

PACE Session
26-30 January
2026

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January 2026 part-session highlights:

- ALDE-PACE has renewed the composition of its bureau. **Iulian Bulai has been re-elected as President of the group.** Several new members have joined the bureau: Lord Michael German as treasurer, and Marijana Puljak, Lucia Plaváková and Sona Ghazarian as vice-presidents. We congratulate all the (re-)elected members and wish them a successful mandate.
- **ALDE-PACE has secured key leadership positions within PACE committees.** Eerik Kross will chair the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, which serves as the guardian of the rule of law and human rights, and is central to PACE's efforts towards the establishment of an accountability system for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo will lead the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, upholding the values and standards cherished by European liberals. The ALDE group has also secured several positions in committee and sub-committee bureaux and looks forward to strong teamwork in the months ahead.
- ALDE-PACE leader Iulian Bulai congratulated the **newly elected PACE President, Petra Bayr** (SOC, Austria), and wished her "wisdom, inspiration, and creativity for the coming two years. You have our full support for the positive initiatives you have proposed for this Assembly."
- **Accountability and Justice for Ukraine:** Amid harsh winter conditions and continued Russian bombings, the situation in Ukraine remains our key focus. Throughout the session week, we renewed our call for governments to act, and for parliaments to ratify—without delay—the international justice instruments developed by the Council of Europe. "The establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine is the most important task before the Council of Europe and its member states today and beyond. Failure to complete this task would be a failure of the international system of justice itself," stressed Eerik Kross during the plenary debate.
- On 27 January, the Parliamentary Assembly commemorated **International Holocaust Remembrance Day**. Participating in the solemn ceremony, Iulian Bulai declared: "I would like to begin by quoting Elie Wiesel, the Romanian-born Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate: 'The opposite of love is not hatred, it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of fate is not heresy, it's indifference. The opposite of life is not death, it's indifference.' These words resonate deeply when we reflect on the grim chapters of history, such as the Holocaust and the extermination of Roma people. These atrocities stand as a stark reminder that the bloodiest regimes do not only rely on fanatics or leaders, but often thrive because of the everyday participation of some, and the indifference of others. Yet history also teaches us that it only takes the courage of a few to say no, to stand up and refuse to comply with injustice, with the authoritarian repression. So, let us choose not to be indifferent. Let us resist apathy and refuse to accept discrimination and hatred. Together, our voices and actions can make a difference."

Scroll down for more highlights and insights...

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. We also thank the International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLRY) for excellent cooperation.

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

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BUREAU &
COMMITTEE
ELECTIONS 2026

ALDE-PACE Bureau Elections 2026

On 26 January 2026, the ALDE Group re-elected Iulian Bulai as its President for a new two-year mandate.
ALDE-PACE also renewed the composition of its Bureau.

President:



Vice-Presidents:

Bertrand BOUYX
(France)



Damien COTTIER
(Switzerland)



Sabina ĆUDIĆ
(Bosnia and Herzegovina)



Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO
(Monaco)



Sona GHAZARIAN
(Armenia)



Yevheniia KRAVCHUK
(Ukraine)



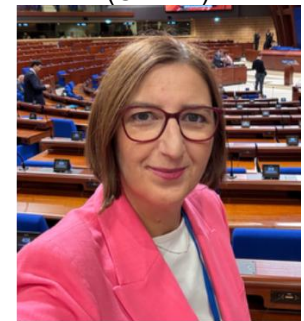
Eerik-Niiles KROSS
(Estonia)



Lucia PLAVÁKOVÁ
(Slovakia)



Marijana PULJAK
(Croatia)



Rian VOGELS
(Netherlands)



Treasurer: Lord Michael GERMAN
(United Kingdom)



We welcome a strong ALDE team in leadership roles in PACE Committees

Stay updated and follow our committee work [@ALDEXPACE](https://twitter.com/ALDEXPACE)



Eerik KROSS (Estonia)

President, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights ([JUR](#))

Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO (Monaco)

President, Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination ([EGA](#))

Damien COTTIER (Switzerland)

1st Vice-President, Special Committee on the New Democratic Pact (PACT)

Sabina CUDIC (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

1st Vice-President, Monitoring Committee ([MON](#))

Yuliia OVCHYNNYKOVA (Ukraine)

2nd Vice-President, Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development ([SOC](#))

Liliana TANGUY (France)

3rd Vice-President, Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy ([POL](#))

Rian VOGELS (Netherlands)

3rd Vice-President of the Committee on Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights ([CDH](#))

More information on sub-committee appointments in our next newsletter!



