

**STANDING  
COMMITTEE**

239 SC 05 E  
Original: English



## **NATO Parliamentary Assembly**

### **SUMMARY**

of the meeting of the Standing Committee  
Landstingssalen, Folketing, Copenhagen, Denmark

Monday 14 November 2005

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## ATTENDANCE LIST

<b>President</b>	Pierre Lellouche (France)
<b>Vice-Presidents</b>	Pierre Claude Nolin (Canada) Jozef Banáš (Slovakia) Vahit Erdem (Turkey) Bert Koenders (Netherlands)
<b>Treasurer</b>	Lothar Ibrügger (Germany)
<b>Secretary General</b>	Simon Lunn
<b>Former Vice-President</b>	John Tanner (United States)

## MEMBERS AND ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Belgium	Daniel Bacquelaine
Bulgaria	Nikolai Kamov
Canada	Jane Cordy Leon Benoit
Czech Republic	Vlasta Parkanova
Denmark	Helge Adam Møller Per Kaalund
Estonia	Sven Mikser
France	Loïc Bouvard
Germany	Markus Meckel Karl A. Lamers
Greece	Georgios Kalantzis
Hungary	Istvan Simicsko
Iceland	Ossur Skarphedinsson
Italy	Paolo Ricciotti
Latvia	Guntis Berzins
Lithuania	Juozas Olekas Petras Austrevicius
Luxembourg	Marc Spautz
Netherlands	Jos van Gennip
Norway	Per Ove Width
Poland	Marian Pilka
Portugal	Rui Gomes da Silva José Lello
Romania	Mihail Lupoi Mihai Stanisoara
Slovakia	Jozef Banáš
Slovenia	Milan Petek
Spain	Rafael Estrella
Turkey	Vahit Erdem
United Kingdom	Bruce George Peter Viggers
United States	Joel Hefley John Tanner

**COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN**

<b>Civil Dimension of Security</b>	Michael Clapham (United Kingdom)
<b>Economics and Security</b>	Paul Gillmor (United States)
<b>Defence and Security</b>	Joel Hefley (United States)
<b>Political</b>	Marcus Meckel (Germany)
<b>Science and Technology</b>	Michael Mates (United Kingdom)
<b>Special Mediterranean Group</b>	Jean-Michel Boucheron (France)

**INVITED REPRESENTATIVES (present only during their addresses)**

Belarus	Stanislas Shushkevich Svietlana Zavadskaya
Mauritania	Cherif Ahmed Ould Mohammed Moussa Matt Mint Ewnen

**SECRETARIES OF DELEGATION*****Member Delegations***

Belgium	Frans Van Melkebeke
Bulgaria	Borislav Penchev
Canada	Denis Robert
Czech Republic	Olga Bendíková
Denmark	Jacob Stahl Otte
Estonia	Tanja Espe
France	Frédéric Taillet Etienne Sallenave
Germany	Rainer Büscher Anne Marie Bürsch
Greece	Maria Apostolou
Hungary	Károly Tüzes
Italy	Alessandra Lai Mario di Napoli
Iceland	Belinda Theriault
Latvia	Sandra Paura
Lithuania	Andrius Baranauskas
Luxembourg	Tun Figueiredo
Netherlands	Leo van Waasbergen
Norway	Allon Groth
Poland	Natalia Jaskiewicz
Portugal	Luisa Pinto Basto
Romania	Irina Bojin Ioan Ilie
Slovakia	Jarmila Novakova
Slovenia	Tamara Gruden-Pecan
Spain	Mercedes Araujo
Turkey	Yesim Uslu
United Kingdom	Libby Davidson Tracey Garratty
United States	Susan Olson

**Accompanying staff**

Belgium  
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Germany  
Italy

Norway  
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Patrick Delodder  
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Mikolaj Karlowski  
Araceli Quintano  
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**International Secretariat**

Eva Antunano  
Isabelle Arcis  
Andrius Avizius  
Helen Cadwallender  
Roberta Calorio  
Andrea Cellino  
Paul Cook  
Valérie Geffroy  
Christine Heffinck  
David Hobbs  
Susan Millar  
Jacqueline Pforr  
Ruxandra Popa  
Steffen Sachs  
Chris Shaw  
Svitlana Svyetova  
Zachary Selden  
Claire Watkins

**Minute Writers**

Sarah Davies  
Richard Cooke

**The meeting opened on Monday 14 November 2005 at 9.00 a.m. with Pierre Lellouche (France), President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, in the Chair.**

### **1. Opening of the meeting**

**The President** declared the meeting open and welcomed delegates to Copenhagen. He thanked Mr Møller and the staff of the Danish Parliament for their hard work, and asked Mr Møller to say a few words.

**Mr Møller** (DK) said that he hoped delegates were finding the meeting useful and interesting. He reminded colleagues about the excursion programme that would take place later in the day, and that the Plenary meeting would take place in a different venue, the Falconer Centre, the following day.

**The President** reported that apologies for absences had been received from Pavel Severa, Head of the Czech delegation who would be replaced by Vlasta Parkanova for this meeting, and from Mr Gyula Vari, Head of the Hungarian delegation, who would be replaced by Agnes Vadai. He welcomed the following heads of delegations, who had been appointed to the post since the last Session:

Nikolai Kamov of Bulgaria, Ossur Skarphedinsson of Iceland, Per Ove Width from Norway, Marian Pilka, Acting Head of the Polish delegation, Mihail Lupoi of Romania and finally, Bruce George, who had been appointed Head of the United Kingdom delegation.

### **2. Adoption of the draft Agenda [152 SC 05 E Rev. 1]**

**The President** said that the Committee had a substantial amount of business to do. He therefore asked colleagues to accept that speaking time should be limited to three minutes. He noted that the Agenda had been revised. In particular, one item (the number of seats available for the delegations of Algeria and Morocco) had been postponed.

**The draft Agenda [152 SC 05 E Rev. 1] was adopted.**

**The limit of three minutes for speeches was agreed to.**

**The President** asked the Committee for its approval of the proposal that representatives from Belarus and Mauritania make short presentations.

