
Council of Europe: Parliamentary Assembly starts today, war in Ukraine tops the agenda. Zelensky expected to intervene

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (in a video address from Kyiv), the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, the President of the Swiss Confederation, Ignazio Cassis, and the Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama, will be the “guests of honour” at the autumn plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) starting in Strasbourg today and ending on 14 October. Items on the agenda include requests for urgent debates on “Europe half a year after the start of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine”, “Food security in Europe: grain exports through Ukrainian ports”, and “The military hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan”. Other issues to be discussed are a European perspective for the Western Balkans, countering Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism, vaccine discrimination, and the impact of Brexit on human rights on the island of Ireland. Also on the agenda, as is customary, is the Communication from the Committee of Ministers (Thomas Byrne, Ireland’s European Affairs Minister) and the address by Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić. The Assembly is also due to debate discrimination against women in sport, safe third countries for asylum seekers, illegal measures of migration management in the context of pushbacks on land and sea, and labour rights. The announcement of the winner of the 2022 Václav Havel Human Rights Prize will also be announced during today’s session.

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