



## Aangenomen aanbevelingen en resoluties PACE 30 september-3 oktober 2014

### **1. Counteraction to manifestations of neo-Nazism and right-wing extremism**

Neo-Nazis are not to be ignored; they should not be turned into martyrs either.

The report stresses the prime responsibility of government representatives and democratic political leaders and urges them to form a bloc around a “democratic consensus” in order to raise concerted opposition to neo-Nazi ideology and to the political parties that speak up in its favour, whether in or out of parliament. All political leaders are thus invited to engage in debate with neo-Nazi movements so as to expose them publicly by rejecting and condemning their ideology and rhetoric. Other measures should include making party leaders and members, including parliamentarians, criminally liable for hate speech, and impeding the funding of such parties.

The Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy underlines that in the fight against neo-Nazism, the focus should be on prevention, through education and awareness raising. Council of Europe member States should design social, economic and cultural strategies to reduce the breeding grounds for the neo-Nazi ideology.

In order to keep alive the memory of the victims of the tragic attack committed by a neo-Nazi on 22 July 2011 in Norway, the committee invites the Assembly to support the initiative by youth activists to make 22 July the European Day for Victims of Hate Crime.

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### **2. Women’s rights and prospects for Euro-Mediterranean co-operation**

Three years after the uprisings which started the “Arab Spring”, the picture is a mixed one: the status of women and its evolution vary considerably from one country to another, just like the general political landscape. Tunisia and Morocco, following different approaches, are managing to gradually improve and consolidate what they have achieved. Libya on the verge of civil war and Egypt struggling to regain stability have not yet given women’s rights the commitment they demand. In Algeria, against a largely unchanging political context, progress regarding the status of women is still insufficient. In all these countries, advances are possible and desirable, through the implementation of the principle of equality provided for in the respective constitutions.



So far, Morocco and Tunisia have been prime interlocutors of the Council of Europe. These fruitful relations should continue in the future. These two countries have the opportunity to play an exemplary modernising role in the region and in the community of countries with a Muslim majority. They demonstrate that it is possible to move towards gender equality without abandoning their cultural and religious roots.

Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the countries of the region, particularly with the tools of interparliamentary co-operation and the "South Programme", should be strengthened and the improvement of the status of women should be integrated into programmes across all sectors.

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### **3. Good governance and enhanced quality in education**

Council of Europe member States devote significant efforts and means to education. However, the level of education of European students, as well as the scores of European universities are not progressing and are even declining in comparative terms according to international classifications. There is a need to rethink education policies and strategies to secure the right to education of adequate quality, but also to increase the competitiveness of European education – and labour force – at global level.

The Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media calls for inclusive and innovative education policies aimed at students' well-being and achievement and at the promotion of European common values. They should oppose exclusion and foster gender equality, promote teachers' professionalism and build on new information and communication technologies, combat corruption and increase ethical standards in education, and develop democratic governance in education institutions, with an active participation of students and their families.

To achieve these objectives, member States should establish mechanisms for assessment and quality assurance to monitor the quality of education systems and the consistency of educational achievements with the needs in terms of professional qualifications, on one hand, and democratic citizenship, on the other. The Council of Europe should encourage and facilitate co-operation between international organisations and relevant professional networks and quality assurance agencies.

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#### **4. The functioning of democratic institutions in Georgia**

Despite a polarised and acrimonious election environment, the 2012 parliamentary and 2013 presidential elections mark the first time in Georgia's recent history that the political power has changed hands peacefully and democratically through the ballot box. The emergence of a strong and experienced opposition, combined with a well-organised ruling coalition, has strengthened the role of the parliament and parliamentarianism in the political system in Georgia. The parliament has held ministers accountable, modified government policies and, on several occasions, used its right of initiative to introduce new legislation. Moreover, on a number of occasions, it has managed to find consensus solutions to major political challenges. These are important developments and a major evolution of the political environment in the country.

The Monitoring Committee takes note of the large number of allegations of possible criminal conduct by former government officials during their tenure. At the same time, it is seriously concerned about allegations that the arrests and prosecution of a number of former government officials are politically motivated and amount to selective and revanchist justice. The Georgian authorities are called upon to ensure that the investigation and prosecution of former government officials are conducted impartially, transparently and in full respect of the principles of a fair trial, as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights.

The committee welcomes the comprehensive reforms announced by the Georgian authorities, including constitutional reform, to further strengthen the democratic institutions in the country and to ensure a genuinely independent judiciary and adversarial justice system. Georgia has made marked progress in its democratic development over recent years. It is now important for it to overcome the antagonism, polarisation and sense of revenge that are still present in the political environment and for political stakeholders to contribute constructively to the further democratic consolidation of the country.

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#### **5. The progress of the Assembly's monitoring procedure (October 2013 – September 2014)**

In its annual progress report, the Monitoring Committee takes stock of its activities since October 2013 and assesses the progress made by the 10 countries under the Assembly's full monitoring procedure, and in the four countries engaged in a post monitoring dialogue, in honouring their obligations and commitments to the Council of Europe. It welcomes progress made and expresses concerns at setbacks, and addresses specific recommendations to the countries concerned.