**This proposal was agreed to.**

### **3. Adoption of the Summary of the meeting of the Standing Committee held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on Monday 30 May 2005 [111 SC 05 E]**

**The Summary [111 SC 05 E] was adopted.**

### **4. Organization of the Plenary Sitting to be held on Tuesday, 15 November 2005**

**The President** outlined the arrangements for the organization of the Plenary Session that would take place the following day.

He asked the Committee whether it approved the granting of speaking time at the Plenary to representatives from Belarus and Georgia.

**This proposal was agreed to.**

## 5. Political issues

- **Draft Declaration on the Disposal of Surplus Weapons and Munitions in Ukraine presented by the President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Mr Pierre Lellouche (France) [219 SC 05 E]**
- **Draft Declaration on Parliamentary Elections in Azerbaijan presented by the President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Mr Pierre Lellouche (France) [234 SC 05 E]**
- **Draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure on the status of Mediterranean Associate Delegations [210 SC 05 E]**
- **Belarus [207 SC 05 E]**
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- **The European Parliament [208 SC 05 E]**

**The President** said that there were three draft texts to consider:

- The draft declaration on the Disposal of Surplus Weapons in Ukraine;
- The draft declaration on the Parliamentary Elections in Azerbaijan; and
- The draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure concerning Mediterranean Associate Members.

In relation to the Ukraine, he said that there was a real problem with the disposal of conventional weapons left by the former Red Army. This was a serious problem that NATO needed to tackle not only to deal with the physical and environmental hazards but also to help improve its image in the region.

**Mr Erdem** (TR) said that the election had been a step towards democracy in Azerbaijan and considered the text too critical of an emerging democracy. He suggested that Azerbaijan, given its limited experience of elections, should not be subject to such a harsh resolution.

**Mr Meckel** (DE) disagreed with Mr Erdem. He reminded the Committee that in the Political Committee's deliberations on Belarus, a clear statement had been produced on conducting future elections and there was no reason to be any less clear in the language applied to Azerbaijan. He suggested that difficulties with the election were less to do with a lack of experience than a lack of will.

**Mr Clapham** (UK) said that he had led the NATO PA delegation to Azerbaijan to observe the election. He accepted that that delegation had only been present on polling day but said that the process he had observed in West Baku was fair.

**Mr Bouvard** (FR) said that he had also been in Azerbaijan. There were reservations about the conduct of the elections but generally he considered them to have been professionally conducted. The proposed text was balanced and he acknowledged that the elections had been a step in the right direction, although more needed to be done.

**Mr George** (UK) said that, given its proximity to the centre of power and the relatively high concentration of election observers, election fraud was unlikely to take place in West Baku. He cautioned against drawing conclusions from short visits to a few polling stations. Only the ODIHR report should be considered an authoritative account of the elections. Azerbaijan had to develop the will to conduct fair elections – currently it did not. Ukraine had managed to transform its election process rapidly and there was no reason for Azerbaijan not to do so as well.



**Mr van Gennip** (NL) reminded the Committee that observing elections was a professional job. The most important period in an election was prior to polling day and there were examples of irregularities in Azerbaijan prior to the election. For example, one presidential contender who had been travelling to the Council of Europe to describe corruption in the election process had been arrested by Interpol in the Netherlands at the behest of the Azerbaijan Government.

**The President** said the current text was balanced and that there appeared to be a consensus. Amendments could be tabled to it if necessary. He noted that there were no comments on the texts relating to Ukraine or the Rules of Procedure. He asked if there were any objections to the three texts being forwarded for consideration at the plenary sitting.

**There were no objections to forwarding the Draft Declarations and the draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure for consideration at the plenary sitting.**

**The President** turned to the matter of Belarus. He noted that the Standing Committee had frequently expressed its concern about the situation in Belarus and at the last meeting the Committee had accepted the generous offer of the Lithuanian delegation to host a seminar on Belarus. The seminar had taken place in Vilnius in October, and the participants had produced a number of options described in Doc. 207 SC 05.

He invited Mr Stanislav Shushkevich, a leading figure in the democratic opposition in Belarus, to address the Committee.

**Mr Shushkevich** (BY) thanked the President and the Committee for the great honour of being able to address them. Belarus was a truly European nation with a long history of constitutional democracy and Christianity. However, 200 years ago, it had been colonized by force by Russia. Physical and then cultural genocide had taken place. In some ways, Belarus had become more Russian than Russia itself.

In 1991, Belarus had in effect become an independent State and the beginnings of democratic Government had existed. However, in 1997 President Lukashenko had been granted dictatorial powers, with the acquiescence of the Russian Prime Minister and the Chairmen of both chambers of the Russian parliament. This marked the end of an independent parliament and judiciary, and as part of this deal, Russia had demanded that Belarus be used as a military base.

The current situation was grave. The people of Belarus were not anti-Russian but they were opposed to Russian-sponsored dictatorship.

He had three requests to the Standing Committee. The first was for member countries to help break the information blockade and help Freedom Radio to broadcast in Belarus with a stronger signal. The second request was to parliamentarians to put pressure on the Russian Federation so that it did not rip out the green shoots of democracy in Belarus. The last request was for assistance in ensuring that the 2006 presidential elections were free and fair.

Concluding, he thanked the delegates, in particular for the adoption of the resolution on Belarus in the Political Committee. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly had already helped the people of Belarus a great deal.

**The President** thanked Mr Shushkevich and reminded the Committee that such speakers to the Assembly effectively put their own lives at risk. He proposed that the NATO PA offered its services for election monitoring for the presidential election in July 2006. This should be done in the form of

a letter to President Lukashenko. He noted that election monitoring would be carried out in co-operation with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and that it would be a difficult task since the elections would be conducted over a five-day period.

**Mr Olekas** (LT) said that he agreed with this proposal, and that Lithuania would be pleased to host another seminar on Belarus prior to the presidential elections.

**The President** explained that if President Lukashenko accepted this proposal he would ask for volunteers to participate. If the request was turned down, that would be denounced publically. He noted that Mr George was particularly experienced in such monitoring and would be asked to advise on the project.

