherlands*). – You said that there should be an assessment. My question is whether the Ukrainian authorities will follow the conclusions of any agreement.

Mr UNGUREANU. – We insist that the Ukrainian authorities keep their word and respect international agreements to which Ukraine is party. I cannot foresee their reaction, but we will not give up.

THE PRESIDENT. – The next question is No. 2, on action to prevent Moldova from being marginalised:

"Question No. 2:

Mrs Durrieu,

Considering that the Balkan countries, Romania, Bulgaria and Moldova are members of the Stability Pact and that some of them, namely Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, may join the European Union in 2007;

Noting, however, that in the case of all the other Balkan countries, their situations and various unresolved issues mean that integration could be subject to more comprehensive and specific analysis when the Stability Pact comes to an end and that, in Moldova's case, there is a risk of the country being sidelined even though it belongs in Europe and has opted for integration,

To ask the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers,

How can the Committee of Ministers help prevent Moldova being marginalised or excluded from the process of integration into the European Union?"

Mr UNGUREANU. – The question by Ms Durrieu takes us back to the debate your Assembly held yesterday on the contribution that the Council of Europe can make to closer ties between the European Union and the countries in Europe which have not yet joined it. In the case of Moldova and other states, the Council of Europe has for several years been conducting assistance programmes whose aims are in line with those of the European Union, involving, for instance, the strengthening of democratic institutions, the independence of the judiciary and the fight against corruption.

The will clearly expressed in 2005 by almost all representative political forces in Moldova to make closer ties with the European Union is a key aspect of the country's foreign policy which deserves to be underlined and taken into account. In February 2006, it led to the signing of an action plan between the European Union and Moldova, marking an important step forward in this process.

We welcome these developments and are prepared to do everything within our power to assist with Moldova's integration into Europe. In practice, this support takes the form of consultations, assistance with the harmonisation of legislation and training programmes. Romania is also actively seeking to involve Moldova in the political and economic co-operation initiatives taking place in South-Eastern Europe, and in future European neighbourhood policies and trans-border programmes.

We hope that the assistance activities which the Council of Europe continues to carry out in Moldova and the measures that will be taken under the action plan I just mentioned will combine to enable Moldova rapidly to attain the stability and prosperity she is aiming for, in her own interest and that of Europe as a whole.

Romania has made substantial efforts to include the Republic of Moldova in all co-operation formats existing in South-Eastern Europe. We were and we will remain one of the strongest promoters of Moldova's membership to SECI, the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, the South-Eastern European Co-operation Process and the Central European Free Trade Agreement.

In our dialogue with the EU members, we are promoting the idea that the Republic of Moldova should at a certain point be dissociated from the ENP programme and included in the package that the EU has offered to the western Balkan countries.

THE PRESIDENT. – Mrs Durrieu, would you like to ask a supplementary question? You have thirty seconds.

Mrs DURRIEU (*France*) said that the European Union was involved in controlling the border between Ukraine and Moldova. The situation was not good at present. There was a blockage in Transnistria and the Russian Federation was supporting the Transnistrian authorities. She asked what could be done.

THE PRESIDENT. – Mr Ungureanu, you have the floor to reply.

Mr UNGUREANU said that Mrs Durrieu was right. This was a self-blockade imposed by the authorities in Transnistria. A detailed survey of the situation in Moldova was being carried out by observers. The case would be put to the European Union. He believed that there was increased sympathy

for Moldova within the European Union and there was no negative interpretation of the decisions now being taken regarding border control. The Russian Federation was another matter. It had given its support, via a Duma resolution, to the decision taken by the Transnistrian authorities. The European Union perspective was that the truth was on its side.

THE PRESIDENT. – We now come to question No. 3, on the establishment of the Black Sea region, which has been grouped with Nos. 9, 14 and 18:

*"Question No. 3:*

Mr Schmied,

Considering that, a few days ago, your country, Romania, hosted the Conference on Inter-regional Co-operation in the Black Sea Basin (Constanta, 30 March 2006);

Noting that this conference adopted a final declaration calling on the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to support the initiative to set up a Black Sea Euroregion (modelled on the Adriatic Euroregion) by the end of 2007,

To ask the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers,

How he sees the future involvement of the Council of Europe, in practical terms, in the effective establishment of the Black Sea Euroregion."

