

2025 ORDINARY SESSION

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TEXTS ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY

Provisional versions

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Opinion
305



Opinion 305 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Draft Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Protecting the environment against harm from human activity has become one of the international community's major concerns, triggered by the understanding that the health of the planet and the well-being of humans are closely tied together. European nations have joined the global action by supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the European Green Deal. Through the 2023 Reykjavik Declaration, the Council of Europe member States recognised the urgency of action on the triple planetary crisis by committing to work "on the human rights aspects of the environment ... in line with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/300 'The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment'".

2. Together with the draft Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment and a related action plan, the new draft Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law ("the draft Convention") will be part of the environmental package submitted for adoption by the Committee of Ministers on 14 May 2025.

3. The Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the conclusion of work by the European Committee on Crime Problems on this new draft Convention which is set to replace and supersede the 1998 convention on the same matter (ETS No. 172). The new Convention, when adopted and implemented, will be the first international legally binding instrument to address environmental crime, covering a wide range of offences, including a particularly serious offence which encompasses conduct that many term "ecocide". The draft Convention builds on international treaties and legal standards relating to environmental protection, human rights and transnational crime, including a series of Council of Europe legal instruments.

4. The Assembly recalls that its Recommendation 2213 (2021) "Addressing issues of criminal and civil liability in the context of climate change" asked the Committee of Ministers to "conduct a study on the notion of 'ecocide', its introduction into domestic legislation and its possible universal recognition" and to draft a new legal instrument to replace the Convention No. 172 which remains unimplemented. The Assembly reiterated this call through its Recommendation 2246 (2023) "Environmental impact of armed conflicts" by requesting that the new Convention would also apply in the context of armed conflicts, wars or occupation, and that it would cover ecocide. Moreover, Recommendation 2272 (2024) "Mainstreaming the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment with the Reykjavik process" insisted on the need to establish an effective monitoring mechanism for the new Convention.

5. The Assembly notes that the draft Convention aims to effectively prevent and combat environmental crime, promote national and international co-operation and set minimum legal standards for States as regards environmental crime. It welcomes the draft Convention's emphasis on prevention through a broad range of punishable offences, awareness-raising measures among the general public and co-operation with civil society and non-governmental organisations.

1. *Assembly debate* on 10 April 2025 (16th sitting) (see [Doc. 16150](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Yuliia Ovchynnykova). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 10 April 2025 (16th sitting).



6. The Assembly welcomes the inclusion of provisions in the draft Convention that specify that it “shall apply in times of peace and in situations of armed conflict, wartime or occupation” and that provide definitions of the terms “unlawful”, “water”, “ecosystem” and “waste”, drawing lessons from member States’ experience and practical difficulties with the enforcement of criminal law regarding environmental issues. A definition of ecocide, such as the one proposed by the Independent Expert Panel for the Legal Definition of Ecocide, could be added to the Explanatory Report to the Convention in order to guide member States towards aligning the understanding of this legal concept and to facilitate its inclusion in national law. In the same spirit, a tentative definition of the terms “irreversible”, “widespread”, “substantial” and “long-lasting” used in Article 31 of the draft Convention should be added to the Explanatory Report, as was originally proposed during the negotiation process. The Assembly notes that in the French version of Article 31 of the draft Convention, the French equivalent of the part of the sentence that reads “or causes long-lasting, widespread and substantial damage” is missing and should be added.

7. In this context, the Assembly recalls that many stakeholders worldwide are working towards a recognition of ecocide or widespread, long-term and severe damage to the environment as a fifth international crime so that it could be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court. The European Union’s new Directive 2024/1203 of 11 April 2024 on the protection of the environment through criminal law lists environmental offences, including those that can constitute a “qualified offence” when they are committed intentionally and cause destruction or widespread and substantial damage that is long-lasting to the environment, which is similar to a “particularly serious offence” as defined under the draft Convention.

8. The Assembly considers that there are good reasons to further raise the level of ambition for this Council of Europe legal instrument. The current draft of the Convention omits illegal logging and unlawful fishing among the offences covered. Bearing in mind the 2001 FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) International Plan of Action to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and with due regard to European Union Regulation 1005/2008 establishing a community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, an article of the draft Convention concerning unlawful fishing under Section 5 on natural resources should be thus reinstated.

9. The Assembly notes that Chapter VIII of the draft Convention establishes a monitoring mechanism whose scope was reduced during the negotiations, despite the support of the Assembly’s representatives for a stronger mechanism. After considering two options modelled on the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS No. 210, “Istanbul Convention”) (stronger option) and on the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, “Lanzarote Convention”) (weaker option), the weaker option was retained. The currently proposed monitoring mechanism establishes the Committee of Parties with modalities of functioning to be determined by its own rules of procedure.

10. The Assembly notes with concern that, regarding the application of the Convention, the drafters have accepted a provision under Article 51.2 (on “Effects of this Convention”) allowing European Union member States to apply between themselves European Union rules falling within the scope of this Convention “without prejudice to the full application of this Convention in their relations with other Parties”. While this provision might facilitate the ratification of the Convention by European Union countries and the European Union itself, the wording of this clause sends a signal to other Parties about the exceptionalism of the group of European Union countries. Moreover, Article 56 dealing with reservations contains provisions for the European Union and its member States to limit the scope of the term “unlawful” in Article 3.a of the Convention, as well as the scope of the terms “domestic law” (which should be placed in the singular here in the French version), “domestic provisions”, “protected” and “requirement” used for the purpose of defining offences under Articles 13, 14, 19 to 22 and 26 to 30 of this Convention.

11. In order to strengthen the balance of provisions, render the draft Convention more comprehensive and enable a more effective prosecution of environmental crimes, the Assembly proposes the following amendments to the draft Convention:

11.1. in the sentence of the Preamble that refers to Assembly resolutions and recommendations, after the words “that call for the recognition” add the words “and legal codification”;

11.2. in the English version of the draft Convention, in the sentence of the Preamble that refers to the resolutions by the General Assembly of the United Nations, after the words “A/RES/76/185 of” replace the words “11 January 2022” with the words “16 December 2021”;

11.3. in Articles 12, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 23, after the words “when committed unlawfully and intentionally” add the words “or with negligence”;

11.4. in Article 16, replace the word “or” before the word “export” with a comma and after the word “export” add the words “or release”, given the particular toxicity and cumulative effects of even small quantities of mercury or mercury-containing products;

11.5. in Article 25, before the words “the placing on the market of unlawfully harvested timber” add the words “unlawful harvesting of timber and” and reword the title of this article to read “Offences related to unlawful harvesting of timber and related trade”;

11.6. after Article 24, add the following new article:

“Unlawful (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing

1. Parties shall take the necessary legislative measures to establish as a criminal offence under their domestic law, when committed unlawfully and intentionally, fishing activities conducted by national or foreign fishing vessels in maritime waters under the jurisdiction of a State, without the permission of that State, or in contravention of its laws, administrative regulations or decisions taken by competent authorities, including the catching, placing on the market, processing, importing, or exporting of the products of such activities, except for cases where the conduct concerns a negligible quantity.

2. Parties shall take the necessary legislative measures to establish as a criminal offence under their domestic law, when committed unlawfully and intentionally, fishing activities conducted by national or foreign fishing vessels in maritime waters under the jurisdiction of a State, which have not been reported to that State or have been misreported to the relevant national authority, in contravention of national laws, administrative regulations or decisions taken by competent authorities of that State, except for cases where the conduct concerns a negligible quantity.

3. Parties shall take the necessary legislative measures to establish as a criminal offence under their domestic law, when committed unlawfully and intentionally, fishing through the use of fishing techniques or other instruments that are destructive or non-selective with regard to wildlife, or that cause or are likely to cause the mass destruction of marine animals, plants and their environment.”

11.7. in Articles 27 and 28, replace the words “protected wild fauna or flora” with the words “protected wild fauna, flora or fungi”, including in the title of these articles, given that fungi are neither plants nor animals but a category apart;

11.8. in the French version of Article 31, after the words “*des dommages irréversibles, étendus et substantiels*,” add the translation of the words “or causes long-lasting, widespread and substantial damage”, which is missing in French and should be as follows: “*ou cause des dommages de longue durée, étendus et substantiels*,”;

11.9. in Article 39 on the right to participate in proceedings, after the words “in accordance with this Convention,” add the words “as well as the right to request the initiation of a judicial review of any decision not to prosecute,”;

11.10. delete 56.3.b, thus narrowing the scope of reservations;

11.11. if the proposal above is not retained, in Article 56.3.b of the French version, replace the words “*droits internes*” with the words “*droit interne*”, as in the rest of the draft Convention.

12. Finally, the Assembly asks the Committee of Ministers that appropriate resources be allocated to promote the signature and ratification of this Convention once it is launched with a view to ensuring its entry into force as soon as possible.

Recommendations
2292 to 2296



Recommendation 2292 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Foreign interference a threat to democratic security in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its Resolution 2593 (2025) “Foreign interference: a threat to democratic security in Europe” underscores that intentional, covert and manipulative interference from foreign powers or their proxies is a continued threat to the core pillars of democratic security shared by the member States of the Council of Europe.
2. Such interference seeks to undermine electoral processes, erode public trust in democratic institutions, national unity, and distort political decision making. The most glaring example of this threat is the escalation in hostile interference originating from the Russian Federation following the beginning of its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, which the Assembly firmly condemns.
3. The Assembly stresses that a co-ordinated and comprehensive response is required to counter the threat of foreign interference effectively, and advocates for closer collaboration with the European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and other international organisations.
4. In addition, the Assembly emphasises that free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democratic societies. Independent and transparent electoral processes are necessary for both citizen’s trust in public institutions, and for the competitiveness of the electoral environment. The Assembly expresses its serious concern that foreign interference operations, through the manipulation of information and voter sentiment, pose a continuing threat in electoral matters to the freedom of voters to form an opinion and to equality of opportunity of candidates and parties.
5. The Assembly, recalling the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy, acknowledges the Committee of Ministers’ ongoing efforts to strengthen democratic resilience and to address democratic backsliding, including its work on countering mis- and disinformation, preventing algorithmic manipulation, and reinforcing electoral integrity. It commends the initiative of the Secretary General to develop a new Democratic Pact to address democratic backsliding, to enhance citizen engagement, and to adapt democratic models to contemporary challenges.
6. In light of the increasing sophistication of multiform foreign interference tactics in the digital sphere, the Assembly welcomes the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (CETS No. 225, “the Vilnius Convention”) as an essential tool to promote transparency, accountability and safeguards against artificial intelligence-driven manipulation and disinformation.
7. In view of the role played by the Council of Europe in ensuring democratic security, the Assembly asks the Committee of Ministers to:
 - 7.1. develop and enhance tools for countering foreign interference that promote a whole-of-society approach, enhance resilience, reinforce public trust, and safeguard institutional integrity;

1. *Assembly debate* on 8 April 2025 (12th and 13th sittings) (see [Doc. 16131](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Ms Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 8 April 2025 (13th sitting).



7.2. consider the feasibility of developing a broad-based, non-binding operational definition of foreign interference to enhance European co-ordination and policy alignment, as well as strengthening clarity on legitimate influence activities.



Recommendation 2293 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Respect for the rule of law and the fight against corruption within the Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, recalling that all ethical frameworks need regular reviews to ensure they are fit for purpose to address the latest challenges, expectations and standards, invites the Committee of Ministers to:

1.1. review their ethical standards and associated enforcement mechanisms regularly and, as necessary, to update these standards and mechanisms so they remain fit for purpose and able to withstand the latest challenges, and to call on all bodies of the Council of Europe to do likewise;

1.2. call on all national institutions of the member States of the Council of Europe, to review their ethical standards and associated enforcement mechanisms regularly and, as necessary, to update these standards and mechanisms so they remain fit for purpose and able to withstand the latest challenges.

2. The Assembly notes the crucial role that member States play in relation to ethical standards and anti-corruption practices, including in their interactions within the instances of the Council of Europe. It therefore calls on the Committee on Ministers to initiate a reflection on ethics and values in the working of the Organisation, with the aim of promoting the development of a common understanding around ethical values and standards.

1. *Assembly debate* on 9 April 2025 (14th sitting) (see [Doc. 16138](#), report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Frank Schwabe). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 9 April 2025 (14th sitting).

See also [Resolution 2596 \(2025\)](#).



Recommendation 2294 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Russian war of aggression against Ukraine: the need to ensure accountability and avoid impunity

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly draws the Committee of Ministers' attention to its [Resolution 2598 \(2025\)](#) "Russian war of aggression against Ukraine: the need to ensure accountability and avoid impunity", which reiterates the need to ensure a comprehensive system of accountability for all violations of international law and international crimes committed as a result of the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, while stressing that any peace negotiations must not lead to impunity.
2. The Assembly refers to its Recommendation 2279 (2024) "Legal and human rights aspects of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine".
3. The Assembly warmly welcomes the Committee of Ministers' decision of 24 February 2025, in which the Committee of Ministers expressed its determination to continue its efforts to ensure that the Russian Federation and those responsible for crimes and violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the context of the aggression against Ukraine are held accountable.
4. The Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers to work towards the establishment of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine as soon as political agreement is finally reached among the States and partners participating in the Core Group, by:
 - 4.1. authorising the Secretary General to conclude the agreement for the establishment of the Special Tribunal with the Government of Ukraine;
 - 4.2. establishing the Enlarged Partial Agreement for the management of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine and inviting all member and observer States of the Council of Europe, as well as other States and international organisations, to become members.
5. The Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers to work without delay towards the establishment of a Claims Commission for Ukraine, notably by setting up an *ad hoc* committee for the drafting of an open Council of Europe convention.
6. The Assembly further welcomes the Committee of Ministers' decision of 6 March 2025 in the supervision of the execution of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the interstate case *Ukraine v. Russia (re Crimea)*, in which it urged the Russian Federation to restore the application of Ukrainian law in Crimea and to investigate the grave and serious violations of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5) committed in Crimea since 2014, in order to identify all those responsible for the purposes of bringing them to justice, in particular perpetrators of enforced disappearances and arbitrary or *incommunicado* detentions, as well as their chain of command and those complicit, and to fully engage and co-operate with any pending international investigations, with national investigations brought under the principles of universal jurisdiction or those pending in Ukraine, and with international inquiries and

1. *Assembly debate* on 9 April 2025 (15th sitting) (see [Doc. 16152](#), report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Iulian Bulai). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 9 April 2025 (15th sitting).



investigative missions. In this regard, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to engage with and further explore synergies with some of these international investigations or inquiries with a view to ensuring accountability for the serious violations committed by the Russian Federation in Crimea.

7. The Assembly refers to Recommendation 2265 (2024) and reiterates its recommendation to the Committee of Ministers to create and ensure the functioning of a joint registry of individuals who have been included in the sanctions lists of Council of Europe member States, as well as in the European Union's sanctions lists, in connection with the involvement in the deportation, forcible transfer or unjustifiable delay in repatriation of Ukrainian children, and in the unlawful adoption or establishment of guardianship over Ukrainian children. The aims of such a registry would be to harmonise the sanctions policy and to monitor and enhance the effectiveness of the imposed restrictive measures.



Recommendation 2295 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Referring to its [Resolution 2599 \(2025\)](#) “Implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights”, the Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the measures taken by the Committee of Ministers and the wider Organisation to implement sections of the 2023 Reykjavik Declaration relating to the implementation of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (“the Court”). This includes steps taken to increase the resources of the Department for the Execution of Judgments, increase the synergy between the Department for the Execution of Judgments and Council of Europe co-operation programmes, increase the transparency of the judgment supervision process, establish a network of national co-ordinators for the implementation of judgments, strengthen the institutional dialogue between the Court and the Committee of Ministers, carry out joint activities with the Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, and set out predictable, gradual steps to be taken by the Committee of Ministers prior to initiating the infringement procedure under Article 46 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, “the Convention”).

2. The vast majority of the Court’s judgments are implemented. Nevertheless, and despite the work done to carry out the steps requested by the Heads of State and Government in the Reykjavik Declaration, the number of leading cases pending implementation remains high. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers further strengthen its work to implement the measures set out in the Reykjavik Declaration to improve the implementation of the Court’s judgments.

