



NEWSLETTER

2025 October part session | Unified European Left | PACE

Upcoming activities

January

The next meetings of the UEL group will be held during the January part session from **26 to 30 January 2025**

Election observation missions

Parliamentary elections in the **Kyrgyz Republic** on 30 November

UEL representative:

Gabrielle Cathala
(France)

Substitute: Nina
Kasimati (Greece)

Motion for resolution

65th anniversary of the European Social Charter
by George Loucaides
(Cyprus)

Written declarations

Swift, transparent measures to legally finalise the electoral process and ensure full democratic legitimacy in Germany by
Andrej Hunko (Germany)

Urgent condemnation of the arrest of passengers during the "Freedom Flottilla" operation by
Gabrielle Cathala (France)

HIGHLIGHTS

Statements from delivered speeches by group spokespersons in debates

Laura Castel (Spain) (...) "We should avoid double standards, and we should be consistent in how we react in backslidings in each case. This is to say, for instance, Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Georgia. There is no consistency in the reactions from this Parliamentary Assembly. For example, Türkiye, since 2016, the situations regarding human rights are not improving – on the contrary. Or Georgia, there is an anomaly of having representation in the Committee of Ministers, but the colleagues of the Georgian Parliament are not present here; etc. We have to remember that we, as an organisation, we could trigger the joint procedure as a way to help and respond to the backslidings. But instead, sometimes we request, depending on the member states, impossible conditions to meet, as in Georgia. So, double standards. And the double standards are crystal clear in Gaza, in the Gaza genocide." (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))



George Loucaides (Cyprus) "Since the failed coup attempt in 2016, Türkiye is experiencing a steady decline in democracy and the rule of law." (...) "While Türkiye was under post monitoring, our Assembly took the unprecedented decision to put the country under full monitoring, the first such case in our history. This reflected the collapse of judicial independence, the suppression of the media and civil society, and the systematic misuse of anti-terror legislation. (...) Thousands of political prisoners, many of whom belong to the Democrat Party, remain behind bars. Mayors continue to be removed and persecuted for political reasons. Türkiye openly defies binding judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, including the orders to release Osman Kavala, Can Atalay, Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksedağ. The judiciary is being weaponised against the main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), in an attempt to weaken and possibly destroy it." (...) "No genuine peace process is possible while Abdullah Öcalan remains in near total isolation." (...) "Türkiye must implement all European Court of Human Rights judgments and this Assembly's recommendations." (...) "If it continues to suppress democracy and defy its obligations, we on the left will demand the activation of the complementary joint procedure." ([Full text](#), [video](#))

Laura Castel (Spain) "Even though there have been positive developments over the past years (in Kazakhstan), this Assembly and other international bodies, such as OSCE/ODHIR, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Freedom House or United Nations have documented systemic political oppression, violations of fundamental rights, rule of law and media freedom. That's why any positive

Questions by UEL members

Emmanuel Fernandes (France) asked a [question](#) to the **Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Alain BERSET** on The Global Sumud Flotilla's support and condemnation of Israel's genocide of Palestinians.

[Answer](#)

Conor Murphy (Ireland) asked a [question](#) to the **Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Alain BERSET** on possible withdrawal by the United Kingdom from the European Convention on Human Rights

[Answer](#)

George Loucaides (Cyprus) asked a [question](#) to **Mr Nikol PASHINYAN, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia** on protection of refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh

[Answer](#)

Berdan Öztürk (Türkiye) asked a [question](#) to Mr Ian BORG, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Malta, President of the Committee of Ministers on to Türkiye's extension for the implementation of the Court's judgment on the right to hope article 18 and other relevant verdicts

[Answer](#)

George Loucaides (Cyprus) asked a [question](#) to **Her Excellency Ms Myriam SPITERI DEBONO, President of Malta** on embedding climate and social justice, equality and the protection of the most vulnerable

[Answer](#)

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assessment must be accompanied by: real reforms, credible investigations and the repeal of laws that enable politically motivated prosecutions, guarantees of peaceful assembly, improvements in media freedom, ending the harassment of civil society, and the misuse of justice for political reprisal. (...) We call on Kazakhstan to comply fully with its international obligations. We are aware of the government's good will to take this path. And we would like to stress that in Almaty is established the UN Regional Centre for Sustainable Development Goals for Central Asia and Afghanistan, and the initiative launched by the European Union and United Nations Development Programme to provide educational opportunities to Afghan women in Central Asia. Regarding this, we call on Council of Europe member states to support and co-operate with this issue, but at the same time, we encourage Kazakhstan to ratify and fully implement the Istanbul Convention. We have several instruments that can help to achieve this important goal, such as the parliamentary network Women Free from Violence, in the Equality Committee, that could organise, for example, a peer-to-peer exchange of views, or seminars, to support to the development of the role of the Parliamentarians in the fight against violence against women, or the role of parliamentarians in implementing and monitoring the Istanbul Convention." (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))

