
Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TurkPA): Beyond Parliamentary Diplomacy

Ercan DURDULAR*

Abstract

TurkPA, as an example of an international parliamentary institution (IPI), constitutes a forum for parliamentary diplomacy and serves as the parliamentary dimension of the cooperation and integration of Turkic countries in Eurasia. IPIs provide new channels for the exchange of views and sharing of experiences, namely through parliamentary diplomacy. The common goal of those institutions and parliamentary diplomacy is to use debate, dialogue and personal contacts to enable parliamentarians in different countries to better understand each other, help one another, and therefore provide an alternative channel to facilitate intraregional communication. This is why these institutions also carry a symbolic importance. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Turkic states in the region showed their dedication to acting together in a coordinated way by establishing the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking States (TurkPA). Today, TurkPA provides oversight to regional problems, harmonises laws and policies towards regional integration, and makes recommendations for legislation, democratic institutions, election observation missions, and good governance, among other functions.

* PhD Candidate, Middle East Technical University, Department of International Relations; Ankara, Turkey; Chief Advisor to the Speaker of Turkish Grand National Assembly.
E-mail: ercan.durdular@tbmm.gov.tr

Key Words

TurkPA, Inter-Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs), Parliamentary Diplomacy, Regional Parliaments, Role of Parliaments in IR.

Introduction

This paper analyses the nature and role of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TurkPA) as an international parliamentary institution, elaborating on its different functions and structural properties that make it a tool for parliamentary diplomacy. To this end, this section details the definition and characteristics of IPIs in a theoretical sense. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the history, establishment, structure and activities of TurkPA, to demonstrate its characteristics as an IPI. Lastly, other IPIs have been comparatively analysed for discussion based on similarities and differences.

In their 25 years of independence, the Turkic Republics of Central Asia have had many successes, each of which

has been very important and valuable in their respective fields. One of the most important of these achievements was undoubtedly the establishment of the international Turkic organizations based on their commonalities in history, culture and language.

TurkPA, as an example of an international parliamentary institution (IPI), constitutes a forum for parliamentary diplomacy and serves as the parliamentary dimension of the cooperation and integration of Turkic countries in Eurasia.

Serving as the cultural, parliamentary, academic and commercial dimensions of a whole with different but complementary parts, TURKSOY, TurkPA, the Turkic Academy, the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, the Business Council, and the Turkic Council as a roof organization, have all become exemplary models in their respective fields, both in regional and global sense.

TurkPA has taken its place in the international arena as a successful international parliamentary institution in the field of parliamentary diplomacy. It has become the parliamentary dimension of the cooperation and integration among Turkic countries.

As a parliamentary body, it is expected to provide legislative support to the activities and undertakings initiated within the framework of wider Turkic cooperation. However, in addition to this main role, it has much more to offer as a subject and instrument of parliamentary diplomacy.

In order to understand this role, it is necessary to take a closer look at the concept of parliamentary diplomacy. Parliamentary diplomacy is a relatively new phenomenon and it is the product of the current networked context of the global society. Parliamentary delegations around the world have begun to play an important and increasing role in bilateral parliamentary relations with their counterparts or within the parliamentary assemblies of international organizations. The increased activities of parliamentarians on behalf of their parliaments in international fora have been labelled as “parliamentary diplomacy”. It is a kind of soft power, representing a medium level positioned between interstate diplomacy in its traditional form and the more current understanding of transnational cooperation. Parliamentary diplomacy aims to intensify mutual understanding between countries, ensure better representation of citizens in the international sphere, and improve inter-governmental institutions’ democratic legitimacy.

Parliamentary diplomacy aims to intensify mutual understanding between countries, ensure better representation of citizens in the international sphere, and improve inter-governmental institutions' democratic legitimacy.

Furthermore, parliamentary diplomacy also aims at promoting democracy and transparency, as well as lending support for further inter-parliamentary cooperation.¹ Thus, governments are no longer seen as the only actors in the international arena. Cutler defines parliamentary diplomacy as representing “a significant middle way between the traditional means of diplomacy and new means of transnational cooperation.”² Meanwhile, Fiott describes the role of parliamentary diplomacy and international parliamentary institutions like TurkPA, attaching importance to them expressing that they are “critical for the conflict prevention and provision of mediation and means to establish long-term political dialogue on the base of trust and mutual understanding.”³

For people like Malabud and Stavridis, the parliamentarization of international relations is a further step, perceived

as both the result and the cause of democratization:⁴ “Parliamentarians from developing democracies, can gain experience from their counterparts from well-established democracies. For example, [...including parliamentarians or officials from parliamentary secretariats in electoral monitoring missions is (another) advantage...] of parliamentary relations”.⁵ In this way parliamentarians gain more experience, while they also demonstrate how parliamentarians can play non-traditional democratic accountability roles. “Parliamentarians from established democracies can share ‘best practice’ experience with their counterparts from developing democracies.”⁶

Stavridis, one of the pioneering scholars on parliamentary international relations or parliamentary diplomacy, highlights the importance and meaning of the phenomenon of parliamentary diplomacy, suggesting that “all activities and actions that parliamentary bodies and their members take in international relations, can be labelled as parliamentary diplomacy”:

“MPs’ missions abroad and participation in transnational parliamentary bodies; Visits by other MPs and parliamentary delegations to parliaments and other institutions (national or transnational); written

and oral questions, reports and other studies on foreign affairs that take place within a parliamentary body; the activities of transnational parliamentary bodies; parliamentary participation in the monitoring of elections in third countries.”⁷

Thus, TurkPA, like any other international parliamentary institution, is a manifestation of parliamentary diplomacy. It is an independent international institution and product of transgovernmentalism,⁸ aiming at greater Turkic cooperation and consultation as based on commonalities and experience sharing. In the following sections, detailed information and analysis on different aspects of TurkPA are provided to better illustrate how it acts as an IPI and embodies the principles of parliamentary diplomacy.

