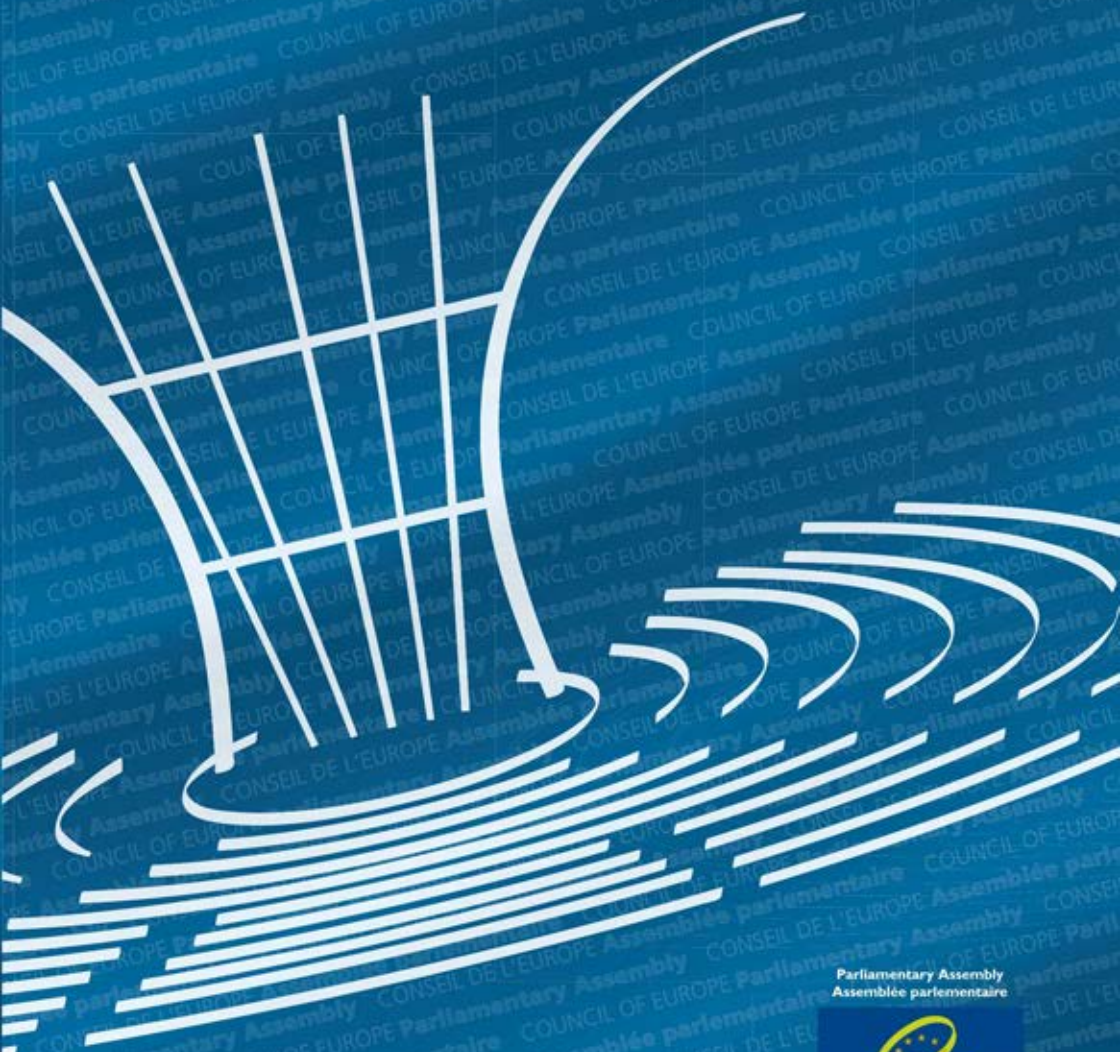


PACE | THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE



Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire



COUNCIL OF EUROPE | CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



The Parliamentary Assembly was the instigator of many initiatives which have made the Council of Europe what it is today, from the European Convention on Human Rights to the integration of the new democracies of central and eastern Europe as a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the establishment of special guest status. The Assembly has now initiated a fruitful dialogue with the countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean by granting "partner for democracy" status to the Moroccan Parliament and the Palestinian National Council.

Above all, the Assembly is a benchmark for democracy. It helps to ensure that the unacceptable is never accepted, whether the issue being addressed is the persecution of Christians in the Middle East or frozen conflicts.

It is also necessary to be vigilant with regard to the older democracies, as respect for our values can never be taken for granted.

To achieve its objectives, it is vital that the PACE work in close synergy with the other Council of Europe bodies – the European Court of Human Rights, the Venice Commission and the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, to name but a few. Together we will be able to strengthen the Council of Europe's values of tolerance, pluralism, democracy, non-discrimination and religious freedom.

Jean-Claude MIGNON
President of the Assembly

Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



EUROPE'S DEMOCRATIC CONSCIENCE

The parliamentarians who make up PACE come from the national parliaments of the Organisation's 47 member states. They meet four times a year to discuss topical issues and ask European governments to take initiatives and report back. These parliamentarians speak for the 800 million Europeans who elected them. They broach the issues of their choice, and the governments of European countries – which are represented at the Council of Europe by the Committee of Ministers – are obliged to respond. They are Greater Europe's democratic conscience.