Emmanuel Fernandes (France) (...) "At the same time, we are witnessing the concentration of the media, all in favour of the government, the repression of human rights defenders, and the banning of all LGBTQIA+ gatherings, including the banning of Pride Marches, in contravention of the case law of the ECHR and Article 11 of the Convention. This is the record of the government in Hungary: backsliding freedoms, weakening democracy and changing the law to ensure its own political survival. At this point, my Group of the Unified European Left would like to thank the rapporteurs, who enable our institution to fulfill its mission of vigilantly monitoring compliance with member states' commitments. At this very moment, Hungarians, exhausted and desperate in the face of the oppression inflicted by their government, are listening to us. We are telling them: "You are not alone. We see what is happening, and we support you." We are calling for strong measures to be adopted to ensure that Hungary respects its obligations, starting with voting in favour of this draft resolution." ([Full text](#), [video](#))

George Loucaides (Cyprus) "The current situation in Serbia calls for our Assembly's attention and sense of responsibility. Demonstrations that began as expressions of grief and frustration have evolved into a wider mobilisation, reflecting legitimate concerns about democratic governance, media freedom and public accountability. While incidents of violence have been indeed reported, the majority of citizens have acted peacefully to voice their discontent. (...) In particular, focus must be put to the implementation of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) recommendations on electoral processes, on steps to ensure judicial independence and

Exchange of views with invited guests

The group held an exchange of views with Maksym Butkevich, candidate and subsequent HR Vaclav Havel Prize winner, Ukrainian human rights activist, journalist, member of the Ukrainian military, coordinator Charitable Foundation "The Principle of Hope"



The group held an exchange of views with Despina Chatzivassiliou, SG PACE, candidate for re-election



The group held an exchange of views with Davyth Hicks, Secretary-General at the European Language Equality Network (ELEN)

The group held an exchange of views with Marc Lassouaoui, UNRWA's Senior Manager for Outreach in Europe and Bernard Sabella, member of the Palestinian delegation to PACE



on stronger guarantees for media pluralism, they are essential.” (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#))

Laura Castel (Spain) (...) “Youth movements are vital forces in the defence of democratic values, the present and future army against authoritarianism and distrust in democratic institutions.” Direct action — protests, boycotts, occupations or any kind of activism — helps society defend against the collapse of democracies. (...) “It is paramount that our Parliamentary Assembly, but also the Committee of Ministers engage in supporting youth participation, repealing legislation that criminalises peaceful protests, ending politically motivated arrests based on vague provisions such as public order, national security or extremism, as it is stressed in the report – used to silence dissent.” (...) “We support lowering of the voting age to 16 – a key element to foster civic responsibility, together with youth quotas and multi-age electoral lists. (...) “With the engagement of youth, with the critical thinking of youth, with the wisdom of youth and with a clear view of youth, humanity wins as a whole.” ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))

Laura Castel (Spain) (...) “Indeed, this draft convention establishing an International Claims Commission is an innovative tool to ensure the victims' approach. It marks a further step in the Council of Europe's response to hold Russia accountable for its aggression. All these systems are innovative: the Register of Damages, the Special Tribunal and the convention establishing the Claims Commission. What is discussed here is how to better make full reparation for all the damage in accordance with the principles of state responsibility. Our Parliamentary Assembly called for setting up international compensation mechanisms for Ukraine, including a compensation fund, and committed the Committee of Ministers to draft this convention.” ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))

Conor Murphy (Ireland) “Freedom of the press is not an optional luxury. It is a foundation upon which all other rights rest. If we allow its destruction, then democracy itself crumbles and we must act with moral clarity and solidarity to defend those who risk everything to bring the truth to light. Journalists are not soldiers, yet they enter battlefields armed only with words, images and the fragile promise of truth. They do not fight for territory, but for memory, to ensure that suffering is not erased and that crimes are not hidden in silence. That is why so many journalists are deliberately targeted. The report tells us that since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, more than 800 crimes have been documented against media workers, including 108 killed journalists, many clearly marked as press. In Gaza, 247 journalists have been killed, not by accident, but because they carried cameras and notebooks instead of arms. Their deaths remind us of a grim truth: in modern warfare, controlling the narrative is as important as controlling the ground.” (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))



