



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Delegation for Relations with South Asia and the SAARC

Working Group visit to Bhutan and Nepal

Paro, Thimphu, Kathmandu, Timai UNHCR refugee camp

18-24 March 2007

Report by Ms Neena Gill, Chair of the D-SAARC Delegation, for

- *The Delegation for Relations with South Asia*
- *The Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy*
- *The Committee on Development*

Brussels, May 9th 2007
PK/ck

Introduction

The Delegation, led by Ms Neena GILL (PSE, UK) chose to combine Bhutan and Nepal in a single visit from 18 to 24 March 2007, as the countries face some similar characteristics and challenges:

- Both are undergoing a constitutional process which should culminate in general elections – theoretically in summer 2007 for Nepal, and mid-2008 for Bhutan. The democratisation challenge was therefore at the core of discussions in both Thimphu and Kathmandu, MEPs stressing the need to ensure free and fair elections in the two countries.
- The issue of the refugee population that fled from Bhutan to Nepal in the early nineties cannot be solved without the involvement of both countries and with the help of the the EU, the US and India, among others. Indeed, due to the involvement of the international community from an early stage (the EU being one of the biggest donors of humanitarian assistance in the camps) this problem cannot be seen as a merely bilateral one.

The EP Delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the European Commission Delegation in Kathmandu for the support it constantly provided, despite being severely short-staffed. This support was instrumental in devising a very thorough programme of activities, in and out of Kathmandu. These also included focusing on the 50th anniversary of the EU, in cooperation with the German Presidency.

Members faced, however, severe difficulties in Bhutan due to the fact that neither the European Commission neither *any* of the 27 Member-States maintains any significant presence in Thimphu; as it is difficult to think of any other country where any risks of duplication of tasks could be lower, the EP Delegation would therefore suggest to the EC to consider upgrading its level of representation. As Bhutan is considering opening a long awaited representation to the EU in Brussels, the EP Delegation would therefore welcome a reciprocal arrangement.

This should be seen as an encouragement to the current efforts Bhutan is undertaking in exiting its isolation and opening to the world; until this happens, however, the EP Delegation would welcome hearing from the Commission how it will, in the meantime, consider a more effective presence and involvement in Bhutan, also in order, by its presence, to prevent a possible second wave of refugees from happening.

During the course of its visit, the 5-strong working group met, among others, with the following:

In Bhutan

- Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Dasho Zhamling Dorji, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly
- Lyonpo Wangdi Norbu, Minister of Finance
- Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup, Minister of Agriculture
- Dasho Kunzang Wangdi, Chief Election Commissioner
- Ms Aum Neten Zangmo, Chairperson, Anti Corruption Commission
- Dasho Damcho Dorji, Attorney General
- Representatives of the media and the civil society

In Nepal

- Mr Girija Prasad Koirala, Prime Minister
- Mr. Subash Chandra Nemwang, Speaker of the House of Representatives
- Mr K.P. Sharma Oli, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Mr Narendra B. Nemwang, Minister of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs
- Mr. Bhojraj Pokhrael, Chief Election Commissioner
- Mr. Ian Martin, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN),
- Mr. Abraham Abraham, UNHCR
- Representatives of the media and the civil society
- rerepresentatives of the refugees from Bhutan, in Kathmandu and in Timai.

A. The Constitutional process in Bhutan and Nepal

I BHUTAN: a Kingdom in transition

Today, Bhutan is an absolute monarchy, ruled by the fifth hereditary Dragon King, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk, after the surprise abdication of King Jigme Singye Wangchuk in December 2006. The EP Delegation found that reaching Bhutan was an arduous task, as Bhutan still faces the dilemma of how to protect its unique heritage and culture while gradually opening to the world. Improved accessibility should however be a priority, as today it is virtually impossible to reach the country otherwise than by one of the 2 planes of the national air carrier.



Exchange of gifts with Dy Speaker Dasbo Zhamling Dorji

The Delegation witnessed, however, that the Himalayan kingdom is living a period of profound change and transition, on its way of becoming a constitutional monarchy, a process initiated in 2003. The draft Constitution has already been circulated to households and presented to all 20 districts of the country by the former King, who discussed the draft extensively in local consultations. The Constitution is expected to be adopted by the National Assembly in 2008. With the entry into the era of constitutional monarchy, Bhutan will see the formal end of a political system characterised by limited civil liberties and by, at least nominal, restrictions on the freedom of speech, press, assembly and association.

These moves, far from being cosmetic, should be strongly supported by the EU: indeed, 2008 will not only see the advent of a Constitutional Monarchy but also the organisation of the first general and direct elections in the history of the country. Some degree of uncertainty, however, may remain as to whether the adoption of the Constitution will be one of the last acts of the outgoing Assembly or one of the first priorities of the newly elected legislative body.



Members of the Delegation during their visit at the Anti-Corruption Commission

The Delegation witnessed that Bhutan is currently actively preparing for the 2008 elections with the appointment of an Election Commission, and the adoption of many measures set to enhance good governance, such as the decisive establishment of an Anti-Corruption Commission - both bodies with real teeth. The EP Delegation met with the Chairs of both Commissions and was impressed by their professionalism and dedication. It is worth noting that the Anti-Corruption Commission is already investigating potential abuses of power or position in a pre-electoral context.

Members were, however, stricken by a common chord in all of the talks they had: in the words of the Deputy Speaker, “*in many countries democracy follows demands of the people... Here it is the opposite*”. Furthermore, “*we are not yet in a position to see whether these new developments will be for better or for worse*”. Generally speaking, it does seem that the impulse for these changes was genuinely initiated from above – i.e. from the former and the current King.

Indeed, many officials met by the Delegation were all too keen to remind that the common perception in Bhutan, due to the situation in some neighbouring countries, is to see democracy as little more than a synonym for potential instability. Prime Minister Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk himself heavily insisted on the “*throne-initiated nature of the devolution process*”, stressing the paradox that if there was to be a referendum on the introduction of a Constitution “*this would clearly be defeated*”. He hinted that the way to avoid the corruption and instability young democracies are associated with would be to only allow a “*reasonable number of political parties*”. Press reports that appeared while the Delegation was in Bhutan seemed to confirm that Bhutan’s government clearly intends the country to evolve towards a system where two main parties alternate in power.



