

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION TO THE EU-KAZAKHSTAN, EU-KYRGYZSTAN AND EU- UZBEKISTAN PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEES, AND FOR RELATIONS WITH TAJIKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN AND MONGOLIA

DCAS 4/06

MEETING

Tuesday 11 July 2006

BRUSSELS

DRAFT MINUTES

1.	Adoption of draft agenda (PE 376.321)	2
2.	Adoption of minutes of meeting on 14 June 2006 (PE 376.320)	2
3.	Chairperson's announcements	2
4.	Exchange of views with Mr Jan Kubis, EU Special Envoy to Central Asia	2
5.	Report of Delegation visit to Turkmenistan 19-22 June 2006	2
6.	Any other business	4
7.	Date and place of next meeting	4

Brussels, 03 August 2006
TB/lo

The Chair, Mrs JUKNEVIČIENĖ, opened the meeting at 10.20 hours.

1. Adoption of draft agenda (PE 376.321)

The draft agenda was adopted without amendment.

2. Adoption of minutes of the meeting on 14 June 2006 (PE 376.320)

The minutes were adopted without amendment.

3. Chairperson's announcements

Mrs JUKNEVIČIENĖ informed members that Mr KUBIS was not able to come as he had been appointed Foreign Minister of Slovakia. She welcomed the Ambassador of Turkmenistan, Mr MOMMADOV and the Commission representative, Mr LIDDELL.

4. Exchange of views with Mr Jan Kubis, EU Special Envoy to Central Asia

In the absence of Mr KUBIS this item was not addressed.

5. Report of Delegation visit to Turkmenistan 19-22 June 2006

Mrs JUKNEVIČIENĖ noted that Mr MAAT - who had chaired the recent delegation to Turkmenistan - could not be present at the meeting. However Mr CALLANAN who had chaired the delegation during the latter stages of the visit was present and she thanked him for his support. She informed members that the draft report on the visit had been prepared but approval was needed. She then gave the floor to Mr CALLANAN.

Mr CALLANAN gave an overview of the programme of the delegation. He noted in particular that there were divisions among the EU ambassadors on the proposed EU-Turkmenistan interim trade agreement. He said that the human rights issue was raised with the Foreign Minister. He shared his impressions of the personality cult of President Niyazov. He said that many problems existed in Turkmenistan but some human rights groups had a tendency to exaggerate. He noted that three human rights activists had been recently arrested by the Turkmen authorities. He touched on the 'spying scandal' that had apparently involved French diplomats. He said that there was no real possibility for foreigners to travel outside Ashgabat because of the close surveillance. The delegation had not been granted a meeting with President Niyazov.

Mrs JUKNEVIČIENĖ thanked Mr CALLANAN for his presentation, and gave the floor to Ambassador MOMMADOV.

Mr MOMMADOV said that Turkmenistan was willing to develop its relations with the European Union. He expressed hope that cooperation would continue. He said Turkmenistan was proud to have organised the delegation's meeting at a high level.

Mrs JUKNEVIČIENĖ asked members for comments.

Mr CASPARY thanked Mr CALLANAN. He said that it was difficult to get the real picture of the situation in Turkmenistan. He noted that some information provided by some NGOs, such as the closing of all libraries and hospitals outside Ashgabat, were not true. He stressed that it was important to help the people of Turkmenistan and to promote steps such as ensuring Red Cross workers could visit prisons. He added that it was important to reinforce the education system in Turkmenistan. He finally said that Turkmenistan should show its seriousness and good will in order to cooperate with the EU and that the vote on the Interim Trade Agreement should be delayed for six to twelve months to give the Turkmen authorities time to show their good faith.

Mr RANSDORF stressed that Turkmen support in the region should be welcomed. He also asked about the quality of control on the Turkmen southern border. Finally he asked about the cooperation with Turkish companies that were investing massively in central Asia.

Mr CALLANAN said that members had not had an opportunity to go to the southern border. However, he said that there were joint cooperation projects between the US and Turkmenistan. He noted that many Turkish companies were investing in Turkmenistan, and that the Turkish ambassador was in favour of the interim trade agreement.

Mr LIDDELL said that it was important to continue dialogue with the Turkmen authorities. He underlined that the EU had allocated important resources for border management projects.

Mrs JUKNEVIČIENĖ said the journalist Annakurban Amanklychev had been arrested on 15 June. She asked the Ambassador about the reason and the process of this arrest.

The Ambassador said that he had no information about the arrest at that moment. He noted that companies from the UK, France and other European countries had been working in Turkmenistan for many years. He said that border management cooperation was very active. He said that many Turkmens lived in the border area in Iran and Afghanistan. He also referred to the pipeline project via Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Mrs JUKNEVIČIENĖ said that the report of Mr CASPARY was a very important step. She added that the agreement should be subject to conditions, and economic benefits should not prevent criticism of the human rights situation in the country.

Mr CASPARY argued that the European Parliament should request information from the French authorities on the "spying case" as French citizens were involved in the matter. Clarification should be sought on what the French had actually been.

Mr ATTARD MONTALTO said that dialogue was very important. He gave his personal impressions of the country, including the cult of personality and the lack of respect for human rights. He noted that the trade agreement could be symbolic. It was not acceptable that people should be on the verge of extreme poverty, particularly in view of the wealth of the country in energy resources. He noted that priority countries for Turkmenistan were China and Russia and that the European Union was not so important.

Mrs JUKNEVIČIENĖ stressed that dialogue was preferable to an absence of contact. She supported the proposal to request information from the French embassy and stated that a letter would be prepared to be sent to the Quai d'Orsay.

6. Any other business

Mrs JUKNEVIČIENĖ stated that the secretariat would prepare a programme for the visit to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan that was scheduled for w/c 2 October. She also announced that Mr LIDDELL was taking up a position in the Commission delegation in Georgia and thanked him for his support to the delegation in the past.

7. Date and place of next meeting

Mrs JUKNEVIČIENĖ announced that the next meeting would take place on 13 September between 9h00hrs and 11h15hrs. The aim of this meeting would be to prepare for the planned delegation visit to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The meeting closed at 11.15 hours.

**DELTAGERLISTE/ANWESENHEITSLISTE/ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΗ 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/Puhemiehistõ/J.L. Presidium: (*) JUKNEVICIENE (P)
Anwesend	Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Μέλη/Members/Diputados/Députés/Deputati/Leden/Deputados/Jäsenet/Ledamöter: BLOKLAND, GIEREK, JEGGLE, PIEPER, RANSDORF
Παρόντες	Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suplentes/Suppléants/ Membri supplenti/Plaatsvervangers/Membros suplentes/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter: CALLANAN, CASPARY, DOMBROVSKIS, GRABOWSKA
Present	
Presentes	
Présents	
Presenti	
Aanwezig	
Lasna	
Närvarande	
Art. 178,2	
Art. 183,3	ATTARD-MONTALTO, FORD
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.

Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung d. Vorsitzenden/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chairman/Por invitación del presidente/Sur l'invitation du président/Su invito del presidente/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/A convite do presidente/Puhemiehen kutsusta/
På ordförandens inbjudan:
Rådet/Rat/Συμβούλιο/Council/Consejo/Conseil/Consiglio/Raad/Conselho/Neuvosto/Rådet: (*)

Kommissionen/Kommission/Επιτροπή/Commission/Comisión/Commissione/Commissie/Commissão/Komissio/Kommissionen: (*)

LIDDELL

Cour des comptes:
C.E.S.:

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