

**1 Ekim 2007**

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

Mr MERCAN (*Turkey*). – Mr President, may I first thank you for all you have done for the Council of Europe? You will be remembered as one of the monumental Presidents of the Council of Europe. I also thank Mr Luc Van den Brande as Chairman of the Election Commission to Turkey. He knows Turkey much better than many other colleagues here.

I want to touch on two issues that my good friend Luc mentioned in his report about elections in Turkey. As you all know, we had an election on 22 July. The participation rate was more than 80% and, as Luc stated, the representation of the electorate exceeded approximately 85%. Given the low participation rate in many, if not all, European countries, I wonder whether that high rate of representation has ever been achieved in the last decades of elections to the European Parliament. I brought up this issue because my friend Luc said that the threshold was high and that it must be reduced. Our last election is a clear indication that a threshold is not necessarily a block to representation. At least, we can easily prove that representation in countries with no threshold is not better than that in countries with a high threshold. There are many examples of that. In addition, we have the European Court of Human Rights decision vis-à-vis the Chamber's decision and judgment on 30 January 2007 with respect to the Sadak and Yumak application that the threshold does not constitute a violation of the Convention. That is the decision of the Court. Nevertheless, we have taken advice. However, as I have stated, the threshold is not a barrier to better representation.

The second issue I want to raise is the report's categorisation of elections in Turkey. The report said that elections in Turkey were "generally" in compliance with European standards. I can assure members that elections in Turkey are in full compliance, excluding the threshold of course, with European standards. There was freedom of speech, freedom in advertising and we were as good as other European countries in coming up with our own lists determined by the party leadership and party chairmanship. We were no worse than many European countries.

Thank you very much for listening to me. For me, too, this may be my last speech in the plenary.

***Migration – Joint Debate***

Mr ATEŞ (*Turkey*). – I am presenting this opinion on behalf of our rapporteur, Mr Iwiński. Our rapporteur appreciates the report's approach, especially of reviewing the many activities of the IOM. It has done an excellent job, but it is not enough. However, we thank the organisation and we would like its efforts to get stronger and stronger.

While agreeing with all the findings and recommendations of the report, and thanking the rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, our rapporteur – Mr Iwiński – would like to underline two major points. One is globalisation and the good governance of migration flows. We must concentrate on that important subject. Migration is a phenomenon that is not going to end. It is bound to grow in response to globalisation, widespread poverty and income disparity. Those problems will continue and therefore migration flows will continue. The IOM makes a great contribution and efforts to improve the good governance of migration around the world, and unfortunately, we in Europe are not doing enough. We are putting all our energies into countering irregular migration while creating insufficient opportunities for legal migration. We enforce border control and surveillance so as to prevent the entry of all irregular migrants. We do not do enough to address the root causes of migration.

The second important point that we wish to underline is the link between migration, development and climate change. Climate change, with its resulting effects, such as rising sea levels, weather-induced floods and shrinking freshwater supplies, will provoke the displacement of approximately 50 million people by 2010. That is the figure of the United Nations and it is confirmed by the Red Cross. Natural disasters currently displace more people than do wars. We have to find a solution.

We must learn much from the IOM and consider its recommendations carefully. The Council of Europe must continue to support the organisation but we should also consider other solutions. For example, we have a North-South Centre. Perhaps that organisation can co-operate with the IOM to overcome some of the problems of migration. Thank you.

Mrs BİLGEHAN (*Turkey*) thanked the Rapporteur of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population for producing a report on such a topical issue, and said that the Assembly needed to look for solutions to the problem of mixed migration flow. Increased migration raised concerns about the fundamental human rights of migrants. The Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men had looked at the specific situation faced by women migrants. They had found that over half the world's migrant population were women. There was a need to explore how issues of gender could be brought into the debate. It was believed that authorities dealing with migration should establish robust systems to prevent indirect discrimination against women. Since 1998, the Council of Europe had issued reports on migrants and refugee populations. However, there was more to be done. The committee had proposed a number of amendments to the report.

Mr ÇAVUŞOĞLU (*Turkey*). – Thank you Mr President. I have written a speech, and was going to stress the importance of the reports presented by our rapporteurs.

