



The Council of Europe must do more for Ukraine



On 25 and 27 April in Strasbourg, ALDE-PACE conducted a series of hearings to prepare the general policy debate on the consequences of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and on ensuring accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and other international crimes committed by the Russian Federation.

The ALDE group exchanged views with Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe Bjorn Berge and Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatovic.

ALDE-PACE strongly encouraged the Council of Europe to actively engage in assisting Ukraine, including in gathering information about war crimes committed on its territory, and to reinforce its presence in Ukraine, including through the return of the Kiev office to Ukraine and the swift organisation of visits by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Commissioner for Human Rights.



ALDE-PACE stands with democratic forces in Russia and in Belarus



ALDE-PACE continues to support the Russian and Belarusian democratic forces who relentlessly denounce the war in Ukraine and work for the democratic transformations in their countries.

"Support for the opposition in Belarus and in Russia: here too, we must reinvent ourselves. This is probably the first time, apart from Greece [under the colonels' regime], where we should consider that supporting the populations and the civil societies is at least as important as having contacts with the authorities who have turned away from our values and became aggressors," declared Jacques Maire in the plenary debate.

At its meeting on 27 April, the group discussed new cooperation activities with Belarusian democratic leaders.

ALDE-PACE also joined forces with other political groups to demand the immediate release of the well-known Russian opposition politician and journalist Vladimir Kara-Murza, who has been arbitrarily arrested, detained and prosecuted under trumped-up charges for having denounced the shelling of Ukrainian civilians by the Russian army.

During the session, ALDE [raised the situation](#) with Luigi Di Maio, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy currently presiding the CoE Committee of Ministers, supported the [statement](#) issued by Damien Cottier, President of the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and bureau member of the ALDE group, and co-signed the inter-group [motion](#) for a resolution demanding the release of Vladimir Kara-Murza and asking PACE to closely follow this politically motivated persecution.



ELECTIONS AND
APPOINTMENTS

ALDE members leading sub-committees and networks



**Parliamentary Network
on Healthy Environment**
Chairperson: Mr Rik
DAEMS, Belgium



**EGA/ Sub-Committee
on Gender Equality**
Chairperson: Ms Maryna
BARDINA, Ukraine



**MIG/Sub-Committee on
Migrant Smuggling and
Trafficking in Human
Beings**
Chairperson Ms Diana
STOICA, Romania



**SOC/Sub-Committee on the
European Social Charter**
Chairperson: Mr Jean-Pierre GRIN,
Switzerland



**CULT/ Sub-Committee on
Education, Youth and Sport**
Vice-Chairperson: Ms Fiona
O'LOUGHLIN, Ireland

PACE representatives to external bodies

European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission)

Members:

Mr Rik Daems (Belgium, ALDE) (Appointment by the PACE President)
Ms Alexandra Louis (France, ALDE) (appointed by AS/Jur)

Council for Democratic Elections of the Venice Commission

Member:

Mr Michael Georg Link (Germany, ALDE) (appointed by AS/Pol)

European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance ECRI

Substitute:

Ms Krista BAUMANE (Latvia, ALDE) (appointed by AS/Pol)

Committee for Works of Art

Substitute:

Ms Yuliia Ovchynnykova (Ukraine, ALDE), (appointed by AS/Cult)



ALDE REPORTS



Dimitri HOUBRON (France)

- **For an assessment of the means and provisions to combat children's exposure to pornographic content**

AS/Soc ([Doc. 15494](#))

Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Reina de BRUIJN-WEZEMAN (Netherlands)

- **Deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities**

AS/Soc ([Doc. 15496](#))

Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Liliana TANGUY (France)

- **Deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities**

opinion AS/Ega ([Doc. 15509](#))

Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Claude KERN (France)

- **The honouring of obligations and commitments by Georgia**

Co-Rapporteur AS/Mon ([Doc. 15497](#))

Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



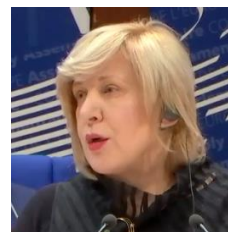
QUESTIONS

Question to Ms Dunja MIJATOVIĆ, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights ([report](#))



Ms Yevheniia KRAVCHUK (Ukraine) - Thank you, Madam Commissioner. You have rightfully

mentioned that today is the 62nd day of war and it is not just war in Ukraine,



Ms Dunja MIJATOVIĆ - Thank you very much. When it comes to terminology, and the fact that the aggression comes from the Russian Federation, I think I

was more than clear already on the first day when the war started.

That day, I think I told you also when we met, I was in Georgia, travelling to Abkhazia, in order to meet IDPs, when I heard that the Russian Federation started bombing Kyiv.

QUESTIONS

as you said numerous times, it is a war of oppression conducted by the Russian Federation. We have to name the things right. The atrocities you mentioned are being done by Russian invaders in Ukraine.

My question is: what are your concrete plans for visiting Ukraine? I would like to kindly remind you that the Presidential Committee of PACE, together with the President of PACE, were in Ukraine three weeks ago and had some high-scale meetings.

And what concrete steps can you take after this visit, besides of course, the statement?. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

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



Ms Nicole DURANTON (France) – Madam Secretary General, You have

partly answered the questions I wanted to ask you about Ukraine. One last one, however: without knowing the difficulties of the situation on the spot, we think it is essential that the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine re-open as soon as possible. We cannot wait. I am convinced that your forthcoming visit will have an important impact. Perhaps you will be able to make some announcements in this regard? I would like to take advantage of this opportunity, since I have a little time, to ask you another question on another issue. You have undoubtedly been aware of the death threats against our former Swiss colleague Mr Dick Marty, who submitted a report on organ trafficking in Kosovo. What do you intend to do to stop these threats and to ensure that the governments concerned face up to their responsibilities before this Assembly?

Thank you very much.

Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

from that very moment, my own opinion and my position stayed the same.

Of course, the situation changed tremendously when we saw what happened in Bucha, Borodyanka, and then in all other places.

When it comes to my visit, I'll be very honest with you. I've been trying to visit Ukraine for the past three weeks. I'm in touch with Ukrainian authorities on the highest level, also from here, from the delegation. I wanted to go to Lviv, I wanted to go to Kyiv. It is still not possible. But it's not something that I control. I think you should talk to your delegation.

Anyway, as I said, I'm ready. I requested it. What I'm going to do there also depends on the situation at that moment. Also, in relation to my talks with Ukrainian authorities in Kyiv. Of course, I would like to go to Bucha, Borodyanka, and to meet human rights defenders, which I think is extremely important. Hopefully, this will happen very soon. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Ms Marija PEJČINOVIĆ-BURIĆ - Regarding the Kiev Office, you are right. What I did not say in my answer to the question "What are we doing with Ukraine?" is that all those who had the right and wanted to leave Ukraine – well, 61 of the

people who work in the Kiev Office – we helped them to go either to Hungary or elsewhere. We provided several measures to help them, including psychological support measures, and for all those whose contracts were short or were due to expire very soon, we immediately put in place the measure to extend them until the end of the year. So people are safe.

It is true that, for the moment, the Kiev Office is not in operation, but once we have the green light from the Ukrainian side, we will certainly be able to think about when and how we will return to Kiev. Of course, security and safety measures have to be taken into account, but it would be time to think about when the work will be agreed with our Ukrainian colleagues, about what we will do. It is already in my mind but it is not possible to say more at the moment. I'm thinking about it because when we have the action plan for immediate assistance, we will need these people; for now, they may be able to telework but we all hope that they can go to their country. Most of them are Ukrainian citizens.

It is true that it is unthinkable that a person who is a member of parliament, who is elected, should be threatened because he has done his work here in the Council of Europe. It is unthinkable, I believe, in the democratic world, to make such threats. For my part, I can only condemn the threats made against her. As for what can be done, I am sure that the relevant authorities in Switzerland will do their best to see who is behind this and how to move forward. In the Council of Europe, we do not have the possibility to carry out such investigations, but I can assure you that I condemn very strongly the fact that someone who has worked for the Council of Europe is

threatened and, if I remember correctly, Mr Dick Marty had worked very well and had made several reports here, not only the one for which he is attacked. I believe that for the safety and security of all of you, of all of us, we have to address immediately the fact that someone – whether he or she was a member of parliament or is now retired – is attacked on the basis of the work that was done here. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Question to Mr Sergio MATTARELLA, President of the Italian Republic



Mr Damien COTTIER (Switzerland) – We believe that the dialogue between this Assembly and the Committee of Ministers, and the

country holding the Presidency, is extremely important.

My question is similar to those raised by Mr Davor Ivo STIER and by Mr Frank SCHWABE. Basically, we are at a turning point in the history of Europe, a turning point perhaps as important as that of 1989, with the aggression of Russia against Ukraine. We must rethink the Council of Europe.

I am glad to hear you say that you support the idea of a summit, a fourth summit that this Assembly is calling for. I would be interested in knowing, in this context, how Italy will concretely engage in the Committee of Ministers, in Turin, for the organisation of this summit. What ideas will it bring to revitalise the Council of Europe, so as to better defend the values it stands for? Thank you, Mister President.

Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Mr Sergio MATTARELLA – You see, what has happened does not weaken, but strengthens the commitment to the mission of the Council of Europe, that of building a

pan-European space based on shared principles and values, which have as their criterion respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

On the contrary, the desire, the ambition, to create a common European home does not diminish – especially since this is under attack by what has happened, by what is happening, by the Russian Federation in Ukraine – the importance of the role played by the Council of Europe, which must be reaffirmed.

And this is the objective that the peoples of Europe certainly hold dear, and that guarantees their future.

For this reason, as I was saying, any initiative, we need to define together. And it could be, I repeat, interesting, a good opportunity, to hold a Summit of Heads of State and Government to define a framework for updating commitments and activities, to make European life more inclusive, more shared, safer and calmer. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Question to Mr Luigi DI MAIO, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe



Mr Claude KERN (France) – Dear Minister, Vladimir Kara-Murza, one of Russia's leading independent civil society figures, who

has already been convicted of insubordination of law enforcement agencies, has been remanded in custody on the basis of a new provision, which makes the dissemination of "false information about the use of Russian armed forces" punishable by 10 years in prison. Sentenced for telling the truth about Russia's aggression in Ukraine.



Mr Luigi DI MAIO - On this issue I want to say that, first of all, we have seen that, with respect to the situation of freedom of expression in Russia, immediately after the unjustified attack on

Ukraine, the situation has even gotten worse. We've seen arrests of thousands of people just for the sole reason of participating in protests against Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine. On this I think it's very important to keep a close eye.

On the legal side, I can say that the resolution adopted by the European Court of Human Rights, on 22 March, according to this resolution, the Strasbourg Court remains competent to deal with claims against the Russian Federation in relation to acts or omissions capable of constituting a violation of the Convention, provided that they occurred before 16 September 2022. The matter could, therefore, be the subject of an

What do you intend to do, at the level of the Committee of Ministers, to prevent Vladimir Kara-Murza from being sentenced in a way that is clearly contrary to the values of the European Convention on Human Rights?

Since we have been discussing this week the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union, would you agree, on behalf of the Committee of Ministers, to ask for the placement under European sanctions of the judges who contribute to this politically-motivated prosecution? I am thinking of Diana Mishchenko, Ilya Kozlov and Elena Lenskaya.

Rest assured that we will then intervene with the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union to support your request.

Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

application to the Court.

On an institutional level, I would like to remind you that the Council of Europe is not precisely competent to decide on sanctioning measures. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the position that I have repeatedly expressed: that Italy does not veto the sanctioning proposals of the European Commission, and certainly co-ordination with the French Presidency is at its highest. We continue to exercise it with the aim of increasing as much as possible the pressure on Russia with respect to this attack.

On a political level, the question raises the issue of respect for human rights in a Russian Federation that is no longer part of the Council of Europe. This issue is a matter of reflection and concern for all of us, and we must ask ourselves what we can do to support human rights defenders in this new context.

I think that this issue will have to remain on our common agenda for the future, but in the immediate future the meeting in Turin must begin to address this issue that you have raised, in close connection with all the other European institutions, starting with the European Union.

Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



GROUP
SPEAKERS

DEBATES

RESULTS

Monday 25 April 2022

Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee



Ms Lesia VASYLENKO (Ukraine) - The last three months have marked a renaissance of thought of the Council of Europe and this Assembly. After Russia escalated its military aggression against Ukraine two months ago, we have seen immense solidarity among all member States and among all of us colleagues: solidarity against aggression, against war crimes, inhumanity, terrorist states, and indeed genocide. [...] As we are fixing the mistakes of the past and look to the future during this session, we have two very important reports to consider. One on the role of the Council of Europe with regards to the consequences of Russian aggression, and another on the accountability of international crimes and breaches of international humanitarian law. [More, video EN](#) | [OV](#)

For an assessment of the means and provisions to combat children's exposure to pornographic content ([Doc. 15494](#))



Ms Fiona O'LOUGHLIN (Ireland) – It is a reality that pornography is now the most prominent sexuality educator for many young people, and that's quite shocking to hear. Most young people discover porn well before they encounter sex. Perhaps even before they have had a kiss. We know from research that has been done that 50% of boys have seen porn before the age of 13 and 50% of girls have seen porn before the age of 15. So, I'm going to make just a few statements that are short simple statements but that really give us the nob of the issue: - Porn can shape sexual tastes and expectations; - Porn bodies are not normal bodies; - Porn sex is not safe sex; - Porn is a performance and it misrepresents pleasure. [More, voting results, video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Tuesday 26 April 2022

Beyond the Lisbon Treaty: strengthening the strategic partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union ([Doc. 15495](#))

Mr Dara CALLEARY (Ireland) - It is interesting, Mister President, to notice that this report was commissioned on 12 April 2019. In the words of W. B. Yeats, "all has changed, and changed utterly". I think the change requires reflection on our part as an institution of the Council of Europe that predates the European Union, as an institution based on human rights, based on democracy, based on the rule of law, on those three key pillars. We need to reflect on our role, on how we become more strategically impatient as opposed to strategically patient in the exercising of that role, and in the exercising of our relationship with the European Union. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities ([Doc. 15496](#))

Ms Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO (Monaco) - At the expense of their most basic rights, they are mostly placed in institutions when they could very well flourish outside them. Moreover, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities indicates that the concept of disability is evolving [...] I personally agree with all your arguments about the advantages that would result from deinstitutionalisation, both for the state, for the people concerned, and for our societal models. In short, a new health policy that would rely on an increase in human and financial resources for care in the city. Financially, as you have pointed out, in the long term, external care by local services should not be more expensive than institutional services. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Tackling discrimination based on social origin ([Doc. 15499](#))

Ms Petra STIENEN (Netherlands) – When we are born, we all seem to be equal. We were all once crying babies longing to be comforted by our parents. In theory, I think we would all agree that we all should be equal before the law as well. In reality, some babies are winners of the birth lottery and some will never win that lottery because the winners of that lottery are born in an environment of privilege, where there is healthy food, access to good education and proper housing, and also most importantly a safe environment free of any forms of violence. [...] Where we are born is totally random and not a fact of life we have been able to influence. Yet, it is a fact that will influence the rest of our lives. Even if we are capable of climbing that social ladder, many of us

in this room can relate to this observation. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Free debate

Mr Damien COTTIER (Switzerland) – On behalf of Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), I would like to express our dismay at the life sentence handed down to Mr Kavala by a Turkish court. The European Court of Human Rights issued a final judgment in 2019 demanding "his immediate release". [...] Secondly, I would like to draw the attention of this Assembly to the threats against our former colleague, Mr Dick MARTY, who was chairman of two committees and rapporteur on several dossiers that have greatly contributed to the reputation of our Council. [...] However, as we have learned from the media, our former colleague has been living for the past 16 months under enhanced police protection because the Swiss authorities have received serious information that there is a threat to Mr Marty's life, in fact, that a contract has been drawn up to have him assassinated. [...] Such threats against a rapporteur of the Assembly are unacceptable. [More](#), [video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Wednesday 27 April 2022

General policy debate : Consequences of the Russian Federation's continued aggression against Ukraine: role and response of the Council of Europe ([Doc. 15506](#))