3. The Assembly recalls the pivotal role that the implementation of the Court’s judgments plays in the Convention system and the workload of the Court. Given the high proportion of cases from the Court which are classified as repetitive, funding additional work to promote the implementation of the Court’s judgments, particularly with regard to leading cases, is an investment in the system which will ensure its long-term sustainability. The Assembly therefore calls for:

- 3.1. a further increase to the resources available to the Department for the Execution of Judgments;
- 3.2. an increase in funding for technical co-operation projects to promote the implementation of judgments of the Court, with a particular focus on leading cases revealing structural or complex problems;
- 3.3. continued funding and State engagement for the project “Support to efficient domestic capacity for the execution of ECtHR [Court] judgments” in particular, given its critical role in building national capacities for judgment implementation.

4. The Assembly also notes that the Reykjavik Declaration called for a strengthening of political dialogue in the event of difficulties in the implementation of judgments and encouraged the participation of high-level representatives from respondent States. The Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers to redouble its efforts to ensure high-level engagement in discussions on the implementation of the Court’s judgments, in order to facilitate dialogue at the political level. The Assembly will enhance its own activities to promote political dialogue in difficult cases.

1. *Assembly debate* on 9 April 2025 (15th sitting) (see [Doc. 16134](#), report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Constantinos Efstathiou). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 9 April 2025 (15th sitting).



5. Further in regard to its own activities, the Assembly welcomes the recognition in the Reykjavik Declaration of the importance of involving national parliaments in the execution of judgments, as well as the invitation to the President of the Assembly to strengthen his political dialogue with national interlocutors on the implementation of judgments. The Assembly further welcomes the Committee of Ministers' decision of 7 February 2024 to invite "the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to strengthen their dialogue with their respective national interlocutors on the implementation of judgments, at both the political and technical levels, and [its instruction to] the Department for the Execution of Judgments to assist".

6. The Assembly notes the steps it has taken to enhance the work of parliamentarians to promote the implementation of the Court's judgments in accordance with the Reykjavik Declaration, including strengthening support for the President of the Assembly to raise the implementation of judgments in high-level meetings, and the organisation by the Department for the Execution of Judgments of briefings for national delegations on the implementation of the Court's judgments in member States. The Assembly expresses its intention to further enhance its activities in this area.



Recommendation 2296 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Strengthening relations between the Council of Europe and Latin America

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly draws the Committee of Ministers' attention to its [Resolution 2603 \(2025\)](#) "Strengthening relations between the Council of Europe and Latin America", in which it underlines that Europe and Latin America share multidimensional ties as well as the same fundamental values: the universality of human rights, the irreplaceable nature of democracy and the primacy of the rule of law over the rule of might.
2. The existing links between Europe and Latin America are particularly relevant in the current volatile and uncertain geopolitical context. The rules-based international order is under attack, and at the same time, the global challenges requiring a common international response based on multilateralism and co-operation are growing: geopolitical conflicts and threats to international security, climate change and environmental degradation, energy transition and the management of relevant natural resources, mass migrations, health risks, and the use of artificial intelligence.
3. The Assembly recalls that the Council of Europe has already institutionalised relations and established contacts with several regional organisations and institutions in Latin America:
 - 3.1. a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Council of Europe and the Organization of American States (OAS) in 2011;
 - 3.2. the European Court of Human Rights together with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted the San José Declaration in 2018, establishing a Permanent Forum of Institutional Dialogue;
 - 3.3. dialogue and co-operation activities have been developed with the Ibero-American System and its Sectoral Organizations;
 - 3.4. a Co-operation Agreement was signed in 2008 between the Assembly and the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino).
4. The Assembly considers that it is more important than ever for Europe to strengthen its ties with regions that share its values. The Latin American region should be considered as a natural ally. While the existing partnerships with multilateral organisations and countries in Latin America should be strengthened, the Council of Europe should also seek to develop dialogue and new forms of co-operation in the region. In the light of the above, and building on the Reykjavik Declaration, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to:
 - 4.1. further strengthen the relations of the Council of Europe with relevant multilateral organisations in Latin America, in particular the OAS and the Ibero-American System, through high-level meetings, sectoral agreements, technical co-operation activities, exchange of expertise and joint events, with a view to:
 - 4.1.1. upholding multilateralism and the respect for international law;

1. *Assembly debate* on 10 April 2025 (17th sitting) (see [Doc. 16129](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Antonio Gutiérrez Limones). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 10 April 2025 (17th sitting).



- 4.1.2. promoting and protecting human rights;
 - 4.1.3. countering the backsliding of democracy;
 - 4.1.4. promoting the principles of the rule of law;
 - 4.1.5. addressing the impact of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity;
 - 4.1.6. addressing the impact of new technologies and artificial intelligence;
- 4.2. engage in a dialogue with States from the Latin American region, to promote Council of Europe standards and technical expertise and to encourage their accession to the enlarged agreements, enlarged partial agreements and conventions that are open to non-member States of the Council of Europe, such as the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (CETS No. 225), the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), and the Council of Europe International Co-operation Group on Drugs and Addictions (Pompidou Group), and the enlarged partial agreement on the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, once it is established.

Resolutions
2593 to 2603

Resolution 2593 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Foreign interference a threat to democratic security in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Intentional, covert and manipulative interference by foreign powers, their proxies or private actors jeopardises security, democratic values, and governance across Europe. This foreign interference aims to undermine sovereignty, destabilise political systems, weaken public trust, and distort democratic processes. These orchestrated efforts continue to increase in volume and velocity, targeting the foundations of European societies and attempting to exploit democratic principles as systemic vulnerabilities.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly recognises foreign interference, in its many forms, as a substantial and persistent threat to democratic security. It condemns deliberate and systematic efforts by foreign actors to undermine electoral and democratic processes and institutions.
3. The Assembly notes the escalation in hostile interference originating from the Russian Federation following the beginning of its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. This has been underlined by the extensive efforts to spread disinformation, covertly fund political campaigns, and buy votes in the Republic of Moldova's presidential election and constitutional referendum of 20 October 2024. Furthermore, the disruption of Romania's presidential election of 24 November 2024 due to the manipulation of digital technology and artificial intelligence conducted from abroad highlights the urgent need to fortify democratic processes against hostile threats and co-ordinated inauthentic behaviour online.
4. This activity forms part of a wider pattern that has included attempts by the Russian Federation to interfere in electoral processes and referenda across the continent over the past decade, with evidence of covert interference during the 2016 Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom, the 2016 United States presidential election, the 2017 coup d'état from Catalanian regional government leaders against the Spanish constitutional order, the 2017 French presidential election, the 2024 Romanian and Moldovan presidential elections, and in German politics.
5. Social media serves as a key instrument for authoritarian regimes to disseminate false and misleading information as part of State policy. Among those engaged in such activities are so-called "journalists", "bloggers", and "influencers" who spread covert propaganda while being financed by Russian authorities. Presented as "independent journalists", and having a large audience, they systematically promote Russian propaganda to divide European society and destabilise European countries from the inside, to justify the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, and to manipulate public opinion in favour of the Russian Federation.
6. In addition to interfering in electoral processes and referenda, the Russian Federation actively intervenes in the political and social life of Europe through hybrid methods, including the systematic dissemination of disinformation and propaganda. This is carried out via Russian State-funded media such as RT and Sputnik, as well as media outlets affiliated with or financed by the Russian Federation, alongside co-ordinated efforts on social media platforms.

1. *Assembly debate* on 8 April 2025 (12th and 13th sittings) (see [Doc. 16131](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Ms Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 8 April 2025 (13th sitting). See also [Recommendation 2292 \(2025\)](#).



7. Another form of foreign interference involves Russian oligarchs and influential figures who reside in Europe and use their assets to exert political and financial pressure on member States.
8. The Assembly recognises that the Russian Federation is using all the tools available to it to influence the foreign and domestic policies of European countries, including through the development of new technologies and new methods of deception, and it can use representatives of so-called anti-war movements in information and other special operations.
9. Democracies must defend themselves against the threat posed by foreign interference as part of an adaptation to this increasingly hostile international environment where the principles of sovereignty, self-determination and democracy are under attack. The resilience of democratic institutions is crucial in countering these dangers and ensuring that the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law prevail.
10. At the same time, addressing foreign interference requires a delicate balance. Measures to counter undue influence or to enhance transparency must align with human rights standards, particularly those safeguarding freedom of expression, association, assembly, and freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Overly restrictive laws designed without adequate attention to this balance risk stifling legitimate democratic activity and freedom of expression, chilling civil society engagement, or being misused for political purposes.
11. The Assembly underscores that building resilient societies with strong democratic institutions, an active and informed civil society, and transparent governance is the most effective way to counter foreign interference and ensure democratic security.
12. Measures to enhance the transparency in public life to combat foreign interference must be implemented in a manner that respects and upholds the freedoms and autonomy of civil society organisations. While safeguarding national interests is crucial, transparency measures should not be used as a pretext for imposing undue restrictions on civil society actors, who play a fundamental role in fostering democratic values, public accountability, and social cohesion.
13. The Assembly notes that the Council of Europe has a wide range of international standards and guidelines aimed at strengthening democratic resilience that are relevant for combating foreign interference. These include measures to ensure transparency and accountability in public life, international standards and guidelines for political party funding and elections, and strategies to combat disinformation. These tools are further strengthened by the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (CETS No. 225, "the Vilnius Convention") which aims to fill legal gaps that may result from rapid technological advances.
14. The Assembly recalls that, at their 4th Summit in Reykjavik in 2023, the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe reiterated their commitment to countering disinformation that poses a threat to democracy and peace, in a manner compatible with international law and the right to freedom of expression and freedom of opinion, as well as their commitment to take appropriate measures against interference in electoral systems and processes.
15. The Assembly stresses the need for comprehensive and holistic strategies to combat the use of multiform foreign interference tactics. A whole-of-society approach that includes parliaments, governments, government agencies, local authorities, private enterprises, journalists, civil society and citizens is encouraged to foster societal resilience and counter foreign interference operations.
16. In light of the threat to democratic security posed by foreign interference, the Assembly calls on the member States of the Council of Europe to:
 - 16.1. integrate foreign interference threats into national security frameworks that recognise the interconnected nature of hostile cyber, economic, political and information activities;
 - 16.2. secure democratic institutions, critical infrastructure, and electoral systems against cyber threats;
 - 16.3. enhance co-ordination between security agencies both nationally and internationally to detect and counter foreign interference activities;
 - 16.4. consider updating laws and regulations to incorporate foreign interference offences for covert conduct on behalf of foreign actors aimed at having a manipulative effect.

17. As part of a whole-of-society approach to enhance resilience, reinforce public trust, and safeguard institutional integrity, the Assembly calls on member States to:

17.1. promote digital and media literacy initiatives aimed at countering disinformation and building resilience among citizens to empower them against manipulation;

17.2. introduce media literacy into national curricula from an early age to develop essential critical thinking skills for exercising judgment, evaluating the credibility of information sources, identifying biased or misleading content, and for critically and effectively engaging with information online;

17.3. in line with its [Resolution 2192 \(2017\)](#) “Youth against corruption”, devise appropriate empowerment strategies to raise young people’s awareness and understanding of corruption and the ways it undermines democratic societies;

17.4. encourage and support pre-bunking and fact-checking systems, and partnerships with independent media organisations and civil society to counteract false narratives without undermining freedom of expression;

17.5. intensify actions to better protect journalists, safeguard press freedom, and to fund and promote media pluralism and independence, including by working with the European Union and other international stakeholders to ensure the continued funding of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty and other independent media;

17.6. in line with its [Resolution 2552 \(2024\)](#) “Strengthening democracy through participatory and deliberative processes”, foster more robust civic engagement with deliberative technologies and participatory processes.

18. In light of the risks presented by disinformation as a strategic foreign interference tool to distort realities, divide societies, and weaken democracies, the Assembly:

18.1. welcomes the United Nations Global Principles for Information Integrity as a global initiative to foster healthier and safer information spaces, and calls for consultations with the public and with private industry on steps that may be taken to implement them;

18.2. calls on Council of Europe member and observer States who have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (CETS No. 225, “the Vilnius Convention”) and ensure its implementation with due regard to the impact of artificial intelligence technologies on the production and dissemination of disinformation and illegal propaganda;

18.3. encourages the use of artificial intelligence as a tool for democratic innovation, including for strengthening public participation, improving transparency and accountability in governance, supporting fact-checking and electoral integrity, and fostering inclusive, efficient, and resilient public services;

18.4. calls on member States to increase expertise and technical capabilities for combating disinformation online and to address emerging threats posed by artificial intelligence;

18.5. calls on member States to explore the development of information verification systems to safeguard online communities against deceptive artificial intelligence election content;

18.6. calls on online platforms to provide clear policies on political advertising, algorithmic amplification, and the removal of harmful content or disinformation, while safeguarding the freedom of expression and refraining from censorship;

18.7. considers that any measures in support of so-called anti-war movements should be applied only in exceptional cases and to persons who have genuine and substantiated evidence of persecution and pressure from the Russian authorities for their true and sincere anti-war beliefs.

19. In light of hostile actor attempts to interfere improperly or illicitly in democratic decision-making processes, the Assembly:

19.1. reiterates its condemnation of massive covert Russian funding of political parties and politicians in democratic countries that attempts to interfere in their democratic processes;

19.2. calls on member States to ensure legislative and policy frameworks that protect against interference in electoral systems, and to carry out comprehensive investigations into allegations of interference in elections and referenda;

19.3. calls on member States to review and enhance national frameworks governing financial contributions to political parties, advertising and electoral campaigns to mitigate the risk of inappropriate or illicit foreign financial interference;

19.4. in line with its [Resolution 2406 \(2021\)](#) “Fighting corruption – General principles of political responsibility”, calls on national governments to enhance measures for preventing corruption and, in line with recommendations of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), adopt and update codes of conduct for all holders of public office;

19.5. encourages member States to explore measures that increase the transparency and integrity of legitimate foreign influence activities;

19.6. encourages member States to consult at an early stage with the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) when developing public governance tools to strengthen the transparency and integrity of foreign influence activities.

20. In light of the need for collective action to respond to the global challenge posed by foreign interference, the Assembly:

20.1. stresses the importance of co-operation among Council of Europe member States to address foreign interference as a shared threat. In this regard, it advocates for closer collaboration with the European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), relevant expertise of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other international organisations in developing co-ordinated responses;

20.2. encourages support to multi-partner rapid response initiatives to identify and respond to diverse and evolving threats to democracies, including through sharing information and analysis, and identifying opportunities for co-ordinated responses;

20.3. supports the use of targeted and co-ordinated sanctions against individuals, entities and State actors engaged in foreign interference including election meddling, media manipulation, illicit funding and cyberattacks;

20.4. calls for strengthened legal avenues to hold foreign and domestic actors accountable for facilitating interference in democratic processes;

20.5. encourages member States to assess the feasibility of developing a broad-based, operational, non-binding definition of foreign interference to enhance co-ordination in countering related threats and to strengthen clarity on legitimate influence activities of member States;

20.6. welcomes the establishment, on its initiative, of the Parliamentary Alliance for Free and Fair Elections as an important step for addressing emerging challenges that threaten electoral integrity, enhancing co-operation with national and international partners on electoral matters, and promoting Council of Europe reference standards in this field.

Resolution 2594 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Modification of various provisions of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly reiterates that its actions and decisions shall be based on clear, consistent and effective parliamentary rules and procedures. It recalls that it has regularly amended its rules in recent years in order to accommodate changes in parliamentary practice, clarify the rules and procedures where their application or interpretation has raised difficulties, or to address specific problems. It therefore intends to take due account of proposals submitted by its members, national delegations, political groups and committees, and make the necessary adjustments to its Rules of Procedure.

2. Having regard to the above considerations and in order to give effect to [Resolution 2553 \(2024\)](#) "Strengthening the youth perspective in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly" and, in particular, to enable the establishment and full participation of youth rapporteurs in the work of the Assembly, the Assembly decides to amend its Rules of Procedure as follows:

2.1. in Rule 50, after paragraph 50.7, add the following paragraph:

"All general committees (other than the Committee on the election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights) may appoint one youth rapporteur, whose role is to present a youth perspective, as relevant, in discussions on reports for which that committee is seized for report. A youth rapporteur for a given committee shall be appointed for a mandate of two years, renewable a maximum of once in that committee. The appointment of a youth rapporteur is subject to the same criteria for appointment as set out in Rule 50.1, with the additional criteria of seeking to encourage young members of the Assembly to take on such roles."