HEARINGS

ALDE-PACE hearings and events



The **situation in Greenland and the state of the rules-based international order** were central themes of the January session. ALDE-PACE initiated an urgent debate on “Threats against the international order: the case of Greenland.” Ahead of the debate, we held an exchange of views with the participation of Michael Aastrup Jensen, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the Council of Europe.

Bertrand Bouyx, ALDE-PACE Vice-President and Chair of the French Delegation to PACE, led the plenary debate as rapporteur. In his opening speech, he stated: “There are times when the facts are so simple that they are hard to remember. And yet, here we are. So, let’s say it once and clearly, Greenland belongs to Greenlanders, for sure. It is a democratic society, with institutions, an identity and a fundamental right to decide its own

future. Its sovereignty, territorial integrity and future are not a matter for speculation, negotiation or outside pressure. They are a matter exclusively for the people of Greenland in conjunction with the Kingdom of Denmark, in accordance with the law and existing constitutional frameworks”.

Presenting the Progress report of the Assembly, ALDE group leader Iulian Bulai also addressed the challenges posed by intimidation, coercion and growing unpredictability facing the international order and Europe, emphasizing our shared responsibility to resist them: “The dark future is not written. That is why I salute those leaders in Europe, in Canada, and beyond who refuse to comply, who refuse to go along. Who, as President Macron put it, ‘prefer respect to bullies’ and ‘rule of law to brutality’”.

During the session, Iulian Bulai alongside other group and delegation leaders co-signed a [declaration](#) in support for Greenland and Denmark.

Georgia has remained a key item on our group’s agenda for over a year. As we continued to discuss the breakdown of democracy and the growing repression against political dissent, journalists, and civil society, we welcomed the recent release of several liberal partners from prison, including Zurab Girchi Japaridze, who joined the ALDE-PACE group meeting online.

During our exchange of views, we paid particular attention to alarming reports of the alleged use of illegal chemical substances against peaceful protesters in Georgia. First revealed in a BBC investigative documentary, this issue warrants serious investigation, and the full rehabilitation of victims is essential. Mrs Mariam Gelovani, herself a victim of the alleged use of harmful substances and currently undergoing treatment in France, joined us to bear witness to the damage caused to her health.



On Monday of the session, ALDE-PACE received **Sir William (Bill) Browder, Head of the Global Magnitsky Justice Campaign.**

Sergei Magnitsky was a Russian tax and accountancy expert who carried out investigations into a massive tax reimbursement fraud against the Russian State budget by criminals benefiting from the collusion of corrupt police and tax officials. After he filed an official complaint, Mr Magnitsky was himself detained for alleged tax evasion and died in terrible circumstances in pretrial detention in 2009.

The Parliamentary Assembly has been demanding justice for Sergey Magnitsky since more than ten years. Currently, a new report on “Tracking the proceeds of the crime denounced by Sergei Magnitsky and holding its perpetrators accountable” is

being prepared by Lesia Vasylenko (ALDE, Ukraine) in the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. The adoption of the resolution is planned for April 2026.



ALDE REPORTS



Iulian BULAI (Romania)

- **Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee, AS/Bur** ([Doc. 16323](#), Doc. 16323 Add. 1, Doc. 16323 Add. 2, Doc. 16323 Add. 3)



Damien COTTIER (Switzerland)

- **Elections in times of crisis, AS/Pol** ([Doc. 16297](#))

[Briefly](#)



Sona GHAZARYAN (Armenia)

- **Strengthening democracies with young people: from participation to shared responsibility, AS/Cult** ([Doc. 16308](#))

[Briefly](#)



Bertrand BOUYX (France)

- **Debate under urgent procedure: Threats against the international order: the case of Greenland, AS/Pol** ([Doc. 16334](#))

[Briefly](#)



QUESTIONS

Question to Ms Maia SANDU, President of the Republic of Moldova



Mr Iulian BULAI (Romania) - Congratulations for the great results of the elections in 2024/25 and for fighting back in the hybrid war.