**This proposal was agreed to.**

**The President** turned to the issue of Mauritania. He drew the attention of the Committee to document 206 SC 05 E which contained correspondence with the Mauritians, who had participated in the Ljubljana meeting, summaries of decisions that he had taken in consultation with the Bureau following the August coup in Mauritania, and background information about the situation in Mauritania.

With the Bureau's agreement, he had proposed that two Mauritanian delegates be invited to attend the Assembly's Copenhagen Session in a non-parliamentary capacity. The Bureau had discussed the available options and had felt that until democratic parliamentary elections took place, Mauritanian representatives should not be invited to participate in Assembly Sessions but that they should be invited to participate as non parliamentary representatives in Mediterranean Special Group activities which were open to non-members. He invited Mr Moussa to speak to the Committee.

**Mr Moussa** (Mauritania) described the deep political crisis prior to the regime's actions on 3 August. The security forces had attempted to end that situation with the support of the general population. Three committees covering justice, the democratic process and good governance had been established, as had a timetable for the transition back to democracy. The Council of Ministers had agreed an order to set up an independent electoral commission as well. He asked the Assembly to note the first half of Article 12 of that order and to apply NATO PA articles 17.2<sup>1</sup> and 35.6<sup>2</sup> that would allow continued relations with Mauritania.

**The President** explained that the rules cited by Mr Moussa were those which he had implemented in order to invite two Mauritanian representatives to attend the Copenhagen Session as non parliamentary observers.

**Mr Estrella** (ES) welcomed the President's proposal and added that the Assembly could send an observer mission to Mauritania.

**The President** agreed that an observer mission would be beneficial and indeed had already been requested by the Mauritanian delegate. It was for the Special Mediterranean Group to take the final decision.

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<sup>1</sup> This article concerns the right of the Assembly's President to invite non-members of the Assembly to attend sessions of the Assembly as observers.

<sup>2</sup> This article concerns the right of the chairman of the Mediterranean Special Group to invite representatives from non-member countries to participate in meetings of the group. This requires the approval of the President if the nation concerned does not have formal status with the Assembly.

**Mr Meckel** (DE) supported both proposals. He reminded the Committee that the former regime in Mauritania had not been a paragon of democracy.

**The President** asked if there were any objections to the proposal that Mauritanian representatives be invited to participate in relevant activities of the Mediterranean Special Group but not to sessions where they would act as a “quasi-delegation”. It would be for the Mediterranean Special Group to decide whether to visit Mauritania.

#### **The President’s proposal was approved**

**The President** reported that the Economics and Security Committee had visited China, led by Hugh Bayley, who encouraged continuing dialogue with the Chinese. That Committee and the President of the Assembly intended to visit China next year. The Bureau had considered the question of reciprocity, and had agreed that Chinese representatives could be invited to participate in the Paris spring session in 2006, but that these representatives should be from the Defence and/or Foreign Ministries, and not from the National People’s Congress.

**Mr van Gennip** (NL) said that during the Economics and Security Committee’s visit to China, there had been useful discussions, and he stressed the importance of improving contact. He had been surprised at the frank discussions they had been able to have on issues such as human rights, and he noted that the World Bank had been very supportive of the Committee’s contacts with China. He reminded the Committee that there were precedents for the Assembly having contact with non democratic countries.

**Mr Lello** (PT) reminded the Committee that the Assembly was based on values. China was of such social, political and strategic importance that it could not be ignored. The Assembly should also remember other important regional players such as South Korea, which were politically closer to the values of the Assembly. He supported the President’s proposal.

**Mr Meckel** (DE) noted that China was a central, global player. It was an important partner both in security and economic terms. In this context, he welcomed the contacts between the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, particularly the Economics and Security Committee, and China. However, he took the view that instead of two visits, the President should lead a delegation including Economics and Security Committee members, as this seemed to be a sensible way of reducing costs.

He observed that there were other actors in the region, for example Taiwan and Korea, but the modest resources available to the Assembly did not permit more than one visit a year.

**The President** said that Mr Meckel had raised an important point to which the Committee should return later in the meeting.

**Mr Bouvard** (FR) welcomed the proposal of the President. He reminded the Committee that in 1994 he had accepted an invitation to visit China, in his capacity as President of the Assembly. The delegation was received by the number four in the Chinese Government, who showed considerable interest in the work of the Assembly. Mr Bouvard agreed with the President’s desire for more political visibility. Contacts with China were particularly important in this context.

**The President** commented that the Committee seemed to have a consensus on the need for contacts with China. He recalled that the previous month he had attended a trade exhibition in Shanghai in his capacity as a French Deputy. Seven French Ministers had also attended that

exhibition. There was a need, if a visit to China went ahead, to ensure that the delegation was received at the appropriate level in China.

Mr Meckel's point on priorities for committees and the limits of the Assembly's work was an important one which should be discussed later in the meeting, and it was indeed the case that the Assembly could not cover the entire world.

**Mr van Gennip (NL)** pointed out that there were effectively two Chinas: the more developed eastern region; and the less developed west. It was important for the Economics and Security Committee to complete its work by looking at the less-developed region.

**Mr Estrella (ES)** observed that there was consensus on the importance of China for the Assembly. He proposed that a strategy document be prepared setting out a framework for the Assembly's contacts with China.

**The President** thought that this was a valid point. Summarizing the discussion, he saw consensus on relations with China, and the need to have a strategy rather than an *ad hoc* approach. He suggested that the techniques for prioritizing should be discussed later in the meeting.

**Mr Banás (SK)** asked whether China was interested in developing relations with the Assembly.

**Mr Viggers (UK)** supported measures to give a high priority to developing relations with China. He noted the extent to which China featured in economic and political thinking in the United States, and said that this clearly indicated that it must be a priority area.

**The President** noted that the possibility of lifting the EU arms embargo on China was a major transatlantic issue. He noted Mr Banás's point and would take this into account when liaising with the Chinese Government. He reiterated that he thought the proposal by Mr Estrella for a strategy document was an excellent one.

Moving on to Russia and Georgia, the President noted that during the meeting of the NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee he had proposed the creation of a monitoring group to follow the withdrawal of Russian forces from their bases in Georgia. He intended to set this process in motion with an official visit to Georgia as President next spring, and he had already received the strong backing of the Georgian Foreign Minister. He felt that this would be a significant innovation that would entail visits to Russian bases in Abkhazia and elsewhere. He envisaged one visit in late 2006, perhaps two during 2007, and a possible final visit in 2008.