2.2. in appendix III (code of conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly), after paragraph 4, add the following paragraph:

"Application of this code to youth rapporteurs:

- Paragraphs 1 and 4 of this code shall apply mutatis mutandis to youth rapporteurs.

- A youth rapporteur shall recuse themselves from intervening as a youth rapporteur in respect of any report in which they may have a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest that cannot be adequately addressed through a declaration of interests or through taking specific measures."

1. *Assembly debate* on 8 April 2025 (13th sitting) (see [Doc. 16137](#), report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, rapporteur: Ms Yevheniia Kravchuk). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 8 April 2025 (13th sitting).



3. In order to simplify and harmonise the approach, the duration of the mandate of general rapporteurs is amended to align it with the approach taken to youth rapporteurs. The Assembly decides to replace Rule 50.7 with the following text:

“Committees may appoint one or more general rapporteurs whose terms of reference they shall determine beforehand. The terms of reference shall be submitted to the Bureau for approval and its decision shall be subject to ratification by the Assembly. A general rapporteur shall be appointed for a mandate of two years, renewable a maximum of once. The appointment of a general rapporteur is subject to the criteria set out in Rule 50.1.”

4. In order to give effect to [Resolution 2579 \(2024\)](#) “Civil society and the Parliamentary Assembly: towards greater transparency and engagement”, the Assembly intends to continue its work, in order to develop a code of conduct for interest representatives for the Assembly once progress has been made on the framework code of conduct for interest representatives for the Council of Europe. The Assembly notes that this work could additionally consider how to improve its engagement with civil society as follow up to the 4th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe and the Secretary General’s Roadmap on Civil Society engagement with the Council of Europe 2024-2027. The Assembly would welcome the resuming of the briefing sessions organised by the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) of the Council of Europe for its members in the margin of the Assembly’s past-sessions.

5. The Assembly encourages committees to seek to engage with a diverse range of voices and interlocutors, including civil society actors active in their thematic areas. It recalls that such exchanges can be conducted within the context of hearings, exchanges of views, meetings with rapporteurs, and as part of a general exchange of views with civil society to help inform the committees’ work programme. The Assembly decides to revise its Rules of Procedure to clarify which meetings are *in camera* by adding, at the end of Rule 48.3, the following sentence:

“The Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs considers individual cases in camera.”

6. In order to promote gender equality in senior roles within the Assembly, whilst simplifying the rules relating to the composition of national delegations, the Assembly decides to replace the last sentence of Rule 16.3 with the following sentence:

“For every three successive Vice-Presidents that a national delegation proposes, at least one must be a woman and one must be a man.”

7. In order to ensure the effective functioning of the Assembly and that there are sufficient numbers of eligible candidates for roles in the bureaux of committees, the Assembly decides to replace Rule 46.7 with the following text:

“- The chairperson and the vice-chairpersons of a committee shall remain in office until the opening of the next ordinary session of the Assembly. They may be re-elected for one further term, consecutive or not. A committee chairperson or vice-chairperson elected in the course of a session for an incomplete term may be re-elected for two further terms.

- A former chairperson of a committee may stand for the office of chairperson or vice-chairperson of any committee on expiry of a period of two years.. A former vice-chairperson of a committee may stand for the office of vice-chairperson of the same committee on expiry of a period of two years.

- A chairperson or vice-chairperson of a committee who has been dismissed from office pursuant to Rule 55 may not be a candidate for the office of chairperson or vice-chairperson of a committee or a sub-committee.”

8. To ensure consistency in respect of sub-committees, the Assembly decides to replace the sixth sentence of Rule 49.7 with the following sentences:

“A former chairperson of a sub-committee may stand for the office of chairperson or vice-chairperson of the same sub-committee on expiry of a period of two years. A former vice-chairperson of a sub-committee may stand for the office of vice-chairperson of the same sub-committee on expiry of a period of two years.”

9. To ensure that the Rules of Procedure adequately take due account of networks, platforms and alliances, the Assembly decides to add, at the end of Rule 49, the following paragraph:

“- The provisions of the Rules of Procedure applicable to sub-committees and the members of their bureaux shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to networks, platforms and alliances established by the Assembly, unless otherwise provided.”.

10. Emphasising that it is not in general advisable to use the urgent procedure for statutory opinions, the Assembly decides to amend its Rules of Procedure as follows:

10.1. replace Rule 50.4 with the following text:

“The report of a committee shall contain an explanatory memorandum by the rapporteur. A report prepared under the urgent procedure should contain an explanatory memorandum only if it relates to a statutory opinion. The committee shall take note of the explanatory memorandum. Any dissenting opinions expressed in the committee shall be included therein at the request of their authors, preferably in the body of the explanatory memorandum, but otherwise in an appendix.”;

10.2. at the end of Rule 51.1, add the following two sentences (noting that the provision relating to the complementary joint procedure is not new as it is currently in the footnote to Rule 51.1):

“A motion to initiate a complementary joint procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly in response to a serious violation by a member State of its statutory obligations cannot be the subject of a request for urgent procedure. The urgent procedure should not be used for a statutory opinion unless there are exceptional circumstances justifying its use.”.

11. In order to properly align committee representation in the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and its Council for Democratic Elections with the thematic scope of the concerned committees' terms of reference, the Assembly decides to replace, in part B of Appendix VIII to the Rules of Procedure, “Specific Terms of Reference of Assembly Committees” ([Resolution 1842 \(2011\)](#)) as modified by [Resolution 2022 \(2014\)](#)), Chapter (IX) “Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee)”, paragraph 8 with the following sentence:

“The committee shall share the Assembly representation in the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and in its Council for Democratic Elections.”.

12. The Assembly decides that the amendments to the Rules of Procedure set out in this Resolution shall enter into force upon their adoption.



Resolution 2595 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Putting an end to collective expulsions of aliens

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls that collective expulsions of foreigners are formally prohibited under Article 4 of Protocol No. 4 to the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 46), a prohibition which is also enshrined in the law of the European Union in accordance with Article 19 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. In this context, the Assembly is concerned about the growing divergence between international law and member States' practice.
2. The Assembly considers that the practice of collective expulsions poses a major challenge to respect for the rule of law and fundamental human rights standards, including the principle of *non-refoulement* and the absolute prohibition of torture. It points to the principles by which the Council of Europe member States are bound, their legal obligations in this respect, and stresses the need for increased action by the Organisation to support them in this area.
3. The Assembly points out that pursuant to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights ("the Court") in *Khlaifia and Others v. Italy*, "collective expulsion" is to be understood as "any measure compelling aliens, as a group, to leave a country, except where such a measure is taken on the basis of a reasonable and objective examination of the particular case of each individual alien of the group".
4. Welcoming the case law of the Court, particularly the *Čonka v. Belgium* judgment, in which it was held that all expulsion procedures must afford sufficient guarantees demonstrating that the personal circumstances of each of those concerned have been genuinely and individually taken into account, the Assembly is alarmed at the widespread practice of collective expulsions in Europe without the individual examination of each person's situation.
5. The Assembly emphasises the importance of an individual examination of each person's situation in preventing collective expulsions. In line with Assembly [Resolution 2461 \(2022\)](#) and [Recommendation 2238 \(2022\)](#) "Safe third countries for asylum seekers", it points out the importance of avoiding the use of lists of safe countries as grounds of inadmissibility for asylum claims, and welcomes the decision of the Committee of Ministers to look into the possibility of revising its Recommendation No. R (97) 2 to member States containing guidelines on the application of the safe third country concept.
6. The Assembly also expresses its deep concern at the spread of the notion of "legal fiction of non-entry", whereby persons are considered not to have entered European territory, and the use of which will be facilitated by the implementation of the European Union Pact on Migration and Asylum (the Pact), which may make it more difficult for people to seek asylum. It refers in this context to the extraterritorial application of Article 4 of Protocol No. 4 established in the *Hirsi Jamaa and others v. Italy* judgment, and the fact that the "legal fiction of non-entry" does not exempt States from their obligations, particularly those of *non-refoulement* and the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment.

1. *Assembly debate* on 8 April 2025 (13th sitting) (see [Doc. 16135](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Mr Pierre-Alain Fridez). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 8 April 2025 (13th sitting).



7. In its [Resolution 2462 \(2022\)](#) “Pushbacks on land and sea: illegal measures of migration management”, the Assembly highlighted the intrinsic link between the prohibition of collective expulsions, the principle of *non-refoulement* and the absolute prohibition of torture. Breaching these fundamental principles can expose individuals to tragic consequences for which those responsible should be held accountable.

8. In its [Resolution 2555 \(2024\)](#) “Ensuring human rights-compliant asylum procedures”, the Assembly highlighted the following legal obligations, and stresses here the binding nature of these obligations: only through a fair and effective individual examination, including of asylum applications, can a State meet its obligation not to expose, directly or indirectly, anyone falling under its jurisdiction to a risk of torture, or inhumane or degrading treatment. Furthermore, in case of an appeal, the remedy must be accompanied by automatic suspensive effect on expulsion measures should the applicant complain of a risk under Article 2 or 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, “the Convention”). These procedural safeguards are required for the appeal to be considered effective and in compliance with Article 13 of the Convention, and with the consistent case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

9. Conscious of the requirements of internal security and border management incumbent on States in a geopolitical context that is sometimes complex, the Assembly invites Council of Europe member States nonetheless not to fall into the trap of invoking exceptions to human rights principles on the pretext of meeting these challenges. In this respect it refers to [Resolution 2404 \(2021\)](#) “Instrumentalised migration pressure on the borders of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland with Belarus”, in which it condemned “any instrumentalisation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers by States for political purposes”.

10. The Assembly underlines that the main victims of what it called “hybrid attacks” in [Resolution 2404 \(2021\)](#) are the migrants themselves. The response of States targeted by such attacks punishes migrants, increases their vulnerability rather than holding to account or sanctioning the States that are guilty of this instrumentalisation. This twisted logic is a trap, and migrants will no longer be exposed to situations of extreme vulnerability and subject to human rights violations if European States refuse to fall into it.

11. The Assembly deeply regrets that the drive to protect national security and ensure a total protection of borders seems to be used to justify the relaxing of the rules in force which were built up and agreed to by the States themselves. The concept of instrumentalisation does not provide a basis for a general derogation from asylum and human rights norms, including the absolute nature of the principle of *non-refoulement* and Article 3 of the Convention, and the obligation to conduct an individual assessment of a person’s situation before returning them. The Assembly urges member States not to derogate from their obligations, even in difficult situations as the Court of Justice of the European Union recalled in the case C-72/22 PPU - *Valstybės sienos apsaugos tarnyba*.

12. Regretting that no European country on the migration routes taken by those seeking refuge and a decent life in Europe is exempt from the practice of collective expulsions of foreigners, the Assembly calls on the Council of Europe member States to work together to establish legal migration pathways which will both avoid human tragedies and respond to labour shortages, in keeping with the spirit of Assembly [Resolution 2586 \(2025\)](#) “Immigration, one of the answers to Europe’s demographic ageing”.

13. To make it possible to document any infringements of rights at the border, to hold those responsible accountable, and to guarantee access for migrants to legal assistance and information on their rights, border areas must be accessible at all times, including areas where and in procedures during which the “legal fiction of non-entry” applies and/or where migrants are deprived of their freedom. Access should be granted, in law and in practice, not only to the Frontex Fundamental Rights Officer but also to national and Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, national human rights institutions, parliamentarians, civil society organisations, health professionals, lawyers and journalists.

14. In this context, the Assembly welcomes the fact that the European Union member States are required to set up independent national monitoring mechanisms by June 2026 to guarantee respect for human rights at borders during the “screening” procedures and accelerated asylum procedures at the border provided for in the Pact. The Assembly strongly encourages member States to take account of the guidance provided by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union in its “Guide on national independent mechanisms”, especially the recommendation to adopt national legislation to extend the scope of monitoring to all the aspects of border management including return procedures.

15. The Assembly recognises that the adoption of the Pact is a sign of the political will among European Union member States to take a consistent approach to these issues. With a transitional period that runs until 2026 and implementing measures yet to be adopted, however, the Assembly stresses that proper safeguards need to be established when devising the national plans for the implementation of the Pact so as to avoid the occurrence of collective expulsions.

16. To guarantee access to an individual assessment of the situation of each migrant, particularly when crossing borders, in the context of asylum or return procedures, the Assembly strongly encourages the member States to:

16.1. adopt national action plans for the implementation of the Pact in line with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of the United Nations (the 1951 Convention) and the European Convention on Human Rights, making explicit reference to these treaties;

16.2. provide for the systematic assessment and guarantee of the legality of expulsion orders, including those following a decision of inadmissibility with regard to an asylum application, by a court with jurisdiction in the territory concerned, before any return operation, including in fictional “non-entry” situations;

16.3. provide appropriate training based on respect for international human rights law standards, including the 1951 Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights, intended for border guards and other stakeholders such as lawyers, judges and prosecutors, interpreters and administrative staff. In this context, the Assembly encourages the use of the Council of Europe Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) to devise such programmes;

16.4. provide access to a lawyer and interpretation services, including when migrants intercepted at sea disembark, and ensure compliance with official note taking procedures, particularly so as to avoid the misinterpretation of statements made in the context of applications for international protection;

16.5. for those member States that are members of the European Union, allocate sufficient material and human resources for the proper implementation of national plans for the application of the Pact while respecting human rights, particularly with regard to the implications in terms of procedural guarantees.

17. Noting the high number of applications pending before the Court concerning collective expulsions and of judgments which are still under supervision of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Assembly urges the Council of Europe member States concerned to execute these judgments promptly and fully, in particular by:

17.1. taking all the necessary measures to ensure that migrants are treated in accordance with the Convention, particularly with regard to collective expulsion, and that they are systematically given genuine and full access to legal entry procedures;

17.2. ensuring that asylum seekers are not expelled without being identified or having their individual situations assessed;

17.3. avoiding any distortion of foreigners’ statements as to whether they wish to request international protection;

17.4. offering migrants effective remedies, including, in particular, sufficient time to take their case to court before expulsion orders are executed;

17.5. ensuring that the suspensive effect of remedies against decisions to refuse applicants admission to the country applies in law and in practice;

17.6. benefiting from the process of execution of Court judgments in order to develop a comprehensive approach to the challenges posed by large-scale arrivals of migrants, aiming thereby to resolve any complex structural problems identified by the Committee of Ministers.

18. The Assembly welcomes the political will of those States which choose to receive migrants in accordance with international law standards despite the challenges raised by substantial numbers of arrivals.

19. Noting that the countries in which migrants first arrive are those that shoulder most of the responsibility for reception and integration policies, the Assembly calls for a co-ordinated and coherent European approach to reception of migrants, in law and in practice, across territories at both national and European levels.

20. The Assembly points out that the prohibition of collective expulsions applies at all borders including internal borders of the European Union. Hasty returns within the Schengen area cannot be justified without due regard for applicable procedural guarantees and an individual decision, in keeping with the case law of Court of Justice of the European Union. The Assembly also draws attention to the extended re-establishment of controls within the internal borders of the Schengen Area, which runs counter to this spirit of solidarity.

21. The Assembly points out how essential it is for the best interests of the child to be protected under all circumstances and strongly regrets instances of political instrumentalisation of the situation of unaccompanied children. Where large numbers of such children arrive in particular geographical areas, the Assembly strongly encourages stakeholders to seek a solution which will enable the relocation, settlement and integration of these children to and into other regions of the same country. This would foster a consistent approach where it comes to their due prospects of being welcomed and integrated, including support through guardianship systems in keeping with Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration.

22. The Assembly strongly encourages an overhaul of asylum legislation in countries where it is no longer fit for the purpose of coping with increases in migration and does not comply with European law.

23. Recognising the importance of providing legal assistance to migrants to make the assessment of their individual situation effective, the Assembly considers it critical that more lawyers specialising in the law on foreigners are available at points of arrival. It strongly recommends the provision of specific training in maritime law and asylum law to support these efforts. It also recommends improved access to interpreters, particularly at the point when migrants disembark.

