



# News from the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

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## **June session in Strasbourg**

- ALDE continues to closely follow the situation in Ukraine which remains the most important challenge to European stability and peace. During the June session the Group invited human rights defenders from Ukraine and Russia to share views on humanitarian aspects of the crisis in the south-eastern regions of Ukraine, including Crimea. The expert panel featured Oleksandra Romantsova (Ukraine), Dmitri Makarov (Russia) and Andrei Yurov (Russia).
- ALDE President Jordi Xuclà discussed the human rights situation in Georgia with Ombudsman Ucha Nanuashvili. The situation of freedom of expression in Azerbaijan was raised at a meeting with journalists. The meeting was attended by President Jordi Xuclà and Vice-President of ALDE Kerstin Lundgren.
- Jordi Xuclà congratulated the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland (Norway) on re-election for a second term, starting on 1 October 2014. Following the announcement of the results, Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, candidate of the German Government and member of the FDP, expressed the hope that the Council of Europe would “make full use of its unique potential” to reinforce its role as Europe's main human rights organisation.

As always, we wish to thank all ALDE members who took active part in plenary debates, defended our position in committees, presented reports and attended group meetings. We also welcome all new members who joined the group since April and wish them excellent work. Finally, we thank ALDE trainees Ilaria Zamburlini (Italy) and Abigail Brightman (IFLRY) for their interest and assistance to our office during the session.

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## Humanitarian situation in Ukraine



Andrei Yurov, Dmitri Makarov, Oleksandra Romantsova, Jordi Xuclà

On 25 June 2014 ALDE held an exchange of views with human rights defenders working in Crimea and in eastern regions of Ukraine. The expert panel featured Oleksandra Romantsova (Ukraine, Centre for Civil Liberties, SOS-Maidan, coordinator of mobile human rights groups), Dmitri Makarov (Russia, Youth human rights movement, coordinator of a field mission to Crimea) and Andrei Yurov (Russia, International monitoring group on human rights in Ukraine).

Human rights defenders presented detailed reports on their findings and underscored three major concerns:

- Growing numbers of IDPs and the need for proper humanitarian and legal measures;
- Severe lack of human rights NGOs' and international organisations' presence on the ground in Crimea and eastern Ukraine;
- Absence of a clear legal definition of the armed operation conducted in the east of Ukraine.

"We see that attitudes and acts that we thought to be history long forgotten re-emerge today to set on fire European peace and stability. It is clear that Ukraine deserves all our attention today. The country needs a constitutional reform, it must also fight corruption. But let us be clear: all this will not be achieved unless violence stops and unless trust is restored. On behalf of the ALDE, I thank all human rights defenders for their courage and presence on the ground," said President of ALDE Jordi Xuclà concluding the debate.

The situation in Ukraine remains at the top of the Parliamentary Assembly's agenda in Strasbourg for over six months. Recently PACE condemned the illegal annexation of Crimea and the bloodshed in the Lugansk and Donetsk regions; parliamentarians raised concerns about the role of the Russian Federation in the unrest and suspended the voting rights of the delegation of the Russian Federation to PACE while keeping the channels of communication open.

*On 1 July 2014, an attack was perpetrated against Andrei Yurov near his organisation's office in Voronezh, Russia. Mr Yurov was beaten and suffers first-degree burns to his eyes caused by antiseptic thrown to his face during the attack. ALDE is concerned about campaigns aimed at intimidating and discrediting human rights organisations and their members in Russia. Last week a banner displaying photos of activists and reading "The fifth column" was placed in the centre of the city of Voronezh.*



### Mr Jordi XUCLÀ (Spain)

Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee  
([Doc. 13538](#), Doc. 13538 Addendum I, Doc. 13542)

Current affairs debate: “Political and humanitarian consequences of the crisis in Ukraine”

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\*translation

### Question to Mr Elmar MAMMADYAROV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers



Ms GUȚU  
(*Republic  
of  
Moldova*)\*

– What  
does  
Azerbaijan  
intend to  
do as

chair of the Committee of  
Ministers to seek to resolve  
frozen conflicts? I am thinking  
in particular of Transnistria,  
South Ossetia and Abkhazia.  
We have already talked about  
Nagorno-Karabakh and one  
might also think of Crimea as  
a future frozen conflict.