He proposed that the group included one Georgian, one Russian, one American and two European members.

**The proposal was agreed to.**

**The President** directed the Committee to the options set out in the papers on relations with the European Parliament and asked for comments to be sent to the Secretariat in writing. He added that the conservative group had made arrangements for closer contact with the EP.

**Mr Lello (PT)** noted that the European Parliament already had a presence at the Assembly and a clear role.

**Mr Koenders** (NL) reminded the Committee that the conservative group was following an innovation by the socialist group.

**Mr Meckel** (DE) said that it was not sufficient for contacts to be only on a party basis and he suggested European Parliament delegates be given equal status in the Assembly. He hoped there would be an opportunity for more strategic discussion on these relationships next spring.

**The President** reiterated his request that proposals and comments be submitted in writing for more detailed consideration at a later meeting.

**Mr Estrella** (ES) said that contacts between political groups could not replace official institutional contacts. He recalled that during the February meetings each year, the Assembly had contacts with European institutions, and he hoped that these could be made more substantial. He also noted that by including such contacts in the context of the February meetings would include American participation whereas a meeting outside that context in, say, September would not. He cautioned that the European Parliament was a huge institution with greater resources and of a different nature than the Assembly, and he did not favour granting the right to submit amendments to texts. He also noted that the European Parliament was already involved with the Assembly.

**The President** said there was no consensus at present and recommended that better use could be made of the annual meeting in Brussels. He suggested that any move to increase the rights of the European Parliament's delegates in the Assembly should be reciprocated. He reminded delegates to send their suggestions in writing to the Secretariat.

**Mr Lello** (PT) stressed that the two institutions were entirely different in nature and it was therefore misleading and inappropriate to talk of reciprocity.

## **6. The Secretary General's Report on Priorities and Activities [204 SC 05 E]**

**The President** said the next matter for the Committee to consider was a particularly important one, as it related to the future of the Assembly. The discussion would take place in two stages. Firstly, the Secretary General would give a presentation on current work and the future programme for 2006. Secondly, the Committee would have an opportunity to examine a series of new ideas, which had already been discussed in the conservative group and in the Bureau. He asked the Secretary General to take the floor.

**The Secretary General** introduced the item by commenting that the Secretariat made a serious effort to co-ordinate the work of various parts of the Assembly, including its committees, seminars, educational programmes and the Parliamentary Transatlantic Forum. There was a wide spectrum of activity. Central co-ordination was necessary to ensure that the priorities of the Assembly were correct, that they were being followed and that the best use was made of resources, whether financial or in terms of members' time. Some duplication was inevitable and necessary, but unnecessary duplication should be avoided.

At this time of year the Assembly's committees set their work programmes, and although these could change in the light of circumstances, a framework had been produced which reflected the latest information following Committee Directors' consultations with their respective Committee officers. An updated list for 2006 had been circulated. The Standing Committee had a traditional guiding role. In the past it had suggested that particular committees should or should not examine certain issues. At this session, this role had been supplemented by a meeting involving the Bureau and the Committee Chairmen on the previous Friday.

On the basis of these discussions, the Secretariat had prepared a best estimate of the "pattern" of business in 2006, which he presented to the Committee. As well as the fixed Plenary and

Committee sessions, the work programme included seminars in Naples, Russia, Albania and Moldova. There were also parliamentary training sessions taking place in Brussels. These sessions, which focused on democratic oversight, were funded by the Swiss and Norwegian Governments. Potential election monitoring missions such as Palestine and Ukraine were listed on the framework of activities since it appeared that there was interest in such activities. He noted that election monitoring was usually conducted with OSCE.

There was a busy agenda for the forthcoming year with about 40 activities involving more than 20 people; plus the presidential visits. There were Assembly activities during 42 weeks in the year, which effectively meant one per working parliamentary week.

**The President** asked the Committee to agree that the Assembly would assist in monitoring the Ukrainian legislative elections in March.

He commended the amount and quality of work by the Secretariat. The Assembly was holding over 40 meetings per year and producing about 15 reports. This was a tremendous amount of work, much more than the other four interparliamentary assemblies. However, there was a contrast between the amount of work and its impact on the public and governments. Clearly the influence of the Assembly was not what it should be given the money and the work.

Second, there was a problem of NATO acceptability in all countries. He had discussed this with the US Ambassador to NATO, Ms. Victoria Nuland, in a meeting on the previous morning. NATO was not popular in his country nor in many others. Moreover, Chancellor Schroeder had, in February, suggested that NATO was no longer the locus for transatlantic relations, and that it should be the European Union. NATO itself was looking for a new role, since Berlin and through to the Istanbul Summit. The Assembly's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, therefore, was an appropriate point to reappraise how the Assembly was doing business. Could things be done more effectively with better prioritization. This was now important because there were no limits, the threats were diffused and the Assembly was discussing issues from Mauritania to China, including the Palestinian elections and the Middle East. Defining the limits was, in his view, a political question.

He was aware that some people, including the speakers of some parliaments were questioning whether the Assembly represented value for money, so there were threats from that perspective also. He suggested that if the work and the relevance of the Assembly's work was not improved then the relevance of the Assembly could be put into question.

He noted that there were now new channels of communication between the European Parliament and the US Congress, so the Assembly was not the only place for transatlantic dialogue. The transatlantic dialogue itself was a problem. It had been one of his priorities and he had worked very hard to improve the relationship. He thanked John Tanner and Joel Hefley for their help in achieving this improvement. He had had a historic first meeting between a NATO PA President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. However, such a meeting had not been possible in the Senate. Certain Senators had told him that they did not attend Assembly sessions because the Assembly was not a centre of power, but rather a talking shop or consultative shop.

He asked the Standing Committee to recognize these aspects. The Assembly was a pretty good organization, a good club of friends with many talented people including those who had held senior office. But the weight of the organization and its degree of influence and relevance in the debate was very low. Many parliaments were simply unaware of the Assembly and its work. This had a Public Relations element but from experience he knew you did not get PR without doing something relevant. Do something relevant and then package it. It was for this reason he had proposed the Monitoring Group on Georgia. It was one item that could put the Assembly on the map.

He proposed two categories for reform: first, the internal workings of the Assembly; and second, outreach. He had explained his ideas to the Bureau.

## 7. The President's Proposal for a Working Group on Assembly Reform [232 SC 05 E]

**The President** turned to document 232 SC 05 E and went through the proposals it outlined.

The first three proposals related to the internal working of the Assembly. The first related to efforts to achieve better focus and prioritization in committee reports and activities. This had already been set in motion, at the President's initiative, with a new form of meeting, based on the French model "Conférence de présidents", between the Bureau and Committee Chairmen. This had taken place on Friday 11 November. The purpose of the meeting was to examine what the Assembly was doing and planning to do and to identify and avoid clashes and duplication. Those present had found it useful. The Assembly had to decide, first, whether to institutionalize this group and, second, whether to go further by giving the leadership the authority to decide priorities. He understood the tension here between the right of committees to set their own agendas and the need to achieve greater focus, but felt that there should be a sharper focus. There had to be a balance between the freedom of the Committees and the right of the leadership to focus on three or four massive efforts.

The second proposal had been raised a year ago by Mr Forcieri who was not able to be present because of voting commitments in Rome. There was at present no common period of mandates for Assembly officers. In his view, two years was not long enough for officers to provide political leadership and direction. However, he reminded the Committee that any changes to term limits would not apply to the existing leadership. He personally was not a candidate for an extra year. But his own view was that a team elected for three years was more appropriate.

The third proposal relating to internal working was to review the structure of Assembly sessions. There was certainly room for improvement here. He thought that the current timetable should be revisited. He understood the many organizational problems as he was responsible for the organization of the Paris session. He knew this was a very heavy business with lots of rules and regulations. Nevertheless, he asked whether it was normal that the political day was at the end and not at the beginning; was it normal to have the excursion in the middle; some people said some Committees were too long, too much a talking shop, why not use the time to be more political? He believed that an alternative structure should be developed which would give more time for transatlantic dialogue. He acknowledged that there were lots of practical problems but they could be fixed.

The second set of proposals concerned the Assembly's outreach. One characteristic of NATO was its democratic deficit. Who controlled NATO? Who looked at how the money was spent, whether the missions matched the mandate? Neither national parliaments nor the Assembly did this. It was governments who asked the questions. If members wanted the Assembly to be a place of relevance and power then it had to act like a parliament.

As part of this process, he proposed that a high level "Wise Men's" study should be undertaken on the future role of NATO and how it functioned.

The second proposal was to strengthen contacts with the North Atlantic Council. The ambassadors had found their participation in the annual session in Venice very useful and several had attended this session. Why not institutionalize this meeting? In this respect, he noted that he had invited the NAC to the Paris Spring Session. Why not eventually invite the Ministers, that would really make the Assembly more relevant.

The third area for discussion was whether some kind of charter for the Assembly was required.

Other initiatives could also be considered such as whether the Assembly should hold an annual meeting of the speakers of members parliaments, and how the Assembly's work should relate to

that of national parliaments. Finally, he agreed with Mr Estrella to use the February meeting for a form of trilateral between the NATO PA, the European Parliament and the US House of Congress.

Concluding, the President said that he was frustrated by the gap between the level of work and the Assembly's effectiveness as a power house. The Assembly had to define and focus its role, otherwise it ran the risk of becoming moribund. He knew reactions would be mixed but he was open for discussion and dialogue on these proposals and other ideas. He had suggested the formation of a small working group to prepare a report for discussion in March. The Bureau had agreed to this idea, and he suggested that the working group should include one North American member, two European members, and Simon Lunn and David Hobbs from the International Secretariat.

**Mr Estrella** (ES) commended the President for his leadership in bringing these proposals to the Committee, which had a responsibility to ensure that the Assembly adapted to the times. However, he regretted that an ideological note had been introduced for the first time through the reference in the text to the support of the conservative group. This was contrary to past practice. The President had been elected to represent the entire membership. He then pointed out that this was an Assembly on the move. The Assembly had responded to challenges quicker than NATO, for example, in allowing participation from non member countries at the end of the Cold War and in pressing for NATO enlargement.

As the leader of his delegation representing four political parties, he believed the Standing Committee was the right body to give direction, coordinate activities, and provide guidance. It had performed this function in the past and would in the future. He agreed reports should be better focused and Rapporteurs should take more responsibility for the political content of their reports. He agreed that the Assembly's reports seldom made the headlines but questioned whether the media interest should be pursued at the cost of relevance. Press attention was not an appropriate measure of a report's value. He noted that many parliamentary reports served a very useful purpose without attracting headlines, and little was to be gained by pursuing "15 minutes of fame". Assembly reports were used by a broad range of institutions and 'think tanks'. He concluded by saying that there was no pressing need to change the role of the Assembly, nor to diminish the role of the Standing Committee.

**The President** said he had not intended to spark an ideological discussion. He had merely discussed his ideas with the conservative group which had supported them. He knew there was a degree of support among socialists for some changes. He acknowledged the contributions of the past but this was a different place. He agreed that the Standing Committee was the place where decisions were made. He asked members not to exceed the 3 mn time limit.

**Mr Lello** (PT) said that he was not in favour of the creation of a "Wise Men's Group". He believed that the Assembly was essentially a consultative group. He believed the Assembly should do what it had always done. He described the Assembly as a laboratory which, in the past, had been innovative in bringing parliamentarians from former Warsaw Pact countries into its discussions and activities. It promoted shared values, and should be proud of that role. He rejected proposals on the paper referring to the party groups stressing that the Assembly was made up of national delegates. The Assembly's meetings – and activities such as the session excursion - provided opportunities to forge links with other parliamentarians and this was an important function which should not be overlooked. Delegates should promote the dignity of the Assembly. This was neither the time for "la prise de la Bastille", nor was it the time to create a new parliament. Assembly members could also exercise oversight over NATO via questions to their national governments.

