

# Press Release

## Parliamentary Assembly Communication Unit

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### Russian chairmanship in the Council of Europe

## Parliamentary Assembly President meets Russian President as PACE Standing Committee holds Moscow meeting

Strasbourg, 24.05.2006 – On the occasion of Russia's chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, Parliamentary Assembly President René van der Linden is due to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Their talks are expected to focus on the objectives of Russia's chairmanship, a European partnership, and on Russia's contribution to building a democratic Europe, including the search for peaceful solutions to existing conflicts on the continent. Russia's role in negotiating a meaningful agreement between the Council of Europe and the EU, with a stronger parliamentary dimension, is also due to be discussed.

The Standing Committee(\*) of the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) will also meet in Moscow on Monday 29 May (11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m., President Hotel). It acts on behalf of the Assembly between part-sessions and will bring together some 60 parliamentarians from the 46 member states.

It will be opened at 11 a.m. by the Speaker of the State Duma Boris Gryzlov and René van der Linden, followed by an exchange of views with Sergey Lavrov, Russian Foreign Minister and Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers.

Items on the agenda include the referendum on the State Status in the Republic of Montenegro, the cultural diversity of the Northern Caucasus, working migration from eastern and central Europe, the need to enhance European air safety, economic development in Ukraine, a European prisons charter and the Council of Europe's budget, as well as a report on the Organisation's visibility.

"Russia's chairmanship in our organisation is an opportunity for Russia to demonstrate that it is a full part of democratic Europe, as an equal partner," Mr van der Linden said in the run-up to the meetings.

\* \* \*

The meeting of the Standing Committee is **OPEN TO THE PRESS**.

**The Russian Foreign Minister and PACE President are due to meet the press on Monday 29 May at approximately noon at the President Hotel.**

Other press meetings will be announced on the spot.

More information: <http://assembly.coe.int>

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(\*)The PACE Standing Committee comprises the Bureau (the President and twenty Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, the leaders of the five political groups and the ten Committee Chairpersons) and the leaders of the national delegations. It generally meets at least twice a year and its main task is to act on behalf of the Assembly when the latter is not in session.

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 315 members from the national parliaments of the 46 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).