TurkPA: Historical Background

TurkPA is the product of a lengthy process of intergovernmental deliberations which began with the new millennium. The idea of establishing a Parliamentary Assembly of Turkish Speaking Countries was put forward for the first time by the Speaker of the Kazakhstan Parliament, Mr. Jarmahan Tuyakbay, during the visit of Ömer İzgi, Former President of the Grand

National Assembly of Turkey, to Kazakhstan on March 29, 2001, on the recommendation of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

One month later, President Nazarbayev expressed the proposal for the establishment of a parliamentary assembly among Turkish speaking countries, in İstanbul during the Summit of the Heads of States of Turkish Speaking Countries. Nazarbayev reiterated the same proposal on 17 November 2006 in Antalya, during the 8th Summit of the Heads of States of Turkic Speaking Countries. After Nazarbayev’s initiation and insistence on the idea of establishing a “Parliamentary Assembly of Turkish Speaking Countries”, the Speaker of the Turkish Parliament invited delegations from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to Turkey for a preparatory meeting.

The first working group meeting for the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkish Speaking Countries was held on 21-22 February 2008 in Antalya with the participation of parliamentary delegations from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. A draft *Letter of Intent* with a draft text of the *Agreement* was signed by the Deputy Speakers of the participating countries. A second

preparatory meeting took place in Astana with delegations from the Parliaments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey in attendance, with the absence of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Nevzat Pakdil, former Vice President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, paid a visit to the capital of Turkmenistan and met with Turkmenistan Parliament Speaker Akça Nurberdiyeva in order to inform him of the developments and to invite Turkmenistan to join in the preparatory meetings of the Assembly. During the visit, Nurberdiyeva stated that “the neutrality policy imposed by Turkmenistan gives priority to bilateral relations instead of multilateral relations and they would closely follow the *Assembly’s* work and that it may be possible to participate in the *Assembly* in observer status in the future.”

Likewise, Former Vice President of the Turkish Parliament Nevzat Pakdil attempted to carry out a visit to Uzbekistan for talks regarding the *Assembly*, however this call was not received positively by Uzbekistan on the grounds that they do not believe in the benefit of international parliamentary organizations.⁹

The back and forth nature of these talks and the way they were initiated and spearheaded by parliamentarians

in all respective countries are a typical representation of IPIs. Even before its foundation, the process of TurkPA’s establishment has in itself been an example of parliamentary diplomacy, strengthening the ties between the parliamentarians of Turkic-speaking countries and serving as a means for international dialogue and rapprochement.

The process of TurkPA’s establishment has in itself been an example of parliamentary diplomacy, strengthening the ties between the parliamentarians of Turkic-speaking countries and serving as a means for international dialogue and rapprochement.

Thanks to the hard work and joint efforts of the Leaders of the Turkish World, the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkish Speaking Countries (TurkPA) was finally established with the Istanbul Agreement on 21 November 2008. The Treaty was signed by Azerbaijan National Assembly President Oktay Asadov, Kazakhstan Senate Vice President Mukhambet Kopeyev, Kyrgyzstan Parliament Speaker Aytibay Tagayev, and former Speaker of the Turkish Parliament Köksal Toptan. TurkPA was established as a result of

the long-term cooperation among the Turkic-speaking Countries, which had started with the First Summit of the Heads of Turkic Speaking States, held in İstanbul in 1992. TurkPA is the first of its kind and unique in being an international parliamentary grouping based on Turkish language, common history and culture. It was established in order to bring national legislations closer and to work in close cooperation on other inter-parliamentary activities.

With the First Article of the İstanbul Agreement on the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries, the parties declared that,

“Parliaments of the Turkic-speaking countries, leaning on historical, cultural and a linguistic community, with a view of the closest interaction in rapprochement of national legislations and other questions, concerning inter-parliamentary activity, have established the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries as an advisory body in order to develop and strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation.”¹⁰

As can be seen, the founding of TurkPA and the articles lying at its core embrace and promote the intercultural dialogue between parliamentarians, incorporating the core properties of IPIs and highlighting its role as a medium for parliamentary diplomacy.

Principles and Objectives of TurkPA

The primary goals of TurkPA include developing inter-parliamentary cooperation among members by means of parliamentary diplomacy, promoting political and economic dialogue between members, and creating a favourable political climate for elaboration and implementation of different initiatives aimed at strengthening regional and global security.

Beyond the historical, cultural and linguistic unity of its members, TurkPA member countries also have commonalities such as being developing economies and having dynamic population structures.

Beyond the historical, cultural and linguistic unity of its members, TurkPA member countries also have commonalities such as being developing economies and having dynamic population structures. These commonalities provide solid ground for enhanced cooperation among them. Since member countries face similar political, economic, and cultural challenges, TurkPA intends to build joint action within the framework

of inter-parliamentary activities to overcome these challenges. As has been reaffirmed by the Baku Declaration, TurkPA is built on the common will of the member countries to adhere to the principles of national independence, sovereign equality, territorial integrity, inviolability of state borders, non-interference in the internal affairs of each other, and inadmissibility of threat or use of force, and as such it is not against any organization or country in the region. In this context, TurkPA is firmly committed to the principles and values of the United Nations and its Charter, as well as to other universally recognized principles and norms of international law. As explained in the Introduction section, parliamentary diplomacy is a phenomenon that has developed in the broader context of globalised multilateral relations and these interactions with the UN and its principles also showcase this connection.

The Main Responsibilities of TurkPA

In parallel with the goals of parliamentary diplomacy, the Parliamentary Assembly of TurkPA aims to build and strengthen mutual trust among the member countries. According to the Second Article of the Istanbul Agreement “harmonization of legislation of the member countries;

preservation and transfer to the future generations of cultural heritage and values of history, art, literature and other areas which are of importance for Turkic countries; promotion of effective regional cooperation in the fields of education, science and technology; interaction of mass media and providing wider communication aimed at efficient exchange of legal information; creation of favourable conditions for trade and investment; promotion of joint regional economic projects, especially in the field of energy and transport; discussion of political issues on the basis of mutual interest” are the main goals of the establishment of TurkPA.¹¹

Members of the TurkPA seek to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue among Turkic-speaking countries in order to generate new ideas and suggestions and to ensure proper legislation for their implementation.

