

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

13th EP/New Zealand Interparliamentary Meeting

18-19 April 2006

Brussels

MINUTES

Tuesday, 18 April 2006

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chairman of the EP Delegation, Mr PARISH, opened the meeting at 15.05 hours. He welcomed members and thanked Ms WILSON for organising an excellent visit to New Zealand six weeks previously.

The Members of the New Zealand delegation, Ms WILSON, Mr KING, Ms BENNETT, Ms MACKEY and Ms TURNER introduced themselves. The members of the European Parliament who were present, Mr RACK, Mr CLAEYS, Mr TRIANTAPHYLIDIS and Mr TAKKULA also introduced themselves.

2. Adoption of draft agenda (PE 370.627)

The agenda was adopted.

3. Opening session on EU-New Zealand relations and the EU-New Zealand Interparliamentary framework

Mr PARISH raised the issue of EU foreign aid to the Pacific region and stressed that Australia and New Zealand were in a good position to advise the Union as they knew far more about the region.

Ms WILSON underlined that support for good governance was extremely important and that monitoring of elections was also a key element.

Ms MACKEY referred to the recent general election in the Solomon Islands and highlighted the generally positive experience of New Zealand regarding multiculturalism. She gave details of the New Zealand aid programmes.

Mr RACK noted that the development process was focussing more on trade and less on aid and asked how effective this had been. He referred to the Cotonou arrangements and the shift to regionalisation.

Mr KING noticed that large nations had better access to the market and that small nations needed support. He underlined that the infrastructure was very limited in much of the Pacific region.

Ms WILSON stressed that it was important to meet the real needs of the Pacific region and that cultures should not be compromised. She raised the issue of how far it was possible to replicate the New Zealand model in small island states.

Mr KING noted that there were some very small island nations in the Pacific, however the region also included large countries such as Indonesia.

Mr TRIANTAPHYLIDIS asked about influence of the USA and other countries in the region. Ms WILSON stated that the US influence was not so obvious. She noted that Japan also had interests in the region and China was becoming increasingly involved.

Mr PARISH noted that EU legislation such as that covering REACH was likely to affect New Zealand and there was a need for Wellington to be engaged in this area.

4. Thematic discussions:

Mr CLAEYS stated that immigration was one of the most important issues of the EU. He stressed the numerous problems of young Muslims, such as integration, employment and education. He argued that the EU was not strong enough to address the issue and that the main political parties had brushed the issue under the carpet...

Mr PARISH stated that labour immigration was necessary in an expanding economy. He pointed to the debate about how far immigrants should be integrated. In his view New Zealand had created a country which had successfully addressed these issues.

Ms BENNETT briefly explained that New Zealand encouraged and celebrated differences and the ability to maintain cultures without separation. Immigrants could become "Kiwis" while retaining their links to their country of origin.

Ms TURNER spoke about the position of immigrants working in the health sector and noticed that this type of work required a good knowledge of the English language and cultural understanding. She emphasised better employment policies to ensure that prospective immigrants had the right skills and qualifications.

Ms MACKEY said immigration would become a bigger problem in New Zealand, although it had the advantage of being able to learn from other countries with greater

experience of the issue. She pointed out some problems with Asian immigration such as a high level of criminality and "Asian on Asian" crime. She added that immigration today was centred in the cities but migrants were needed in the countryside. It was important to give realistic expectations to immigrants.

Mr RACK drew attention to the exclusion of immigrants and stressed that integration into the labour market was greater than integration into society

Mr KING stressed that the focus should be on literacy and education of immigrants.

Mr TAKKULA referred to the cultural autonomy given to the Sami people in Finland. He asked about the Maori people and their attitude towards integration issues.

Ms WILSON said that there was a need for a conscious policy to ensure that injustices of the past were addressed and there had been some progress as Maori culture became part of New Zealand culture. She stated that inclusiveness rather than integration was the appropriate policy to follow. She stressed that not all Maoris thought the same and some wanted separate development and some did not.

