

# Press Release

## Parliamentary Assembly – Communication Unit

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### 47 member States

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

## Spring session: Finnish President and Spanish Prime Minister to address PACE

Strasbourg, 17.04.2009 – Addresses by Finnish President Tarja Halonen and Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero are among highlights of the spring session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg on 27-30 April 2009.

On the first day of the session there will be a short celebration to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council of Europe.

Two requests for debates under urgent procedure have been submitted, one from the Socialist Group on the functioning of democratic institutions in Moldova, and one from the Committee of Ministers for an opinion on draft Protocol No. 14 *bis* to the European Convention on Human Rights, which aims at simplifying the internal procedures of the European Court of Human Rights.

The parliamentarians are also due to debate the humanitarian consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia, as well as the follow-up given by these two member states to the Assembly's [Resolution 1647](#).

Other items on the agenda include the situation of human rights defenders in Council of Europe member states, the honouring of obligations and commitments by Serbia, and action to combat gender-based human rights violations, including abduction of women and girls. On the fringe of this debate, Humeyra Abedin, a Bangladeshi doctor working in the United Kingdom who was abducted by her family and forcibly married, will give a press conference, together with her lawyer (see below).

Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation Miguel Ángel Moratinos will present the Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Assembly. Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg will also present his 2008 annual activity report.

The Assembly will decide on its final agenda at the opening of the session.

### Draft agenda

#### **Monday 27 April 2009 (opening at 11.30 am)**

- Opening of the second part of the 2009 Ordinary Session
- Election of a Vice-President of the Assembly with respect to Cyprus
- Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee
- Celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Council of Europe
- [Protection of human rights in emergency situations](#)

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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).

# Press Release

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## Tuesday 28 April 2009

- [The situation of human rights defenders in Council of Europe member states](#)
- Address by Finnish President Tarja Halonen
- [The funding of public service broadcasting](#)
- [Honouring of obligations and commitments by Serbia](#)
- [Action to combat gender-based human rights violations, including abduction of women and girls](#)

## Wednesday 29 April 2009

- Follow-up given by Georgia and Russia to [Resolution 1647 \(2009\)](#)
- The humanitarian consequences of the war between Georgia and Russia: follow-up given to [Resolution 1648 \(2009\)](#)
- Possible urgent debate on the functioning of democratic institutions in Moldova
- Communication from the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly presented by Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation Miguel Ángel Moratinos

## Thursday 30 April 2009

- Annual 2008 activity report by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and statement by the Commissioner, Thomas Hammarberg
- Possible urgent debate: opinion on draft Protocol No. 14 *bis* to the European Convention on Human Rights
- Address by Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero
- [Growing food and fuel](#)

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## **Practical information**

**Press conferences:** Lluís Maria de Puig, PACE President, will give a press conference on Monday 27 April at 10.30 am.

Humayra Abedin, a Bangladeshi doctor living in the UK who was abducted by her family and forcibly married, will give a press conference on Tuesday 28 April at 1.30 pm, ahead of the debate on this subject.

These two press conferences will be broadcast live on the Assembly's website at <http://tv.coe.int/internet/press.html>. Other press conferences will be announced on the spot.

**Further details:** see the Assembly's website, <http://assembly.coe.int>. Additional information may also be found on the [Council of Europe web portal](#).

**For TV planning units:** videos in broadcast quality summing up PACE highlights can be downloaded for free at <http://dl.coe.int> no later than two hours after the event.

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