

PACE Session  
27 – 30  
September  
2021 & more

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## September 2021 part-session highlights:

- [Highlights of the session](#) presented by ALDE-PACE President Jacques Maire.
- Under the liberal leadership of the Parliamentary Assembly, MPs clearly stated that the **right to live in a healthy, clean and safe environment should be part of the universal corpus of fundamental human rights**. PACE unanimously adopted a recommendation to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to prepare additional protocols to the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter. ALDE-PACE continues liberal mobilisation in support of the paradigm shift from 'environment as a policy' to 'environment as a human right' through a joint working group with [Liberal International](#) and PACE President's Rik Daems's initiative [#EnvironmentRightNow](#).
- ALDE-PACE exchanged views on the recent elections and the post-electoral situation in the **Russian Federation**, with the participation of Russian partners. ALDE-PACE will insist on the declassification of the report that will be prepared by the PACE election assessment mission who travelled to Moscow on 18 and 19 September 2021.
- Belarus remains a tremendous concern. **ALDE-PACE compiled a list of Belarusian partners of the Council of Europe who are facing repressions for their professional activities and civic engagement**. Jacques Maire officially transmitted the list to the CoE Secretary General and PACE Rapporteurs on Belarus and called on the organisation to step up efforts in assisting those under threat. We recall that Belarus has the grim record of detaining over 700 political prisoners. One of them, Maria Kalesnikava, sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment for organising the election campaign of an opposition presidential candidate, became the 2021 PACE Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize. ALDE-PACE met with Tatiana Khomich, sister of Maria Kalesnikava.
- Ahead of the current affairs debate on the situation in the **Western Balkans**, ALDE-PACE exchanged views with **Roman Jakic**, President of LIBSEEN, former Minister of Defence of Slovenia. Later ALDE Group President Jacques Maire discussed European perspectives for the region with North Macedonia's Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs **Nikola Dimitrov** at a bilateral meeting.
- Congratulations to **new rapporteurs: Maryna Bardina** (Ukraine) AS/EGA: "Promoting inclusive participation in parliamentary and political life"; **Petri Honkonen** (Finland) AS/MON co-rapporteur on "The honouring of membership obligations to the Council of Europe by Romania"; **Yuliia Ovchynnykova** (Ukraine) AS/SOC: "Towards Council of Europe seas and oceans strategies against the climate crisis" and **Petra Stienen** (Netherlands) AS/EGA: "The role of men and boys in stopping gender-based violence"
- Because ALDE-PACE believes that **female MPs should play an active role in PACE** and because visibility matters, we are happy to share a few numbers:
  - ALDE Rapporteurs during the September session: 2 F – 3 M
  - ALDE New rapporteurs: 3 F – 1 M
  - ALDE Questions to invited personalities: 3 F – 1 M
  - ALDE Speakers in plenary debates on reports: 6 F – 6 M

We thank all members who took part in the group's work, defended liberal position in the plenary debates and committees, presented reports and participated in the group 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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ENVIRONMENT  
AS A HUMAN  
RIGHT



### [Environment and Human Rights in PACE](#)

An ambition of the liberal presidency of PACE to make the right to live in a healthy, clean and safe environment part of the universal corpus of fundamental human rights. Two years of collective work and personal commitment of PACE President Rik Daems and many others. Seven reports adopted by the largest pan-European parliamentary body. A clear recommendation to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to prepare additional protocols to the European Convention on Human Rights and the Social Charter. The road is long, but 29 September 2021 marked the history of environmental rights and brought us closer to a paradigm shift from 'environment as a policy' to 'environment as a right'.

**On 29 September 2021, addressing the high-level panel with the participation of Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres, ALDE-PACE President Jacques Maire delivered the following speech:**

*It is a source of pride for us, the ALDE Group, to be with you today because it has taken almost two years of effort to build up this important work.*

*The messages that have been sent today by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, by you, Mr President, by the Pope, by the Court [European Court of Human Rights], by the ministers and by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe show that there comes a time when action must be taken.*

*[...] If today there were the Hague Conference with Konrad Adenauer, Winston Churchill and François Mitterrand, the right to a healthy environment would obviously be included in the European Convention on Human Rights. If the same thing happened in 1990 at the time of the Social Charter, the environment would obviously be included in the Social Charter. So what are we waiting for?*