However, after hearing from them and from other colleagues, I do not need to outline the reports again, so I will not take as much time as I anticipated.

First, on behalf of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, may I thank our honourable guest, Mr McKinley not only for his participation in this important debate, but for the excellent exchange of views that we enjoyed this morning and for his willingness to co-operate with the committee and with the Council of Europe? The IOM's assistance during the elaboration of several reports has been valuable. I thank, too, our three rapporteurs for the excellent job that they have done and I thank the Secretariat for the great support that it has provided. Thank you very much, colleagues, for your participation and support in the debate. I thank Mrs Bilgehan and Mr Ateş for their opinions.

I would like to stress one thing. Migration issues are humanitarian issues. Yes, we are all politicians and are active in politics, and sometimes we have to give a message to the areas that we represent and to our people. However, we should not politicise humanitarian issues all of the time. That is a problem, which is why we cannot implement the recommendations and resolutions that we have accepted. The issue of Armenia and Azerbaijan has been relevant in every debate. It includes subjects such as internally displaced persons, migration in the South Caucasus, missing persons and the situation of migrant women and children. We should not politicise the issue, which involves a conflict between two countries.

I want to thank colleagues in advance for supporting the recommendation, the resolution and the reports.

**2 Ekim 2007**

### ***Humanitarian crisis in Darfur***

Mr ÇAVUŞOĞLU (*Turkey*). – Mrs Vermot-Mangold has obligations in her national parliament, which is why I am presenting her report.

In the April part-session, on the initiative of the Swiss delegation, the Assembly held a current affairs debate on Sudan and Darfur and Europe's responsibility in that regard. Based on a proposal by our colleague, Mr Marty, the Assembly agreed that it should adopt a special resolution and put the appalling situation in Darfur before national governments so that they can act on it. Mrs Vermot-Mangold was appointed by our committee as the rapporteur responsible for this report and we thank her for her great efforts in preparing it. As I said, she is unable to present her work herself.

Today we have a unique opportunity to defend the fates of several million displaced people in the Darfur region and to call on the international community to act to end this humanitarian crisis. The conflict in Darfur is one of the most serious

ongoing humanitarian crises in the 21st century. We are alarmed by the scale of violence in the Darfur region, where 85 000 people have been killed and more than 200 000 have died of hunger or disease during the four years of conflict between local leaders, the Sudanese army and the allied Janjaweed militia. As a result of the crisis, more than 2 million people live in camps for internally displaced persons – IDPs – scattered over the vast area of the Darfur region, and up to 4 million people desperately need humanitarian aid. Unfortunately, despite the signing of the Darfur peace agreement in May 2006 and the recent ceasefire agreement between the Government of Sudan and rebel groups on 11 January 2007, the Sudanese Government has failed to stop violence in the region and improve the humanitarian situation.

The situation in Darfur has been aggravated by several important factors: the demographic explosion in the region; the climatic changes that have caused drought; political opportunism; and the failure of traditional tribal mechanisms to control the conflict. Internal displacement continues, with more than 250 000 more internally displaced persons registered in January 2007 than a year previously. Violence against women has surged, with more than 200 instances of sexual assault in five weeks around the Kalma camp in south Darfur alone in September-October 2006. April 2007 was one of the bloodiest months for the African Union Mission in Sudan since the 2004 deployment, with seven soldiers killed. The human security consequences of the Darfur conflict extend well beyond its borders, with hundreds of people killed in the east of neighbouring Chad, and another 120 000 people displaced.

Thirteen United Nations agencies, more than 80 non-governmental organisations and various agencies of the Red Cross are giving humanitarian support to the affected population in the Darfur region. After the Darfur peace agreement, humanitarian aid workers came under increasing attack by fighters on both sides, which led to the withdrawal of some humanitarian missions and important movement restrictions for international humanitarian organisations. Despite a high degree of insecurity and the continued harassment of humanitarian organisations and workers, the humanitarian community has been able to safeguard humanitarian standards in camps for IDPs.

Unfortunately, the funding for humanitarian operations will run out in a few months, with every prospect that the crisis will become further aggravated. A few days ago, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees made an urgent appeal to the international community, informing it that it would have to cut its humanitarian operation in the Darfur region unless it received more funds immediately. Only US\$12.6 million has been received towards its budget of \$19.7 million.