24. The Assembly is concerned about the sexual and gender-based violence to which women and children are subjected during their journey, and the risks of trafficking afterwards. It recalls that if the competent authorities consider that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person is a victim of trafficking in human beings, they must not be removed from the country until the process of identifying them as a victim is complete. It recommends the introduction of special protection measures to guarantee their safety including:

24.1. specific training for lawyers to help them recognise and assist victims of sexual and gender-based violence, with earmarked funding;

24.2. save in cases of family ties or friendships predating the journey, the separation of men and women in reception centres for foreigners or the transfer of women to separate centres to protect them from pressure from the men with whom they travelled.

25. The Assembly welcomes the creation of a new Division on Migration and Refugees at the Council of Europe, established with a view to consolidating and intensifying the Organisation's efforts to address urgent matters related to migration and asylum, and invites the member States to take full advantage of this new structure.

26. Convinced of the Council of Europe's key role in supporting member States in their efforts to honour the commitments they have entered into in joining the Organisation and ratifying its international treaties, particularly the European Convention on Human Rights, the Assembly encourages the member States and European Union bodies to refer systematically to Council of Europe standards when devising national and European public policies on migration and asylum. More generally, it considers that the updating of the "Twenty guidelines on forced return" adopted by the Committee of Ministers (CM(2005)40) and the development by the Council of Europe of a toolkit of good practices concerning the implementation of its standards in the management of migration and asylum by its member States would be very useful.

27. The Assembly is convinced that the complex situation of Council of Europe member States' overseas territories, which requires a humane and transparent policy response respecting individual rights, would merit further consideration, and recommends that this issue be addressed in a future report.

Resolution 2596 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Respect for the rule of law and the fight against corruption within the Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls that in the aftermath of the corruption scandal linked to the vote in the Assembly on the Strässer report in 2012 and the observation of the 2013, 2015 and 2016 elections in Azerbaijan, the Assembly set up, in April 2017, the *ad hoc* Independent Investigation Body on the allegations of corruption within the Parliamentary Assembly. Since then, the Assembly has clearer codes of conduct and clearer rules on declarations of interests and gifts, on honorary status and on lobbying.
2. However, the Assembly emphasises that all ethical frameworks need regular reviews to ensure they are fit for purpose to address the latest challenges, expectations and standards. Moreover, it is important that an ethical culture is encouraged to flourish and develop within the Council of Europe, which includes ensuring that the Organisation has adequate – and adequately resourced – enforcement mechanisms to uphold its ethical standards.
3. The Assembly welcomes the Council of Europe Policy on reporting wrongdoing and protection from retaliation (Speak Up Policy), and rule of investigations, operational since 1 January 2023, which applies to the Secretariat and all members of the Council of Europe's organs and bodies, including members of the Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, and the judges at the European Court of Human Rights. This enables whistleblower-type complaints to be made to the Department of Internal Oversight who can undertake an initial consideration, and a preliminary assessment into any wrong-doing contrary to the public interest. An investigation can then follow (whether through the Department of Internal Oversight or the relevant organ's ethics body). The Assembly emphasises the importance of effective enforcement mechanisms in improving behaviours and standards, whilst being aware that only a small number of cases are currently reaching the Department. The Assembly invites all instances of the Council of Europe, including the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, to raise awareness of the availability of the whistleblower contacts within the Speak Up Policy and to create an environment and culture in which reporting alleged wrong-doing is supported and enabled.
4. Acknowledging the need for a bespoke approach for the judiciary, the Assembly welcomes recent steps by the European Court of Human Rights to review and to make more transparent its own procedures and ethical standards, including in relation to recusal. The Assembly encourages the Court to foster the development of an ethical culture and to keep ethical questions under review.
5. The Assembly resolves to review its own ethical standards, procedures and practices on a regular basis, to ensure its standards are exemplary, and its processes reflect best practice, whilst having regard to the importance of the separation of powers and the peculiarities of political life. In its activities, the Assembly

1. *Assembly debate* on 9 April 2025 (14th sitting) (see [Doc. 16138](#), report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Frank Schwabe). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 9 April 2025 (14th sitting).

See also [Recommendation 2293 \(2025\)](#).



will remain vigilant to the risks of political favouritism, exertion of influence and trading of influence within political life and their potential impact on the Assembly and national parliaments. To improve the accessibility and visibility of its codes of conduct and ethical standards, the Assembly will:

- 5.1. revise the structure of its Rules of procedure to make it more coherent, accessible, and user-friendly, whilst placing the ethical standards up front;
- 5.2. promote transparency, ethics and anti-corruption on its website and will produce user-friendly info-graphics and guides on ethical standards, including for specific roles.

6. Desiring to consolidate the considerable progress made in relation to declarations of interest, the Assembly decides to have a single, updatable document, published online, containing all declarations of interest relating to a member's various mandates within the Assembly. Declarations of interest will identify how any perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest will be addressed and will be required for all roles of significance within the Assembly. The Assembly decides to amend the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly (set out in [Resolution 1903 \(2012\)](#), as modified, and contained in Appendix II to the Rules of Procedure), in relation to declarations of interest, as follows:

- 6.1. in order to clarify how to address actual or potential conflicts, to replace paragraph 9 with the following paragraph:

"In their declarations of interest, members should identify any actual or potential conflicts between economic, commercial, financial or other interests on a professional, personal, or family level on the one hand, and the public interest in the work of the Assembly on the other. In doing so, special regard should be paid to that member's particular roles within the Assembly. Once an actual or potential conflict of interest has been identified, members should set out steps that will be taken to avoid that conflict unduly affecting their work in the Assembly (for example by desisting from certain actions or roles). Conflicts of interest should thus be resolved in favour of the public interest and should be disclosed.";

- 6.2. to replace paragraph 10 with the following paragraph:

"Any member with interests relevant to a debate that are not yet adequately reflected in their written declaration must set them out in an oral declaration when speaking in any proceedings of the Assembly or its committees, or in any relevant communications.";

- 6.3. whilst generally discouraging the seeking, giving or receiving of gifts, to replace paragraph 15 with the following paragraph:

"Members shall not accept any gifts or benefits whose nature and/or value is not strictly within the bounds of parliamentary protocol or practices regarding hospitality";

- 6.4. to add, at the end of paragraph 18, the following sentences:

"The declaration shall include a specific entry for every specific role that member has within the Assembly, including President or Vice-President of the Assembly, chairperson or vice-chairperson of committees, sub-committees, networks, platforms and alliances, rapporteur (including general rapporteur or co-rapporteur), chairperson and member of an ad-hoc committee for the observation of elections, member of an ad hoc committee of the Bureau, or a role representing the Assembly or a committee. Such entries shall set out any interests specific to that role and shall identify how any perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest that might arise would be addressed.";

- 6.5. in order to reflect that gifts are now recorded in declarations of interest, to add, before the last sentence of paragraph 18, the following sentence:

"Members shall update their declarations of interest, within 30 days, to include any relevant new information, including any gifts or similar benefits (such as travel expenses, accommodation, subsistence, meals, or entertainment expenses) of a value in excess of €200 that they accept in the performance of their duties as Assembly members.";

- 6.6. in order to encourage the submission of annual declarations of interests, to add, after paragraph 18, the following three paragraphs:

"Any member who has not submitted an annual declaration of interests for the relevant year shall not be entitled to apply for, be granted, or to continue to hold, any specific office within the Assembly including President or Vice-President of the Assembly, chairperson or vice-chairperson of a committee, sub-committee, network, platform or alliance, rapporteur (including

general rapporteur or co-rapporteur), member of an ad-hoc committee for the observation of elections, member of an ad hoc committee of the Bureau, or a role representing the Assembly or a committee. In case of the late submission of a declaration, this prohibition shall cease two months after the submission of that member's declaration for that year.

If intervening in a debate, a member who has not submitted an annual declaration of interests for the relevant year must start their intervention with an oral declaration of interests.

Upon the second consecutive year of a failure to submit a declaration of interests by a given member, the President shall write to the Speaker of the relevant parliament highlighting the continued absence of a declaration of interests for that member, and asking the Speaker to consider (in accordance with national procedures and in consultation with the competent persons) whether that member is suitable to remain a member of the national delegation given the continued failure to provide a declaration of interests."

7. The Assembly consequently decides to modify other provisions of its rules of procedure as follows:

7.1. in order to apply similar standards to those for rapporteurs in paragraph 1 of the code of conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly (as set out in [Resolution 1799 \(2011\)](#), as modified, and contained in Appendix III of the Rules of Procedure), to members with similarly significant mandates within the Assembly, add, after paragraph 18, the following paragraphs:

"Rules of conduct for the President and Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of committees, sub-committees, networks, platforms and alliances and the chairpersons of political groups:

- principle of neutrality, impartiality and objectivity, including in particular:

- obligation to declare any economic, commercial, financial or other interests, on a professional, personal or family level, connected with the work of the Assembly, committee, sub-committee, network; platform, alliance or political group, as the case may be;

- undertaking not to seek or accept instructions from any government or governmental or non-governmental organisation, or pressure group or individual;

- undertaking not to accept any reward, honorary distinction, decoration, favour, substantial gift or remuneration from a government or governmental or non-governmental organisation, a pressure group or an individual in connection with activities carried out in the exercise of their duties;

- obligation of discretion, in particular the undertaking not to make personal use of information acquired in the course of their duties;

- undertaking of availability, in particular undertaking to attend Assembly sessions, Standing Committee meetings, and meetings of committees, sub-committees, network, platforms and alliances, in connection with their duties;

- undertaking to respect the values of the Council of Europe."

7.2. at the end of paragraph 1.1.1 of the code of conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly, add the following sentence:

"Such a declaration shall be in writing and shall be made public by being added to the existing annual declaration of interests for that member.";

7.3. replace paragraph 20 of the Guidelines on the Observation of Elections by the Parliamentary Assembly (adopted by the Bureau of the Assembly and set out in Appendix XIV to the Rules of Procedure) with the following paragraph:

"All candidates for membership of an ad hoc committee, at the time of putting forward their candidacy, shall make a written declaration of interests in connection with the country concerned by an election observation; this declaration shall be added to their declaration of interests published on the Assembly website. In that addition to their declaration of interests, members should identify any actual or potential conflicts between any actual or potential economic, commercial, financial or other interests on a professional, personal or relational level on the one hand, and the public interest in the work of the ad hoc committee for observing those elections. "Relational" includes direct and indirect family relations as well as people with whom they are in regular contact. Once an actual or potential conflict of interest has been identified, members

should set out steps that will be taken to avoid that conflict unduly affecting their work in that role (for example desisting from certain actions or roles). Political groups should not submit the candidatures of members with noteworthy conflicts of interest in respect of a particular country.”;

7.4. incorporate the code of conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly into the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly, adding it after the final paragraph of the code of conduct for members;

7.5. in order to strengthen the test to be applied to the President and Vice-Presidents to include untruthful declarations or failing to declare relevant interests, so as to align it with that for rapporteurs as set out in Appendix III, paragraph 4, in Rule 54.1 replace the words “*no longer fulfils the conditions required for the exercise of that office or is guilty of serious misconduct by seriously or repeatedly violating the provisions of the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly*” with the following words:

“no longer fulfils the conditions required for the exercise of that office, or if he or she fails to honour one or more undertaking in the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly, including if he or she failed to declare any relevant interests or made an untruthful declaration, or if he or she is guilty of serious misconduct by seriously or repeatedly violating the provisions of the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly”;

7.6. in order to strengthen the test to be applied to the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of committees to include untruthful declarations or failing to declare relevant interests, so as to align it with that for rapporteurs as set out in Appendix III, paragraph 4; and in order to apply the same standards to the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of sub-committees, networks, platforms and alliances, modify Rule 55 as follows:

7.6.1. at the end of the title, add the following words:

“, sub-committees, networks, platforms and alliances”

7.6.2. in Rule 55.1, replace the words “*no longer fulfils the conditions required for the exercise of that office or is guilty of serious misconduct by seriously or repeatedly violating the provisions of the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly*” with the following words:

“no longer fulfils the conditions required for the exercise of that office, or if he or she fails to honour one or more undertaking in the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly, including if he or she failed to declare any relevant interests or made an untruthful declaration, or if he or she is guilty of serious misconduct by seriously or repeatedly violating the provisions of the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly”;

7.6.3. after Rule 55.6, add the following paragraph:

“References, in this paragraph, to committee include sub-committee, network, platform and alliance.”.

8. In order to improve transparency and to better emphasise the obligations on rapporteurs, the code of conduct for rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly is amended as follows:

8.1. after paragraph 1.5, to add the following paragraph:

“Obligation on rapporteurs to sign an undertaking, when updating their declaration of interests, to abide by the obligations of neutrality, impartiality, objectivity, discretion and availability as part of that role”

8.2. to replace paragraph 3 with the following paragraph:

“The rapporteur should, unless there are good reasons for not doing so, publish the list of individuals, experts and representatives of governmental or non-governmental organisations consulted, met or received in the process of drafting the report.”.

9. Reiterating the importance of effective enforcement mechanisms in improving behaviours and standards, the Assembly decides to amend the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly to better highlight reporting options and to indicate some types of expertise that can be used in an investigation, as follows:

9.1. after paragraph 20, to add the following paragraph:

“Concerns about wrong-doing affecting the public interest, including breaches of the Assembly’s codes of conduct, or inaccurate declarations of interest, can be reported to the President of the Assembly or the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs.” The Assembly website should be similarly updated to highlight relevant reporting options.

9.2. at the end of paragraph 22, to add the following sentence:

“The Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs may avail itself of the expertise of internal and national experts to assist in such an investigation.”;

9.3. after paragraph 25, to add the following paragraph:

“Where the committee decides to open an investigation, it may refer the matter to the Conduct Investigation Panel of the Parliamentary Assembly to gather evidence and to establish the facts on its behalf. The Conduct Investigation Panel of the Parliamentary Assembly is composed of seven former judges of the European Court of Human Rights, and supported by a secretariat composed of Council of Europe staff members. For each referral, three of those former judges will serve as the panel for that matter. The provisions of paragraph 23 and 24 above apply to the Conduct Investigation Panel of the Parliamentary Assembly, as if it were the committee. Any final determination shall remain for the committee itself.”.

10. The Assembly will develop an improved checking mechanism for declarations of interest by its members:

10.1. the Secretariat would undertake initial checks of declarations of interest to raise any potential obvious omissions of potential conflicts with the member concerned;

10.2. this mechanism should focus, as a priority, on checks in relation to those members who have specific offices within the Assembly (the President, the Vice Presidents of the Assembly, chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of committees, sub-committees, networks, platforms and alliances, chairpersons of political groups, rapporteurs, co-rapporteurs, and members of *ad hoc* election observation committees);

10.3. appropriate additional resources should be placed at the disposal of the Secretariat to the Assembly in order to facilitate this checking mechanism;

10.4. the Secretariat should produce an annual information note, for the attention of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, on its progress in this work checking the declarations of interest of the Assembly members. The President of the Assembly should also receive a copy.

11. In order to address concerns in respect of conduct by members who have left the Assembly, the following amendments are made to the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly:

11.1. after paragraph 28, add the following two paragraphs:

“In respect of a member who has left the Assembly, where allegations arise of significant breaches of the rules of conduct, or conduct likely to bring the Assembly into disrepute through association with that former member, the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs may examine alleged breaches of the conduct of conduct as for current members.

Where a member leaves the Assembly following allegations of serious or repetitive breaches of the rules of conduct, the President of the Assembly or the President of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, should send information concerning those concerns to the Speaker of the relevant national Assembly, inviting them to consider taking appropriate action pursuant to their own ethical standards and enforcement mechanisms and to keep the President and the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs informed.”;

11.2. after paragraph 29, add the following paragraph:

“In cases of serious or repetitive breaches of the rules of conduct by a former member, or of conduct by that member likely to bring the Assembly into disrepute through association with that former member, the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs may remove that former member’s honorary status and may ban the former member from attending the Council of Europe’s premises.”

12. Recalling concerns that members could seek to avoid investigations by leaving the Assembly and rejoining, the Assembly notes that sanctions under paragraph 29 of the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly could be also taken in relation to previous serious or repetitive breaches, where a member rejoins the Assembly.