In this reporting period, the Committee reflected extensively on ways to enhance the efficiency and impact of the Assembly's monitoring procedure with regard to all Council of Europe member States, and made a series of concrete recommendations in this respect. In particular, it decided to establish a periodic review, on a country-by-country basis, of the honouring of Council of Europe membership obligations by the 33 countries that are not under the full monitoring procedure or engaged in a post-monitoring dialogue.

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#### **6. Threats against humanity posed by the terrorist group known as "IS": violence against Christians and other religious or ethnic communities**

The world is shocked by the threats posed by the terrorist group known as "IS" ("Da'ish" in Arabic), which has been wreaking death and destruction throughout Iraq and Syria. Its rapid and cruel advances in the Middle East have transformed the serious issue of steadily increasing persecution of religious and ethnic communities into a full-scale lethal onslaught.

The countries in the Middle East, together with Europe and the international community in general, should firmly condemn all acts of violence and co-operate to put a stop to the ongoing massacres and to bring peace to the region.

As a matter of urgency, humanitarian aid supplies should be stepped up. The Parliamentary Assembly should continue to follow closely the situation in the region as well as the tragic humanitarian consequences of the current crisis and the issue of foreign terrorist fighters.

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## **7. The activities of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in 2013-2014**

In providing assistance to its member countries in their transition to market economies, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) contributes to their progress towards democracy and the rule of law.

By regularly debating the activities of the EBRD, the Parliamentary Assembly provides a parliamentary oversight of the Bank's operations.

The expansion of the EBRD's activities to the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) is to be welcomed; the experience of the EBRD in helping countries to make the transition to open market economies can be of valuable assistance also in that region.

It is regrettable that many of the EBRD's countries of operations do not seem to be committed to, and are not applying, principles of multiparty democracy and pluralism. It is proposed that the Assembly assist the Bank in a more effective implementation of the EBRD's new methodology to assess the compliance of its countries of operations with the political aspects of its mandate.

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## **8. The honouring of obligations and commitments by Albania**

The Monitoring Committee welcomes the marked progress made by the Albanian authorities in honouring its obligations and commitments to the Council of Europe, despite the delays in many reforms as a result of the deep political crisis that ensued in the country following the 2009 parliamentary elections.

However, despite the progress achieved, many serious concerns remain in Albania, in particular with regard to the impartiality of democratic institutions and the civil service, the independence of the judiciary and the fight against the endemic corruption.

Consistent concrete action by all stakeholders, the authorities and the opposition, is needed to ensure that all the membership obligations and accession commitments are fully honoured. In this respect, the committee emphasises that it is crucial that the many reforms and legislative packages that have been adopted also be actually implemented in order to effectively address the concerns noted by, inter alia, the Assembly.



Against this background, the committee recommends that the Assembly continue to monitor the honouring of obligations and commitments by Albania.

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## **9. The alternatives to immigration detention of children**

The present report is based on the principle that children are first and foremost children and should never be detained for immigration purposes. The immigration detention of children has a detrimental impact on their mental and physical health. The detention of children violates their rights and deprives them of access to general education and proper health care.

In addition to arguing against children's detention from a human rights perspective, this report offers an insight into the cost benefits of alternatives to detention and outlines some of these alternative models.

The Council of Europe member States who have not yet responded to this issue are called upon to put an end to the detention of migrant children and to promote and facilitate the application of alternatives to detention.

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## **10. Towards optimum breast cancer services across Europe**

Breast cancer is still the most common cancer in European women and has the highest mortality of any cancer in women. Providing breast cancer services and care of guaranteed quality leads in the medium and long term to improved survival rates, to savings for the health-care system and to a better quality of life for patients.

The Council of Europe member States should keep the fight against breast cancer at the top of their health agendas and ensure that women have effective access to European guidelines-compliant screening and treatment programmes, including accurate, evidence-based information and shared decision-making between patients and medical teams.



The Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development further recommends the establishment and maintenance of national cancer registries, the outlawing of discrimination against breast cancer patients on the basis of their disease status, and the encouragement of co-operation amongst researchers with a view to reducing mortality rates and improving the quality of life of individual patients as well as screening, diagnosis and treatment techniques – and, ultimately, to finding the cure.

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### **11. Raising the status of vocational education and training**

As technology evolves ever faster, Europe needs workers who are able to train and re-train in order to keep their knowledge at the cutting edge, thus maintaining Europe's competitiveness in international markets. Yet, despite this urgent need, training is often regarded as a "poor cousin" compared to other forms of education, with poorer quality standards and lower social recognition.

It is time for a strategic vision to restore vocational training to its rightful place, including urgent measures to improve its quality, increase its attractiveness and bring it into line with employers' needs. States should begin by making the right to vocational training a binding obligation – by signing up to the relevant parts of the revised European Social Charter.

National strategies to boost the learning of technical and practical skills should be rolled out, including in new areas of expertise which are often missing from existing vocational training programmes – such as entrepreneurship, foreign language skills or information technology knowledge. Finally, public authorities should make the necessary resources available, for instance by giving grants and scholarships to students and employers who carry out this kind of training, especially in new or innovative ways

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