
Council of Europe: Parliamentary Assembly to address situation in Ukraine. Possible speech by Zelensky

Ukraine again, particularly the legal and human rights aspects of Russia's aggression, sanctions and the erasure of cultural identity, as well as political solutions and support for the displaced people of Ukraine are the items on the agenda for a series of debates that will take place during the summer plenary session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly from 24 to 28 June in Strasbourg. The press statement announcing the debates also mentions a possible speech by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Also on the agenda are an urgent debate on the situation of democracy in Georgia, a speech by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, and joint debates on "strengthening democracy through participatory and deliberative processes" and on "strengthening the youth perspective in the work of the Assembly". There will also be an exchange of views on the Cypriot city of Varosha and its return to its lawful inhabitants. Indeed, the city on the east coast of Cyprus is military occupied by the Turkish army who have sealed it off. In the course of its work, the Assembly will announce the winner of the first ever Vigdís Prize for Women's Empowerment, which rewards outstanding initiatives to promote the empowerment of women in all their diversity in Europe and beyond. Discussion will also focus on protecting women human rights defenders in Europe. Besides the customary addresses by the President of the Committee of Ministers (currently Lithuania's Foreign Affairs Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis) and by Council of Europe Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burič, this session will elect her successor for the next five years. Competing for the post are former Belgian European Commissioner Didier Reynders, former Swiss President Alain Berset, and former Estonian Minister of Culture Indrek Saar.

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