The Chair and Delegation Members with PM Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk

Dasho Kunzang Wangdi, Chief Election Commissioner, met by the Delegation, did not explicitly comment on reports according to which, for a party to have MPs, the threshold would be set at a quite high level (10%). He did accept the point implicitly, though, explaining that while independent candidates would theoretically be allowed to run, “*in practice they will not have a chance*”.

The Election Commission, appointed by Royal Decree and to be re-confirmed by the newly elected Assembly in a bipartisan manner, is also the body which will oversee the formation of political parties – which were outlawed until now. Members found the whole process to be a bit hurried, as in order for parties to compete in the spring/summer 2008 elections (no firm date being set) they would have to register well in advance, by July/fall 2007. The terms of registration were still unclear: a party should present a list of registered members as well as a list of possible candidates for the 2008 elections; but how many registered members are needed? In the words of the Chief Election Commissioner, “*as many as possible, but there is no firm answer yet*”.

M. Daho Kunzang Wangdi also confirmed that the requirement of holding a BA in order to run at the election is also going to be strictly applied. This was met by surprise and concern by MEPs – a feeling shared by most National Assembly MPs who had been met before, including the Deputy Speaker. It should be reminded here that not only many of the current Members do not hold a BA but that less than 2% of the population does; in some rural constituencies, this percentage is even lower, meaning that some candidates may run in virtually uncontested constituencies.

Furthermore, out of the (few) BA holders most currently work in the civil service, from which they would have to resign so as not to compromise the political neutrality of the Administration. The EP Delegation did stress that maintaining this requirement could mean a disruption of the smooth functioning of the civil service, as well as indirectly discriminate against women, but Bhutanese officials did not appear to have second thoughts. Indeed, even the option to return to the civil service for unelected candidates is not currently on the table.

The two key aspects in the electoral process are, at this stage, constituency mapping (which is more or less complete, with 47 electoral districts set) and compiling the electoral rolls. This second dimension is perhaps more complicated, as universal suffrage, with everybody above 18 entitled to vote, has never previously been applied.

425.000 voters have thus been identified, out of whom 55% has already successfully undergone the process in being delivered the ID cards which are going to be necessary on polling day. It should be mentioned that some Members enquired whether a specific “non objection certificate”, which is still, rather controversially, needed to get a passport, for instance, would be required in order to vote or stand for elections – but the Chief Election Commissioner refuted this.

As, however, several reports have since seen the light indicating that the requirement to produce such a NOC certificate is necessary in order for voters to get the necessary ID cards, and there have been allegations that the Bhutanese Police has, on some instances, refused issuing such certificates on political / ethnical grounds in southern Bhutan, the EP Delegation would welcome clarifications on the matter, from both the Bhutanese Government and the European Commission - with the possible observation of the 2008 elections. For the Chair of the Delegation, an active presence of the Commission could help in securing the free and fair character of the elections, as well as safeguarding that the elections will be an inclusive process.

Indeed, on the subject of the presence of International Observers, Bhutanese officials underlined that SAARC Observers would be welcome, as well as official observers coming from international organisations with which Bhutan has established ties. Such requests would, however, have to be presented in advance and through the proper diplomatic channels (i.e. Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordination with the Electoral Commission).

*

* * *

Finally, the Delegation also had the opportunity to hold talks with the Ministers of Agriculture (on the themes of rural projects and land management) and Finance (diversification and modernisation of Bhutan's economy, poverty issues), as well as to visit a traditional medicine project which benefits from EU funding. Ironically and paradoxically, however, several of these drugs have faced problems in being exported to Europe as the technical requirements they would have to meet are too stringent. Members nevertheless felt that EU assistance should be maintained and extend to assistance in the pattern - granting process, as there have been cases of regional counterfeiting.

II NEPAL: heavy doubts over the electoral calendar

The Delegation arrived in Nepal to find a rather turbulent political situation: Maoists were now represented in Parliament and had started decommissioning their weapons, under UN supervision, but their reported continuous practice of extortions had triggered genuine popular protests, as well as general strikes in Kathmandu and the main urban centres. At the same time, the unrest in southern Nepal - the Terai- was growing, with ethnic protests in favour of regional autonomy going on and demonstrators violently clashing with the Maoists (26 casualties were reported shortly before the Delegation left).



A common sight in Kathmandu: poster calling for the incarceration of King Gyanendra

At the same time, and against widespread speculation that the June elections in view of forming a Constituent Assembly that would determine the future --if any-- of the Monarchy would be postponed again, the Maoists warned that in such a scenario they would envisage "*proclaiming the Republic from the street*".

Indeed, as M. Sharma Oli, deputy PM, explained, the general behaviour of the Maoists still was a very aggressive one. There is, however, hope that with their gradual joining the political mainstream, in both Parliament and Government, they would stop such acts. While "*they have not yet declared that they renounce violence they cannot go back any longer, as they have made many commitments and are now part of the process*". M. Subash Nemwang, Speaker of the House of Representatives also appeared quite optimistic as "*there is a commitment of the whole country that the election of a constituent assembly takes place as planned*" ; he also assured Members that "*we are doing all the necessary preparations*" to have the legislation that would allow the elections to take place in June.



The Chair with PM Koirala

PM Koirala explained that the Maoists have formally accepted the Peace Accord "*even though they do not always respect it*". Complying is essential, as is allowing displaced persons to return to their homes, if the Maoists really want to enter government. The PM admitted that "*the law and order situation is not that good*". Asked by Members of the Delegation how his government would tackle this in the context of the elections, M. Koirala did not answer directly. Instead, he stressed that the international community should massively send electoral observers, due to the tremendous psychological impact on the voters such a presence would have, as their confidence in the electoral process would then be boosted.

Some Members at least, thus, wondered whether, for the Nepali authorities, the main purpose of the EU Electoral Observation Mission would be rather to safeguard, with their presence, the free and fair character of the elections, instead of just monitoring it.