What can we do to stop the crisis and help the millions of people in need of humanitarian assistance? First, our governments must continue to press for the

establishment of a functioning ceasefire and the deployment of the African Union-United Nations hybrid force in Darfur. We should put pressure on the Government of Sudan immediately to ensure that it complies fully with all the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and in particular puts an immediate end to violence against the civilian population: violations of human rights, in particular the forced expulsion of people from their home villages; multiple acts of violence against women and girls, especially the use of rape as a cruel instrument of war; and the blockage of relief efforts in the region.

Urgent action should be undertaken to ensure the effective protection of the civilian population in the Darfur region and neighbouring areas in Chad and the Central African Republic. A strict time frame for the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces should be established, with concrete sanctions for non-compliance. An appeal should be made to the Sudanese Government to increase its efforts to promote the national reconciliation process to establish peace and stability in the region. It is important to support the initiative by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to hold peace talks between the Sudanese Government and the Darfur rebels on ending more than four and a half years of conflict. Those talks should start on 27 October in Tripoli in Libya.

Our member states and other stakeholders should contribute generously to the extension of humanitarian assistance in the region and provide the humanitarian operations of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UNHCR, UNICEF – the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund – and the International Committee of the Red Cross with financial and material resources. Pressure should be put on the Government of Sudan and all parties in the conflict to pay particular attention to the protection of women and girls and others who are in an especially vulnerable situation. Dear colleagues, I urge you to support this draft resolution, which will be our joint contribution in respect of this serious ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Mr ÇAVUŞOĞLU (*Turkey*). – Dear colleagues, all your voices are raised today during the debate in defending the victims of the terrible humanitarian crisis in Darfur and condemning the violation of the human rights of the civilian population by the parties of the conflict. That demonstrates the urgency of the situation and the need to put an end to the human suffering. I am sure that the resolution that we will adopt today will contribute to the initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, in holding peace talks between the Sudanese Government and the Darfur rebels on ending four and half years of conflict. Those will start on 27 October, as I said in my speech. I therefore urge colleagues to support and adopt the resolution.

My special thanks go to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee and personally to Mr Hancock for his firm position and very important amendments to the draft resolution, which we, as the Committee on Migration, Refugees and

Population, certainly support. I completely agree with Mr Hancock that we can make a difference on this issue. We should put pressure on those of our countries that support such conflicts. As Mr Chope noted, it is unacceptable that some of our member states continue to sell arms to Sudan.

As was pointed out by Mr Gardetto, financial aid and humanitarian action form one of our major obligations. I agree with Mr Haibach that the crisis in Darfur affects us directly because it affects the credibility of the international community. We cannot close our eyes when there is a violation of human rights in any part of the world because one of the mandates of the Council of Europe is to defend human rights. We have a saying in Turkish – I do not know if it will make sense if I translate it into English – that if you ignore the fire in the neighbouring house, eventually it will jump to your house. Another saying is: you can allow a snake to live if it does not bite you, but it might bite you eventually. Combating terrorism is the major issue in the world right now. We have to find the root causes of terrorism and terrorists. Situations such as that in Darfur are root causes of terrorism and we have to fight to stop them.

I greatly appreciate the contribution by Mr Zacchera, who witnessed himself the situation in Darfur. Mr Branger is right to call that situation a crime against humanity, and I would like to thank him for his contribution. Finally, I would like to stress the special contribution to this report made by our colleague from Canada, Mr Goldstein, and thank him for his work in Canada to defend the cause of the victims in Darfur. Thank you very much for your attention and support.

### **3 Ekim 2007**

#### ***Address by Mr Abdullah Gül, President of Turkey***

Mr GÜL (*President of Turkey*). – Mr President, distinguished parliamentarians, ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen, it is with strong personal feelings that I address you today, as the President of the Republic of Turkey. I was an active member of the Assembly for nine years. The last time I spoke from this rostrum was nearly five years ago, as the prime minister of a newly elected government. During the last four years, I have represented my country at the Committee of Ministers as the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I gained great experience and had valuable inspiration from my long association with the Council of Europe. Therefore, coming back to this Assembly today is not merely a pleasant occasion to meet many old friends. It is also a deeply emotional moment.

