

Parliamentary **Assembly**
Assemblée parlementaire



**ACTIVITIES OF MR MEVLÜT ÇAVUŞOĞLU,
PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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I. INTRODUCTION

My Presidency of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe focused on priorities which, I believe, are important not only for our Organisation, but are equally linked to the main concerns and aspirations of European citizens. In today's world in a state of turmoil, it is vital that our continent be a place where all countries live in peace, dialogue and understanding, and where all citizens enjoy equal rights, without discrimination or double standards.

One of my main objectives during my official and working visits was to assist the authorities of countries under the monitoring process, or engaged in a post-monitoring dialogue, in making progress on their obligations and commitments towards the Council of Europe. My work in these areas has been complementary to the work of our Committees and Rapporteurs, who deal with these issues on a permanent basis.

In the Balkan region, for instance, during my official visit to **Serbia** in March 2011, I welcomed ongoing reforms and called for intensified efforts to amend the electoral legislation, to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, to fight corruption and to continue strengthening minority rights. In **Montenegro** in May 2010, I reaffirmed the overall positive evaluation by the Assembly and expressed the hope that Montenegro would maintain the current reform dynamic and complete the implementation of its commitments, such as the ratification of several important Council of Europe conventions, the adoption of several important laws and the strengthening of the mechanisms of parliamentary oversight over the Government's activities.

I paid several visits to the countries of the South Caucasus region. In **Armenia**, in May 2010, I urged the authorities to close once for all the sad chapter of the 1-2 March 2008 events in order to restore public confidence, move towards reconciliation and consolidate the democratic process in the country. I also visited **Azerbaijan** on different occasions, which I used to seek progress on key commitments undertaken by this country, such as the holding of free and fair elections, guaranteeing freedom of expression and assembly, as well as the issue of persons that are considered to be detained for political reasons. Equally in **Georgia**, my talks also focused on ongoing democratic reforms, including relations with the opposition and the right balance of repartition of power among state institutions.

I paid several visits to the **Russian Federation**, where I sensed a positive climate in relations between PACE and Russia, whilst recognising that there were questions on which our opinions differ and demands which Russia had yet to fulfil. I expressed my belief that if we work together as partners, with mutual respect and without double standards, progress would be achieved even on these difficult issues. The Assembly's resolution on the situation in the North Caucasus, supported by the Russian delegation, was a very good example of such a partnership. I also visited the **Republic of Tatarstan**, a subject of the Russian Federation, where I expressed my appreciation for efforts to develop and preserve the cultures and traditions of about 115 nationalities and ethnic groups.

I visited **Ukraine** several times, in particular in the framework of the Ukrainian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. In my talks with the authorities I reiterated the support and assistance of the Council of Europe for ongoing reforms. At the same time, I stressed that the role of the opposition is extremely important and invited the authorities to associate the different political forces of the country with the reform process. I also invited them to resist the temptation of excessive concentration of power and to ensure long-standing political stability based on political pluralism. Furthermore, I tried to facilitate efforts aiming at improving economic and social integration of **Crimean Tatars** and on two occasions in 2010 and 2011 visited the Crimea region in Ukraine.

At the end of my mandate, I carried out an official visit to **Turkey** in January 2012, where I praised the reform process undertaken by the Turkish authorities and welcomed the importance given to a comprehensive constitutional reform. At the same time, I urged for further efforts to complete judicial reform and to reduce the number of cases before the European Court of Human Rights. During a visit of a refugee camp in Turkey's Hatay region, which borders Syria, I was impressed by the swift and generous response of Turkey to the Syrian refugee crisis. However, I repeated the Assembly's call on Turkey to lift its geographical limitation on the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees so that non-Europeans could also be able to obtain refugee status in Turkey.

Often my visits served as mediation between political forces, through **parliamentary diplomacy**, in order to help overcome political deadlocks.

In **Albania** in February 2010, together with the Presidential Committee of the Assembly, we tried hard to bring the opposition back to parliament and help restore political dialogue in order to achieve progress with the needed reforms.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, which I visited three times, I tried to assist the political forces to find a solution to a long-lasting political deadlock, which was endangering the very functioning of this country. I am very glad that a few days after my last visit, in December 2011, an agreement was concluded on the formation of the new Government. I also kept encouraging the authorities and the political leaders to take concrete steps with regard to the execution of the Sejdic and Finci Judgment of the Strasbourg Court.

I also devoted three visits to the Republic of **Moldova** in order to help promote political dialogue between the parties and to solve the crisis resulting from the failure to elect, after 3 elections and 1 referendum, the President of the country. I also visited the autonomous territorial unit of **Gagauzia**, which, in my opinion, could be a good model for the peaceful coexistence of different national communities in this region.

I paid special attention to the issue of frozen conflicts, which I find unacceptable in today's Europe. During my visits to **Armenia and Azerbaijan**, the issue of Nagorno Karabakh was high on the agenda and my position was that both countries have to abide by Parliamentary Assembly resolutions, in particular Resolution 1416 of 2005.

Both in **Georgia and Russia** major discussions were devoted to the consequences of the war between these two Council of Europe member countries. I reiterated PACE's firm support for the territorial integrity of Georgia and called on all sides to fully implement the demands the Assembly had made, in particular in its Resolution 1683, which addresses crucial humanitarian issues affecting the daily life of the inhabitants in this region.

I used my participation in the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament in **Cyprus** in 2010 to call for a lasting and comprehensive solution for a peaceful and united island, which would guarantee the legitimate rights of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, in full compliance with the values and principles of the Council of Europe, particularly in conformity with PACE Resolution 1628 of 2008.

During all my visits, besides questions related to the specific situation of each country, I have systematically raised issues which were closely linked to the **priorities of my Presidency**, in particular inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and the fight against all forms of intolerance and discrimination

In the process of promoting **intercultural and inter-religious dialogue**, I met a number of religious leaders in Europe, in particular Pope Benedict XVI, Patriarch Bartholomeos I, the Patriarch of Romania, the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Chief Mufti of the Russian Federation, the Grand Rabbi of Russia and the CIS Region, the Chief Rabbi of Turkey and the Deputy Patriarch of the Armenian Patriarchate in Turkey, as well as many other representatives of different religions during my numerous visits.

I also attended major international intercultural and interreligious events, such as the "World Forum on Inter-cultural Dialogue - United Through Common Values, Enriched by Cultural Diversity" in April 2011 in Baku or, in May 2010, the Third Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations in Rio de Janeiro.

One of the highlights of my Presidency was the extremely interesting debate that the Assembly held in April 2011 on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue with the participation of representatives of five main European religions. I also actively supported the Assembly's involvement in the follow-up to the report on "Living together in 21st-century Europe" prepared by the Group of Eminent Persons.

The **fight against all forms of intolerance and discrimination** was equally high on my list of priorities. I concentrated on issues of minorities and migrants, in particular the need to guarantee

their rights and freedoms according to Council of Europe standards.

I participated in several important events devoted to the fight against various forms of discrimination, such as the round table in Rio de Janeiro on “Addressing Islamophobia: Building on unused opportunities for mutual respect and inclusion”, co-organised by the Alliance of Civilizations, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the Council of Europe and the British Council, or the OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination in Astana, in June 2010.

I paid particular attention to the issue of the rights of the **Roma population** in Europe. I therefore took part in the high-level meeting on Roma, organised by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in October 2010 in Strasbourg, as well as in its follow-up, urging authorities of member countries to give the Roma population a stronger voice at local, national and international level.

I closely followed the Assembly’s involvement in the Council of Europe’s Convention on preventing and combating **violence against women and domestic violence**, which was finalised under the Turkish Chairmanship in May 2011. Furthermore, **children’s rights and child protection** have always been at the centre of my interests. In 2011, at the High-level Conference on the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012 – 2015 held in Monaco, I called upon the authorities of Council of Europe member states to support the draft Strategy and take an active part in its implementation through comprehensive national strategies.

I tried to be active and supportive on **institutional issues** as well. During my Presidency I urged the authorities of all member countries, in particular those of the EU, to facilitate the **accession of the European Union to the European Court of Human Rights**. The Assembly made a good contribution to this accession - our Joint Informal Body set up between the Assembly and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the modalities of participation of European Parliament representatives in the sittings of the Parliamentary Assembly and its relevant bodies when the Assembly elects judges to the European Court of Human Rights.

During all my visits, I also sought support for the process of the **reform of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly**, aiming to make our Organisation more pro-active, politically relevant and efficient. I consider the reform of the Assembly as one of the major achievements during my mandate.

My visits to member states were an excellent occasion to ask for the **support of national parliaments** for the work of their delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly. In the current context of budgetary restrictions in many member states, I always argued in favour of continued active involvement in Assembly activities.

Finally, I am proud that I could contribute to the **strengthening of relations with the neighbouring non-member states**, in particular in the Arab world and Central Asia.

The Arab spring was certainly one of the most important events which started and unfolded during my Presidency. The Assembly was visionary in this respect. Already in 2008 we adopted Resolution 1598 and Recommendation 1825 on strengthening co-operation with the Maghreb countries and then, in 2009, created the status of “Partnership for Democracy” for Parliaments of non-member states sharing our values, subscribing to our standards and actively engaged in building democratic societies based on the principles of rule of law and fundamental freedoms.

In this respect I paid official visits to **Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia** (including a visit to Tunisia together with the Presidential committee). The main objective was to reassert common values and principles and identify areas in which we could cooperate more strongly.

I am delighted that during my mandate the Assembly had granted this new status to the two first partners for democracy - the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco in June 2011 and the Palestinian National Council in October 2011.

Following my visit to the **Kyrgyz Republic** in July 2011, the Kyrgyz Parliament requested this status as well and the process of examination is currently under way. We also hope that Tunisia will soon apply, as well as Algeria

As a **conclusion**, my mandate coincided with major upheavals in Europe and in the world and major changes within the Council of Europe. I am glad that the Assembly, while proceeding with its own reform, stayed abreast of these developments by being pro-active, ambitious, visionary and a strong defender and guardian of the high principles and values of our Organisation. I wish to thank all my colleagues parliamentarians, all Council of Europe institutions and bodies as well as the staff for their precious cooperation and help.

II. ACTIVITIES

A. Visits and meetings

1. Conference on the Future of the European Court of Human Rights (Interlaken, 18-19 February 2010)

On 18 February, I addressed the Interlaken Conference on the future of the European Court of Human Rights. In my address, I put emphasis on the following points:

- the supervisory mechanism of the ECHR is subsidiary in nature, therefore the primary responsibility for the protection of human rights should be shifted back to national legal systems and practices
- a well-functioning national human rights protection machinery could make a separate filtering body within the Court superfluous
- in order to keep the authority of the ECHR, the Parliamentary Assembly has to be in a position to elect top quality judges from lists of the highest level
- the insufficient funding of the Court has to be reviewed as a matter of urgency, but not at the expense of the rest of the Organisation
- rapid EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights is needed to guarantee a coherent, Europe-wide system of human rights protection.

While in Interlaken, I welcomed Russia's ratification of Protocol No. 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights. I stressed that this ratification illustrated Russia's will to be a major political player within the organisation, showed Russia's firm commitment to the Council of Europe's values and protection mechanisms and encouraged Russian courts to make sure that their judgments take into account the European Convention on Human Rights and the Strasbourg Court's case-law.

2. Visits of the Presidential Committee to Albania (22-23 February 2010)

On 22-23 February 2010, I led the delegation of the Presidential Committee together with the rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee to Tirana. The detailed report on this visit is contained in the Bureau document AS/BUR (2010) 22 from 2 March 2010.

3. Official ceremony to inaugurate the new President of Ukraine, Mr Viktor Yanukovich (25 February 2010)

On 25 February, I took part in the official ceremony to inaugurate the new President of Ukraine, Mr Viktor Yanukovich. I met the President to congratulate him personally and invite him to address the Assembly. The President accepted the invitation and we agreed to continue contacts to determine whether this visit would be already possible during the Assembly's April part-session.

On this occasion, I also met the President of Armenia, the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, the Speaker of the Russian State Duma, the President of the European Parliament, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, the EU's Enlargement Commissioner, the Foreign Minister of Turkey and the State Secretary for European Affairs of France.

On 24 February, I met the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament, Mr Lytvyn, and members of the Ukrainian parliamentary delegation to PACE. I stressed my hope that following the presidential elections, which, according to the international observers, met most of the international standards, the political situation in the country will stabilise and that the Parliament will be able to concentrate on the necessary legislative reforms. I also suggested that, in order to accelerate progress on meeting the obligations and commitments of Ukraine, the Parliament could elaborate a road-map with concrete steps towards achieving these objectives.

4. Official visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina (1-3 March 2010)

The official visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of my priorities since the very start of my mandate.

As a former co-Rapporteur of the Monitoring Committee on this country, I was aware how important – and urgent – it is that Bosnia and Herzegovina adopts constitutional changes in time for the next parliamentary elections due in October 2010.

Back in 2006, when the parliament failed to adopt the so-called “April package” draft constitutional amendments by just 2 votes, the Assembly had expressed its concern at the way the institutions of the country would function. The last 4 years have only confirmed the increasing difficulty of running the country in the present constitutional set-up. In its Resolutions 1626 (2008) and 1701 (2010), the Assembly called on all political forces to engage in a dialogue as well as draft and adopt a new constitution before the October elections. Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina now also has a legal obligation to revise the constitution following the recent judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Sejdic and Finci v. BiH*.

During the visit, I met the Presidency, the Chair of the Council of Ministers, and the Speakers and collegiums of both chambers of the Parliamentary Assembly, as well as the parliamentary delegation to the Assembly and the leaders of the main political parties in the country. I delivered an address to both chambers of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly.

I praised the efforts of the political class to bring about positive changes in a particularly difficult political context: I mentioned, for instance, the defense reform, the painful but successful establishment of the State Ombudsperson’s Office, or the fact that through the so-called “Prud process” the first constitutional amendment on Brcko was adopted in 2009.

At the same time, I pointed out that progress could have been far greater and that a number of commitments and obligations that Bosnia and Herzegovina had undertaken upon joining the Council of Europe remain pending: making the democratic institutions stronger and more efficient; speeding up reforms, particularly in the field of the judiciary, the local government, human rights and media pluralism; Euro- integration.

Although only 2 months are left for constitutional changes to be made (the deadline for changing the electoral provisions is 6 months prior to elections), I expressed my strong belief that this was still possible. What can be achieved is at least to change the constitutional provisions regulating the election to the Presidency and to the House of Peoples, on the understanding that a wider constitutional reform is needed and that work on it will have to carry on after the elections. The substance is there – there are sound proposals from the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission, as well as domestic and international initiatives.

During my meetings with the main political stakeholders, I heard diverging, sometimes opposing, views on the content, extent and timing of constitutional changes. But all these meetings confirmed my belief that in the end everything came down to political will. I strongly urged my interlocutors to overcome their differences and to send a powerful signal, both to the citizens of the country and to the international community, that Bosnia and Herzegovina has a political class which can solve problems and move forward. I pointed out that in the long term, this would bring greater political benefits than the defense of narrow party and ethnic interests.

Another major topic of discussions was the need to organise of a population census in 2011, together with all other European states. I referred to the Assembly’s position on this issue expressed in Resolutions 1626 (2008) and 1701 (2010) and called upon the main political stakeholders to resume discussion and adopt the law on census at the earliest opportunity. At the same time, I stressed that the Assembly was closely following the implementation of Annex VII to the Dayton Peace Agreement dealing with the return of displaced persons. The census and the return of displaced persons should be implemented in parallel and not be conditional on one another.

I felt obliged to warn my interlocutors of the possible consequences of a new failure to proceed with urgently-needed reforms. If the institutions which result from the October elections are deemed in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, their legitimacy may be put in question. This would inevitably affect the country's further advancement on the road of Euro-Atlantic integration. Moreover, this could result in a flow of applications to the Court. Furthermore, the new PACE delegation could face a possible challenge of their credentials.

I stressed that the co-Rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee would soon visit the country and the issue would be on the Committee's agenda. I personally took great interest in an Action Plan on the execution of the judgment of the Court that the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly had tasked the Council of Ministers to prepare. The Action Plan was approved by the Council of Ministers on 4 March and should now be examined by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly. I urged the domestic political stakeholders to consult the Venice Commission in the process of finalising the Action Plan, before its final adoption at political level. Finally, I urged the Bosnia and Herzegovina parliamentary delegation to the Assembly to be as active as possible in order to place the current challenges that the country faces in a pan-European context.

5. Meetings with members of the European Parliament (Strasbourg, 8-9 March 2010)

One of the priorities of my presidency is to strengthen the relations with the European Parliament. This is why I came to Strasbourg on 8-9 March, during one of the sessions of the European parliament, in order to meet its President, Jerzy Buzek.

On the same occasion, I also held a series of meetings with the leaders of the political groups in the European Parliament, namely Joseph Daul, Chairman of the group of the European People's Party, Martin Schulz, Chairman of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Chairman of the Greens/European Free Alliance and Graham Watson, former Chairman of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

During all the meetings, I emphasized the good existing cooperation between the two institutions – in particular, the annual exchange of views between the European Parliament Conference of Presidents and the PACE Presidential Committee (although such a meeting could not take place in 2009 due to the elections for the European Parliament); the joint meetings between PACE and EP committees, or the cooperation in the field of election observation. At the same time, I pointed out that there was room for further improvement and suggested more regular meetings or hearings between committees, as well as closer contacts between respective PACE and EP rapporteurs on similar topics and between political groups.

Concerning the substance of cooperation between the PACE and the EP, the main topics of discussion during the meetings were: the accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe conventions; the role of our two institutions in conflict prevention and conflict resolution, as for instance between Georgia and Russia or in Cyprus, Nagorno karabakh and the Middle East; the prospect of integrating Belarus and the opening up of the Parliamentary Assembly to non-member countries through the status of a "partner for democracy"; the environment.

During the meetings, I placed a special focus on the need for the two institutions to coordinate their policies and political messages with regard to the countries which are under the PACE monitoring procedure and, at the same time, are aspiring to join the European Union. In this connection, I insisted that the Parliamentary Assembly should be involved in Euronest, the parliamentary branch of the Eastern Partnership Initiative.

The EP President and my other interlocutors praised the efforts of the PACE for strengthening democracy and human rights across the continent. They valued particularly the wider scope of the Assembly work, covering almost all the countries of the continent, and the broad spectrum of additional viewpoints and ideas that this could bring to the debate on key European issues.

6. Official visit to Kazakhstan (Astana, 15-18 March 2010)

At the invitation of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, I made an official visit to Astana from 15 to 18 March. During my two-day stay in Astana, I met the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Speaker of the Senate Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev, the Speaker of the Mazhilis Ural Muhamedzhanov, Foreign Affairs Minister Kanat Saudabayev, Minister of Education and Science Zhanseit Tuimebayev and the First Deputy Chairman of the Nur Otan party Nurlan Nigmatulin. I also addressed students at the Eurasian National University in Astana.

The main subject of my discussions was the perspective for Kazakhstan to apply for "partner for democracy" status with PACE, which would enable a more active participation of the Kazakh Parliament in the Assembly's activities, including plenary debates and the work of the Assembly's committees and political groups. I explained that the "partner for democracy" status was established by the Parliamentary Assembly in 2009 for the parliaments of neighbouring states of the Council of Europe to upgrade their relations with the Assembly and place them on an institutional basis.

I stressed with the authorities that obtaining this status would be fully in line with the efforts of Kazakhstan to intensify co-operation with Europe and European institutions, as shown by the recent accession of the country to the Council of Europe European Cultural Convention, its current Chairmanship of the OSCE and the ten-year programme "Path to Europe" launched by the President of the country.