Practically, members of the TurkPA seek to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue among Turkic-speaking countries in order to generate new ideas and suggestions and to ensure proper legislation for their implementation. The inclusion of

legislative harmonisation in the aims and activities of TurkPA is a sign of the more practical impact of IPIs, showing that legal integration and cooperation can happen outside of traditional state-to-state bilateral relations.

Organizational Structure of TurkPA

This section details the organisational structure of TurkPA, especially with regards to the governance structure. The common pattern that can be observed is that the structure revolves around equality between all members and a revolving basis of chairmanship, which is a direct reflection of the participatory and equitable nature of IPIs.

At its core, TurkPA consists of the parliamentary delegations of its member countries. Each member country is represented in the Assembly by nine delegates. The Assembly normally holds a plenary session once a year and the supreme body is the *Council of Assembly* composed of the chairpersons of the member parliaments. The Council meets one day prior to the plenary session and coordinates the Assembly's activities.

The TurkPA *Chairmanship* is held for one year by each member country in alphabetical order. Decisions of the Assembly are taken based on

consensus. The Chairman of the Council of Assembly is the Chairman of the member country parliament hosting that session of the Council. The Chairman of the Council of Assembly performs his duties through presiding over the plenary sessions of the Assembly for the duration of one year.

The Commissions consider the issues within their competences, ensure the execution of the decisions adopted by the Council of Assembly and during the Plenary Session, assess documentation and examine proposals submitted to the commissions, and adopt draft reports, recommendations and decisions to be presented at the Plenary Sessions.

At the former stage the Assembly established four commissions; the Commission on International Relations, the Commission on Legal Affairs, the Commission on Economic, Trade and Financial Affairs, and the Commission on Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Affairs. Due to the necessities and because of the agenda, some of the commissions were merged and new ones established. Currently there are still four permanent Commissions, but with different responsibilities. They work under the head of delegation of each member country. Today, the Commission on Environment and Natural Resources is headed by Azerbaijan, the Commission

on Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Issues is headed by Kyrgyzstan, the Commission on Economic Cooperation is headed by Kazakhstan, and the Commission on Legal Affairs and International Relations is headed by Turkey.¹²

National parliaments that are not members of TurkPA and international parliamentary institutions and other organizations may participate in the public meetings of the Assembly as observers and guests upon consent of the Council of Assembly and by invitation of the Chairperson.¹³

The TurkPA *International Secretariat* ensures the effective functioning of the Assembly, the Council and the Commissions. The Secretary General, head of the International Secretariat, manages the overall activity of the Secretariat. The main tasks of the secretariat are; preparation of the necessary documents for meetings of the Assembly, the Council and other bodies; informing the Assembly, Council and other bodies of the data and information support; sending documents to the parliaments; and informing them of the activities organization. The Secretariat employees are obliged to fulfil their responsibilities in line with the interests and objectives of TurkPA.¹⁴

The international status of the TurkPA Secretariat is based on the Host-country

Agreement signed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and the TurkPA Secretariat. However, diplomatic immunities recognized by Azerbaijan to the members of Secretariat, are not yet recognized by the other members.

The Secretariat's Budget is made by contributions of the TurkPA member countries determined by their annual GDP.¹⁵ TurkPA's budget was 300,000 euros in 2011, it was raised to 570,000 euros for the year 2012 and 2013, then 650,000 euros for the ongoing years.

Activities of TurkPA

The General Assembly

This section provides a chronological account of the sessions of TurkPA that have convened to date, shedding light on the main policy priorities, areas of action, and concrete steps that were taken. Through these, it is possible to understand the concrete applications of parliamentary diplomacy and see the various roles IPIs can play in furthering relations between countries.

The First Plenary Session of the TurkPA General Assembly took place on 29 September 2009 in Baku. At this meeting, issues such as the establishment of the TurkPA Secretariat, and selection of the headquarters and officials were discussed, and it was decided that the

headquarters would be established in Baku and Azerbaijan would be the first chairman and host country for the new organization. It was also decided that the next chairmen and host countries for the plenary sessions would continue in alphabetical order after Azerbaijan. TurkPA Internal Rules and Secretariat Regulations were accepted and the first declaration of TurkPA was published. It was emphasized in the Declaration that TurkPA would be “beneficial for increasing the cooperation among the member countries and for bringing the people closer to each other.”¹⁶

The Second Session of the TurkPA General Assembly was held on 28 April 2011 in Astana, with Kazakhstan taking over the presidency. An icon and a flag were accepted for TurkPA. Chairs of the Commissions were elected and the amount of the budget was redetermined. A further agreement was reached to make an amendment to the İstanbul Agreement for the addition of the English language to the working languages of TurkPA alongside the national languages. A memorandum of understanding was signed for cooperation between the libraries of the national parliaments. The Declaration of Astana was adopted. The importance of strengthening relations between parliamentarians was emphasized and the contributions of TurkPA to political, economic, and cultural and other fields were praised.

For the first time, during the Fourth General Assembly, held in Ankara, a non-member country, Hungary, participated as a guest to the plenary session.

The financial crisis that was taking place at that time was also mentioned in the Declaration and it was also remarkable that the intention to contribute to the regulation of the new global financial and economic system was declared in the global sense.

Similarly, during the 3rd General Assembly of TurkPA,¹⁷ decisions were taken to develop a business union in various areas. While the content of the Bishkek Declaration is similar to the previous ones, it is noteworthy that the items related to economic issues came to the forefront.

For the first time, during the Fourth General Assembly, held in Ankara, a non-member country, Hungary, participated as a guest to the plenary session. Members jointly declared support for the settlement of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity in the Karabakh conflict and for a solution based on the political equality of the two sides in Cyprus within the framework of the United Nations. Members also decided to improve knowledge and experience sharing

among the administrative bodies of their parliaments and to mutually support each other's candidacy in international organizations.¹⁸ At the meeting, the application of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) to obtain observer status in TurkPA was addressed, but the decision on this issue was postponed. The participation of Hungary was a great example of how TurkPA's work to date and effectiveness as an important regional platform had come to be embraced by non-member countries as well.

