

## October 2023 part-session highlights:

PACE Session  
9-13 October  
2023 & more

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Highlights

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Democracy

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Didier Reynders

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- **European Justice Day:** [video message](#) from ALDE-PACE leader Iulian Bulai: “I believe in Europe where Justice is not just a dream, but a reality. That is why liberals are fighting to uphold the rule of law in every corner of Europe, wherever it is at risk”.
- ALDE-PACE continues to keep the **Council of Europe focused on Ukraine**. Iulian Bulai presented a report under urgent procedure and a [resolution](#) calling to maintain solidarity and aid to Ukraine. A comprehensive system of accountability is key for justice in Ukraine; this should also include a special international tribunal for the crime of aggression, a well-functioning register of damage and a compensation system. **Following Iulian Bulai’s proposal, the Parliamentary Assembly decided to recognise Holodomor as a genocide against the Ukrainian people.** Finally, ALDE-PACE organised a hearing on the findings of an independent report on [Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ukraine](#): lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Preparing the Reykjavik summit of Council of Europe’s heads of state and government in May 2023, ALDE-PACE promoted stronger inclusion of youth in Council of Europe’s programmes and activities. During the October session, in cooperation with the Renew Europe group of the European Parliament, we organised an exchange of views with representatives of international youth organisations on the “**Role of Youth in revitalising democracy.**”
- During the October session, ALDE-PACE supported **five exceptional procedure debates** on ensuring a just peace in Ukraine, the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, tensions in the North of Kosovo, escalation of violence in the Middle-East following Hamas attacks on Israel and the persistent refusal by Türkiye to implement the ECHR judgement concerning Osman Kavala.
- ALDE-PACE continuously draws attention to the situation of political prisoners. The group supported the call for the immediate release of the 2023 Vaclav Havel Human Rights Laureate **Osman Kavala** detained in Türkiye since 18 October 2017. Speaking on behalf of the group, Damien Cottier also drew attention to the ongoing repressions against former Vaclav Havel laureates serving illegal prison terms in Russia and Belarus: **Vladimir Kara-Murza, Ales Biliatski, and Maria Kalesnikava.**
- Congratulations to new rapporteurs appointed during the October session: **Bertrand Bouyx** (France) on the Establishment of an Order of the European solidarities; **Liliana Tanguy** (France) on Globalisation in times of crises and war: the role of OECD since the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine (opinion); **Yevheniia Kravchuk** (Ukraine) on Strengthening a youth perspective in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly (opinion)

We thank all members who took part in the group’s work, defended the liberal position in debates, presented reports and participated in our meetings. We welcome new members who joined ALDE-PACE since the last part-session and wish them good work.

**ALDE endeavours to be the engine of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe defending the core European values.**

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## The role of youth in revitalising democracy



Young people are not the future, they are the present. During its plenary group meeting on 9 October, ALDE-PACE held a debate with the participation of liberal youth organisations, co-organised with the Renew Europe group of the European Parliament.

Is political participation through political parties and youth organisations still relevant for young people and how to make it more relevant or relevant again? How do we address the challenge of extreme-right and extreme-left ideologies that often target young people? How can institutional politics, and the liberal family

efficiently take on board the major claims of the young generations, such as environmental rights, technological transformations or identity issues? These are just a few of many questions pertaining to the role of youth in politics that democratic societies need to confront.

The debate chaired by ALDE-PACE leader Iulian Bulai featured Dan-Aria Sucuri, President of LYMEC (European Liberal Youth), Lounes Lachgar, member of YDE (Young democrats for Europe), Doris Lisett Rudnevs, Renew Europe, Institutional Relations policy advisor and MEP Dragos Pislaru, chair of Renew Europe's Youth Taskforce. The guests presented the [Renew Europe Youth Manifesto](#) with concrete ideas on how to empower young people across Europe.

The manifesto is a result of a participative process of consultation and co-creation with young people, including the youth organisations.

Youth representatives also held bilateral meetings with ALDE-PACE MPs, including rapporteur on the Role of Youth in Revitalising Democracy Sona Ghazaryan (Armenia), chair of the sub-committee on Education, Youth and Sport Fiona O'Loughlin (Ireland) and member of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media Yulia Ovchynnykova (Ukraine).

