



NEWSLETTER

April 2025 part session | Unified European Left | PACE

♦ **Co-chair Andrej Hunko (Germany)**
presents the progress report

Upcoming activities

June

The next meetings of the UEL group will be held during the **June part session** from 23 - 27 June 2025 in Strasbourg

Election observation missions

Election to the Assembly of Kosovo on 9.02.2025

UEL representative: Nina Kasimati (Greece)

Presidential election in Poland on 18 May 2025

UEL representative: Laura Castel (Spain)

Parliamentary elections in Albania on 11 May 2025

UEL representative: Andrej Hunko (Germany)

Substitute: Arnaldo Lomuti (Italy)

HIGHLIGHTS

News:

12 March: Statement by the UEL Bureau on the Federal Elections in Germany

Statements from delivered speeches by group spokespersons in debates

Sevim Dağdelen (Germany): "(...) Our continent, ladies and gentlemen, is too beautiful to be left to sleepwalkers and escalation. That is why I welcome the fact that over 100 000 people took to the streets in Rome yesterday – for peace and diplomacy instead of rearmament. And in the context of these preparations for war, democracy in Europe is being undermined. In Romania, the presidential candidate is being removed – not because he is right-wing, but because he is critical of NATO. In Germany, a recount of the votes has so far been refused despite numerous irregularities because it could bring a peace party like the BSW into parliament. In Estonia, the Russian minority is being deprived of the right to vote and in Moldova the President of the Autonomous Republic of Gagauzia is being arrested. But anyone who does not want to see these attacks on democracy or even justifies them is calling democracy itself into question. Mister President, as democrats we must not allow this to happen. That is why we say: Yes to democracy and the sovereignty of the people – No to rearmament." ([full text](#) + [report](#))

Georges Loucaides (Cyprus): "(...) As the Group of the Unified European Left, we believe the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe must not become a forum of one-sided narratives. We must not distinguish between good and bad interference based on geopolitical alignment. Whether it comes from Moscow, Washington or Brussels, interference that overrules sovereignty and democratic choice must be condemned equally. (...) Yes, we must condemn disinformation and manipulation – but through democratic tools, strong institutions, free media, digital education and transparency in political financing. Not by advancing selective narratives that weaken our credibility." ([full text](#) + [report](#))

Gabrielle Cathala (France): "After the collapse of the Novi Sad train station canopy last November, killing 15 people, for whom I would like to spare a thought, the Serbian people entered a citizens' revolution, thanks in particular to their youth. Right from the start, the students were joined by their professors, rectors, primary and secondary school teachers, lawyers, farmers, judges, cab drivers, and pensioners. These people have risen up against corruption, (...). Our group supports the Serbian people. The strength of this movement lies in the student plenums set up in all the mobilised universities, where decisions are taken on the principle of direct democracy. This type of general assembly organisation is part of a tradition of student struggles in the Balkans to improve schooling and living conditions for students. These were the largest demonstrations in the country's contemporary history. Yet, in Western European capitals, silence reigns, just as it does for the mobilisation against the exploitation of the country's natural resources. ([full text](#))

Laura Castel (Spain): "(...) This is not about inclusion. It is about preparing the next generation to take democratic responsibility and carry our values

Progress report speech

Andrej Hunko (Germany): "(...) I would like to start with a new situation we are facing with the inauguration of a new president in the US and the implications that means for our countries and especially for international co-operation—as well as for this Assembly (...) So I think in these circumstances, where there is a threat, one from that side, other external threats we talked a lot about, and we have some internal problems, (...) I would like to congratulate the General Secretary, Alain Berset, for pushing for this democracy pact. (...) and we have to discuss possibly having a new summit of Heads of States next year, which could be an outcome of the debate on that democratic pact. I think it's necessary to have the question of democracy centred, as the trust of our people in the different countries in the institutions is shrinking; we have to say, and probably there is a kind of backsliding all over Europe in terms of democratic standards. (...) We faced, in Germany, concerning the elections on 23 February, a lot of very surprising irregularities, and we are facing a lack of instruments on how to challenge and how to deal with this. (...) I would like you to look a bit closer at this, that even in a developed democracy like Germany, there are problems. There are problems with how to deal with it, because we don't have a mechanism to deal with it in a short time frame. We also had problems with foreign voters. This is a thing which is in several countries. I just came last week. We had the pre-electoral mission in Albania. There is a new mechanism oriented to the German system. So the whole issue of abroad voting, of voting of the diaspora, is a thing we should look closer at. And let me finally say some words about the new convention which is proposed. We have an unprecedented loss of biodiversity, which is primarily driven by human activities within an economic system that is designed to make profit. (...) protection of the environment through criminal law. [\(full text\)](#)

