

Council of Europe

June 2014: third Session

Part one

Activities of the PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe)

The third 2014 session of the Council of Europe took place from 22nd to 26th of June in Strasbourg, France.

The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) re-elected Thorbjørn Jagland (Norway) Secretary General of the Council of Europe for a five-year term. Mr Jagland is also Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee. Norway is an important financial contributor to the Council of Europe projects.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko addressed the APCE. He reiterated that it is through peaceful dialogue that conflicts in Ukraine can be resolved and called for de-escalation of the conflict in the East of the country and for the restoration of peace. The President thanked the Council of Europe for its prompt response to the crisis and expressed the will to continue cooperation as Ukraine has started implementing a package of measures to fight corruption within the country. Reform of the judiciary will be pursued to ensure greater transparency and public confidence in judicial institutions. Steps have been taken to decentralize administration, in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan told APCE delegates that his country wants to create a better world for everyone to live in dignity and peace. Azerbaijan assumed the six-month chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in May 2014. President Aliyev, is a former member of the Assembly. Following the break-up of the former Soviet Union, Azerbaijan suffered social unrest, economic turmoil, military defeat, loss of territory and even a civil war in 1993. However, the country has enjoyed rapid economic transformation and development in recent years and, according to the President, has become a bridge for intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in the region.

President Aliyev said that Azerbaijan is prioritizing implementation of reforms with a view to modernizing the country and making progress sustainable, giving particular importance to fighting corruption and promoting education. Membership of the Council of Europe was a conscious choice in 2001, and Azerbaijan is ready and willing to implement its commitments and obligations.

The Assembly expressed its concern about the situation of legal immigrants and their offspring, whose overall level of integration remains unsatisfactory in its view. Relying on quantitative and qualitative indicators, the parliamentarians concluded that in many member States the existing State policies relevant to various areas of the integration of migrants are insufficient.

In order to promote integration more effectively, the Assembly emphasized the need to return to comprehensive policies which ensure a better redistribution of wealth towards those with few resources, and advocated a series of measures relating to the labor market, education, political participation, discrimination and family reunification.

Concerning the large scale of arrival of mixed migratory flows on Italian shores, the Assembly called for the creation of safe legal channels to Europe, through further harmonization of common asylum procedures and acknowledged important efforts by member States, Italy in particular, towards saving more lives at sea, recommending clear, binding and common standards for search and rescue operations.

Part two
A Selection of Documents

Parliamentary Assembly

Integration of migrants in Europe: the need for a proactive, long term and global policy
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=21067>

Identities and diversity within intercultural societies
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=21066>

Violence in and through the media
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=21048>

The large-scale arrival of mixed migratory flows on Italian shores
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewPDF.asp?FileID=21040>

Committee of Ministers

Written Question No. 657 to the Committee of Ministers by Mr Martin Henriksen: “Framing of a State’s family policy” Reply of the Committee of Ministers (adopted on 30 April 2014 at the 1198th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies) “The Committee of Ministers agrees that it is for each member State to frame its own family policy, as long as its obligations in international law, particularly with regard to fundamental rights and freedoms, are respected”.

Doc. 1305 April 23rd 2014 Violence towards women in Europe. Answer to Recommendation 2030, de 2013, supporting the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and enhancing the role of the Council of Europe in its implementation (GREVIO).

The so-called Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence towards women will come into force the first of August 2014. Georgia was the 21st country to ratify the Convention. This Convention, under the guise of protecting women, is actually enforcing gender mainstreaming. WUCWO is not supporting it.

Part Three

The Conference of INGOs (international ONGs) Activities

WUCWO Representative Activities

Your representative attended the following meetings of the Conference : Human right Committee and Democracy Committee, the plenary, and the working group “preventing hate speech”, plus a subcommittee on disability and inclusion in the framework of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly.

The Conference of INGOs elected the following Chair and Vice-Chair for its three thematic Committees:

Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee : Chair Anne-Marie Chavanon (International Federation for Housing and Planning), Vice-Chair Karl Donert (Eurogeo - European Association of Geographers) and Thierry Mathieu (International Association for Research in Hospital Hygiene)

Committee Education and culture : President Sabine Rohmann (Robert Schuman Institute For Europe), Vice-Chair Roseline Moreau (European Group for Research and Training of Teachers holding Christian and other beliefs and other convictions)and Didier Schretter (European Association for Education in the Audiovisual Media)

Human rights Committee : Chair Michel Aguilar (EBU European Buddhist Union), Vice-Chair Lamvi Totsi (International Confederation of intellectual workers) and Gérard Gregneron (European Council of Police Trade Unions)

The Conference voted recommendations « gender base violence as political weapon » (4 abstentions including WUCWO) « Combating anti-Semitism in Europe ».

The Conference is contributing to the monitoring process of the Council of Europe Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Lanzarote Convention). A questionnaire was distributed. The inaugural seminar of the Observatory «Child without violence» will take place in Lisbon, Portugal, next October. Anna Rurka is in charge.

The Conference adopted unanimously a position paper prepared by the Committee on Democracy and social challenges about “Climate change and human rights”.

Your representative had an informal meeting with to two new representatives (European Democrat students and UIGSE International Union of guides and scout of Europe) and paid a courtesy visit to the new representative of the Holy See, Msg Ignazio Ceffalia, to introduce WUCWO.

Your representative sent a written proposition for the World Forum for Democracy 2015 “include gratuity as a core value in the national gross product indicators because non trade activities are fundamental to living together »

Anne Girault, WUCWO Representative to the Council of Europe