The participation of Hungary was a great example of how TurkPA's work to date and effectiveness as an important regional platform had come to be embraced by non-member countries as well.

TurkPA's 5th General Assembly was organized in Baku on 13 June 2014. The Baku meeting confirmed full support to the Bodrum Declaration of the Turkish Council. During the 4th Heads of States Summit of the Turkic Council, the Bodrum Declaration was adopted to condemn all forms of terrorism and give support to the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict. The Bodrum Declaration can be taken as a showcase of how IPIs can lead to the

strengthening of a certain international position held by a group of countries with a common denominator. As such, it constitutes a powerful statement made by Turkic-speaking countries.

Another important development during this session was that Hungary was granted observer status in TurkPA. Despite the insistence of Turkey, no Council or General Assembly resolution was accepted on the observer membership of TRNC and the issue was postponed for the second time. Because of this issue, the scope of the Baku Session and Declaration remained very limited. It was decided that the TRNC would be invited to the meetings of TurkPA as a guest but its observer status would be evaluated later.

The 6th General Assembly of TurkPA was held on 4 December 2015 in Kazakhstan's capital city Astana. In the General Assembly, TurkPA legislative activities and the importance of increasing election observation missions were discussed and appreciated. A consensus was reached on the initiation of granting TurkPA Honour Medals. Once again, the importance of establishing the business union, solidarity of member countries in hosting international conventions and support of each other's candidacy for the posts in international organizations, were emphasized.

TurkPA has gradually developed as an IPI, having shifting priorities and areas of focus depending on the broader political context.

The planned 7th General Assembly of TurkPA in 2016 in Kyrgyzstan has been postponed several times. Finally, it was postponed to 2017 because of the Constitutional referendum in Kyrgyzstan on 11 December 2016.

Based on the developments so far, it can be observed that TurkPA has gradually developed as an IPI, having shifting priorities and areas of focus depending on the broader political context. Its welcoming of observer countries and participation of non-member countries such as Hungary have also rendered it a successful example of parliamentary diplomacy, increasing its presence and importance at the regional level.

Commissions

After the initial phase of TurkPA's establishment, certain structural developments occurred which have increased its practical output and functions. This was mainly through the establishment of commissions that had varying degrees of focus. This section gives an overview of TurkPA

commissions and their area of work to further elaborate on TurkPA's role as an IPI.

In the second half of 2011, specialized commissions started their work, and the first documents of the Commissions were adopted by the Assembly after its Third Plenary Session.

The Commission for Economic Cooperation covers main economic issues, including economic, financial, and commercial relations; energy and tourism; and commercial relations such as transport, import-export volumes, and customs processes that form the backbone of economic relations. The establishment of the Business Council within TurkPA and possible creation of the free economic and trade areas in the member countries are also subjects of this Commission.

The Commission on Legal Affairs and International Relations deals with the constitutions and legal affairs, and shares information about legislative activities in national parliaments between the members. It works on legislative processes and on the harmonization and approximation of legislation. Multilateral cooperation issues and cooperation in international organizations and diaspora matters are discussed under the heading of international relations.

The Commission on Environment and Natural Resources covers the management of natural resources that are very important for the world economy and trade relations. Environmental issues that necessitate multilateral work to protect the environment are also coordinated by this Commission.

The Commission on Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Issues handles issues related to the cultural ties that constitute the foundation of TurkPA: business alliance opportunities in social and humanitarian issues; general issues and works related to Turkish language, translation and education initiatives between Turkish dialects; and other fields of cultural art, are among the topics covered in this commission.

Through the composition and focus areas of the commissions, it can be seen that TurkPA covers all areas of multilateral relations and facilitates relations between its members in all areas from economic cooperation to social and cultural issues. This is a clear demonstration of its important role as a tool for regional cooperation and increased dialogue.

Election Observations

According to Hasanov, the First Secretary General of TurkPA, the main activities of TurkPA have been holding plenary sessions and observing

elections in member states.¹⁹ Election observations are an important additional function of TurkPA, as they constitute a very concrete means through which the members cooperate and interact with each other's democratic systems. Whereas plenary sessions and the relevant work of the commissions, as detailed in the previous section, showcase the soft power of TurkPA and its role as a platform for dialogue and cooperation, election observations are a very specific area in which there are clear and tangible outputs of international importance.

As an important part of parliamentary diplomacy, election observations and experience sharing become one of the most important missions of international parliamentary organizations. It has become an important mechanism for ensuring election integrity in countries undergoing democratic transition or in post-conflict societies. Thus, today observation missions enjoy near-universal acceptance, and can help raise voter confidence and evaluate the legitimacy of an electoral process and its international credibility and respect.²⁰ Election observation missions have also become a learning opportunity for national electoral administrators and election participants. They promote bilateral exchanges of knowledge and information on electoral practices that usually leads to lasting cooperative relations.

Today observation missions enjoy near-universal acceptance, and can help raise voter confidence and evaluate the legitimacy of an electoral process and its international credibility and respect.

To ensure the legitimacy of their work, international observers have to follow internationally recognized standards of conduct. Several organizations that specialize in international observation have developed codes of conduct to guide such observers' behaviour. Like others, TurkPA observer missions obey the Behaviour Codex of International Observers accepted by the United Nations in 2005, and the Principles of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe. Respecting the sovereignty of the host country and the rules of its election management body is essential to maintain the credibility and effectiveness of the election observation missions. *Objectivity, non-interference in the election process, accuracy and abstaining from conflicts of interest* are also among the principles that TurkPA Observer Missions follow.

TurkPA's mandate to observe elections in the member countries has contributed to enhanced cooperation of the Assembly with public administrations and efforts to comprehensively monitor

the national elections processes in the member countries.²¹ In member countries, 15 parliamentary and presidential elections have been monitored by the TurkPA International Observers Mission since 2010.²² Traditionally, TurkPA sends its final reports on results of elections to the leading international institutions, such as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament. TurkPA's mandate on international observation of elections is recognized and accepted by the international community. For this reason, the Assembly added a special provision to the TURKPA Rules of Procedure in order to further promote the "International Observers Mission" in the non-member countries at the global level, and, if required, on joint observation of elections with other international organizations.