into the future. We also strongly encourage our committees to seek engagement with a broad and diverse range of voices, particularly those from civil society, working directly in our thematic areas. A truly balanced and representative understanding of these issues we address cannot emerge from an institutional perspective alone. It is by listening to the voices of grassroots organisations, minority communities, youth representatives, etc., even experts from under-represented regions and those directly impacted by our policies, that we enrich the quality and legitimacy of our work." [\(full text + report\)](#)

Emmanuel Fernandes (France): "(...) All human beings are entitled to dignity. It is the duty of states to protect everyone against the risks of ill-treatment, torture or sexual and gender-based violence. (...) We cannot turn a blind eye to these violations of fundamental rights, all the more so as they concern children on a massive scale, and unaccompanied minors in particular (...) Those who make distinctions between human beings are, in fact, anomalies in this House. States urgently need to put an end to collective expulsions and put in place real guarantees for humane, individualised treatment of each situation. It's a question of law, but also and above all a question of humanity(...)." [\(full text + report\)](#)

Andrej Hunko (Germany): "(...) It is of course good to develop rules, which is what we are doing here to prevent this corruption. But a world in which inequality is growing and in which such concentrations of money arise will of course always be susceptible to such corruption. And that is why the fight against inequality is always indirectly a fight against corruption." [\(full text + report\)](#)

George Loucaides (Cyprus): "(...) In Resolution 2319 of 2020, we called again for the immediate release of Osman KAVALA and in Resolution 2459 of 2022, we made it explicit: Türkiye's failure to comply with the Court's rulings could and should lead to the triggering of the complementary joint procedure. Yet here we are in 2025, and not only have those warnings been ignored by Turkish authorities, but the situation has continued to deteriorate. Media pluralism has all but vanished. Peaceful protests are met with repression. The judiciary is under clear political control. And most recently, the massive protests following İMAMOĞLU's arrest have been met with brutal police force. (...) If we do not respond meaningfully to this deep and ongoing democratic backsliding, we risk undermining the credibility of the Council of Europe and the principles we are meant to defend. (...) We must initiate the complementary joint procedure, not as punishment, but as a necessary step toward restoring the rule of law and democratic standards in a member state of the Council of Europe." [\(full text + report\)](#)

Sevim Dağdelen (Germany): "(...) The co-responsibility of NATO, the USA, and its European NATO allies for this war through the broken promises of NATO expansion is to be made invisible. Nor do they want to talk about the character of the regime in Kiev. They do not want to talk about the fact that opposition parties have been banned, that trade unions are being harassed, that hundreds of thousands are fleeing forced recruitment and that crimes, such as the death of US journalist Gonzalo LIRA in Ukraine, remain unsolved and unpunished. This is nothing other than whataboutism, dear colleagues, which you like to accuse others of in order to silence criticism of your double standards. At its core, it is therefore war propaganda. You are longing for escalation, and while the USA, even if it is a President Trump, is trying to work towards peace in Ukraine, you now want to continue the proxy war, which the USA itself says is a proxy war, on your own. (...) Détente and disarmament may still be dirty words to them, but they mean everything to the peoples of Europe." [\(full text + report\)](#)

Questions by UEL Members

Sophia Chikirou (France) asked a [question](#) to **Mr Michael O'FLAHERTY, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe** on human rights violations in Palestine ([full text](#))

