

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Delegation for Relations with Switzerland, Iceland and Norway and to the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee

MINUTES

of the meeting on
Wednesday, 22 October 2008
15.00 - 16.00

Strasbourg

1. Adoption of the draft agenda
2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held in Brussels on 3 June 2008

With a view to the 31st meeting of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee on 4 November 2008 in the European Parliament in Brussels

3. Consideration of the programme and the draft agenda for the JPC meeting
4. Consideration of the draft reports on
 - *Research and Education Programmes and the EEA*
EP Co-Rapporteur: Ms Hanne DAHL (IND/DEM - Denmark)
 - *Future Perspectives for the European Economic Area*
EP Co-Rapporteur: Ms Bilyana RAEVA (ALDE - Bulgaria)
5. Any other business
6. Next meeting

Annex. Attendance list

The meeting opened at 15.05 with Ms Raeva, Chairperson, in the Chair.

1.

The draft agenda was adopted.

2.

The minutes had been distributed to the Members prior to the meeting.

The minutes were approved.

With a view to the 31st meeting of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee on 4 November 2008 in Brussels

3.

The Chair presented the Programme and the draft JPC agenda

Re: Programme

The JPC meeting would take place the whole day of 4 November. A dinner, hosted by the SINEEA Chair, would be held in the evening of 3 November.

Re: Draft agenda of the JPC

Item 6: For the consideration on the draft report on the "Future perspectives for the EEA", Mr Richard CORBETT has been invited to brief the JPC members on the Treaty of Lisbon and the implications for the EEA.

This item has been scheduled for 15.00

Item 7: At the last JPC meeting in Iceland, it was agreed to make a follow-up on the EEA JPC resolution on "Health Services in the EEA". Mrs Androulla VASSILIOU, Commissioner responsible, had therefore been invited to address the JPC meeting on the Commission's initiatives on cross-border healthcare. Unfortunately, the Commissioner will not be able to attend the JPC meeting, but the Chair had asked the Commissioner to send a high level replacement.

Mr Paul RÜBIG, EP-Co-rapporteur on this matter, would not be able to attend the JPC meeting due to other commitments in Austria. Mr Svein Roald HANSEN, the EFTA Co-rapporteur would therefore be the JPC's spokesman on this matter at the JPC meeting.

At the last JPC meeting the Icelandic delegation expressed the wish to have a debate on the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) and aviation. However, the Icelandic Delegation did not want to have this matter dealt with at the JPC meeting. It might be taken up at the 2009 spring JPC meeting.

Switzerland had been asked to give a briefing on the Swiss financial contributions to the EU enlargement and Iceland had been contacted in order to be briefed on the financial situation and the implications for the EEA. To be confirmed.

Mr Klinz spoke on this item and suggested that a short note on the financial crisis and the EEA should be made available for members at the JPC meeting.

Ms Panayotopoulos spoke on the taxation systems and on the situation of women and children regarding equal rights.

The Chair reminded members about the discussion on taxation questions, which took place at the last JPC meeting in Iceland. Mr Sakalas raised the question on an economic plan for helping Iceland and other countries suffering from the financial crisis. Mr Janowski spoke on the future cohesion policy (up to 2014) and proposed to deal with this matter at the JPC meeting.

The Chair made reference to the upcoming referendum in Switzerland in Feb. 2009 on the free movement of persons and to the establishing of a working group in the EP on cohesion funds. The EEA/EFTA participation in the cohesion funds should also be taken into account in the discussions in the JPC.

4.

Research and Education Programmes:

The EEA and the EFTA States

EP Co-Rapporteur: Ms Hanne DAHL

Future Perspectives for the European Economic Area

EP Co-Rapporteur: Ms Bilyana RAEVA

The draft reports had not yet been finalised, but the Co-rapporteurs gave an oral introduction to their reports.

As soon as the reports would be available, they would be distributed to members with a deadline for tabling amendments.

The reports should be considered and the draft resolutions and amendments be voted at the JPC meeting on 4 November.

5.

The Chair briefed members on

- **8th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region**

Parliamentarians from Canada, Denmark/Greenland, the European Parliament, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the USA met in Fairbanks, Alaska, 12-14 August 2008 for the 8th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.

The European Parliament was represented by Mrs Diana Wallis, Vice President and Mrs Bilyana Raeva, Chair of the SINEEA Delegation.