George Loucaides (Cyprus) (...) “It is right to acknowledge the determination of Bulgarian institutions and society to confront deep-rooted challenges. The measures to reinforce accountability of the prosecutor general, the establishment of a stronger anti-corruption body, new protections for victims of domestic violence and actions to counter hate speech are not symbolic gestures. They demonstrate resilience and a commitment to European standards, even in a period marked by political turbulence. For these reasons, our group fully supports the proposal to close the post-monitoring dialogue. Yet support must come with responsibility. Bulgaria's reform agenda is far from complete. Judicial independence remains vulnerable after constitutional setbacks. The fight against corruption has advanced on paper, but effective results in high-level cases are still awaited. Marginalised Roma communities continue to face exclusion. Long-pending Strasbourg judgments demand urgent execution. Media pluralism is challenged by concentration of ownership and abusive litigation. Therefore, closing post-monitoring cannot be seen as closure in substance. It must be understood as a transition to a new phase of co-operation based on trust, but also on vigilance.” (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))

George Loucaides (Cyprus) (...) “From the very beginning, our political group has supported the establishment of a platform for dialogue with Russian democratic forces. We firmly believe it is our duty to maintain open channels of communication with those who oppose war and repression and who continue to defend democracy and human rights, whether in their homeland or in exile. At the same time, we cannot ignore a fundamental concern. The draft resolution introduces a series of restrictive conditions that risk excluding a wide spectrum of progressive and legitimate voices. In practice, this could transform the platform into a narrow forum, thereby undermining its very purpose. We should avoid requirements that resemble tests of political orthodoxy. On the contrary, we must recall that Russian democratic forces are by definition diverse and fragmented without electoral mandates and without institutional recognition. Their legitimacy derives not from formal structures, but from their courage and their clear opposition to authoritarianism and aggression.” (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))



Ettore Antonio Licheri (Italy) (...) “Russia has violated the most basic norms of humanitarian law and international law. The decision to expel the Russian Federation from this Assembly, which is the cradle of European law, was therefore unanimous and convincing. Europe can never tolerate a violation of the principle of national sovereignty, because respect for national sovereignty is the first pillar of our democracies. We know, however, that in addition to the criminal invasion of Ukraine, Russia is trying to attack the social cohesion of our states. And it does so by influencing and directing our public opinions.” (...)

"in the face of this threat, the best response cannot come from the policy of rearmament alone". (...) “We know that every euro we will have to spend more on arms will be a euro taken away from health, schooling, and welfare. And all this will generate protest, anger, discontent and disappointment in our peripheries, thus feeding the cancer of nationalisms, on which Russian thinking feeds on. Converting our social economies into war economies will mean falling into President Putin's trap. To strengthen our democracies in the face of the Russian threat, we need to invest in life, in the welfare of our citizens and in environmentally sustainable development.” (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))

Alexis Tsipras (Greece) (...) “Eight months ago, from this Assembly, we said that on the Palestinian issue, Europe is on the wrong side of history because it's far from doing all it can for peace. Unfortunately, this is still the case. The issue of the safety of journalists in Gaza is a clear example of the unbelievable scale of destruction. According to the UN, since 2023, over 2 040 journalists have been killed by the Israeli armed forces. I wonder how does a European citizen feel when on one hand, there are calls for harsh sanctions, even military interventions. And on the other, Europe turns a blind eye to the mass killing of tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians, in what the UN has called a genocide. Last night, dozens of peace activist ships carrying humanitarian aid were intercepted by Israeli forces”. (...) “The Council of Europe must condemn this act of piracy and demand the immediate and safe return of all activists to their countries. It is the Israeli government that must respect international law, instead of the international community tolerating acts of violence, piracy and genocide.” (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))



Berdan Öztürk (Türkiye) (...) “In the parliamentary elections held in Georgia last October, international observers, including the OSCE and our own Assembly, identified serious shortcomings like the misuse of administrative resources, pressure on voters, vote buying and weak oversight. At the same time, they didn't find verifiable evidence of large-scale fraud that would overturn the outcome. For this reason, the results, though followed, were not challenged by the international community. Nevertheless, in January, this Assembly adopted Resolution 2585, which imposed conditions and restrictions on the Georgian delegation's credentials. Shortly afterwards, the Georgian delegation decided unilaterally to suspend its participation in this Assembly. The result is a paradox. Georgia continues to be represented in the Council of Europe through the Committee of Ministers, while both government and opposition parliamentarians remain absent from this chamber. This imbalance undermines statutory equality and deprives us of an essential forum for dialogue. We must remain consistent.” (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))