On this occasion, I also expressed appreciation for the efforts of Kazakhstan in areas important for the Council of Europe, in particular strengthening intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and the participation of national minorities in the political and social life of the country.

At the same time, I encouraged the authorities to pursue democratic reforms with a view to reinforcing political plurality and fundamental freedoms in the country.

My proposals were accepted very positively and I received assurances from the authorities of Kazakhstan that they will carefully study our proposal with a view to formulating their position as soon as possible.

7. Meeting of PACE Presidential Committee with the Chair and the Bureau of the Committee of Ministers (Paris, 18 March 2010)

Together with members of the Presidential Committee, we held a meeting in Paris with Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey, the current Chair of the Committee of Ministers, its next Chair the Foreign Minister of "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" Antonio Milososki, as well as members of the Bureau of the Committee of Ministers, in the presence of Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjörn Jagland.

The topics discussed included enhancing dialogue and co-operation between PACE and the Committee of Ministers and current political questions, notably the recent visit of the Presidential Committee to Albania, as well as my recent visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to Kazakhstan.

First of all, I should like to underline that the meeting took place in a very constructive and positive atmosphere. I should like to thank both Mrs Calmy-Rey and Mr Milososki for their availability, as well as members of the Bureau of the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. I consider this meeting as the beginning of a new chapter of the relations between the Assembly and Committee of Ministers and all participants expressed the wish to continue this kind of informal dialogue.

At this meeting, both sides presented the measures they have already taken to implement part B (measures or topics requiring a thorough discussion both within the Committee of Ministers and the PACE with regard to the role and prerogatives of both organs) of the above-

mentioned "Proposals" as well as suggestions for future measures to be taken regarding specific issues. Furthermore, I also presented Assembly's proposals on budgetary issues.

As the discussion on the "Proposals for enhanced dialogue and cooperation" is an ongoing process, I will inform you about the progress achieved at a later stage.

I also hope that the discussion was a useful contribution for the Secretary General for drafting his report on the items listed in part B of the "Proposals for enhanced dialogue and cooperation between PACE and the Committee of Ministers".

It was agreed to hold another meeting in this format still within the Swiss Chairmanship during the Assembly April part-session, devoted to discussion on priority political issues for the Organisation, mainly Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Belarus and the conflict between Georgia and Russia.

8. Official visit to the Republic of Moldova (Chisinau, 23-25 March 2010)

The Republic of Moldova is the third member country that I visited as President of the Parliamentary Assembly. The importance that I attached to making this visit as soon as possible was related in particular to the continuing deadlock in the country concerning the election of its President. Two consecutive parliaments have been unable to gather the necessary 3/5 majority in order to elect a President.

During my visit, I met several times the President of parliament and acting President of the country, the leaders of all main political forces in the country and in parliament, with the exception of the Prime Minister, who was in Brussels for a donors' conference, as well as the Moldovan delegation to PACE. I also gave a speech in the parliament.

My approach was not to teach lessons and impose solutions, but to offer friendly advice from the position of the values and principles of the Council of Europe.

The position that I defended during all the meetings was that the present deadlock could not continue and that it was unthinkable to go to yet another election with the present constitutional provisions regulating the election of the President. I stressed that the final decision of which way to go in order to overcome the deadlock belonged to the Moldovan people. However, they could rely on the Council of Europe expert advice, offered by the Venice Commission and supported by the EU and the OSCE.

I warmly welcomed the setting up, on the very same day when I gave my speech in parliament, of a parliamentary committee which will revise art. 78 of the Constitution, which sets the procedure for electing the President. It was also a very encouraging sign that all political forces, including the opposition, had designated representatives to it.

I pointed out that the Council of Europe, and the PACE in particular, were ready to become a guarantor of the agreement on the content of article 78 when it came to vote in parliament, along with other international actors.

At the same time, it is clear that in the longer term a thorough constitutional revision is necessary. I stressed that the process of constitutional reform needs to be as broad and inclusive as possible in order to enjoy mass political and popular support.

Drawing on the conclusions of the PACE ad-hoc Committee which had observed the 29 July 2009 parliamentary elections and which I had chaired, I insisted on the importance that the new elections are up to the highest democratic standards. This means, in particular, to improve the electoral lists and guarantee far better the possibility of Moldovan citizens abroad to participate in the elections.

A lot of effort during my visit was devoted to help overcome divisions in the parliament. I was particularly glad that the opposition came to parliament to listen to my speech. I urged them not to leave it as a symbolic gesture, but to stay from now and contribute to the parliamentary

debate with their ideas and principles. After the speech, the leader of the opposition announced that he was ready to meet the President of parliament in order to discuss the terms and conditions of a possible end of the opposition's boycott.

I also addressed the issue of the Moldovan parliamentary delegation to PACE, which is still incomplete because the representatives of the opposition are missing. After talks with the leader and the other members of the delegation, it seemed that the problem could be resolved soon.

Finally, I reminded my interlocutors that Moldova had been lagging behind in the fulfillment of its outstanding obligations and commitments to the Council of Europe, such as the reform of the judiciary, of the Prosecutor's office, the police, the freedom of the media etc. I welcomed some courageous steps taken by the new government in order to overcome the economic and social crisis and to move towards more democratic freedoms.

9. 122nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Bangkok, 27-29 March 2010)

I attended the 122nd Assembly of the Interparliamentary Union, which discussed the role of parliaments in political reconciliation and good governance, interparliamentary co-operation in the global fight against organised crime and trafficking in human beings, and the participation of young people in the democratic process.

In my speech before the IPU, I concentrated on the issue of political reconciliation. I stressed that reconciliation has always been the 'raison d'être' of the Council of Europe. The fundamental values which the Council of Europe is promoting - democracy, human rights and rule of law - are not an aim in itself but a means to an end: namely, reconciliation and long-lasting peace on our Continent. In this connection, I presented to the delegates from all corners of the world, examples of our mechanisms and concrete action on conflict prevention, solution and reconciliation.

10. International parliamentary conference in St Petersburg to mark the 65th anniversary of the Second World War (St Petersburg, 7 April 2010)

In my speech at this Conference, organised by the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), I recalled that the Council of Europe has twice led a process of post-war reconciliation – after the Second World War and the Cold War. I used this occasion to stress that, 65 years after the end of the war, we should not only celebrate the anniversary of a great victory, but also the fact that we have achieved a reconciliation process and have common values of human rights and democracy. It is the universal acceptance and application of these values which is the best guarantee to prevent any further military conflict from happening on our Continent, and elsewhere.

I used this occasion to hold a series of bilateral meetings with Mr Mironov, Chairman of Russia's Federation Council, the Speaker of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada Volodymyr Lytvyn and the Speaker of the Council of the Republic of the Belarus Parliament Boris Batuna.

During the meeting with Mr Butura, I expressed the firmest condemnation to the Speaker, on behalf of the Council of Europe, of the recent executions of two persons in Belarus. I said that these executions were a serious setback to our aspiration to bring Belarus closer to European values. I also stressed that the Council of Europe was ready to help Belarus but in order to work together, we need a serious signal from the Belarus authorities that they are willing to move towards the values of human rights and democracy. I called on the Speaker to intensify the engagements of Belarus parliamentarians to put an immediate end to the use of the death penalty.

11. International parliamentary conference on "The future of European security" (St Petersburg, 8 April 2010)

On 8 April, I spoke at an international parliamentary conference on "The future of European security" organised jointly by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

In my speech, I underlined that democracy, human rights and the rule of law were a form of “soft security” that promote prosperity and peace. I expressed my satisfaction that, after long years of ideological division in Europe and the world, countries increasingly look at common problems through the same prism based on our common values. But there should be no slackening in joint efforts to deal with common threats such as terrorism or nuclear proliferation.

12. Official visit to Azerbaijan (13 to 16 April 2010)

At the invitation of the Parliament of Azerbaijan, I carried out an official visit to Baku and Ganja, second largest city of the country. During my visit, I met the President of the Republic Ilham Aliyev, the Speaker of Parliament Ogtay Asadov, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov and representatives of political parties in Parliament, as well as representatives of parties not in Parliament and NGOs.

The main message that I transmitted to the President and the authorities of Azerbaijan was that holding free and fair parliamentary elections in November would be the best way for Azerbaijan to celebrate its tenth anniversary as a member of the Council of Europe next year.

The aim of this visit was to express support for the continuation of democratic reforms in the country. The Council of Europe, through our monitoring procedure, the Venice Commission’s advice and input from other Council of Europe programmes, is helping the authorities create the best possible conditions for these elections. However, I stressed that these conditions, including guarantees of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, independence of electoral commissions and a fair registration process of candidates, can only be put in place through the joint efforts of all political forces, both the majority party and opposition parties.

In this context, I also raised the question of the persons that are considered to be detained for political reasons. I asked the President and the authorities to review very carefully these cases and was given assurances that it will done.

I also stressed the urgency of solving the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. “The Assembly has already clearly stated its position on this matter in Resolution 1416, adopted in 2005. I said that it would support the re-constitution of the ad hoc Bureau committee on the conflict, where MPs from both Azerbaijan and Armenia can meet, together with other Assembly members, to move forward on this difficult question. Therefore, I will organise a meeting with the parliamentary delegations both from Armenia and Azerbaijan during the April part-session with a view to finding an agreement on this issue.

13. Transfer of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers between Switzerland and "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (11 May 2010)

In my address to the Committee of Ministers on the occasion of their 120th session, I congratulated the Swiss Chairmanship for its efforts to improve the effectiveness of the European Court of Human Rights and the Swiss Foreign Minister, Mrs. Calmy-Rey, for having strengthened dialogue with PACE. I expressed my conviction that this kind of relations would be continued during the Chairmanship of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and its Foreign Minister, Mr. Miloshoski.

Topics raised during my speech included constitutional reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation in Albania, Moldova, the frozen conflicts in Nagorno- Karabakh as well as in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. With regard to Belarus, I recalled that the Assembly had decided to put on hold its activities involving high-level contacts with Belarus. However, I expressed the opinion that we have a moral obligation towards the people of Belarus to be more present and engaged in the country.

14. Visit to Armenia (12-14 May 2010)

During this visit I met the President of the Republic Serzh Sargsyan, the President of the National Assembly Hovik Abrahamyan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandyan, members of different political factions represented in the National Assembly, and the extra-parliamentary opposition. I also met Davit Harutyunyan, Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the

Assembly on State and Legal Affairs, responsible for the monitoring of implementation of the recommendations proposed by the ad hoc Committee of the Assembly to inquire into the events of 1-2 March 2008. Meetings also took place with the Ombudsman, with members of the diplomatic community and civil society as well as with families of victims of the events of 1-2 March 2008.

I called on the authorities of Armenia to draw on the recommendations of its ad hoc parliamentary committee and of PACE in relation to the 1-2 March 2008 events and to adopt and implement in due time a roadmap of reforms. Such clear determination is needed in order to restore public confidence, move towards reconciliation and consolidate the democratic process in the country.

I encouraged the National Assembly to play to the full its role of parliamentary control, in particular when discussing the reports that will be submitted by its Committee on State and Legal Affairs, which is responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of the reforms needed in relation to the March 2008 events. I praised the excellent co-operation that has been existing with the Armenian delegation to PACE in that respect.

Amongst the most important reforms needed, I stressed: the adoption of a new electoral code, up to the highest European standards, well ahead of the 2012 parliamentary elections; the reform of the police, including better education and a change in the mentality; the reforms needed to ensure the independence in the justice sector; the unrestricted implementation of the law on freedom of assembly; and the independence and pluralism of the media, in particular with regard to the tender on broadcasting licences that would be organised in July 2010.

At the same time, I considered it unacceptable that nobody had been held responsible in relation to the 10 deaths that occurred during the March 2008 events. I also stressed that the issue of persons detained in relation to the events of March 2008 was not fully resolved either.

With regard to the Nagorno Karabakh issue, I stressed that both Armenia and Azerbaijan had to abide by Parliamentary Assembly resolutions, in particular Resolution 1416 of 2005. The Assembly, for its part, has the duty to monitor how its recommendations are implemented by member states. I said that I would continue consultations with the chairmen of the Armenian and Azeri delegations to PACE, separately and jointly, including also a representative of the opposition on each side, until a solution and a format are found which are satisfactory for both sides.

15. Working visit to Crimea, Ukraine (15 May 2010)

During my working visit, I welcomed the signing on 13 May 2010 by the President of Ukraine of the Decree No 615/2010 concerning additional measures to integrate the Tatars of Crimea.

I expressed the hope that this decree, aiming at improving the social-economic situation of the Crimean Tatars and enhancing their participation in the social, cultural and political life, will mark the beginning of a new and positive chapter in the situation of the Crimean Tatars in Ukraine.

I held a meeting with the representatives of the Crimean Tatars and regional authorities of Crimea, with the participation of Mr Sergei Levochkin, Head of the Administration of the President of Ukraine, to discuss the potential of this decree and the process of its implementation. On this occasion, I called on all parties to intensify their dialogue and co-operation in good faith and mutual respect to solve the existing problems, in particular as regards education, language and land issues.

My visit took place on the eve of the commemoration, on 18 May, of the 66th anniversary of the deportation of the Crimean Tatar population by the Stalinist regime. In April 2000, the Assembly adopted Recommendation 1455 (2000) on repatriation and integration of the Tatars of Crimea. The commitment of Ukraine to develop its policy towards ethnic minorities on the basis of the Council of Europe standards and principles is being followed by the Parliamentary Assembly in the framework of its monitoring procedure with respect to Ukraine.

16. Official visit to Montenegro (17-19 May 2010)

During this visit I met the President of the Republic, Filip Vujanovic; the Prime Minister, Milo Đukanovic; the President of the Parliament, Ranko Krivokapic, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Milan Rocen. Talks also took place with the leaders of the political groups and with the delegation of Montenegro to PACE.

During my speech in the Parliament of Montenegro I welcomed the clear progress made by the country, including through the adoption of numerous Council of Europe standards and conventions, which will assist Montenegro on its road to European Union membership. I underlined that I expected the EU to make full use of the reports of PACE when preparing its opinion on the membership application, as was the case on many previous occasions.

I encouraged the Montenegrin authorities to continue their close collaboration with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, especially with regard to the search and arrests of indictees who were still at large.

Referring to the debate held three weeks ago during the last PACE session in Strasbourg on the first report on 'Honouring of obligations and commitments by Montenegro', I invited the members of Parliament to complete the process of ratification of several important Council of Europe conventions and complete the adoption of some important laws, such as a new one governing the elections of the members of Parliament. I stressed that the mechanisms of parliamentary oversight over the activities of the Government, particularly with respect to the implementation of laws adopted by the Parliament, should also be strengthened.

I expressed the overall positive evaluation by the Assembly and the hope that Montenegro will maintain the current reform dynamic and complete the implementation of its commitments. Having visited this region often in recent times, I felt that there is a readiness among many of the new countries of the former Yugoslavia to re-establish links with each other: a new openness to dialogue. I would welcome such a development.

17. Assembly's meetings in Skopje (20-21 May 2010)

During the Assembly's meetings in Skopje, I congratulated the authorities on the programme of the Macedonian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe and pointed out that it largely coincides with my own priorities as President of the Parliamentary Assembly.

I also held bilateral meetings with the President of the Republic, the President of Parliament and the Prime Minister. On this occasion, I congratulated the authorities on the democratic achievements of their country and expressed support for their efforts to join the European Union as soon as possible. I recalled that the Assembly closed its monitoring procedure in recognition of these achievements, but stressed that the adopted legislation must be reinforced through greater dialogue and confidence building measures in society. I also encouraged the authorities to finalise their work on the latest judiciary and administrative reforms as soon as possible.

At the meeting with Foreign Affairs Minister Antonio Miloshoski, I expressed my confidence that the very positive co-operation between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly, developed during previous Chairmanships, would be further strengthened.

18. Third Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (Rio de Janeiro, 27-29 May 2010)

I took part in the Third Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, which was held in Rio de Janeiro (27-28 May 2010), alongside Brazilian President Lula da Silva and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as well as the co-sponsor of the initiative Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The theme of the forum was "Bridging cultures, building peace".

At the invitation of the Speakers of the Brazilian Senate José Sarney and Chamber of Deputies Michel Temer, I took part in two parliamentary events, co-organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Actually, it was the first time that the Alliance of Civilizations was bringing in a strong parliamentary component into the Forum. The Parliamentary meeting on 27 May focused on the Follow-up to the IPU Resolution on Ensuring respect for and peaceful coexistence between all religious communities and beliefs in a globalized world. On the next day, one of the thematic sessions of the Forum was devoted to “Democracy, good governance and cultural diversity”.

On the eve of the forum, I also participated in an open round table on “Addressing Islamophobia: Building on unused opportunities for mutual respect and inclusion“, co-organised by the Alliance of Civilizations, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the Council of Europe and the British Council.

Despite some internal organisational problems, the Forum was a success as far as the Council of Europe is concerned. The Council of Europe as a whole had a very strong input into the different working sessions, which was a good proof of the relevance of the work of our organisation in the field of cultural diversity and inter-cultural dialogue. It was also the first time that a PACE President was involved in so many parts of the forum.

In all my speeches, I stressed that democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which are at the heart of our activity, are the keys to overcoming political, cultural and religious divides. International assemblies such as PACE are the perfect ground for dialogue between cultures and religions, bringing together parliamentarians from many cultures, and offering a tribune for prominent religious leaders from around the world.

I also called on parliaments from regions neighbouring Europe to participate in the work of the Assembly through its “Partner for democracy” status.

Bearing in mind that intercultural dialogue has gradually become one of the main challenges to our increasingly diverse societies, I outlined different ways in which national parliaments and international assemblies can better address the challenges linked to it.

At the round table on fighting Islamophobia, I pointed out that Islamophobia was mostly the result of ignorance, misperception and a lack of communication and dialogue. I listed the ways governments could combat it by addressing the root causes of poverty, ending discrimination, encouraging immigrant communities to participate in public life, eliminating stereotypes and fighting terrorism in line with human rights. I specified that extremists who abuse Islam should not be invoked to justify a negative approach to Islam and Muslims. Yet Muslims should also be the first to condemn political extremism under the cover of Islam and work to transmit core European values within their communities, by highlighting their compatibility with Islam as a religion.

I drew the attention of participants to the major debate on Islamophobia that the Assembly will hold during its June part-session and in which the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations Jorge Sampaio will take part.

19. Ceremony to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) (5 June 2010)

On 5 June 2010 I participated in the ceremony to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the European Commission for Democracy through Law, in Venice. To mark the importance of the event, the Presidential Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly chose to meet on the same occasion.

Besides the Secretary General Torbjorn Jagland and Minister Miloshoski for the Macedonian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, the personalities who took part in the commemoration hosted by President Buquicchio included President Saakashvili of Georgia and Azerbaijan’s Foreign Minister Mammadyarov.

In my speech I underlined firstly the importance of the co-operation between the Venice Commission and the Parliamentary Assembly, particularly on the occasion of electoral observation missions. Secondly, I emphasised the different character of the two bodies, eminently political

the Assembly, strictly legal the Commission, the impartiality and non-political role of the latter being the reason of its prestige and strong impact.

Finally, I welcomed the fact that the Commission is open to exchanges with countries beyond the border of the Council of Europe, which goes in line with the policies of the Parliamentary Assembly and its recently established status of "Partnership for Democracy".

20. 8th Conference of Speakers of Parliament from the countries of the South-East European Co-operation Process (SEECP) (Antalya, 6-7 June 2010)

I attended the 8th Conference of Speakers of Parliament from the countries of the South-East European Co-operation Process (SEECP) held in Antalya on 6-7 June 2010. The Conference was hosted by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and one of the main points on the agenda was the perspective of creating a parliamentary assembly for the region and co-operation with existing parliamentary bodies such as PACE.

