

Mahmoud Abbas to address the Assembly

Strasbourg, 21.09.2011 – An address by the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, on Thursday 6 October 2011 will be one of the highlights of the autumn session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which will be taking place in Strasbourg from 3 to 7 October.

On Tuesday 4 October the Assembly will consider the request for Partner for Democracy status submitted by the Palestinian National Council, whose President, Salim Za'noun, will address the Assembly the same day. A report by Jean-Charles Gardetto (Monaco, EPP/CD) on co-operation between the Council of Europe and the emerging democracies in the Arab world, which calls on them to intensify and broaden their co-operation, will be debated on Wednesday 5 October.

A debate on prenatal sex selection will be another highlight of the session. The draft resolution presented says that recourse to this practice has reached "worrying proportions" in several Council of Europe member states, particularly Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, asks for it to be prohibited unless it is used to prevent a serious hereditary disease, and proposes to European governments that doctors withhold information about the sex of the foetus.

Other debates on the agenda include those on abuse of state secrecy and national security, based on the report by Dick Marty (Switzerland, ALDE), the protection of privacy on the internet, undocumented migrant children, the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on the Council of Europe, and the activities of OECD in 2010-2011, with a statement by its Secretary General, Angel Gurría.

Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, Ukrainian Minister for Foreign Affairs, will present the communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly on Monday afternoon and will answer questions from parliamentarians.

Draft agenda

The final agenda is decided by the Assembly on the opening day of the session. Monday 3 October (opening at 11.30 a.m.)

- Statement by Mevlüt Çavusoglu, PACE President
- Election of Vice-Presidents of the Assembly
- Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee
- Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly, presented by Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers
- National sovereignty and statehood in contemporary international law: the need for clarification

Tuesday 4 October

- Request for Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Palestinian National Council and statement by Salim Za'noun, Speaker of the Palestinian National Council
- Address by an invited personality [tbc]
- The impact of the Lisbon Treaty on the Council of Europe

- Prenatal sex selection

Wednesday 5 October

- The activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2010-2011 and statement by Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD
- Combating "child abuse images" through committed, transversal and internationally co-ordinated action
- Violent and extreme pornography, and statement by Najat Maalla M'jid, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the emerging democracies in the Arab world
- The amendment of various provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliamentary Assembly – implementation of Resolution 1822 (2011) on the reform of the Parliamentary Assembly
- The terms of reference of Parliamentary Assembly committees – implementation of Resolution 1822 (2011) on the reform of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Thursday 6 October

- Abuse of state secrecy and national security: obstacles to parliamentary and judicial scrutiny of human rights violations
- Address by Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian National Authority [tbc]
- [Possibly] Debate under urgent procedure or current affairs debate
- The underground economy: a threat to democracy, development and the rule of law
- Human rights and the fight against terrorism

Friday 7 October

- The functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia
- The protection of privacy and personal data on the Internet and online media
- Undocumented migrant children in an irregular situation: a real cause for concern

Practical information : Live web stream: The session is streamed live over the web.

Press conferences: PACE President Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will give a press conference on Monday 3 October at 10.30 a.m. Other press conferences will be announced on the spot. Press conferences are streamed live over the web.

For TV planning units: videos in broadcast quality summing up PACE highlights can be downloaded for free no later than two hours after the event. Further information from the Council of Europe Audiovisual Service, tel. +33 3 88 41 25 64 (prior to the session) or +33 3 88 41 35 00 (during the session).

For accreditation: Directorate of Communication, accreditation@coe.int.

Further details: see the Assembly's website.

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