**Mr Meckel** (DE) welcomed discussions about the effectiveness of the Assembly and was pleased to examine possible reforms in view of global challenges. However, he thought it unlikely that a small group considering the structure of the Assembly's work could complete its work before next



autumn. He welcomed the meetings between the Bureau and Chairmen of Committees to agree on priorities. On terms of office he was strictly against equalising terms of office. The Treasurer, for example, needed continuity. He was in favour of two years for the President although this might take the form of a single, two-year mandate for the Vice-Presidents rather than two, one-year mandates. For the Committees, perhaps thought could be given to reducing mandates from four to three years. He also thought that the plenary structure did not need adjusting. Nevertheless, he thought the President's paper asked the right questions and that some time would be needed for considering how to undertake reform in a solid way.

**Mr Mates** (UK) reported that the Science and Technology Committee did not think the mandates should be altered. He congratulated the President on stimulating the discussion and agreed that a small group should work on producing options to be discussed in Poland. There was a wide range of views on these issues and it would be helpful to have some options set out. These should be based on facts. These options should be reviewed in Poland and, if necessary, again in Paris.

**Mr Clapham** (UK) reported that the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security was satisfied with the present mandates, and it could be left to the discretion of the officers concerned if they wished to step down before their full terms had expired.

Turning to structural change, this certainly needed to be re-examined. However, this should be on the basis of clear proposals. The Committees were able to bring together members with specific interests and were able to produce excellent reports. Better use should be made of these reports. There should be greater engagement with the European Parliament, Council of Europe and the OSCE, and members should make more of the Assembly's work within their own national parliaments. This would help lift the profile of the Assembly. He agreed that a study should be considered during the meeting in Poland.

**The President** thanked Mr Clapham and noted that the Committee was having only a preliminary discussion that day, pending further debate in 2006. He welcomed the interest of so many colleagues in his proposals.

**Mrs Cordy** (CA) agreed that all organizations should evaluate their work from time to time, particularly in a world which was changing so quickly and in which NATO itself had changed profoundly. She suggested that the document should form only part of the working group's mandate and that it should be free to look at wider issues including the selection of priorities, communications and logistics. She added that there should be a mechanism for input from member countries. It was important that the Assembly had time to debate and reflect on possible change and therefore she recommended that a final decision should not be taken in Poland but rather be taken when the Assembly meets in Paris in Spring 2006.

**Mr Kamov** (BG) recalled that the political groups had been informed about the President's proposals on Saturday. The Bulgarian Delegation had also had time to consider them and took the view that they were sensible and necessary. NATO itself was changing and the Assembly had to change as well. Moving to another issue, he urged the President to consider changing the date of the Transatlantic Forum visit to America. The existing date of early December was unsuitable as many key interlocutors were absent and it might be better to hold the meeting in September or October.

**The President** suggested that the Secretary General address the latter point later in the debate. The timing of the Transatlantic Forum was a very complicated issue. He thanked Mr Kamov for his support.

**Mr Hefley** (US) echoed the thanks of colleagues to the President for his interesting proposals. The American Delegation had a number of reservations. Firstly, although it might make sense to

reconcile the length of mandates, the time commitment required for these posts made him question whether lengthening some terms was a good idea. Secondly, he feared that the proposal for a “Wise Men’s” study would impose additional work for both members and staff on top of an already intense workload. It would be very difficult for a member of the American Delegation to participate. He repeated that the US delegation was doing as much as they could. He wondered whether a better way forward would be to conduct this work within existing structures. Concluding, he expressed particular support for the proposals for better contact with the North Atlantic Council and for the proposal of a charter for the Assembly as this would help define its role and missions.

**Mr Olekas** (LT) agreed that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Assembly was a sensible time to reflect on its future. He had a common interest as he was born in 1955. The link between NATO and the NATO PA was an important one which should be examined and re-evaluated. Lithuania had become a NATO member through the support it had received as a member of the Assembly. He agreed with Mrs Cordy that national delegations should have an opportunity and time to participate in the working group process. He also suggested that the working group should be more politically diverse than that proposed by the President.

**Mr Ricciotti** (IT) commented that the events of the past decade had shown the importance of the Assembly. The outreach which it had provided to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had been a powerful driving force in encouraging them to join NATO. He said that the Assembly had been innovative in the past by opening up to Russia and other nations, and national governments had followed the NATO PA lead. Outreach had been extended to the Middle East and China. He welcomed the President’s suggestions and stressed the need to maintain the impetus and therefore considered it appropriate to discuss options in March. There were issues to be resolved and his delegation considered it appropriate for the President’s and Committee Chairman’s mandates to be harmonized at three years in order to provide continuity in direction of the Assembly.

**Mr Boucheron** (FR) said that the Assembly had a voluminous and cumbersome structure as did NATO and the EU. It was important to start thinking about reform and he commended the President’s energy and initiative. He suggested in addition to the items already proposed the Assembly should have a strategy and the resources to improve national media relations.

**Mr Møller** (DK) supported the establishment of a small group whose conclusions should be discussed in Poland. He also supported the possibility of longer mandates for Presidents and Vice-Presidents. If they were doing a good job, there should be the possibility of extending their mandates to three or even four years.

**Mr Gillmor** (US) said that he thought that it was healthy for any organization to periodically review its work and its working methods. Regarding the question of the duration of mandates, he reported that the Economics and Security Committee was content with the current mandates. He reminded members of the saying, “if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it”.

**Mr Berzins** (LV) said that he found the Assembly reports interesting but had occasionally questioned the Assembly’s efficiency and impact. He welcomed the President’s initiative and supported the establishment of a small working group. He stressed the need to focus on the important issues and bring the various tools of the Assembly – Committee reports, seminars, etc - to bear on them.

**Mr Bouvard** (FR) responded to Mr Lello’s comments about the Assembly providing a pleasant environment for discussions. He agreed that discussions within the Assembly were very productive and useful, but felt that greater stress should be placed on enhancing the Assembly’s output and influence with NATO, governments and parliaments. He suggested that the priorities should be better defined and the Assembly should be more outward looking, and that one of its focuses

should be on strengthening transatlantic ties. He therefore offered his unreserved support for the President's initiative.