I warmly thank my old friend, President van der Linden for inviting me to the Assembly again. I pay tribute to you, Mr President, for all that you have done to raise the profile and visibility of this Assembly during your tenure. Under your able leadership, the Assembly's role as a pan-European forum for debate and discussion has been strengthened. The debates you organised on current issues like

intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, and the state of human rights and democracy in Europe, testify to the contribution of this Assembly to the European debate.

Mr President, when I addressed the Assembly in January 2003, I outlined the ambitious reform agenda adopted by the Turkish Government and supported by the Turkish Parliament elected in the November 2002 elections. It was an agenda that embodied Turkey's strong commitments to achieve the highest standards of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Today, I am proud to say that Turkey has lived up to the expectations it generated by fulfilling the commitments undertaken.

First and foremost among them has been human rights policy. One pillar of this policy has been assuming new obligations by becoming party to core international instruments on fundamental rights and freedoms. I am pleased to inform you that Turkey is now party to all of the seven principal international human rights treaties of the United Nations. Turkey is also party to a large number of Council of Europe conventions and protocols, including Protocols Nos. 6 and 13, abolishing the death penalty in all circumstances.

The second pillar of Turkey's policy has been legislative reform. In this field, our progress has been significant. Existing laws and regulations have been revised in the light of our international and European commitments. The case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the recommendations of the international monitoring mechanisms have been taken on board. Nine legislative packages and substantial constitutional amendments have been passed by our parliament. Amendments on the Political Parties Law and the Anti-Terror Law, the adoption of new civil and penal codes and the new Law on Associations are among the benchmarks of our legislative reforms.

In this context, gender equality is enshrined as a constitutional principle with an emphasis on the obligation of the state to ensure such equality. All forms of discrimination are banned. Legal and constitutional guarantees on the right to association and assembly have been reinforced. Limits that can be imposed on freedom of expression have been reduced in line with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. Cultural and religious rights have also been upgraded.

The fight against torture and ill-treatment has been another priority. The zero tolerance policy against torture has yielded impressive results. We have put in place an effective legislative and regulatory framework for combating torture. In the words of the former President of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, today "it is difficult to find a Council of Europe member state with a more advanced set of provisions in combating torture" than Turkey. Human rights reforms in Turkey have been widely acclaimed by the international community from Europe to the Middle East.

I should also point out that the reforms in Turkey did not take place in the most favourable international environment. They occurred at a time when there was a massive war in Iraq, as well as threats of war and other conflicts in our neighbourhood. The world economy was also passing through dire straits.

The ongoing transformation in Turkey corresponds to the aspirations of the Turkish people. The cumulative impact of the democratic reforms is that Turkey today is more pluralist, inclusive and tolerant. The orderly conduct of parliamentary elections with a turnout of almost 85% this summer reaffirms the commitment of the Turkish people to democratic values.

The process is still under way. In a big country with a large population, sweeping reforms are difficult uniformly to implement overnight. The third pillar of our human rights policy, effective implementation, still poses a few challenges. The new Turkish Government has announced that it will give top priority to addressing those challenges. The government has also announced its full commitment to ensure full exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms by every individual.

The political reforms in Turkey were accompanied by sweeping economic reforms, financial discipline and structural changes in economy. Thus, economic growth and dynamism was substantially boosted. Reforms have also led to the flourishing of cultural, literary and artistic life in Turkey, and Istanbul's designation as the cultural capital of Europe for 2010 and Turkey's designation as the focus country of the international Frankfurt book fair in 2008 are indicators of that development.

Turkey's commitment to the reform process will go on. I trust that the newly elected Turkish Parliament, which started its legislative work only two days ago, will address those issues soon. In my speech in the inaugural session of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, I put a strong emphasis on the need for the continuation and deepening of the reform process and its full implementation. I am confident that the level of maturity achieved by the Turkish democracy will enable us to tackle remaining human rights issues effectively.