*There are, of course, a few difficulties here and there, there is, I would say, the cumbersome nature of multilateralism today, there are, of course, the obstacles posed by a few states, but we are a pivotal political generation, the one for which our children, our grandchildren will say in a few years' time: "Grandpa, Dad, you were there, you were in charge, do you see where we are now? What did you do?"*

*Everyone knows perfectly well that we are not within 2°C. We are not within 1.5°C. Everyone knows that, so everyone must take action. Here at the Council of Europe, the seven reports show the ways in which we can take action. The most important of these are the additional protocols. This is not a taboo, nor is it a magical object: these are objects that must be studied.*

*I believe that we have done our utmost in the Parliamentary Assembly. These seven reports, which bring together all the political groups, have been voted on strongly [...]*

More, video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

On 30 September 2021, Rik Daems announced the launch of the #EnvironmentRightNow hashtag initiative ([video](#); [documents](#)):



*Dreams and reality are separated by laws. The Right to life is already a reality, but the Right to a healthy environment is still a dream. As PACE President, I've put the issue of the environment and human rights as one of my political priorities. Like many citizens and legislators, I believe environment should be anchored into solid legal foundations. Because the right to live in a healthy, clean and safe environment should be part of the universal corpus of*

*fundamental human rights. Environment is a human right and it must be incorporated as such in the European Convention of Human Rights, which is and remains the constitutional instrument of Europe's public legal order. Join us if you want to make the Environment a Human Right, Now.*

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ALDE REPORTS



#### Jacques MAIRE (France)

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

AS/Bur ([Doc. 15375](#), Doc. 15375 Add. 1, Doc. 15375 Add. 2) 27 September 2021

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



#### Alfred HEER (Switzerland)

- **Observation of the early parliamentary elections in Bulgaria (11 July 2021)**

AS/Bur ([Doc. 15355](#)) 27 September 2021

Video [EN](#)



#### Nicole TRISSE (France)

- **Gender representation in the Parliamentary Assembly**

AS/Pro ([Doc. 15366](#)) 28 September 2021

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



**Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO (Monaco)**

- **Strengthening the fight against so-called “honour” crimes**

AS/Ega ([Doc. 15347](#)) 28 September 2021

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



**Olivier BECHT (France)**

- **Research policies and environment protection**

AS/Cult ([Doc. 15357](#)) 29 September 2021

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



QUESTIONS

**Question to Ms Stella KYRIAKIDES, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety**



Ms Fiona O'LOUGHLIN (Ireland) - I commend you for your incredible work in vaccines and of course in

cancer strategy as well. You speak about the voice of the citizen and I wish to give a voice to those who don't have a voice, neither here nor in their own home countries, sadly because in many cases their voice is no longer and it remains to families and others to advocate for them. And I'm talking about people living with dementia or Alzheimer's who have been hugely impacted by the pandemic. And while member countries need to invest heavily in home care strategies and community day services, I believe that, at a European level, focus and investment should go into some particular areas, particularly around younger onset dementia support, dementia research, drug therapies, etc. And of course investment in prevention. The dementia-inclusive companies focus on the nine modifiable risk factors of dementia and I would like to ask you what you could possibly do to prioritise these areas. Thank you. Video [EN](#)



Ms Stella KYRIAKIDES - I have already said it, of the rates of vaccinations: we have reached over 73% in the adult population in member states but this is not for all the member states.

But we need to address this gap. We need to address the difficulties but one size does not fit all, so we cannot have vaccine hesitancy and address it using only one way.

We need to, in every country, in every member state, understand the reason why they are having challenges. As you do know, the vaccination programmes are competencies of the member state, so we need to address the differences faced in the different member states and support them in every way that they need.

There needs to be no doubt that the lower we have the vaccination coverage in any country and in any member state we have more pressure on the hospital systems and higher rate of mortality.

So the work of the Commission and my work as the Commissioner of Health and Food Safety is to understand the different challenges faced in member states and to support them so that they are able to move forward.

I wanted to also say here that it was mentioned that at the beginning a lot of mistakes were made. I would say that we have learned a lot of lessons along the way in an unprecedented health crisis, but we have also always left space for the member state in their national campaigns to use the information that they think fit. And also we work with them very closely to fight misinformation and disinformation about vaccines.