[Answer](#)

Laura Castel (Spain) asked a [question](#) to **Mr Xavier ESPOT ZAMORA, Head of the Government of the Principality of Andorra** about violations of the rights and freedoms of Andorran and Catalan citizens ([full text](#))

[Answer](#)

Sophia Chikirou (France) asked a [question](#) to **Mr Alain BERSET, COE Secretary General** about diplomacy and dialogue with the aggressor state

[Answer](#)

Andrej Hunko (Germany) asked a [question](#) to **Mr Xavier BETTEL, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Luxembourg, Chair of the Committee of Ministers** the right to hope in the case of Mr Abdullah ÖCALAN

[Answer](#)

Reports under preparation by UEL Members

Composition UEL

UEL welcomes new members from Sinn Féin and LFI



Georges Loucaides (Cyprus): (...) Nine countries, including Türkiye, have over 40 leading cases pending, many for more than 5 years. This is not merely a technical delay. It reflects a systemic resistance to democratic accountability. (...) Human rights cannot be optional nor selectively applied. We therefore fully support the call for strengthened national coordination mechanisms equipped with adequate authority and resources. National parliaments must exercise robust oversight and ensure that domestic legislation aligns with the Convention. The establishment of the execution coordinators network and the proposed network of parliamentarians are promising developments. Let us make them count. Failure to implement judgments damages the credibility of our institutions, undermines multilateralism, and weakens citizens' trust. We owe it to the people we represent to defend the right to justice and to ensure that when the Court speaks, states listen." ([full text](#) + [report](#))

Georges Loucaides (Cyprus): "(...) The destruction of our environment is not simply an unfortunate by-product of economic activity. It is in many cases a crime: often committed knowingly and with impunity. And like all crimes, it must be punished accordingly. We welcome the Convention's intention to criminalise acts that amount to ecocide – a concept whose time has come to be formalised and codified into relevant conventions and legal frameworks. The deliberate and widespread destruction of ecosystems is not only an assault on nature, but a violation of human rights, of our shared humanity, and of intergenerational justice. The recognition of ecocide as a particularly serious offence is both morally and legally necessary. (...) Environment justice is social justice. (...) We must do our utmost to use the tools provided by the Convention to further strengthen environmental rights, and to hold accountable those who violate them." ([full text](#) + [report](#))

Andrej Hunko (Germany): "(...) What has changed in Georgia is the country's geopolitical orientation. After the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in April 2022, there was considerable pressure, and we were informed of this, on the Georgian Government to take part in a confrontation with Russia in one form or another, and the Georgian Government rejected this, not because they are pro-Russian, but because they fear that their country will be destroyed in this war. So the Georgian Dream also ran its election campaign in Georgia with images from Ukraine and Georgia, with destroyed cities and intact cities and said, "We don't want to get into this situation and underneath: Don't vote for war, vote for peace". Now you can find all this right or wrong, but I think it is urgently necessary that we respect geopolitical diversity here. The Georgian Government, and apparently also with the support of the majority of the population, has chosen this path, not to be pro-Russian, but (...) to remain neutral. I think it's wrong if that's the reason for sanctions. We are the only assembly, the only international format that actually needs dialogue, where Georgia is not represented now. I think that's completely wrong." ([full text](#) + [report](#))

Andrej Hunko (Germany): "The Lisbon Treaty, the EU's basic treaty, adopted in 2007, came into force in 2009. This treaty states that the EU will accede to the ECHR. It doesn't say it could join, should join. It says it will join, and that should have happened in 2009 or in the following years. But it still hasn't, and that is indeed a scandal. In 2014, the Luxembourg Court of Justice described in detail over 150 pages that this accession is not possible. It could also have written a sentence, "We do not want an external court that is above us in matters of human rights. So, only the sky is above us." ([full text](#) + [report](#))

Sevim Dağdelen (Germany): "(...) Without the weapons from the USA and Germany, without the benefits from the EU, the war crimes of Benjamin NETANYAHU's government, which is in part far-right, would not be possible. The governments of numerous EU and NATO