Experience- Exchange Programs

Another important function of TurkPA is the organisation of experience and exchange programmes. In accordance with Article 2 of the İstanbul Agreement, the TurkPA International Secretariat develops experience-exchange programmes among the parliaments of the member countries in order to enhance inter-parliamentary cooperation.

The increasing role of parliamentary diplomacy becomes another tool to promote political dialogue and exchange of views at all levels.

TurkPA realizes experience-exchange programs among Parliamentary staff of member countries. Through the reciprocal visits of parliamentary staff members to the national parliaments of TurkPA members, they become acquainted with the activities of the Departments of Foreign Relations and Protocol, Law and legislation, Permanent Committees, Departments of International Relations, Social Legislation, Economic Legislation, the Press Secretariat, Committees and Commissions, and Information Resources and Technology of the Turkish Parliament. In addition to becoming acquainted with those departments, visitors participate in the preparation of draft laws, works in the permanent committees and get to know each other for future cooperation and consultations. At the end of each visit and seminar, the TurkPA Secretariat issues Certificates of Participation for the staff. This function is a concrete example of how parliamentary diplomacy can foster dialogue, and the exchange of knowledge and best practices between politicians from different countries. Through these

visits, greater unity and communication between Turkic-speaking countries have been achieved.

Relations with Other International Organizations

Since one of the objectives of TurkPA is to contribute to the development of parliamentary diplomacy through the establishment of relations with other parliaments and international regional and global organizations, it gives special importance to present its own identity in international fora. As have been detailed in previous sections, the existence and importance of IPIs should be analysed and understood in the bigger global context of international relations. At a time when multilateralism and soft power is becoming so important, the relationship of IPIs with other international organizations becomes an important area of focus and influence.

The Assembly stands for interaction and strengthening ties with all international organizations, especially those in the Eurasian region, in order to contribute and to maintain operational coherence among various organizations in its own sphere. The increasing role of parliamentary diplomacy becomes another tool to promote political dialogue and exchange of views at all levels. In this

context, TurkPA supports interaction between parliamentary and traditional diplomacy and the establishment of a mutually reinforcing relationship with both inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary institutions. TurkPA pushes such an inter-parliamentary cooperation beyond the boundaries of the Turkic-speaking world. In this context, TurkPA applied for observer status in the UN General Assembly and has declared several times its recognition of and respect for the supreme role of the UN and its values.

Moreover, TurkPA gives particular importance to strengthening a common inter-parliamentary platform for dialogue at a global level. As a result, the Assembly was granted observer status by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)²³ and the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (PUIC), the largest of all inter-parliamentary institutions. Close cooperation between TurkPA and PUIC was enhanced by granting each other observer status on a reciprocal basis.

TurkPA has also established relations with a number of international organizations through its Secretariat. These organizations are the OSCE and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, GUAM, the

Baltic Assembly, the Nordic Council, and the Parliamentary Dimension of the Southeast European Cooperation Process. The Assembly has established dialogue with the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures (CICA) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Both organizations granted observer status to TurkPA. As can be seen, TurkPA has fostered its relations with a broad number of organisations with different regional and substantive scopes.

Since 2010, the European Parliament has initiated practical cooperation with TurkPA. In this regard, the Office for the Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy (OPPD) played a key role in the process of establishing long-term relationships between the European Parliament and TurkPA. The OPPD assists the development of regional inter-parliamentary organizations in order to strengthen their capacity of inter-parliamentary legislative cooperation and to share best practices. At the first stage of cooperation with the OPPD, staff of the TurkPA International Secretariat have been invited by the OPPD to take part in a study programme in the European Parliament. As the next stage of this cooperation, OPPD has organized an individual fellowship programme and training events for the TurkPA International Secretariat.

Although TurkPA focuses primarily on economic, social and cultural cooperation, it defines itself as a sub-regional organization aiming to contribute to the promotion of security across the Eurasian region. Consequently, the Assembly pays particular attention to cooperation with the OSCE, the largest regional organization with a comprehensive approach to security and political issues in the region. TurkPA makes its sole contribution to the achievement of the OSCE tasks and objectives. The Organization supports a flexible approach towards establishing a mutually reinforcing relationship with the OSCE on the basis of established principles of equality, inclusiveness and transparency. Since its establishment, TurkPA has constantly maintained regular contact with the OSCE and has supported any opportunities for future cooperation between the two organizations.

Although TurkPA focuses primarily on economic, social and cultural cooperation, it defines itself as a sub-regional organization aiming to contribute to the promotion of security across the Eurasian region.

TurkPA also closely cooperates with the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (the Turkic Council) and TURKSOY in order to shape a joint pattern for economic, political and cultural cooperation among Turkic-speaking states. These relationships are maintained through mutual participation in events and creation of a basis for coordination activities. Thus, a TurkPA delegation participates in the Summits of the Turkic Council, where the Heads of States and Ministers of Foreign Affairs are informed about the TurkPA's activities on a regular basis. The Turkic Council and TurkPA in their adopted documents reiterate their support for each other's activities. Thus, TurkPA in its Astana Declaration,²⁴ expresses its readiness to continue the implementation of summit declarations by contributing to effective interaction with the Turkic Council and TURKSOY.

Presently, TurkPA and the Turkic Council conduct deliberations on institutionalized interaction that would contribute to the promotion of political dialogue and exchange of views among Turkic-speaking states at various levels, as well as to the consolidation of efforts and undertakings for enforcing relations with the international community.

Based on all these relationships, it is possible to observe how TurkPA has gradually increased its importance as an

TurkPA also closely cooperates with the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (the Turkic Council) and TURKSOY in order to shape a joint pattern for economic, political and cultural cooperation among Turkic-speaking states.

IPI bringing together Turkic-speaking countries. Through the diversified relationships with these organisations, it has come to be recognized as an important counterpart in parliamentary diplomacy activities.