Mr MAMMADYROV – I do not want continually to repeat myself, but I believe that we have a common approach to what you called frozen conflicts, which are sometimes referred to as protracted conflicts. Because of our aspirations, we all face losing part of our territories. The most important element for Azerbaijan, Moldova and now Ukraine and Georgia is to stand on the principles on which we must build international relations and

international law in the coming years. As a matter of principle, territorial integrity and sovereignty must be considered and it must be inadmissible to change internationally recognised borders without the consent of the federal government. That is a must, at least for us in Azerbaijan – I am again speaking on behalf of my country. There should not be any confusion. During the negotiations on a settlement with Armenia, for example, the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan was never, ever a subject for negotiation.

When we try to reach a settlement in bilateral discussions, sometimes with mediation – in our case from the United States, Russia and France – we must recognise that if we want to use the principle of international law that calls for self-determination, without even reading the Helsinki Final Act carefully one can see that self-determination does not mean the violation of territorial integrity. You can self-determine, as illustrated by many examples in Europe, within the existing boundaries recognised by the world, including those who have joined the United Nations, including both of our countries. I have no doubt that we will need to move. Of course we want to do that through peaceful means, because it is important to use diplomacy – I always say that, in conflict settlement, diplomacy cannot be exhausted. On the other hand, we must be consistent. The international community should therefore be consistent in recognising that if we change one principle, there will be a domino effect and we might lose a lot of elements that could ruin the rules of international law and international relations for this century.

**Question to Mr Ilham ALIYEV,  
President of Azerbaijan**



Mr XUCLÀ  
(Spain)\* – In  
2006, the  
Republic of  
Azerbaijan  
adopted the  
Council of  
Europe's

convention on the fight against corruption, which is very important in terms of our standards. We have very clear guidelines and we have GRECO. What measures have your government taken since then to implement the convention, and on the law on access to information and transparency concerning funds and properties?



Mr ALIYEV – As I said, corruption is one of the main areas that we will concentrate on during our chairmanship of the Council of Europe. Corruption is a disease that needs to be cured. Our compatriots from the former Soviet Union – all of us – were in a difficult situation because of deep-rooted corruption in our societies. Elimination of

this evil is one of our government's targets. Without that, our success cannot be sustainable. Signing up to the convention and using the positive experience of European Union member states in particular is an extremely important part of our country's co-operation with the EU. As I said, implementing institutional measures gives much better results than administrative measures or punishment. The issue, unfortunately, cannot be resolved by changing the people, so we have found a mechanism. As I said, the public services system makes corruption impossible.

I fully agree with what you said on transparency. We have a good record on that. Azerbaijan was one of the first countries to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative of the then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr Blair. Azerbaijan became the first full member of this initiative and there is now 100% transparency in the extractive industries in Azerbaijan. We need to have the same percentage of transparency in our financial and public services sectors, and we are working on that.

**Question to Mr Petro  
Poroshenko,  
President of  
Ukraine**



Mr  
GARDARSSON  
(Iceland) –

Thank you very  
much for your  
excellent  
speech, Mr  
President. In the

past six days you have introduced a unilateral cease-fire in the eastern regions of Ukraine and an ambitious new peace plan. The cease-fire will end tomorrow. Based on the reactions to your efforts towards peace, especially from President Putin, are you optimistic that your plan will make a lasting difference?



Mr POROSHENKO – It is a very important and key challenge that Ukraine demonstrates, by not only its words but by its actions, its will to peace. I repeat that we have paid a very high price for demonstrating that, but it was a unilateral cease-fire. It was a well-co-ordinated international action, and the whole world now has evidence that Ukraine is ready to go the peaceful way to resolve the conflict.

I will give a simple example. Yesterday, we agreed that today we would hold a meeting with the trilateral commission – a representative of the Russian ambassador, the ex-President of Ukraine and the ambassador from the OSCE. They are collected together, but unfortunately we do not have a representative from the separatists because they are not interested. That is very symbolic for the prospect of peaceful regulation of the current situation. Tomorrow will be the end point. I have had it confirmed that only half an hour ago the separatists demonstrated their interest in participating, less than 12 hours before the end of the ceasefire. A lot depends on tomorrow's negotiations. If a key element of the peace plan is accepted by the separatists, that will give us strong hopes. If it is rejected, we will have to make a very important decision tomorrow. I cannot comment on what type of decision we will make.

**Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee**



Ms LUNDGREN (*Sweden*) – We note the interest of the Assembly in a dialogue with Russia, but we also note that there is nobody here to have a dialogue with, because of the decision of the Russian Duma. Elections are one of the basic indicators of democracy in Council of Europe member states. [...] The so-called referendums in Crimea and eastern Ukraine [...] were unconstitutional, as has been pointed out clearly by the Venice Commission. [...] On the other hand, the presidential election in Ukraine was remarkably well done, given the violence in southern and eastern Ukraine and in Crimea. It was open to the whole country, and even to Crimea. [Read more, voting results](#)

**Free debate**



Ms GUȚU (*Republic of Moldova*)\* – I would like to call your attention to an event that will take place on 27 June in Brussels – the signing of the association agreements between the European Union and Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. It is a major event in the modern history of eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet empire. [...] Of course, the three countries are only setting out on the way to progress. [...] They have problems with corruption, the effective functioning of their legal systems, standards and quality of life, but I congratulate the constitutional authorities in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia on that historic event. I am convinced that their national parliaments will immediately ratify the association agreements, and that the three governments will straight away start to implement the provisions of the agreements

for the benefit of their citizens. [Read more](#)

**Tuesday 24 June 2014**

**Joint debate: The “left-to-die boat”: actions and reactions and The large-scale arrival of mixed migratory flows on Italian shores**



Mr STROE (*Romania*) – Controlling migration is not enough, and such an effort alone may sometimes seem selfish to those outside Europe. Part of the answer, no matter how optimistic it may sound in these times of crisis, is to expand the space of prosperity and security from our neighbourhood to other areas. I am proud that our Assembly assumed a leading role in establishing the status of partner for democracy for countries in the southern Mediterranean region, and I regret that the measure has not, so far, been replicated at the level of the Committee of Ministers. [...] The Council of Europe, through its specialised bodies, should be more present in North Africa, the Middle East and central Asia, and this interaction should also bring answers to the migration problem. [Read more, voting results 1, 2](#)



Mr KENNEDY (*United Kingdom*) – We have to strike the age-old balance between responsible control and the maintenance of artistic and journalistic freedom. We as a group, and the Council of Europe as an institution, need to be acutely conscious of that balance. We agree with the broad thrust of the amendments tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, and we believe that the principles enshrined in them should be transferred into recommendations for measures that member states can take. However, I very much endorse Sir Roger's important caveat that in transferring responsibility to member states, we should also transfer it further down to the family unit. [...] Balancing journalistic and artistic freedom with the responsibility of parents and commercial interests is vital and valuable. We want that freedom to be maintained responsibly, and we do not want the Vladimir Putins of this world to point to legislation that we pass as an excuse for constraining journalistic freedom. [Read more, voting results](#)

### Evaluation of the implementation of the reform of the Parliamentary Assembly



Ms TAKTAKISHVILI (*Georgia*)\* – I underscore the importance of one of the novelties proposed: the setting up of a new committee responsible for the election of judges to the European Court of Human Rights. [...] There will also be a 500-word limit on speeches that cannot be delivered during a sitting and on dissenting opinions in reports and limit of five reports or opinions per individual Assembly member. We will have a time limit for chairs and vice-chairs to allow greater participation by more members of committees and sub-committees. [...] Two proposals that were not retained in the resolution: the possibility of individual sanctions and the possibility of introducing voting in the Chamber by secret ballot. [Read more, voting results](#)

### Wednesday 25 June 2014

### Towards a better European democracy: facing the challenges of a federal Europe



Ms MATEU PI (*Andorra*)\* – What do we see now? After many years of disappointment, we find that a lot of our fellow citizens are disillusioned about democracy and democratic values. There is little convergence on the notion of moving towards a federal Europe and we even find a number of organisations and institutions refusing to work with one another, or to see themselves as complementary. They live isolated, parallel lives, and ordinary people are at a loss to understand how those organisations and institutions work, with many of them duplicating the work of our own Organisation. [...] We need a Europe that may converge towards federalism, but we are reserved about the means the rapporteur advocates for achieving that goal. [Read more, voting results](#)

## Commemoration ceremony of the 100th anniversary of the First World War



Mr XUCLÀ (Spain)\* – In Sarajevo 100 years ago on 28 June, an assassination precipitated a conflict and the end of an era. The novel “Embers” by Sándor Márai is a brilliant evocation of the end of that era. From today’s vantage point, knowing the consequences, it is surprising to realise what a febrile climate there was 100 years ago. Ernst Jünger, the German intellectual who fought in two world wars, described it in immortal words in “Storm of Steel”. He said that we had grown up in a climate of security, so we were attracted to the unusual and the dangerous and that it had seemed to us like a virile event – a sort of merry shooting match on a flower-filled meadow, on which blood was the dew. [Read more](#)

## Parliamentary contribution to resolving the Western Sahara conflict



Ms FIALA (Switzerland) – We must remember Resolution 1818 of 2011, “Request for Partner for Democracy status with the Parliamentary Assembly submitted by the Parliament of Morocco”. Paragraph 11 of the resolution states that “the Assembly expects that Morocco will continue to seek the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. From reading today’s report and hearing the contribution of Liliane Maury Pasquier, we certainly understand that there is still a lot to do, although it cannot be denied that there has been some progress. [...] Western Sahara still does not have self-governance and it is still de facto under the Moroccan regime. We must call upon all parties to find acceptable solutions for both sides. The people of Western Sahara must have self-determination.