In my speech, I stressed that the parliamentary dimension of the SEECP makes it more democratic and closer to the people of the member countries and expressed our readiness to cooperate with a future parliamentary assembly for the region, should such an institution be established. I put emphasis on the necessity to ensure the freedom of movement of people in Europe as the absolute pre-condition for any further integration.

I underlined that South-Eastern Europe was an important priority for the Assembly and that membership in the Council of Europe is an important step towards the EU accession.

21. Third Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) (Istanbul, 8 June 2010)

I was invited to address participants at the Third Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) held on 8 June in Istanbul.

This Conference was attended by many Heads of State and Government, including the President and the Prime Minister of Turkey as well as Presidents of Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Iran.

In my speech, I made a plea for soft security as a means of strengthening security and stability in a globalised world stressing that peaceful co-existence of different cultures and religions, based on mutual respect, is one of the most important elements of this soft security. I also declared that, even though it was possible to draw a formal dividing line between the European and Asian continents, in reality such a dividing line did not exist. Therefore, eradicating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all other manifestations of discrimination and intolerance should be our common objective.

I drew attention of participants to the potential of the Council of Europe's legal instruments open to non-member states, in particular the conventions on the prevention of terrorism and against trafficking in human beings and recalled the recent creation of the "Partner for democracy" status at PACE level.

22. European Conference of Presidents of Parliament (Limassol, 11-12 June 2010)

Together with members of the Presidential Committee, I attended this conference organised jointly by the Parliament of Cyprus and PACE. The Conference brought together some 300 participants and focused on the rights and responsibilities of the opposition in a parliament and the role of national parliaments in implementing the principle of non-discrimination with a view to strengthening European democracies at a time of economic crisis and increasing discrimination.

At the end of the Conference, the Speaker of the Parliament, Mr Marios Garoyian, and myself presented the conclusions in which we stressed the need for a renewed commitment to implement international human rights law. In this connection, we called on national parliaments, in particular, to urgently promote the signature and/or ratification of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights enshrining the principle of non-discrimination.

With regard to the rights of the opposition, we concluded there was no unique model of electoral system that could be recommended as the best one. However, excluding large sections of the population from the right to be represented was detrimental to the democratic system.

Finally, in conformity with PACE Resolution 1628 of 2008, we expressed the firm hope that a lasting and comprehensive solution for a peaceful and united Cyprus would be found which would guarantee the legitimate rights of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, in full compliance with the values and principles of the Council of Europe.

I wish to thank very sincerely President Garoyian and the Parliament for hosting this Conference which, according to many participants, was one of the most successful ever held in this framework.

On this occasion, I held a series of official meetings, among others with Presidents of Parliament of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Montenegro, Moldova and Ukraine, and many other bilateral talks.

I also received an official invitation to pay an official visit to Cyprus and hope that I will be able to carry out this visit in November 2010.

23. Prize-giving ceremony of the Turkey's Association of European Journalists (Istanbul, 12 June 2010)

On 12 June, I attended the prize-giving ceremony of the Turkey's Association of European Journalists and received the award "Politician of the Year" from the Chairman of the Association, Mr. Adnan Fisenk.

24. Official visit to Georgia (13 to 15 June 2010)

I carried out an official visit to Georgia from 13 to 15 June 2010. During my visit, I met the President of the Republic Mikhail Saakashvili, the Chairman of the Parliament David Bakradze, the Vice-Prime Minister and State Minister for Reintegration Temur Yakobashvili, the Foreign Minister Gregory Vashadze and the State Minister of Refugees and Accommodation Koba Subeliani. I also held talks with, in particular, the Chairman of the Constitutional Court George Papuashvili, representatives of the parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition, the Governor of the Shida Kartli Region Lado Vardzelashvili and the Chairman of the Government of Adjara Levan Varshalomidze.

I stressed that by coming to Georgia early in my Presidency I wanted to show the importance I attached to the country, its ongoing democratic reforms as well as its plight after the August 2008 war. My talks focused on the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia and the role that the Council of Europe, and especially PACE, could and should play in this respect as well as the ongoing democratic reforms and outstanding commitments of Georgia to the Council of Europe.

With regard to the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia, I re-iterated PACE's firm support for the territorial integrity of Georgia and called on all sides to fully implement the demands PACE had made, in particular in its Resolution 1683, which addresses crucial humanitarian issues affecting the daily life of the inhabitants in this region: the freedom of movement of civilians over the administrative borders with the two regions; access, and more important, the presence of monitors as well as international and humanitarian organisations; the right to return of IDPs; a full and credible investigation into alleged violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed by any side, including Georgia, in relation to the war.

With regard to ongoing democratic reforms, I welcomed that the last local elections were considered a big improvement by international monitors, whilst stressing the need to address remaining important shortcomings. A new election code should be drafted with the help of the Venice Commission, and in dialogue and consultation with both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition, well before the next parliamentary elections.

I also called on the authorities to strengthen dialogue with all opposition forces on issues deemed important for the development of the country and welcomed reforms aimed at consolidating democracy and strengthening the role of the parliament.

Finally, I expressed my concern about complaints brought to my attention with regard to decreasing media pluralism and lack of transparency with regard to media ownership, the independence of the judiciary, especially in cases that have political implications, as well as allegations that political motives had affected the prosecution and sentencing of persons. These are worrying issues that could directly affect the further European integration of Georgia. I therefore said that I would ask the PACE co-rapporteurs for Georgia to organise a visit in the very near future, giving priority to these important human rights issues.

The state of affairs with respect to the repatriation of the Meskhetian population was also discussed.

25. 5th Strasbourg Summer University for Democracy (28 June 2010)

In my opening statement at the fifth annual Strasbourg Summer University for Democracy on the theme 'Crisis of Leadership', I put emphasis on the following points:

- encouraging young female leaders to claim leadership roles in our societies;
- setting up of a Strasbourg Democracy Forum as proposed by the Parliamentary Assembly as an umbrella structure providing an international reference in the field of democracy and a laboratory for new ideas and proposals;
- stressing the need for the political leadership especially at the current times of crisis, because it takes real leadership on the part of our governments and parliaments to explain to the people ways in which the negative economic and social consequences of the crisis can be shared equitably among different groups in society;
- stressing that leadership has to be displayed in co-coordinating action with other European countries so that the actions of one do not compromise those of the others.

I also took this occasion to announce that the Akdeniz University in my home town of Antalya, Turkey, would be very happy to play an active role in relation to the Summer University and the Schools of Political Studies.

26. OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (Astana, 29-30 June 2010)

This high-level conference was held under the auspices of the President of Kazakhstan and was attended by many distinguished guests, including Mr Sampaio, High Representative of the UN Secretary General for the Alliance of Civilizations.

In my introductory address, I stressed that parliaments must be the driving force behind the elaboration of national action plans for intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. In my opinion, they must contribute to such plans not only through ideas and political impetus, but also through parliamentary control of the executive which has to implement them. Besides such specific plans, I called on parliaments to take into account the intercultural and inter-religious dimension in their overall legislative work.

On this occasion, I held a series of bilateral meetings, including with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, with whom we discussed, in particular, the potential for the Kazakh Parliament of the Partner for Democracy Status with the Parliamentary Assembly.

27. Official visit to the Russian Federation (1 – 4 July 2010)

On 1-2 July, I carried out my official visit to Moscow and met the Speaker of the State Duma Mr Boris Gryzlov, the Chairman of the Federation Council Mr Sergey Mironov, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Sergey Lavrov, the leaders of the political groups in the State Duma and representatives of NGOs. I also held a conference with the young Russian political leaders.

At the press conference held at the end of my visit, I expressed my satisfaction at the current positive climate in relations between PACE and Russia. I recognized that there were questions on which our opinions differ and demands which Russia had to fulfill. However, I expressed my conviction that, if we work together as partners with mutual respect and without double standards, progress would be achieved even on these difficult issues. In this connection, I referred to the Assembly's resolution on the situation in the North Caucasus adopted during the June part-session of the Assembly as a very good example of such partnership.

I took this opportunity to urge my interlocutors to fulfill the requests made in Assembly resolutions concerning the conflict between Georgia and Russia. Given that political talks are taking place on Geneva, I expressed my opinion that we must concentrate on humanitarian issues to improve the life of ordinary citizens, in particular as regards access and the presence of international monitors and organizations, the return of IDPs and the investigation of human rights violations.

My visit took place just before the visit of the Assembly's co-rapporteurs on the monitoring of the obligations and commitments of Russia. Leaving to them the task to assess progress, or the lack of it, since the last monitoring report adopted in 2005, I pointed out that the recent legislative changes, including improved access for political parties to the state media, seemed to be a step in the right direction.

My interlocutors conveyed to me their concerns about the re-writing of history, in particular as regards the assessment of the Second World War. On this matter, I declared that interpretation of history should be left to historians and should not be used to attack other countries or nations, or justify inhuman and racist ideologies. I invited politicians to be more responsible and look towards the future.

Finally, I welcomed the willingness of Russia to contribute to reforms within the Council of Europe, including the European Court of Human Rights. The ratification by Russia of Protocol No. 14 to the Convention was a very important step and I thanked again both Houses of Parliament for voting in favour of this ratification at the beginning of this year.

On 3-4 July, I visited the city of Yaroslavl and held meetings with the Governor of the Yaroslavl region, Mr A. Vakhrukov, and members of the Regional Council.

28. Commemoration of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide (11 July 2010)

Together with Mr Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and with the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr Erdogan, I attended on 11 July the commemoration of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide. We jointly took this opportunity to stress our commitment to reinforce Europe around our common values to prevent such terrible tragedies in the future.

29. 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Geneva, 19-21 July 2010)

I took part in the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva on 19-21 July 2010. The broad theme for the 2010 conference (the two previous ones were held in New York in 2000 and 2005 respectively) was "Parliaments in a world of crisis: securing global democratic accountability for the common good".

In my speech, I outlined the role of the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly in ensuring democratic accountability at European level: in particular, through our monitoring mechanisms; through debates on the major challenges facing our societies; and through developing parliamentary dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy. I also quoted the Assembly's 2010 debate on the state of democracy in Europe, which reached the conclusion that democracy has also to be developed beyond representation.

Finally, I stressed that the Parliamentary Assembly is also the pan-European forum for the Speakers of national parliaments. I therefore invited the participants in the Conference to consult the

conclusions of the latest European conference which took place in June 2010 in Limassol and the topics of which were closely related to those discussed in Geneva.

30. Award of the European Prize to the City of Kharkov (Kharkov, Ukraine, 22-25 August 2010)

Following the decision of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs in April 2010 to award the 2010 Europe Prize to the city of Kharkov, I took part in the award ceremony on 23 August, together with the Chairman and members of the Sub-Committee on the Europe Prize and the Mayor of Ankara, city that won the Europe Prize last year.

It is the first time a Ukrainian town has won this prize. Kharkov has already been awarded three European distinctions prior to the Europe Prize, in particular because of the number and depth of friendly ties that the city had built up – including 17 twinnings with towns across the world.

31. Official visit to Romania (29 August – 1 September 2010)

In the course of my official visit to Romania I met the highest authorities of the country: the President, Mr Basescu, the Speakers of both Chambers of Parliament – Mrs Anastase and Mr Geoana and the Minister of Foreign Affairs – Mr Baconschi. I also met Patriarch Daniel, Head of the Romanian Orthodox Church, who accepted my invitation to address the Parliamentary Assembly at one of the next part-sessions (possibly April 2011), and I addressed the annual meeting of the Ambassadors in Bucharest.

During the meetings, discussions focused on how Romania can contribute to the solution of the problems which all European countries have to face today. I stressed how much the Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Europe as a whole are involved in fighting racism, xenophobia and discrimination of all kind and praised Romania for the successful dealing with minority issues and the efforts aimed at increasing integration of minorities in the political, economic and social life of the country.

In my talks, I also encouraged the authorities to intensify the fight against corruption and called for the continuation of the judicial reforms, also with a view to reducing the number of applications lodged before the European Court of Human Rights.

On regional issues, together with the Romanian authorities, we expressed our deep conviction that the political crisis in Moldova must be solved in a democratic and transparent manner by the Moldovan people. I stressed that the Assembly would observe the constitutional referendum on 5 September and expressed the hope that it would be a beginning of the political stabilisation of the country.

32. Joint meeting of the Presidential Committee of the PACE and the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament (Brussels, 2 September 2010)

On 2 September 2010 I lead the PACE Presidential Committee, at the Joint Meeting with the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament in Brussels. The meeting took place in a very cordial atmosphere. EP President Buzek and I underlined the positive developments in the relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union, including the many high level contacts, and stressed the importance of continuing this development.

Discussions focused on the accession of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights and in particular the right of the European Parliament to appoint and send a certain number of representatives to PACE when the latter elects judges to the European Court of Human Rights. Participants also agreed on the importance of having an informal body in order to coordinate information sharing between the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly.

33. Official meetings and seminars on “The role of Turkey in the European Union” (Stockholm and Göteborg, 3-4 September 2010)

During my visit in Stockholm, I met Swedish EU Affairs Minister Birgitta Ohlson and the State Secretary to the Prime Minister Gustaf Lind. I praised Sweden for its active role in both the Council of Europe and the European Union, and urged it to continue supporting the reform

processes within both organisations, including EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. My interlocutors were interested in the current priorities of the Council of Europe. They also reiterated Sweden's firm support for Turkish accession to the EU.

On 3 and 4 September I attended a series of seminars on the role of Turkey in the European Union, organised in Stockholm and Göteborg by the Swedish-Turkish Federation.

34. 2010 Council of Europe Exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue, (Ohrid, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", 13 September 2010)

The role of the media in fostering intercultural dialogue, tolerance and mutual understanding: freedom of expression of the media and respect towards cultural and religious diversity were at the centre of discussions between some 150 participants from all over Europe, experts, academics, media professionals, religious leaders from various origins, representatives of non-confessional-communities.

In my speech at the opening, I stressed the need to appreciate that there are diverse sensitivities which come together and inter-relate with each other. Not merely cohabitation of different religions and cultures in our states and in Europe is at stake, so is the co-existence of our societies with those of the world at large.

I also indicated that we must ensure that the media perform a role of mediation and help create an environment conducive to better understanding of the various religious beliefs and cultural approaches.

I pointed out that intercultural dialogue is one of the prime topics for the Assembly, and it is one of the priorities for my term as President of the Assembly. I therefore intend submitting to the Bureau a proposal for the organisation of a major debate on intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, based on a background report by the competent Assembly committee, in the course of next year.

35. Official visit to Ukraine (20-23 September 2010 to Kiev, 23-24 September 2010 to Odessa)

During my official visit, I met President Viktor Yanukovich, the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada Volodymyr Lytvyn, Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, former Prime Minister of Ukraine, Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko and the leadership of coalition and opposition factions, as well as Mrs Nina Karpachova, Ombudsperson, and NGO representatives.

I also visited Odessa and met professors and students of the Odessa Law University as well as representatives of the local and regional authorities.

I stressed that, after years of political instability, the holding of a democratic presidential election and the creation of the new governing coalition gave Ukraine a unique change to carry out the reforms, which your country urgently needs - in particular as regards judiciary (including the Prosecutor's Office), electoral legislation and the fight against corruption. I also reiterated that according to the texts adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly, constitutional changes were also necessary to ensure clear separation of powers between executive, legislative and judicial branches.

I congratulated the President for his ambitious reform programme and reiterated the support and assistance of the Council of Europe for these reforms. I said that that speed of reforms was important, but stressed that equally important was the quality of the adopted legislation, which must be based on international legal standards and expertise. In this connection, I urged the authorities to seek systematically opinions of the Venice Commission before draft laws are adopted.

Furthermore, I stressed that the role of the opposition is extremely important. Therefore, I invited the authorities to associate different political forces of the country with the reform process. In this connection, I also invited the authorities to resist the temptation of excessive concentration of power and to ensure a long-standing political stability based on political pluralism.

The local election on 31 October will be an important political test. I called on the authorities to respect democratic rules at all stages of the election process, including registration of candidates, access to media, work of election commissions and the actual voting.

The freedom of media is one of the best indicators of the state of democracy. Therefore, I urged the authorities to take firm steps to reply to some allegations concerning possible state pressure on the media and, in particular, properly investigate the disappearance of a Kharkov journalist Mr Klymentyev.

Last but not least, we discussed the right of minorities. I welcomed the fact that Ukraine acceded to the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages and invited the authorities to implement the recommendations made to them as regards the use of minority languages in public administration, education and media.

In this connection, I also called for the implementation of the Presidential Decree from May 2010 concerning measures to integrate the Tatars of Crimea in order to improve their social-economic situation and enhance their participation in the social, cultural and political life.

The fulfillment of the commitments in the Council of Europe is necessary for the integration of Ukraine in the European Union. In this connection, I gave my full support to the European aspirations of the Ukrainian people and to the visa free regime with the EU.

36. Official visit to France and Hearing with the European Committee of the National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale) (Paris, 27-29 September 2010)

My official visit to France included meetings with the Speaker of the National Assembly Bernard Accoyer and the Minister for Foreign Affairs Bernard Kouchner, as well as a working lunch with the Secretary of State for European Affairs Pierre Lellouche, in which also participated the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Yves Le Fur, the Chair of the European Affairs Committee Pierre Lequiller, the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee Axel Poniatowski, and members of the French delegation to the PACE, chaired by Jean-Claude Mignon.

The main topics of these meetings revolved around relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union and the need to avoid overlap between the two institutions, in particular with regard to the EU Agency of Fundamental Rights and the planned parliamentary dimension of the EU Eastern Partnership – Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. My interlocutors were greatly interested in the future accession of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights.

I called on France, as a host country of the Council of Europe, to be one of the driving forces of the ongoing reform process of the organisation, aiming at making it better focused, more efficient and more visible.

The Roma issue was another topic widely discussed during all the meetings. My interlocutors appreciated the initiative of the Council of Europe Secretary General for a high-level meeting on Roma. We shared the view that such a constructive approach, involving all the European countries and drawing on the expertise of the Council of Europe and the financial means of the European Union, would be the best way to find appropriate solutions.

I equally took part in a hearing organised by the European Affairs Committee of the National Assembly, where I presented the main priorities of the Council of Europe and the need to enhance cooperation with the European Union.

On the occasion of my visit to Paris, I equally met the Governor and Vice-Governors of the Council of Europe Development Bank.

37. 3rd European Heritage Forum (Istanbul, 2 October 2010)

I participated in the Third European Heritage Forum on the theme : "Cultural Heritage, Participation, Prosperity – Contribution to cohesion and prosperity in today's societies through

sustainable use of heritage resources" and delivered a speech (available on the website of the Assembly).

The Forum was the closing event of the 25th anniversary of the European Heritage Days, which is a joint activity of the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

38. Official visit to Finland (24-28 November 2010)

At the invitation of the Finnish Parliament, I visited Finland for an official visit from 24-27 November 2010. In Helsinki (24-25 November), I met President Tarja Halonen, Prime Minister Mari Kiviniemi, the Speaker of Parliament Sauli Niinistö, Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb and the members of the Finnish delegation to the Assembly. I also gave an address at an open seminar of the Finnish Institute for International Affairs on the topic "The Council of Europe as a human rights defender – relevance and capacities in today's Europe".

In the Inari municipality, in the far north of Finland (26-27 November), I met representatives of the local authorities, including Klemetti Näkkäljärvi, the President of the Sámi Parliament.

