

Dr. Grégor Puppinck Director

> Members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Avenue de l'Europe, 67000 Strasbourg

10 October 2023

Object: Withdrawal of the Palestinian "Partner for Democracy" status

Dear members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE),

In the context of the current affairs debate on the "Escalation of violence in the Middle East following the recent Hamas attack on Israel", the European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) recommends that you withdraw the Palestinian Legislative Council from the "Partners for democracy." The ECLJ is a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Strasbourg and specializing in human rights.

The Palestinian Legislative Council is the unicameral parliament of the Palestinian state. It is chaired by MP Abdel Aziz Doweik, a member of Hamas. Not less than 74 of its 132 members are also members of Hamas, i.e. the majority. These 132 members were elected in 2006, and the "Palestinian Authority" has not held legislative elections since. The Resolution 1830 (2011) of the Assembly granted the status of "Partner for democracy" to the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Because of their "Partner for democracy" status, members of the Palestinian Legislative Council delegation are entitled to speak in the Assembly (article 64-5 of the Rules of Procedure), to take part in committee meetings (article 64-6), to submit proposals concerning the agenda (article 64-6), to sign motions for resolutions and recommendations and written declarations (article 64-6), and to participate in the work of political groups (article 64-6).

The status of "Partner for democracy" requires the fulfillment of several conditions, which are not met by the Palestinian Legislative Council, such as embracing the values of the Council of Europe, abolishing capital punishment, and organizing free and fair elections (article 64-2).

For this reason, we invite you to suspend or withdraw the "Partner for Democracy" status of the Palestinian Legislative Council. To do this, a resolution must be voted on by the Assembly, based on a report from the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy (article 64-7).

This should be debated as early as tomorrow's current affairs debate on October 11.

Sincerely yours,