A MELTING POT OF IDEAS

Since 1949, PACE, which is sometimes said to be the driving force of the Council of Europe, has been behind many of the Organisation's major initiatives (the European Convention on Human Rights, for instance). It must be consulted about all international treaties drawn up at the Council of Europe. It elects the judges of the European Court of Human Rights and the Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe and its own Secretary General.

HELPING STATES TO HONOUR THEIR COMMITMENTS

To what extent do countries honour their commitments? The Assembly monitors the situation and endeavours to help states to honour their obligations. If a state persistently fails to do so, the Assembly may refuse to ratify, or may withdraw, the credentials of that country's national delegation. As a last resort, it may recommend that the country's membership of the Organisation be suspended.



EXPERIENCE ON THE GROUND

PACE representatives make periodic field visits throughout Europe to collect information from which to draft Assembly reports. They also make trips to monitor elections. PACE is constantly developing parliamentary diplomacy and promoting the active involvement of parliamentarians in international relations.

BUILDING PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERSHIPS

PACE co-operates with the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE and other international parliamentary bodies to strengthen the influence of parliamentarians in European and international affairs. It also serves as a parliamentary platform for the OECD and has close links with several United Nations specialised agencies.

CONCRETE RESULTS



The texts adopted by PACE – recommendations, resolutions and opinions – serve as guidelines for the Committee of Ministers, national governments, parliaments and political parties. Eventually, through legislation and practice, these texts influence and improve Europeans' lives.



HOW IT WORKS



PACE meets four times a year for a week-long plenary session in the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg. The 318 representatives and 318 substitutes are appointed by national parliaments from among their members. Each country, depending on its population, has between two and eighteen representatives, who provide a balanced reflection of the political forces represented in the national parliament.

In addition to English and French, which are the Council of Europe's official languages, PACE uses German, Italian and Russian as working languages.

The Assembly's work is prepared by eight committees and a Bureau comprising the President of the Assembly, the 20 Vice-Presidents, the chairpersons of the five political groups and the committee Chairpersons. The Assembly adopts three types of texts: recommendations (to the Committee of Ministers), resolutions (which express its own viewpoint) and opinions (on membership applications, draft treaties and other texts submitted by the Committee of Ministers).

ISSUES CURRENTLY BEING CONSIDERED INCLUDE:

- Protection and promotion of human rights and democracy
- Honouring of member states' obligations and commitments
- Combating terrorism while respecting human rights
- Regional crises
- The situation of refugees and migrants
- Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue
- Social cohesion



POLITICAL GROUPS

EPP/CD *Group of the European People's Party*

SOC *Socialist Group*

EDG *European Democrat Group*

ALDE *Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe*

UEL *Group of the Unified European Left*

COMMITTEES



84 SEATS

- Political Affairs and Democracy
- Legal Affairs and Human Rights
- Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development
- Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons
- Culture, Science, Education and Media
- Equality and Non-Discrimination
- Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee)

37 SEATS

- Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs

“I see these twelve stars as a reminder that the world could become a better place if, from time to time, we had the courage to look up at the stars ”

Václav Havel,
*President of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic
Parliamentary Assembly,
10 May 1990*



PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS WITH THEIR NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

Albania (4)	Luxembourg (3)
Andorra (2)	Malta (3)
Armenia (4)	Moldova (5)
Austria (6)	Monaco (2)
Azerbaijan (6)	Montenegro (3)
Belgium (7)	Netherlands (7)
Bosnia and Herzegovina (5)	Norway (5)
Bulgaria (6)	Poland (12)
Croatia (5)	Portugal (7)
Cyprus (3)	Romania (10)
Czech Republic (7)	Russian Federation (18)
Denmark (5)	San Marino (2)
Estonia (3)	Serbia (7)
Finland (5)	Slovakia (5)
France (18)	Slovenia (3)
Georgia (5)	Spain (12)
Germany (18)	Sweden (6)
Greece (7)	Switzerland (6)
Hungary (7)	"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (3)
Iceland (3)	Turkey (12)
Ireland (4)	Ukraine (12)
Italy (18)	United Kingdom (18)
Latvia (3)	
Liechtenstein (2)	
Lithuania (4)	

SPECIAL GUEST STATUS

The Belarusian parliament's special guest status was suspended on 13 January 1997.

OBSERVER STATUS

The parliaments of Canada, Israel and Mexico.

PROGRESSION OF A PACE REPORT

1 TABLING OF A MOTION FOR A RECOMMENDATION OR RESOLUTION

A group of parliamentarians (at least 20) tables a motion for a resolution or recommendation on a specific subject.

2 REFERRAL TO A COMMITTEE

The motion is examined by the PACE Bureau which proposes to the Assembly to refer it or not to the relevant committee.

3 COMMITTEE EXAMINATION

A rapporteur is appointed. The draft report is examined by the committee. Following this discussion, the committee adopts a draft resolution and/or draft recommendation.

4 DEBATE ON THE REPORT IN PLENARY SESSION

The report is presented by the rapporteur and debated by the Assembly.

5 VOTE ON AND ADOPTION OF THE TEXT

At the end of the debate, the draft text – which can be amended – is voted on and adopted or rejected by the Assembly.

PACE

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

PACE Communication Division

Tel. +33 3 88 413 193

Fax: +33 3 90 214 134

<http://assembly.coe.int>

PACE News is the monthly electronic newsletter

Subscriptions: pace.com@coe.int

Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE