





## Iulian Bulai - new leader of the ALDE group in PACE

On Monday 20 June 2022, ALDE-PACE unanimously entrusted Iulian Bulai (USR, Romania) with the task of leading the group. Mr Bulai took the office on 24 June.

“In the past weeks I had many valuable discussions with members of the ALDE group. I thank you all for your openness and your ambition to work together to have the ALDE group as the most relevant and the most innovative PACE group fighting for democracy, rule of law and human rights,” said Mr Bulai in his inaugural speech.

“As we in ALDE-PACE come from all the corners of Europe, we should be proud of our European liberal heritage from both North and South, East and West, from Ukraine to Ireland from the Baltic Sea to the Caucasus, from Norway and Denmark to Spain. In defending human rights there should be solidarity with those abused regardless of geography or the economic development of a region”.

In his speech, the new ALDE-PACE President specifically addressed the on-going war in Ukraine:

“Dear Ukrainian friends, your commitment to the liberal values should be mirrored by the commitments of this ALDE-PACE group towards the Ukrainian cause: oriented towards European values, towards the right of self-determination, towards the right of every individual to live in peace in their own country. Dear friends, we will be by your side. There are no mitigating circumstances for the aggressor. Defending the victims is the deep belief of this group. We should do that with a strong voice and non-ambiguous decisions.”



## ALDE-PACE thanked Jacques Marie for his leadership

Following Jacques Maire’s decision not to run for re-election to parliament in France, his mandate as ALDE-PACE leader came to an end. ALDE members wholeheartedly thanked Jacques Maire for his leadership since January 2020. Inclusiveness, integrity, respect for every opinion and colleague, this is what characterised Jacques’s presidency of ALDE-PACE.

« Cher Jacques, tu as déjà fait de l’ALDE et de l’APCE une place plus riche par ta présence et tes contributions politiques et humaines. Jacques Maire’s legacy to the ALDE group is great and diverse: transparent decision-making process within the group, collaborative leadership, ethics of defending the common good before the national or own party interests, encouraging women’s participation. I sincerely want to thank Jacques for his contribution and legacy, and I would like us to continue in the same spirit: transparent, inclusive and bold, » said new ALDE-PACE President Iulian Bulai.

The PACE President also paid tribute to Jacques Maire:

« Your diplomatic solutions helped our Assembly a lot to take the right decisions. You were there in crucial moments, you were there representing your group, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, in an excellent way. I thank you for being a good friend, a good colleague in the Presidential Committee, an excellent rapporteur, and an excellent leader of the ALDE group,» declared PACE President Tiny Kox following the adoption of the last report prepared by Jacques Maire.





## Political prisoners in Russia and in Belarus: the task to remember



ALDE continued to raise concern over the growing number and the systematic character of persecutions in Russia targeting citizens who protest against the war. Since 24 February 2022, over 16,000 people have been detained across the country for speaking out against the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine. As many as 58 criminal cases, including against prominent Russian opposition figure and long-standing partner of PACE Vladimir Kara-Murza, and 2,393 administrative cases have already been initiated.

On 21 June, ALDE hosted a side event featuring Yevgenia Kara-Murza, wife of Vladimir Kara-Murza, and Sergei Davidis, Memorial Human Rights Centre. Damien Cottier (Switzerland, ALDE), chairman of the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, and Sunna Ævarsdóttir (Iceland, SOC), rapporteur on political prisoners in Russia, contributed to the discussion chaired by Jacques Maire.

ALDE-PACE continuously demands to stop the war of aggression, to put an end to politically motivated persecutions and reminds about the “task to remember” the victims of political repression who lost their lives or find themselves in jail. Our call to remember was destined not only to the members of the Assembly, but also to the Council of Europe’s decision-makers and permanent representations of member states in Strasbourg, as well as to the international human rights NGOs who attended the hearing and the bilateral meetings co-organised by the ALDE group on this occasion. Following the side event, Jacques Maire tabled a motion for a resolution on “Systematic large-scale persecution against anti-war protesters in the Russian Federation”.

On 21-22 June, ALDE organised a series of meetings with Tatsiana Khomich, sister of Belarus’s Maria Kalesnikava who was sentenced to 11 years in prison for having said ‘no’ to a new mandate of Lukashenko and for having campaigned in the 2020 presidential elections in Belarus for an alternative candidate. In 2021, Maria Kalesnikava was awarded the PACE Vaclav Havel Prize and remains one of the symbols of the struggle of the people of Belarus for civil and political liberties and fundamental rights. Today Tatsiana Khomich leads a campaign to ensure the Belarusian prisoners of conscience are not forgotten.



Finally, on 21 June, Jacques Maire and Iulian Bulai met with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, leader of the democratic forces of Belarus. Ms Tikhanouskaya’s husband also remains in the Belarusian prison for having opposed the autocratic rule of Alexander Lukashenko in 2020.

In the end truth always finds a way, and that is why the European Court of Human Rights must continue examining the cases against the Russian Federation. That is also why the Council of Europe and its Assembly must promote political and institutional cooperation with the democratic anti-war civil society and opposition forces in Belarus and in Russia.





ALDE REPORTS



### Yevheniia KRAVCHUK (Ukraine)

- **Justice and security for women in peace reconciliation**

AS/Ega ([Doc. 15525](#))

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



### Jacques MAIRE (France)

- **Review of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic**

AS/Pol ([Doc. 15526](#))

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



QUESTIONS

### Question to Mr Simon COVENEY, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence of Ireland, Irish Presidency of the CM of the CoE



Ms Yuliia OVCHYNNYKOVA (Ukraine) - Concerning the political prisons in the Russian Federation, my question is about

possible steps for free people who spread the truth about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, like Vladimir Kara-Murza. Do you believe that the global community can do anything for Vladimir?

And the next part is Ukrainian kidnappings: Ukrainian kids are kept as political prisoners like Vlad Buriak, the son of the head of the Zaporizhzhia District Administration, Oleh Buriak. What should the Council of Europe do now to free Vlad? Video

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



Mr Simon COVENEY - First of all, Yuliia, thank you for taking the time to be with us today. I am sure you have a lot on your mind as indeed do all of your political colleagues in Ukraine right now.

Let me try and answer your question, first of all, on the kidnapping of children and on the deportation of populations from parts of eastern Ukraine into Russia. I think that is really concerning. It seems to me that it is history repeating itself. You go to a country like Estonia, and they will tell you their own experience of losing almost 20% of their population after the Second World War, who were forcibly removed and some disappeared. We are seeing a similar approach now. It is very hard to put our finger on the actual numbers involved, but whatever the number is, it is far too many. I think one of the things that the Council of Europe can do is raise the profile and the illegality of forcibly moving people on the justification that Russia seems to be putting out there.

I think more generally we have not been good enough during this war at responding to disinformation. We had a debate on this in the EU amongst foreign ministers this week. Whether it is across the continent of Africa, whether it is across Latin America, the blame for food shortages and increased food prices is often being targeted at sanctions. The EU and others were imposing sanctions as opposed to targeting Russia for continuing an illegal conflict.

I think we need to become more vocal and more organised in terms of responding to disinformation more generally. In terms of those who have been in put in jail for speaking out, I think the best thing we can do for them is keep talking about them so that they know they are not forgotten and that we

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

Mr Iulian BULAI (Romania) – Dear Secretary General, Congratulations on planning this summit for the future of Council of Europe.



Times of crisis means times of opportunities. We all support this initiative and understand the interest of a high-reflection working group.

We regret, though, the absence of representatives from Eastern European countries, the Balkans, the Baltics, the Caucasus, and, very importantly, Muslim countries.

We need to have a clear agreement about the way we work for the first part of the preparation. Classical dialogues are not sufficient. Starting now we will organise ourselves within PACE to come up with concrete proposals. We have to agree, consequently, on the way to work directly with you, with the committee of ministers, and with a high-reflection group till October. Thank you very much.

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

continue to highlight these issues in a way that makes Russia feel uncomfortable, if that is possible, on all of the multilateral organisations that they continue to sit on. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Ms Marija PEJČINOVIĆ-BURIĆ - I was very vocal at all stances that I think it is very important to have the fourth summit and in that respect, I think, we agree. It is also very important to prepare it well. It is also very important to seize the moment because now we live in a particular time for

Europe, in a time of crisis, a time of war, a time where many of our values are questioned. [...] However, when we come to the reflection group, there was always one way to prepare for reflection inside the Council of Europe by a person or persons, coming, [...] as an outsider; so an outside or external look to what is needed to be done. So there was a past when there was only one person working on that. When the Committee of Ministers came with this proposal, and actually, if you read decisions from Turin, it is very clear they tasked me to set up the group and to inform the Committee of Ministers accordingly. So I did exactly as it was written and it was asked by the Committee of Ministers.

I told you [in Dublin] what the criteria were and how I intend to proceed and on Monday at the Bureau here, I informed you of the group that consists of seven people who are coming from the ranks of presidents, former presidents, former prime ministers, former deputy prime ministers, ministers of foreign affairs. The highly qualified group; because for me, the message was clear: they are not government representatives, they are not representatives only of their own quality as people, who in the past served or took and had very important offices and who had a lot of experience in human rights, but also in multilateral work. So I believe that this group of seven people [...] is well balanced and can produce a good result. [...] So there is a short period of time ahead of me which is why I needed to act very quickly. If the group is to produce a meaningful result, and I can assure you that at whatever stage there would be, my feeling is that is important to convey the message or to come into the discussion with you, I will do so, as I have always done. But the task of forming the group and responsibilities for forming the group and for helping them and assisting the way how they will work has been tasked to me, so that task is for the Secretary General. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

**Question to Ms Katerina SAKELLAROPOULOU, President of the Hellenic Republic**

Mr Iulian BULAI (Romania) – Madam President, Tomorrow an EU-Western Balkans top meeting is scheduled for discussing the future relationship. The Greek Prime Minister Mr Kyriakos Mitsotakis has recently advanced 2033 as a possible date for the EU integration for the Western Balkans.

How does Greece intend to help devise a roadmap for the acceleration of the integration calendar?



Ms Katerina SAKELLAROPOULOU – Greece wholeheartedly supports the European integration of the Western Balkans. At the 2003 Thessaloniki Summit, a clear message was delivered by Greece on this particular front. Since that time, Greece has

worked very very closely with the European Union in a constructive fashion in order to integrate the Western Balkans. It is a very complex situation. We know that it requires numerous different stages of adjustment, a whole series of decisions [...] The incorporation of the Western Balkans also involves a transition of societies. The countries which are up now for candidacy, according to the decisions of the European Union, must make decisions on democratisation, on rule of law issues, and meeting of the Copenhagen criteria, whichever those may be.

What kind of support are you ready to give to Greece's neighbours in the new regional context in order to counteract Russian and other non-EU influences? Thank you. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

It is a very complex and long procedure. There is no doubt that in the end, the incorporation of the Western Balkans into the European Union will be to the benefit of all. We once again wholeheartedly support this effort. It is important for our region; it is important for the entire European Union. I do hope, indeed, that things will move a little bit faster in the future. Changes have already been incorporated to speed up the procedure. Greece is providing considerable know-how with the various countries of the Western Balkans to facilitate that in this process, we are doing whatever we can. We hope that this procedure will end in a positive, fructiferous fashion. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



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Monday 20 June 2022

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



Mr Jacques MAIRE (France) - The context is totally marked by the appalling Russian aggression in Ukraine. There are many sources of concern, but there is also hope. This is what was decided a few days ago by the European Commission when it proposed the status of candidate for Ukraine, for Georgia tomorrow, and for the Republic of Moldova. [...] I believe that just because Russia is no longer a member of this Assembly does not mean that we should not talk about the situation in Russia. The legislation adopted by President Putin recently is having a dramatic effect, including when it comes to charging people with criticism of the Russian armed forces. Let's not forget them. I am very happy to have with us today the wife of Vladimir Kara-Murza. [...] One of the challenges that we will have to deal with in the coming months, concerning our summit, is how we can help the victim states, but also how we can remain relevant for the people whose states no longer play according to CoE rules but whose many political, associative, or institutional actors do wish to use the Council of Europe as an instrument for the defence of their rights. [More](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

**The role of political parties in fostering diversity and inclusion: a new Charter for a non-racist society ([Doc. 15535](#))**



Ms Fiona O'LOUGHLIN (Ireland) – I believe that political parties are best placed to contribute to the fight against racism and intolerance and to foster an inclusive society. [...] Unfortunately, migrants often find themselves marginalised from public discourse on issues of integration and diversity, and there's some barriers indeed to migrants getting involved in politics and contributing to policy. Within ALDE, many of our parties have developed migrant networks to help address this issue and to encourage those from a migrant background to use their voice to get involved and to help formulate policy. And I suggest that those parties here who have not developed these networks do so. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Tuesday 21 June 2022