Events and Conferences

In the context of cooperation with international organizations and other countries, TurkPA has organized a number of events. The conference on “Parliamentary Diplomacy – TurkPA”²⁵ on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and in line with the policy of fostering the Turkey-Azerbaijan and Turkey-Kazakhstan inter-parliamentary relations was held in the Azerbaijani Parliament. The international conference on “The Role of Parliamentary Democracy in the Process of the Interstate Relations Development” was held at

the Baku State University.²⁶ Likewise, the International Conference on the “Increasing Role of Women Politicians in the 21st Century,” dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, was organized jointly by TurkPA and the “Women Leaders” Association.²⁷

The TurkPA International Secretariat also organized the International Forum on “The Role of Youth Leadership in the Development Process of Interstate Cooperation”. The aim of the Forum was to bring together young leaders from the various countries to build their personal networks and conduct a dialogue. Young parliamentarians, diplomats, bureaucrats and representatives of international and non-governmental organizations from 25 countries participated in the Forum.²⁸

The TurkPA Secretariat further contributes its utmost effort to the development of cooperation with the public agencies of the member countries, as well as with diplomatic and international organizations present in the host country, the Republic of Azerbaijan. In line with this, meetings were held with the foreign ministers of member countries, certain ambassadors of the EU countries, top officials of the UN mission and the prime UN agencies present in the Republic of Azerbaijan,

officials of the European Council and European Parliament, and heads of inter-parliamentary friendship groups.

The varying nature of topics and TurkPA's willingness to address important questions such as the role of women and youth are important developments. Through these activities, TurkPA has broadened its network beyond the participation of parliamentarians and increased its role of thought leadership and representation.

Publications

One important function of IPIs is to increase understanding between its members and encourage knowledge exchange. For this to happen, it is of utmost importance that there is a minimum level of understanding between participating countries when it comes to their respective governance structures and political priorities. To this end, the TurkPA Secretariat published a series of documents in order to help members better understand each other's administrative structures and parliamentary systems. For this purpose, the member countries collected constitutions which were translated into the five official languages of TurkPA and published.²⁹ Correspondingly, the rules of procedures of each member parliament were translated into the official languages of TurkPA and published separately.³⁰ It is important

to mention that the members see that the parliamentary systems of the member countries differ from each other and have unique properties. Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Turkey have a unicameral system while in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, they have bicameral system with different competence. By bringing together the rules of procedures of the member countries' parliaments, it is aimed that the similarities and differences of the parliaments can be understood more clearly, facilitating the analysis and follow-up of the political mechanisms of member parliaments. For this reason, although Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are not members of the organization, their bylaws were included in the project.

Lessons from Other Regional Parliaments

In this section, regional parliament examples from all over the world are discussed to showcase different approaches to parliamentary diplomacy. These IPIs have varying degrees of legislative power, unique characteristics in terms of structure, and different compositions in terms of membership and participation. It is important to see, however, that their main functions still carry the core characteristics identified in the previous sections for IPIs.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

The IPU is a prototype of an international parliamentary organization and the only organization of this type at the international level. It is *sui generis* in that it is an international parliamentary, political and representative organisation and it enjoys a significant measure of international personality.³¹ The IPU was founded in 1889 as the first international political organization composed of national parliamentarians and acting as an NGO. Overtime it developed from an NGO to an organization of national parliaments. The recent change of *de facto* membership from national groups in parliaments to parliaments by itself was the turning point indicating that the IPU had gotten recognition of its international personality by governments. The IPU has a headquarters agreement with Switzerland and has had the right to set up a diplomatic mission in New York since 1998. It has concluded international treaties with the UN, UN Specialized Agencies, and with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Through advancing and intensifying its cooperation with the UN, a process officially phrased as “providing the parliamentary dimension to the United Nations” has started. Accordingly, following the Cooperation Agreement with the UN, the IPU was granted

observer status in the UN General Assembly, which includes the right to circulate its official documents at the General Assembly. Moreover, for many years it has been organizing parliamentary conferences parallel to UN meetings and conferences. Since 2000, it has been holding World Conferences of Speakers of Parliament every five years and organizing an annual parliamentary hearing at the UN General Assembly. If cooperation becomes even closer, the IPU at some point could become a specialized “parliamentary” agency within the UN system.

The European Parliament

As regards to parliaments, the EP is the most developed example. Its competences evolved overtime. Initially, the EP, like the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly, was a forum composed of delegations appointed by national parliaments and selected from their own ranks, with limited consultative functions regarding a small number of issues, and the ability to make legislative proposals prior to their adoption by the Council.³² According to Malabud and Stavridis, the creation of the parliamentary assemblies in Europe after the Second World War had more than just a symbolic value. These assemblies of the Council of Europe, the ECSC and the WEU, served as an interface between the organizations

and the national parliamentarians, and allowed politicians who came from previously warring countries to establish closer contacts, thus promoting the restoration of mutual trust and cooperation between former enemies.³³

On the other hand, the idea of European unification and the pooling of sovereignty was a distinctive feature of the European Community. The European Union's founding fathers Schuman and Monnet's idea of building a polity beyond the nation states led to strong activism on the part of the members of the *Assembly*, which led to the direct election of the EP and to the emergence of European Party formations.

Electoral dynamics, a strong Treaty and elected MPs empowerment, transformed the EP into an exceptional *supranational parliamentary assembly* that has democratic legitimacy and decision-making competencies. It has become the benchmark against which the performance of other regional parliaments are measured.³⁴

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe³⁵

The Parliamentary Assembly was set up as a consultative body of the Council of Europe in 1949. The Assembly brings together 324 delegates and substitutes who are elected members

of parliament in their respective countries. Each national delegation is comprised of between two to eighteen representatives, depending on the country's population, and must reflect the balance of political forces in the respective national parliament.

In the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the parliamentarians are organized not by their national parliaments but according to their political groupings i.e. Socialist Group, Group of the European People's Party, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, European Democrat Group, and the Group of the Unified European Left. These groups are important to ensure that members reflect their own political views, not the interests of their own countries.

The Assembly meets four times a year. During these sessions, the parliamentarians discuss Europe's most pressing socio-political questions. Within the framework of these debates, the Assembly adopts three different types of texts: recommendations,³⁶ resolutions,³⁷ and opinions.³⁸ The Assembly has eight permanent committees.³⁹ Furthermore, the Parliamentary Assembly is responsible for the election of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, its Human Rights Commissioner and the judges at the European Court of Human Rights.

The Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO)

The Latin American Parliament is a unicameral assembly made up of members of 22 national Latin American and Caribbean parliaments.⁴⁰ PARLATINO was founded in 1964 with the aim of promoting domestic democracy and regional integration. It is composed of national delegations sent by the member parliaments, each of which can appoint up to 12 representatives in a proportion that reflects the weight of the national parliamentary groupings. All member countries have the same voting power regardless of population and attendance. PARLATINO gathers once a year, and it has no decision-making authority and limits itself to issuing nonbinding declarations and recommendations. Its main historical merit was to provide a protective umbrella for democratic political leaders and aspirations during the dark era of dictatorial rule. Because it is composed of national parliamentarians, it is intergovernmental, lacks legislative competencies and is quasi-continental in scope. PARLATINO resembles the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe more than the EP. It is unique in that it stands independently and is not part of a broader organization.

The Central American Parliament (PARLACEN)

PARLACEN was inaugurated in Guatemala City in 1991.⁴¹ It was first envisaged by Central American presidents as a symbol of reconciliation for a region that had been devastated by years of bloody conflicts and political instability. Today it has 132 deputies and 42 parties from six countries. Deputies are elected directly every five years by member country citizens. Each country can elect 20 representatives and have two appointed deputies from former presidents and vice-presidents. PARLACEN is the deliberative body of the Central American Integration System (SICA), initially called the Central American Common Market.

The parliament's legislative competencies are limited to proposal, analysis and recommendation. It cannot pass laws, but it can formally elect, appoint and remove the executive officials of SICA institutions.

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP)⁴²

The PAP, founded in 2004, is the parliamentary organ of the African Union (AU) and currently has 250 members from 50 countries.⁴³ Each parliament sends five representatives, one of which must be a woman. The

PAP is a semi-permanent body that convenes twice a year, has exclusively advisory and deliberative powers, and is tasked with harmonizing national legislation. It focuses more on international issues than on domestic questions, operating as an international debate forum and an instrument of parliamentary diplomacy rather than as a community organ.

The objectives⁴⁴ of the PAP are to facilitate the effective implementation of the policies and objectives of the OAU and ultimately the African Union; to promote the principle of human rights and democracy in Africa; to encourage good governance, transparency and accountability in Member States; to familiarise the peoples of Africa with the objectives and policies aimed at integrating the African Continent within the framework of the establishment of the African Union; to promote peace, security and stability; to contribute to a more prosperous future for the peoples of Africa by promoting collective self-reliance and economic recovery; to facilitate cooperation and development in Africa; to strengthen continental solidarity and build a sense of common destiny among the peoples of Africa; and to facilitate cooperation among Regional Economic Communities and their Parliamentary fora.

Even though PAP prioritizes the representation of all the peoples of

Africa and its members are supposed to act in their personal and independent capacity, deputies are still selected by their own national parliaments.

The Arab Parliament

Members of the Arab League agreed to create an Arab Parliament, and passed a resolution in 2001 to give the Secretary General of the Arab League the power to start and create the Parliament. Subsequently, in 2004, all Arab League Members sent their representatives to the temporary Parliament sessions that took place in the headquarters of the Arab League in Cairo, Egypt. It remains largely symbolic, rather than playing an active role in its region.

The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States

The Commonwealth of Independent States is a regional organization formed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Nine out of the 15 former Soviet Republics are member states, and two are associate members (Ukraine and Turkmenistan). Georgia withdrew its membership in 2008, while the Baltic States⁴⁵ chose not to participate.

The CIS has few supranational powers but aims to be more than a purely symbolic organization, nominally possessing coordinating powers in the realms of trade, finance, law making, and security. It has also promoted cooperation on cross-border crime prevention.

The Assembly was established in March 1995 by the leaders of the Supreme Soviets (parliaments) of the Commonwealth countries as a consultative institution to discuss problems of parliamentary cooperation and to develop proposals by the parliaments of the CIS states. Its Assembly consists of parliamentary delegations of the member states. The activities of the Assembly are carried out by the Assembly Council which comprises the leaders of the parliamentary delegations. There is also an Assembly Secretariat, headed by a Secretary-General, to ensure the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, its Council and commissions.

Conclusion

TurkPA, like other international parliamentary institutions in Asia, Africa, Europe and America, is a clear manifestation of parliamentary diplomacy together with its symbolic importance. Since governments are no longer sole actors in the

international arena, parliaments and parliamentarians, the representatives of the people, have started to play their role in international relations. Through IPIs, they became more visible in the international arena. IPIs also provide moral legitimation for international decision making procedures. They become the voice of people, represent common sense and make those procedures more transparent, accountable and participatory.

Since governments are no longer sole actors in the international arena, parliaments and parliamentarians, the representatives of the people, have started to play their role in international relations.

Since IPIs enable the use of dialogue, parliamentarians in different countries can better understand each other, help one another and represent their regional identities and commonalities. They all introduce a democratic, popular element into regional and international governance.

Since more and more governmental organizations aim to acquire supranational features and some degree of regional integration and harmonization of laws, parliamentary

structures serve to the purpose of facilitating these goals.

Although different in the level of parliamentariness and in their competences, IPIs all over the world do have a common goal to some degree, namely regional integration, good governance, mediation, conflict prevention and a means to establish long term political dialogue based on trust and mutual understanding.

To this end, TurkPA has successfully managed its role and became the parliamentary dimension of cooperation and integration among Turkic countries. As a parliamentary body, it provides legislative support to

the activities and undertakings initiated within the framework of wider Turkic-cooperation.

Although different in the level of parliamentariness and in their competences, IPIs all over the world do have a common goal to some degree, namely regional integration, good governance, mediation, conflict prevention and a means to establish long term political dialogue based on trust and mutual understanding.