Ms Maia SANDU - Europe has been helping us with the major reforms. These are the anti-corruption efforts, the strengthening of the capacity of the anti-corruption institutions and with the justice sector reform, which is not an easy effort, but to which we're

Thank you for what you did for the huge amount of Ukrainian refugees being welcomed so properly by the Moldovan people. That's so important. A country with solid resources doing so much. Thank you.

Our question is what can we do as parliamentarians in 2026 to better help the quicker integration of Moldova in European Union, both as Council of Europe and members of the national parliaments? Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

fully committed, and of course, all the other areas with respect to providing for human rights and so on.

We would like to continue to count on the Council of Europe's support and all the institutions that have been working with us. Otherwise, bilaterally, as EU countries, of course you can contribute to finding the solutions to the problems I just mentioned, so that the EU accession process will continue.

Moldova has shown resilience, but the danger to democracies and especially to smaller countries are not going to disappear in two years from now, in three years from now. We need to act together. And I also want to believe that everybody is taking this seriously, because in the case of Moldova, Russia's interference has been brutal. It was easier for people to see it. It was easier for us and for civil society and for the press to expose it.

In some of your countries, this interference is not going to be that brutal and that multidimensional. But it doesn't mean that it's not going to be damaging and dangerous, especially regarding the manipulation of information, which is not easy for people to see and understand, but which can have a significant effect on our democracies. I think we need to work together, we need to learn together. We need to protect our democracies together. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

QUESTIONS

Question to Mr Alain BERSET, Secretary General of the Council of Europe



Ms Yevheniia KRAVCHUK (Ukraine) - Dear Secretary General, 100 000 Ukrainians already filed their applications to

the International Claims Commission for Ukraine. These are the same people that are without electricity and heat in Ukraine. When do you think the compensation fund will start working? And how about the compensation? When will people see the compensation? And with regard to the fight to against disinformation, when will this toolbox you mentioned, the Convention, be given to countries and what range of instruments can we give now? Because member states are waiting now. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Mr Alain BERSET – For the first element, I mean, you mentioned the Claims Commission.

I just want to recall in this room that when the Register of Damage was created by the heads of state and heads of government in Reykjavík, it was in May, June, May 2023. And now, less than three years later, it can be long, but it is at the same time really something efficient – we have not only a fully functioning Register in the Hague, with teams also working in Ukraine. We have now more than 100 000 elements registered in the Register. [...]

We also need and have here an advance team working for the establishment of the Claims Commission. Then, once we have the Claims Commission and once we have enough countries having ratified the signature they gave in December, and also the resources, then it will be possible to act. [...]

I could repeat what I told your Ukrainian colleague before. I mean to ratify faster, decide faster and resource faster.

About the second question, the second part of your question about disinformation and foreign interferences. I must tell you that we had the case of Moldova, but we had a lot of different situations in Europe. I can mention here, Romania, I can mention Poland, I can mention a lot of different countries because nobody is protected

QUESTIONS

Question to Mr Ararat MIRZOYAN, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia



Ms Louise MOREL (France) – Mister Minister, I too would like to pay tribute to the recent progress

made towards a lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan through the agreement signed in Washington in August 2025.

I would also like to assure you of my group's support for your efforts to combat foreign interference, to combat Russian agents and also for your actions, particularly on this subject of the Church.

Minister, unfortunately, like other countries, you too are faced with foreign interference in your internal policy, including your rapprochement with the European Union.

How can this Assembly help you, especially as you are the only democracy in the region? Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Mr Ararat MIRZOYAN – Well, thank you very much for the question.

Basically, I already had the chance to address this question, to speak a little bit about the hybrid attacks against Armenia's democracy and the readiness of democratic powers and the people of Armenia, most importantly, and the determination of the people of Armenia to protect the democracy in Armenia.