*"Question No. 9:*

Mr Açıkgöz,

Noting your efforts in support of the creation of a Black Sea Euroregion and the successful international conference held in Constanta on 30 March 2006, organised on the initiative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, in close co-operation with the Romanian presidency, as a first step in creating a Black Sea Euroregion,

To ask the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers,

How he sees the future prospects of the Black Sea Euroregion in light of the conclusions of the Constanta conference."

*"Question No. 14:*

Mrs Nakashidzé,

Considering that Romania strongly supports the development of co-operation within the Black Sea region,

To ask the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers,

What impact could the creation of the European Black Sea region have on security and economic issues in Europe?"

*"Question No. 18:*

Mr Fomenko,

Noting that Romania has been persistently promoting the idea to convoke the Black Sea Forum of Dialogue and Partnership Summit in Bucharest, and that it held a conference on inter-regional co-operation in the Black Sea region in Constanta;

Noting that, to a certain extent, the agenda of these meetings concerns the issues which are within the competence of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organization and other integration frameworks functioning in the region,

To ask the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers,

Does he consider that the existing institutions for co-operation have exhausted their potential, no longer meet the demands of the times and are incapable of providing the conditions necessary for the mutually beneficial co-operation of the Black Sea countries?"

Mr UNGUREANU. – I thank the four honourable members for their questions related to the Black Sea Euroregion, to which I propose to give a joint reply, albeit unfortunately a long one. I would first of all seize this opportunity to stress once again the importance that we attach to the initiative to create such a Euroregion. I have the honour, in the presence of all the members of this distinguished Assembly, of thanking Mr Giovanni Di Stasi and praising him for the efforts that he has put into his report.

While referring to the information set out in the written report of the chair and to my statement, I would like to highlight the three following points. The first is the importance of initiatives aimed at strengthening democracy, good governance and human contacts at the grassroots level. As Mr Schmiel pointed out, the process of creating a Black Sea Euroregion, which was set in motion in Constanta, is directly inspired by other similar processes, in particular the process which should, by the end of the year, lead to the establishment of an Adriatic Euroregion.

The second is the importance of combining the efforts of governments and international organisations with those of local and regional authorities. I therefore welcome the fact that the Constanta conference was attended by governmental representatives from 10 Council of Europe member states, who participated in the drafting of the final declaration of the conference. Eight of these countries have already decided to take part in the project while the Russian Federation and Greece are only acting as observers, at least for the time being. We expect progress to be made only by bringing together efforts of all parties concerned, at national, regional and local level, thus responding to the wish expressed by Mr Açikgöz.

Thirdly, there is the contribution that such initiatives can make to the democratic stability of the continent and to the process of European integration in the broad sense of the term. This is particularly obvious in such a strategic region as the Black Sea, which is situated at the crossroads between east and west and between north and south. We all know that progress in democratic stability leads to further progress in the fields of economics, tourism, cultural exchanges and social cohesion. This is of course the long-term objective of the initiators of the process, as Mrs Nakashidzé correctly understood.

I believe that these three points taken together provide not only the reply to most of the legitimate questions of your Assembly but also to the challenges linked to the creation of the Black Sea Euroregion. One of these challenges, to which Mr Fomenko has drawn attention, is to ensure that efforts are properly co-ordinated, to avoid unnecessary duplication, or even more important, to ensure that the different initiatives are not incompatible. Since the Black Sea Euroregion is focusing mostly on co-operation between local and regional authorities, that can only be mutually beneficial for all the parties involved. Whatever activity the Black Sea region will undertake, it will be complementary to that of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organisation.

As you know, as well as the Council of Europe we are chairing the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organisation, and quite soon the Russian Federation will take over that responsibility. In the framework of our chairmanship we have proposed a number of concrete economic projects and initiatives, some of which have not materialised so far. We believe that high-level guidance is now needed. That is why we are holding a forum for dialogue and partnership, which we are promoting "aggressively." It will take place on 5 June in Bucharest, and the Secretary General has been invited.

