

# Press Release

## Parliamentary Assembly Communication Unit

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## PACE President calls for a new impetus for a Europe-Russia partnership

Strasbourg, 26.04.2006 – On the eve of a visit to St Petersburg, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), René van der Linden, today called for a new impetus for a partnership between Russia and the rest of Europe.

"When I became President of the Assembly in January 2005, I stressed the importance of ensuring constructive and friendly relations with Russia. Now is the time to give this an extra impetus. We must strengthen mutual trust and confidence, cooperate on an equal footing as the key to success, build on stability and durability, shoulder our responsibilities in solving conflicts and consolidate peace. A partnership is therefore absolutely vital", René van der Linden said today.

On 27 April, he will take part in a special session of the State Duma of the Russian Federation to celebrate its first centenary. On this occasion, the President will hold a series of bilateral meetings in particular with the President of the State Duma, Boris Gрызlov, the President of the Council of the Federation, Sergey Mironov, as well as with the Speakers of the Parliaments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, will also attend this special session which will take place in the Tavrichesky Palace, where the first State Duma sat from 1906 to 1917. René van der Linden will deliver his address at 5 pm (the verbatim text will be available on the PACE website (<http://assembly.coe.int>)).

The next day, 28 April, the PACE President will be co-chairing the "International Conference on European Parliamentarianism: Past and Present", to be jointly organised by PACE, the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly and the State Duma. One of the topics to be discussed at the conference is "international standards for democratic elections". **The conclusions of this event will be presented at a press conference at 4.30 pm** (Tavrichesky Palace).

This will be the fourth time the President of the Assembly has visited Russia since his election in January 2005. The visit is taking place just before Russia takes over the Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, on 19 May 2006.

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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).