

Press Release

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Frozen conflicts must be solved, says PACE President on eve of visit to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

Strasbourg, 03.07.2007 – René van der Linden, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), is to visit Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia from 4 to 10 July 2007. This will be his second visit to the three countries of the southern Caucasus during his mandate.

Mr van der Linden will be in Armenia on 4-5 July, Georgia on 5-7 July, and Azerbaijan on 8-10 July. On 7 July, he will visit South Ossetia for meetings in Tskhinvali and Kurta.

Speaking on the eve of his visit, the President said: "This is an important region for the Council of Europe, and my main aim in returning here is to see how we can do more to solve the frozen conflicts in the countries concerned. Only this will enable the peaceful development of the region in the interest of all its peoples."

As well as the role of parliamentary diplomacy in solving conflicts, the President intends to raise the rights of the opposition, freedom of expression, the role of civil society, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, relations with neighbouring countries, and the building of one Europe without dividing lines.

He is due to meet the Presidents and leading members of the parliament and government in all three countries, as well as, among others, the leaders of different political forces, representatives of civil society and the media, and religious leaders.

Press conferences will be arranged in Yerevan (Wednesday 4 July), Tbilisi (Friday 6 and Saturday 7 July) and Baku (Monday 9 July), times and places to be confirmed.

Further information may be obtained from the offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary General in the three countries concerned:

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Georgia: +995 32 98 89 77 / 95 60, e-mail informtbilisi@coe.int
Azerbaijan: +994 12 497 54 93 / 89, e-mail fieldbaku@coe.int

Field Code Changed

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 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).