During my meetings in Helsinki, I discussed a range of Council of Europe priorities and initiatives, including plans for the reform of the Organisation and the forthcoming accession of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights. I took this opportunity to thank Finland, a fervent promoter and defender of the Organisation and its values, for its long-standing support for the Council of Europe. I stressed that Finland set an example for other European countries in many areas, such as the fight against discrimination, the rights of minorities, Roma rights, the fight against corruption, women's rights as well as finding peaceful solutions to regional conflicts.

Furthermore, we discussed difficult situations in Europe, in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Moldova, in Belarus and in Cyprus as well as the Council of Europe's efforts to improve the situation of Roma and to fight intolerance and discrimination.

I reiterated these issues in my speech to the Finnish Institute for International Affairs and during the exchange of views which followed. I underlined the specific contribution of Mrs. Halonen, current President of Finland and former PACE member, to establishing the procedure for monitoring the obligations and commitments of Council of Europe member states in the so-called Halonen Order, presented to the Parliamentary Assembly in 1993. I also recalled the case of the Åland Islands, which, in my opinion, can serve as an historical example for the peaceful settlement of today's frozen conflicts in Europe.

39. Meeting of the W.E.U. (Western European Union) (Paris, 1 December 2010)

In my address to the 59th session of the European Security and Defense Assembly (Assembly of the Western European Union) I pointed out to what extent that Assembly had been complementary and closely linked to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: not only because many of the national delegations to the two Assemblies are the same, but also because together we represent the two main pillars of peace and stability in Europe since the Second World War: the so-called hard security (defense) and soft security (democracy, human rights and the rule of law). I praised the achievements of the European Security and Defence Assembly over the years in ensuring the link between members of the EU, NATO members and all the other European countries, and more generally, its contribution towards increasing the awareness at the highest political level of the need for a stronger common European defense and security policy.

Following the end of the existence of the Western European Union as a result of the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, I did not wish to interfere with the way in which issues that were on the WEU Assembly's agenda would be debated at a parliamentary level in the future. However I stated my deep conviction that international parliamentary scrutiny is just as essential for democratic stability as the control that is exercised by national parliaments and that this was particularly important when it comes to defense, where we are talking above all about human lives; without forgetting the huge amounts of taxpayers' money involved.

40. Rekindling of the Hanukkah Flame (Paris, 1 December 2010)

On the occasion of my visit to Paris, I also participated in the rekindling of Hanukkah Flame, one of the most important Jewish traditions. This was an occasion to stress again my deep belief of the necessity for dialogue between cultures and religions and, more generally, the fight against prejudice and the promotion of tolerance.

41. Official visit to Bulgaria (7-10 December 2010)

During my official visit, I met the President of Bulgaria, the Speaker of Parliament, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, the leaders of parliamentary political parties as well as other officials. On 10 December, the International Human Rights Day, I went to Varna where I met the Regional Governor and gave a lecture to the students of the Free University of Varna.

I warmly welcomed the democratic transformations in Bulgaria, which enabled it to rapidly join the European Union and NATO. I also stressed that Bulgaria was a constructive, active and reliable partner of the Council of Europe.

I showed appreciation for the efforts that the Parliament was making in order to amend the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure in collaboration with the Council of Europe's Venice Commission. At the same time, the proper implementation of this legislation is equally important and I invited the authorities to take this into account.

Fight against corruption and organised crime should also be a priority and I stressed that the authorities had to fully invest themselves into this task.

On the democratic institutions front, I encouraged the key stakeholders to work on a new election law. I stressed that an electoral reform should be based on a broad consensus among different political forces. I invited Parliament and the key political stakeholders to use fully the expertise of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission in electoral matters in order to take into account the best European practices in this field.

The implementation of these and other reforms would create the conditions for closing the Assembly's "post-monitoring dialogue" with Bulgaria. I expressed my confidence that the authorities had the political will to succeed in this task.

In my meetings I also had an opportunity to discuss other issues, including the reform of the Council of Europe, the accession of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights, the fight against discrimination and the rights of minorities, religious and ethnic groups, including the Roma.

I also addressed a number of regional issues such as the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Albania, in Kosovo and in Moldova. I stressed that Bulgaria was a "factor of stability" in the Balkans. At the same time, I expressed my belief that it should play a greater role in helping other countries in the region with their own European integration. During my meetings, I suggested some concrete mechanisms that Bulgaria could use to achieve this objective.

42. Joint meeting of the Presidential Committee with the enlarged bureau of the Venice Commission (17-18 December 2010)

On 17 December 2010 I attended, together with my colleagues from the Presidential Committee, the Joint meeting between the Presidential Committee and the Enlarged Bureau of the Venice Commission. This meeting was one in a series of joint meetings organised regularly within the framework of the Co-operation Agreement between the Assembly and the Venice Commission.

As usual, our exchange of views was rich, fruitful and constructive. Three key issues were discussed: a) co-operation between the Assembly and the Venice Commission in Council of Europe member states presenting difficult political and institutional situations; b) synergies which could be created between the Assembly and the Venice Commission in the implementation of the Assembly's new status of "Partner for Democracy"; c) implications of the Council of Europe reform for the Venice Commission as well as the reform of the Assembly.

As far as in country co-operation is concerned, I stressed that the actions of the Assembly and of the Venice Commission were complementary. Since the last joint meeting in 2009, as many as 10 opinions were prepared by the Venice Commission at the request of the Assembly. Joint action at political and legal level by the Assembly and the Venice Commission is instrumental in resolving the current institutional and political crises in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova. The Venice Commission's support is essential in ensuring that the ambitious and far-reaching democratic reforms in Georgia and Ukraine comply fully with Council of Europe standards.

I also stressed that the Venice Commission's expertise and experience in working with non-member states of the Council of Europe is extremely useful for the Assembly, in the consideration of the pending and future applications for the "Partnership for Democracy" status. Morocco is a full member of the Venice Commission and the Palestinian National Authority enjoys a special co-operation status with the Commission. Therefore, I invited the Venice Commission to make available all the relevant opinions and studies to the Assembly rapporteurs on the applications for the partnership status.

After the Joint Meeting I had the opportunity to address the Plenary session of the Venice Commission and brief the members of the Commission on the results of our discussions in the Joint Meeting.

43. Official visit to the Kingdom of Morocco (19-23 December 2010)

During my official visit I met the Speakers of the two Chambers of parliament, the Interior Minister, the Foreign Minister and the President of the Consultative Council on Human Rights. I also met regional authorities in Marrakech.

During all my meetings I stressed that for the Council of Europe, and its Parliamentary Assembly, Morocco was a strategic partner. First of all, because it is a very close neighbour, not only in geographical terms, but also as a modern, liberal, tolerant country, open to the rest of the world and to Europe in particular. And also because many of the challenges in a global world such as migration, sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, fight against terrorism, or fight against all sorts of trafficking, require a coordinated response on both sides of the Mediterranean. In this connexion, I pointed out that Morocco was a strong and reliable partner of Europe and it played a stabilising role in the region.

I welcomed in particular the broad reforms that the country has undertaken during the last decade in the political, economic and social sphere, such as the Initiative for Human development, the new Family Code, the Truth Commission and, more generally, all the work that has been done in order to expand civil liberties and fundamental freedoms and to strengthen democratic institutions and practices.

I showed my appreciation for the excellent cooperation between Morocco and the Council of Europe, Morocco being for instance a member of the Venice Commission and also the first non-European country to have joined the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. I also urged my parliamentary interlocutors to make full use of the Parliamentary Assembly 2008 Resolution on strengthening cooperation with the Maghreb countries, which has already resulted in regular visits by a Moroccan parliamentary delegation to each Assembly session.

I stressed that the most ambitious objective now was for Morocco to be able to obtain the status of "partner for democracy" with PACE, which would bring our cooperation to a new level. I praised Morocco for being the first country to have applied for this status and, I doing so, to have made a formal commitment to embrace the values and principles of the Council of Europe and to use its experience as widely as possible. I said that this commitment should now be given specific substance.

During my meetings, I therefore encouraged the Moroccan authorities to join as many Conventions of the Council of Europe open to non-member states as possible, to cooperate closely with the Venice Commission and the Human Rights Commissioner and the Council of Europe monitoring bodies such

as the CPT or the ECRI. I also congratulated Morocco on the moratorium on death penalty which has existed since 1993 – but also pointed out that Morocco could come even closer to Council of Europe standards in this respect.

I encouraged the authorities to make further progress in the democratisation of the country, paying special attention for instance to issues such as giving even bigger rights to women, as well as fully respecting human rights in the fight against terrorism.

I also stressed that if Morocco strengthened its cooperation with the Council of Europe in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, this would also help further integration with the European Union in the framework of its “Advanced status” with Morocco and the European Neighbourhood Policy.

With all my interlocutors, we also discussed the issue of Western Sahara. I exposed the Assembly position on this issue in a resolution of 2004 in which it gives its full support for a negotiated and mutually acceptable solution in the framework of the UN. My meetings helped me gain a better insight of the Moroccan position on this issue, which I promised to report back to Strasbourg.

44. Official visit to Tunisia (10-12 January 2011)

At the invitation of the Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Tunisia, I visited Tunisia on 10-12 January 2011. During my visit, I met Mr Fouad Mebazaâ, President of the Chamber of Deputies, Mr Abdallah Kallel, President of the Chamber of Advisors, Mr Mohamed Ghannouchi, Prime Minister, Mr Kamel Morjane, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr Mohamed Nouri Jouini, Minister of Development and International Co-operation.

My visit took place at a very turbulent moment: protests over the current social and economic situation, which started mid-December 2010, degenerated in early January into massive clashes with the police leading to the death of at least 78 people, according to the official information. Leaders of trade unions and international NGOs say the death toll may even be higher.

In this context, I expressed profound concern at the recent social and economic tension. I called upon the authorities to manage the current crisis in a responsible manner and in full respect of Council of Europe principles, ensuring in particular full respect of the freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and avoiding disproportionate use of force by law enforcement agencies. I called upon the authorities to investigate fully the events and provide the population with comprehensive unbiased information.

At the same time, during my visit, I presented to the authorities the opportunities offered by the new status of “Partnership for Democracy” with the Assembly as well as the important conditions attached to the granting of this status. I stressed that while there were many issues of common concern on which we could work together (e.g. migration, prevention of terrorism, trafficking in human beings, intercultural dialogue and its inter-religious dimension), the Tunisian authorities had to make further progress in order to meet the conditions for granting the partnership status with the Assembly, especially, in the field of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The representatives of all parties represented in Parliament as well as the Speakers of both Chambers of Parliament showed great interest and enthusiasm with respect to the opportunities offered by this new status. I trust the new Parliament to be formed as a result of early elections scheduled to take place later during 2011 will take further steps in this direction soon.

In my meetings with the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs as well as the Minister of Development and International Co-operation I encouraged our partners to use fully other opportunities for co-operation: enlarged partial agreements, especially, in the field of democracy and human rights. In this respect, I advised the authorities to use the expertise of the Venice Commission in legislative reforms as well as apply for membership in the Council of Europe’s North-South Centre.

45. Hearing on the current situation with regard to “The consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia” (organised by the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by member States) (Paris, 17 January 2011)

At this hearing, I said that we should not argue about the past anymore and that we now needed to discuss the future. I stressed that the cornerstone of building the future was of course a lasting political settlement of the conflict in conformity with international law and guaranteeing security and freedoms and rights of the populations concerned. I added that until this lasting settlement was found, the conflict would continue to compromise both stability and economic development of the whole region.

I concluded saying that we must, first of all, deal with the living conditions, human rights and perspectives of the populations directly affected by these conflicts and that I was persuaded that, if we are really determined and concerted, we can and must achieve concrete results on this "humanitarian dimension" of the consequences of the war without further delay.

46. Visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau at the invitation of the Aladdin Project, the City of Paris and UNESCO (Auschwitz, 1 February 2011)

The visit in respect to the victims of the Holocaust at the Nazi camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau was organised by the Aladdin Project in partnership with UNESCO and the City of Paris. More than 200 personalities from forty countries across five continents took part, including UNESCO Director General, UN Deputy Secretary-General, former Heads of State and Government, the special envoys and representatives of the Heads of State and Governments of Poland, France, USA, Russia, Turkey, Morocco, Jordan, Israel, and Iraq and mayors of major cities in Europe, Middle East and Africa. The delegation also included Algerian, American, British, French, German, Iraqi, Iranian, Israeli, Jordanian, Moroccan, Pakistani, Palestinian, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Tunisian and Turkish political, religious and civic leaders and intellectuals and Holocaust survivors.

In my speech, I stressed the importance of people coming together, as on that day in Auschwitz, regardless of their origin, country, culture and religions in order to fight growing hate speech and intolerance in the world. I highlighted some of the most important achievements of the Council of Europe in teaching the memory of the Holocaust and preventing crimes against humanity through education. I also mentioned the major debate on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue that the Parliamentary Assembly will hold during its April 2011 part-session, which is part of the Assembly's endeavor to contribute towards a hate-free and phobia-free Europe.

47. Official visit to the Republic of Moldova (8-10 February 2011)

At the invitation of Mr. Marian Lupu, President of Parliament and Acting President of the country, I carried out an official visit to the Republic of Moldova on 8-10 February 2011. During this visit, I met Mr. Lupu as well as Prime Minister Mr. Vlad Filat, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Mr. Iurie Leanca and all political groups represented in parliament.

The objective of the visit was to help solve the current deadlock concerning the election of the President of the Republic of Moldova. Mostly because of this deadlock, three elections and one referendum took place in less than two years and Moldova now needs political stability to make progress on the necessary reforms.

During my meetings, I was encouraged by the willingness of the Moldovan political parties to dialogue to solve this political deadlock. I stressed that any solution to overcome it should be based on a large consensus of political forces and that it was fundamental for the majority and the opposition to engage, without further delay, in meaningful negotiations and to accept compromises in the interest of the country.

In this connection, I welcomed the readiness of all concerned to discuss all the different proposals which have been put forward by different political parties. Mr. Lupu informed me of his intention to set up a parliamentary committee to discuss possible constitutional arrangements

following the latest decision of the Constitutional Court on this matter. I urged all political parties to take part in this initiative and I received a favorable reaction from all of them.

In the meantime, it is of utmost importance that a lasting solution is found without blocking the normal functioning of Moldova's institutions, in particular the Parliament. It was encouraging to see that despite difficulties with the election of the President, the state institutions are working and fulfilling their functions.

I also stressed that any solution must be in conformity with the Moldovan Constitution and laws as well as with the Council of Europe standards and invited the authorities to seek advice of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission as much as needed.

Furthermore, it is obvious that the process of looking for a solution of this deadlock must also go hand in hand with work on a far-reaching institutional and legislative reform, including constitutional amendments where relevant, in order to establish genuine democratic safeguards against similar situations.

Moldova is still under the PACE monitoring procedure and I invited both the majority and the opposition to concentrate fully on completing the implementation of remaining commitments and obligations to the Council of Europe. These reforms were also needed to accelerate the integration process with the European Union and advance towards a visa-free regime with the EU, an objective which I fully supported.

48. Lecture at the Moscow State University of Culture and Art (Moscow, 10 February 2011)

At the invitation of Mr. Ilyas Umakhanov, Vice-President of the Council of the Federation, and Mr. Ramazan Abdulatipov, Rector of the University, I addressed students and lecturers of the Moscow State University of Culture and Art on 10 February 2011 and held an exchange of views with them. In this connection, I was awarded an "honoris causa" degree of this University.

In my speech, I welcomed the positive climate in relations between Russia and the Council of Europe. Referring to the Assembly priorities, I expressed concerns about the general rise of extremist, racist and xenophobic rhetoric in many of our member states and stressed that intercultural dialogue and its inter-religious dimension was the most effective tool for promoting mutual understanding and fighting against discrimination.

49. Meeting with the "Dialogue Eurasia Platform" (Moscow, 11 February 2011)

With a view of discussing the role of NGOs in promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, I held a meeting with the "Dialogue Eurasia Platform" on 11 February in Moscow. "Dialogue Eurasia Platform" is a major non-governmental organisation, which promotes tolerance and peaceful co-operation among nations and different ethnic groups in the Euro-Asian space.

In my statement, I stressed that NGOs are indispensable partners in the fight against growing intolerance and xenophobia in our societies and they also make a valuable contribution to the integration of migrants and the fight against discrimination. I also mentioned my intention to invite NGOs active in the field of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue to the June part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly.

50. Visit to the Republic of Tatarstan (Russian Federation) (11-13 February 2011)

Upon the invitation of Mr. Ilyas Umakhanov, Vice-President of the Council of the Federation, and Mr. Rustam Minnikhanov, President of the Republic of Tatarstan, I visited this Republic - subject of the Russian Federation - on 11-13 February 2011.

During my visit, besides the meeting with the President of Tatarstan, I met the Chairman of the State Council, Mr. Farid Mukhametshin, members of the State Council, representatives of political parties and national and cultural associations in the Republic, religious leaders and students at the University of Kazan.

At the end of the visit, I expressed my appreciation to the authorities of the Republic for their efforts to develop and preserve the cultures and traditions of about 115 nationalities and ethnic groups. In my opinion, the Republic of Tatarstan can serve as an example of tolerance and peaceful and prosperous coexistence of cultures and religions for the whole region. At the same time Tatarstan, with its system of broad autonomy, can also be a model for organising relations between the federal center and autonomous entities.

51. 20th Anniversary of restoration of the Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Paris, 17 February 2011)

On 17 February 2011, I attended the ceremony to mark the 20th anniversary of restoration of Azerbaijan's independence held in Paris. The ceremony was held at the initiative and with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and Azerbaijani Embassy in France. Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva, the First Lady of Azerbaijan and President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation as well as the French Culture Minister Mr. Frederick Mitterrand took part and addressed the event.

52. Lectures at the National Conference of University Professors (Carlton House Terrace) and the London School of Economics (London, 18 February 2011)

On 18 February 2001 in London, I presented the activities of PACE to the National Conference of University Professors (Carlton House Terrace) and also addressed students from the London School of Economics, one of the most prestigious universities in the world. I, in particular, paid a lot of attention to the ongoing developments in Arab countries and stressed that the Council of Europe stands ready to support democratic transformation in this region.

53. Visit to the United Nations (New York, 21-25 February 2011)

On 21-25 February, I paid an official visit to New York in order to participate in two events organised in the margins of the 55th Plenary Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. On 23 February, I addressed the annual parliamentary meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on "the Role of Parliaments in promoting access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology", focusing on the issue of non-discrimination and combating gender stereotypes in education. On 25 February, I spoke at the Council of Europe side event on "Combating Gender Stereotypes in Education", highlighting the key Assembly recommendations in this area. Both meetings offered a good opportunity to present the Assembly contribution to our global and European partners.

In the margins of both events, I met Ms Michele Bachelet, UN Under-Secretary General for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, as well as Executive Director of the recently established UN Women – UN structure dealing with the issues of empowerment of women. During my meeting, I stressed the complementarity of the activities of the Assembly and of UN Women as well as invited Ms Bachelet to address the Assembly on the occasion of one of our forthcoming debates on the issue of empowerment of women.

I also met a number of Permanent Representatives to the UN of Council of Europe member and observer states. The issues discussed were: interaction with UN bodies in the field of inter-cultural dialogue and its inter-religious dimension, parliamentary diplomacy and complementary and joint actions in countries presenting difficult political and institutional situations (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, frozen conflicts), as well as the situation in the Middle East and the Euro-Mediterranean region (Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria).

54. Official visit to Serbia (7-8 March 2011)

On 7-8 March 2011, I paid an official visit to Serbia, at the invitation of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. During my stay in Belgrade, I met Ms Slavica Djukic-Dejanovic, Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Mirko Cvetkovic, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Mr Vuk Jeremic, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the representatives of the political parties represented in the National Assembly as well as the members of the Serbian delegation to the Assembly. I also had an opportunity to address the National Assembly on 7 March 2011.

