

Press Release

Parliamentary Assembly Communication Unit

Ref: 172a08

Tel: +33 3 88 41 31 93

Fax :+33 3 90 21 41 34

pace.com@coe.int

internet: www.coe.int/press



47 members

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

John Prescott calls on all parties in Armenia to show "restraint and respect" following talks

Strasbourg, 10.03.2008 - John Prescott (United Kingdom, SOC), rapporteur for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on the Armenian elections, has called upon all sides to show restraint, respect and avoid any precipitate action that could make matters worse, following two days of meetings with all relevant parties in Yerevan.

"This is essential if we are to move to a genuine and open dialogue," said Mr Prescott. "I am convinced that a solution can be found to the present difficulties. This requires the recognition by all of the authority of the Constitutional Court and its ruling on the outcome of the Presidential election. It also requires the removal of the state of emergency and the restoration of individual human rights and freedoms, including political rights, as well as the establishment of an independent inquiry into the circumstances of the events of 1 March that tragically led to the death of 8 individuals and left many injured. In addition it will also be necessary to make changes to Armenia's election code in order to restore trust in the electoral system. Next week I intend to communicate to the President of the Parliamentary Assembly in greater detail how the Assembly could play an effective role in securing the resolution of this conflict," Mr Prescott added.

He pledged that the Assembly will do all it can to help resolve the ongoing dispute following the recent Presidential election in Armenia.

Whilst in Armenia, Mr Prescott met President Kocharyan, Prime Minister and President-elect Serghz Sargsyan, former President and candidate Levon Ter-Petrossyan – who was held in de facto house detention -, Parliament Speaker Tigran Torosyan, the Chairman of the Constitutional Court, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Chairman of the national delegation to PACE, Davit Harutyunyan, as well as leading political figures and members of civil society and the diplomatic community in Armenia.

The snap visit was organised following a request from the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Lluís Maria de Puig, in co-operation with the Chairman of the Armenian delegation to PACE, following the declaration of emergency.

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

President: Lluís Maria de Puig (Spain, SOC) ; Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

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