Mr HELMER recalled that there were 20 million unemployed people in Europe. He argued that the EU labour markets were inflexible and there were many overqualified graduates in the UK. He noted the main sources of immigration in the UK; i.e. asylum seekers and economic migrants from both inside and outside the EU. He underlined that better management of immigration was necessary. Mr CLAYES agreed with Mr HELMER.

Mr PARISH closed the meeting at 17.10 hours.

Wednesday, 19 April 2006

Mr PARISH opened the meeting at 9.05 hours.

Mr BÖGE took the floor and gave an outline of the European budget. He briefly explained the differences between the European and national budgets and outlined the budgetary process. He noted in particular that the income and expenditure needed to be in balance and that there was a process of multi-annual financial planning with a voluntary agreement between the three institutions. A key issue to be addressed was the funding for agriculture and rural development. Funding for the accession of Romania and Bulgaria also needed to come from the budget. He also recalled that there would be a review in 2008-2009, and that in 2009 there would be European elections and that a new Commission would need to be approved by the Parliament.

Mr WYNN stressed that the EU budget was a complex mechanism. He recalled that the European Parliament had a crucial role as co-budgetary authority. He noted that the Parliament was encouraging Member States to take responsibilities for their spending.

Mr WYNN pointed out that the European budget represented only 1% of Europe's GNI (gross national income), and that expenditure on agriculture now represented only 0.43% of European GNI.

Ms WILSON made some brief comments on the Parliament's role to exercise more accountability and transparency for the budget.

Mr PARISH noticed that a lot of expenditure was the responsibility of Member States. He explained the situation with the mid-term review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and noted that the review had turned out to be one of the most fundamental reorganisations of agriculture. He stressed that enlargement was the main driving force behind the CAP reform. Mr PARISH then briefly explained the new systems of farm payments, and how Member States were implementing it.

Mr KING said that he was pleased to see the way in which Europeans have accepted the changes. He agreed with Mr PARISH that the new system was much more WTO-driven. He noted with satisfaction that New Zealand had removed agricultural subsidies.

Mr PARISH underlined that access to the European market would be the most difficult issue in the WTO negotiations.

Ms WILSON said that New Zealand understood the EU's difficulties, and noticed that New Zealand had made radical changes in its agriculture policy and that there had been costs.

Mr PARISH asked Mr VAN ORDEN to introduce himself and explain the enlargement process.

Mr VAN ORDEN noted that enlargement was an enormously successful process, which had extended the area of prosperity, stability and security. He underlined that Bulgaria and Romania were experiencing some difficulties and could see their accession postponed. He recalled that some Member States had become increasingly concerned about further enlargement. He noted that countries in south-eastern Europe also aspired to join the EU. He reminded the meeting that Turkey was the longest-standing applicant and the most controversial candidate, and that it would take many years before Turkey could become a full member. He briefly spoke about Turkey's difficulties, such as poverty, human rights, terrorism, Kurdish population and the Cyprus problem. He added that the UK was one of the strongest supporters of Turkish accession. Finally, he said that Turkey's accession to the EU could confirm the westernising and modernising elements within Turkish society. He stressed that the EU needed Turkey as an ally and this could send a strong signal to the Muslim world.

Mr TRIANTAPHYLIDIS disagreed with Mr VAN ORDEN. He recalled that Turkey occupied a part of EU territory. He also referred to other problems, such as the Kurdish problem and the Armenian question.

Mr CLAEYS said that the possible accession of Turkey was an extremely controversial subject. He said that the human rights situation in the country reminded unacceptable, that the Armenian genocide had not been acknowledged, and discrimination against

minority groups persisted. He pointed to the fact that Turkey was a member of the Islamic Conference. Mr CLAEYS said that Europe could not integrate Turkey economically. He recalled that Turkey refused to recognise the Republic of Cyprus and said that a privileged partnership was the most convenient option.

