

# Press Release

## Parliamentary Assembly – Communication Unit

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### 47 member States

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## Parliamentarians demand close regulation of private military and security firms

Strasbourg, 29.01.2009 – Council of Europe governments should closely regulate private military and security companies to ensure that in practice their personnel meet the human rights standards which apply to regular armies and state security services, according to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE).

After debating a report by Wolfgang Wodarg (Germany, SOC), the parliamentarians called for a convention which would require such firms to be more transparent, and to seek parliamentary approval for any foreign missions they carried out. Any laws and rules applying to the regular army or police should also apply to them.

Some areas of security were "inherently governmental", the Assembly said in its resolution, and should remain exclusive to sovereign states, which act in the public interest. Private firms, by contrast, had an interest in the outbreak or maintenance of conflict: "The more conflicts there are, the more the market for their services becomes profitable."

There were real human rights abuses committed by personnel from these companies, the parliamentarians said – yet there were difficulties in bringing them to justice. Their influence on political choices and policy orientations was also a concern.

Presenting his report, Mr Wodarg said the global turnover of such firms in 2006 was estimated at \$200 billion dollars. He cited the example of today's decision by the Iraqi government to deny a license to the US security firm Blackwater, which has been accused of excessive force.

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 Democrat Group); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).