**Recent challenges to security in Europe: what role for the Council of Europe? ([Doc. 15541](#))**



Mr Jacques MAIRE (France) - I think that if we do not draw the conclusions, of the consequences of this crisis on our organisation, we are not up to the task. Now, the Committee of Ministers is offering us a challenge, an important challenge: it is a Summit of Heads of State and Government. This Summit is really an opportunity for us to draw the consequences of the various crises that we see here at the Council of Europe. First, obviously, a geopolitical crisis [...], but also a crisis of efficiency [...] and thirdly, a crisis of attractiveness [...] There is a proposal that has been much talked about recently: the proposal of a European political community. [...] Can the Council of Europe respond to this demand for a European political community? I have only one

wish, it is that the whole organisation, our Assembly, be mobilised in the days, weeks and months to come in order to contribute rapidly to the process and to the substance of what should be the level of ambition of this Summit of Heads of State and Government. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)



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## Upholding democratic security in Europe - High Level Panel and interactive debate



Mr Iulian BULAI (Romania) - Dear Ms Tsikhanouskaya, your presence here is an explicit sign of support of this Assembly to the democratic efforts of the Belarusian civil society. Two years ago, Belarusian people massively protested against injustice and dictatorship. Today, many are in prison. We are proud to count you, Ms Tsikhanouskaya, among the European democratic community, the place of strong civil society fighting dictatorship and defending democratic values belongs to this Assembly. We now live in a new political context. Totalitarian regimes are back to Europe, and they threaten our security. [...] If we want to be relevant in this new context, we should think of new institutional ways to include into the work of our organisation the democratic forces of Belarus. [More, video EN](#) | [OV](#)

## Joint debate: The continuing need to restore human rights and the rule of law in the North Caucasus region ([Doc. 15544](#)); Reported cases of political prisoners in the Russian Federation ([Doc. 15545](#))



Mr Jacques MAIRE (France) – Our role is to defend those who need it most, those fighters who are there to embody our values. And the worst thing that can happen to these prisoners of conscience is that they are forgotten. These political prisoners are also a temperature gauge for the state of societies. A democratic Russia would probably not have let Putin massacre foreign populations and sacrifice his country. So we must continue to mobilise, to make sure that the ECHR can judge the pending cases concerning Russia, but also the complaints that are accumulating day after day. And even if the Russians do not cooperate in the implementation of the judgments, these judgments are owed to these victims so that their status is recognised. [More, voting results](#)

1, 2, video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

## Wednesday 22 June 2022

### Preventing and combating antisemitism in Europe ([Doc. 15539](#))



Mr Claude KERN (France) - I would like to express my deep concern and sadness at the increase in the number of acts perpetrated and hate speech directed against Jewish populations in recent months. [...] The rise of hatred and violence leads, in fact, many families of the Jewish faith to change neighbourhood, city, or even purely and simply to leave Europe or to consider doing so. We cannot leave these facts unanswered. We cannot accept the expression of this hatred and violence on a European continent marked by a tragic history, of which Strasbourg is a symbol. I believe it is essential that the Council of Europe, which is doing

remarkable work, continue to mobilise fully to fight against all forms of antisemitism. [...] [More, voting results, video EN](#) | [OV](#)

## Joint debate: Humanitarian consequences and internal and external migration in connection with the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine ([Doc. 15547](#), [Doc. 15547 Add.](#)); Protection and alternative care for unaccompanied and separated migrant and refugee children ([Doc. 15548](#)); Justice and security for women in peace reconciliation ([Doc. 15525](#))



Ms Petra STIENEN (Netherlands) - All three rapporteurs are asking very urgent questions. How do we deal with the present war situation on our continent? What is needed to deal with the short and long-term humanitarian consequences of internal and external migration in connection with the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine? How can we protect separate migrant and refugee children in the short and long-term? And how can we obtain justice and security for women in peace reconciliation? [...] What strikes us as the ALDE group is that every report has clear conclusions on what needs to be done. And they [provide] important insights for us to take into account when dealing with the crisis we are in. [More, voting results 1, 2, 3, video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Thursday 23 June 2022

**The honouring of membership obligations to the Council of Europe by Malta** ([Doc. 15546](#))

Ms Petra STIENEN (Netherlands) - We should all work together and at home to gather the European solidarity that Malta needs in order to deal with the arrival of north African migrants and refugees. It is high time to find a framework of support that works for all European frontline states with European support. [...] I have to notice that Malta proves again that having rights on paper does not always translate for women as well as for LGBTI people and other minorities into the actual exercise of these rights. [...] In the ALDE group, we are deeply concerned that being a journalist keeps being a very dangerous profession in Malta, even after the government was forced to act in the light of the Daphne Caruana Galizia assassination. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