Let me take the opportunity to underline the importance in this context of the proposal to set up, in the near future, a Council of Europe centre for inter-regional and transfrontier co-operation in St Petersburg. We believe that the mandate of the centre should focus on co-ordination between initiatives aimed at fostering regional co-operation in the whole of Europe, including the Black Sea region.

A number of stages will be necessary to achieve the creation of a Black Sea Euroregion by the end of the 2007, which is our aim. The next will be a further conference, which will take place in Samsun, in Turkey, this autumn. As from today, what is most important is to maintain the political momentum initiated by the conference in Constanta. We think that the 116th Committee of Ministers session, which will take place in Strasbourg in mid-May, could be used for that purpose.

The Constanta conference was only the beginning of a process. The Black Sea badly needs and deserves co-operation to the benefit of all the riparian countries, as well as that of the citizens of the countries on the borders of the Black Sea.



THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. Mr Schmied, would you like to ask a supplementary question?

Mr SCHMIED (*Switzerland*). – No.

THE PRESIDENT. – Does anyone else wish to ask a supplementary question? I call Mr Fomenko.

Mr FOMENKO (*Russian Federation*). – This may be the same question as before, but I should like a proper answer to it. I think that that is important today. Does all that you have said mean that you think the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organisation has exhausted its potential, and cannot provide the necessary conditions for Black Sea co-operation?

Mr UNGUREANU. – On the contrary, I would say that the organisation has a potential that has not yet been fully developed and given its full value. That was the challenge that faced us when we began to chair the organisation, and that is why we proposed to all its members economic projects to boost the economic interests of the countries involved. We intend to establish a Black Sea company to deal with infrastructure projects. Unfortunately, that economic blueprint – which would enable the riparian countries to participate in the building of a range of infrastructure links – has been met with indifference, and turned down.

I say this loudly: it is mostly the indifference of some countries in the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organisation that could kill the organisation. That is why we thought it necessary to arrange the forum, which does not supersede the organisation but is intended to bring to the same table, for the first time in history, the heads of state and government of the riparian countries. Until now, they have never had the chance to discuss, in the proper sense of the word, with fewer formalities and less ceremony, the issues that are at stake. One of those issues is prosperity. Our bid was to offer the average citizen of the riparian countries the possibility of access to that prosperity, which can only be done through co-operation.

I am afraid that co-operation is so far lacking in the Black Sea region. That is why we have tried to revive economic co-operation in the Black Sea. We have invested a great deal in it, but sometimes when it comes to political calculus it is impossible to go beyond a certain threshold.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. The next and possibly final question is tabled by Mr Cubreacov.

*“Question No. 4:*

Mr Cubreacov,

Considering that, in accordance with the provisions of several Council of Europe texts and, in particular, Resolution 1031 (1994), whereby ‘all member states of the Council of Europe are required to respect their obligations under the Statute, the European Convention on Human Rights and all other conventions to which they are parties; [and] in addition to these obligations, [have] freely entered into specific commitments on issues related to the basic principles of the Council of Europe (...),’ the Russian Federation has undertaken to withdraw its 14th Army and weaponry from the territory of Moldova;

Considering that the Russian Federation is still supporting the illegal regime installed in Tiraspol by senior officers of the Russian intelligence services;

Noting also that, under the decision taken at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in 1999, the Russian troops should have been unconditionally withdrawn from Moldovan territory by the end of 2002;

Emphasising that Russian armed forces, including their heavy weaponry and munitions, are still on Moldovan territory today and that Russia is not planning any withdrawals in the near or even distant future,

To ask the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers,

How he views the situation in Moldova and what steps the Committee of Ministers has taken to require Russia to honour in full its specific commitment to withdraw its troops and weaponry from Moldovan territory.”