Exchange of views with invited guests

The group held a hearing with Mr Ratibor Trivunac, anarcho-syndicalist and anti-militarist activist from Belgrade



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Former UEL PACE President Tiny Kox with former PACE presidents

Andrej Hunko (Germany): “I would like to use this debate to talk about the difficulties we had in the recent elections in Germany. (...) on 23 February. Early elections, also with a massively shortened preparation time for this election. One of them concerns our colleague, (...), who was not re-elected even though he won the constituency. This has to do with the new electoral law. (...) The second problem is that most of the 213 000 registered Germans living abroad were unable to vote even though they were told that they could vote by post. (...) We don't even know how many of the Germans abroad were able to vote at all. The third issue, and I want to go into this in more detail, is the irregularities in the count. =>

member states are therefore jointly responsible for the breach of international law and the extent of the violations of the human rights of the Palestinians, which can hardly be described as anything other than genocide. US President TRUMP wants to ethnically cleanse the Gaza Strip together with NETANYAHU. Israel has stopped the delivery of humanitarian aid and is in the process of completely occupying the Gaza Strip militarily. Shouldn't the governments in Europe, who give vassal-like support to this murderous course of the USA, be called accomplices, I ask you? It is a disgrace that such war crimes are deliberately supported by self-declared democrats. (...) Over 50 000 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli security forces, 70% of them women and children. Those who continue to supply weapons to Israel also bear responsibility for this. We need an immediate ceasefire and a stop to the supply of weapons. The Palestinians must also have a right to life.” ([full text](#))

Emmanuel Fernandes (France): (...) Why create a new space, the EPC, instead of strengthening what already exists? With my Group for the United European Left, we question the legitimacy of Macron's initiative. (...) As far as form is concerned, the European Political Community has no democratic basis, in the sense that it is disconnected from the citizens, even though we have a Parliamentary Assembly in which we sit. Few citizens are even aware of the EPC's existence, as journalists take little interest in it and summit reports are not readily available. This poses a problem of transparency. Furthermore, the composition of the EPC raises questions: why are Monaco, the Kingdom of Andorra and the Republic of San Marino, three Council of Europe member states, not included in the EPC? (...) My Group of the Unified European Left advocates strengthening legitimate institutions such as the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, heirs to historical constructs which, while always perfectible, are themselves the guarantors of respect for international law and balance.” ([full text](#) + [report](#))

Laura Castel (Spain): “(...) We endorse the resolution and recommendation contained in the report. We would also like to take the opportunity to say to the president of this Assembly that he should formalise invitations to the president of Mexico and President Luiz DA SILVA to take part in the next Parliamentary Assembly, to try and strengthen relations between our different entities. In the case of Mexico, it has been an observational member of this organisation for over 25 years and with which we share various different important international treaties. Right now, it is undergoing an historical moment of transformation, not only politically, constitutionally and societally, but also in terms of feminism. That is why we would like to commend Mexico on formalising its accession to the Istanbul Convention, a convention that is open to all states, even ones outside the Council of Europe. Mexico really is at the vanguard of all our brothers and sisters in Latin America, it is truly inspirational for all of us. (...)” ([full text](#) + [report](#))

Andrej Hunko (Germany): continued: In my constituency in Aachen, for example, my party, which ended up with 4.981%, i.e. very, very, very close to the 5% threshold, 48 votes were allocated to another party in one polling station, and this was only corrected following massive protests at this local level. But this mistake happened all over Germany and was only corrected in some parts. You can also see from the statistics that there are still polling stations where a mini-party, in this case Bündnis Deutschland, has received a surprisingly large number of votes from another party, so to speak, and we sometimes get zero votes. That can all happen. But the main problem we currently have in Germany –and we have this because it has never happened before in history that there has been such a close election– is that there is no mechanism or no mechanism that corresponds to the recommendations of the Venice Commission to enable a recount, because that would be necessary now. We cannot do that. It is now referred to a committee of the newly elected Parliament and there is no time limit for it to decide.

([full text](#))