13. Recognising the unique pressures on election observation missions, the Assembly:

13.1. welcomes its new Parliamentary Alliance for Free and Fair Elections and encourages it to undertake work to further strengthen ethical standards related to election observation missions, including the issue of suitability of appointments to an *ad hoc* committee for election observation, declarations of interest, impartial conduct during an election observation mission (including by declining any individual gift or bilateral invitation by hosting authorities, making public statements and the overall attitude of members during the mission), and the enforcement of the rules;

13.2. acknowledging the potential for unofficial election observation missions to damage the reputation of the Assembly and the viability of election observation in general, and noting the need for clarity as to the criteria for appointment, decides to replace paragraph 13 of the Guidelines on the Observation of Elections by the Parliamentary Assembly with the following text:

“In making appointments to an ad hoc committee for election observation, political groups must exercise due diligence, ensuring appropriate, impartial and skilled members for such missions. In particular, political groups must respect:

- the principle of gender balance having regard to gender membership of their respective groups;*
- the principle of fair geographical representation;*
- the need for the candidate to participate meaningfully in the work of the mission, having regard to the candidate’s linguistic capability, given that, in situ, interpretation is only provided to and from English or French;*
- the prohibition on members observing elections in their own country;*
- the prohibition on appointing members who took part in non-official missions conducted for the purposes of observing elections or in connection with elections in the country concerned and which were sponsored by or undertaken at the invitation of a State, a parliamentary, governmental or non-governmental organisation, association, foundation or any other natural or legal person, which includes any mission that would contradict with the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, including the principle of impartiality.”*

14. Acknowledging that political groups have an important and powerful role within the work of the Assembly, the Assembly:

14.1. encourages consideration as to whether ethical standards should be developed for political groups;

14.2. calls on political groups to act to ensure improved transparency of their expenditures;

14.3. calls on political groups to have regard to the reputation of the Assembly in their work and to exercise due diligence in their decisions to nominate members to committees, as well as in proposing or supporting candidates for significant roles within the Assembly, including as President of the Assembly or chairperson or vice-chairperson of committees;

14.4. after paragraph 7 of [Resolution 1115 \(1997\)](#), as modified, set out in Appendix IX to the Rules of Procedure – Honouring of Obligations and commitments by member States of the Council of Europe, decides to insert the following paragraph:

“Political groups must exercise due diligence in their decision to nominate members to the Monitoring Committee, as well as in proposing or supporting candidates as a co-rapporteur, noting the importance of ensuring appropriate, impartial and skilled co-rapporteurs.”

15. The Assembly decides to instruct the Bureau to review the special rules on honorary status, and, in order to improve transparency, decides to publish on its website a list of those with honorary status. The Assembly emphasises that it should be possible to remove honorary status due to disreputable conduct that could impact upon the reputation of the Assembly.

16. Conscious that links between parliamentarians and lobbyists require clear ethical guidance, the Assembly will develop a code of conduct for lobbyists at the Assembly, taking account of the work on the framework of principles for lobbyists to the Council of Europe.

17. Given the well-known potential for conflict with the work of the Assembly for members acting in a consultancy role, the Assembly decides to replace paragraph 11 of the code of conduct for members of the Parliamentary Assembly with the following sentence:

“No member shall act as a paid advocate or consultant in any work relating to activities of the Assembly.”

18. In order to better reflect the importance of ethical standards in the work of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, the Assembly decides to change the name of the committee, as follows:

Committee on Rules, Ethics and Immunities.

19. The amendments to the Rules of Procedure contained in paragraphs 6.4, 7.2, 7.3 and 8.1 to this Resolution, which require the establishment of a single consolidated declaration of interests, shall enter into force on 1 January 2026. All the other amendments to the Rules of Procedure set out in this Resolution shall enter into force upon its adoption.

Resolution 2597 (2025)¹

Provisional version

The arrest of the Mayor of Istanbul and the state of democracy and human rights in Türkiye

Parliamentary Assembly

1. On 19 March 2025, Ekrem İmamoğlu, Mayor of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and President of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye (UMT), was arrested on charges of “corruption” and “aiding terrorism”, alongside 106 people, including the district mayors of Şişli, Resul Emrah Şahan, and Beylikdüzü, Mehmet Murat Çalik, as well as other local officials, politicians, journalists and businessmen. On 23 March, Mr İmamoğlu was placed in pre-trial detention on corruption charges, together with 47 other suspects. He was also removed from office, along with the district mayors of Şişli and Beylikdüzü, who were also detained in connection with the same investigation.
2. Mr İmamoğlu's arrest came just four days before he was nominated as the candidate of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) for the 2028 presidential election, in a primary in which over 15 million voters participated. In addition, on 18 March, Istanbul University revoked Mr İmamoğlu's university degree, which under the Turkish Constitution, is a prerequisite for running for the country's presidency.
3. The decision to detain Mr İmamoğlu, the criminal investigation launched against him and the revocation of his university degree effectively prevent him from standing as a presidential candidate. Recalling that respect for the will of the people to express their opinions and choose their elected representatives is the foundation of democracy, the Parliamentary Assembly expresses its deepest concern at these decisions, which appear politically-motivated and an attempt to intimidate the opposition, obstruct its actions, stifle pluralism and limit freedom of political debate.
4. The Assembly notes that the arrest of Mr İmamoğlu triggered an unprecedented wave of largely peaceful mass protests, primarily by young people – especially students – across the country, particularly in Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir. A culminating protest organised by the CHP took place in Istanbul on 29 March 2025 and gathered around 2.2 million people, according to the organisers. The protests in Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir took place despite a blanket ban on demonstrations imposed by the authorities. During the demonstrations, the police used pepper spray, stun grenades, plastic bullets and water cannons against the demonstrators, causing injuries, especially in Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir. Numerous protesters also reported that they had been beaten with batons and kicked while lying on the ground. While the Ministry of the Interior reported over 150 police officers injured during the demonstrations, the official number of injured protesters is unknown. According to the Ministry of the Interior, following the protests, almost 2 000 people were arrested and over 300 detained. There have been reports of cases of physical ill-treatment, unlawful strip-searches, sexual harassment, insults and other human rights violations against people held in custody.
5. The Assembly strongly condemns the unjustified arrests and detention of demonstrators, as well as the disproportionate use of force by the law-enforcement authorities during protests and cases of ill-treatment or other human rights violations of persons held in custody. It is also dismayed by the fact that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan described the protests as “street terrorism”.

1. *Assembly debate* on 9 April 2025 (15th sitting) (see [Doc. 16151](#), report of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee), co-rapporteurs: Mr Stefan Schennach and Lord David Blencathra). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 9 April 2025 (15th sitting).



6. Similarly, the Assembly expresses its concern at reports of physical attacks against journalists and media workers while covering the protests, as well as their arrests and detention in connection with their reporting activities. At least 20 local journalists were physically assaulted by the police or protesters while covering the protests and at least 10 of them were detained; some of them have already been released after appeal, pending trial. The Assembly is also worried about measures targeting foreign medias' journalists: on 27 March 2025, a British journalist from the BBC, Mark Lowen, was expelled on grounds of 'threat to public order', after having been detained for over seventeen hours; and, on 28 March 2025, Swedish journalist, Joakim Medin, who intended to cover the protests, was detained upon his arrival in Türkiye. Moreover, a photograph for Agence France-Presse, Yasin Akgül, had been detained for three days, after covering protests in Istanbul.

7. The Assembly also deplores the widespread restrictions of the right to receive and impart information in the context of these protests. The Turkish Radio and Television supreme Council (RTÜK) imposed administrative fines and/or temporary suspensions of up to ten days on the television channels Halk TV, SZC TV, Tele 1 and Now TV. In addition, for almost two days after Mr İmamoğlu's arrest, access to major social media and messaging applications (including X, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp) was temporarily restricted in Istanbul, with reported bandwidth restrictions and numerous accounts in Türkiye blocked and/or made invisible on the orders of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, a regulatory body. During these two days, the internet was almost unusable. Furthermore, dozens of people were detained or subjected to judicial control measures in relation to their social media posts related to the protests.

8. The Assembly recalls that the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of expression, which are fundamental to the conduct of public debate in a well-functioning democracy, may be restricted only under certain conditions provided for in the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, "the Convention"), to which Türkiye is a State Party: they must be prescribed by law and "necessary in a democratic society", namely proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued. A blanket ban on demonstrations is disproportionate and unjustifiable, while the use of force by law-enforcement authorities must be strictly necessary and proportionate to that aim, and those who use it must be held accountable before the law. Journalists and media outlets should be free to report on issues of public interest, including protests and other related events, and should not be punished or harassed for carrying out their journalistic activities. In addition, the public has the right to receive impartial information about ongoing protests and all related events.

9. The Assembly also reiterates its previously expressed concerns about the independence of the judiciary and prosecution services and the respect for the right to a fair trial in Türkiye, voiced in particular in its [Resolution 2459 \(2022\)](#) "The honouring of obligations and commitments by Türkiye" and [Resolution 2518 \(2023\)](#) "Call for the immediate release of Osman Kavala". One of the most problematic issues in this context is the structure of the Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK), which was recently criticised in an opinion of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the "Venice Commission") ([CDL-AD\(2024\)041](#)) and is at the origin of the violations of the Convention found by the European Court of Human Rights in the judgments *Kavala*, *Selahattin Demirtaş (No. 2)* and *Yüksekdağ Şenoğlu and Others*, concerning the politically-motivated detention of activists and/or politicians. The Assembly strongly deplores the fact that these judgments still remain unimplemented despite various calls made by the Committee of Ministers in the context of its supervision under Article 46 paragraph 2 of the Convention, and by the Assembly. The Assembly urges the Turkish authorities to implement these judgments without delay, in particular by releasing the applicants and conducting a comprehensive reform of the justice system to fully guarantee judicial independence, in line with the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Venice Commission.

10. Türkiye is a State with thousands of years of history and more than a century of democracy. It is a long-standing member of the Council of Europe and an important actor in ensuring security, stability and peace in Europe and has played an important role in supporting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Assembly also notes the recent positive developments in the peace process in the country, following the call on 27 February 2025 by the imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Abdullah Öcalan, for the PKK to lay down its arms and disband. Against this background, the Assembly is all the more disappointed by the arrest and detention of Mr İmamoğlu and the worrying events surrounding it. The Assembly also notes with great concern and condemns a pattern of arrests on spurious charges, including terrorism-related offences, of anyone who might become a challenger to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and/or criticises the government. All these worrying developments represent a retreat from democratic values and go against the will of the Turkish people.

11. Reiterating its previous resolutions on Türkiye, including [Resolution 2459 \(2022\)](#) and [Resolution 2518 \(2023\)](#), the Assembly recalls that Türkiye, as a member State of the Council of Europe, has committed itself to upholding and promoting democratic values, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. It

therefore demands that the authorities implement immediately all these resolutions as well as the recommendations contained in the Venice Commission's opinions concerning Türkiye. Moreover, the Assembly urges the Turkish authorities to:

- 11.1. release Mr İmamoğlu immediately and drop all unfounded charges against him and others involved in the same investigation;
- 11.2. repeal the decision of Istanbul University to revoke Mr İmamoğlu's university degree;
- 11.3. fully respect the rights to freedom of expression and assembly, as well as other human rights and fundamental freedoms in the context of the ongoing mass protests;
- 11.4. stop any disproportionate use of force against protesters during protests and against those who are held in custody;
- 11.5. release all protesters who have been detained on unfounded charges;
- 11.6. ensure an effective investigation into cases of violence and other human rights violations by law-enforcement bodies during protests and in custody;
- 11.7. with regard to all those detained in connection with the investigation into Mr İmamoğlu and the protests, ensure that their right to a fair trial by an independent and impartial court and their right to a defence are fully respected, in accordance with Article 6 of the Convention;
- 11.8. release all journalists and media workers detained because of reporting on protests;
- 11.9. ensure that journalists can report on public assemblies freely and safely and to remove any obstacles to their work;
- 11.10. ensure that no more blanket bans on public demonstrations are imposed;
- 11.11. create an environment that allows the media to provide the public with necessary information and to report on events free from State pressure;
- 11.12. ensure full access to social media and the internet;
- 11.13. remove all restrictions on the right to receive and impart information in the context of protests, in particular to:
 - 11.13.1. repeal all sanctions imposed on broadcasters;
 - 11.13.2. annul all unlawful orders to block social media accounts of persons exercising their right to freedom of expression;
 - 11.13.3. refrain from using legal and extra-legal means to exert pressure on social media platforms to censor online content involving political discourse;
- 11.14. end the repression of opposition politicians, civil society activists and dissenting voices in the media;
- 11.15. implement all Venice Commission's and Assembly's recommendations on reforming the electoral framework;
- 11.16. ensure genuine free and fair elections, in line with international standards.

12. Finally, recalling the statements of the European Union [High Representative for Foreign Affairs and its Commissioner for Enlargement](#) of 19 March 2025, the [Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights](#) of 24 March 2025 and the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities](#) of 27 March 2025, the Assembly calls on all Council of Europe member States, if they have not already done so, to condemn the arrest and detention of Mr İmamoğlu and the subsequent reprisals against demonstrators calling for his release.



Resolution 2598 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Russian war of aggression against Ukraine: the need to ensure accountability and avoid impunity

Parliamentary Assembly

1. More than eleven years after its start, the illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine continues to rage, causing endless damage and suffering to Ukraine and its people. Many wrongful acts committed by the Russian Federation, including the act of aggression itself, the attempted annexation of Ukrainian territories and the attempt to commit genocide against the Ukrainian nation – as evidenced, inter alia, by the deportation of Ukrainian children, the systematic destruction of cultural identity and the targeted mass killings of civilians – violate *erga omnes* obligations and peremptory norms of general international law. Thus, these acts affect not only Ukraine, but the entire international community and entail a duty for all States to co-operate in order to bring such serious breaches of international law to an end and to avoid impunity. Failure to ensure accountability for these acts would undermine the multilateral order based on international law, creating the preconditions for their repetition in the future thus causing a serious threat to the maintenance of international peace and security.
2. Recalling its previous Resolutions 2436 (2022), 2482 (2023) and 2556 (2024), the Parliamentary Assembly expresses its full support for all the existing accountability mechanisms that address the consequences of the aggression: the Ukrainian prosecuting and judicial authorities; prosecuting and judicial authorities other States on the basis of universal jurisdiction; the International Criminal Court (ICC); the European Court of Human Rights; and other bodies such as the United Nations (UN) Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine.
3. The Council of Europe, with the Assembly as its driving force, has worked tirelessly for the establishment of a more comprehensive system of accountability and justice for Ukraine, including through the creation of the Register of Damage for Ukraine at the Reykjavik Summit in 2023, the proposal for the establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression and the participation in the Core Group consultations, actions aimed at securing the return of Ukrainian children, including the appointment of a Special Envoy of the Secretary General and, most recently, participation in the negotiations on the setting-up of an international claims commission.
4. During talks with the United States administration in March 2025, Ukraine expressed readiness to accept the US proposal to enact an immediate, interim 30-day full ceasefire, which can be extended by mutual agreement of the parties, and which is subject to acceptance and concurrent implementation by the Russian Federation. Ukraine accepted the US proposal without additional conditions, and the Russian Federation should accept it without additional conditions. In addition to addressing issues such as a partial ceasefire on energy and critical infrastructure facilities and safe navigation in the Black Sea, the agreement reached between the United States and Ukraine on 23-25 March in Riyadh reaffirmed the commitment to concrete humanitarian security measures aimed at reducing harm to civilians and facilitating dialogue. While Ukraine has demonstrated its good faith and readiness to uphold these commitments, the Russian Federation has repeatedly violated the agreed terms of partial ceasefire and continued its military attacks against Ukraine,

1. *Assembly debate* on 9 April 2025 (15th sitting) (see [Doc. 16152](#), report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Iulian Bulai). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 9 April 2025 (15th sitting).
See also [Recommendation 2294 \(2025\)](#).



including missile strikes on civilian infrastructure, resulting in civilian casualties, particularly in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Kryvyi Rih, as well as other cities and regions, further demonstrating its lack of willingness to engage in genuine peace efforts. The Assembly welcomes the US commitment and considers that any peace negotiations must unconditionally address the human dimension of the war, including the release of unlawfully detained civilians by the Russian Federation and mutual release and repatriation of all prisoners of war, according to the formula “all for all”, as well as the safe return and reintegration of children unlawfully deported to the Russian Federation and Belarus or forcibly transferred to the Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation.