**Ensuring accountability for the downing of flight MH17** ([Doc. 15543](#))

Mr Caspar Van den BERG (Netherlands) - I'm humbled to express my utmost respect to the relatives of victims who are present here this morning, on behalf of the entire ALDE group. [...] As the ALDE family we feel this loss also in a direct sense, given that one of the victims of this atrocity, Pim de Kuijter, was a member of our family. Despite his young age, he was a person who commanded respect from everyone for his incredible societal drive and sense of justice. [...] The excellent report demonstrates once more how the Russian authorities failed to cooperate in good faith with the air safety investigation by the Dutch Safety Board and the criminal investigation by the joint investigation team. We are appalled by the way in which

the Russian authorities have been frustrating the path to establishing truth, and achieving accountability and justice. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#)

**Current affairs debate: United Kingdom agreement on asylum seekers and the critical government reaction regarding the European Court of Human Rights decision**

Ms Fiona O'LOUGHLIN (Ireland) - The fact that the UK government is talking openly about breaching international law is a matter of huge concern. It is deeply disappointing that yesterday the UK has put forward a bill to replace the Human Rights Act and will, if enacted, breach international law as well as severely damaging international relationships and trust. [...] Today, as war rages in Ukraine, key principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and above all, the effective functioning of the ECtHR, the conscience of Europe and execution of its judgments. A ruling ignored is a human right infringed and if we are selective in applying the rule of law, before long lawlessness will be the rule. [More](#), [video EN](#)

**Current affairs debate: Consequences of the blockade of the Black Sea**

Mr Damien COTTIER (Switzerland) - The situation in which we find ourselves, on the one hand, is related to the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the blockades that result from it, but also to the bad harvests on the side of China, and an incredible heat wave on the side of India and other such local events related to climate change, which make the situation very dangerous in terms of access to global food resources. [...] We need a strong political will to resolve this crisis because we must not add a huge famine crisis at the international level to the various crises that our planet is already experiencing, and each and every one of us would do well to

intervene in this sense, not only in this Assembly, but also with the governments of our various countries. [More](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)



## Review of the partnership for democracy in respect of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic ([Doc. 15526](#))



Mr Rafael HUSEYNOV (Azerbaijan) - Just as close co-operation with us is beneficial for the Kyrgyz Republic, which received the status of a partner for democracy with the Parliamentary Assembly eight years ago, it is equally important for us to have systematic relations with this country, one of the newly independent states in Central Asia. Because we are talking about establishing a network of values of human rights, democracy, the rule of law in a wider area of contact. [...] We have been closely following the changes that have happened in the Kyrgyz Republic in recent years, and we have witnessed the political concerns also that have occurred since the 2020 elections. Of course, all this could not but have a negative impact on the normal

development of relations. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#)

## The control of online communication: a threat to media pluralism, freedom of information and human dignity ([Doc. 15537](#))



Mr Zeki Hakan SIDALI (Türkiye) - The intermediary companies gained enormous power and created trade barriers as never before. Their priorities and benefits do not match with the platform's users; there are after foreseeable users whom they can manipulate according to their preferences. Due to AI programs they claim to know us better than ourselves. [...] We need a more transparent control mechanism, and preferably by third-party fact-checking networks which should ensure us our right to choose our own information. Another issue is control-freak governments; they should never become a virtual Big Brother. As the number of illiberal democracies increases, the number of governments using regulations

as a stick also rise. [...] We need more information, more transparency and more inclusivity by everybody. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#)

### Friday 24 June 2022

## Fighting vaccine-preventable diseases through quality services and anti-vaccine myth-busting ([Doc. 15542](#))



Mr Jean-Pierre GRIN (Switzerland) - Vaccination must be promoted as an international public good and know-how must be shared. This is the opinion of the ALDE group, which emphasises individual responsibility, respect for institutions and equality of all towards health. [...] During the Covid-19 pandemic, without the rapid discovery of vaccines of various kinds, one cannot imagine what the consequences would have been on human populations. But the public debate on vaccines became highly polarised and politicised during the pandemic. While vaccination should not be made mandatory, in our group's view is that it should be strongly recommended and encouraged. To ensure the highest possible

vaccination rates, all member States should, first and foremost, conduct awareness and information campaigns while improving the quality of health services, in order to create an environment conducive to vaccination, which should be free of charge to allow everyone access. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)