On the date of the elections, the PM was adamant: "*they will take place in June*" and "*observers will be able to move freely*". He warned that if the elections were to be delayed, this would be for a significant period, and "*would mean many complications*" -- alluding, perhaps, to the veiled threats of the Maoists that in such a case they would declare the Republic (and abolish the Monarchy) "*from the streets*". In short, concluded PM Koirala, without failing to remind MEPs that the government has established a pro-poor budget as the people need to see that there is a "peace dividend", "*we need EU support*". During their visit, Members felt that such support is indeed needed - but that Nepal itself should take steps to improve the situation on several sectors where attention is urgently needed, such as trafficking and women's empowerment.

The future perspectives of the peace-process were thoroughly examined, notably at the exchange of views held with Mr Ian Martin, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). While all participants agreed that the peace process is linked to the electoral calendar, it was reminded that the situation, when compared with the one Nepal faced in 2006 or 2005, had improved dramatically - despite all the challenges which still remain on the table. One of them is to devise ways so as to allow the Maoist *cadres*, who are now in cantonments, to fully integrate into civilian life.

Technical preparations in the ru-up to the elections were discussed with M. Bhojraj Pokharel, Chair of the Electoral Commission, in presence of many other Members of the Commission. M. Pokharel indicated that:

- for the 1st time in 10 years, the Electoral Commission is allowed in all of the country;
- the electoral process is linked to the peace process; elections are a key element insofar peace and stability are concerned ;
- 17 million voters are expected to register;
- the electoral system that will apply will be a mixed one, with an element of proportional representation ;

However, it quickly appeared that many questions still remained unanswered, as

- most of the legislation needed has not been enacted by Parliament ;
- electoral constituencies are not delimited yet; this "painful exercise" is, at least partially, in the hands of the Government ;
- An extra 30.000 staff are needed to organise the elections properly; it is unclear how they could be hired when no electoral date has been firmly set ;
- the government faces a very cruel dilemma: it has the duty to ensure that everybody feels secure to participate in the elections -- but it is also clear that the Royal Nepalese Army and the Police Forces lack the necessary credibility to perform this function.

M. Pokharel explained that the message that has been conveyed to Nepal's political parties is that, technically, "*meeting the June deadline has now become very difficult*". Asked by Ms Gill, he stated that "*there is no plan B*"; if, however, the elections were *not* to take place in June, which did seem the most likely scenario to the EP Delegation, it was judged unlikely they would be organised before the end of the monsoon (i.e. after the fall).

B. The refugees' issue

I. The Context

104,000 Bhutanese refugees, perhaps of Nepalese origin or Nepali-speakers (*Lhotshampas*), but definitely claiming to be Bhutanese citizens, live in seven UNHCR camps in eastern Nepal. They began arriving in the early 1990s, after Bhutan reviewed retroactively its citizenship laws¹, and alleged prosecution by the Bhutanese authorities on the basis of their language and culture. Several rounds of Nepal-Bhutan ministerial-level resulted in an initial agreement, in December 2000, to allow Joint Verification Teams (JVT) to visit the camps. JVT aim at classifying the refugees in the following categories:

- Category I: Bhutanese citizens forcibly evicted
- Category II: Bhutanese citizens who voluntarily left the country
- Category III: Non-Bhutanese
- Category IV: Bhutanese citizens with a criminal record

The verification process was conducted in 2004 in the Khudunubari camp only, examining approximately 12,000 cases. Joint Verification Teams assessed only **4,8%** of the refugees to be genuine Bhutanese citizens, half of whom with a criminal record. The discussions on the modalities to repatriate them, together with category II (70%, who, however, would have to reapply for citizenship) stalled after, on 22/12/2004, the Bhutanese officials belonging to the JVT were lapidated by an angry refugee crowd. Since then, the situation is best described as a total stalemate.

It should be taken into account that the population of Bhutan, once estimated at over a million and half, has constantly been downgraded by Thimphu. According to the more recent census (2005), which was conducted in the run-up to the elections, Bhutan counts 672,425 nationals. The Bhutanese Prime Minister informed the Delegation that the current estimate is that "*125,000 foreigners live in our country, most of them illegally*". In the words of the PM, these persons are currently allowed to reside in Bhutan as, "*because of what happened in the nineties, we took no action*"².

Members also met with key representatives of the international community who have a concern over the matter, such as the Ambassadors of China, the United States, Japan, India and M. Abraham, UNHCR Representative in Nepal. The EP Delegation conveyed the opinion that a rapid solution should be encouraged and that the eternal funding of the status-quo in the camps is not a workable option. A partial way out of the impasse seems, therefore, to be the current US initiative to accept 60.000 refugees on US soil; granting green cards means securing freedom of movement and the right of employment across the US.

Why this initiative? As the US representatives explained in Kathmandu, "*Bhutan will never, never take anyone back*" as "*this would be an admission of guilt of ethnic cleansing*". An Overseas Processing Entity will therefore start operations in Nepal in April, so that refugee re-settlement effectively begins before the end of 2007; the target seems to be 12,000 persons per

¹ Bhutan changed its citizenship laws in December 1958 and, for the last time, in December 1990. These last changes effectively meant that every person who could not prove being a resident (or descendant of a resident) before 1958 had to leave the country with his/her citizenship repealed as illegally granted.

² The PM did not expand precisely on what action was taken in the nineties, and by whom.

year, and the programme, initially envisaged for 5 years, could be extended - reaching, overall, 84,000 persons.

The US authorities also stressed that the programme would be open to all refugees ("*all that want to be resettled will be resettled*"), even though each application will be screened; nevertheless, given US policy of considering Maoists in Nepal as a terrorist organization, it is doubtful whether refugees who espouse Maoist activism will be allowed to participate¹. Green card holders can, eventually, apply for citizenship and fully integrate in the American social fabric.

II. The Talks

The issue was examined thoroughly by the EP Delegation; Members met with UNHCR, WFP, UNDP Officials as well as with refugee representatives in Kathmandu. The Delegation also had the opportunity to examine the subject with M. Koirala and Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, Prime Ministers of Nepal and Bhutan respectively [the Memorandum submitted by the Bhutanese PM is annexed].