ALDE-PACE thanks the Renew Europe group of the European Parliament for cooperation in the organisation of the visit.

### Liberals committed to the rule of law across European organisations

On 12 October, ALDE group leader Iulian Bulai held a bilateral meeting with Didier Reynders, European Commissioner for Justice. They discussed the state of the rule of law in Europe, including the recent report by the European Commission, the EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights, and the ways to increase the efficiency of human rights and rule of law action of the Council of Europe and the EU institutions. The same day, Commissioner Reynders [addressed](#) the Parliamentary Assembly.



### ALDE Party Council in Bucharest

On 20-21 October 2023, Iulian Bulai welcomed ALDE-PACE members and former members attending ALDE [Party Council](#) meetings and fringe events in Bucharest.



**Fiona O'LOUGHLIN (Ireland)**

- **The honouring of membership obligations to the Council of Europe by France**

Co-rapporteur, AS/Mon ([Doc. 15833](#))



**Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO (Monaco)**

- **Preventing and combating violence against women with disabilities**

AS/Ega ([Doc. 15828](#))



**Iulian BULAI (Romania)**

- **Ensuring a just peace in Ukraine and lasting security in Europe**

AS/Pol ([Doc. 15842](#))



**Diana STOICA (Romania)**

- **Preventing addictive behaviours in children**

AS/Soc ([Doc. 15830](#))



**Lesia VASYLENKO (Ukraine)  
Claude KERN (France) (opinion)**

- **The role of the Council of Europe in preventing conflicts, restoring credibility of international institutions and promoting global peace**

AS/Pol ([Doc. 15821](#))

AS/Mon ([Doc. 15824](#)) (opinion)



## QUESTIONS

### Question to Ms Marija PEJČINOVIĆ BURIĆ, Secretary General of the Council of Europe



Mr Bjarni JÓNSSON (Iceland) - Secretary General, in the Reykjavík Declaration, the heads of

state encouraged the establishment of a new intergovernmental committee on the environment and human rights: the Reykjavík Committee. How is the Committee of Ministers following up on this statement? What steps have already been taken? How is the progress? And what is the timeline for this process?

Further, can you promise this Assembly that you will do everything that lies within your competencies to defend the fundamental human rights of the Armenian people exiled from Nagorno-Karabakh? Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Ms Marija PEJČINOVIĆ-BURIĆ - On the Committee on the Environment: at this moment, the Committee of Ministers' intergovernmental sector is working on two lines. One is, indeed, the Steering Committee on Human Rights, which is the link with issues pertaining to the feasibility of a future instrument to be decided upon. So, the

work, the negotiations, are actually starting and the Committee is due to have to come back with an answer on feasibility by June next year. So, by June next year, we will know what the feasibility says and what would be the most appropriate for the Council of Europe to have as a new instrument dealing with this issue. [...]

In what concerns your second question, when you ask me to do whatever is in my capacity to protect Armenians who have fled, unfortunately, from the place they have lived for hundreds of years. Already, by now, my special representative is on the way to Armenia with, of course, consent from the Armenian authorities. She will map the needs of those people because there are over 100 000. Almost all unfortunately left from Karabakh and we will certainly, when coming back, we will devise a plan on how to assist so immediately the people who are there. But, of course, there is a bigger question to see when and how these people should return home because I think no one wants to be a refugee, no one wants to leave the place where they were born or their ancestors were born. So, I think throughout the Council of Europe, we should pay attention to that and do whatever we can to allow these people to go back.

And, of course, on the side of Azerbaijan, I hope soon to be able to send a mission from the Secretariat that will talk to Azerbaijani authorities and see what is their assessment of the situation in Azerbaijan. But also with this I call on Azerbaijan as I did to our Joint Committee to really apply the European Convention on Human Rights fully because everyone around the Council of Europe space is entitled to enjoy all freedoms and rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

## QUESTIONS

### Question to Mr Krišjānis KARIŅŠ, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia and President of the Committee of Ministers



Ms Fiona O'LOUGHLIN (Ireland) – This Standing Committee had a very fruitful and pleasant visit to Riga at

the start of your presidency when your predecessor, now president, committed to ratification of the Istanbul Convention. We would appreciate an update in relation to that.