The topics of the Conference were:

- Human health in the Arctic
- Development of renewable energy resources
- Development of an Arctic maritime policy for safety at sea
- Adaptation to climate change

The Conference underlined the need to

- develop harmonised, effective regulations to reduce all forms of pollutions from ships sailing in the Arctic Ocean
- ensure the inclusion of an appropriate contribution from elected representatives of the Arctic Region to the COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009
- develop an Arctic policy in the European Union and the Arctic states, and to involve the national parliaments and the European Parliament in this process, taking into account the Communication from the European Commission on an Arctic policy to be issued in the autumn of 2009

The Conference was convinced that there was an urgent need to develop the political role of the Arctic Council given the many challenges facing the region, particularly by ensuring more regular ministerial meetings with all participants, no less than once a year, and to ensure their full engagement with other international bodies, particularly the UN. The strategic and geopolitical importance of the Arctic Region was underlined.

The Chair also made reference to the Declaration of the 5 coastal states of the Arctic meeting in Ilulissat, Greenland.

The 9th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region will be hosted by the European Parliament in 2010.

The CPAR statement had been distributed to members.

- **17th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference**

Parliamentarians from all the countries in the Baltic Sea Region met in Visby for the 17th BSPPC on 1-2 September 2008.

Unfortunately, the EP was not represented at the Conference, due to the EP session taken place in Brussels that week.

However, Vice President Wallis had sent a message to the Conference stating that the EP currently is dealing with the energy supply and maritime policy issues. She underlined, that the energy security must be regarded as an essential component of the overall security of the EU and that the maritime policy within the EU has become a very significant policy area after the publication of the Green Paper 'Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union' and the subsequent Commission statement entitled ' Maritime policy: a new step forward towards integrated maritime governance'.

The 17th BSPPC considered following topics:

- Cooperation in the Region
- Climate Change and Energy Issues in the Region
- The Baltic Sea Action Plan and the Integrated Maritime Policy
- Labour Market and Social Affairs

The EP participation in the Working Group on Energy and Climate Change (MEP Paul Rübig) was highly appreciated.

The Polish, the Latvian and the Lithuanian delegations advocated to include a paragraph on the Nord Stream project/gas pipeline linking Russia and Germany (based on the EP resolution of 8 July 2008) to call on the European Commission and the Governments of the CBSS to fully commit themselves to make an analysis of the environmental consequences of the construction of the Nord Stream. This proposal was not supported by the other participants.

- **60th session of the Nordic Council and The Northern Dimension Parliamentary Debate** in Helsinki on 26-29 October 2008

The EP would be represented by Diana WALLIS, Vice President and Bilyana RAEVA, Chair of the SINEEA Delegation.

Members were asked to forward their possible contributions to the Chair.

- The next meeting of the **Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region** was scheduled for 5-7 November 2008 in Östersund in Sweden.
- The next meeting of the **Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference** was scheduled for 20-21 November 2008 in Copenhagen.

6.

- 31st meeting of the EEA JPC in Brussels on 4 November 2008
- The 25th EU-Norway IPM scheduled for 29 September 2008 in Oslo was postponed due to a very limited number of members registered.
An option for the EU-Norway IPM is 20-21 January 2009 in Brussels.
To be confirmed.
- As soon as the calendar for SINEEA delegation meetings in spring 2009 has been established, members will be informed. The 2009 activity programme for delegations was approved 21 October by the Conference of Delegation Chairs. The programme will be considered by the Foreign Affairs Committee, before approval by the Conference of Presidents. The CDC also discussed the future working conditions of the delegations. The Chair suggested that the permanent committees should be invited to attend Interparliamentary meetings in the future.

The meeting closed at 15.45

ATTENDANCE LIST

Members

RAEVA (Chair) - SAKALAS (Vice-Chair) - DAHL (Vice-Chair) - PANAYOTOPOULOS - SKOTTOVA - JANOWSKI - KIRKHOPE (Substitute) - KLINZ (Substitute)

Political Groups

HEISTER (PPE-DE) - PERRIN (PSE) - KRINGS (ALDE)

Members' Assistants

WILEN (WALLIS) - SEIDERMAN (KLINZ) - MATEV (RAEVA) - CZUCHRA (JANOWSKI)-

Secretariat

OLSEN - d'AGOSTO - DALL'OZZO