A lively and wide debate has been taking place in Turkey on the elaboration of an entirely new constitution or a comprehensive amendment of the current one. This broad public debate is continuing with the participation of all political parties, NGOs, professional associations, universities, think tanks, intellectuals, the media and citizens. I am confident that this debate will culminate in improving Turkey's constitutional norms in line with the requirements of the 21st century.

Today, one of the major global challenges is the growing polarisation of the international community along cultural and religious fault lines. Extremists on both sides irresponsibly exploit this all over the world. I believe that it is time for moderates to be as daring and courageous as extremists.



Troubling events in recent years have made a meaningful dialogue imperative for us all. A true dialogue among nations calls for respect for, and understanding of, other cultures and civilisations. Our basic principles of respect for human rights, democracy and rule of law are universal. Therefore, those principles form a perfect basis for such a true dialogue, because these values are products of mankind's collective progress and enlightenment.

Today, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and discrimination on religious or ethnic grounds are on the rise in many of our societies. Migrant communities all over the world, in particular Muslims, are specifically vulnerable to acts of prejudice, hatred and intolerance in the post-11 September period. Combating discrimination and hatred of all kinds requires strong political resolve and proactive action everywhere. Similarly, we have to reject the identification of terrorism and extremism with any particular religion or culture. The real fault lines are not among religions or cultures, but among open democracies and authoritarian regimes.

This is why Turkey co-sponsored, together with Spain, the initiative on the alliance of civilisations under the auspices of the United Nations, with a view to promoting dialogue and co-operation among different cultures and religions. Turkey, given its historic multicultural experience, its strong links with a vast geographical area and its position as a home to many civilizations, is fully aware that interaction among different cultures is necessary, possible, fruitful and enriching. Turkey's own experience is testimony that secular democracy can flourish in a predominantly Muslim society.

The Council of Europe has been at the forefront of efforts to foster unity in diversity. In this age of globalisation, ensuring respect for unity in diversity has become a major challenge, simply because globalisation renders diversity inevitable. The settlement of anachronistic political conflicts in Europe and on its periphery is a must for the future security, stability and welfare of Europe.

Cyprus remains the oldest unresolved conflict in Europe. The overall settlement of this conflict could have been achieved during the simultaneous referenda, which were held on the island on 24 April 2004, on the UN settlement plan. However, that chance was missed due to the rejection of the plan by the Greek Cypriot side. Had this opportunity been seized then Cyprus now could have been a reunified island and represented as such in this Assembly. Isolations imposed on the Turkish Cypriots would have been lifted. The Turkish and Greek Cypriot property issues would have been resolved. The military presence of Greece and Turkey would have reached an agreed solution. A negotiated settlement in Cyprus would have transformed the eastern Mediterranean into a hub of regional co-operation between Turkey, Greece and island of Cyprus. Nevertheless, Turkey remains fully committed to a political settlement: a settlement which will ensure the reunification of the island under the auspices of the good offices mission of the UN Secretary-General, based on the long-established UN parameters.

I recognise the presence of two elected representatives of the Turkish Cypriot people among you. I seize this opportunity to thank the Parliamentary Assembly for taking this modest but meaningful step in helping to ease the political isolation of the Turkish Cypriots.

South Caucasus is another critical region burdened with persisting unresolved conflicts. Its frozen conflicts continue to represent a serious threat to peace and stability in the region. These conflicts provide a major impediment to the region-wide co-operation initiatives. They are also undermining prospects for prosperity of the future generations. Therefore, the resolution of these conflicts constitutes one of the most important and urgent issues in the South Caucasus and beyond. Peaceful solutions should also meet the Azerbaijani and Georgian legitimate concerns over their territorial integrity and sovereignty. Turkey's approach to the South Caucasus is shaped by its genuine desire to establish comprehensive co-operation in the region. The contribution of all three South Caucasian states would be most preferable.

Turning to south-eastern Europe, the crisis unleashed by the disintegration of former Yugoslavia is back to where it started two decades ago, in Kosovo. Turkey has acted together with the international community in the settlement of Kosovo's final status. In south-eastern Europe, our focus now must be not on where we were, but on where we would like to head. The issues confronting the region call for bilateral and multilateral co-operation among the Balkan states.