**Mr van Gennip** (NL) welcomed the initiative and stressed that he was content with the quality of the Assembly's work and the level of engagement by the United States. He reflected that the enlargement of the Assembly had contributed to its difficulties.

He said that he was in favour of the proposal to set up a small working group. He suggested that it should first examine internal working practices, before turning to the wider environment and the future of NATO. On the subject of mandates, he could testify from experience that it took time to learn what was involved in a particular role. Quick rotation was therefore not sensible and the term lengths should be left as they were. He agreed with the point made by the President about the need to strike a balance between autonomy in committees and the Assembly's need to plan strategically.

**Mr Lamers** (DE) thought that the proposal marked an important opportunity for the Assembly to explore new methods of doing things. The world was changing and the Assembly had to establish how to change alongside it. In his view, raising the profile of the Assembly should be a priority.

**Mr Meckel** (DE) drew the attention of the Committee to a small reform which he had initiated in the Political Committee. Committee members had the opportunity for a general exchange of views among themselves, occasionally with input from the Assembly's guests. Responses to this initiative had been favourable.

**Mr Bacquelaine** (BE) said that he agreed with the proposal to establish a working group but took the view that two conditions were necessary. Firstly, the group should be transatlantic. Secondly, it was essential that all three political groups were represented. He added that in his view a possible compromise on the length of mandate should be established by giving the Assembly the opportunity after two years to continue or revoke an appointment. Attention should be paid to cultivating the Assembly's relevance by focussing on topical issues. In addition, members could pursue issues in a co-ordinated fashion in their own national parliaments, perhaps by questioning ministers and officials.

**Mr George** (UK) hoped that his lack of experience on the Standing Committee would be mitigated by his long service in the Assembly. Whatever failings the Assembly may have had, the Committee should remember that its metamorphosis over the last 20 years had been truly incredible. The excellent book produced by the Secretariat demonstrated this. It was a stock-take of what this Assembly has done. With the limited resources available to it in terms of staff and budget, the NATO PA was able to punch way above its weight. Considerable incremental change had added up over time to a revolution.

Moving on to the specific proposals, he did not like the idea of a 3 or 4 year Presidency which he termed "Napoleonic". Lengthening mandate terms was a bad idea as it interfered with the circulation. He also suggested that the working group should write to all delegations, inviting them for their views, which could then be incorporated in the final report. He commended the excellent reports produced by the Secretariat and was sure that many people looked at them on the website. He suggested the number of hits could be checked. However, the range of topics was considerable and he agreed with previous speakers about the need for more focus. The Assembly risked doing too much and activities that were superfluous should be dumped. In this respect, he questioned the creation of the Monitoring Group for Georgia. More should be done to follow up reports and chase progress by holding the executive accountable.

**The President** welcomed the friendly and constructive discussion. There was general agreement for the need for reform and some useful proposals had emerged during the discussion including requesting input from the delegations. Ideas could also come from the Chairmen of Committees

and the Special Mediterranean Group. He asked the Committee to consider timing and membership of the group. He suggested that a quick report would allow a discussion in Poland and put forward Senator Nolin, Mr Erdem, and Mr Koenders working with Simon Lunn and David Hobbs at the Secretariat as suitable candidates.

**Mr Meckel** (DE) suggested that time be allowed for discussion within the political groups before putting forward names. He stressed that he did not want final decisions to be taken until the meeting in November.

**Mr Koenders** (NL) supported the suggestion that the political groups have an opportunity to discuss candidates.

**Mr Estrella** (ES) said that as a member of the socialist group he was content with Mr Koenders as a candidate. He asked whether the mandate for the group should be more tightly defined, although he agreed with the general areas it should consider. He also asked that the group's report highlight where changes to the Assembly's rules would be required.

**The President** said he wanted the group to remain flexible and was not in favour of a tightly drawn mandate. The group would consist of the Secretariat representatives plus Senator Nolin, representing North America, Mr Koenders for the socialist group and a conservative. He confirmed that he would write to the Committee Chairmen and Delegations asking for ideas to be considered by the group.

**Mr Viggers (UK) nominated Mr Erdem to be a representative on the group.**

**Mr Lamers** (DE) supported the nomination.

**The President** thanked the Committee for reaching a speedy agreement.

## 8. Finance

- **Report of the NATO Board of Auditors on the Financial Audit of the Accounts of the NATO PA [142 FIN 05 E]**
- **Letter of Representation [158 SC 05 E]**
- **Statement on Internal Control [157 SC 05 E]**
- **Audited Financial Statements for 2004 [143 FIN 05 E and appendices]**
- **Audited Provident Fund Financial Statements for 2004 [25 FIN 05 E]**
- **Draft Report by the Treasurer on the Results of Financial Year 2004 and of the current Financial Year [144 FIN 05 E]**
- **New Key for National Contributions [182 SC 05 E]**
- **Approval of the draft Budget for 2006 [71 FIN 05 E Rev. 1]**
- **Amendment to the Financial Regulations (implementing rules) on cash payments [212 SC 05 E]**
- **Nature and Levels of Reserves and Provisions [213 SC 05 E]**

**Mr Koenders (NL) took the Chair.**

**The Chairman** invited the Treasurer, Mr Lothar Ibrügger, to present the Financial Reports.

**The Treasurer** introduced the representatives from NATO's Board of Auditors and thanked them for their work – which was provided free of charge.

**Mrs Westin** presented the Board of Auditors' opinion and audit of the Accounts of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. She confirmed that the Board had given the Financial Statements a "clean bill of health".

Having presented the financial information she referred to two issues that the management had been asked to consider and on which documents were available for the Standing Committee's consideration – the thresholds for making payments through petty cash and reassessing the number of provisions. In line with normal audit practice, there would be further follow-up of these points during the next audit.

The auditors had received both a letter of representation and a Statement of Internal Control from the Assembly. The Board considered this to be an indication of good governance and would determine the methodology by which both documents would be assessed over the coming year. The NATO PA was thanked for its co-operation with the auditors.