We also use this opportunity to express our gratitude to all our international partners which, even today, currently at this very moment, work together with my colleagues from the Armenian administration to make sure that these hybrid attacks do not succeed and Armenian democracy survives again. And this is very important to emphasise, using only democratic tools, tools and mechanisms that democracy itself provides.

In regards to our policy towards deepening and significantly deepening our relations with the European Union. Yes, this is part of our policy. Like I said during my speech, the Armenian Parliament adopted a specific law making it mandatory for any government of the Republic of Armenia to implement this policy of getting full membership of the European Union.

Meanwhile, to this end, we are currently implementing various steps together jointly with our EU colleagues, including the sectoral integration, including, for instance, the visa liberalisation, several tools and mechanisms to support Armenia's democracy, like the European Peace Facility, like the Growth and Resilience Plan that was implemented, and hopefully we will continue our joint efforts. Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

QUESTIONS

Question to Mr Mihai POPȘOI, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, President of the Committee of Ministers



Ms Liliana TANGUY (France) - Minister, In a context marked by the intensification of foreign interference and manipulation of



Mr Mihail POPȘOI – As you have heard yesterday from President Maia SANDU, and I'm sure that you know that information manipulation is not an abstract threat, particularly in the country where I come from, unprecedented foreign information manipulation

interference designed to weaken social unity, sow distrust, divide and influence people's choices is a dangerous weapon in a hybrid war waged against all of our democracies. It is used in all domains, including in the context of elections. We must

against this situation right now. We are fully aware of the risks also that we see for the next elections, for example, in Armenia and for the day where it will be possible also to have elections in Ukraine. It will be also extremely risky.

That means speaking about the toolbox. It's maybe a bit too simple as a definition. I think we need... It was just to underline that it's not just to speak about the fight against disinformation, it's not just about solemn statements against disinformation: it is to create something concrete. And well, it will take a bit of time because we need to see if there is a will, a political will from states to develop this convention on foreign interference and disinformation. At the moment, we are doing a feasibility study. I think it's finished very soon. It will be this week. Thank you. [...] Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

information that endanger European democracies, how does the Moldovan Presidency intend, through regional exercises and media education initiatives, to support the strengthening of the democratic resilience of Member States? Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)

together find solutions to prevent information abuse and manipulation and thus strengthen our resilience.

To respond to this emerging threat, the Committee of Ministers has just set up a Committee of Experts on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference. This Committee is tasked with preparing by 15 April a feasibility study on the possible elaboration of a Council of Europe legal instrument on foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), including disinformation, exploring challenges in relation to election interference, media concentration and so forth. The study will examine legal challenges and gaps regarding the criminalisation of certain conduct related to FIMI and identify potential approaches regarding prevention, awareness-raising and educational measures.

Under the Moldovan Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe will convene a high-level conference on media literacy and information integrity, building resilience to disinformation in Europe. [...] Video [EN](#) | [OV](#)



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Monday 26 January 2026

Current affairs debate: Safeguarding the system of international justice



Mr Eerik-Niiles KROSS (Estonia) – [...] The greatest threat to the international justice system today is the increasingly dominant belief that aggression is once again rewarded, that the use or threat of force is an effective tool to achieve political goals. [...] And that logic is back. And if it prevails, there will be no system of international justice. That is why one simple principle must be our core line of defence. There must be no impunity for the most serious crimes under international law, especially for the crime of aggression, which the Nuremberg Tribunal rightly called the "supreme international crime because it contains within itself all others". If aggression goes unpunished, every other rule becomes conditional. And if aggression goes unpunished, there will be more aggression. This is why the establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine is

the most important task before the Council of Europe and its member states today and beyond. Failure to complete this task would be a failure of the international system of justice itself. [More](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee ([Doc. 16323](#), [Doc. 16323 Add. 1](#), [Doc. 16323 Add. 2](#), [Doc. 16323 Add. 3](#))