George Loucaides (Cyprus) (...) “The erosion of trust in political parties and institutions is not a theoretical problem. It is the lived experience of millions of Europeans who feel that politics no longer delivers for them. Citizens are tired of promises. What they ask from us is not more declarations, but concrete results. And their expectations, while diverse, converge on a single fundamental demand: the right to a dignified life for themselves and their families. This means secure jobs, strong labour and social rights, affordable housing, quality public education, accessible healthcare and social protection. Unless our institutions can guarantee these rights in practice, no amount of speeches will restore faith in democracy. That is why, in our group, we insist that political parties must place equality and social justice at the centre of their programmes and actions. Only by delivering real, tangible improvements to people's lives can we reverse the crisis of legitimacy that our democracies face.” (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))

Laura Castel (Spain) (...) “Let me be clear. This draft convention, we think is solid because in a media landscape, dominated by global giants, Europe urgently needs these tools to strengthen our cultural sovereignty, protect our creators and ensure access to a pluralistic media landscape. But I must say that this opinion surprisingly supports large companies, the strongest players in the audio-visual ecosystem, rather than independent producers, small creators and public interest. For example, in relation to the definition of "independent producer", the convention proposed a common definition which opens the door for small producers. Instead, the opinion insists on leaving every state to its own definitions, which means perpetuating unequal markets", (...). "On rights on licensing, the opinion again sides with the biggest players. It warns that new rules may disrupt broadcasters' business models. But which business model is this opinion defending? Unfortunately not the public's right to diverse, independent content. Instead, the interests of companies who, as monopolies, dominate the field. And on data, instead of embracing transparency, the opinion raises fears of "confidentiality" or "burden". But currently, it's the public who have no say in how their data is used and other creators who cannot access information on how their work is consumed. So transparency is not a threat. It is a democratic necessity.” (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))



George Loucaides (Cyprus) (...) “The right to housing is not an abstract principle, but a daily struggle for millions across Europe. Despite our commitments, too many citizens face homelessness, overcrowded dwellings, skyrocketing rents and the insecurity of eviction. For refugees, migrants, the young and the poor, the situation is even harsher. Housing must never be reduced to a commodity. It is a fundamental human right and a social good. That is why we need more than expressions of concern. We need bold political choices. Governments must invest massively in social and affordable housing, regulate rental markets and prevent speculation that drives prices beyond the reach of ordinary people”. (...) “We therefore support rent regulation in high-demand urban areas and linking increases to average

national incomes rather than inflation to create a fairer balance between household means and housing costs. The same principles apply to healthcare. Universal coverage must guarantee equal access, but also strong systems: workforce, infrastructure, financing, governance and social determinants. Financing requires courage and decisiveness to implement progressive taxation, distribution of wealth and European solidarity funds. ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#) + [report](#))



Emmanuel Fernandes (France) (...) “My UEL Group would like to thank and congratulate the rapporteur on his work, which has raised awareness in our Assembly of the opportunities, but perhaps, above all, the dangers, and therefore the key precautions that our member states must take in this area in order to respect the human rights that we are responsible for defending here. Our group advocates a resolutely humane approach to supporting people in migration situations. Behind the concept of artificial intelligence lie deeply political realities. The design of the algorithms used is imbued with political decisions, choices, preferences and orientations in how models are trained. In other words, artificial intelligence produced in an authoritarian state has nothing in common with AI developed in a progressive state.” (...) “As the

philosopher Emmanuel Levinas reminds us, in humanity, it is the encounter with the face of the other that is at the heart of the ethical relationship. So what place is there for purely digital, faceless artificial intelligence? We believe that if we are to improve the reception and treatment of migrants, we must first and foremost put in place safe migration routes and a substantial increase in human resources to welcome, accompany, guide and support them, with dignity and respect for human rights.” ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))



Berdan Öztürk (Türkiye) (...) “It's a very important topic, ensuring that members of this Assembly can travel freely is fundamental to the very purpose of our institution. Deprivation of free movement is not an abstract concept. It includes administrative, legal and judicial restrictions such as detention, house arrest, curfews, the surrender of passports and travel bans. These measures, whether temporary or indefinite, directly obstruct our capacity to carry out our parliamentary work. Such restrictions are not merely technical obstacles, they weaken our collective ability to safeguard democracy, human rights and the rule of law.” (...) “We must be clear. Governments have a responsibility to facilitate, not hinder, the work of parliamentarians. Using travel restrictions as a political tool undermines both individual rights and the

credibility of institutions. Colleagues, if we are serious about defending democracy and the rule of law, we must ensure that all our members can exercise their mandate without fear, obstruction or restriction.” (...) ([Full text](#), [video](#), [report](#))