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



Ms Lesia VASYLENKO (Ukraine) - Madam Secretary, First, I kindly thank you for your

participation in the Crimean Platform in Kyiv in August this year. Your support for the dialogue around ending human rights atrocities resulting from Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea is immeasurable, as is your support for all dialogue platforms in Europe. At the same time, I would like to ask you how we here at the PACE may improve and diversify dialogue instruments so that the dialogue at this Assembly is not reduced to merely a formal exchange of opinions but that it leads instead to actual mediation of cases where a countries stray from their commitments on their ever so challenging democratic journey? Perhaps you have already identified mechanisms that need reforming in the strategies that you have mentioned? If so, you could maybe share what they are. I not, perhaps you could agree that the matter merits a wider discussion, maybe in the form of a report or of a separate strategy or maybe of a special working group being set up here in this Assembly. Thank you. Video

[EN](#)



Ms Marija PEJČINOVIĆ-BURIĆ - Let me start by saying that there are a number of international organizations dealing with different things. In the Council of Europe we are dealing with what is called "democratic security" which makes the 223 different treaties and conventions that are applied across 47 Member States. And when dealing with situations like with you mentioned the Crimean platform, I would like to recall that the Committee of Ministers' decision from May this year gave me a task to make a report on human rights in the occupied Crimea and the City of Sevastopol.

So this is one way how the Council of Europe can and should approach the issues of areas that are temporarily occupied or are under occupation or post conflict. We are not a security organisation, this is dealt with by some other organizations.

Now, when it comes to the areas of unresolved conflict, which are always and still continue to be and will be on the agenda of the Council of Europe in a very high position. Because every individual across the 47 Member States, no matter where they live, should be protected by the European Convention on Human Rights. So, CoE is always asking unhindered access of our monitoring and other bodies to these areas. We all know that it is not always possible but, as the Secretary General, I would always ask for this access because only by accessing to these places we can be assured that assessment of our monitoring and advisory bodies will be the proper one and that their reports could be taken with the complete picture, including the one on the spot.

So this is the way how I see that we continue insisting on having access of all our bodies to the areas of conflict and also to implement confidence-building measures which we have been doing in a number of our countries where it is needed. But this always is the case; we need to have the country which is involved or countries that are involved and their positive opinion on that. For instance, we recently started talks with Armenia and Azerbaijan to have also CBMs among these two countries, but only if both agree we will continue to have that. But CBMs are certainly one of the tools to make, as the name says, confidence-building measures among those who otherwise probably would not be in the possibility to talk to each other and through that arrive to the situation where they can speak about different issues. But CBMs normally deal with non-political issues such as empowering women, inter-municipal cooperation, and others that may help bring people together to work on that.

**Question to Mr Péter SZIJJÁRTÓ, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**



Ms Fiona O'LOUGHLIN

(Ireland) - In the spirit of all that we represent, here, firstly I'd like to congratulate

Switzerland on a resounding victory in their Yes Equality referendum at the weekend.

Minister, in your last address to PACE in June, you did give special emphasis on the importance of the rights of all individuals to practice their religion, and I commend you for that, and in speaking about how you protect minorities. The same tolerance, understanding, and compassion is not shown when it comes to the LGBTI community, as is proven by the enactment of legislation in your parliament in relation to gender identity. These laws are discriminatory, harmful, and stand in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

We parliamentarians within our own countries and across Europe must work harder than ever to end homophobia and transphobia and to achieve equality for all.

Minister, what actions will you take to reverse the discriminatory legislation introduced and cease Hungary's attacks on the rights of the LGBTI community? Video [EN](#)



Mr Péter SZIJJÁRTÓ - Thank you for your question regarding the LGBT community in Hungary because here now you give me a chance, finally, to clarify

some things because there are awful lies and fake news and misinterpretation circulated about the law in Hungary, which was passed by the parliament in order to give protection to children. This law is not against anybody. It is definitely not against any community. It is not against the LGBT community at all because this law does not say anything about the LGBT community in Hungary. It does not say anything about what citizens do after the age of 18. It does not say how they should behave, what kind of choice they have to make, with whom they live, whom they love, but it says the following and I am proud of that: parents have the exclusive right to conduct the education of their children under the age of 18 when it comes to the education of sexual orientation. That is, the exclusive right of the parents and we stick to it because we parents know our children best. No NGO knows my kids better than myself. And yes, we have prohibited NGOs from going into kindergartens and into schools and conducting sexual education there; because it is not their job. It is not their job – it is the job and the exclusive right of the parents. That is how we understand [it to be] and that is how this law has been passed. Once again, I would like to ensure my honourable colleague that it has nothing to do with discrimination, and has nothing to do with the LGBT community in Hungary.