The official positions of both countries are therefore as follows:

Bhutan:

- Contrary to the terminology used by the UNHCR and the international community², the term "refugee" is felt as inappropriate, as the problem is perceived purely in terms of illegal immigration.
- Granting citizenship to illegal immigrants is impossible, as this would create "*a dangerous precedent*".
- Declares its "*commitment to resolve this problem*" and a willingness to discuss it with the Nepali side in the margins of the next SAARC summits.
- Nepal's political instability is perceived as the main factor having prevented a swift resolution so far.
- Kathmandu is expected to provide adequate security to the Joint Verification Teams for them to resume activity.
- Once this is achieved, Bhutan will accept repatriation of persons falling under categories I (genuine Bhutanese nationals) and IV (Bhutanese with a criminal record): in the words of the PM, "*we stand by this commitment*". Category II will be dealt with afterwards.
- There is a fear that the Maoist element has infiltrated the camps. This gives little room to manoeuvre to Bhutan as "*there is a serious concern of terror and instability; Bhutan's absorption capacity, in such terms, is very limited*".

¹ Ambassador Moriarty made however a distinction between Maoists leaders and mere sympathizers.

² Including the European Parliament, in its resolutions of 7/9/2000 and 14/3/1996.

Nepal:

- Accepts that many of the refugees are indeed Nepali-speakers (*Lhotshampas*) or of Nepali origin but insists that, as they were living on Bhutanese soil for generations, they are Bhutanese citizens and should have the right to return to their homeland – Bhutan.
- PM Koirala: “*this is a chronic problem, but should not be our problem*”. Nepal reminds that Bhutan and Nepal are not contiguous: “*why did this India allow this to happen by letting the refugees in our country?*”
- Argues that there may have been problems when the JVT started their operations, but that Nepal offered, since, the security guarantees Bhutan had required.
- Accepts voluntary resettlement of the refugees in third countries, and will not present any obstacles in this respect.



Timai Refugee Camp: open discussion with refugees

A working group of the Delegation also visited the UNHCR Timai refugee camp, one of the first to be established, spontaneously, by the refugees, in 1991, and witnessed the Refugee Census undertaken by the UNHCR. Today the camp numbers 10.300 persons, out of which 42% are below 17 years of age - meaning they have never seen Bhutan. Members were briefed by the UNHCR in situ, and were also able to discuss their plight directly with the refugees, touching upon the sensitive issue of resettlement in a third country.

The EP Delegation noted that:

- For many refugees, the notion of being examined by a Joint Verification Team in charge of assessing their nationality appeared as a deeply humiliating ordeal.
- Irrespective of their alleged Nepali origins, many of the refugees maintained a strong sense of Bhutanese identity and a connection to the culture and customs left behind 17 years ago.
- Courses in *Dzongkha* are still part of the curriculum taught in the schools in the refugee camps, without any assistance from the Bhutanese government.
- Specifically the classification of persons under category IV (“Bhutanese citizens with a criminal record”) seems to have been operated under extremely opaque criteria: several cases are reported where category IV classification actually extends to persons being born in the camps. Explanations on how such persons could have a criminal record in Bhutan would be welcome. In other cases, several persons were reported to have been classified as criminals because of, loosely defined, “anti-national activity” their relatives were suspected of in the late eighties.

III. Conclusions of the Delegation

On the Joint Verification operations:

- The EP Delegation is aware that the Joint Verification Process is a painful one for the vast majority of the refugees who feel they have been evicted unfairly. It nevertheless stresses that, if only for the sake of the estimated 5% of camp population whose citizenship is not in question, Joint Verification Teams should be allowed to resume. Both Bhutan and Nepal are called to allow the process to take place under the supervision of the UNHCR.
- Nepali authorities are called to guarantee that these teams are allowed to function in the proper security environment and to explore ways, possibly in collaboration with the Kathmandu US Overseas Processing Entity, to safeguard that genuine Bhutanese concerns on the safety of their officials are met. The EP Delegation reminds that Nepal is the party that bears ultimate responsibility for allowing the Khudunubari camp incidents to have taken place in late 2004.

On repatriation to Bhutan:

- Bhutanese authorities are urged to consider granting an amnesty to the persons falling under category IV. The EP Delegation reminds that nobody, including Bhutan, doubts their Bhutanese citizenship. The EP Delegation would expect the Bhutanese government to feel that being condemned to live in a refugee camp outside one's country for 17 years is adequate punishment - no matter what offence may, or may not (as it is unclear whether these persons were ever judged) have taken place in the late eighties.
- Likewise, for the EP Delegation, the voluntary repatriation, in safety and dignity, of all persons already falling under categories I and IV and of their families, should start immediately and certainly **not** before the status of the last refugee in the last camp has been ascertained. The EP Delegation would be interested in learning what concrete steps Bhutan intends to take in favour of the persons it accepts are its nationals in this respect.

On third country resettlement:

- The EP Delegation welcomes the offers made by third countries, as the US, Australia, Nordic countries, allowing for voluntary resettlement. It understands that, for most of the refugees, this is not the ideal solution¹ and believes that this option does not extinguish their right to return as foreseen by international law. Nevertheless, 3rd country resettlement constitutes a real and tangible hope – at least for the stateless bulk that falls / would fall under category II. The EP Delegation particularly welcomes the US commitment that the green card opens the way for full citizenship.
- The EP Delegation therefore calls the Nepali government to stand by the commitment personally made by PM Koirala and provide an explicit guarantee that it will fully

¹ Is it the ideal solution for Bhutan? One could argue that as long as these persons feel having been wrongly evicted from their own country, it is probable they will, in the long run, constitute a powerful pressure group when integrated in US public life. Whether the Bhutanese authorities have taken this into account is, of course, another question.

cooperate with the US Overseas Processing Entity (and similar bodies), actively facilitating refugee resettlement, and for the whole duration of these operations.

- EU Member States are also called to devise similar schemes as the US and some member-states have done, in order to contribute their part to a comprehensive and coordinated solution to the problem. Member States are reminded that the refugee problem has been an issue of European concern until now, as the EU Institutions have dealt with the problem as long as it fell within their competence, by funding, directly or indirectly, the UNHCR camps for almost two decades.

On other ways of integration of the refugee population:

- Nepal is also called to consider giving the option to some of the refugees, and particularly those that the JVT have already found / will find to fall under category III (non Bhutanese) to integrate in Nepal's society, by granting them full Nepali citizenship.