The Sahrawi people must have rights, laws and judicial organs, as well as the financial resources that are necessary to guarantee development. [Read more, voting results](#)

## Joint debate: Identities and diversity within intercultural societies; Integration of migrants in Europe: the need for a proactive, long-term and global policy



Mr KOLMAN (Croatia) – . It is sad and worrying that we are discussing such issues under the dark clouds of rising xenophobic and intolerant political movements across large parts of Europe. Yet it makes us all even more aware of the need to change our practices further and faster, so that our children will not have to go through the tragic experiences that our forefathers had to go through, such as people being thrown into furnaces just because they were different. We need to give strong and honest support to a concept that the liberals have been talking about for a long time. We need individual freedom based on individual identity. [...] Both integration and respect of individual identities constitute the essence of achieving personal freedom. In unfortunate times, when from the highest political places we hear ever louder voices questioning our

freedoms and suggesting other concepts that we thought had been left safely in the past, we need to get involved even more. [Read more, voting results 1, 2](#)

Thursday 26 June 2014

## Political and humanitarian consequences of the crisis in Ukraine



Ms FIALA (*Switzerland*)\* – The latest news from Ukraine is dire. NGOs report that hundreds of thousands of so-called internally displaced persons have had to leave their homes owing to the occupation of Crimea and the military operations in eastern Ukraine. These people have no status and no protection given the current situation. Their security is in jeopardy, so it is vital that international organisations set up a humanitarian corridor. The disasters in Ukraine mean that many people have died or have been driven out and made homeless. There are parlous epidemiological conditions in conflict areas, but no health care. On behalf of ALDE, I call upon our member states to campaign for humanitarian and medical assistance for Crimea and Ukraine. [Read more](#)

## Challenges for the Council of Europe Development Bank



Ms ANTTILA (*Finland*) – Under the current leadership of the Bank, governance issues have progressed. However, as reflected in the report, efforts to address good governance and the rationalisation of the Bank should continue. Fine-tuning its structures and cutting bureaucracy would improve serving the Bank's aims. Internal reform has been too slow and a fresh look is needed. The voting rules should be changed to be more equal. [Read more, voting results](#)

## Europe's public administrations in flux: public service under threat?



Mr KOLMAN (*Croatia*) – I wish to stress that, although the economic crisis and austerity measures have had a negative effect in many public administrations, it is not a normal situation by any means. We cannot judge the idea of reforming public administration only by emphasising the effect of austerity measures. It is our deepest belief that the goals of efficiency, user-friendliness and cost-effectiveness need to be reached. The reform of public administration needs to continue. It is our responsibility as parliamentarians to keep an eye on the process, analyse measures before they are introduced, and evaluate the results of reform. [Read more, voting results](#)

## Reinforcement of the independence of the European Court of Human Rights



Mr KENNEDY (*United Kingdom*) – The issue is that the United Kingdom seems to be in danger of forgetting its founding contribution to the European Court, post-Second World War and post-Nuremberg, and the contribution that we made to the drafting of the very articles that gave rise to its being. Indeed, this is best expressed – although ridiculously so – by the Court all too often being referred to, in the media and in sections of British political discourse, as a foreign court. It is not a foreign court to the United Kingdom, any more than it is a foreign court to any other member state that subscribes to it. We all send senior judicial figures to participate in its deliberations and, as is mentioned in the report, when their term in office is concluded, we encourage those senior judicial figures to return to their home country and to continue to contribute their legal

expertise there. That is the difficulty that we are dealing with in Britain, and it has been most vividly expressed in the unresolved issue of voting rights for prisoners. [Read more, voting results](#)

## Child-friendly juvenile justice: from rhetoric to reality



Ms ANTTILA (*Finland*) – There is a need to focus on the implementation of the standards in this area to ensure that we respect children's rights and improve juvenile justice practices across Europe. Early intervention is very important for young offenders – really early intervention. [...] Our main target must be to move from rhetoric to reality. I really hope that we succeed. I am glad that the rapporteur and our committee approved my proposal to include a call for the introduction of a multi-professional approach to helping young delinquents in the draft resolution. It is important that we learn from the best practice in different countries. [Read more, voting results](#)

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