**Question to Mr Nikola DIMITROV, Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs of North Macedonia**



Mr Jacques MAIRE (France) Happy birthday, Mr DIMITROV. First of all, I am very pleased to give the ALDE

Group's full support to the efforts made by Northern Macedonia, particularly through the Prespa agreement that we celebrated together a few weeks ago and the Ohrid Agreement before that, which have indeed made it possible to avoid a war in the Balkans – which has claimed the lives of many other countries.

We did see a demography summit recently which proposed a very



Mr Nikola DIMITROV - The way we see the European Union is not unrelated to the values and processes of this organisation. For the citizens of the region, when you say 'European,' the word brings

positive associations of democracy, of freedom, of having your rights respected, of having equal opportunities, of decency, of normalcy, of economic prosperity.

The bulk of our reforms to become more European are very much in line with the principles of this organisation.

When I say you already help a lot, I refer to the Venice Commission. This is an instrument we use very often when we amend legislation or have dilemmas and we try to align with European standards, and the Group of States against Corruption, the Council of Europe (GRECO) as well. Now we have local elections so I am seeing many public opinion polls. When you ask people their number one concern, it is justice and the fight against corruption. So in this respect, GRECO is extremely important.

particular European path with many Balkan leaders. It seems to me that North Macedonia is asserting deep democratic values, a desire for change, a desire for integration and convergence. In this context, which is being debated quite a bit in Europe today, what is the European project that North Macedonia is defending when it wants to come closer and when it wants to integrate into the European Union – which is obviously the profound wish of the entire ALDE Group? [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Then the projects supported through the horizontal facility, the Council of Europe has an office in Skopje. I think this is also very helpful. In terms of the narrative of values, I think the two organisations are very much part of the "one vision" for our continent. [...] I don't think there is an alternative to becoming European. I think it is easier to do so if you have the reform tool of the accession process. But having it or not having it, we're going to stick to the plan to make North Macedonia a functional European democracy governed by the rule of law.



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**Monday 27 September 2021**

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



Mr Iulian BULAI (Romania) - In the name of the ALDE group, we affirm that we are very supportive of the idea that the environment should be part of human rights, and we count on Wednesday's debate to give an impulse to our national governments to support this move demanded by citizens all over Europe and start a real conversation on this topic.[...] Regarding the report on the elections in Russia, it is important that PACE was present on the ground, but the Covid-19 pandemic cannot become a pretext for countries to make meaningful international observation virtually impossible since this will only increase mistrust in free elections and the voting process itself. Also on the eastern front, ALDE is extremely preoccupied with the

escalation of the crackdown against civil society in Belarus, and on a personal note, I am very happy that Maria Kalesnikava won this year's Václav Havel Human Rights Prize. [...] Our organisation's own partners, who have taken part in our meetings as experts or witnesses over many years, have also suffered from repression and they risk heavy jail terms. We cannot forget these people. We cannot leave them behind. [More, video EN](#)

### **Humanitarian consequences of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan**



Mr Jacques MAIRE (France) – I think that everyone is aware of the dramatic impact of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, which involves two of our countries, with 7,000 deaths, more than 91,000 Armenians and 84,000 Azerbaijanis displaced on that occasion. [...] The subject of prisoners of war is also a central issue that could be resolved with a little goodwill and that we must take very seriously. We held an urgent debate last April: I see that the problem remains unresolved. Several dozen Armenian soldiers are still being held captive in Azerbaijan. [...] We in the ALDE Group therefore call on the Committee of Ministers to take action to protect the Armenian and Azerbaijani populations as a matter of priority and to ensure that the human

rights of both civilians and soldiers are respected. [More, voting results, video EN](#) | [OV](#)

### **Guidelines on the scope of the parliamentary immunities enjoyed by members of the Parliamentary Assembly**



Mr Claude KERN (France) – Parliamentary immunities are provisions designed to guarantee the proper functioning of democracy, not to confer any privileges on parliamentarians. I therefore support the draft resolution, which aims to ensure that the immunity system be applied consistently. [...] Given the political and economic stakes of their action, they can be subject to various pressures. It is thus to protect parliamentarians from such pressure and thus guarantee their independence that this system of immunities exists. [...] Similarly, a Member State cannot refuse access to its territory to a member of our Assembly who has denounced certain shortcomings in the implementation of the principles upheld by our Organisation. [More, voting results, video EN](#) | [OV](#)