Mr Jacques MAIRE (France) - We have done things; we have not been inactive. We have indeed suspended and then excluded Russia. We have gone there [to Ukraine] but we are still, in spite of the enrichment of the report, in a reality, in Strasbourg, which is still much too bureaucratic. I say this frankly. The member States and the European Union have reinvented themselves in the last two months. They have pushed their limits, they have revisited their mandates, and they have done things that they did not do before, including for example in terms of military support, which is not our subject. Ukraine is a member of our Organisation. We can see that, sixty-two days after the beginning of the conflict, the presence of the Council of Europe in Ukraine is not up to the mark, neither from the point of view of the Bureau, nor from the point of view of the political leaders. [...] Let's reinvent ourselves. This drama must serve a purpose. This drama must allow us to be more relevant and to be more present in this political environment. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Fighting and preventing excessive and unjustified use of force by law enforcement officers ([Doc. 15498](#))



Ms Ingvild Wethrus THORSVIK (Norway) - It's been almost two years since George Floyd was killed by police in the US. It sparked an international anti-racist protest, lead by people fighting for fundamental justice and against racism and discrimination. The police depend on the trust of citizens to do their job, which is securing a safe society. Citizens must be able to be completely confident that the rule of law and their human rights are safeguarded if police, as a representative of the state, exercises power against them. Examples of excessive force can lead to tensions and distrust in society and injustice against individuals. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Thursday 28 April 2022

Debate under urgent procedure: The Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine: ensuring accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and other international crimes ([Doc. 15510](#))



Ms Yevheniia KRAVCHUK (Ukraine) - I want to tell you a story of Mykola Mykytchyk from the village of Katyuzhanka, Kyiv region. As well as millions of Ukrainians, he can't come here and tell his story, but I can do it. He is a school principal, Mykola Mykytchyk. Here is what he told: we had 40 new laptops and 50 computers in our schools, Russian soldiers stole everything. They made a toilet for themselves in the classrooms. The houses in which they lived were completely robbed. They organised a torture chamber in the school basement and held prisoners from various towns and villages of the Kyiv region. They mutilated people and filmed it. More than 10 corpses were found in the school basement. [...] I want to congratulate this Assembly because we are the first international

organisation to put this recommendation, to establish an ad hoc international criminal tribunal to investigate and prosecute the crime of aggression committed by the political and military leadership of the Russian Federation. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Safeguarding and promoting genuine democracy in Europe ([Doc. 15486](#))

Ms Nicole TRISSE (France) - It is regrettable, but there are countless alarming reports pointing out the decline of democracy in countries where it had previously flourished. The tangible manifestations of this trend are unfortunately perceptible everywhere: a drop in voter turnout, mistrust of politicians and elected officials, increased resonance of populist or hateful discourse, and the contestation of established facts or truths. And the coronavirus pandemic, since 2020, has only accentuated this phenomenon. In France, during the presidential election, the result revealed the extent of these populist movements through the emergence of nationalist and anti-European parties. [...] Obviously,

ALDE supports the resolution and recommendation of this report, and in particular the establishment of the permanent platform for democracy and the early warning mechanism to avoid any authoritarian drift. [...] To conclude, dear friends, I would like to share with you a quote from a French journalist, Françoise Giroud: "This is how fascism begins. It never says its name, it crawls, it floats, when it shows its nose, we say: Is it him? You think so? You mustn't exaggerate! And then one day it gets in your face and it is too late to expel it." [More](#), [voting results](#), [video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

The honouring of obligations and commitments by Georgia ([Doc. 15497](#))

Mr Iulian BULAI (Romania) - What the report calls a zero-sum political strategy in Georgia, is the aspect that has troubled me the most. This kind of political environment in which elections are referenda on the ruling parties, not competitions between alternative visions of national development, can only hamper the consolidation of democracy, crucial reforms and honouring Georgia's membership obligations and accession commitments. [...] In this new context [of war], the situation of the occupied territories of Georgia became even more serious for the whole continent and the most robust way for Georgia to protect itself is to leave aside petty politicisation and strengthen its democratic processes and frameworks. I too welcome that a fully professional

election system will be introduced as far from the 2024 parliamentary elections. But 2024 is still a long time from now and the legal system does not guarantee a functional system by itself. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)