Also, if you could advise us of the plan, in the presiding minister, in ensuring that all of the competencies and the organs of the Council of Europe will be employed in the Nagorno Karabach region, and what would be the consequences if not. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Mr Krišjānis KARIŅŠ – Regarding the Istanbul Convention and its ratification process in Latvia, I headed the last two governments in Latvia. One of the reasons I disbanded the previous government was that we could not come to a political consensus on implementing the ratification

through the parliament. This was not the sole reason, but this was one of them. In forming the new government, my successor Prime Minister Ms Evika Siliņa set as one of the bases of forming the government that we would agree, among other policy issues, to finish this ratification process. [...]

The second part of your "one question" had to do with Nagorno-Karabakh and, you know, how we will we really deal with it. I think this is one of the big issues of today and this week and how actually to deal with it. I've met with one side, and I've met with the other side. I understand very much what I'm being told. At the end of the day, regardless, say, for these, the question is how we will define these migrants. I think this House, the Council of Europe has a big task ahead of it. [...] These 110 000 to 120 000 ethnic Armenians who have now fled or left their homes for Armenia, are they migrants? Are they refugees? This is the question Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

**Question to Mr Didier REYNDERS, European Commissioner for Justice**



Mr Julian BULAI (Romania) – Dear Commissioner, on behalf of Alliance of Liberals and Democrats

for Europe, I would like to thank you for coming to address this Assembly today.

Our question is how can the two institutions work better to avoid duplication and use our resources in the most efficient manner in order to help out member states to be fully in line with the rule of law, democracy, and human rights obligations?

I was also going to ask you to tell us more about the good work you're doing on Ukraine, both you and the whole European Commission as such. I've heard a lot.

I want to thank you. Congratulations for what you have done already on behalf of the EU for Ukraine. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Mr Didier REYNDERS - How is it possible to avoid duplication and maybe to do more? First of all, with such a kind of example of exchange that we have, because if you do not explain what we are doing on both sides, it becomes difficult to try to avoid duplications or different kinds of contradictions in our work. And we have regular contact with all the services, of course, with all the bodies of the Council of Europe, with the Secretary General and we try to explain what we are doing. It is very important to see how it is going to be compatible and do not have any duplication in the way we are working on this. [...]

On the rule of law, the best way is to identify better the added value of different specific bodies. And I have mentioned the way we are working with the Venice Commission or with GRECO. And I am sure that is very important because we receive, every year now, a huge contribution from the two bodies, to give two examples, and of course, we do not want to organise a duplication of that. We are taking that. Like I said, when we have a justice reform in one member state or in the candidate country, we ask to follow the recommendations of the Venice Commission and to read the recommendations and not just to discuss whether... I am sure that it is possible to continue to enhance that. But again, we are open to see if there are other opportunities to find a good collaboration between us and the Council of Europe. Also on the fight on impunity.

About the compensation mechanism, we have started to build the register of damage with the Council of Europe. It is very important to continue to work on the next steps, also with the Council of Europe. I know that we have a huge part in the discussion about offending of the compensations, but for the mechanism it is important to work together. I said maybe first of all, for all the participants to appoint members of the board and then to organise a good functioning of the system. And so, you see that it is also possible to work on Ukraine. I want just to add on Ukraine, that my personal fear - but I am not alone I am sure - is that we have seen in the last year more and more actors in the international scene using violence to make some progress in their minds. And that is a real danger. So, we need to continue to be very strict about accountability to show all perpetrators of crimes that they have the risk of being in front of a tribunal or a court for the rest of their lives. We must be strict on this. It is maybe for tomorrow, for next week, for next month, maybe in 10 years, but we want to be sure that we are working on accountability to have real opportunities to bring perpetrators to justice. Without that, we will see more and more people and authorities being open to using violence to reach some goals. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



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**Monday 9 October 2023**

**Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee (Doc. 15834, Doc. 15834 Add 1, Doc. 15834 Add 2)**



Mr Damien Cottier (Switzerland) - For my part, I have had the honour of chairing the Legal Affairs Committee for almost two years now, and its reports at each part-session basically underline the importance of the Council of Europe's conventions, of the entire legal framework on which this Organisation is based. [...] The Legal Committee has also decided to create a post of rapporteur on political prisoners, and I believe that the ceremony we have just witnessed, Mr Chairman, underlines just how important it is to fight for political prisoners. Mr Kavala who won the Vaclav Havel prize deserves that we think of him, that we support him, and it's good that we're organising a debate

during this week. But let's also think of the three people who have won the prize in recent years, namely Mr Vladimir Kara-Murza, Mr Ales Bialiatski and Ms Maria Kalesnikava, who are currently serving sentences that are both unjust and inhumane. [...] And sadly, crises – human crises – continue in every corner of our continent and in its immediate vicinity: the atrocious war in Ukraine, the horrible crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh and the horrific situation we are currently witnessing in Israel. [More, video EN | OV](#)