In my talks with the officials I stressed that the reforms should not slow down and that the Serbian Government and Parliament should intensify efforts to amend the electoral legislation and abolish the so-called 'party-administered mandates', strengthen the independence of the judiciary, step up efforts to fight corruption and continue strengthening minority rights. I invited the National Assembly to complete the drafting of the Roadmap for the completion of Serbia's remaining post-accession commitments and obligations, in consultation with the Assembly co-rapporteurs, stressing that the Assembly stands ready to provide its full political support to Serbia in this process.

As far as regional co-operation is concerned, I invited the Serbian authorities to play a constructive role in the region, by promoting reconciliation and dialogue, supporting neighbours on their path to European integration (especially, Bosnia and Herzegovina), as well as engaging in meaningful constructive negotiations with the authorities in Pristina in order to find solutions to the problems individuals living in this area have to face, irrespective of their ethnic, cultural or linguistic background.

On 8 March 2011, I visited Vojvodina where I met the Speaker of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Mr Sandor Egeresi, the Chairman of the Executive Council, Mr Bojan Pajtic, as well as the representatives of the National Minority Councils whose offices are located within the territory of the Autonomous Province. In my talks with officials I welcomed the efforts of the institutions of Vojvodina aiming at promoting integration and supporting minority communities in the fields of education, culture, the use of minority languages and access to the media. I also praised Vojvodina's success in implementing cross-border co-operation projects with regions in neighbouring countries, stressing that the best practice developed should be replicated in other parts of Serbia as well as elsewhere in Europe.

Finally, I raised the issue of the composition of the Serbian delegation with the Speaker of the National Assembly and with the Chairman of the Serbian delegation to the Assembly. I was informed of the tabling of a draft decision which would bring the composition of the delegation into line with the Assembly Rules of Procedure and invited the Serbian Parliament to complete the procedure quickly, in order to submit a new delegation to the Assembly for the April part-session.

55. Summit "Leaders of change" (Istanbul, 14 March 2011)

On 14 March 2011, I addressed the "Leaders of Change Summit" in Istanbul during a session on international leadership in the modern age. I took this opportunity to stress that today's challenges were no smaller than those 60 years ago when the Council was founded. I said that we were living through a challenging and uncertain period for Europe and the world and, in many respects, it would seem that our differences were again becoming more important than what we have in common.

Therefore, I called on current political leaders to show the same attachment to the fundamental values as the founders of the Council of Europe did in 1949, to concentrate on our common future and not revive the evils of history again.

This two-day summit, which was opened by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was attended by global statesmen, academic leaders and business executives from around the world, including the Prime Minister of Ukraine Mykola Azarov, member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Bakir Izetbegovic and a number of Foreign Ministers, as well as former heads of state and government. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Nobel prize-winner Al Gore also participated.

56. Official visit to the Principality of Monaco (17-19 March 2011)

During this official visit, I stressed that, since its accession to the Council of Europe, Monaco has demonstrated its commitment to the Organisation's standards as well as the political will to carry out further reforms. The country has made progress in a number of areas such as the fight against money laundering, terrorist financing and corruption, exchanging information on tax matters as well as the reform of the judiciary and the revision of the Criminal Code.

However, I also recalled that some issues still remain unresolved and invited the authorities to continue further reforms of Monaco's institutions and fulfill commitments in the framework of the post-monitoring dialogue. In this connection, I encouraged further progress in ensuring that the National Council was able to fulfill its constitutional functions of supervising government action, initiating legislation and debating the executive's policies and budget. The Monegasque authorities should also consider revising the legal status of political parties as well as seek to bridge legal gaps between Monegasque and non-Monegasque.

My programme included an audience with His Serene Highness Prince Albert II, to whom I expressed my condolences following the death of the Prince's aunt, Princess Antoinette. Furthermore, I met with the Principality's Minister of State Michel Roger, the President of Monaco's National Council Jean-Francois Robillon and representatives of political groups in the National Council.

57. Official visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina (23-25 March 2011)

My visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 23-25 March 2011 aimed at following up to the talks with the authorities and leaders of key political parties during my official visit of 1-3 March 2010, in order to identify concrete ways of supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina further, in the process of formation of authorities after the October 2010 general elections as well as in the implementation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's post-accession commitments and obligations.

During my visit, I met the members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the leaders of key political parties. I expressed serious concern that, almost six months after the 2010 general elections, authorities have not been established at every level, stalling urgently-needed reforms. In this context, I called upon all political stakeholders to engage in meaningful negotiations and, if necessary, make concessions in order to come to a compromise, because a whole country cannot be held hostage by politicians who cannot agree.

Furthermore, I regretted very much that, more than one year after the Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the Sejdic and Finci case, the authorities have not made any convincing attempts to implement the judgment and carry out a constitutional reform. In this respect, I again urged the key political stakeholders to establish a serious domestic institutionalised process to draft constitutional amendments in order to execute this judgment but also to improve the functioning of Bosnia's institutions at every level.

Finally, I again urged the Presidency to complete the process of appointment of Bosnia and Herzegovina's members to Council of Europe expert and monitoring bodies, including the Venice Commission, the CPT, the Advisory Committee of the FCNM and ECRI. I also called upon the key political stakeholders to urgently launch consultations about the appointment of a new delegation to the Assembly for the April part-session.

58. XVI Award ceremony of the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe and working visit to Portugal (28-29 March 2011)

I participated in the XVI Award Ceremony of the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe on 29 March 2011 in Lisbon. In my speech I underlined the action, the political experience and the huge moral authority of the two prize-winners Louise Arbour – former Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, as well as former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, former Brazilian President. I also praised their commitment in favour of dialogue and understanding amongst cultures and religions, and recalled the holding, during the April 2011 part-session of the Assembly, of a major debate on the religious dimension of inter-cultural dialogue.

I took the occasion of my visit to Lisbon to meet some of the highest officials of the State, namely Luis Amado, Minister of State and Foreign Affairs and Jaime Gama, President of the Portuguese Assembly, and I also had an interesting exchange of views with the Portuguese Delegation to PACE. I equally paid a visit to ACIDI (Portuguese High Commissioner for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue), the experience of which is impressive and deserves to be more widely known in Europe.

Talks focused on the need to enhance inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation with neighbouring countries, in particular in the light of the revolutions in the Arab world; the economic crisis; the reform of the Council of Europe and of the PACE, and the EU accession to the European Convention of Human Rights. I was impressed by the commitment of the Portuguese authorities to the further development and action of the North-South Centre and shared their desire to persuade more countries, Council of Europe members and other neighbouring countries, to join the Centre.

59. Working visit to the Czech Republic (30 March – 1 April 2011)

During my working visit to Prague, I discussed the contribution of the Czech Republic to the priority tasks of the Council of Europe, in particular as regards the accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights and the reform of the Organisation. Other issues, which I raised with the Czech authorities included the situation of the Roma population, the situation in Belarus, recent developments in the Arab world as well as PACE's new "Partnership for democracy" status.

I welcomed the authorities' commitment to the fight against extremism and progress made in the fight against discrimination and racism with the entry into force of the new Criminal Code and the passing of the 2009 Anti-Discrimination Act.

At the same time, I invited the Czech Republic to join important Council of Europe conventions such as the Convention on Cybercrime, the Protocol on non-discrimination to the European Convention on Human Rights, the Revised Social Charter, the Convention on Money Laundering, the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

During this visit, I met the President of the Chamber of Deputies Miroslava Nemcova, the President of the Senate Milan Stech, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Galuska, the Minister of Trade and Industry Martin Kocourek and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of both Chambers of Parliament.

60. European banking and financial Forum "World Finances on the Threshold of the Asian Era" (Prague, 31 March 2011)

On the occasion of my working visit to the Czech Republic (30 March - 1 April), I was invited to address the European banking and financial Forum "World Finances on the Threshold of the Asian Era".

I stressed that business was not the priority area of the Council of Europe work, but that we were concerned with the larger picture of business, including the fight against discrimination, intolerance, corruption and cyber crime or the defense of social protection standards.

Furthermore, I declared that as politicians, we were very much concerned about some global economic developments which have consequences on human rights of our citizens. In this connection, I recalled a report by Pieter Omtzigt (Netherlands, PPE/DC) on "Over-indebtedness of states: a danger for democracy and human rights" which will be discussed during the April Assembly part-session. This report expresses serious concerns about the vicious circle of excessive debt, large budget deficits and low economic growth, which is now threatening the very foundations of European structures and the quality of life of European citizens.

I also addressed the issue of links between human rights and business. Due to globalisation, businesses have grown in power and influence and even though the duty to protect human rights traditionally remains with the state, I stressed that there was an increasing legal recognition that private individuals and legal persons, including businesses, also have responsibilities in this respect.

61. World forum on inter-cultural dialogue (Baku, 7 April 2011); Bilateral working meetings with the Azerbaijani authorities (7-8 April 2011)

Following the invitation of the Azerbaijani authorities, I attended on 7 April 2011 the opening session of the "World Forum on Inter-cultural Dialogue - United Through Common Values, Enriched by

Cultural Diversity” and addressed the participants. Some 500 participants from 102 countries attended the Forum, together with senior representatives of key international partners (UNESCO, ISESCO, UN Alliance of Civilisations). The President of Azerbaijan, Mr Ilham Alyiev, opened the Forum.

In my address, I underlined that the fundamental values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law make up the foundation for intercultural dialogue and create an environment in which dialogue can flourish. Referring to the Council of Europe White Paper on Inter-cultural dialogue as well as to the recent Assembly reports on this subject, I called upon the participants to design and implement comprehensive national policies for promoting intercultural dialogue, stressing in particular the role that Parliaments should play in this process.

In the margins of the Forum, I held a series of working meetings with the President, Mr Ilham Alyiev, the Speaker of the Milli Mejlis, Mr Ogtay Asadov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Elmar Mammadyarov, as well as the members of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Assembly. My meetings focused on the co-operation between Azerbaijan and the Council of Europe in the implementation of key outstanding commitments and obligations as well as the most recent Assembly recommendations.

62. Visit to Tunisia by the Presidential Committee (20-22 April 2011)

On 20-22 April 2011, I took part in the visit of the Presidential Committee to Tunisia. This visit aimed at identifying, together with the authorities, concrete areas where the Assembly could provide its political support to Tunisia in the current process of democratic transformation. Together with my colleagues – leaders and representatives of the Assembly’s five political groups – I met Mr Fouad Mebazaa, President of the Republic a.i., Mr Beji Caïd Essebsi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tunisia, Mr Mohamed Mouldi Kefi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Taoufik Bouderbala, President of the National Committee for the establishment of facts during the recent developments, Mr Yadh Ben Achour, President of the High Commission for the achievement of the goals of the revolution, for political reform and democratic transition, as well as some NGO representatives and the Ambassadors of Council of Europe member states in Tunisia.

In our meetings we saluted the Tunisian people’s determination to build a genuine democratic society based on universal values and commended the government and people of Tunisia for managing the transition well. We also welcomed the creation of a series of commissions to prepare the democratic reforms, in line with the Assembly recommendations.

We stressed that the key priority of the authorities was to organise elections to the Constituent Assembly in compliance with the highest democratic standards, referring to the expertise and support that the Venice Commission could provide in this respect. In this context, we assured our partners of the Assembly’s full support as well as readiness and availability to observe the forthcoming elections.

In this context, I orally invited the Prime Minister of Tunisia, Mr Beji Caïd Essebsi, to address the Assembly during its June 2011 part-session, in relation with the debates on the co-operation between the Council of Europe and emerging democracies in the Arab world as well as the situation in Tunisia. Finally, we once again encouraged the current Tunisian authorities to keep in mind the opportunities offered by the status of “Partnership for democracy” with the Assembly as well as the conditions attached to it, so that the Constituent Assembly and the future authorities to be established could eventually prepare the ground for applying for this status, once a Parliament is elected.

After the visit, further to my official invitation, the Prime Minister designated Mr Mohamed Mouldi Kefi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to participate in the Assembly debate during the June part session.

63. High Level Conference on “The Future of the European Court of Human Rights” (Izmir, Turkey, 26 April 2011)

In my address, I stressed that national parliaments must play a key role in stemming the flood of applications submerging the European Court of Human Rights, mostly through rigorously and

systematically verifying the compatibility of draft and existing laws with the Convention's standards. Parliaments should apply pressure on governments to rapidly implement the Court's judgments when violations were found.

I also underlined PACE's role in electing the judges of the Court, pointing out that the Assembly was doing its best to ensure that the judges were of the highest caliber and did not hesitate to send back lists of candidates which it considered unsatisfactory.

On this occasion, I held bilateral meetings with the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Sven Alkalaj, and Bulgarian Deputy Minister of the Interior, Mr. Veselin Vuchkov.

64. Official visit to Croatia (27-29 April 2011)

During the visit, I met the President of the Republic, Mr Ivo Josipovic, the Speaker of Parliament Mr Luka Bebic, the Prime Minister, Ms Jadranka Kosor, as well as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Mr Gordan Jandrokovic. Talks were also held with, in particular, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament and Chairman of the Committee on European Integration, Mr Neven Mimica, with the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and head of the Croatian delegation to PACE, Mr Frano Matušić, as well as with the Chairperson of the National Committee for monitoring the accession negotiations with the EU, Ms Vesna Pusic, and with members of the parliamentary Committee on human and national minority rights.

With my interlocutors I praised the active and constructive role that Croatia has played during its 15 year membership in the Council of Europe, thus demonstrating its potential of playing the same positive role and making full benefit of a membership in the European Union. I stressed that the country has a special responsibility as it would serve as a model of European integration to the other countries of the region.

I paid tribute to the efforts that Croatia has made in dealing with the past, also praising its role in fostering reconciliation and co-operation in the region. Further effort is still needed to pursue war crimes prosecutions at domestic level, in particular in order to ensure unbiased trials, regardless of the national origin of the defendants and to provide reparation for victims. Finding a fair and final solution to the property issues of refugees and IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) would also help to close this chapter.

I urged the Croatian authorities to pursue the reform of the judiciary in order to increase its efficiency and professionalism.

I also commended the "zero tolerance" shown by the Croatian authorities to corruption and efforts to fight organised crime, and urged them to show courage and determination in pursuing this policy, to further strengthen regional co-operation in these areas and to make extensive use of the help of Council of Europe specialised bodies.

I stressed that although much has been achieved in the field of minority rights, further efforts are needed to eradicate hatred inherited from the past and improve the situation of the Roma.

Talks also focused on the current reform of the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights, the situation in neighbouring Balkan countries, as well as on the need for greater co-operation and intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in the Mediterranean, in the light of current events in North Africa.

65. General Assembly of the Association of Towns awarded the Europe Prize (Ankara, 6-7 May 2011)

The General Assembly of the Association of Towns awarded the Europe Prize was held on 6 and 7 May 2011 at the invitation of the Mayor of Ankara. Around twenty mayors took part in this Assembly and discussed projects of social cohesion in their towns ; they also elected their new president, the Mayor of Ankara, Mr Melih Göcek, for a period of two years.

I participated in the opening session, in the exceptional presence of the Turkish Prime Minister, Mr Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

66. 121st session of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers meeting (Istanbul, 11 May 2011)

In my address, I said that a Council of Europe summit was needed to ensure the necessary level of political commitment to implement the measures proposed by the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe in their report on “Living together – combining diversity and freedom in 21st century Europe”. Such a Summit would mark the new start for a reformed Council of Europe with the European Union as member to the European Convention on Human Rights and would also highlight the unique capacity of our Organisation to cover a united, but multi-polar Europe – comprising the European Union, but also non-European Union member states.

I also used this occasion to meet Mr. Rupiah Bwezani Banda, President of Zambia, and Mr. Alpha Conde, President of Guinea, who were in Istanbul to participate in the UN Summit of the least developed countries.

67. Meeting of the Bureau of the Congress of local and regional authorities (Antalya, Turkey, 13 May 2011)

I participated and addressed the meeting of the Bureau of the Congress.

68. Standing Committee and official meetings in Ukraine (Kiev, 25-27 May 2011)

On the occasion of the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly, I met the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and acting Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, and the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, Volodymyr Lytvyn.

69. Meeting of the European Forum Cyprus (Istanbul, 27 May 2011)

This project, jointly supported by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, brings together young leaders from the two communities of Cyprus. I called for a lasting and comprehensive solution for a peaceful and united Cyprus, which would guarantee the legitimate rights of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, in full compliance with the values and principles of the Council of Europe. I have also stressed that the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly could make a useful contribution through promoting people-to-people contacts.

70. Official visit to Kirghizstan (27-28 June 2011)

Upon the invitation of the President of the Speaker of the Kirgiz Parliament, I visited Bishkek on 27 and 28 June 2011. During my visit, I met, in particular, the President of the Republic Mrs. Roza Otunbaeva, the Speaker of Parliament Mr. Akhmatbek Keldibekov, the Prime Minister Mr. Almazbek Atambaev, the leaders of parliament’s political groups as well as representatives of the Meskhetian Turks.

I welcomed the encouraging democratic changes that have taken place Kirgizstan in the last year and offered closer contacts to encourage further change. In my opinion, Kirgizstan is on the right track in the implementation of reforms related to democratic institutions and basic freedoms, however, there is still a need to make progress in developing a democratic political culture.

I suggested that the parliament consider applying for “Partner for Democracy” status with the Assembly. The parliament had already fulfilled some important conditions for this status, such as abolishing the death penalty and a multi-party composition. In this connection, I invited a delegation from the Kirgiz Parliament to attend PACE’s 2011 October part-session.

I also welcomed the country’s on-going co-operation with the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission and encouraged the authorities to ratify Council of Europe conventions that were open to non-

member states. I also said that the Assembly would be ready to observe the Presidential elections scheduled for October 2011.

71. Meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) (Astana, Kazakhstan, 29 June- 1 July 2011)

On 29 June 2011 in Astana, I addressed the meeting of foreign ministers of the Organisation for Islamic Co- operation. In my speech, I stressed that the OIC and the Council of Europe have much in common and must work together more closely to head off conflicts and counter intolerance. In my opinion, the two organisations have a huge potential for co-operation. We face the same challenges in the modern world and, therefore, we have to find a common response to these challenges, based on shared values and principles.

I also suggested the OIC could contribute – along with the EU and UN Alliance of Civilizations – to a possible “platform for dialogue” between the Council of Europe, the main religious faiths and the main humanist organisations. The two Organisations should also make joint efforts to fight intolerance – be it Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, racism or xenophobia in general – by, for example, countering stereotypes in schoolbooks, the media and public discourse. In this connection, I called on politicians and elected representatives to speak out against extremism. For their part, Muslims and Muslim communities should also be the first to condemn and combat any form of political extremism under the cover of Islam.

On this occasion, I held bilateral meetings with Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Yerzhan Kazykhanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kanat Saudabayev, Secretary of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Kairat Mami, Speaker of the Senate and Mr. Ural Mukhamedzhanov, Speaker of Majilis of the Parliament.

72. Visit to Gagauzia, Republic of Moldova (14-16 July 2011)

Upon the invitation of the Bashkan of Gagauzia Mr. Mikhail Formuzal, I visited the autonomous territorial unit of Gagauzia (Moldova) and held meetings with the Bashkan and other officials and visited the Komrat University.

In my opinion, Gagauzia is a good model for the peaceful coexistence of different national communities in one country and the administrative arrangements for the region – where around 4.5 per cent of Moldova’s population lives – could be used as a model for the reintegration of Transnistria. I stressed that the Council of Europe remains ready to assist the Moldovan authorities to harmonise Gagauzia’s laws with national legislation, help clarify the distribution of competences and consolidate the status of the region.