## Socio-economic inequalities in Europe: time to restore social trust by strengthening social rights



Ms Diana STOICA (Romania) - The effects of Covid-19 medical emergency have been profound reversing the convergence of the standard living and putting considerable pressure on our social protection systems. Even though Europe's been prospering and growing, the reality is that this is not the reality for every citizen. The socio-economic division has grown raising concerns both from the perspective of sustainable economic growth and from the perspective of social cohesion. The most vulnerable of us were the most affected. Social inequality has deepened poverty and poverty is never good business for any nation. We have the duty to tackle the root causes of inequalities, guarantee fundamental rights and develop national legislatives to ensure opportunities for all of our citizens. [More, voting results, video EN](#)

## Gender representation in the Parliamentary Assembly



Mr Damien COTTIER (Switzerland) - I am sure that our parliaments and assemblies, as well as all elected political authorities, must strive for good gender representation. And yes, there must be a clear political will to achieve this and proactive measures. However, the ALDE Group highlights the importance of a positive and liberal spirit in this process, not overly constrained or rigid. ALDE will always favour voluntary measures, with the emphasis on human genius, enthusiasm and freedom, over a policy of strict quotas, automatism, obligations or, worse still, penalties. We also stress that we must avoid the trap of overly complex recruitment rules which multiply the criteria, first at national level and then in our Assembly, and which can ultimately make choice – which is the very basis of democracy – difficult and, in some cases, even impossible. [...] Most of the report's proposals are inspired by this voluntary spirit, without excessive constraints, and we support this spirit. A number of amendments are intended to accentuate this clear political will, but with the necessary flexibility, which we believe is more effective, and our group will support them. On the other hand, it will oppose those amendments, in particular Amendment No. 3 paragraph 8.2, which seek to impose an overly restrictive straitjacket. [More, voting results, video EN | OV](#)

## Strengthening the fight against so-called “honour” crimes



Ms Lesia VASYLENKO (Ukraine) - "Honour" crimes are perpetrated by those close to the victim, [they are] premeditated and organised mostly by men who seek revenge for their hurt "honour." "Honour" crimes - those which allow claims of hurt feelings and disappointment to be mitigating circumstances in courts that consider cases of marital rape, beatings, and even murder. Now, as I read through these criteria yet another type of "honour" crime came to mind. This time where the perpetrators are not individuals but whole organisations of individuals. This new phenomenon, which is picking up across Europe has many names - Masculine Foundation in Poland, Male State in Russia, Fathers4Justice in the UK, and Father Has a Right in Ukraine, to name but a few. The rise of masculus groups brings with it the dissemination of hate speech against women, organised threats, psychological and physical attacks on ex-wives, and the kidnapping of children. [...] Colleagues, with this intervention, I hope to sound the alarm around the spreading threat of collective horror crimes that remain under, or rather below the radar of authorities. [More, voting results, video EN](#)



Wednesday 29 September 2021

### Joint debate: Environment and Human Rights

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Ms Liliana TANGUY (France) - We must welcome President DAEMS's determination to put the environment and human rights at the top of our Assembly's political agenda.

This joint debate enables us to address the issue of the right to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment from different angles, based on several very rich reports and accompanied by many avenues of work to ensure that the Council of Europe provides a response that is equal to the challenges facing future generations of Europeans. We want to be leaders in this field. The ALDE Group shares the conclusions of the rapporteurs and will support them. The question now is to explore the possible deliverables proposed in these reports. Which instruments will be able to truly anchor the right to a healthy environment, to gather the broadest political support necessary to protect this global public good and to enter into force within a reasonable timeframe, given the climate and environmental urgency? The ambitious option would be to launch a vast project around new additional protocols to the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter, and other "5P" type conventions on environmental threats and health risks. [More, video EN](#) | [OV](#)



