

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

**29th EP/Australia Interparliamentary meeting
24 and 26 April 2006**

BRUSSELS

MINUTES

Monday, 24 April 2006

1. Opening of the meeting

The chair of the delegation, Mr PARISH, opened the meeting at 17.35 hours. He welcomed Senator Kay PATTERSON and other members of the Australian delegation. Members on both sides introduced themselves.

2. Adoption of draft agenda

The agenda was adopted, subject to changes in the order of items.

3. Trade and agriculture issues

Mr PARISH outlined the situation regarding the common agricultural policy, referring in particular to the mid-term review and the single farm payment, both of which he considered to be positive changes for Australia. He noted that the greatest challenge for the EU was to find the way to manage and reform its system of agriculture. He said that further steps would include the reduction of tariffs and increasing access to the European market.

Senator PATTERSON said that she could not understand how the single farm payment will increase access to the European market for Australian farmers. She argued that the EU needed to undertake further reforms to its agriculture.

Mr TUCKEY argued that Australian agriculture was not a threat to the European market. He considered that concerns about animal welfare could be seen as another non-tariff barrier being invented by the EU. He also drew attention to the fact that Australia's tariffs were constantly going down.

Ms JEGGLE said that she was in favour of agricultural reform. She recalled that according to the WTO rules the agricultural subsidies should be reduced. She stressed that there was a need to take time in order to implement reforms properly as European farmers were already under pressure.

Dr WASHER stressed that every industry needed to reform itself. He recognised the importance of animal welfare and stressed Australia's awareness of sustainability.

Mr WYNN noted that the European Union was not a country but a unique gathering of 25 individual member states. He said that it was necessary to take into account the political reality of the situation. He expressed his concern about the fact that the EU was funding social, rural and environmental policies through the common agricultural policy. He said that animal welfare was a real issue and referred to the UK's past experience. He called on the Australian delegation to address Australia's concerns work through the Cairns group and in the WTO. He added that the EU budget represented only 1% of Europe's GDP and that agriculture in Europe was 0.43 % of the European budget.

Mr BERMAN agreed with Mr WYNN. He pointed out that agriculture needed restructuring in a social way. He said that Australian farmers could largely meet the EU criteria with regard to animal welfare. He noted that the WTO rules allowed for animal welfare to be taken into account.

Mr TUCKEY supported Senator PATTERSON's remark and said that Australia needed access to the European market.

4. Environment, energy and sustainable development, including REACH

Mr DOVER outlined the Commission's Green Paper on energy policy. He said that it was an extremely important issue and referred to the recent dispute between Russian gas monopoly Gazprom and Ukraine. He noted that Europe's dependence on energy imports was high. He recalled that the UK presidency had previously called for a new energy policy. He said that there was a widespread support for pursuing an agenda of liberalisation of the market. He pointed out the importance of debates on energy efficiency, nuclear energy and bio fuel. He finally made some brief comments on the REACH agreement.

Mr TUCKEY said that hydrogen was the next fuel of mobility. He said that he was an opponent of the use of renewable power resources in a grid system. He briefly explained his position on hydrogen. He said that there was a need to address the economy and ecology issues.

Dr WASHER pointed out the enormous energy consumption growth coming in the next decade. He said that Australia had vast uranium reserves and that it could supply the EU with uranium and thereby reduce CO2 emissions. He recalled that Australia had rejected the Kyoto protocol. He spoke about the Australia Asia-Pacific Partnership, which focuses on carbon reducing technologies.

Mr DOVER made a brief comment on uranium supply from Australia. He referred to his visits to uranium enrichment plants in France and the UK. He said that it was a real way ahead for sustainable energy sources. He finally asked about the impact of the REACH programme for Australian chemical producers.

Mr FITZGIBBON made a brief comment on nuclear energy and pointed out the need for nuclear generation debate.

Dr WASHER noted that there was a need for a uranium debate in Australia. He said that Australia might become one of the biggest exporters of uranium. He commented briefly on the energy situation in Australia.

Mr PARRY referred to Australia's uranium reserves.

Mr FERGUSON noted that Australia was a net energy exporter. He said that the country was dependent on imported oil, as Australian refineries could not compete with bigger Asian refineries.