Mr Damien COTTIER (Switzerland) – [...] We must strengthen Europe, the European continent, in its defence, in its politics, in its political weight, in its economic attractiveness, and in the diversification of its partnerships. [...] And then, we must also strengthen democracy, democratic security as Secretary General, Mr Alain BERSET calls it. [...] And this must encourage us to work more, even harder, and even more closely together and with our partners, those who want to, and in particular with the countries that want to join this organisation, and here I am thinking of Kosovo, for which it would be good if the Committee of Ministers took up the matter again. [...] We must make even more progress, reaffirm our principles and strongly reiterate that Greenland belongs to Denmark and is

neither for sale nor negotiable, and that Ukraine must be supported by all means until a just and lasting peace is achieved, but also until a dignified and solid peace can be negotiated, and that includes efforts in the field of international justice. [More](#), [video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Elections in times of crisis ([Doc. 16297](#))

Ms Larysa BILOZIR (Ukraine) – [...] Across Europe, elections today face unprecedented challenges: disinformation, foreign interference, cyber attacks, security risks. The rapporteur emphasises those risks. We must take into account the experience also in Moldova and Romania's recent elections, of the challenges they faced during those elections. [...] As a Ukrainian, let me be very clear. Elections today are not possible because the country is at war. Some want to push Ukraine for this. Ukraine's priority is to defend people, to survive and to achieve just and lasting peace. No democratic process can be genuine when citizens live under constant security threats and shelling. [...] After the war, Ukraine wants to hold elections. We have already created a group of which I'm a member. We are working on issues of security, legitimacy, on preparations for

elections, and it is established already, and the amendments to the law are ready. [...] [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Supporting the commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine and the security of the European continent ([Doc. 16311](#), [Doc. 16311 Add.](#))

Mr Bertrand BOUYX (France) – Our continent is under attack from all sides. In the East, in Ukraine, by Russia in an open war that has been going on for over four years. We know this. We have been debating it at every part-session since 2022. To the West, in Greenland, by our oldest ally, the United States. And this is more unexpected. [...] So, once we have moved on from our astonishment, as Europeans, what can we do? As the old saying goes, if you don't want to be on the menu, you'd better have a seat at the table. And there is only one way to do that, and that is through power and strategic autonomy. [...] Yes, Ukraine's security is first and foremost a European matter. It is our vision of the world. A vision that respects the sovereignty of states, multilateralism and respect for international law. A vision

that goes against the imperial designs that seem to be at work. It is about defending our interests, because Ukraine is not just defending its territory, it is defending the integrity of Europe as a whole. It just so happens that they are on the front line. [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

The functioning of democratic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina ([Doc. 16310](#))

Ms Marijana PULJAK (Croatia) – This document addresses one of the most serious institutional crises since the Dayton Peace Agreement, but its most important message is not only about crisis, but about resilience. [...] We have witnessed direct challenges to the constitutional order, the authority of the Constitutional Court, and the Office of the High Representative. Yet, the rule of law prevailed. Court decisions were implemented, unconstitutional laws were withdrawn, and elections were held. This demonstrates that the institutions can withstand severe political attacks when there is legal clarity and international support. [...] However, resilience alone is not enough. From a liberal perspective, no democratic system can be considered

complete as long as discrimination is embedded in its constitutional framework. The continued non-implementation of the Sejdić-Finci judgment and related rulings of the European Court of Human Rights is not a technical issue; it is a fundamental question of equality and basic democratic principles. These judgments must be implemented without further delay. [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

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Strengthening democracies with young people: from participation to shared responsibility ([Doc. 16308](#))

Ms Yevheniia KRAVCHUK (Ukraine) – Today, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is setting a gold standard by moving from just the engagement of young people to real shared responsibility in decision-making processes. [...] Ukraine serves as a living example of how young people take on this 'shared responsibility' even when they are facing mortal danger. We have effectively implemented the call to establish youth councils, so now, we have 664 youth councils from the local level to the national level. Volunteering among youth has more than doubled, rising from 20% to 42% since the full-scale invasion started. Lviv, as the European Youth Capital 2025, has become a symbol of resilience, providing young residents with the space to grow within their communities. We are ready to exchange and share these unique experiences and expertise. The democracy of the

future, as described in this report, is impossible without sustainable peace. [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Current affairs debate: Ensuring accountability, humanitarian protection and respect for international law in Gaza and the West Bank after the ceasefire