5. The Assembly takes note of the ongoing negotiations between Ukraine and the United States regarding a possible agreement on mineral resources. It underlines the importance of ensuring that any such agreement is consistent with Ukraine's commitments to European Union integration, particularly concerning economic sovereignty and adherence to European Union competition and single market rules.

6. The Assembly underscores that the cessation of temporary protection status for Ukrainians should be contingent upon the establishment of a lasting, just and comprehensive peace in Ukraine. Premature termination of this status based solely on a ceasefire or temporary truce may expose Ukrainians to continued risks and instability. Therefore, the Assembly urges member States to ensure that any modifications to protection status are based on verifiable and lasting peace agreements, thereby safeguarding the well-being and security of displaced Ukrainians.

7. The Assembly considers that the continuation or revival of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines project is unacceptable. Such actions would increase Europe's dependence on Russian energy resources, undermining the European Union's energy security and contradicting its strategic objective of diversifying energy supply sources. The Assembly calls on all member States to oppose any efforts to resume the project, emphasising the importance of unity and resilience against energy-related geopolitical pressures.

8. The Assembly stresses that any possible future peace negotiations must not compromise the commitment to hold the Russian Federation and those responsible for its crimes and violations of international law fully accountable. In line with Resolution 2588 (2025), the Assembly considers that in order to be lasting and comprehensive, peace must be just and based on the principles of international law, including respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, and human rights. Any final settlement must not result in impunity.

9. In this context, the Assembly welcomes the successful outcome of the Core Group's meeting in Strasbourg between 19 and 21 March 2025 and the finalisation of the necessary legal documents for the establishment of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression within the framework of the Council of Europe, after almost two years of consultations. The agreed texts include a draft bilateral agreement between Ukraine and the Council of Europe, the Special Tribunal's draft statute and a draft enlarged partial agreement on the management of the Special Tribunal. The three documents have now been submitted for political consideration in Ukraine and in the States participating in the Core Group. Participation in the enlarged partial agreement will be open to non-member States, therefore ensuring cross-regional support and international legitimacy. The Assembly considers that the model of the tribunal envisaged by the Core Group, with the participation of international judges and the application of international law, contains features that make it sufficiently international. By establishing such a tribunal, the Council of Europe will not only support its member State, Ukraine, in its efforts to ensure accountability, but will also uphold the international legal order, on the premise that the pursuit of peace based on justice and international co-operation is vital for the preservation of human society and civilisation, as recalled in the Preamble to its Statute (ETS No. 1).

10. The Assembly expresses its hope that the final texts on the Special Tribunal will address some of its demands stated in previous resolutions, including with regard to functional immunities, the definition of the crime of aggression, trials in absentia, fair trial rights and co-operation with the ICC. With regard to the temporal scope of its jurisdiction, the Assembly refers to its Resolution 2482 (2023) and Resolution 2556 (2024) and reiterates that the full-scale invasion launched on 24 February 2022 constitutes a continuation of the war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine that began on 20 February 2014. Any compromise reached on other issues should be understood as not undermining the ability of the Special Tribunal to effectively investigate and punish the crime of aggression and should be without prejudice to the current state and future development of international law. The Assembly stresses that the Special Tribunal's jurisdiction should extend to the alleged crimes of aggression committed by the so-called Belarusian leadership as well as the military and political leadership of North Korea.

11. The Assembly warmly welcomes the launch in The Hague, between 24 and 26 March 2025, of formal negotiations on an International Treaty to establish a Claims Commission for Ukraine within an Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee, with the participation of more than 50 States from different

continents and the European Union. This is an important step towards the establishment of the second component of a comprehensive compensation mechanism, as repeatedly called for by the Assembly in its previous resolutions and as foreseen in the Statute of the Register of Damage. The Assembly considers that the best model for establishing such a commission would be an open Council of Europe convention, which could ensure the necessary cross-regional support while benefiting from the leadership and expertise of the Organisation in this area.

12. With regard to the enforcement of the compensation for the damage caused by the aggression, the Assembly notes that as a result of the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the total cost of reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine over the next ten years, as of 31 December 2024, has been estimated to be €506 billion. It further recalls that several Council of Europe member and non-member States decided to immobilise approximately US\$300 billion in Russian State assets, as part of the sanctions adopted in response to the full-scale invasion. However, it notes with concern that the decision to freeze an important part of these assets will expire unless renewed every six months by the Council of the European Union, thus allowing the Russian Federation to use the return of these assets to financially sustain its war against Ukraine, as well as its attack on European security and the international legal order.

13. In the light of these considerations, as regards the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, the Assembly:

13.1. calls on all States and international partners that have participated in the Core Group to reach a final political agreement on the draft texts (the draft bilateral agreement between Ukraine and the Council of Europe, the Special Tribunal's draft statute and the draft enlarged partial agreement) without delay and pursue the establishment of the Special Tribunal irrespective of the evolution of any peace negotiations;

13.2. calls on the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Government of Ukraine, to conclude the bilateral agreement for the establishment of the Special Tribunal once the necessary internal proceedings have been completed, including the necessary and swift authorisation by the Committee of Ministers;

13.3. calls on all States and international partners that have participated in the Core Group to join the enlarged partial agreement once it is established and to provide the Special Tribunal with the necessary tools and resources, including sufficient financial contributions, highly qualified judges and staff, and cooperation agreements, in particular on witness protection programmes, enforcement of sentences and release of persons acquitted or convicted;

13.4. calls on other member States, observer States and other States to consider becoming members of the future enlarged partial agreement.

14. With regard to other international crimes, such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including enforced disappearance, the Assembly:

14.1. welcomes Ukraine's recent ratification of the ICC Statute;

14.2. expresses its full support to the ongoing investigations into the situation in Ukraine by the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC and calls on all member States and other States to co-operate with the ICC and enforce the arrest warrants issued against Russian suspects, including Vladimir Putin, should any of these suspects come within their jurisdiction;

14.3. condemns any attempts by States not party to the ICC Statute to sanction the ICC and its staff, which may result in the obstruction of its work and lack of co-operation by some States Parties;

14.4. invites all member States and other like-minded States to increase their assistance to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine and existing international accountability mechanisms, as well as NGO accountability projects in Ukraine, by pooling resources and filling the gap left by the new United States administration's decision to withdraw from certain accountability projects and suspend international aid;

14.5. commends the work of prosecuting authorities and courts of member States in investigating crimes committed in Ukraine on the basis of the principle of universal jurisdiction, such as the recent conviction of a Russian citizen for war crimes in Ukraine by a court in Finland, and invites all member States whose legislation provides for universal jurisdiction to do the same, in close co-operation with the Ukrainian authorities and the ICC, or, where appropriate, in the framework of Eurojust;

14.6. calls on all States to ensure that the Russian Federation and Belarus are held accountable for their systemic use of torture and other forms of ill-treatment to which Ukrainian prisoners of war, Ukrainian civilians and political prisoners in the Russian Federation and temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories, as well as political prisoners in Belarus, have been and are being subjected, by having recourse to the dispute settlement mechanism stipulated in Article 30.1 of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

15. With regard to the international compensation mechanism for the damage caused by the aggression, the Assembly:

15.1. welcomes the opening by the Register of Damage for Ukraine of seven new categories of claims, including with respect to missing immediate family members, sexual violence, torture or inhumane or degrading treatment and serious personal injury;

15.2. welcomes the engagement of the Register of Damage with NGOs present in Ukraine and other countries, as well as national authorities and international partners, including through the Register's Civil Society Coordination Platform, and encourages the register to continue to intensify its outreach campaign to potential claimants;

15.3. condemns the designation by the Russian Federation of the Register of Damage as an "undesirable organisation";

15.4. welcomes the launch of formal negotiations on a treaty to establish a Claims Commission for Ukraine and calls on all member States participating in these negotiations to work swiftly towards the establishment of an international claims commission and to support the option of an open Council of Europe convention that would ensure cross-regional participation and make full use of the Organisation's expertise;

15.5. calls on the Participants and Associate Members of the Register of Damage to extend the eligibility of claims to include those dating back to 2014, rather than limiting it to claims from 24 February 2022. This broader scope would ensure that all victims of Russian aggression, including those impacted by the annexation of Crimea, the war in the east of Ukraine, and other acts of aggression, can seek justice and compensation. It is essential for the Register to accurately reflect the full extent of the Russian Federation's actions over the past decade.

16. Finally, as regards frozen Russian assets, the Assembly, reaffirming its Resolutions 2434 (2022), 2482 (2023), 2539 (2024), 2556 (2024) and 2588 (2025):

16.1. welcomes the decision of the European Union institutions to direct extraordinary revenues stemming from immobilised Russian State assets for Ukraine as well as the G7's decision to offer Ukraine a US\$50 billion loan secured through revenues stemming from the immobilised Russian State assets;

16.2. welcomes the adoption of resolutions by the French National Assembly and the European Parliament calling for the repurposing of frozen Russian State assets and calls on the parliaments of all member States to adopt similar resolutions and to urge their governments to take resolute action;

16.3. calls on Council of Europe member and non-member States currently holding immobilised Russian State assets, pending the creation of an international compensation fund, to immediately take any such measures that might be necessary to:

16.3.1. transfer these assets to an international trust fund, as an extraordinary, lawful and proportionate response to the Russian Federation's ongoing violation of obligations arising under peremptory norms of general international law and its outright refusal to make reparation for the damage caused to Ukraine and its people;

16.3.2. ensure that any State or non-State entity suffering possible negative consequences of the transfer of these assets is properly protected and, if necessary, compensated for any directly associated losses;

16.3.3. ensure that the transferred assets are invested and managed for the ultimate benefit of the victims of the aggression, first and foremost the State of Ukraine and its citizens, pending final distribution;

16.4. calls on the European Union, its member States and other States to maintain and strengthen the current sanctions against the Russian Federation, its allies, entities and individuals supporting or benefiting from the aggression, until the Russian Federation ceases its aggression against Ukraine and complies with its international obligations;

16.5. calls on the European Union, its member States and other States to introduce and strengthen secondary sanctions against individuals, entities and jurisdictions facilitating the circumvention of sanctions imposed in response to the Russian Federation's aggression.

16.6. calls on the member States and European Union institutions to impose sanctions on the NLMK Group (PAO Novolipetsk Steel, LLC VIZ-Stal, JSC Stoylensky Mining and Beneficiation Complex) and others, due to their ongoing co-operation with Russia's defence industry.



Resolution 2599 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The year 2025 will mark the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No.5, “the Convention”). The Parliamentary Assembly celebrates the history and extraordinary impact of the system established by this unique instrument. The Convention and the European Court of Human Rights (“the Court”) have helped promote peace across the continent, leading to the Court being awarded the Dresden Peace Prize in January 2025. The Convention and the Court have also helped entrench democracy and the rule of law on our continent and create a vast legal space in which everyone can be protected from and find redress against human rights violations. To date, they represent the most advanced supranational system for the protection of human rights worldwide.
2. The Assembly reiterates the unequivocal obligation for the States Parties to the Convention to implement the judgments of the Court in a timely and effective manner. It further emphasises that State Parties are bound to comply with interim measures indicated by the Court, as they are essential to ensuring further effective implementation of judgments.
3. In the Reykjavik Declaration adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (16-17 May 2023), States underlined the fundamental importance of the execution of the Court’s judgments. They reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to the Convention system, agreed to redouble their efforts to ensure the full, effective, and rapid implementation of the Court’s judgments, and set out a series of specific steps to help achieve this. The Heads of State and Government, recalling that national parliaments also bear responsibility for complying with the judgments of the Court, invited the President of the Assembly to strengthen the political dialogue with national interlocutors in this area.
4. The Assembly welcomes the commitments made at the Reykjavik Summit, as well as the extensive work done to date to carry out the steps requested by the Heads of State and Government.
5. Although the vast majority of the Court’s judgments are implemented, the Assembly is concerned by the failure of some States to remedy the underlying causes of human rights violations identified in certain judgments, reflected in cases pending implementation which have been classified by the Committee of Ministers as “leading”. Leading cases usually highlight a wider human rights problem affecting many people. If reforms are not carried out to implement such cases, the underlying problem can persist, causing harm to more individuals. The failure to implement such judgments can also lead to repetitive applications to the Court, increasing its workload and harming the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire Convention system. Looking at the overall number of cases pending implementation for a State is of only limited use for understanding the State’s compliance with the Convention and the Court’s case law, as the number of such cases can be reduced often simply by paying just satisfaction. The number and type of leading cases pending implementation are an important indicator, because leading cases can often only be implemented by taking the general measures necessary to resolve underlying human rights problems.

1. *Assembly debate* on 9 April 2025 (15th sitting) (see [Doc. 16134](#), report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Constantinos Efstathiou). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 9 April 2025 (15th sitting).
See also [Recommendation 2295 \(2025\)](#).



6. Nine States have over 40 leading cases pending implementation: Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, Türkiye, and Ukraine. These States also have the highest numbers of leading cases which have been pending implementation for more than five years, indicating that human rights issues are not being resolved in a reasonable period of time. The Assembly urges these countries in particular to undertake urgent measures to systematically improve their implementation of the Court's judgments.

7. The Assembly realises that the situation in Ukraine is complex in comparison with other countries due to the Russian war of aggression and that the implementation of judgments of the Court faces specific challenges in light of the war. The Assembly welcomes the fact that, even in such difficult circumstances, the Ukrainian authorities stayed firm, have acknowledged, and continue to demonstrate their commitment to full compliance with the Convention and to undertake a number of measures to solve the structural problems identified by the Court.

8. The "Reykjavik Principles for Democracy" set out in Appendix III to the 2023 Reykjavik Declaration reiterate that democracy is "the only means to ensure that everyone can live in a peaceful, prosperous and free society". Council of Europe member States resolved to "prevent and resist democratic backsliding on [the European] continent". A key way in which this can be done is through the implementation of the judgments of the Court, notably those concerning the protection of freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, the right to free and fair elections, and the independence of the judiciary, as well as judgments highlighting an abusive limitation of rights and freedoms involving a violation of Article 18 of the Convention. The Assembly urges States Parties to the Convention to implement such judgments as a matter of priority.

9. The Assembly considers it absolutely unacceptable that the case of *Kavala v. Turkey*, which was the subject of infringement proceedings under Article 46, paragraph 4, of the Convention, has not yet been implemented and that Mr Kavala is still imprisoned. The Assembly refers to its [Resolution 2518 \(2023\)](#) "Call for the immediate release of Osman Kavala", including its conclusion that the case merits the initiation of the complementary joint procedure foreseen in [Resolution 2319 \(2020\)](#) "Complementary joint procedure between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly in response to a serious violation by a member State of its statutory obligations". It reiterates its call on Türkiye to immediately release Mr Kavala, in line with its obligations under the Convention and the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1).

10. The implementation of interstate cases and cases with interstate features is also a matter of considerable concern. The Assembly calls on current and former States Parties to the Convention that are the subject of such judgments to comply with their international obligations. The Assembly further calls on the member States and other stakeholders in the Convention system to demonstrate the necessary political will and commitment to make progress in the implementation of these cases.

11. In order to urgently strengthen the implementation of the Court's judgments, the Assembly calls on States Parties to the Convention to carry out the measures set out in paragraph 7 of [Resolution 2494 \(2023\)](#) "Implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights".

12. In particular, the Assembly urges States Parties to the Convention to ensure that effective national co-ordination mechanisms are in place, with sufficient authority, resources, and participation from across government to enable the timely and effective implementation of the Court's judgments. The Council of Europe has carried out a multi-country study to identify best practices of domestic capacity for rapid execution of the judgments and decisions of the Court (carried out under the project, "Support to efficient domestic capacity for the execution of ECtHR [Court] judgments"). The Assembly urges States Parties to use the findings of this study to inform any changes needed to their own national arrangements, in order to ensure full and timely implementation of the Court's judgments. The Assembly welcomes the establishment of the Execution Coordinators Network in June 2024, resolving to carry out any joint activities that the Network and the Assembly regard to be constructive.