Mr WYNN said that there was a need for a balanced energy policy. He noted that Europe was investing billions into research on nuclear fusion. He said that new member states were very pro-nuclear. He deplored the absence of a common energy policy in Europe.

Mr TUCKEY noticed that Australia needed public education on uranium.

Dr TANNOCK agreed with Mr WYNN on the fact that there was no European energy policy. He noted that there was an increasing protection of the national markets from take-over bids within Europe and from outside. He referred to the recent case with Gazprom, which was thinking of launching a bid for Centrica, the largest network distribution of gas in Britain. He asked Australians what their country would do if China was launching a bid for one of Australia's natural reserves companies.

Dr WASHER said that Australia had a foreign investment review board, which ruled on such proposals. He added that there were some deals, which were blocked.

5. Integration of immigrants, minority issues and human rights

Dr TANNOCK outlined the EU competencies in the fields of external trade, consumer protection, environmental issues, and the single market. He said that EU competence in the area of asylum and immigration was increasing. He noted that the whole agenda had moved forward since the Maastricht Treaty. He recalled that the UK was receiving 200,000 immigrants a year, mostly asylum-seekers. He stressed that debate on the large-scale immigration and various multi-cultural models had become more open. He pointed out that there was a rise in a vote for far right parties. He said that Australia had also had such a debate. He noted that it was a fundamental right of a sovereign state to regulate its borders and to make sure that people enter the country legally. He referred to the numerous problems that EU had with Ceuta and Melilla, Lampedusa and the Canaries.

Mr CLAEYS noted that immigration was one of the most controversial issues in current political debate. He recalled that people from Turkey and North Africa had come as guest workers in the 1960 and 1970s. He said that the unemployment and criminality rate were higher within the immigrant communities. He said that limitations on immigration should be imposed in order the countries could stipulate who and how many people may come. He also pointed to "de facto" segregation with parallel communities and "no go" areas.

Mr WYNN noted that there was a real fear of immigration. He said that it was a question of perception and recalled that after EU enlargement many in the UK were afraid of being

flooded with immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. He said that it turned out to be an enormous advantage and praised the performance of UK economy. He added that Turkey's future accession should be considered within this context.

Ms LULLING noted that Europe had difficulties in integrating immigrants. She referred to the situation in Luxembourg, which was experiencing problems with integration of immigrants from Kosovo and some Muslim countries. She pointed to the rejection of the EU constitution and stressed the need for a controlled immigration.

Senator PATTERSON recalled that Australia was a country based on immigration with 100,000 immigrants arriving each year. She said that Australia had a very intensive settlement programme, including free English courses, diverse assistance, schools totally dedicated to young immigrant children. She also referred to Australia's unique interpreting service for community services which included 140 languages. She said that the objective was to make people economically productive within five years. She pointed out the problem with people smugglers from China and Indonesia. She added that there was a need to help people and give them a proper settlement programme.

Mr FERGUSON said that in recent years the trend was towards skilled migration and family migration. He also said that there was a strong trend towards temporary entry. He noted that Australia had a very diverse migration and that it helped the country.

6. Developments in the EU and in Australia (including competitiveness and services directive)

There was insufficient time for this item.

Mr PARISH thanked the participants and closed the first day's meeting at 18.35 hours

Wednesday, 26 April 2006

The Chair of the delegation, Mr PARISH, opened the meeting at 1015 hrs. He apologised for the absence of interpretation facilities.

7. EU institutional affairs - constitution and enlargement

Mr HÄNSCH said that enlargement had been an important EU challenge for the last ten years. He said that the constitutional treaty would represent another such a challenge for the next ten years. He recalled that enlargement took the EU from 15 to 25 member states and that Bulgaria and Romania were expected to join in 2007. He noted that the EU had opened negotiations with Croatia and that other Western Balkan countries had the prospect of becoming EU members. He recognised that Turkish membership was a complex issue as it would challenge the capacity of the EU to digest such a large country. He briefly explained the current position of the constitutional treaty, saying that the solution would only be

possible after 2010. He finally noted that the Union would confront a crisis if enlargement were to continue without a new basis for its operations as it was possible to vote out the text but it would not be possible to vote out the problems..