Lord Michael GERMAN (United Kingdom) – it goes without saying that the America-brokered ceasefire is very welcome indeed. But, as has already been said, it's very fragile. [...] We must be concerned, in fact, I would say very concerned, that the plan that has been put on the table by President Trump seeks to bypass the United Nations. The Board of Peace's proposed charter describes it as "an international organisation that seeks to promote stability, restore dependable and lawful governance, and secure enduring peace in areas affected or threatened by conflict." [...] All very worthy. But the charter does not mention human rights once. And I say that that is music to the ears of the Russian and Chinese governments, which have worked for

years to de-emphasise human rights at the United Nations. [...] Misery is everywhere in Gaza. [...] The people of Gaza deserve support now for the basics of life. The people of Gaza deserve a response which respects the value of human life. And above all, the people of Gaza deserve respect, not subjugation. [More](#), [Video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Draft additional protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine concerning the protection of human rights and dignity of persons with regard to involuntary placement and involuntary treatment within mental healthcare services ([Doc. 16309](#))

Mr Bertrand BOUYX (France) – [...] The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe fully endorses the rapporteur's vigilance regarding respect for autonomy in mental healthcare. The opinion sets the objective of eliminating involuntary measures. The disappearance of involuntary measures would probably be over-optimistic, but reducing them to cases of extreme necessity would already be a satisfactory result. This brings me to the hard point of the draft opinion, which is to issue an unfavourable opinion on the draft protocol as it stands, and which recommends that the Committee of Ministers carry out a study of the compatibility of this draft with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by all the member

states of the Council of Europe. In other words, international law. At a time when international law is being called into question, particularly that derived from UN bodies, it remains absolutely essential to respect our international commitments and not to adopt orthogonal texts. [...] [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Ms Carla MOONEN (Netherlands) – Schools show the value and the diversity of our societies. But also the problems: discrimination, racism and exclusion. It is at school that children and young people must learn to deal with these differences, to listen and understand each other, and forge opinions, disagree, discuss and develop shared solutions. In the words of the rapporteur: "schools must serve as [...] a space where democracy is not only taught but lived". [...] Democracies can provide solutions to these current and future problems; they can provide a better life for current and future generations. Rather than trying to restore the old order, we should build something better, stronger, more democratic and more just. Schools are at the foundation of this new order. [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Thursday 29 January 2026

Debate under urgent procedure. Threats against the international order: the case of Greenland ([Doc. 16334](#))



Mr Lulian BULAI (Romania) – Greenland is Denmark. Greenland is Europe. This is the clear choice of the people of Greenland. I salute the fact that we're holding this debate today. It is a sign of solidarity, but also a sign of recognition that we, national parliamentarians, take the situation seriously. We take security in the North seriously. We take co-operation with allies seriously. And we take the state of the world order very seriously. I salute the declaration prepared by our Danish delegation led by Mr Mogens JENSEN. I salute the solidarity of those who signed it. My group signed it. I welcome the report prepared by you, dear Mr Bertrand BOUYX. Thank you for doing this important work. Thank you for doing it with a cool head and for sticking to the values of multilateralism and international system based on

rules, predictability and co-operation rather than crude power. Unpredictability is much more costly, risky and dangerous in the long term than a well-functioning multilateral system. We subscribe to the calls of the rapporteur who underlines that international relations grounded in trust and respect for agreed rules are the foundation of stability, collective security and prosperity, and that the use of economic, political and security dependencies as instruments of coercion risks eroding trust and destabilising the international order. [...] [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)

Debate under urgent procedure. Political crisis in the broader Middle East: need to protect human rights and the rights of all minority groups ([Doc. 16336](#))