Mr BÖGE stated that the deepening of the EU should be a priority. He reminded that the experience with Romania and Bulgaria demonstrated that the EU needed to be careful. He said that the EU was reaching the limits of the capacity to absorb new members. Finally he said that Germany had a very close relationship with Turkey but stressed the failure of integration policy with regard to young Turks.

Mr WYNN said that he followed his government's position in favour of Turkey's accession. The EU was hypocritical with respect to Turkey because some Member States would never accept Turkey's accession. He said that if Turkey met all the demands, it would deserve to be a member of the EU.

Ms WILSON said that the delegation wished to develop a greater understanding of Turkey. She referred to the visit of Turkish Prime Minister to New Zealand last year. She said that her delegation was appreciative of the views expressed by the members of the Parliament.

Mr PARISH proposed to move on to the EU constitutional issues.

Mr DUFF said he was a strong supporter of the Constitutional Treaty. He said that the Constitution streamlined the decision-making procedures, codified and consolidated what was built up over several obscure treaties and clarified the issues of competence and strengthened the capacity of the EU to act effectively abroad and inside Member States. Mr DUFF said that without the Constitution, future progress of expansion of the Union would be difficult and maybe an impossible task. He added that the European Parliament was trying to complete the process successfully and to improve the treaty through a serious re-negotiation.

Mr KIRKHOPE set out the background to the drafting of the Constitutional Treaty. He pointed out the need to make Europe more accountable and more interesting to ordinary people. He also said that it was necessary to simplify the structures of Europe and to get the relationship between institutions into the right balance. He referred to his proposals for a simplifying treaty. He said that Europe had failed to reform economically. He also stressed that the arrival of the new European countries was a tonic in terms of political and economic input.

Mr RACK stated that there was a basic division in philosophies over what the EU should become and whether the Constitution should be confined to simply technical reforms or should be a move towards federalisation.

Mr PIOTROWSKI said he was concerned about the whole procedure and about the fact that no alternative to the Constitution had been proposed and that the EU had not produced a "Plan B". He noted that many problems needed to be solved. He mentioned that most Dutch and French MEPs had voted in favour of the Constitution, although their electorates subsequently rejected it.

Mr PARISH said that he would support the proposal for a referendum in the UK. He gave his interpretation of the reasons for the "No" vote in the Netherlands and France. He added that it was impossible to run the EU with the existing treaties.

Mr RUTOWICZ said that the text of the Constitution was too complicated and stressed the need for a simpler and more transparent document, which could be supported by European citizens.

Mr TRIANTAPHYLIDIS stated that the Constitution had not been sufficiently debated among the citizens and that it should be put to a popular vote.

Ms WILSON recalled that New Zealand did not have a written constitution. She said that she now had a better understanding of the issues that linked the constitution, the budget and enlargement. She thanked all the members for sharing their views.

5. Any other business

There was no other business.

6. Future activities

Mr PARISH announced that the next meeting between the European Parliament and New Zealand would take place in 2007 in either Brussels or Strasbourg.

He thanked the New Zealand delegation and all the MEPs for attending the meeting. He closed the meeting at 11.00 hours.

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DRAFT PROGRAMME

Sunday 16 April 2006

- 08h10 Arrival of the Rt.Hon. Margaret WILSON, Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament
 accompanied by Ms Rosemary HART, Media Advisor
 LH4570 - ex Frankfurt
 (met by the Embassy and the EP Protocoll)
- 10h35 Arrival of Mr David WILLIAMS
 LH4572 - ex Frankfurt
- 14h40 Arrival of Mrs and Miss BENNETT at Gare du Midi from Paris (met by Stuart HORNE, Second Secretary of the NZ Mission)

Monday 17 April 2006

- 10h25 Arrival of 2 members of the delegation with flight LH4572 - ex Frankfurt
 Mr Colin KING
 Mrs Lynnette KING
 (met by the EP Protocoll)
- 10h35 Arrival of 4 members of the delegation with flight BD 145 - ex London
 Ms Judy TURNER
 Mr Graham TURNER
 Ms Moana MACKEY
 Mr Kelvin LANGE

(met by the EP Protocol)

Ambassador's Programme arranged by New Zealand Mission (private dinner at the residence).