The Black Sea region draws growing attention due to its strategic transportation and trade routes as well as its energy corridors. All Black Sea littoral states are members of the Council of Europe. That provides a common basis for enhanced co-operation. Almost twenty years ago, Turkey pioneered the establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization to help transform the Black Sea into a region of co-operation and integrate it into the global economy. Deeper economic co-operation may also eventually contribute to the resolution of political issues in the region.

I know that your Assembly has been preoccupied with the developments in Iraq. The territorial integrity, political unity and stability of Iraq is of vital importance for the region and beyond. Turkey contributes in every possible way to further the national reconciliation and political dialogue process in Iraq. Arriving at such a political deal will require fair representation of all political elements and equitable sharing of the natural resources of the country. The current situation in Iraq may not be promising. However, one should not fall into the illusion that the current problems can be overcome by the partition of Iraq. This would be the worst scenario for the people of Iraq and the whole region. Therefore, nobody should look for solutions alternative to respecting territorial and political unity of Iraq. This will certainly further complicate the situation.

The situation in Iraq is also of direct relevance for Turkey's security due to the challenge it poses in combating terrorism. The terrorist organisation PKK continues to use the north of Iraq as a safe haven and to perpetrate violent acts across the boundary. The need for international co-operation in combating terrorism is today self-evident and compelling. The normative work carried out by the Council of Europe in this field is commendable. It provides the legal basis for enhanced European co-operation.

At this point, I would like to thank you, Mr President, for your sincere and prompt reaction to the recent atrocious terrorist attack by PKK against my people in the southeast town of Şırnak. The victims of this attack were a dozen local civilians working for an irrigation project. They were going back their home to break their fast last Saturday afternoon.

Mr President, distinguished parliamentarians. Turkey, as a founding member, believes that the Council of Europe continues to play an essential, if not much publicised, role in Europe. Its standard-setting work has been indispensable in achieving democratic stability in the continent. The comprehensive system of conventions has created a pan-European legal space with monitoring mechanisms. Independent bodies such as the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) carry out very valuable work. The Turkish authorities maintain excellent working relations with them. Our reform process has benefited from their recommendations.

The European Court of Human Rights is a unique institution. The case law that it has developed over the decades has expanded individual liberties for the citizens of Europe. Turkey supports the adoption of more effective working methods and additional resources to the court. The entry into force of Protocol 14 without further delay would be a first step in that direction. There is a large grey area, however, where the protection mechanism provided by the European Convention on Human Rights does not apply. This situation can be corrected by the accession of the European Union to the Convention. Thus, actions directly affecting lives of millions of Europeans would be submitted to the scrutiny of the Court.

Today, Europe enjoys unprecedented democratic stability and prosperity. It is the duty of our generation to take these achievements forward by bringing to a peaceful end unresolved regional conflicts, fostering intercultural dialogue, combating discrimination and terrorism and promoting greater respect for human rights everywhere in the continent. The Council of Europe and, in particular, the Parliamentary Assembly can continue to make important contributions towards these goals. As a former member of the Assembly, I call on you to take this challenge. Thank you.

**4 Ekim 2007**

***Prostitution – which stance to take?***

Mrs BİLGEHAN (*Turkey*) said that delegates held different views on this matter. The report had been adopted by the committee despite some reticence. She was glad that it had been well received by the Assembly. Forced prostitution and trafficking was a form of modern slavery and needed to be condemned. The prostitution of minors was completely unacceptable. Attitudes varied in the case of voluntary prostitution by women aged over 18 who had “chosen” to engage in the activity. Sweden was the only European country that could be said to have taken an abolitionist approach. Discrimination had to be avoided and rules sometimes pushed prostitution underground, leaving women in the arms of pimps.

The underlying causes of prostitution needed to be addressed so that women were not forced into the activity. Action should not be moralistic and individual choices had to be respected so long as they did not harm other people. To answer the question “which stance to take?”, her recommendation was a pragmatic approach with respect for human dignity. She thanked Mr Platvoet for his work on this report as well as elsewhere in the Council of Europe, as she understood that he would shortly be leaving the Assembly. She commended his report to the Assembly.