GROUP  
SPEAKERS

### Current Affairs Debate: The situation in the North of Kosovo\* following the recent attack and the need for de-escalation

DEBATES



Ms Sabina ČUDIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – Strategic ambiguity is a term invented by diplomats to, at best, buy time and at worst, justify the policy of appeasement whose failure we have seen for centuries but most recently, of course, on European soil. And strategic ambiguity is something that, unfortunately, is practised in the Western Balkan region, as well, particularly in the last years. [...] So there are two thirds of members of our family – of this institution – who strongly believe that Kosovo should be allowed to be a member of the Council of Europe. This is the time, the right time to recognise and face the fact that we can no longer wait to open doors to those who wish to be part of the Council of Europe family. And the longer we wait

the longer reopened the doors to more destructive and malign influence very much present in the Western Balkan region, and allowing it to reign on European soil, starting with Mr Putin who has direct access to both Belgrade and Banja Luka. [More, video EN | OV](#)

RESULTS

Tuesday 10 October 2023

### The challenge of far-right ideology to democracy and human rights in Europe (Doc. 15826)



Mr Bertrand BOUYX (France) -Indeed, everywhere the far right presents itself as the best defender of the nation, its identity, and its interests. But everywhere, every time there is a question of defending the nation, it betrays, capitulates and chooses the side of its enemies.

Why this paradox, you may ask? Because it puts ideology above the people, because it's so fascinated by the cult of the strong man, the leader, the guardian of tradition. [...] Examples abound. Without going back to the Second World War, just look at Vladimir Putin's biggest supporters today. Which parties enjoy the largesse or simply the sympathy of Russian power? I'm sure you have them in every one of your countries. [...] It's the far-right parties. In fact that's how you can recognise this type of party. And why? Because these self-proclaimed defenders of

the homeland actually favour what best corresponds to their fantasy, the strongman, even if that strongman is an enemy of their homeland. [...] I therefore invite our countries not to focus on these parties, which err every time history gives them the opportunity to do so, but more effectively to remove the soil on which they thrive like gangrene on a diseased leg. There's nothing specific about the struggle. It's called good governance, inclusiveness, democracy, economic and social progress, and tackling the real issues facing our societies, far from the wishful thinking of the proponents of these ideologies.. [More, voting results, video EN | OV](#)

### The honouring of membership obligations to the Council of Europe by France (Doc. 15833)



Mr Caspar van den BERG (Netherlands) – Monitoring the human rights, the functioning of democracy and the rule of law are a vital part of our work here at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). To quote King Willem-Alexander in his speech in the hemicycle in June 2022: "the goal is never to point the finger at someone else, but the goal is to learn from looking critically and constructively at ourselves in the mirror." That is the way in which our efforts here have a positive added value to our societies and our citizens. [...] For my political group, it is important to stress that monitoring reports should be about the functioning of states, not the naming and shaming of individual persons or officeholders. [...] Among other things, the report asks attention for the strained capacity of the French prison system. We understand that the French government has now launched a programme to

increase the number of places for detainees, and is working hard to overcome the hurdles of both personnel scarcity and local objections to new facilities. [...] Also, the report expresses concerns

about the use of force on the part of the French police. This remains an important topic to be vigilant about and every case is in principle one too many. We are pleased to see that new statistics from the French inspectorate about the use of force by the police have come out last month which provide more transparency and insight in casualties, and how they are followed up.. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

