

# PACE

## The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe



*"The Council of Europe was set up in 1949 by courageous visionaries intent on building a Europe based on justice and equity, a Europe that would bring freedom and peace to all its inhabitants.*

*PACE continues to set great store by the vision of those who founded the Council of Europe; it strives to promote human rights and human dignity and champions openness and democracy. Just as it did 50 years ago, it allows Europeans to voice their opinions and involves them in the building of Europe."*

René van der Linden

President of PACE

### progression of a PACE report

#### Tabling of a motion for a recommendation or resolution

A group of parliamentarians  
(at least ten) tables a motion  
for a resolution or recommendation  
on a specific subject.

#### Referral to a committee

The motion is examined by the PACE  
Bureau which proposes to the Assembly  
to refer it or not to the relevant committee.

#### Committee examination

A rapporteur is appointed.  
The draft report is examined  
by the committee.

Following this discussion,  
the committee adopts  
a draft resolution or draft  
recommendation.

#### Debate on the report in plenary session

The report is presented  
by the rapporteur and debated  
by the Assembly.

#### Vote on and adoption of the text

At the end of the debate, the draft  
report – which can be amended –  
is voted on and adopted or rejected  
by the Assembly.

### parliamentary delegations with their number of representatives

Albania	(4)	Greece	(7)	Romania	(10)
Andorra	(2)	Hungary	(7)	Russian	
Armenia	(4)	Iceland	(3)	Federation	(18)
Austria	(6)	Ireland	(4)	San Marino	(2)
Azerbaijan	(6)	Italy	(18)	Serbia	(7)
Belgium	(7)	Latvia	(3)	Slovakia	(5)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	(5)	Liechtenstein	(2)	Slovenia	(3)
Bulgaria	(6)	Lithuania	(4)	Spain	(12)
Croatia	(5)	Luxembourg	(3)	Sweden	(6)
Cyprus	(3)	Malta	(3)	Switzerland	(6)
Czech Republic	(7)	Moldova	(5)	"the former	
Denmark	(5)	Monaco	(2)	Yugoslav Republic	
Estonia	(3)	Montenegro	(3)	of Macedonia"	(3)
Finland	(5)	Netherlands	(7)	Turkey	(12)
France	(18)	Norway	(5)	Ukraine	(12)
Georgia	(5)	Poland	(12)	United Kingdom	(18)
Germany	(18)	Portugal	(7)		

### special guest status

The Belarusian parliament's special guest status was suspended on 13 January 1997.

### observer status

The parliaments of Canada, Israel and Mexico have observer status.



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“I see these twelve stars as a reminder that the world could become a better place if, from time to time, we had the courage to look up at the stars”

Václav Havel, President of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic  
Parliamentary Assembly, 10 May 1990

## Europe's democratic conscience

The parliamentarians who make up PACE come from the national parliaments of the Organisation's 47 member states. They meet four times a year to discuss topical issues and ask European governments to take initiatives and report back. These parliamentarians speak for the 800 million Europeans who elected them. They broach the issues of their choice, and the governments of European countries – which are represented at the Council of Europe by the Committee of Ministers – are obliged to respond. They are Greater Europe's democratic conscience.

## A melting pot of ideas

Since 1949, PACE, which is sometimes said to be the driving force of the Council of Europe, has been behind many of the Organisation's major initiatives (the European Convention on Human Rights, for instance). It must be consulted about all international treaties drawn up at the Council of Europe. It elects the judges of the European Court of Human Rights and the Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe and its own Secretary General.

## Helping states to honour their commitments

To what extent do countries honour their commitments? The Assembly monitors the situation and endeavours to help states to honour their obligations. If a state persistently fails to do so, the Assembly may refuse to ratify, or may withdraw, the credentials of that country's national delegation. As a last resort, it may recommend that the country's membership of the Organisation be suspended.



## Experience on the ground

PACE representatives make periodic field visits throughout Europe to collect information from which to draft Assembly reports. They also make trips to monitor elections. PACE is constantly developing parliamentary diplomacy and promoting the active involvement of parliamentarians in international relations.

## Building parliamentary partnerships

PACE co-operates with the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE and other international parliamentary bodies to strengthen the influence of parliamentarians in European and international affairs. It also serves as a parliamentary platform for the OECD and has close links with several United Nations specialised agencies.

## Concrete results

The texts adopted by PACE – recommendations, resolutions and opinions – serve as guidelines for the Committee of Ministers, national governments, parliaments and political parties. Eventually, through legislation and practice, these texts influence and improve Europeans' lives.

## How it works

PACE meets four times a year for a week-long plenary session in the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg. The 318 representatives and 318 substitutes are appointed by national parliaments from among their members. Each country, depending on its population, has between two and eighteen representatives, who provide a balanced reflection of the political forces represented in the national parliament.

In addition to English and French, which are the Council of Europe's official languages, PACE uses German, Italian and Russian as working languages.

The Assembly's work is prepared by ten committees and a Bureau comprising the President of the Assembly, the 20 Vice-Presidents and the chairs of the five political groups. The Assembly adopts three types of texts: recommendations (to the Committee of Ministers), resolutions (which express its own viewpoint) and opinions (on membership applications, draft treaties and other texts submitted by the Committee of Ministers).

Issues currently being considered include:

- Protection and promotion of human rights and democracy
- Honouring of member states' obligations and commitments
- Combating terrorism while respecting human rights
- Regional crises
- The situation of refugees and migrants
- Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue
- Social cohesion



## Political groups

SOC	<i>Socialist Group</i>
EPP/CD	<i>Group of the European People's Party</i>
ALDE	<i>Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe</i>
EDG	<i>European Democrat Group</i>
UEL	<i>Group of the Unified European Left</i>

## Committees

83 seats

- Political affairs
- Legal affairs and human rights
- Economic affairs and development
- Social, health and family affairs
- Migration, refugees and population
- Culture, science and education
- Environment, agriculture and local and regional affairs
- Equal opportunities for women and men
- Honouring of obligations and commitments by member states (monitoring)

51 seats

- Rules of Procedure and immunities