Mr RACK recalled that the EU was not a nation state. He insisted on the internal cohesion of the EU as enlargement substantially reduced the average income per capita. He stressed the difficulties of the EU in speaking with one voice.

Mr PARISH said that the UK government had promised to hold a referendum on the constitutional treaty but that a "yes" vote would have been unlikely. He noted that Mr KIRKHOPE had proposed a "simplifying treaty". He said that the EU needed to find a way to manage the enlarged Union, but not necessarily through the constitution.

Mr TUCKEY outlined his understanding of the constitution. He then asked to what extent the negative votes had been influenced by domestic issues.

Mr MARTIN said that the problem had been more one of the context and not the constitution. He recalled that Europe was facing important economic problems at the time of the votes. He said that in the case of France, there was another issue concerning the directive on the services liberalisation. He also noted that France and Germany were becoming quite protectionist. He then gave an example of EU fishing policy, saying that there was no difference between the constitution and the existing treaties; however this had been misrepresented by the Scottish National Party.

Mr PARISH said that France was particularly worried about enlargement and Turkey. He said that in the Netherlands there was a great concern about enlargement and the fact that Germany and France had broken the stability and growth pact. He stressed once again that people did not necessarily vote on the constitution but on other issues.

Mr WYNN noted that the French socialists had different opinions on the constitution. He said that the Spanish socialists overwhelmingly supported the constitution. He stressed the need for the public to support the constitution.

Mr HÄNSCH said that the reasons for the no vote were different in the two countries, but in both there were fears about enlargement. He agreed that domestic issues played an important role in the rejection of the constitutional treaty.

Mr PIOTROWSKI and Mr NICHOLSON briefly introduced themselves.

8. Foreign Affairs/Security and Development/ACP issues

Mr MARTIN said that the first priority of the EU was the near neighbourhood policy, including the South (Barcelona process) and East dimensions. He said that the prospects of EU membership had transformed Turkey and stabilised the Balkan region. He mentioned the trade agreement with Turkmenistan. He spoke about the EU's divisions with regard to the invasion of Iraq but noted the EU is united in terms of what should be done in the reconstruction of the country. He mentioned the problems with the Hamas government in Palestine. He finally said that the EU had a role to play in order to contribute to the good governance through the election observation missions.

Mr PARISH agreed with the comment on the good governance. He said that he had been banned from Zimbabwe because of his criticism of the Mugabe regime.

Dr WASHER asked about the rising military power in Russia and the Iranian situation.

Mr MARTIN said that the EU tried to have dialogue with Iran and did not talk about military action against that country. He said that the EU had been very active in bringing Russia into the WTO.

Mr PARISH added that if coalition troops were to leave Iraq, Iran could take over Iraq and create a difficult situation.

Mr FERGUSON stressed the progress that Turkey has made in terms of secularisation. He said that a more democratic Turkey could be of important symbolic value in the world.

Mr FITZGIBBON noted that just the prospect of joining the EU had triggered significant changes in Turkey. He pointed out the problem with Cyprus. He suggested that it was better to promote more linkages between the West and the Middle East and to encourage reforms in Turkey, rather than to deny it outright the possibility of it joining the EU.

Mr MARTIN agreed that the presence of a secular Islamic country in the EU would represent an important symbol. He recognised that many in countries such as Austria and Germany had reservations with regard to Turkey's accession. He said that Cyprus was a very complex issue but that Turkey would not withdraw from Cyprus in the immediate future.

Mr WILSON said that much of EU funding was to support bureaucracy.

Mr WYNN briefly shared with members his experience of the investigation into the accusation that EU funds could possibly be used for terrorist purposes in Palestine and said that there was no evidence of this happening. He said that he was in favour of Turkey's accession, but some member states clearly did not want Turkey in the EU. In his view if it fulfilled all the criteria it would deserve to join the EU.

Mr HÄNSCH made some comments on the Turkish issue. He pointed out the economic and political improvements related to the possible EU membership. He said that he was not convinced that support for Turkey's membership was increasing in Turkey. He also said that the EU should not exaggerate the example that Turkey could give to the Islamic world. He finally noted that the EU would find it very difficult to live up to all Turkey's expectations.