On future perspectives:

- The EP Delegation strongly believes that the events which took place in the early nineties should never be repeated. It is particularly concerned by the fact that the 2005 census in Bhutan found 125.000 persons living in the country to be "foreigners". The EP Delegation therefore calls the Bhutanese government to clarify its position, explaining how many of them were, at any stage, considered Bhutanese citizens, how many are now considered legal immigrants, how many are considered illegal - and use transparent and objective criteria in doing so.
- The EP Delegation sees little point in re-examining the actions India took, or failed to take, in the early nineties, when it faced a problem it had not created nor expected - the flow of refugees arriving from Bhutan. Especially given the current situation in south-eastern Nepal, however, the EP Delegation would like to stress that should a 2nd wave of refugees appear, this might further destabilize Nepal and the wider region. The EP Delegation therefore calls India, a strategic partner of the European Union, to actively mediate between Bhutan and Nepal and to decisively prevent such a problem for re-surfacing.

To the European Commission:

- The EP Delegation is confident it does not have to remind to either DG RELEX either DG ECHO that the European Parliament is the budgetary authority of the Union, nor that the plight of the Bhutanese refugees has been on the agenda of the EP Plenary twice in recent years. Alarmed by recent information arriving from the UNHCR camps, the EP Delegation therefore calls the European Commission to abstain from taking any steps that might render life in camps more difficult and to thoroughly submit, by September 15th, both to the competent Delegation and to the EP's Foreign Affairs Committee, how it envisages the situation. The Delegation will remain seized on the matter.

*

*

*

Position Paper
of the Royal Govt of Bhutan;
submitted to EP Delegation 19/3/2007

ANNEX

BRIEF ON THE ISSUE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS IN NEPAL

I. BACKGROUND

1. The entry of people of Nepalese origin into Bhutan started in the beginning of the 20th century when the agents of the Royal Government of Bhutan were allowed to employ these economic migrants to extract timber in the dense tropical forests of Samtse, the westernmost district in Bhutan's southern foothills. Also known as "tangias" or forest labourers they were, by contract, prohibited from establishing a permanent place of residence in Bhutan. Later, they were allowed to stay as tenant farmers in the areas where the forests were cleared. In the absence of any mechanism for regulating such people, they started to settle in parts of the southern districts. Proper district administrations in southern Bhutan were established only in the early 1980s.
2. The Royal Government, upon receiving the petitions of this group of economic migrants, granted them Bhutanese citizenship as a one time measure in 1958 in accordance with the decision passed by the 11th session of the National Assembly of Bhutan. In keeping with this decision, citizenship was granted to all Nepalese who had been living in Bhutan for more than 10 years prior to 31st December 1958. These people and their descendants are genuine Bhutanese citizens. Today, they constitute over 20% of the population and are participating actively in all walks of life including the civil service, the security forces, the parliament and in the business sector.
3. After 1958, the Royal Government has continued to grant citizenship to people of Nepalese origin from Nepal and India. For example, following the first nationwide census in 1988, 12103 such people were granted citizenship by His Majesty the King. Ethnic Nepalese who apply and fulfil the requirement continue to be granted citizenship to this day.
4. Those who entered Bhutan later and acquired citizenship, land and property illegally are not Bhutanese citizens and cannot be accepted as such under our citizenship laws. Granting citizenship to such people would be against our citizenship laws. It would create a dangerous precedent for a small country like Bhutan. The UNFPA-assisted Population and Housing Census carried out in May 2005 counted 125,336 foreigners working in the country who could also make similar demands for citizenship. Most of them are illegally in the country but we are not able to take any action against them for fear of creating similar problems as in the past.

II. BHUTAN'S SECURITY CONCERNS

1. The infiltration into the camps by Maoist elements and the formation of radical parties such as the Bhutan Communist Party, Bhutan Gorkha National Liberation Front and the Bhutan Revolutionary Students Union are of serious concern to Bhutan. These parties have declared their intention to enter Bhutan to engage in violence to achieve their political ends and to end the monarchy in Bhutan through an armed revolution. The Bhutan Communist Party is a member of the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA) which has recently vowed "to deepen and advance the new democratic revolutions in different countries of South Asia" and to "turn South Asia into a flaming field of peoples' revolutionary upsurges". It is common knowledge in Bhutan, Nepal and amongst international organizations that large numbers of people in the refugee camps in Jhapa are supporting and joining the Maoist movement in Nepal. Maoist flags are openly flying in the camps and posters are also seen in the camps. They are listed as refugees in the camps and at the same time registered as Maoist members. Recently in September 2006, the Royal Bhutan Police recovered two bombs planted in different locations in Phuentsholing town in southern Bhutan. The Maoists from the camps in Nepal used Nepalese from across the border to plant these bombs. Due to our small size, Bhutan is not in position to absorb even a fraction of the violence and lawlessness that pervades Nepal. Allowing the highly politicized camp people into Bhutan would mean importing ready made radical political parties and terrorists to duplicate the violence, terror and instability the Maoists have unleashed in Nepal.
2. Of equal concern is the growing nexus between the militant elements in the camps and the Indian Maoists/Naxalites and insurgent groups who were flushed out of Bhutan in 2003.
3. In a culmination of the process of political reforms that His Majesty the Fourth King has been carrying out, a draft written constitution that will usher in parliamentary democracy has been distributed to the people and consultations with the public of all twenty districts have been completed. The first national election to elect a government under a system of parliamentary democracy will take place in 2008. For the new political system to be smoothly and successfully introduced, it is critical for Bhutan at this delicate juncture to maintain its peace and stability.

III. OTHER CONCERNS

1. The camps in Jhapa, Nepal receive one of the highest levels of support and assistance compared to similar refugee camps in the world. For example, the residents receive free services and facilities that exceed basic food and shelter. These include health care, education including higher studies, vocational training, and even kerosene and cooking oil. In fact many observers note that life in the camps is much better than those prevailing in rural Nepal, India and Bhutan. This is the main reason why so many Nepalese have congregated in the camps claiming to be refugees from Bhutan and why they continue to stay in the camps so that they can avail all the facilities provided to them.
2. People in the camps are not permitted to go out to meet their relatives in Nepal and India or in search of jobs without a written Out Pass.
3. The governments of Nepal are making every effort to maintain the people in the camps as Bhutanese refugees.