13. The Assembly also invites national parliaments to play their role in the execution of the judgments of the Court, by implementing the "Basic principles for parliamentary supervision of international human rights standards" set out by the Assembly in [Resolution 1823 \(2011\)](#) "National parliaments: guarantors of human rights in Europe". These require the establishment of appropriate parliamentary structures to ensure rigorous and regular monitoring of compliance with and supervision of international human rights obligations, such as a dedicated human rights committee or an analogous structure. The remit of such structures should include regular examination of the implementation of the judgments of the Court by the State concerned; the initiation of legislative changes to ensure compliance with the Convention and implementation of the Court's

judgments; and the systematic verification of the compatibility of any draft legislation with international human rights obligations. It is essential that such parliamentary structures are provided with sufficient and specialised staff as well as resources to carry out these tasks effectively.

14. The Assembly welcomes the contribution that the European Commission has made in its Rule of Law Reports to highlighting problems with the implementation of the Court's judgments. The Assembly invites the European Commission to more frequently include the implementation of the Court's judgments in its lists of recommendations in the Rule of Law Report Country Chapters, through (a) recommending to States to implement particular judgment(s) which are significant to ensuring the protection of the rule of law, and/or (b) recommending to States to improve their overall record of implementing leading cases of the Court, for countries that have a significant problem with the execution of these cases.

15. The Assembly underlines the continuing obligation of the Russian Federation to implement the Court's judgments and welcomes the measures taken by the Committee of Ministers to continue its supervision of cases concerning the Russian Federation, in particular via its contacts with other international organisations, notably the United Nations. The Assembly resolves to further examine whether additional steps could be taken to ensure the payment of outstanding just satisfaction awarded by the Court in these cases, including in particular interstate cases.

16. The Assembly also resolves to continue and enhance its role in promoting the full, effective, and rapid implementation of the judgments of the Court, in accordance with the Reykjavik Declaration and subsequent decisions of the Committee of Ministers. Additional work initiated since the Reykjavik Declaration includes greater support for the President of the Assembly to raise the implementation of the Court's judgments in high-level meetings, as well as briefings for national delegations on the implementation of the Court's judgments in their State. Subject to adequate funds, the Assembly resolves to create a Network of Parliamentarians to promote the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. Members of the Network would share best practices on the implementation of judgments within the Assembly, and at the same time promote the implementation of judgments domestically in their own countries, for instance by engaging with relevant national interlocutors or encouraging legislative and structural reforms.

17. In view of the need to improve implementation of the Court's judgments, the Assembly resolves to remain seized of this matter and to continue to give it priority.



Resolution 2600 (2025)¹

Provisional version

The situation in Georgia and follow up to Resolution 2585 (2025) “Challenge, on substantive grounds, of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Georgia”

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls its [Resolution 2585 \(2025\)](#) “Challenge, on substantive grounds, of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Georgia” in which it expressed its serious concerns about the rapid democratic backsliding and deep social crisis in Georgia that raise questions about the willingness of the country to abide by its membership obligations and accession commitments to the Council of Europe. In that context, the Assembly also takes note of the report by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights following his visit to the country, the exchange of views in the Committee of Ministers on the situation in the Georgia with the participation of, *inter alia*, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the “Venice Commission”), as well as the report adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe during its March 2025 session on “The situation of local and regional democracy in Georgia”.
2. The Assembly deeply regrets that, despite the Assembly's decision to ratify the credentials of the Georgian delegation, all its members resigned from the delegation, thus rejecting dialogue, as a result of which there is currently no Georgian delegation in the Assembly. In the view of the Assembly, the participation in its work and its monitoring procedures of a delegation whose credentials were ratified, is not an option, but an obligation.
3. In its [Resolution 2585 \(2025\)](#), the Assembly identified a number of key areas in which it expected marked and tangible progress when assessing the situation in the country and reconsidering the credentials of the Georgian delegation at its April 2025 part-session. It regrets that these urgent recommendations have not been addressed to date and the situation in the country has continued to deteriorate.
4. With regard to its call upon the authorities to immediately release all political prisoners and initiate an inclusive process involving all stakeholders and social actors, including the ruling majority, opposition and civil society, to urgently address the deficiencies and shortcomings noted during the recent parliamentary elections and to create an electoral environment that is conducive to new, genuinely democratic, parliamentary elections to be announced during the coming months, the Assembly regrets that no such steps have been taken. In that respect the Assembly, in particular:
 - 4.1. regrets the recent adoption of the amendments to the Electoral Code pertaining to local elections, which, according to the Venice Commission, may result in the further entrenchment of the ruling party's position, do not contribute to the promotion of political pluralism and undermine the principle of equal suffrage. In line with this opinion, the Assembly urges the authorities to repeal these

1. *Assembly debate* on 10 April 2025 (16th sitting) (see [Doc. 16153](#), report of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee), co-rapporteurs: Ms Sabina Čudić and Ms Edite Estrela). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 10 April 2025 (16th sitting).



amendments and to ensure that the delimitation of electoral districts is carried out by an impartial and independent authority on the basis of clear legal criteria and in consultation with the relevant stakeholders;

4.2. is concerned about recent changes to the rules of procedure of the Georgian Parliament, which lower the majority required for the appointment of members of the Central Election Commission and remove the legal requirement for civil society organisations to be consulted in the appointment process, thus further undermining the independence of the electoral administration;

4.3. takes note of the resolution adopted on 26 March 2025 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe that concludes that the many shortcomings and challenges affecting respect for democracy, the rule of law and human rights are not conducive to holding the 2025 local elections in a trust-based environment and, in fact, risk exacerbating the situation. The Assembly reiterated its call to the Georgian authorities to restore the conditions for genuinely democratic elections without further delay;

4.4. is concerned about the Central Election Commission's recent decision to substantially restrict the rights of observers on election day and their ability to effectively monitor the electoral process, and urges it to revoke these restrictions since they affect the legitimacy of, and public trust in, of any future election.

5. The Assembly is concerned that arrests and the abuse of legal processes to retaliate against protesters, journalists and civic leaders continue unabated. It notes that pretrial detention continues to be renewed by the courts on seemingly questionable legal grounds, underlining the continuation of concerns already expressed in previous resolutions. In this context, it is concerned about the criminal investigations launched against and the freezing of, the assets of several Georgian solidarity funds, which covered the costs of legal aid, fines and loss of income for those arrested or dismissed in connection with the demonstrations. The Assembly reiterates its call for all detained protesters to be released without delay and recommends that the CPT visit their places of detention.

6. While noting the decrease in reports of police brutality during the demonstrations, the Assembly remains concerned that these violations have not been effectively investigated to date, leading to a climate of impunity. In this context, it is deeply concerned by reports from Georgian human rights organisations that a large proportion of those detained in connection with the demonstrations were subjected to torture and ill-treatment during arrest and in detention. It calls on the authorities to fully investigate all such reports in a transparent and effective manner. The Assembly condemns the degrading treatment of opposition leader Elene Khoshtaria who was forcibly stripped naked by police officers in a temporary detention center, following her arrest at a demonstration.

7. Challenges to freedom of assembly and expression continue. The Assembly expresses its concern about the recently adopted amendments to the Law on Administrative Offences, which have a negative impact on the rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. The Assembly notes that the Venice Commission, in its urgent opinion on these amendments, which was requested by the President of the Assembly, considers that these amendments were adopted in an overly hasty manner, without the participation of relevant stakeholders, and are likely to have a chilling effect on the exercise of freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. The Assembly urges the authorities to repeal these amendments and reiterates its call to the authorities to adopt a completely new Law on Administrative Offences that is fully in line with European human rights and rule of law standards

8. Regrettably, the media environment has continued to deteriorate. The Assembly notes that according to the 2024 World Press Freedom Index, Georgia has dropped from 77th to 103rd place, while the Europe Press Freedom Report highlighted the rapid deterioration of media freedoms amid growing authoritarianism. In this context, the Assembly is concerned about amendments to the media legislation that prohibit media outlets, including online media, from receiving direct or indirect foreign funding (except for commercial advertising, product placement and similar activities) and that significantly increase the content regulation powers of the Georgian National Communications Commission, whose independence and impartiality are widely questioned.

9. The Assembly notes with concern the continuing reports of intimidation and retaliation, including a large number of dismissals, against civil servants critical of the authorities' response to the social crisis in the country. It deplores the recent adoption of legislation reducing the employment protection of civil servants and the repeated refusal by the Public Registry to register the "Independent Trade Union of Civil Servants", which was founded last year.

10. The Assembly welcomes the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe of the interim resolution on the execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Identoba and Others v. Georgia*, calling on the Georgian authorities to repeal the Law on Protecting Family Values and Minors, which runs counter to Georgia's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5). The Assembly reiterates its position that this law should be repealed without further delay.

11. The Assembly is deeply concerned by the adoption by the Georgian Parliament of the Foreign Agent Registration Act. This act, which serves the same objectives as the controversial Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, introduces criminal liability for non-compliance and will have a devastating impact on civil society in Georgia. The Assembly calls on the Georgian authorities to fully address the concerns and recommendations of the Venice Commission in its forthcoming opinion on this law. The Assembly is also concerned about the adoption of legislation that abolishes the mandatory participation and consultation of civil society organisations in the law-making process and in the appointment of key State positions, including members of the Central Election Commission, the Prosecutor's Council and non-judicial members of the High Council of Judges. The Assembly considers that the participation of civil society organisations and other stakeholders is essential for the social acceptance of legislation, especially in the context of a *de facto* single-party parliament, and urges the Georgian Parliament to repeal this legislation.

12. The Assembly deplores the decision of the ruling majority to set up a parliamentary inquiry commission, with far reaching powers, into the "[United National Movement (UNM)] *regime's and its political representatives' activities in 2003-2012*", later extended to include the period from 2013 to present. It is concerned that criminal charges have been brought against former UNM members as well as other personalities, including from other opposition parties and civil society representatives, who have declined to appear before this commission. The Assembly is in this context especially deeply concerned about the stated intention by the ruling party to ban the "collective UNM" and the introduction of legislation that prohibits any successor or related parties. It is also concerning that former members of the Georgian delegation to the Assembly are brought for interrogation and may possibly face prosecution for a vote they cast for Resolution 1633 (2008) "The consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia". The effective prohibition of democratic opposition in Georgia would be a gross violation of Georgia's membership obligations under the statute of the Council of Europe. Even if not yet enacted, the threat of such action alone already deepens the political schism in the country and prevents the resolution of the ongoing crisis.

13. The Assembly notes that there is currently no Georgian delegation to the Assembly. Reiterating the conditions set out in [Resolution 2585 \(2025\)](#), the Assembly considers that the lack of progress in addressing the recommendations and concerns of the Assembly, as set out in [Resolution 2585 \(2025\)](#) and [Resolution 2561 \(2024\)](#) "Challenges to democracy in Georgia" and the continuing democratic backsliding in Georgia in general, would not be conducive to ratifying the credentials of a new Georgian delegation should they be presented at a future Assembly part-session.

14. The Assembly calls upon the Georgian authorities to address the concerns and recommendations expressed by the Assembly in its [Resolution 2438 \(2022\)](#) "The honouring of obligations and commitments by Georgia", [2561 \(2024\)](#) and [2585 \(2025\)](#) in order to overcome the crisis in the country and to resume their full co-operation with the Council of Europe and its Assembly.



Resolution 2601 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Legal aspects of the accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, “the Convention”), which is marking its 75th anniversary in 2025, can be considered as the most outstanding achievement of the Council of Europe and the cornerstone of all its activities. Although ratification of the Convention is a precondition for accession to the European Union and the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Convention are part of the Union’s general principles of law, the European Union is not yet a party to the Convention and its institutions are not directly bound by it. This means that the European Union member States – all member States of the Council of Europe and parties to the Convention – can be held responsible for breaches of Convention rights before the European Court of Human Rights (“the Court”) even when implementing or applying European Union law, while the actions of the European Union institutions themselves are not subject to the same external judicial review. This is problematic given the increasingly broad competences transferred to the European Union, which makes it more difficult to accept that the European Union institutions should be the only public authorities and “legal space” operating in Council of Europe member States that are not subject to external oversight by the Court. This imbalance may lead to confusion and to perceived or actual disparate legal protection, to the detriment of European Union citizens and human rights protection in Europe.

2. Referring to its previous resolutions and recommendations, which for more than forty years have called on the then European Communities and later the European Union to accede to the Convention, most recently its [Resolution 2430 \(2022\)](#) “Beyond the Lisbon Treaty: strengthening the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union” and its [Recommendation 2245 \(2023\)](#) “The Reykjavik Summit of the Council of Europe – United around values in the face of extraordinary challenges”, the Parliamentary Assembly considers that European Union’s accession to the Convention will:

2.1. strengthen the protection of human rights in Europe by giving European Union citizens and persons within the jurisdiction of the European Union the right to lodge an application with the Court when they consider that their fundamental rights have been violated by an European Union institution. They will therefore enjoy the same protection vis-à-vis acts of the Union as they presently enjoy vis-à-vis all European Union member States;

2.2. be the best way to ensure the harmonious development of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union in human rights matters, thereby securing a coherent system of human rights protection across Europe, based on common minimum standards, for the benefit of public authorities, in particular courts, in all member States;

2.3. confirm the essence of the European Union as a Union based on the rule of law, and strengthen the principle of legal certainty, given that the European Union institutions will be subject to the same external judicial review on human rights matters as the member States;

1. *Assembly debate* on 10 April 2025 (16th sitting) (see [Doc. 16126](#), report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Titus Corlăţean). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 10 April 2025 (16th sitting).



2.4. resolve the problems resulting from the fact that currently the European Union cannot be party to proceedings before the Court, in cases where the implementation or application of European Union law by member States is at stake, and facilitate the execution of the Court's judgments requiring amendments to European Union law;

2.5. convey a strong political message of clear commitment to the protection of human rights and international law not only within the European Union boundaries but also Europe-wide and worldwide, at a time when war has returned to Europe and the common values shared by the Council of Europe and the European Union are under threat. The accession will therefore enhance the credibility of the European Union, its neighbourhood policies and external relations;

2.6. reinforce synergy, complementarity and co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union, which is the main institutional partner of the Council of Europe, in line with the Reykjavik Declaration.

3. The Assembly recalls that the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1 December 2009, created a legal obligation for the European Union to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights. On the Council of Europe side, Protocol No. 14 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending the control system of the Convention (CETS No. 194), which entered into force in 2010, amended Article 59 of the Convention in order for the European Union to be able to accede. Consequently, negotiations for accession opened in 2010, and a draft Accession Agreement was agreed in April 2013. However, in December 2014, the Court of Justice of the European Union concluded in its Opinion 2/13 that the draft Accession Agreement was incompatible with the EU treaties, triggering disappointment and some criticism. It was not until 2020 that negotiations on the accession resumed, with the aim of overcoming the objections identified by the Court of Justice of the European Union in its opinion and revising the draft accession instruments to the extent necessary.

4. The Assembly warmly welcomes the fact that the *ad hoc* negotiation group “46 + 1” established under the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) reached a unanimous provisional agreement on revised draft accession instruments in March 2023. This is a collective achievement which shows a considerable sense of compromise by all parties involved, including non-European Union member States, to overcome the numerous legal obstacles found by the Court of Justice of the European Union. The Assembly considers that the provisional agreement reached on most issues (co-respondent mechanism, prior involvement procedure, inter-party applications, principle of mutual trust, advisory opinions under Protocol No. 16 to the Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (CETS No. 214) accommodates the position of the Court of Justice of the European Union on the specificities and autonomy of European Union law, while preserving the integrity and effectiveness of the Convention system, the role of the Court as the ultimate master of its proceedings and the position of individual applicants before the Court. Furthermore, the new rule on majority requirements in the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe when supervising the execution of judgments in cases against the European Union duly protects the interests of non-EU member States.

5. With regard to the revised provision on the election of judges to the Court (new Article 7 of the draft Accession Agreement), the Assembly notes that the amendments to the 2013 version of the draft agreement do not alter the substance and purpose of the original provision, which was to provide a basis for the participation of the European Parliament in the sittings of the Assembly and the meetings of its relevant bodies when the latter exercise their functions under Article 22 of the Convention. However, the agreement on the modalities of this participation reached in June 2011 between representatives of the Assembly and of the European Parliament within a Joint Informal Body will need to be updated in view of the developments since then, in particular the fact that the then Sub-Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights (of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights) is now an Assembly committee in its own right. The updated agreement will then have to be approved by the Assembly and the European Parliament in due course, in accordance with their own internal procedures. The Assembly also understands that the Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers on the selection of candidates for the post of judge at the European Court of Human Rights and its own resolutions and practice on the election of judges will apply to the European Union internal procedure for the selection of the candidates to be submitted in respect of the European Union. In this regard, it also expects that the European Union will duly consult the Advisory Panel of Experts before submitting its list of candidates to the Assembly, as all Parties to the Convention do.

6. The Assembly notes with satisfaction that, with respect to the “Basket 4” issue (Common Foreign and Security Policy-related acts), the Court of Justice of the European Union, in a judgment delivered on 10 September 2024, has clarified the scope of its jurisdiction in relation to these acts. The Court of Justice found that the limitation of its jurisdiction in this area can be reconciled both with Article 47 of the Charter of

Fundamental Rights of the European Union (right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial) and with Articles 6 and 13 of the Convention. This judgment has generally been perceived as a positive step that could potentially solve the problem of the limited scope of jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union in this area and help overcome what appears to be the last remaining obstacle to accession. The CDDH welcomed the judgment “as a promising avenue to be explored for resolving the outstanding issue” and encouraged the European Union to take the necessary decisions at the earliest opportunity. In fact, the only way to be sure that this judgment fully resolves the issue would be to ask the Court of Justice of the European Union for an opinion on the new draft Accession Agreement.

7. In view of these considerations and in order to maintain the current momentum after the provisional agreement on revised draft accession instruments, the 2024 judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union, and the entry into office of the new European Commission, the Assembly:

7.1. invites the European Union institutions, in particular the European Commission and the Council of the European Union, to take the necessary decisions aimed at facilitating the European Union accession process to continue advancing, including by submitting a request for an opinion on the compatibility of the revised draft accession instruments with the European Union Treaties to the Court of Justice of the European Union without delay and, if the opinion is positive, to proceed with the conclusion of the agreement as soon as possible in accordance with their internal procedures;

7.2. invites the European Parliament to support the draft Accession Agreement and start the consultations with the Assembly with a view to updating the 2011 agreement on arrangements related to the participation of the European Parliament representatives in the sittings of the Assembly and the meetings of its relevant bodies when the Assembly exercises its functions concerning the election of judges to the Court;

7.3. calls on the member States of the Council of Europe that are also members of the European Union to exercise their influence within the European Union institutions to enable the rapid conclusion of the accession agreement, as well as its entry into force, including by submitting observations in support of the current draft Accession Agreement before the Court of Justice of the European Union in the context of any opinion sought;

7.4. urges the parliaments and governments of member States of the Council of Europe to take all measures within their areas of competence to facilitate the conclusion of the accession agreement and its entry into force, in particular by signing and ratifying it in accordance with their national procedures in a timely manner;

7.5. calls on parliaments and governments of member States of the Council of Europe, in particular those that are also members of the European Union, as well as all European Union institutions, to raise awareness among citizens about the strengthened protection of their fundamental rights that would result from European Union’s accession to the Convention;

7.6. in the meantime, invites the Court and the Court of Justice of the European Union to maintain and further develop their well-established judicial dialogue in order to avoid any inconsistencies in the interpretation of the Convention that would undermine the protection of fundamental rights, by showing mutual respect, cross-referencing each other and harmonising their positions to the extent possible.



Resolution 2602 (2025)¹

Provisional version

Interconnections between the Council of Europe and the European Political Community

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Following a proposal made by the President of the French Republic on 9 May 2022 at the closing ceremony of the Conference on the Future of Europe, leaders of the European Union agreed at the European Council meeting in June 2022 to launch the European Political Community, with the aim of bringing together European Union and non-European Union countries on the European continent. The ambition was to foster political dialogue and co-operation among leaders to address issues of common interest to strengthen the security, stability and prosperity of the European continent.
2. The launch of the European Political Community demonstrated the willingness of European Union leaders to rapidly react and adapt the multilateral architecture of Europe to a deeply challenging geopolitical environment, marked, in particular, by the full-scale war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.
3. So far, five summits – one every six months – have been held, hosted alternately by the European Union member State holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union and a non-European Union country. Since the inaugural summit in Prague in October 2022, summits held in the Republic of Moldova, Spain, the United Kingdom and Hungary have focused on peace, prosperity, security, energy resilience, connectivity, and most recently democracy and migration.
4. The non-institutionalised and flexible nature of the European Political Community has created unique possibilities for dialogue that would otherwise not be possible in other frameworks. The Parliamentary Assembly notes that the European Political Community, a platform for political co-ordination, does not replace any existing organisation, structure or process, nor does it seek to create new ones. The Assembly also notes that the European Political Community has no legal basis establishing a formal membership. It underlines that the European Political Community has remained an informal intergovernmental platform for political dialogue between European leaders from European Union member States and non-European Union member States, in the presence of European Union institutions. Operational work is carried out by the host country and the Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, while continuity between European Political Community summits of European leaders is ensured by the President of the European Council.
5. The Assembly welcomes the participation of the Council of Europe in the last two summits of the European Political Community in London and Budapest. To ensure synergies and complementarity between the European Political Community and the treaty-based Council of Europe (Statute of the Council of Europe, ETS No. 1), a pan-European political community of 46 member States, the Assembly encourages future hosts countries to maintain this invitation to the Organisation.
6. As the European Political Community is not meant to replace the European Union's neighbourhood and enlargement policies, it adds another circle to the already existing variable geometry of European integration. In that respect, the European Political Community has yet to prove that it can contribute to the further alignment of non-European Union countries.

1. *Assembly debate* on 10 April 2025 (17th sitting) (see [Doc. 16128](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Zsolt Németh). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 10 April 2025 (17th sitting).



7. Although the nature and objectives of the Council of Europe and the European Political Community are not the same, the question of the links between the new European Political Community and the long-standing Europe-wide political activity of the Council of Europe was raised from the outset. Since then, the geographical scope of participation in the European Political Community has come closer to that of the Council of Europe membership and the wider range of issues addressed by the European Political Community has highlighted the need to seek co-operation, in line with the Reykjavik Declaration. In addition, the support of the Council of Europe to Ukraine and its efforts to hold the Russian Federation accountable for its war of aggression against Ukraine make the Organisation a key partner of the European Political Community.

8. In light of these considerations, the Assembly:

8.1. recalls that the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe met at their Fourth Summit in Reykjavik on 16 and 17 May 2023 to stand united against Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and to give further priority and direction to the work of the Council of Europe. They reiterated the pan-European role of the Council of Europe and confirmed that it is uniquely placed to bring together, on an equal footing, all the countries of Europe to protect democratic security in Europe and to counter the undermining of human rights, democracy and the rule of law;

8.2. stresses that the Council of Europe is a pan-European political community of 46 member States;

8.3. believes that, at this pivotal moment for Europe, the Council of Europe must be an ever stronger and more resilient pillar of multilateralism. The Council of Europe should play a proactive role in the discussions related to the European political architecture. It should also maintain its leading intergovernmental role in all matters relating to human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe and its leading responsibility for the functioning of its convention system.

9. Furthermore, in this rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape, where the rules-based international order faces severe challenges, the Assembly believes that European leaders should bring the European Political Community and the Council of Europe closer together and, in line with the Reykjavik Declaration, set an example of effective and dynamic multilateralism that promotes shared values and underpins security and stability in Europe.

10. Equally, the Assembly considers that the unprecedented challenges currently facing Europe call for ever closer co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union. As reaffirmed in the Reykjavik Declaration, "the European Union is the main institutional partner of the Council of Europe in political, legal, and financial terms". The Council of Europe should further strengthen its strategic partnership with the European Union.

11. The Assembly also recalls the invaluable role of the Council of Europe in the European Union enlargement process. In this context, the Council of Europe, as the benchmark for human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Europe, should increase its support to enhance the level of preparedness of candidate and potential candidate countries for European Union accession.

12. Consequently, as regards relations between the Council of Europe and the European Political Community, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States, in particular European Political Community host countries and, when relevant, European Union leaders to:

12.1. ensure synergies and co-ordination between the European Political Community and the Council of Europe, notably by ensuring systematic participation of the Council of Europe in European Political Community summits;

12.2. develop, during European Political Community summits, a format for dialogue on strategic issues, with the Council of Europe, on matters falling under its mandate;

12.3. make full use of the participation of the Council of Europe in European Political Community summits for additional high-level dialogue;

12.4. develop contact points through Senior Officials in the Council of Europe Secretariat in Strasbourg, in close co-operation with the Council of Europe Liaison Office in Brussels, and in the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union;

12.5. make full use of Council of Europe instruments and work, notably on democracy through the new Democratic Pact under preparation;

12.6. consider developing a joint declaration to ensure complementarity of respective activities and develop further synergies.

13. Regarding the role of the Council of Europe, the Assembly calls on the Council of Europe member States to:

13.1. strengthen the position of the Council of Europe as the leading intergovernmental organisation in Europe promoting and safeguarding human rights, democracy and the rule of law, in the evolving European and global multilateral architecture as they committed to in Reykjavik;

13.2. further develop the role of the Council of Europe as a resilient and robust political community and a platform for strategic and political dialogue, diplomacy and multilateralism, where member States can come together to address shared challenges and pursue common goals, by:

13.2.1. enhancing the political dimension of its work and bodies;

13.2.2. ensuring efficient co-ordination of functions and responsibilities with other institutions and fora within the multilateral architecture;

13.2.3. convening summits of Heads of State and Government on a more regular basis.

13.3. support the further development of Council of Europe work in the area of democratic security and democratic resilience.

14. Finally, the Assembly resolves to continue to act as a dynamic platform for pan-European political dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy.

Resolution 2603 (2025)¹
Provisional version

Strengthening relations between the Council of Europe and Latin America

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Europe and Latin America share multidimensional ties: the Parliamentary Assembly, in its [Resolution 390 \(1968\)](#) “Relations with Latin America”, already recalled that “the many bonds linking Europe and Latin America are not simply the result of the economic realities of the modern world, but also of their heritage of civilisation”. Indeed, their cultures, politics and economies are deeply intertwined, and the links forged during more than five centuries of common history have facilitated the exchange of ideas, traditions and values across the Atlantic Ocean.
2. With some exceptions, countries and organisations in the Latin American region share the same fundamental values that lie at the heart of the Council of Europe: the universality of human rights, the irreplaceable nature of democracy and the primacy of the rule of law over the rule of might.
3. The Council of Europe has already institutionalised relations and established contacts with several regional organisations and institutions in Latin America:
 - 3.1. a Co-operation Agreement was signed in 2008 between the Assembly and the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino);
 - 3.2. a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Council of Europe and the Organization of American States (OAS) in 2011;
 - 3.3. the European Court of Human Rights, together with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, adopted the San José Declaration in 2018, establishing a Permanent Forum of Institutional Dialogue;
 - 3.4. dialogue and co-operation activities have been developed with the Ibero-American System and its Sectoral Organizations.
4. The Council of Europe has always supported the cause of freedom, democracy and the rule of law in Latin America. In 2024, it awarded the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize to María Corina Machado.
5. The Council of Europe also has bilateral relations with a number of Latin American countries. Mexico is the country with the strongest ties with the Organisation, considering that, since 1999, it enjoys observer status with the Council of Europe and the Mexican Congress enjoys observer status with the Assembly. Other Latin American countries co-operate with the Council of Europe, for example through the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission): since 2002, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Peru have joined the Venice Commission as members, and Argentina and Uruguay as observers.
6. The existing links between Europe and Latin America are particularly relevant in the current volatile and uncertain geopolitical context. The rules-based international order is under attack, and at the same time, the global challenges requiring a common international response based on multilateralism and co-operation are

1. *Assembly debate* on 10 April 2025 (17th sitting) (see [Doc. 16129](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Antonio Gutiérrez Limones). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 10 April 2025 (17th sitting). See also [Recommendation 2296 \(2025\)](#).



growing: geopolitical conflicts and threats to international security, climate change and environmental degradation, energy transition and the management of relevant natural resources, mass migrations, health risks, and the use of artificial intelligence.

7. As in some member States of the Council of Europe, democracy in Latin America suffers from the threat of polarisation, radicalism and foreign interference.

8. The Assembly considers that it is more important than ever for Europe to strengthen its ties with regions that share its values. The Latin American region should be considered as a natural ally. While the existing partnerships with multilateral organisations and countries in Latin America should be strengthened, the Council of Europe should also seek to develop dialogue and new forms of co-operation in the region.

9. The Assembly recalls that in the Reykjavik Declaration, the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe committed to strengthening the role of the Organisation in global governance by enhancing its external dimension, through a new engagement based on its core values with democracies in the world. They also underlined the need to promote increased ratification of Council of Europe conventions that are open to non-member States, extending the outreach of the Organisation to non-member countries also through the active contribution of observer States, and called for more political dialogue with other international organisations.

10. The Assembly pays tribute to the important contributions made by the observer delegation of the Mexican Congress to the work of the Assembly, and to the role played by Mexico as a State that has observer status with the Council of Europe, for more than 25 years. It therefore invites Mexico and its Congress to continue to promote the work and standards of the Council of Europe, and to serve as an inspiration for other countries and their national assemblies in the region that might be interested in strengthening their relations with the Organisation.

11. In line with these considerations, and building on [Resolution 2581 \(2025\)](#) “The need for a renewed rules-based international order”, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States and observer States to:

11.1. strengthen their relations with relevant multilateral organisations in Latin America, in particular the OAS and the Ibero-American System, through high-level meetings, sectoral agreements, technical co-operation activities, exchange of expertise and joint events, with a view to:

- 11.1.1. upholding multilateralism and the respect for international law;
- 11.1.2. promoting and protecting human rights;
- 11.1.3. countering the backsliding of democracy;
- 11.1.4. promoting the principles of the rule of law;
- 11.1.5. addressing the impact of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity;
- 11.1.6. addressing the impact of new technologies and artificial intelligence;

11.2. engage in a dialogue with Latin American States, to promote Council of Europe standards and technical expertise and to encourage their accession to the enlarged agreements, enlarged partial agreements and conventions that are open to non-member States of the Council of Europe, such as the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (CETS No. 225), the Venice Commission, and the Council of Europe International Co-operation Group on Drugs and Addictions (Pompidou Group).

12. The Assembly welcomes the fruitful collaboration of the European Court of Human Rights with its regional counterparts, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and encourages them to further strengthen their joint efforts, in particular with regard to the promotion of their regional instruments, the sharing of their jurisprudence with national courts, and the available mechanisms for monitoring the enforcement of judgments.

13. Convinced of the importance of inter-parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy in building bridges across continents, ensuring the cross-fertilisation of ideas, and protecting and strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the Assembly resolves to:

13.1. revive the Co-operation Agreement signed with the Latin American Parliament in 2008 and contribute to its implementation, by:

13.1.1. inviting the President of the Parlatino, at appropriate intervals, to attend and address the Assembly's plenary during its part-sessions;

13.1.2. inviting a delegation from the Parlatino to attend the Assembly's part-sessions, conferences and other events, whenever appropriate, and organising joint *ad hoc* meetings on matters of common interest;

13.1.3. exchanging official documentation and putting its expertise on parliamentary practice and procedure at the disposal of the Parlatino and its members;

13.2. enter into a dialogue with the ParlAmericas, the independent network comprised of national legislatures of the member States of the OAS, to assess possible areas of collaboration on matters of common interest.

14. The Assembly encourages national parliaments from the Latin American region to explore the strengthening of their relations with the Assembly, with a view to submitting a request for observer status with the Assembly.

15. With regard to the general outreach of the Council of Europe in the Latin American region, the Assembly recognises the value of having available and updated texts and information regarding the Organisation translated into Spanish, and recommends that this effort be continued whenever possible.