**Wednesday 11 October 2023**

**Current affairs debate: Escalation of violence in the Middle-East following the recent Hamas attack on Israel**



Mr Damien COTTIER (Switzerland) - What's happening there [in Israel] shattering our hearts and minds. Terrorist attacks by Hamas, deliberately targeting civilian populations and even the most vulnerable: young people, children, the elderly, babies – babies! – killed, mutilated, taken hostage, and entire villages murdered. [...] The Group of Liberals and Democrats for Europe condemns these heinous acts in the strongest possible terms. It calls for their immediate cessation and for the release of the hostages. It expresses its solidarity with Israel. It affirms that no one can support or rejoice in such atrocities, whatever their position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nothing can justify such atrocities. Nothing, anywhere, ever. [...] Israel has the right to defend itself. We call on it to do so, while respecting its international obligations and demonstrating

proportionality by protecting the civilian population in Gaza as far as it can, especially the most vulnerable, notably children. Let's not confuse Hamas terrorists with the Palestinian population. We need humanitarian access. [...] This atrocious situation must not make us lose sight of the fact that, one day, a just and lasting peace will be needed. [More](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

**Pegasus and similar spyware and secret state surveillance (Doc. 15825)**

Ms Sabina ČUDIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina) - Leading up to the ambitious Reykjavík Summit, we



were wondering whether a certain identity crisis that the Council of Europe may or may not be suffering from would be addressed successfully and whether it would be solved. That is actually on these kinds of issues that the strength of this institution and the strength of this institution's capacity to address two key questions in its jurisdiction lie: 1) human rights protection and addressing human rights violations and 2) can democratic standards can truly be addressed by the Council of Europe and can we make consequential decisions for the citizens of our member states. When we take into consideration that 14 countries, members of the European Union, bought the Israeli company's software whose sole, essential purpose is to target the opposition, the human rights activist, to use it politically motivated to target those that we

perceive as our enemies, then the question is can we truly tackle this issue when the target is actually ourselves? [...] In this regard, we salute this report. We salute the effort to seriously point out in a measured and responsible way, the vulnerabilities of our system. [...] We support the conclusions by the European Parliament of the European Union that this report builds upon. By this report we invite the member states to come fully clean towards the Venice Commission, report their use of the software and make sure it finds itself in the confines of the European Convention on Human Rights. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

**Preventing and combating violence against women with disabilities (Doc. 15828)**



Ms Sona GHAZARYAN (Armenia) – I would like to start on a positive note and state that with the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in many member states, we mark a real turning point in making inclusion and participation priorities. However, the voices of women with disabilities are less listened to, with a lack of participation of women with disabilities in decision-making processes both in governments and parliaments. [...] But what I would like to bring your attention to is women with disabilities during armed conflicts. Unfortunately, we need to speak about this as well, as they are at higher risk when they need access to bomb shelters or they need to leave their houses. In the twenty-first century, in the heart of Europe, Ukrainian women with disabilities had problems accessing

bomb shelters. That's a general issue actually. The same with Nagorno Karabakh last month, when women with disabilities had difficulties in leaving their houses. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Thursday 12 October 2023

**Joint debate under urgent procedure: The role of the Council of Europe in preventing conflicts, restoring credibility of international institutions and promoting global peace (Doc. 15821); Ensuring a just peace in Ukraine and lasting security in Europe (Doc. 15842)**



Ms Sabina ĆUDIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – One of its historic roles is being played out today in our attitude in finding a path to peace for Ukraine. That path to peace is also a European path to peace, because there can be no peace in Europe without peace in Ukraine. Without victory of Ukraine in this world, there can be no peace. This report stipulates and clearly outlines the road that we need to take and the responsibility we need to take in identifying the war crimes that are taking place as we speak in Ukraine that are being committed, crimes against humanity, potentially genocide, and ask of us to give unconditional support to the establishment, completely justifiably to the special international tribunal starting with the crimes of aggression, and of course, all other

established crimes. [...] On a personal note, as you said, Madam President, I come from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I come from a country whose victims did not fully find justice. However, a little justice that we did find, mostly came from the international mechanisms of justice, namely the international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia that established, for example, historically for the first time in human history that rape was used as a weapon of war, it was treated as a war crime and that we again had genocide on European soil despite our post-Second-World-War chance of never again. Therefore, let's avoid the mistakes. Let's, for the first time on European soil in this century, avoid the mistakes we made in the past.. [More](#), [voting results 1](#), [2](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