Tuesday 18 April 2006

11h30 Arrival of the delegation at the European Parliament

Met by Neil PARISH, Chairman of the Delegation for relations with New Zealand, and the Protocol - tour of the building

13h00 Lunch hosted by Mr Neil PARISH, Chairman of the European Parliament delegation for relations with New Zealand

European Parliament, Members' Dining Room 6

15h00 Interparliamentary meeting with the European Parliament

*European Parliament, meeting room P4B001
Tel. +32 2 284 4108*

17h30
PARISH Conclusion of meeting - Drinks offered by the Chairman, Mr Neil

18h00 Departure from European Parliament to hotel

*Hotel Renaissance
19 rue du Parnasse
Brussels
+32 (0)2 505 2929*

19h15 Transport for Dinner

19h30 Dinner hosted by the Chair of the Australia/New Zealand Delegation, Mr Neil PARISH

*Restaurant 'La Maison du Cygne'
Rue Charles Buls (Grand Place) 2
1000 Bruxelles
Tel. +32 2 511 82 44*

Wednesday 19 April 2006

08h30	Depart hotel for European Parliament
09h00-11h00	Interparliamentary meeting continues <i>European Parliament, meeting room P4B001</i> <i>Tel. +32 2 284 4108</i>
11h00-12h00 Constitution in	The Speaker, Rt.Hon. Margaret WILSON, meets MEPs to discuss the <i>Protocol Room Nr 1</i> Members of delegation meet with political counterparts <i>PES Group, meeting room A3H-1</i> <i>EPP Group, meeting room of Mr Chichester</i>
12h00 of the	Buffet lunch hosted by Mr Janusz ONYSZKIEWICZ, Vice President European Parliament <i>Members' Restaurant</i>
13h30	Departure for the airport
15h35	Flight for Ankara, Turkey TK1936

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List of Participants of the New Zealand Delegation

Right Honourable Margaret WILSON	Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives (Labour Party)
Ms Moana MACKEY	MP (Labour Party)
Mrs Judy TURNER	MP (United Future Party)
Ms Paula BENNETT	MP (National Party)
Mr Colin KING	MP (National Party)

Accompanying persons :

Mr Graham TURNER
Mr Kelvin LANGE
Ms Anna BENNETT
Mrs Lynnette KING

Staff:

Mr David WILLIAMS
Ms Rose HART
office

Secretary of the Delegation
Communications Advisor, Speaker's

Embassy of New Zealand:

H.E. Wade ARMSTRONG
Ms Janet LOWE

Ambassador
Counsellor

**DELTAGERLISTE/ANWESENHEITSLISTE/ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/LITE 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 (1VP) (19/4), Terry WYNN (VP) (19/4)
Anwesend	Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Μέλη/Members/Diputados/Députés/Deputati/Leden/Deputados/Jäsenet/Ledamöter: Reimer BÖGE, Giles CHICHESTER (18/4), Philip CLAEYS, David MARTIN, Reinhard RACK, Hannu TAKKULA (18/4), Kyriacos TRIANTAPHYLIDIS, Leopold RUTOWICZ (19/4)
Παρόντες	Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suplentes/Suppléants/Membri supplenti/ Plaatsvervangers/ Membros suplentes/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter:
Present	Paul RÜBIG (18/4), John ATTARD-MONTALTO (19/4)
Presentes	
Présents	
Presenti	
Aanwezig	
Lasna	
Närvarande	
Art. 183,3	
Art. 178,2	ASHWORTH, DUFF, HELMER, KIRKHOPE
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/Läsnä/Närvarande den.