Mr RACK stressed that the EU was a gathering of states. He said that there were a number of countries, which judged Turkey on its political past. He referred to an alternative model for countries without a membership perspective and said that the EU needed to have an alternative strategy.

Mr PARISH proposed to move on to the ACP and development issues.

Mr KOTEREC and Ms GILL introduced themselves.

Mr DEVA introduced himself and recalled that the Treaty of Amsterdam gave the Development Committee enormous co-decision powers to allocate funds through the EU budget but also to prioritise areas of cooperation. He briefly explained the procedure of allocating EU funds to the development programmes and noted that the EU Cooperation budget amounted to some six to seven billion euros a year. He thanked Australia for its work in the tsunami relief operations. He referred to the reconstruction process in South-East Asia. He spoke about AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria programmes. He finally made a brief comment on the ACP functioning.

Ms GILL stressed that the EU paid a great deal of attention to China and India. She recalled that very ambitious plans were launched with both countries, which were looking at issues beyond trade. She said that the EU and Australia had a common interest in Asia in tackling issues such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, migration, and the consequences of the tsunami. She asked about Australia's concerns in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Mr GAHLER spoke about his visits in the region, including the Solomon Islands where he praised the Australian deployment to the (RAMSI) Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands. He said that EU policy should stabilise the countries in the region, which were quite fragile economically.

Mr TUCKEY said that former colonial countries should take their responsibility.

Mr PARRY asked about EU mechanism for anti-terrorism issues and level of cooperation in particular with Asian countries. He also asked Ms GILL about the cooperation between the EU and Australia in tackling the consequences of the tsunami.

Senator PATTERSON asked about the coordination of aid programme for the Solomon Islands.

Ms GOMES introduced herself and spoke on development aid to the Pacific region and in particular Portugal's role in the process. She also touched on East Timor's independence process and noted that Papua might also independent over time.

Mr DEVA recalled that Indonesia was one entity. He said that EU did not want to see the region destabilised and that Indonesia's stability should be preserved as the country could be considered as a model. He stressed that there would be chaos in the region if Indonesia were to break up. He asked the Australian government's view.

Senator PATTERSON replied that there was bipartisan support in Australia for the continued territorial integrity of Indonesia and there was therefore no support for Papuan independence.

9. Any other business

There was no other business

10. Date and place of next IPM

It was announced that it was planned to hold the next IPM in Australia in week commencing 19 February 2007, subject to authorisation.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Delegation for relations with Australia and New Zealand

29th EP/Australia Interparliamentary Meeting

24-27 April 2006
Brussels

List of delegation from Australia

Senator the Hon Dr Kay **PATTERSON** Liberal Party, Queensland
Leader of the delegation

Mr. Laurie **FERGUSON**
Deputy leader of the delegation

Labour Party, New South Wales

Mr. Joel **FITZGIBBON**

Labour Party, New South Wales

Senator Stephen **PARRY**

Liberal Party, Tasmania

Hon Wilson **TUCKEY**

Liberal Party, Western Australia

Dr Mal **WASHER**

Liberal Party, Moore, Western
Australia

Mr. Christopher **REID**

Delegation Secretary

Accompanying persons

Mrs Allison **PARRY**

Mrs Dianne **FITZGIBBON**

Mrs Nola **WASHER**

Mrs Maureen **WALSH**

Mrs Jennifer TUCKEY

Mission of Australia to the EU:

H.E. Peter GREY

Ms Sarah STOREY

Ambassador

First Secretary

**DELTAGERLISTE/ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KATAΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/LIITE RECORD
OF ATTENDANCE/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/LISTE DE PRESENCE/ELENCO DEI
PRESENTI/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/DELTAGARLISTA**