Ms Yuliia OVCHYNNYKOVA (Ukraine) – I am honoured and delighted to have this opportunity to speak on behalf of the ALDE group on this vital topic, especially since I belong to both areas: to research and environmental protection. As a researcher in environmental issues, I welcome the Report and Recommendations to develop and financially specific research programmes and at the same time support fundamental research. Unfortunately, sometimes commercialisation influences education and research funding and diminishes priority for elemental analysis. Money is a resource, not a goal in science. We call member States to establish instruments for cross-sectoral and inter-sectoral collaborations and massive involvement of early career researchers. Young researchers should develop their skills

in a more collaborative, more inclusive and open research environment. [More, video EN](#)

### Joint debate: Voting results

[Vote](#): Anchoring the right to a healthy environment: need for enhanced action by the Council of Europe

[Vote](#): More participatory democracy to tackle climate change

[Vote](#): Addressing issues of criminal and civil liability in the context of climate change

[Vote](#): The climate crisis and the rule of law

[Vote](#): Combating inequalities in the right to a safe, healthy and clean environment:

[Vote](#): Climate and migration

[Vote](#): Research policies and environment protection

[More information](#)

### Thursday 30 September 2021

#### Debate under urgent procedure: "The situation in Afghanistan: consequences for Europe and the region"



Mr Jacques LE NAY (France) - More than a month ago, we all witnessed the hasty and uncoordinated withdrawal of American troops and the scenes of panic and horror that ensued.

After those weeks of chaos, we are now faced with the distressing reality that the Taliban is once again in control of Afghanistan. This new situation, although foreseeable, must make Europe reflect and lead it to act. We must face up, together, to the consequences of this political development. [...] My political group believes that the European strategy for Afghanistan should be as follows: no recognition of the Taliban regime, increased humanitarian aid to deal with the serious crisis in the country, and a decent reception of Afghan nationals who arrive in Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen, a European strategy is required to ensure that Afghanistan is not left prey to famine or obscurantism, while maintaining the hope of a free and democratic Afghanistan. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

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### **Current affairs debate: The Western Balkans between democratic challenges and European aspirations: what role for the Council of Europe?**



Ms Stephanie KRISPER (Austria) - What could we do as the Council of Europe? The rule of law and human rights is at the heart of Council of Europe's work. For 18 years already, the Western Balkans have tried to come closer to membership of the EU, but in the same period also some Member States of the EU - even old Member States - have started to deteriorate regarding rule of law and democracy [...]. We should be clear with the West Balkan governments. We are willing to support them and work together with governments and opposition in tangible projects like the Venice Commission, like the Group of States against Corruption, the Council of Europe (GRECO) as we heard before from the North Macedonian Deputy Prime Minister. It is on us not only to tell people but to make them feel

what the rule of law and human rights mean for their lives, and what improvements they could bring. [More](#), [video EN](#)

### **Debate under urgent procedure: Increased migration pressure on the borders of Latvia, Lithuania and Poland with Belarus**



Ms Maria JUFEREVA-SKURATOVSKI (Estonia) - The situation on the Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish border with Belarus is not only a regional security concern for us. Currently, several dozen persons from Iraq and Afghanistan are stranded on the EU-Belarusian border. President Alexander Lukashenko uses migrant trafficking as a hybrid attack to undermine the values and the unity of the EU countries. He manipulates defenceless people, who came with a hope for a better life. He uses them as a political instrument. This is completely unacceptable. Therefore, we need to have a common strategy to deter President Lukashenko from escalating the crisis and to prevent the instrumentalisation of migrants. I would like to underline that

addressing migration-related challenges should be fully compliant with international law and human rights obligations. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#)

### **Debate under urgent procedure: Draft Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence**



Mr André GATTOLIN (France) - The Budapest Convention on Cybercrime represents an important step forward in the fight against the exploitation of information technologies for criminal purposes. Sixty-six countries have already ratified it, including 21 that are not members of our Organisation. [...] All the member States of the Council of Europe have ratified it, with two exceptions: Ireland and the Russian Federation, which has not even signed it. [...] Since the convention was opened for signature in 2001, cybercrime exploded, making it necessary to adapt this convention. [...] That is why it is important to have an additional protocol, but doing so is never a simple operation, given the diversity of the legal systems of the States party to the Convention. The resolution

proposed by our rapporteur rightly emphasises this point when it states that the Convention and its protocols can only establish minimum standards of protection, which must be implemented by all the participating States, while leaving the most advanced States the possibility of providing for enhanced protection for their citizens. However, these higher standards must not compromise the common purpose of the Convention and its protocols. [More](#), [voting results](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

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