Mr Mehmet AKALIN (Türkiye) – First of all, I must emphasise that we are committed to stop using colonial language when referring to this region. I will therefore call each country by its proper name and refrain from using imposed identities. Secondly each country's situation and challenges are different and must be addressed as such. The countries concerned in this debate are sovereign states. Iran, in particular, has a civilisation stretching back thousands of years and deserves recognition for its contribution to humanity, despite the actions of its current regime. Those horrific actions include serious human rights violations, the violent suppression of protests, and the killing of protesters. Violence against civilians is unacceptable and

criminal. In Syria, as state institutions weakened, an arms race emerged among competing groups, often fuelled by external actors. Territories taken by force by one armed group, are frequently later seized by another. In this cycle of violence, it is always the smallest and most vulnerable minorities who suffer first and most. [...] [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video](#) [EN](#) | [OV](#)



Mr Andries GRYFFROY (Belgium) – Conversion practices is a broad term for therapies aimed at turning someone away from their natural sexual orientation. For a long time, some people were told that who they loved or how they understood themselves was a mistake, something that needed fixing. Conversion practices grew out of that belief. They promised change, certainty, relief. What they often delivered instead was fear, shame and silence. [...] Over time, doctors, psychologists and survivors began to tell the same story from different angles. These practices don't change who someone is, but they can break someone inside them. [...] As science advanced, another truth became clear. Being LGBTQ+ isn't an illness. There is nothing medically or psychologically wrong that needs correcting.

So the idea of treatment stopped making sense. What remained was harm. And bans on conversion practices came from that realisation. They aren't about policing belief or silencing religion. They are about drawing a line where harm begins. [...] At heart, the ban says something simple, but powerful. People should not be punished for being themselves, especially when they are at their most vulnerable. Protection, not punishment, is the goal. [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Debate under urgent procedure: The 65th anniversary of the European Social Charter: social rights as the foundation of resilient democracies and social justice ([Doc. 16335](#))



Mr Iulian BULAI (Romania) – I agree with the rapporteur when he says that social rights are under unprecedented pressure in Europe and beyond. [...] As parliamentarians, we try to find solutions, and we confront this pressure in our daily work with our citizens at home. We also feel the devastating consequences of this pressure, including when our citizens are lured by populist forces into supporting easy solutions to complex problems. [...] We must not overlook social rights, or abandon our pursuit of social justice, employment and decent working conditions today, when important technological, structural, economic and social changes are reshaping the labour markets. In Europe, we have made tremendous progress in the past 65 years, and we are the

most advanced group of countries on this matter. Let us not stop here. The European Social Charter is a major source of inspiration, and available to us all in this pursuit. [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Post-monitoring dialogue with North Macedonia ([Doc. 16317](#))



Ms Rian VOGELS (Netherlands) – ALDE Group supports closing the post monitoring dialogue. This reflects genuine institutional progress and sends a clear message to pro European and reform minded actors that commitment and reform do make a difference. However, closing post monitoring must not be mistaken for ending scrutiny. The Parliamentary Assembly retains its permanent responsibility to uphold Council of Europe standards, as it does for all member states. From a liberal perspective, human rights are not a checklist to be completed once and set aside. They require constant political will, resilient institutions, and sustained societal engagement. [...] The report rightly identifies areas where further progress is needed. Judicial independence remains vulnerable to political pressure and limited

resources. The fight against corruption must be assessed not by action plans, but by credible investigations, prosecutions, and final court decisions. We also underline that implementing the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights is a core and ongoing obligation. [...] Particular care must be given to the protection of minority rights in the broadest sense: ethnic, religious, social, and sexual minorities. [More](#), [voting results](#), [Video EN](#) | [OV](#)

Free debate

GROUP
SPEAKERS

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RESULTS



Mr Iulian BULAI (Romania) – [...] On behalf of the Liberals, we wish you, Madam President Petra Bayr, good luck, wisdom, inspiration and creativity for the coming two years. You have our full support for the good things you have proposed to do with this Assembly on behalf of all Europeans. I welcome very much the freedom that the new colleague has taken in speaking his own mind. That's the spirit of this Parliamentary Assembly. There's no censorship of that. So we are here to exchange views. We are here to be brothers and sisters of open communication with arguments. As Liberals, and as a Liberal, I would never ask someone to just refrain from saying something, but I would not have the courage to award a person for those statements either, despite the fact that I'm not agreeing with it. So here there's

liberty of speech. [More](#), [Video EN](#) | [OV](#)