Til stede	Formandskabet/Vorstand/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Ufficio di Presidenza/Mesa/Puhemiehistö/J.L. Presidium: (*) Neil PARISH (P), Mirosław Mariusz PIOTROWSKI (VP) (26/4), Terry WYNN (VP)
Anwesend	Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Μέλη/Members/Diputados/Députés/Deputati/Leden/Deputados/Jäsenet/Ledamöter: Giles CHICHESTER, Philip CLAEYS (24/4), Klaus HÄNSCH (26/4), Milos KOTEREC (26/4), David MARTIN (26/4), James NICHOLSON (26/4), Reinhard RACK, Leopold RUTOWICZ (26/4)
Παρόντες	Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suplentes/Suppléants/Membri supplenti/ Plaatsvervangers/ Membros suplentes/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter:
Present	Den DOVER (24/4), Paul RÜBIG (24/4), Andres TARAND (24/4)
Presentes	
Présents	
Presenti	
Aanwezig	
Lasna	
Närvarande	
Art. 183,3	
Art. 178,2	BERMAN, DESS, DEVA, GAHLER, GILL, GOMES, JEGGLE, LULLING, TANNOCK
Endv. Deltog/Weitere Teiln./ Συμμετείχαν επίσης/Also present Participaron igualmente/ Participaient également/ Hanno partecipato altresì/ Andere deelnemers/ Outros participantes/ Muut osallistujat/ Dessutom deltog	
(Dagsorden/Tagesordnung Pkt/Ημερήσια Διάταξη Σημεί/Point OJ/Punto OG/Agenda Punt/Ordem do dia Punto/punto orden del dia/Esityslist Kohta/ Föredragningslista punkt):	

- * (P) = Formand/Vorsitzender/Πρόεδρος/Chairman/Président/Presidente/Voorzitter/Presidente/Puhemies/Ordförande
(VP) = Næstform./Stellv. Vorsitz./Αντιπρόεδρος/Vice-Chairman/Vice-Président/Vicepresidente/Varapuhemies/Ondervoorz./
Vice-Pres./Vicepres/Vice ordförande.

Til stede den/Anwesend am/Παρόν στις/Present on/Présent le/Presente il/Aanwezig op/Presente em/Presenteel/Läsna/Närvarande den.

C.E.S.:

* (P) = Formand/Pres./Πρόεδρος/Chairman/Président/Voorzitter/Puhemies/Ordförande
(VP) = Næstform./Vize-Pres./Αντιπρόεδρος/Vice-Chairman/Vice-Président/Ondervoorz./Vice-pres/Varapuhemies/Vice ordförande.
(M) = Medlem./Mitglied/Μέλος/Member/Miembro/Membre/Membro/Lid/Membro/Jäsen/Ledamot
(F) = Tjenestemand/Beamter/Υπάλληλος/Official/Funcionario/Fonctionnaire/Funzionario/Ambtenaar/Functionário/Virkamies/Tjänsteman

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

29th EP/Australia Interparliamentary meeting

24 and 26 April 2006

Brussels

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Sunday 23 April 2006

- Individual arrivals of Delegation in Brussels and transfer to

*Hotel Amigo
rue de l'Amigo 1-3
1000 Brussels
Tel. +32 (0)2 547 47 47*

Private programme: Tour of Bruges arranged by the Australian mission.

Monday 24 April 2006

- 14h45 Departure from hotel to the European Parliament
- 15h00 Arrival at the European Parliament - PHS entrance
Met by Mr Neil PARISH, Chairman of the Delegation for relations with
Australia and New Zealand, and the Protocol service
Tour of the European Parliament
- 16h00 Meeting with the Australia/New Zealand delegation at European
Parliament (see separate agenda)

*Meeting room A5E-2 (Altiero Spinelli building)
Tel. +32 2 284 8116*

- 18h15 Departure from European Parliament to hotel

19h30 Dinner hosted by Mr Neil PARISH, Chair of the Delegation for Relations with Australia and New Zealand.

*Restaurant La Chaloupe d'Or
Grand Place 24
1000 Brussels
+32 (0)2 511 41 61*

Tuesday 25 April 2006 – ANZAC Day, YPRES

Organised by Australian mission

Wednesday 26 April 2006

08h45 Departure from hotel to the European Parliament

09h15 Meetings with members from like-minded political groups
EPP-ED - Working breakfast - Members restaurant - ASP Building
PES - Working breakfast - Members restaurant - ASP Building

10h15 Thematic discussions on the following items:

1015- 1115 hrs - EU Institutional issues (constitution and enlargement
1115 - 1215 hrs - Development and ACP issues and Foreign Affairs/Security issues

*Meeting room A5H-1 (Altiero Spinelli building)
Tel. +32 2 284 8525*

12h30 Departure to The Hague

N.B. Australian Mission will be responsible for transport throughout the visit.