Mr UNGUREANU. – I do not wish to answer this question without first recalling Opinion No. 193 on Russia's request for membership of the Council of Europe, which your Assembly adopted in January 1996. In the opinion, the Assembly noted that the Russian Federation intended "to ratify, within six months from the time of accession, the agreement of 21 October 1994 between the Russian and Moldovan Governments, and to continue the withdrawal of the 14th Army and its equipment from the territory of Moldova within a time-limit of three years" – that was back in 1994 – "from the date of signature of the agreement".

Unfortunately, I can only deplore the fact that that intention has not been put into practice. I also regret that the Russian Federation has not met a similar commitment, which it made at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe summit in Istanbul in 1999 but which does not come within the Council of Europe's remit.

Nevertheless, the Committee of Ministers, for its part, is continuing to keep a close eye on the issue. In the reply that it adopted in December 2005 to Assembly Recommendation 1710 on the honouring of obligations and commitments by the Russian Federation, the Committee of Ministers clearly stated that the outstanding obligations and commitments concerning Russia's relations with neighbouring countries and other Council of Europe states in the region "should be fulfilled without any further delay".

I repeat that the Committee of Ministers is prepared, within its particular sphere of competence, to provide the assistance required to achieve that, so that a lasting solution can be found to the problem of the Transnistrian region of Moldova, in full compliance with the standards and values of the Council of Europe and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova.

In any case, finding a solution to this issue is not only the responsibility of the international community, but lies also with the Russian and Moldovan authorities. The Russian troops were subject to a bilateral agreement signed back in 1994 by the two presidents of the countries at the time, Mr Snegur and Mr Yeltsin, but no legal steps have been taken by the Russian Duma to ensure its ratification and entry into force. That process cannot be finalised by the international community only; it requires the full commitment of the Moldovan authorities as well. I look forward to concrete action from those authorities, including the Moldovan Parliament.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. Do you wish to ask a supplementary question, Mr Cubreacov?

Mr CUBREACOV (*Moldova*) said that he did not have a question but wanted to make a statement.

THE PRESIDENT said that only supplementary questions could be allowed.

*(The speaker continued in English)*

We must now conclude the questions to Mr Ungureanu. I thank him very much for his contribution. This is his last exchange of views in his role as Chairman-in-Office of the Committee of Ministers, although this is not the last act that we will be involved in jointly. I thank you most warmly for presenting the communication to the Assembly and for answering questions. I would like to ask you to reply to the oral questions in writing, so that members can receive replies.

#### **6. Date, time and orders of the day of the next sitting**

THE PRESIDENT. – I propose that the Assembly hold its next public sitting this afternoon at 3 p.m. with the orders of the day which were approved on Monday.

Is that agreed?

It is agreed.

The sitting is closed.

*(The sitting was closed at 1 p.m.)*

## CONTENTS

1. Minutes of proceedings
2. Written declarations
3. Organisation of debates
4. Stop trafficking in women before the FIFA World Cup

Presentation by Mrs Vermot-Mangold of the report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Doc. 10881

*Speakers:*

Mr Mendes Bota (Portugal)  
Mrs Bargholtz (Sweden)  
Mr Evans (United Kingdom)  
Mr de Puig (Spain)  
Mr Platvoet (Netherlands)  
Mrs Ahlqvist (Sweden)  
Mrs Hägg (Sweden)  
Mr Hancock (United Kingdom)  
Mr Lintner (Germany)  
Mrs Smirnova (Russian Federation)  
Mrs Rupprecht (Germany)  
Mr Arnaut (Portugal)  
Mrs Graf (Germany)  
Mr Østergaard (Denmark)  
Mr Greenway (United Kingdom)  
Mr Kucheida (France)  
Ms Christoffersen (Norway)  
Ms Vėsaitė (Lithuania)  
Mrs Čurdová (Czech Republic)  
Mrs Wurm (Austria)  
Mr MacShane (United Kingdom)  
Mrs Stoitsits (Austria)  
Mrs Cliveti (Romania)

*Draft resolution contained in Document 10881 adopted.*

5. Communication from the Committee of Ministers

Presentation by Mr Ungureanu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania and Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers

Questions

6. Date, time and orders of the day of the next sitting