Endnotes

- 1 Frans.W. Weisglas and Gonnje de Boer, "Parliamentary Diplomacy", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2007), pp. 93-96.
- 2 Robert M. Cutler, "The OSCE's Parliamentary Diplomacy in Central Asia and the South Caucasus in Comparative Perspective", *Studia Diplomatica*, Vol. LIX, No. 2 (2006), pp. 82-83.
- 3 Daniel Fiott, "On the Value of Parliamentary Diplomacy", *Madariaga Paper*, Vol. 4, No. 7 (April 2011), pp. 1-5.
- 4 Andrés Malamud and Stelios Stavridis, "Parliaments and Parliamentarians as International Actors", in Bob Reinalda (ed.), *Ashgate Research Companion to Non-State Actors*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2011. p.105.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Stelios Stavridis, "Parliamentary Diplomacy: Some Preliminary Findings", *Jean Monnet Working Paper*, No. 48 (November 2002), <http://aei.pitt.edu/591/1/jmwp48.htm> (last visited 17 March 2017)
- 8 Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, Boston, Pearson, 2000, p. 25.
- 9 Lilya Emiruseinova, "Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan abandoned membership to Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkish Republics", <http://qha.com.ua/tr/siyaset/ozbekistan-ve-turkmenistan-turk-cumhuriyetleri-parlamentolararasi-asamblesi-uyeliginden-vazgecti/35970/> (last visited 17 March 2017).
- 10 Istanbul Agreement on the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries, Article 1, <http://www.turk-pa.org/documents/IstanbulAgreement.pdf> (last visited 17 March 2017).
- 11 Ibid., Article 2.
- 12 Permanent Commissions, <http://www.turk-pa.org/cat.php?cat=2028&lang=en> (last visited 17 March 2017).
- 13 Istanbul Agreement on the Parliamentary Assembly, Article 9.
- 14 Statute of the Secretariat of Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries, *TurkPA Report 2010*, pp. 96-97, <http://www.turk-pa.org/news.php?id=329&lang=en> (last visited 17 March 2017).
- 15 Ibid. According to Article 6 of the Statute Of The Secretariat of Parliamentary Assembly Of Turkic-Speaking Countries; the Ratio of the contributions of the member countries are Azerbaijan 2/15, Kazakhstan 4/15, Kyrgyzstan 1/15, and Turkey 8/15 consecutively.
- 16 Baku Declaration, <http://www.turk-pa.org/news.php?id=119&lang=en> (last visited 17 March 2017).

- 17 The 3rd General Assembly of TurkPA held on 14 June 2012 in Bishkek.
- 18 Ankara Declaration, at <http://www.turk-pa.org/news.php?id=989&lang=en> (last visited 17 March 2017).
- 19 Activities of TurkPA, <http://www.TurkPA.org/cat.php?cat=2063&lang=en> (last visited 17 March 2017).
- 20 OSCE- ODIHR, carries out election observation in OSCE participating States to assess the extent to which elections respect fundamental freedoms and are characterized by equality, universality, political pluralism, confidence, transparency and accountability, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections> (last visited 17 March 2017), and International IDEA, <http://www.idea.int/> for more information. (last visited 17 March 2017).
- 21 A special provision on the activity of the TurkPA International Observers Mission in the non-member countries and, if required, on observation of elections jointly with other international organizations, has been added to the TurkPA Rules of Procedure's Article 23/7.
- 22 Dates, places and subjects of those elections were as follows: 11 December 2016 Kyrgyz Republic, Amendment to the Constitution; 26 September 2016 Azerbaijan, Amendment to the Constitution; 20 March 2016 General Assembly Elections of Kazakhstan; 1 November 2015 Turkey, General Election; 1 November 2015 Azerbaijan, General Election; 4 October 2015 Kyrgyzstan, General Election; 6 June 2015 Turkey, General Election; 26 April 2015 Kazakhstan, Presidential Election; 10 August 2014 Turkey, Presidential Election; 9 October 2013 Azerbaijan, Presidential Election; 30 October 2011 Kyrgyzstan Presidential Election; 12 June 2011 Turkey, General Election; 27 April 2011 Kazakhstan, Presidential Early Election; 7 November 2010 Azerbaijan, General Election; 10 October 2010 Kyrgyzstan, General Election.
- 23 The TurkPA Secretary General was admitted to the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) as a member with observer status. ASGP is a consultative body of IPU and seeks to facilitate personal contacts between holders of the office of Secretary General in any parliamentary assembly.
- 24 Astana Declaration adopted at the 2nd Plenary Session in 2011.
- 25 Conference was organized on 24 May 2010 in Parliament of Azerbaijan.
- 26 Conference was organized on 21 September 2010 in Baku State University.
- 27 Conference organized by TIKA and Women Leaders Association on 3-4 October 2011, hosted by Parliament of Azerbaijan.
- 28 Forum held in Istanbul on 15-16 October 2012.
- 29 TurkPA Publications, *Constitutions*, <http://www.turk-pa.org/news.php?id=620&lang=en>, (last visited 17 March 2017).
- 30 TurkPA Publications, *Bylaws*, <http://www.turk-pa.org/news.php?id=2712&lang=en>, (last visited 17 March 2017).

- 31 Claudia Kissling, “Legal and Political Status of International Parliamentary Institutions”, *Background Paper*, No. 4, Committee for a Democratic UN, 2011, p.22 and 24.
- 32 Malamud p. 108.
- 33 Ibid. p. 109.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/Home-EN.asp> (last visited 17 March 2017)
- 36 Proposals addressed to the Committee of Ministers.
- 37 Decisions by the Assembly which it is empowered to put into effect on its own.
- 38 Answers of the Assembly to questions put to it by the Committee of Ministers.
- 39 <http://www.europewatchdog.info/en/structure/parliamentary-assembly/> (last visited 17 March 2017). Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy; Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights; Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development; Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons; Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media; Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination; Monitoring Committee; Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs.
- 40 Members: Argentina, Aruba, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, the Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela.
- 41 Members: Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama
- 42 <http://panafricanparliament.org/home> (last visited 6 March 2017).
- 43 AU member states that have ratified the PAP protocol Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, DR Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sahrawi Republic, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, UR of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
- 44 <http://panafricanparliament.org/about-pap> (last visited 6 March 2017).
- 45 Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.