**The Treasurer** thanked Mrs Westin. He was pleased that the Assembly had been granted a clean bill of financial health. As there were no questions on the documents that had been circulated, he turned to an issue which had been raised earlier in the morning about the scrutiny of NATO. He reminded the Committee that NATO's Board of Auditors conducted studies of NATO projects and infrastructure for the NATO Council. These reports could be of considerable use to committees and to the Assembly.

He was pleased that there were no objections to the 2006 draft budget which had been drawn up in accordance with the new budget key adopted by NATO during the summer. He repeated that the budget was tight and commented that members had to realize that the Assembly did not have the staff resources or financial resources for additional activities and projects. He foresaw only a very small surplus in the current financial year and there was unlikely to be a surplus in following years. In concluding, firstly he thanked the International Secretariat for the work that had been done to produce the book commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Assembly. He also thanked those countries which had contributed to the additional costs of the project. The total for these contributions was €45,000. He drew the attention of the Committee to the set of guidelines which had been produced to help with the organization of Committee visits and, in particular, interpretation requests.

There was one major problem for the Assembly to address, which was the lack of host nations for the annual sessions in 2008 and 2009. If a host for 2008 did not come forward, the cost of the session usually borne by the host country would have to be included in the budget for 2008 and would represent either significant increases in contributions or decreases in activity. Three countries, Spain, Greece and Luxembourg, had not hosted sessions in recent years and discussions with these countries were ongoing.

**Mr Pilka** (PL) said that Poland would consider holding the annual meeting in 2008 or 2010, but was unable to do so in 2009 as there would be elections.

**The Treasurer** thanked the Polish Delegation for this helpful offer and urged other delegations who could consider holding an annual session to contact him as soon as possible.

**Mr van Gennip** (NL) first noted the significant potential value of the auditors' reports referred to by the Treasurer, both for committees and for the Assembly. He noted that the terms of reference of the Working Group should reflect the need not to overload the capacity of the staff. He congratulated all the staff who had worked on the financial audit.

**The President** complimented the Treasurer on his work.

**All ten proposals were agreed unanimously.**

## 9. Approval of new Officers of Committees, Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Special Groups

The list of officers was approved.

Mr Meckel (DE) noted that the work of the Political Committee and Science and Technology Committee on aspects of Iran's nuclear capability would be complementary.

## 10. Future sessions and meetings

- February Joint Committee meetings, Brussels, Belgium, 19-21 February 2006
- Standing Committee meeting, Gdynia, Poland, 24-26 March 2006
- Spring Session, Paris, France, 26-30 May 2006 [093 SESP 05 E]
- Annual Study Visit, 2006, Romania
- Annual Session, Quebec, Canada, 13-17 November 2006
- Sessions and meetings from 2006 [037 GEN 05 E Rev. 2]
- Host Countries for future sessions and meetings [214 SC 05 E]

The President set out the programme of future sessions and meetings.

Mr Pilka (PL) described the arrangements for the Standing Committee meeting in Gdynia.

The President described the preparations for the Spring Session in Paris.

The President continued that those attending the Spring Session would have the opportunity to see French technical, military and other capabilities and there would be trips for committees to appropriate sites. Further details would be available for the meeting of the Standing Committee in March.

Mr Lupoi (RO) confirmed that arrangements for the Annual study visit, 2006, to Romania were fully under control. The likely date for the visit was early September.

Mrs Cordy (CA) said that the Canadian delegation was looking forward to hosting the Annual Session in Quebec in November 2006. Quebec was a very beautiful city with a long history. She warned participants to bring warm clothes and pointed out that smoking was prohibited in all public buildings.

The President returned to the matter raised by the Treasurer about hosts for future sessions. He asked whether any countries other than Poland were able to host sessions.

Mr Kalantzis (GR) said that Greece could host a session.

Mr Estrella (ES) said that he would raise the possibility of Spain hosting a session with officials in parliament. He gave apologies on behalf of the Spanish delegation for their absence during the following day's plenary sitting as the budget debate was taking place back in Madrid.

The President thanked Mr Estrella. He noted that this was more evidence that the Plenary meeting should take place on the first day of the meeting.

Mr Berzins (LV) commented that Latvia could offer to host the Spring Session 2010 in Riga.

The President thanked Mr Berzins. He noted that these offers filled most of the gaps in the Assembly programme. In response to a question from the Lithuanian delegation, he confirmed that Lithuania's offer to host the Standing Committee in 2009 was still on the table.

**Mr Kalantzis** (GR) clarified that Greece had offered to host the Standing Committee meeting in Greece in 2009 and that this had been approved by the parliament but he would take forward the possibility of Greece also hosting the Annual Session.

#### **11. Consideration of proposed candidatures for the Bureau of the Assembly [211 SC 05 E]**

The **President** said that Senator Forcieri was not eligible for re-election for another term as Vice-President of the Assembly, but that the President and four Vice-Presidents – Mr. Lellouche, Senator Nolin, Mr. Koenders, Mr. Banáš and Mr. Erdem were eligible for re-election. The Treasurer, Mr Ibrügger, was also eligible for re-election this year.

He said that the following nominations had been received:

For the office of **President** of the Assembly, Mr. Pierre Lellouche (France)

For the office of **Treasurer** of the Assembly, Mr. Lothar Ibrügger (Germany)

For the office of **Vice-President** of the Assembly:

Sen. Pierre Claude Nolin (Canada), Mr. Bert Koenders (Netherlands), Mr. Jose Lello (Portugal), Mr. Jozef Banáš (Slovakia), and Mr. Vahit Erdem (Turkey).

The **President** recalled that according to Article 5, paragraph 5 of the Rules of Procedure, the Vice-Presidents had to be of different nationalities, and at least one member of the Bureau had to be a member of the delegations of Canada or the United States. He noted that the nominations fulfilled these conditions, and since there was one candidate for each vacancy, the nominations could be approved by acclamation.

**The nominations were approved by acclamation**, and the President thanked Senator Forcieri for his distinguished service as Vice-President over the previous two years.

#### **12. Miscellaneous**

**The President** thanked delegates for their hard work. He thanked the Danish hosts, interpreters, the Secretary General and all the staff. He added that the composition of the small working group agreed to earlier should be supplemented with Mr Bacquelaine on behalf of the liberal group.

**The meeting was closed at 1.12 p.m.**

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