IV. PRESENT STATUS

1. There is a misperception that Bhutan is not responsive or willing to resolve the problem. Nothing could be further from the truth. The RGOB is committed to resolving the situation through the bilateral process with the Government of Nepal, on the basis of agreements previously reached by the two governments. Our continuous efforts and actions to date clearly demonstrate this.
2. The governments of Bhutan and Nepal have been meeting regularly at the Ministerial level to discuss the resolution of the issue of the people claiming to be Bhutanese refugees in the camps in eastern Nepal. In the past year, these meetings have been taking place on the sidelines of conferences and meetings at the UNGA, NAM, SAARC and BIMSTEC. The latest meeting was held on 20 September 2006, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, between the Foreign Minister of Bhutan and Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal. The two Ministers have also exchanged letters and spoken over telephone during the month of October 2006.
3. In recent meetings, the Government of Nepal have introduced a new element by stating that the problem is between Bhutan and the camp people and not between Bhutan and Nepal, and that Bhutan should talk directly to the people. The Government of Nepal have even stated in the press that it would not abide by the past agreements reached between the two governments. The Government of Nepal's latest position is that all the

people in the camps have to be repatriated. The Government of Nepal have also stated the following:

- Nepal can only facilitate to resolve the problem.
- Nepal had only given asylum to the people on humanitarian grounds.
- The prime onus to resolve the stalemate lies with Bhutan.
- The Government of Nepal wants to make a fresh start, doing away with past agreements.

4. The Royal Government of Bhutan cannot accept the Government of Nepal's new position that the problem is between Bhutan and the people in the camps in Nepal, and that Bhutan should talk directly with the people in the camps.

- i) As conveyed to the Government of Nepal during earlier meetings, during the discussion over telephone with Mr. Oli on 19 October 2006 and in Lyonpo's letter dated 25 October 2006 to Mr. Oli, the issue must be resolved through the bilateral process and in accordance with the signed agreements between the two Governments.
- ii) The two Governments had agreed from the beginning of talks in 1993 that they were in the best position to find a solution to the problem through the bilateral process. The Royal Government and successive governments in Nepal have always reiterated their commitment to the bilateral process.
- iii) Furthermore, it will neither be useful nor practical for the Royal Government to talk to the people in the camps as many of the people are not Bhutanese. The camps have also been infiltrated by Maoist elements and several radical parties such as the Bhutan Communist Party, Bhutan Gorkha National Liberation Front and the Bhutan Revolutionary Students Union have been formed with the declared objective of carrying out armed struggle to overthrow the Royal Government of Bhutan. Moreover, it was the Government of Nepal which established the camps and sought UNHCR assistance in 1991 when there were only 304 persons claiming to be Bhutanese refugees. Until mid-1993 all ethnic Nepalese claiming to be Bhutanese refugees were admitted into the camps without proper screening.
- iv) The Government of Nepal's involvement in the process is necessary as there is clear agreement on Category 2 whereby people under this category who do not wish to return to Bhutan will be given the option to apply for Nepalese citizenship.
- v) The Government of Nepal's involvement and agreement is also necessary for settlement of the people in third countries.
- vi) These and other reasons have already been explained at length to the Government of Nepal during the meeting between the two Foreign Ministers in September 2006 in New York.

vii) Therefore, Nepal has both moral and legal responsibility over the problem.

5. The Government of Nepal's present proposal for the Royal Government to talk to the people in the camps is an entirely new element and not in keeping with the agreements reached between the two Governments. At a time when the two Governments are trying to move forward, this proposal is a step backward and could derail the bilateral process. This would mean going back on all the agreements reached between the two governments and undoing all that has been achieved in the past fourteen years.
6. The Royal Government of Bhutan's position is that the issue must be resolved through the bilateral process and in accordance with the signed agreements between the two Governments, and it is not agreeable to talk to the people in the camps.
7. The Maoists have now joined the interim legislature-parliament in Nepal with the Seven Party Alliance. In the interest of Bhutan's security, it is important and necessary to know the intentions and policies of the Maoists towards Bhutan and the Royal Government, and their position on the people in the camps in eastern Nepal.


V. THE NEXT STEP

1. To move the bilateral process forward, the Royal Government of Bhutan had offered to the Government of Nepal in 2005 to implement the decisions reached between the two governments on Category 1 and Category 4 from Khudunabari camp and to deal with Category 2 after resolving the afore-mentioned categories.
2. The Royal Government also proposed for the Joint Verification Team (JVT) members of the two countries to visit the camp to explain the terms and procedures to the people, as well as to collect applications of those opting to come to Bhutan. It was explained that in the event our JVT is not involved in the process and the people in the camps were simply put into buses and sent from Nepal, they would have to be stopped at the border to verify their eligibility to enter Bhutan. This would lead to thousands of people being stopped at the Indo-Bhutan border leading to serious law and order problems. Till date, the Government of Nepal have not agreed to the visit of the JVT.
3. Bhutan is hopeful that we will be able to find a way to move forward through the bilateral process with the Government of Nepal in keeping with the signed agreements between the two governments.

4. Our Foreign Minister had invited his Nepalese counterpart to Thimphu and it had been agreed to meet from 20 to 23 November 2006, but the talks had to be postponed on the request of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Nepal.
5. The Royal Government appreciates the United States' offer of resettlement. However, the Government of Nepal is not keen on resettlement although they have finally agreed to the census of the people in the camps by the UNHCR and, as per media reports, have also agreed to the setting up of an Overseas Processing Entity in Kathmandu by the US Government. They are insisting that all the people be repatriated to Bhutan.

