

PACE | PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE



Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



“We must continue to work tirelessly to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law, both on the European continent and beyond in the face of rising extremism, violence and repression, and in a context in which migration and security are very strained issues.

The President of the Assembly therefore has an important role to play in advocating values such as justice, integrity and cohesion, while speaking out against exclusion, hate and an atmosphere of one against all.

The difficult institutional and financial context in which our Assembly finds itself also requires us to strengthen our values of transparency, responsibility and commitment to the democracy that we defend.

In order to resist the adverse winds both externally and internally, the Assembly needs a President with strong convictions and experience.

These convictions and experience I gladly place at the service of our Assembly. In accordance with our values of equality, the protection of minorities and in the belief that I represent all our parliamentarians, I am very honoured to have been elected to this position.”

Liliane Maury Pasquier

President of the Parliamentary Assembly



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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 the national delegation of the parliament of that State. As a last resort, it may recommend that the country's membership of the Organisation be suspended.



EXPERIENCE ON THE GROUND

PACE members 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



ISSUES CURRENTLY BEING CONSIDERED

PACE meets four times a year for a week-long plenary session in the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg. The 324 representatives and 324 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.

The Assembly's work is prepared by nine committees and a Bureau comprising the President of the Assembly, the 20 Vice-Presidents, the Chairpersons of the six 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).

- 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 interreligious dialogue
- Social cohesion



POLITICAL GROUPS

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

SOC *Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group*

EC *European Conservatives Group*

ALDE *Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe*

UEL *Group of the Unified European Left*

FDG *Free Democrats Group*

COMMITTEES



- 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 (Monitoring)
- Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs
- Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights

"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)	Republic of 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)	Slovak Republic (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 (18)
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 REFERENCE 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.

PARTNER FOR DEMOCRACY STATUS

The parliaments of Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Palestine.

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PACE

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. The Parliamentary Assembly, consisting of representatives from the 47 national parliaments, provides a forum for debate and proposals on Europe's social and political issues. Many Council of Europe conventions originate from the Assembly, including the European Convention on Human Rights.



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