**Debate under urgent procedure: Humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh (Doc. 15840)**



Mr Iulian BULAI (Romania) – The ALDE group will support actions to deliver the following messages to the Azerbaijani government: Any hostilities including rhetoric must be stopped. Any border violation would be unacceptable for a member state of the Council of Europe. All Council of Europe missions should be on ground and receive full co-operation at all levels. The issue of mass exodus must be urgently addressed and we need a clear roadmap on how it will be dealt with. All the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians should receive full guarantees of return to Nagorno-Karabakh. If all this is not to be echoed, we are willing to use all the tools available to us in order to trigger concrete repercussions. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

**Debate under urgent procedure: Call for the immediate release of Osman Kavala (Doc. 15841)**



Mr Caspar van den BERG (Netherlands) - As every member of this Assembly knows, under the Article 46.1 of the European Convention of Human Rights, member states are bound to comply with final judgments of the Court. Period. Even though this may come as a surprise in the context of the report we are debating on today, I want to make a compliment to the Turkish State, as it has demonstrated to comply with a high percentage of Court rulings, higher than some other member states. This record shows that the Turkish States is well aware of its international obligations as a member of the Council of Europe and under the European Convention of Human Rights. Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe sees a difference in interpretation between the Turkish authorities and the Strasbourg institutions as to where we stand in

the judicial process. According to Türkiye, the domestic legal procedures are not yet exhaustively completed. The Strasbourg consensus is that the 2019 Court ruling and the outcome of the 2022 exceptional infringement procedure constitute a final judgment of the European Court that surpasses the jurisdiction of the national judicial system. The sad reality is that Mr Kavala has been unlawfully detained for six years now. The Court ruling is clear, it has been reconfirmed in 2022, and it is by its nature non-negotiable. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)



Friday 13 October 2023

**Examining the legitimacy and legality of the ad hominem term-limit waiver for the incumbent President of the Russian Federation (Doc. 15827)**

Ms Larysa BILOZIR (Ukraine (Ukraine) – Dear colleagues, first of all I want to thank the rapporteur for the really good report, though I wouldn't say it's a timely report of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as the motion was tabled months before the full scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Moreover, it refers to 2020, when Russia made changes to its constitution, allowing Putin to remain in office probably practically forever, until 2036. As a result of this decision, we had bad consequences, dramatic for the future of our nation. Unfortunately, Ukraine is fully experienced with what it means to have a neighbour country with unlawful increasing presidential time limits. The concentration of power in the hands of Putin led and turned to dictatorship.[...] It's time to finally recognise Putin and his government as illegitimate after the end

of his current presidential term, and restrict all contact with him. Not only because it will be his fifth term, not only the term-limit was waived, violating both the Russian constitutions and all international legal principles, but because this election will be carried out in Ukrainian territories, temporarily occupied Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, the Zaporizhzhia region, and the Kherson region, which Russia invaded. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

**Joint debate: Preventing addictive behaviours in children (Doc. 15830); Mental health and well-being of children and young adults (Doc. 15829)**

Ms Yuliia OVCHYNNYKOVA (Ukraine) – International and national statistics reveal a troubling increase in mental health issues among children and youth. [...] Comprehensive, accessible and free or affordable mental health services and support should be ensured across Europe. Relevant policies and changes in the healthcare and education systems should be immediately implemented. [...] The 15 concrete recommendations formulated in the Report will definitely help to improve the situation and care more effectively about the mental well-being of future generations. [...] The ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine and economic hardship have placed additional burdens on the mental health of Ukrainian children and youth, also those who became refugees

in Europe and beyond. [More](#), [voting results 1, 2](#), [video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

**The humanitarian crisis emerging for Afghanistan and Afghan refugees (Doc. 15831)**

Mr Mehmet AKALIN (Türkiye) - I would first like to start by expressing the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe's condolences for the victims of the earthquakes that hit Afghanistan this week. [...] I would like to thank the rapporteur for the extensive work undertaken in the making of this report, which brings the tremendously concerning humanitarian situation in Afghanistan to our attention. [...] The rapporteur is right to underline the dire situation of women and girls whose rights have been drastically limited by the de facto authorities. They face forced marriages, segregation, physical and sexual violence. [...] There is clearly no doubt that the situation requires urgent international attention and that no country alone can meet the current flow of refugees from Afghanistan. [...] Engagement with the de facto authorities should be on the

condition that Afghanistan will not serve as a base for terrorism and will respect human rights. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)