VI. RGOB – EU COOPERATION

1. Bhutan attaches high importance to its relations with the EU. The Royal Government is considering establishment of a resident mission in Brussels to further strengthen EU-Bhutan relations. Bhutan has received assistance from the EU since 1982, which has contributed greatly to the socio-economic development of the country. EU assistance to Bhutan is concentrated in the Renewable Natural Resources sector.
2. EU-Bhutan Cooperation started in 1982, when the first agreement on Plant Protection Services Project was signed. Since then, numerous activities have been undertaken in Bhutan in the agriculture and livestock sectors.
3. Visits by the European Parliament's Inter-Parliamentary and EC delegations as part of regular interactions between the EU and Bhutan have contributed towards understanding each other better and appreciating Bhutan's concerns.
4. The Permanent Mission of Bhutan to the UN in Geneva has been keeping the EC and European Parliament regularly briefed on progress in the bilateral talks with Nepal. Besides, Ministers from Bhutan visiting Brussels have always taken the opportunity to meet the EC Commissioner for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid and the Commissioner for External Relations.
5. Despite our principled position against country specific resolutions at the UN General Assembly and the erstwhile Human Rights Commission, Bhutan has supported the EU on several resolutions.

- 
6. As a small landlocked country facing many challenges in safeguarding its security and sovereignty, and promoting socio-economic progress, the Royal Government looks forward to continued cooperation with the EU and its Member Countries.

* * * * *

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH SOUTH ASIA AND THE SAARC

PRESS RELEASE

Thimphu, 20 March

A 5-strong working group of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with South Asia and the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (D-SAARC) rounded up talks today with the Bhutanese authorities. The Delegation was led by Neena GILL (PSE, UK), and was composed by Lidia GERINGER DE OEDENBERG (PSE, PL), Robert EVANS (PSE, UK), Nirj DEVA (EPP, UK) and Sarunas BIRUTIS (LT, ALDE).

The D-SAARC delegation held its first visit in Bhutan since 2003, aiming at focusing on the political situation in the country in the run-up to the 2008 elections. In the words of the Chair, "*we really applaud the reforms initiated by HM King Jigme Singye Wangchuck and continued by HM Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck to introduce a functional parliamentary democracy in the country. This is a visionary step which has our full support*".

"*We are here to demonstrate our solidarity to the Government of Bhutan for a smooth transition in the framework of Constitutional Reform*". Furthermore, continued Ms Gill, "*this move can only be successful if the people of Bhutan embrace these changes*".

During its 3 day stay, the Delegation visited Paro and Thimphu and had the opportunity to meet key players such as Prime Minister Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, Finance Minister Lyonpo Wangdi Norbu, Agriculture Minister Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup and Attorney General Damcho Dorji. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) also met with their counterparts from the National Assembly, led by Deputy Speaker Dasho Zhamling Dorji.

Election-related questions were discussed with Chief Election Commissioner Dasho Kunzang Wangdi. MEPs expressed some reservations on the, perhaps too stringent, requirement of holding a BA in order to stand at the elections could end up discriminating against women. Furthermore, as most BA holders are currently civil servants, MEPs wondered whether it would not be wiser to allow those who unsuccessfully run for office to return to the civil service: such a measure could stimulate active participation in the elections without undermining the administrative structure of the country.

Issues such as good governance and the fight against corruption were raised with Aum Neten Zangmo, Chair of the Anti Corruption Commission; despite the fact that this body is a recent one, Members were impressed by the dedication of the Officials working for it and their resolve in tackling a problem which affects developed and developing countries altogether.

The European Parliament's Delegation will leave for Nepal on 21/3, where they will also focus on the plight of the refugees who are currently in UNHCR camps. MEPs took note and will convey the commitment of the Bhutanese authorities, repeated on the occasion of the Delegation's visit, that repatriation of all persons in categories I and IV is, in principle, an agreed matter once the conditions are met for Joint Verification Teams to resume work.

For more information on the European Parliament: www.europarl.europa.eu

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH SOUTH ASIA AND THE SAARC

PRESS RELEASE

Kathmandu, 23 March

A 5-strong working group of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with South Asia and the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (D-SAARC) rounded up talks today with the Nepali authorities. The Delegation was led by Neena GILL (PSE, UK), and was composed by Lidia GERINGER de OEDENBERG (PSE, PL), Robert EVANS (PSE, UK), Nirj DEVA (EPP, UK) and Sarunas BIRUTIS (LT, ALDE).

This was the second visit of an EP Delegation in nine months; the main objectives of Members were to focus on the political situation in the country in the run-up to the constituent assembly elections which are currently scheduled for mid-June on one hand, and to examine whether any progress can be made as far as the Bhutanese refugees are concerned. Two Members are to visit the refugee camp in the South.

Specifically concerning the electoral process, in the words of the Chair, *“there is an urgent need for all parties to keep with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and to respect it. A prosperous Nepal, where all people reap the dividends of peace, is a Nepal where citizens and the business community witness no intimidation.”*

“We are here to support parliamentary democracy and want to see a successful outcome to this process. That mainly depends on the population of Nepal feeling confident that it can participate freely in this process”

During its 3 day stay, the Delegation visited Kathmandu and had the opportunity to meet key players such as Prime Minister Koirala, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sharma Oli. Members of the European Parliament also met with their counterparts from the interim Legislature Parliament, led by Speaker Subash Chandra Nemwagh.

Election-related questions were discussed with Chief Election Commissioner Bojraj Pokhrel while Parliamentarians also addressed human rights and arms management issues with Special Representative Ian Martin and Head of the OHCHR Lena Sundh.

Ms Gill will meet representatives of the Press this afternoon at a Press Conference to be held at the Hyatt, 16:45pm.

For more information on the European Parliament: www.europarl.europa.eu

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTH ASIA AND THE SOUTH ASIA ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)

Working group visit to Nepal & Bhutan
Kathmandu, and Thimphu
18-24 March 2007

Programme

Saturday, 17 March

Paro

15:00 - 17:00 Coordination meeting with the Bhutanese Protocol / German Presidency with the EP Secretariat

Sunday, 18 March

Paro - Thimphu

- 11:40 Arrival of members at the Paro International Airport
- Received by
 - Mr. Kesang Wangdi, Director, Department of Bilateral Affairs,
 - Mr. Pasang Wangdi, Dy. Chief of Protocol and Protocol Officer
- 12:00 Visit National Museum
- 14:00 Leave for Thimphu
- 16:30 Arrival at the Phuntsho Pelri Hotel (Members only)

Monday, 19 March

Thimphu

- 09:30 Call on Dasho Zhamling Dorji, Dy. Speaker and Members of the National Assembly
- 10:30 Meeting with Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, Hon'ble Prime Minister at the Gyelyong Tshokhang
- 11:45 Meeting with M. Dasho Kunzang Wangdi, Chief Election Commissioner
- 14:30 Call on Ms Aum Neten Zangmo, Chairperson, Anti Corruption Commission
- 15:45 Call on Dasho Damcho Dorji, Attorney General