In Chisinau on 14 July, I met with the First Vice-Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament Mr. Vlad Plahotniuc and the Chair of the External Policy Committee of the Moldovan Parliament Mr. Igor Corman, who is also a member of Moldova’s delegation to PACE.

73. International round table “Ukrainian Constitution and Modern Parliamentary” (Odessa, Ukraine, 17- 19 July 2011)

On 18 July 2011, I addressed a round table at the Odessa National Academy of Law with a lecture on “The Council of Europe neighbourhood policy in the light of the upheavals in the Arab world”.

I said that the “winds of change” sweeping the Arab world offer huge opportunities for the creation of a neighbourhood to Europe which is more peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous. To achieve this objective, freedom, dignity and democracy should not remain just revolutionary slogans, but the challenge is to translate them into specific actions on the ground and begin the immense task of changing minds, attitudes and practices.

In this connection, I listed the steps the Council of Europe – and particularly the Assembly – was taking to share its deep knowledge of democratic transformation, but without giving lessons or imposing models.

74. 2011 Ramadan reception and discussion evening (Copenhagen, 22 August 2011)

Upon the invitation of Mr Hüseyin Araç, member of the Danish Parliament, and of the Scandinavian edition of the Zaman newspaper, I attended the 2011 Ramadan reception and discussion evening held on 22 August at the Danish Parliament. This event brought together Members of Parliament, representatives of the diplomatic community, academics and NGO representatives. On this occasion, I addressed the participants in order to share with them the Assembly's contribution to the new Council of Europe's neighborhood policy, with special focus on the events in the Southern Mediterranean region.

Moreover, I spoke about the challenges that multiculturalism has to face in Europe, especially, in the light of the recent tragic events in Norway, and the Assembly's contribution in this respect as regards living together and the fight against extremism, racism, intolerance and xenophobia. In particular, I stressed that "the best model for living together" must be to bring cultures and religions together in a spirit of respect, dialogue and tolerance.

In the margins of this event, I met with the members of the Danish delegation to the Assembly to discuss with them the consequences of the recent tragic events in Norway and their political implications, possible Assembly actions in this respect, the Assembly's contribution to the Council of Europe's neighborhood policy, as well as the implications of the Assembly's reform.

75. Meetings with the Political Affairs Committee (Caserta, Italy, 6 September 2011) and the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Paris, 9 September 2011)

I attended meetings of these committees and held exchanges of views with members. At the meeting of the Political Affairs Committee, during which the Committee gave the go-ahead for granting the Partner for Democracy status to the Palestinian National Council, I concentrated on our relations with neighbouring non-member states.

At the meeting of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, I stressed, in particular, my personal commitment to non-discrimination on any grounds and discussed the question of the work of the Committee under its new mandate as from January 2012.

76. 8th Yalta Annual Meeting : "Ukraine and the World : Common challenges, common future" (Yalta, Ukraine, 15-17 September 2011)

An important number of personalities gathered at this meeting, including Mr. Yanukovich, President of Ukraine, Mr. Peres, President of Israel, Mr. Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine, Mr. Filat, Prime Minister of Moldova, Mr. Bildt, Foreign Minister of Sweden, Mr. Bagis, Minister for European Affairs of Turkey, Mr. Sikorski, Foreign Minister of Poland, Mr. Füle, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, and also Mr. Blair, former UK Prime Minister, Mr. Kwasniewski, former Prime Minister of Poland, Mr. Solana, former EU High Representative for CFSP, a number of MEPs and others, including Mr. Krugman, Nobel Prize Laureate.

I took part in a round table on "Human Rights and Democracy in Wider Europe" together with Mr. Jagland Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Gryshchenko, Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Mr. Yatsenyuk, MP, leader of "Front of Changes" party and Mr. David, MEP.

In my speech, which was followed by a discussion, I stressed that all Europe is now facing unprecedented challenges unseen since the end of the 2nd World War and that the way forward goes only through strict adherence to the Council of Europe fundamental values. I also stressed that "wider Europe" goes beyond the strictly geographical frontiers of our continent. Referring to the recently-established "Partner for democracy" status, I added that the Assembly was pursuing a strategy of bringing non-member states closer to the Council of Europe and to its standards and I recalled that we had even intensified our efforts in the wake of the Arab revolutions.

77. Conference on "A Common European Heritage – Value The Heritage, Sustainable Partnerships along Cultural Routes" (Shabo, Ukraine, 18 September 2011)

At this conference, organised in the framework of the European Heritage Days, I focused on the importance of cultural heritage and inter-cultural dialogue. I expressed my appreciation for

programmes such as the European Heritage Days, which create a platform for local partners to develop cross-frontier European projects. It is important to develop projects which focus less on the national angle than on the European dimension of heritage, put emphasis on the shared origins of much of this heritage and encourage a shared responsibility in its protection and development.

78. Round Table on “Reducing Risks” (organised by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine) (Kiev, 19 September 2011)

Speaking at a round table on risk reduction, I emphasized that politicians bear responsibility for overcoming humanity’s past errors and moving the world community in a direction which will preserve civilization. I stressed that humanity could either move towards balanced development, with human rights and democracy at its core, or regress to promoting only short-term interests which could eventually lead to the destruction of civilization.

79. Joint meeting with the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament (Brussels, 22 September 2011)

Our traditional annual joint meeting with the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament took place in Brussels on 22 September 2011. Despite the limited time available for our exchange of views (1.5 hour), it was a very good opportunity for dialogue between political group leaders of both institutions.

In my introduction, I welcomed the good progress with regard to the accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular the agreement reached on the modalities of participation of EP representatives in PACE meetings when the Assembly elects judges to the European Court of Human Rights.

I stressed that the format of a Joint Informal Body proved to be a very efficient and flexible co-ordination mechanism between PACE and the European Parliament and, therefore, I suggested using this model in future for discussing other issues of common interest.

Also in my introduction, I stressed that the revolutionary changes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, as well as ongoing protests in Syria, present us with a great challenge and informed the European Parliament leaders about the success of the new PACE “Partner for Democracy” status.

During the discussion which followed, I was very pleased by the firm support of the mainstream European Parliament political groups to the European Union accession to the ECHR. There was a clear political will of the European Parliament side to develop our cooperation. Among the issues mentioned by the European Parliament leaders in this connection were the influence and role of media in our societies and the serious challenges which the European Union was facing today.

80. International Humanitarian Forum (Baku, 10-11 October 2011)

During my speech at the International Forum in Baku on the humanitarian aspects of the challenges of the 21st century, I stressed that overcoming prejudice, discrimination and xenophobia through a truly intercultural model of “living together” is a key challenge for Europe and the world. I called for concrete steps to promote “living together” in Europe, including encouraging politicians to speak up for tolerance, an annual Forum against Extremism, and a major campaign on living together.

I also took this opportunity to highlight the Council of Europe’s work to build democratic stability and good governance in its neighbouring regions, not least through the Assembly’s new “Partnership for democracy” status. I declared that, in my opinion, by providing support to our neighbours in building stable democratic institutions, promoting human rights and sustainable development, we are addressing the root causes of humanitarian disasters, and that, without these efforts, even with the best co-ordination mechanisms possible of humanitarian aid, our action would not be sustainable.

On the occasion of the Forum, I met the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the Milli Mejlis and the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

81. Ceremony on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the opening for signature of the European Social Charter (Strasbourg, 18 October 2011)

I was invited to take part in a ceremony in Strasbourg to mark the Social Charter's 50th anniversary. I declared on this occasion that all Council of Europe member states should be bound by the Charter, just as they are bound by the European Convention on Human Rights. The two conventions together make a whole and should be treated with equal value. I pointed out that to date, only 14 of the Council of Europe's 47 member states allow collective complaints under the European Social Charter – which allows trade unions and international NGOs to bring collective complaints against states over social rights. I stated very clearly that it is no longer acceptable to make excuses when it comes to ratification of the European Social Charter.

82. Participation in the 21st session of the Congress (Strasbourg, 18 October 2011)

On 18 October 2011, I addressed the 21st Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and replied to questions of Congress' members.

83. Official visit to Norway (19-21 October 2011)

On 19-21 October 2011, I paid an official visit to Norway, at the invitation of the Norwegian Parliament. During his visit, I had an audience with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon, and met with the President of the Storting, the representatives of political groups, the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, as well as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. I also held an exchange of views with the members of the Storting's Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence and with the Norwegian delegation to the Assembly. Finally, I delivered a lecture at the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights and met the Director of the Nobel Institute.

Speaking at the end of the visit, I welcomed Norway's permanent support to the work of the Assembly and the Council of Europe, praising in particular Norway's substantial contribution to the Organisation's co-operation programmes, both in terms of financial resources and expertise. In this respect, I supported the idea of launching co-operation and joint programmes in neighbouring countries, in order to offer them the necessary expertise for strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law and human rights.

Among other issues addressed during the visit, I discussed with my Norwegian interlocutors the Council of Europe's activities in the field of inter-cultural dialogue and its religious dimension, the situation in South-East Europe and the Council of Europe's role in the region, the Council of Europe reform process as well as the accession of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights and the reform of the Strasbourg Court.

At the end of his visit, I laid flowers at the Oslo Cathedral, in memory of the victims of July's attacks in Oslo and on Utøya island.

84. International high-level Conference on the occasion of the opening for signature of the Council of Europe Convention on Counterfeiting of Medical Products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (Medicrime Convention) (Moscow, 23 October 2011)

On 23 October 2011 in Moscow, I addressed the Conference on the occasion of the opening for signature of the Council of Europe Medicrime Convention. I stressed that counterfeiting medicines is one of the most hideous crimes, as it preys on peoples' weaknesses and vulnerability, and called on all Council of Europe member states to sign and ratify this convention as soon as possible.

On this occasion, I also met with the new Speaker of Russia's Federation Council, Mrs. Valentina Matvienko. After the meeting, I was awarded the Order of Merit for Developing Parliamentarism, the highest distinction of the Federation Council.

85. International Conference on Women as Agents of change in the Southern shore of the Mediterranean (Rome, 24 October 2011)

The conference was organised by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and an ad hoc Committee of the Bureau also took part in it. In my speech, I pointed out that the current political

developments in the South Mediterranean represented a unique opportunity to ensure that gender equality is enshrined in the new constitutional and legal frameworks of the new democracies, including family law, as well as an opportunity to promote a change in mentality amongst ordinary people and political leadership. Women must have their say in the running of public institutions and in the political decision-making process, in voting and standing for elections, in the same way as men. I said that the empowerment of women should not be limited to the public sphere, since in many countries of the South Mediterranean, women increasingly represent a driving force in the economy, as successful entrepreneurs or highly educated administrators.

I also highlighted the contribution of the Assembly to this process, namely through the Network of contact parliamentarians committed to combating violence against women, through the 'Partnership for democracy' status, which also includes a gender dimension, through intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, as well as through specific proposals for enhanced cooperation with emerging democracies in the Arab world, contained in a recently adopted Assembly Resolution on the same topic.

In the margins of the Conference, I had an interesting meeting with Mr Gianfranco Fini, President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies.

86. 17th Council of Europe Conference for Local and regional Government (Kyiv, 3 November 2011)

On 3 November 2011 in Kyiv, I addressed the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Local and Regional Government. On this occasion, I also addressed students at the University of Taras Shevchenko in Kiev and held an exchange of views with them.

87. Seminar on elections monitoring organized by the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member Nations (St Petersburg, Russian Federation, 10 November 2011)

On 10 November 2011 in St. Petersburg, I addressed the seminar on election monitoring organised by the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the CIS member nations. I stressed that election observation increases public confidence in the democratic institutions and, therefore, the presence of trusted observers exerts pressure on the protagonists of the political process to set up a proper framework and respect the rules. I underlined that it was essential to agree on common standards and methods for election observation in order to avoid conflicting evaluations and forum shopping.

During my visit to St Petersburg, I also held a bilateral meeting with the Chairman of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation Vladimir Churov.

88. Official visit to Algeria (13-16 November 2011)

I paid an official visit to Algeria on 13-16 November at the invitation of the Chairman of the Council of Nations Abdelkader Bensalah. I also had talks with the President of the National People's Assembly Abdelaziz Ziari, the Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia and the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mourad Medelci. I also met the Chairman of the National Consultative Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights Mohamed Farouk Kessantini and made a visit to the city of Tlemcen where I met with the regional Governor and the President of the regional Council.

During my talks, I stressed the key role that Algeria plays for stability and economic development in the Euro-Mediterranean region. I said that cooperation between the country and the Council of Europe was indispensable, as many key issues require common responses and co-operation, such as fight against terrorism, illegal immigration, trafficking, inter-cultural dialogue and environment.

I particularly encouraged authorities to request the PACE Partner for democracy status, stressing that this would give the Algerian parliamentarians – who are already coming to the PACE sessions under the terms of PACE resolution 1598 (2008) on strengthening co-operation with the Maghreb countries – more rights to take active part in deliberations on issues of common interest. In this respect, I expressed my opinion that Algeria qualifies on some of the key criteria for the Partnership status: multiparty system, moratorium on death penalty, efforts to enhance gender equality, organisation of elections according to democratic principles.

One of the major topics of all the discussions were the reforms announced last April by President Bouteflika aimed at changing legislation on elections, on political parties, liberalisation of broadcasting media, decriminalisation of press offence, participation of women in elected assemblies as well as a subsequent reform of the Constitution. I assured my interlocutors that the Assembly would be following developments with great interest and encouraged authorities to seek the opinion of the Venice Commission – of which Algeria is a member – on these laws, as well as on the forthcoming constitutional reform.

I also welcomed the intention of the authorities to invite international observers to the next parliamentary elections in spring 2012 and expressed my hope that PACE would be invited to observe these elections. Furthermore, I encouraged Algeria to join the Council of Europe North-South Centre.

My interlocutors were very interested in all these possibilities. At the same time, however, they expressed a clear desire to introduce reforms at their own pace and in accordance with the national realities and sensibility, and following the principle of sovereignty. I assured them of the Assembly's respect for these principles and emphasized that co-operation should be enhanced in a spirit of dialogue and mutual understanding, not by exporting models, but by learning to each other. I encouraged the Algerian authorities to use the Council of Europe's expertise along these principles.

89. Working visit to Istanbul: participation in the 44th Annual Conference of the International Association of Political Consultants and the 2011 Black Sea Energy and Economic Forum (Istanbul, 18 November 2011)

On 18 November 2011, I participated in the 44th Annual Conference of the International Association of Political Consultants, held in Istanbul, delivering a key note speech on the topic "Religion, Ethnicity & Culture Challenges for Democracy". In my speech, I stressed that Parliaments should use fully their democratic oversight powers in order to ensure that Governments take into account the inter-cultural dimension in the design of their policies and legislation. Moreover I noted that ever-closer ties should be developed with all of the actors in the society, particularly with ethnic and religious communities, including minority groups, in order to address all aspects of inter-cultural dialogue.

On the same day, I delivered a key note speech at the 2011 Black Sea Energy and Economic Forum, on the topic "Key regional perspectives: Europe's Southeast and Pan-European Values" highlighting the Council of Europe's and the Assembly's role in supporting the countries of the region in fulfilling their European aspirations. Moreover, I stressed that the South-East Europe and Black Sea region could be the bridge between Europe and the wider Euro-Asian and Euro-Mediterranean region. In particular, I suggested that the countries of the region should play an active role in sharing their own experiences of democratic transformations with our neighbours.

90. Working visit to Monaco, participation in the High level Conference on the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012 – 2015 (Monaco, 20-21 November 2011)

On 20 November 2011, I participated in the High level Conference on the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2012 – 2015, convened at the initiative of the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Monegasque authorities. In my opening speech, I called upon the authorities of Council of Europe member states to support the draft Strategy and take an active part in its implementation through comprehensive national strategies. I stressed that the Assembly would keep the issue of children's rights high on its agenda in the years to come in order to ensure that Parliaments make their own contribution to the implementation of the Council of Europe and national Strategies, by adopting the necessary laws corresponding to Council of Europe standards and scrutinizing the activities of the executives.

In the margins of the Conference, I held working meetings with the Speaker of the National Council, Mr Robillion, Minister of State, Mr Roger, the Government's Councilor for external relations, Mr Badia, as well as the members of the Monegasque delegation to the Assembly. In my meetings, I welcomed the good co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Monegasque authorities, in particular, within the framework of the post-monitoring dialogue. At the same time, I stressed the need to continue reforms in order to implement the Assembly recommendations relating to outstanding commitments, in accordance with Resolution 1690(2009). In this respect, I suggested elaborating a

concrete roadmap, with clear objectives, measures and deadlines, in order to streamline the reforms and fulfill Assembly's recommendations.

91. Working visit to London (22-23 November 2011)

During my two-day working visit to London, I met the Speaker of the House of Commons Mr. John Bercow and Deputy Speaker Mr. Nigel Evans as well as the Lord Speaker Baroness D'Souza. I also met the Minister of State for Justice Lord McNally, the Chair of the House of Lords EU Select Committee Lord Roper, the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Turkey Mr. Fabian Hamilton and the Chair of the UK delegation to PACE Mr. Robert Walter, as well as other members of the UK delegation. I also attended Prime Minister's question time.

During my meetings, I welcomed the priorities of the UK presidency and underlined that they hand in hand coincided with the priorities of the Assembly, in particular the emphasis put on the reform of the Court. In this connection, I stressed the importance of the EU accession to the European Court of Human Rights and expressed hope that the progress will be achieved during UK Chairmanship. Finally, I discussed the importance of a further development of the Council of Europe neighbourhood policy and the Assembly dimension of it, especially in the light of current political changes in the Arab World.

92. IPU 2011 Parliamentary Hearing on "Strengthening political accountability for a more peaceful and prosperous world" and bilateral meetings (New York, 28-30 November 2011)

In New York, I was member of the panel on "Accountability in the management of public funds – good practices and model legislation for budget transparency". In my introductory statement, I stressed that accountability in the management of public funds and transparency are the pillars of good governance and parliaments play a key role in ensuring that these principles are implemented. In my opinion, nowadays, parliamentary scrutiny over public finances is even more pertinent against the background of widespread socio-political turbulence and the loss of confidence by the public in institutions and politicians.

I called on parliaments to demonstrate a sense of leadership, political will and national unity around the public interest. I also pleaded for stronger links between parliaments and independent auditors, because external independent audits of national accounts play a highly valuable role in securing financial accountability, especially if their findings and recommendations are duly channelled to parliaments.

Finally, I stressed the role of co-operation at international level in the prevention of the spreading of bad financial management practices, praising in particular the contributions of the OECD and of the IMF which provide parliaments and governments with a wealth of good practice examples and models to follow.

During my stay in New-York, I held high-level bilateral meetings, in particular with the President of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, the Under-Secretary General of the United Nations for Political Affairs Mr. Lynn Pascoe, the Secretary General of the IPU Mr. Anders Johnsson, and the members of the diplomatic community, in particular Permanent Representatives of France, Russia and the United Kingdom to the UN. In accordance with the Assembly's Resolution 1831, I asked the Ambassadors to take into account the Assembly's call upon the members of the UN Security Council to support the Palestinian formal request to join the UN as a full member state. Among other issues, I raised the questions of promoting "soft security", strengthening the core values of the Council of Europe and promoting inter-cultural dialogue and its inter-religious dimension.

93. Working visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo, Banja Luka , 6-8 December 2011)

At the invitation of the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I travelled to Sarajevo and Banja Luka on 6-8 December 2011 to meet the leaders of all main political parties, the members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the members of the Collegiums of the House of Representatives and of the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly. During my meetings, I discussed the different ways to overcome the political

deadlock over the formation of a Government at State level as well as the implementation of the Sejdic and Finci Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights.

At the end of my visit, I suggested a set of concrete measures the authorities could take in order to overcome the political stalemate as well as speed up the implementation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitments and obligations to the Council of Europe. Among other things, I encouraged the authorities to continue seeking an agreement over the implementation of the Sejdic and Finci Judgment within the framework of the Joint Interim Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly, working at the same time on a broader constitutional reform to be implemented at a later stage, in order to create the necessary conditions for moving ahead with the EU integration agenda. Moreover, I urged the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to complete, before the Assembly debate on the functioning of democratic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina scheduled to be held during the January 2012 Assembly part-session, the appointment of Bosnia and Herzegovina's representatives in Council of Europe expert and monitoring bodies and launch the process of selection of candidates for the judge to be elected to the European Court of Human Rights.

Finally, I encouraged the political party leaders as well as the authorities in place to speed up the implementation of CoE- and EU-related reforms, on the eve of Bosnia and Herzegovina's 10th anniversary of membership in the Council of Europe in April 2012.

During my meetings, I felt that an agreement on the formation of a new Government was close to being concluded. Therefore, after my visit, I welcomed, on 30 December 2011, the conclusion of an agreement on the formation of the new Government and encouraged the authorities and the political leaders once again to take concrete steps in the implementation of the commitments and obligations to the Council of Europe as well as the execution of the Sejdic and Finci Judgment of the Strasbourg Court.

94. 89th Plenary meeting of the European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission) (16 December 2011)

I participated in the 89th Plenary meeting of the Venice Commission and took part in the debates.

95. Other meetings

I met the Palestinian President, Mr. Mahmud Abbas on 21st December 2011 and the Ukrainian President, Mr Viktor Yanukovich on 22 December 2011.

96. Official visit to Turkey (9-13 January 2012)

During my official visit, I met on 9 and 10 January in Ankara Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister, Mr. Cemil Çiçek, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly, Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu, Foreign Affairs Minister and Mr. Sadullah Ergün, Minister of Justice, as well as the heads of the political parties represented in the Parliament. I also delivered a speech before the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

Addressing the Grand National Assembly, I praised the reform process undertaken by the Turkish authorities and welcomed the importance given to a comprehensive constitutional reform. I stressed that the constitutional referendum held in September 2010 created, in particular, the basis for progress on 12 issues addressed in the framework of the PACE post-monitoring dialogue with Turkey.

However, I underlined that there are still efforts to be made in order to complete judicial reform and to reduce the number of cases before the European Court of Human Rights. In this connection, I invited the authorities to make extensive use of Council of Europe legal and technical expertise, such as that of the Venice Commission and other Council of Europe specialised bodies.

I also emphasized the efforts of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Europe in general to strengthen co-operation with neighbouring countries, both in the Arab world and Central Asia, in order to assist them in building democratic institutions.

When talking about the core issues on the Council of Europe's agenda, I especially highlighted the necessity to fight racism, islamophobia intolerance and discrimination in our societies and underlined

the importance of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue in order to cope with these negative phenomena.

In order to discuss the question of inter-religious dialogue, I met on 11 January in Istanbul the Chief Rabbi of Turkey, His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomeos I and the Deputy Patriarch of the Armenian Patriarchate. I also took part in a conference organised by the Istanbul Policy Center at Sabanci University, met the Rector of Koç University and addressed its students.

On 13 January, I visited a refugee camp in Turkey's Hatay region, which borders Syria and expressed my warm appreciation to the Turkish authorities for their generous treatment of Syrians fleeing the violence in their country. In my opinion, the Turkish response to the Syrian refugee crisis has been swift, efficient and generous. The camps that have been set up are of a high standard, providing shelter and warmth in the depths of winter to a traumatised population.

In this connection, I repeated the Assembly's call on Turkey to lift its geographical limitation on the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees so that non-Europeans are also able to obtain refugee status in Turkey. It would allow those who cannot or do not wish to return to Syria to benefit from longer-term international protection.

Referring to the ongoing crisis in Syria, I again urged the Syrian authorities to immediately cease violence against their own people and to honour their agreement with the Arab League. I declared that the continuing bloodshed was unacceptable and that Syria must stop killing its own people and start finding a way to enable peaceful democratic transition. In this connection, I also expressed concern at the death of the French TV journalist killed recently in Syria during a government-authorized trip and expressed sympathy to his family.

Furthermore, in Hatay, I addressed students at Mustafa Kemal University and visited the St Pierre Church, the Habib-i Mosque, the Orthodox Church and the Havra Synagogue. Finally, I ended up my visit in my home region of Antalya, where, in particular, I addressed students at Akdeniz University.

B. Press releases

1. Remembering is the best way to prevent a repeat of the tragedy of the Holocaust, says PACE President (27 January 2010)
2. Turkish Foreign Minister and PACE President meet in Strasbourg (29 January 2010)
3. Belarus - death penalty: PACE President welcomes creation of a parliamentary working group (4 February 2010)
4. « The Assembly will provide full support to achieve the necessary reforms in Turkey,» said PACE President (11 February 2010)
5. PACE President and Turkish Foreign Minister talk about reform in Turkey (11 February 2010)
6. PACE President and Georgian Speaker: "Mutual goodwill and the intention to co-operate" (11 February 2010)
7. PACE President invites new President-elect of Ukraine to address PACE April session (15 February 2010)
8. PACE President recalls major role of national legal systems for human rights protection (18 February 2010)
9. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu warmly welcomes Russia's ratification of Protocol No. 14 (18 February 2010)
10. PACE President, the leaders of the five political groups and the monitoring co-rapporteurs to visit Albania (18 February 2010)
11. 'One human rights standard – one Europe' (19 February.2010)
12. PACE President to participate in inauguration of Ukraine's President-elect (23 February 2010)
13. PACE President attends inauguration of new President of Ukraine (26 February 2010)
14. PACE President to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina (26 February 2010)
15. Albania : PACE President calls on all political forces to work together in Parliament (1 March 2010)
16. Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians to continue dialogue at PACE meeting in Turkey (2 March 2010)
17. 'Political will' needed for urgent constitutional change in Bosnia and Herzegovina, says PACE President (3 March 2010)
18. Middle East: PACE President urges parliamentarians on both sides to keep talking (4 March 2010)
19. Enhancing PACE-European Parliament co-operation: Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to meet Jerzy Buzek in Strasbourg (5 March 2010)
20. The Chair of the CM and PACE President call for a stronger participation of women in politics (5 March 2010)
21. PACE President wants to strengthen co-operation with the European Parliament (9 March 2010)
22. PACE President to visit Kazakhstan (12 March 2010)
23. PACE President in favour of strengthening relations with Kazakhstan (16 March 2010)
24. PACE Presidential Committee-Committee of Ministers: discussion on enhancing dialogue and co- operation (18 March 2010)
25. PACE President makes official visit to Moldova (19 March /2010)
26. Council of Europe condemns executions in Belarus (23 March 2010)
27. PACE President urges political forces in Moldova to continue dialogue over the Constitution (25. March 2010)
28. The role of parliaments in political reconciliation and good governance (26 March.2010)
29. PACE President condemns terrorist attacks in Moscow (29 March 2010)
30. Reconciliation has always been the 'raison d'être' of the Council of Europe (29 March /2010)
31. The Council of Europe condemns the bombings in Dagestan (31 March 2010)
32. Parliamentarians debate the future of European security at St Petersburg conference (1 April 2010)
33. After two wars, the Council of Europe has created a 'common language' of reconciliation (7 April 2010)
34. The Council of Europe supports the Roma community (8 April 2010)
35. PACE President recalls the value of 'soft security' (8 April 2010)
36. PACE President reacts to 'national tragedy' of plane crash in Smolensk (10 April 2010)

37. Free and fair elections 'the best way' for Azerbaijan to mark ten years in the Council of Europe (14 April 2010)
38. PACE President calls for frank dialogue with Russia, support for reforms in Ukraine and an increased presence in Belarus (26 April 2010)
39. PACE President calls on parliamentarians to mobilize for the preservation of biodiversity (28 April 2010)
40. PACE President expresses appreciation for efforts of the Swiss Presidency (7 May 2010)
41. PACE President to visit Armenia (10 May 2010)
42. 'Culture is not a luxury, it's a compelling need', says PACE President (10 May 2010)
43. PACE President congratulates Swiss Chairmanship (11 May 2010)
44. Armenia needs a clear roadmap of reforms in order to consolidate democracy (14 May 2010)
45. Ukraine: PACE President welcomes signing of Presidential Decree on Crimean Tatars (15 May 2010)
46. PACE President to visit Montenegro (17 May 2010)
47. PACE President says he hopes that Montenegro maintains current reform dynamic (17 May 2010)
48. Belarus: Council of Europe calls to commute two new death sentences (17 May 2010)
49. PACE President expresses support for Montenegro's EU bid (19 May 2010)
50. PACE President congratulates authorities in Skopje on their Chairmanship programme (20 May 2010)
51. PACE President expresses support for the priorities of the CM Chairmanship (21 May 2010)
52. Mevlüt Çavusoglu meets with Jean-Claude Mignon in Ankara (25 May 2010)
53. PACE President attends Alliance of Civilizations Forum (25 May 2010)
54. PACE President calls for a political culture which 'values diversity' (28 May 2010)
55. PACE President in Rio outlines ideas for combating Islamophobia (28 May 2010)
56. PACE President condemns Israel for 'disproportionate use of force' over Gaza convoy (31 May 2010)
57. Council of Europe leaders condemn terrorist attack in Turkey (31 May 2010)
58. PACE President underlines long-standing and effective co-operation between the Assembly and the Venice Commission (5 June 2010)
59. Freedom of movement of people a pre-condition for any further integration (7 June 2010)
60. In reality there is no dividing line between Europe and Asia, says PACE President (8 June 2010)
61. PACE President to visit Georgia (10 June 2010)
62. PACE President calls for enhanced intercultural dialogue to fight increasing intolerance (11 June 2010)
63. Mevlüt Çavusoglu named "Politician of the Year" in Turkey (14 June 2010)
64. PACE President calls for full implementation of Resolution 1683 (16 June 2010)
65. PACE President at European Forum Cyprus (17 June 2010)
66. Council of Europe leaders condemn bus bombing in Istanbul (22 June 2010)
67. PACE President encourages young women to claim leadership roles (28 June 2010)
68. 2010 International Day in support of victims of torture (28 June 2010)
69. PACE President makes official visit to Moscow (28 June 2010)
70. Parliaments should take into account the intercultural dimension in their work (29 June 2010)
71. PACE President satisfied with 'current positive climate' in relations with Russia (2 July 2010)
72. PACE President calls for calm after explosion in Mitrovica (3 July 2010)
73. The renewal of politics requires responsiveness, accountability and transparency, PACE President says (20 July 2010)
74. Kharkiv in Ukraine to receive 2010 Europe Prize during ceremony (19 August 2010)
75. PACE President expresses concern over the situation of Roma in Europe (20 August 2010)
76. Kharkiv's 'spirit of openness' praised during award ceremony (23 August 2010)
77. PACE President makes official visit to Romania (25 August 2010)
78. Mevlüt Çavusoglu expresses his condolences at the death of Lord McIntosh (31 August 2010)
79. PACE President: 'Romania deals successfully with minority issues' (1 September 2010)

80. PACE Presidential Committee and EP Conference of Presidents discuss EU accession to the Convention (2 September 2010)
81. Sweden praised for 'active role' in Council of Europe and EU reform (3 September 2010)
82. PACE President and delegation to attend a papal audience (7 September 2010)
83. "The mistreatment that Sakineh Ashtiani is suffering cast a tragic shadow on Iran", says PACE President (8 September 2010)
84. PACE President condemns bomb attack in Vladikavkaz (10 September 2010)
85. Fostering intercultural dialogue: a role of mediation for the media (11 September 2010)
86. PACE President welcomes referendum result in Turkey (13 September 2010)
87. PACE President makes official visit to Ukraine (15 September 2010)
88. PACE President congratulates Ukrainian President on reform programme but calls for different political forces to be involved (21 September 2010)
89. PACE President speaks at Odessa National Academy of Law and is awarded Honoris Causa (22 September 2010)
90. PACE President to make an official visit to Paris (24 September 2010)
91. Mevlüt Çavusoglu: Euronest Assembly and PACE must be complementary (28 September 2010)
92. PACE President supports priorities of the Turkish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers (10 November 2010)
93. PACE memorial forest in Antalya symbolises stronger Turkey-Europe relations (14 November 2010)
94. PACE President makes official visit to Finland (19 November 2010)
95. PACE President meets new member of Bosnian Presidency in Ankara (23 November 2010)
96. PACE President praises Finland for its leading role in promoting Council of Europe core values (24 November 2010)
97. PACE President discusses Council of Europe priorities with Finnish leaders (25 November 2010)
98. PACE President expresses concern at Swiss public support for automatic deportation of foreigners convicted of serious crimes (29 November 2010)
99. PACE President makes a plea for international parliamentary scrutiny (1 December 2010)
100. PACE President at rekindling of Hanukkah Flame in Paris (2 December 2010)
101. PACE President makes official visit to Bulgaria (7 December 2010)
102. PACE President welcomes Bulgaria's strong determination to fight corruption (9 December 2010)
103. PACE President condemns terrorist attack in Stockholm (12 December 2010)
104. PACE President stresses Russian MPs' valuable contribution to the functioning of the Council of Europe (13 December 2010)
105. Sweden: PACE President alarmed about return of Iraqi refugees to Iraq (17 December 2010)
106. PACE President makes official visit to Morocco (17 December 2010)
107. PACE and Venice Commission have complementary roles (17 December 2010)
108. Morocco: a Partner for Democracy status to strengthen cooperation (21 December 2010)
109. PACE President condemns attack in Alexandria (2 January 2011)
110. PACE President makes official visit to Tunisia (7 January 2011)
111. PACE President, visiting Tunisia, calls on authorities to manage the current tension in a responsible manner (12 January 2011)
112. Hearing on the current situation with regard to "the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia" (18 January 2011)
113. 'European Court explodes myth that Europe is able to protect the rights of refugees', says PACE President (21 January 2011)
114. PACE President's 'shock and horror' at Moscow airport bombing, Assembly members stand for a minute's silence (24 January 2011)
115. The Assembly pays tribute to Mateo Sorinas (24 January 2011)
116. PACE President recalls that human rights and freedoms must be the same for all (24 January 2011)
117. International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January 2011)
118. PACE President: "All forms of intolerance are on the rise again" (1 February 2011)
119. PACE President to make a visit to the Republic of Tatarstan (7 February 2011)

120. PACE President makes official visit to Moldova (7 February 2011)
121. PACE President welcomes willingness of Moldovan political parties to dialogue to solve the political deadlock (9 February 2011)
122. PACE President expresses concern about the rise of extremist rhetoric in Europe (10 February 2011)
123. PACE President meets the Dialogue Eurasia Platform (11 February 2011)
124. Arrivals in Lampedusa: all of Europe is concerned, says PACE President (14 February 2011)
125. Tatarstan an example of multinational and multi-religious coexistence (14 February 2011)
126. PACE ready to support democratic transformation in Tunisia (18 February 2011)
127. PACE President suggests measures for non-sexist education (23 February 2011)
128. Teachers are reinforcing gender stereotypes, PACE President suggests (25 February 2011)
129. PACE President strongly condemns indiscriminate and excessive use of force in Libya (25 February 2011)
130. PACE President calls for Europe to support humanitarian evacuation following massive exodus from Libya (2 March 2011)
131. PACE President makes official visit to Serbia (3 March 2011)
132. Serbia: 'the reforms should not slow down' says PACE President (7 March 2011)
133. PACE President welcomes Serbia's contribution to the reconciliation process between the countries of the former Yugoslavia (7 March 2011)
134. 'Gender equality should not wait another century' says PACE President (7 March 2011)
135. PACE President: Vojvodina 'a successful multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society' (9 March 2011)
136. The values we stand for can defeat dictatorships, says PACE President (11 March 2011)
137. PACE President expresses solidarity and sympathy following earthquake in Japan (11 March 2011)
138. PACE President issues call for leadership in an uncertain time (14 March 2011)
139. PACE President to make official visit to Monaco (15 March 2011)
140. PACE President welcomes Monaco's contribution to the Council of Europe (18 March 2011)
141. PACE President to make official visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina (18 March 2011)
142. PACE President to make a visit to the Czech Republic (25 March 2011)
143. PACE President in Bosnia: 'A whole country cannot be held hostage by politicians who cannot agree' (25 March 2011)
144. The North-South Prize is a symbol, but also a cause, said PACE President (29 March 2011)
145. PACE President concerned about global economic developments and their consequences on human rights (31 March 2011)
146. PACE President hails the contribution of the Czech Republic to the Council of Europe (31 March 2011)
147. PACE President: "Each death of a boat person is one too many" (1 April 2011)
148. PACE President: 'We must design and implement comprehensive national policies for promoting inter- cultural dialogue' (7 April 2011)
149. 'Give the Roma more say!' declares PACE President (7 April 2011)
150. PACE President: the revolutions in the Arab world proof that the values the '47' stands for are universal (11 April 2011)
151. PACE Presidential Committee salutes progress in Tunisia, calls on the authorities 'not to fail the expectations of the people' (21 April 2011)
152. PACE President to make official visit to Croatia (26 April 2011)
153. President points to the Assembly's potential key role in 'stemming the flood' of Court cases (26 April 2011)
154. Croatia 'on the right track', a potential model for other Balkan countries (26 April 2011)
155. Terrorist attack in Marrakech: PACE President extends his condolences (29 April 2011)
156. The Europe Prize: an important medium for improving relations between all citizens of Europe (6 May 2011)
157. PACE President calls for an inquiry into Europe's role in the deaths of 61 boat people (9 May 2011)
158. PACE President calls for a Council of Europe Summit (11 May 2011)
159. Earthquake in Lorca: PACE President expresses his solidarity (12 May 2011)

160. The action of the Congress and of the Assembly is very much complementary (13 May 2011)
161. Belarus: PACE President calls on the authorities to cease the continuous harassment of political opponents (16 May 2011)
162. PACE President welcomes the release of Azerbaijan opposition journalist Eynulla Fatullayev (26 May 2011)
163. The arrest of former Bosnian Serb military chief Ratko Mladic is great news for the future of Serbia (26 May 2011)
164. PACE President: A lasting and comprehensive solution for a peaceful and united Cyprus (27 May 2011)
165. Mevlüt Cavusoglu: 'The priorities of Ukraine's Chairmanship fully correspond to PACE values' (27 May 2011)
166. PACE President on World Refugee Day: too many deaths at sea (17 June 2011)
167. Partner for Democracy' status awarded for first time in history of PACE (20 June 2011)
168. PACE President to visit Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (24 June 2011)
169. PACE President welcomes 'encouraging democratic changes' in Kyrgyzstan, offers partnership (28 June 2011)
170. PACE President proposes that Kazakhstan apply for 'Partner for Democracy' status (29 June 2011)
171. OIC and the Council of Europe have 'huge potential' for working together, says PACE President (30 June 2011)
172. Boat accident on the Volga river: PACE President conveys condolences (11 July 2011)
173. Gagauzia model could be 'an inspiration' for other European countries, says PACE President (15 July 2011)
174. Winds of change in the Arab world offer 'huge opportunities' for a more peaceful neighbourhood (18 July 2011)
175. A good day for justice and for Serbia', says PACE President following Hadzic's arrest (20 July 2011)
176. PACE President shocked after Norway attacks (23 July 2011)
177. PACE President to speak at Danish Ramadan reception (19 August 2011)
178. PACE President defends multiculturalism at Danish Parliament Ramadan reception (23 August 2011)
179. PACE President says 'Partner for Democracy' status for Palestinian National Council a logical development (6 September 2011)
180. PACE President: 'Discrimination is a real threat to our societies' (9 September 2011)
181. PACE President, at Kyiv round table, outlines vision for democratic progress (19 September 2011)
182. PACE President: 'Wider Europe' goes beyond the strictly geographical frontiers of our continent (19 September 2011)
183. PACE President's reaction to bombing in Ankara (20 September 2011)
184. Increased co-operation between PACE and the European Parliament (22 September 2011)
185. In Baku, PACE President spells out concrete steps for 'living together' in Europe (10 October 2011)
186. PACE President appeals for calm following violent clashes in Egypt (10 October 2011)
187. PACE President makes official visit to Norway (14 October 2011)
188. Dialogue, integration and interaction between different communities start at local level (18 October 2011)
189. 'No more excuses' for not ratifying the Social Charter, says PACE President (18 October 2011)
190. PACE President welcomes Israel-Hamas prisoner exchange (18 October 2011)
191. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko and Mevlüt Çavusoglu express shock at terrorist attacks in Turkey (19 October 2011)
192. The Assembly and national parliaments have a responsibility for implementation of ECHR judgments (20 October 2011)
193. PACE President: 'Norway is a strong and solid partner' 21 October 2011)
194. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko and Mevlüt Çavusoglu express solidarity following earthquake in Turkey (24 October 2011)
195. Arab Spring: an opportunity to ensure that gender equality is enshrined (24 October 2011)

196. Mevlüt Çavusoglu: 'Counterfeiting medicines is one of the most hideous crimes' (26 October 2011)
197. PACE President: 'The Federation Council is a long-standing constructive partner' (27 October 2011)
198. Mevlüt Çavusoglu: exploring new mechanisms of participatory democracy (3 November 2011)
199. PACE President : fostering synergies to promote human rights at local level (3 November 2011)
200. PACE President makes official visit to Algeria (10 November 2011)
201. PACE President : election observation increases public confidence in the democratic process (10 November 2011)
202. PACE President calls for enhanced co-operation with Algeria (16 November 2011)
203. PACE President makes working visit to the United Kingdom (18 November 2011)
204. The Black Sea region could be the bridge between Europe and the wider Euro-Asian and Euro-Mediterranean region (18 November 2011)
205. PACE President calls on governments to take into account the inter-cultural dimension in legislation (18 November 2011)
206. 'Children's rights will remain high on our agenda in the years to come', says PACE President (20 November 2011)
207. PACE President welcomes the good co-operation between the Council of Europe and Monaco (21 November 2011)
208. PACE President welcomes priorities of UK presidency (23 November 2011)
209. PACE President welcomes 'new ideas' to deal with European Court backlog (25 November 2011)
210. Accountability and transparency are the pillars of good governance, says PACE President (29 November 2011)
211. PACE President makes official visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina (6-8 December 2011)
212. Bosnia and Herzegovina: PACE President proposes a set of concrete measures to overcome the political stalemate and speed up reforms (8 December 2011)
213. PACE President pays tribute to late Vaclav Havel (18 December 2011)
214. Bosnia and Herzegovina: PACE President welcomes the agreement between the leaders of key political parties (31 December 2011)
215. PACE President welcomes justice after 18 years in 'Europe's most notorious racist hate crime investigation' (4 January 2012)
216. PACE President makes official visit to Turkey (9 January 2012)
217. PACE President praises the reform process undertaken by the Turkish authorities (10 January 2012)
218. PACE President praises Turkey's generous treatment of Syrian refugees and again calls on Syria to end violence (12 January 2012)

C. Speeches

1. Opening statement of the 2010 January part session (25 January 2010)
2. Welcome speech to Mr Danny Ayalon, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel and to Mr Mohammed Ishtayyah, Minister for Public Works and Housing of The Palestinian National Authority (Strasbourg, 26 January 2010)
3. Welcome to Mr Franco Frattini, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy (Strasbourg, 26 January 2010)
4. Speech on the occasion of the ceremony of presentation of the New Year wishes to PACE members by the City of Strasbourg (27 January 2010)
5. Welcome to Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch, Former High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (Strasbourg, 28 January 2010)
6. Address on the occasion of the High Level Conference on the Future of the European Court of Human Rights (Interlaken, Switzerland, 18-19 February 2010)
7. Address to the Members of the Parliament of Bosnia And Herzegovina (Sarajevo, 2 March 2010)
8. Speech at the National Eurasian University of Astana (16 March 2010)
9. Speech before the Parliament of Moldova (25 March 2010)
10. Speech delivered at the 122nd Assembly of the inter-Parliamentary Union on the subject "Parliament at the heart of political reconciliation and good governance" (Bangkok, 27 March 2010)
11. Speech at the International Parliamentary Conference organized by the CIS PA on the occasion of the 65th Anniversary of the Victory in the WWII (1941-1945) in St Petersburg (7 April 2010)
12. Speech at the International Conference "Future of the European Security in St Petersburg (8 April 2010)
13. Opening speech at the Second part of the 2010 Ordinary session (Strasbourg, 26 April 2010)
14. Welcome to Ms Calmy-Rey, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 26 April 2010)
15. Welcome to Mr Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine (Strasbourg, 27 April 010)
16. Welcome to Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (27 April 2010)
17. Welcome to Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, Former Head of the International fact-finding mission on the conflict in Georgia (28 April 2010)
18. Speech at the European Biodiversity Day (Strasbourg, 28 April 2010)
19. Welcome to Mr Thomas Hammerberg, European Commissioner for Human Rights (28 April 2010)
20. Welcome to Mr Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (28 April 2010)
21. Welcome to Federal Councilor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police (29 April 2010)
22. Speech at the meeting of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education (Istanbul, 10 May 2010)
23. Statement expressed during the visit to Armenia (Yerevan, 10 May 2010)
24. Speech at the 120th session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 11 May 2010)
25. Speech before the Parliament of Montenegro (Podgorica, 17 May 2010)
26. Speech at the third Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilisations (Rio de Janeiro, 27 May 2010)
27. Speech at the open Roundtable on "Addressing Islamophobia: Building on unused opportunities for mutual respect and inclusion" (Rio de Janeiro, 27 May 2010)
28. Speech on the occasion of the Ceremony to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the European Commission for democracy through law (Venice, 5 June 2010)
29. Speech at the 8th Conference of the SEECF Speakers of Parliament (Antalya, 7 June 2010)
30. Speech at the "Third Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia" (Istanbul, 8 June 2010)
31. Speech at the opening of the European Conference of Presidents in Cyprus (Limassol, 11 June 2010)

32. Opening speech of the Third part session of 2010 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg, 21 June 2010)
33. Welcome speech to Mr Ivo Josipović, President of Croatia (21 June 2010)
34. Welcome speech to Mr Antonio Milošoski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of « the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia », President of the Committee of Ministers (21 June 2010)
35. Welcome speech to Mr Milo Đukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro (22 June 2010)
36. Welcome speech to Mr Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, President of the Republic of Ingushetia (Russian Federation) (22 June 2010)
37. Welcome speech to Mme Fanny Ardant, marraine of the Dosta ! campaign of the Council of Europe 22 June 2010)
38. Welcome speech to Mr Jorge Sampaio, High Representative of the Secretary general of the United Nations for the Alliance of Civilizations (23 June, 2010)
39. Opening speech of the debate on « The situation of democracy in Europe » (23 June 2010)
40. Welcome speech to Mr. Alain Touraine, sociologist (23 June, 2010)
41. Welcome speech to Mr Gjorgje Ivanov, President de « the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia» (24 June 2010)
42. Speech at the Opening of the 5th Summer University of the Council of Europe (28 June 2010)
43. Speech at the OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination in Astana (29 June 2010)
44. Speech on the occasion of the exchange of views with young political leaders (Moscow, 1 July 2010)
45. Speech at the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament : “Parliaments in a world of crisis: securing global democratic accountability for the common good” (United Nations, Geneva, 19-21 July 2010)
46. Address on the occasion of the award of the European Prize to the Ukrainian City of Khirkov (23 August 2010)
47. Address at the annual meeting of the Ambassadors of Romania ; Panel: “Eastern Dimension of the Foreign Policy of Romania – the role of regional multilateralism, tendencies in the democratic processes in the region” (Bucharest, 1 September 2010)
48. Address at the 2010 Council of Europe Exchange on the religious dimension of multicultural dialogue (Ohrid, 13-14 September 2010)
49. Speech at the Conference with teachers and students of the Odessa National Academy of law (Odessa, 22 September 2010)
50. Address to the Committee on European Affairs of the National Assembly (Paris, 28 September 2010)
51. Speech delivered at the 3rd European Heritage Forum (Istanbul, 1 October 2010)
52. Address at the Opening of the Fourth part session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 4 October 2010)
53. Welcome to Mr Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Strasbourg, 6 October 2010)
54. Welcome to Mr Apolonio Ruiz Ligeró, Vice-Governor of the Council of Europe Development Bank (Strasbourg, 6 October 2010)
55. Welcome to Mr Jan Fischer, Vice-President of the EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) (Strasbourg, 6 October 2010)
56. Speech at the 2nd meeting of the PACE network of contact parliamentarians committed to combating violence against women two years after the Council of Europe campaign “Stop domestic violence against women”, what next ? (6 October 2010)
57. Welcome on the occasion of the Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights (Strasbourg, 6 October 2010)
58. Speech at the meeting of the Conference of INGO's (Strasbourg, 6 October 2010)
59. Welcome to Mrs Hayrinnusa Gül, Patron of The Turkish “Education Enables” Campaign (Strasbourg, 7 October 2010))
60. Welcome to Mr Nicola Gruevski, Prime Minister of “The Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia” (Strasbourg, 7 October 2010)
61. Address at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (Moscow, 13 October 2010)

62. Address on the occasion of the International Symposium "Education In Europe – For Harmonious Development of Students" (Moscow, 14 October 2010)
63. Address at the High-Level Meeting on Roma (Strasbourg, 20 October 2010)
64. Address at the Maastricht School of Management (Maastricht, 25 October 2010)
65. Address before the Senate of the States-General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (The Hague, 26 October 2010)
66. Address at the 19th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 27 October 2010)
67. Welcome address at the International Conference "The Past and Present Relevance of the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of its signing" (Rome, 3 November 2010)
68. Speech addressed to Mr Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey (Strasbourg, 10 November 2010)
69. Speech addressed to Mr Antonio Milošoski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (Strasbourg, 10 November 2010)
70. Address delivered at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (Helsinki, 24 November 2010)
71. Address delivered at the 59th Session of the European Security and Defence Assembly Assembly of Western European Union (Paris, 1 December 2010)
72. Speech delivered on the occasion of the Rekindling of the Hanukkah Flame (Paris, 1 December 2010)
73. Lecture delivered at the Free University of Varna, Bulgaria (Varna, 10 December 2010)
74. Address at the meeting of the European Club (Paris, 13 December 2010)
75. Address at the 85th Plenary Session of the European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission) (Venice, 17 December 2010)
76. Speech delivered at the meeting with the students of the University of Tunis (Tunis, 11 January 2011)
77. Speech at the hearing on the current situation with regard to "the consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia" (Paris, 17 January 2011)
78. Opening statement delivered at the 1st part of the 2011 Assembly's Session (Strasbourg, 24 January 2011)
79. Words to Mr Mateo Sorinas, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly (Strasbourg, 24 January 2011)
80. Welcome words to Mr Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, President of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 24 January 2011)
81. Welcome words to Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 24 January 2011)
82. Welcome words to Mr Arne König, President of the European Federation of Journalists (Strasbourg, 25 January 2011)
83. Welcome words to H.E. Mr Abdullah Gül, President of Turkey (Strasbourg, 25 January 2011)
84. Welcome words to H.E. Mr Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia (Strasbourg, 26 January 2011)
85. Speech at the first meeting of contact parliamentarians of the council of Europe campaign against sexual violence against children (Strasbourg, 26 January 2011)
86. Welcome words to H.E. Mr Traian Băsescu, President of Romania (Strasbourg, 27 January 2011)
87. Words for the commemorative ceremony on the occasion of the international day of commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust (Strasbourg, 27 January 2011)
88. Press conference during the official visit to Moldova (Chisinau, 9 February 2011)
89. Lecture at the University of Kazan (Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation, 12 February 2011)
90. Speech at the London School of Economics (London, 18 February 2011)
91. Speech at the IPU Parliamentary meeting on "The Role of Parliaments in Promoting access and participation of women and girls to Education, Training, Science and Technology" (New York, 23 February 2011)
92. Speech at the Council of Europe event on 'Combating gender stereotypes in education' (New York, 25 February 2011)
93. Speech before the Parliament of Serbia (Belgrade, 7 March 2011)

94. Welcome speech to Mr. Dominique Baudis, President of the Institute of the Arab World (Paris, Standing Committee, 11 March 2011)
95. Speech at the Summit "Leaders of change : "Leadership in Modern Age - Why it has to be international?" (Istanbul, 14 March 2011)
96. Address on the occasion of the XVI award ceremony of the North-South Prize (Lisbon, 29 March 2011)
97. Speech at the European Banking and Financial Forum "World finances on the threshold of the Asian area' (Prague, 31 March 2011)
98. Address at the World Forum on Inter-Cultural Dialogue, Session 1: "Towards A World Without Dividing Lines" (Baku, 7 April 2011)
99. Opening Statement at the Second part of the 2011 Ordinary Session (Strasbourg 11 April 2011)
100. Welcome to Mr Steingrímur J. Sigfússon, Minister of Finance of Finland (11 April 2011)
101. Welcome to Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (11 April 2011)
102. Welcome to Religious Personalities (Strasbourg, 12 April 2011)
103. Welcome to Mr Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, President of the Committee of Ministers (12 April 2011)
104. Welcome to Mr Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey, (13 April 2011)
105. Welcome to Mr Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe (13 April 2011)
106. Welcome to Mr Federico Mayor Zaragoza, President of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty (14 April 2011)
107. Address on the occasion of the book launch "Turkish Founding Fathers of United Europe" (Kayhan Karaca) (Strasbourg, 14 April 2011)
108. Address on the occasion of the High Level Conference on The Future of the European Court of Human Rights (Izmir, Turkey, 26 April 2011)
109. Lecture on the topic: „Challenges facing Europe and the Role of the Council of Europe“ at the Faculty of Political Science (Dubrovnik, Croatia, 28 April 2011)
110. Speech delivered on the occasion of the General Assembly of the Association of Towns awarded the Europe Prize (Ankara, 6 May 2011)
111. Speech delivered on the occasion of the 121st session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (Istanbul, 11 May 2011)
112. Address to the Bureau of the Congress (Antalya, 13 May 2011)
113. Address to the Standing Committee (Kyiv, 27 May 2011)
114. Address to the European Forum Cyprus (Istanbul, 27 May 2011)
115. Opening speech delivered at the Third part of the ordinary session of 2011 (Strasbourg, 20 June 2011)
116. Welcome notes to the attention of Mr Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (Strasbourg, 20 June 2011)
117. Address on the occasion of the inauguration of the Ukrainian exhibition (Strasbourg, 20 June 2011)
118. Address on the occasion of the opening of the "Living Library" (Strasbourg, 20 June 2011)
119. Welcome to Mr AbdelWahed Radi, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Morocco and Mr Mohamed Cheikh Biadillah, Speaker of the House of Counselors of Morocco (Strasbourg, 21 June 2011)
120. Welcome to Mr Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine (Strasbourg, 21 June 2011)
121. Welcome to Mr Serzh Sargsyan, President of Armenia (Strasbourg, 22 June 2011)
122. Welcome to Mr Nikolay Mladenov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria (Strasbourg, 22 June 2011)
123. Welcome speech to the attention of Mr Igor Kalyapin, Chair of the Committee against Torture (Strasbourg, 23 June 2011)
124. Welcome to Mrs Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, Federal Minister of Justice of Germany, and Mr Dominic Grieve, Attorney General for England and Wales (Strasbourg, 23 June 2011)
125. Speech at the Conference of the Council of Ministers of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 29 June 2011)

126. Speech at the "Round-Table" with teachers and students of the Odessa National Academy of Law "The Council of Europe neighbourhood policy in the light of the upheavals in the Arab world" (Odessa 18 July 2011)
127. Speech at the 2011 Ramadan reception and discussion evening organised by the Danish Parliament (Copenhagen, 22 August 2011)
128. Address on the occasion of the 8th Yalta annual meeting - Ukraine and the world: common challenges, common future at the round table on "Human rights and democracy in wider Europe" (Yalta, Ukraine, 17 September 2011)
129. Address on the occasion of the round table on "Public-private partnership in the sphere of risk reduction - a basis for the country's competitiveness" ; round table organised by the Risk Reduction Foundation, with the participation of the Sub-committee on sustainable development (Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs) (Kyiv, Ukraine, 19 September 2011)
130. Introduction at the joint meeting of the Assembly's Presidential Committee and the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament (Brussels, 22 September 2011)
131. Opening speech at the 4th part session of the ordinary session of the Parliamentary Assembly (Strasbourg, 3 October 2011)
132. Welcome to Mr Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 3 October 2011)
133. Welcome to Mr Salim Al-Zanoon, Speaker of the Palestinian National Council (Strasbourg, 4 October 2011)
134. Welcome to Mr Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Strasbourg, 5 October 2011)
135. Welcome to Ms Najat Maalla M'Jid, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (Strasbourg, 5 October 2011)
136. Welcome to Mr Mahmoud Abbas, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, President of the Palestinian National Authority (Strasbourg, 6 October 2011)
137. Address at the Baku International Humanitarian Forum (Baku, 10 October 2011)
138. Speech on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the European Social Charter (Strasbourg, 18 October 2011)
139. Speech at the 21st Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 18 October 2011)
140. Speech at the Norwegian Centre of Human Rights (Oslo, 20 October 2011)
141. Speech at the Conference of Women as Agents of Change in the Southern Shore of the Mediterranean (Rome, 24 October 2011)
142. Speech for the International High-level Conference on the occasion of the opening for signature of the Council of Europe Convention on Counterfeiting of Medical Products and Similar Crimes Involving Threats to Public Health (Medicrime Convention)(Moscow, 26 October 2011)
143. Speech on the occasion of the 17th Council of Europe Conference for Local and Regional Government (Kyiv, 3 November 2011)
144. Lecture at the Kyiv National University "Taras Shevchenko"(Kyiv, 3 November 2011)
145. Key note speech at the Annual Conference of the International Association of Political Consultants (Istanbul, 18 November 2011)
146. Speech at the Black Sea Energy and Economic Forum : Key regional perspectives: Europe's Southeast and Pan-European Values (Istanbul, 18 November 2011)
147. Conference on the Council of Europe Strategy for the rights of the child 2012-2015 (Grimaldi Forum, Monaco, 20 November 2011)
148. Address on the occasion of the Standing Committee of the PACE (Edinburgh, 25 November 2011)
149. Key note speech at the IPU hearing on "Strengthening political accountability for a more peaceful and prosperous world"; theme :Accountability in the management of public funds - good practices and model legislation for budget transparency (New York, 29 November 2011)
150. Introductory remarks at the meeting of the PACE Committee on Economic Affairs and Development (Paris, 9 December 2011)
151. Speech at the 89th plenary session of the European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission) (Venice, 16 December 2011)
152. Speech at the General National Assembly of Turkey (Ankara, 10 January 2012)

153. Speech at the Conference organised by the Istanbul Policy Center at Sabanci University (11 January 2012)
154. Speech delivered to the students of the Koç University (Istanbul, 11 January 2012)
155. Speech addressed to the students of the Mustapha Kemal University (Hatay, 12 January 2012)
156. Speech addressed to the students of the Akdeniz University (Antalya, 13 January 2012)