18:30 Dinner with Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Tuesday, 20 March

Thimphu

09:30 Call on Lyonpo Wangdi Norbu, Minister of Finance

11:00 Call on Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup, Minister of Agriculture

13:00 Lunch offered by the EP to Dasho Zhamling Dorji, Dy. Speaker, National Assembly and to members of the Bhutanese Chamber of Commerce, *Bhutan Kitchen, Sakten Building*

14:00 Visit Institute of Traditional Medicine Services (Medicinal Plant Project – Phase-II supported by the European Commission)

15:00 Visit NSSC, Simtokha

18:45 Dinner

Wednesday, 21 March

Paro - Kathmandu

08:30 Leave for Paro

10:00 Arrive at Paro International Airport

10:45 Depart for Delhi

11:40 Arrival of members of the delegation in Kathmandu (Druk Air flight KB 204) and transfer to

Hotel Hyatt Regency Kathmandu

Taragaon, Boudha

Kathmandu, Nepal,

Tel : 977 1 4491234, Fax: 977 1 4490033

13:00 Reception hosted by
Mr. Dibya Mani Rajbhandari
European Economic Chamber of Trade, Commerce & Industry (EEC)

15:00 Meeting with Mr K.P. Sharma OLI, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Shital Niwas

16:30 - 18:30 Meeting with Mr. Bhojraj POKHAREL
Chief Election Commissioner
Election Commission, *Kantipat*

19:00 Dinner with the EU Ambassadors hosted by the EP Delegation,
The Hyatt

Thursday, 22 March

Kathmandu

- 09:00 - 09:45 Meeting with Mr Girija Prasad KOIRALA, Prime Minister
- 10:15 - 11:00 Meeting with Mr Narendra B. NEMWANG,
Minister of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs
Parliament House, Singha Durbar
- 11:15 - 12:15 Meeting with Mr. Subash Chandra NEMWANG, Speaker of the House of
Representatives
Parliament House, Singha Durbar
- 12:30 - 14:15 *Free lunch*
- 14:30 - 15:30 Meeting with :
Mr. Ian MARTIN,
Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and
Head of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN),
Mr Tamrat Samuel, Advisor to the UN Secretary General
Mr John Norrish, Political advisor to Mr Ian Martin
- 15:30 - 16:45 *Visit of the Patan Museum*
- 17:30 - 18:30 Meetings with
- H.E. Xi HUI, Chargé d' Affaires of China
 - H.E. James Moriarty, Ambassador of the United States
 - Ms. Crystal KATTAN, Refugees Officer, US Embassy
 - H.E. Tsutomu HIRAOKA Ambassador of Japan
 - H.E Kheya BHATTARCHARYA, Ambassador of India
- Hotel Hyatt Regency Kathmandu*
- 19:00 - 20:30 Reception hosted by the EC Delegation to Nepal on the occasion of the
visit of the EP Delegation and of the 50th anniversary of the treaty of Rome
Hotel Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, the Ball Room

Friday, 23 March

Kathmandu

Group 'A' : MM Gill, de Odenberg, Deva

- 09:00-10:00 Meeting with the Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee
Association of Human Rights
Activists Bhutan (AHURA Bhutan).
Ratan Gazmere
- 10:00 - 11:00 Visit Maiti Nepal
short presentation about the activities of Maiti Nepal and tour of the
Rehabilitation Centre and Child Protection Centre of Maiti Nepal
- 11:30 - 13:30 Visit to field EU project
Foundation for the Solidarity and development of Women (Women
Foundation) in partnership with Human Development and Peace
Campaign, Nepal

- 14:00 - 15:00 free lunch
- 15:00 - 16:00 Meeting with Mr. Abraham ABRAHAM, UNHCR
Hotel Hyatt Regency Kathmandu
- 16:00 - 16:45 Meeting with
acting UNDP Resident Representative
Ms Junko Sazaki
- Deputy Country Director WFP
Ms Dominique Hyde
- 16:45 - 17:30 Press Conference
Hotel Hyatt Regency Kathmandu
- 17:30 - 19:00 Reception hosted by H.E Ambassador to Pakistan on the occasion of the
Pakistan national day
Hotel Hyatt Regency Kathmandu

Friday, 23 March

Bhadrapur

Group 'B': MM Evans, Birutis

Visit to the Bhutanese refugee camps in coordination with UNHCR

10:00 Kathmandu - Bhadrapur [flight BHA 951]

12:30 Arrival at Bhadrapur

*UNHCR escort to Timai refugee camp
visit of the Camp - witness refugee identification procedure and census
open discussion with refugees*

17:40 Birtanagar - Kathmandu [flight BHA 904]

18:15 Arrival at Kathmandu

Saturday, 24 March

Kathmandu

9:30 Visit of Bahktapur

14:30 Leaving to the airport

16:10 Departure of Members

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH SOUTH ASIA AND THE SAARC

Working group visit to Bhutan and Nepal

18-25 March 2007

List of EP participants (10)

<u>Members (5)</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Country</u>
Ms GILL, Neena , Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee on Budgets	PSE	UK
Ms GERINGER DE OEDENBERG, Lidia <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee on Legal Affairs, Vice-Chair	PSE	Poland
Mr EVANS, Robert <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee on Transport and Tourism	PSE	UK
Mr DEVA, Nirj <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee on Development	EPP-DE	UK
Mr BIRUTIS, Šarūnas <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee on Industry, Research and Energy	ALDE	Lithuania

General Secretariat of the European Parliament, DG External Policies (3)

Mr Philippe KAMARIS	Administrator
Mr Xavier NUTTIN	Administrator
Ms Germana CARNAZZA	Administrative Assistant

Political groups staff (1)

Ms Ruth de CESARE	Political Advisor
--------------------------	-------------------

On behalf of the EU Presidency (1)

Mr York SCHUEGRAF	Political Counsellor, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, New Delhi
--------------------------	--

EPP-DE	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats
PSE	Group of the Party of European Socialists
ALDE	Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe