

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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*Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia*

DSAS\_PV(2007) 06-26

## **MINUTES**

of the meeting of 26 June 2007, from 16:15 to 17:45  
BRUSSELS

The meeting opened at 16:15 on Tuesday, 26 June 2007, with Robert Evans (Chairman) in the chair.

### **1. Adoption of draft agenda (PE 391.181)**

The agenda was adopted with a slight modification, i.e. to examine point 7 (presentation by Ms Gill of the report on the Mission to Bhutan / Nepal) immediately after the election of Vice-Chairs.

### **2. Adoption of the minutes of the meeting on 2 May 2007 (PE 389.679)**

The minutes, distributed electronically on May 10th, were adopted without modifications.

### **3. Election of the Vice-Chairs of the Delegation**

The Chairman established the presence of a quorum (6 Members, according to Rule 185(2)) and called for nominations for the posts of first and second vice-chairman.

Mr Nirj DEVA, nominated by the EPP-ED to the post of 1st Vice-Chairman and Mr Jaromir KOHLICEK, nominated by the GUE to the post of 2nd Vice-Chairman were thus elected by acclamation. It was established that they consented being nominated and that their declarations of financial interests for 2006 had been updated.

### **4. Announcements by the Chair**

The Chair proceeded directly to the next point.

### **5. Presentation by Ms Gill of her report on the D-SAARC mission to Nepal Bhutan, 18-**

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PE 391.195v01-00

**24 March 2007**

Before giving the floor to Ms Gill, M. Evans reminded Members that this mission was the last one undertaken by the D-SAARC under the Chairmanship of Ms Gill; the report has been distributed electronically to Members who participated and is included in the meeting documents folder.

The Chair also welcomed representatives from Nepal (Ms Luintel), the EC (M. Dashwood and Coste) and the UNHCR (M. Leclerc) and gave the floor to Ms Gill who presented, in the broad lines, her report. Ms Gill made the following main points:

- Both Bhutan and Nepal are undergoing a constitutional process which should culminate in general elections. The democratisation challenge was therefore at the core of discussions in both Thimphu and Kathmandu.
- 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 EU, the US and India, among others.
- The EP Delegation is grateful to the EC Delegation in Kathmandu for the instrumental support it constantly provided, despite being severely short-staffed. Members faced, however, severe difficulties in Bhutan and would suggest to the EC to consider upgrading its level of representation and consider a more effective presence also in order, by its presence, to prevent a possible second wave of refugees from happening.
- In Bhutan, EU presence could also be helpful in assessing the free and fair character of the elections to be organised and safeguarding that the elections will be an inclusive process. The EC is therefore called to examine whether it could observe the elections.
- As the elections in Nepal have now been postponed, the Commission is also called to provide its opinion on whether the shortcomings witnessed by the EP Delegation have been remedied and whether elections will be possible in November, as currently scheduled.
- Commenting on the refugee issue, Ms Gill welcomed proposals on Third country resettlement made by the US, Canada and others and called Member-States to devise similar schemes. She furthermore stressed that the EP's Delegation would expect Bhutan to stand by its commitment to accept repatriation of its nationals (categories I and IV) and of their families in safety and dignity, and to allow for this process to start immediately.
- She lamented the fact that classification under category IV (Bhutanese with a criminal record) seems to have been operated under extremely opaque criteria and wondered how it is possible for persons having been born in the camps to have criminal records in Bhutan.
- Ms Gill further stressed that the events which took place in the nineties should not be repeated again and called the international community, including the EU, US and India to mediate so as to prevent a second wave of refugees from occurring.

M. Leclerc, from the UNHCR, strongly supported the position of the EP Delegation in favour of allowing voluntary resettlement of the refugee population to third countries. He indicated that the High Commissioner Antonio Gutierrez also visited Bhutan and Nepal shortly after the EP Delegation did, and conveyed the same message to the Bhutanese and Nepalese authorities. He furthermore stressed that the problem of statelessness affects in Nepal, more widely, almost 4 million persons and is linked to the peace process. This creates a tremendous pressure upon the Nepalese government.

Ms Luintel informed Members that elections in Nepal are now announced to take place on November 22, and that EU Observers are welcome. She underlined the eagerness of her government in helping solving the Bhutanese refugee issue.

M. Dashwood from the Commission indicated that Bhutan could be considered as a priority for election observation for 2008, but for this to take place Bhutan would have to first to issue an official invitation. As the EU is now a SAARC observer perhaps this could help things. He also hinted that, contrary to the very clear impression Members got in Bhutan, perhaps the authorities will re-examine the current requirement of having a BA in order to be allowed to stand for elections.

Commenting on the difficulties ECHO faces on providing aid to the camp, M. Dashwood was rather laconic, expressing his hope that a solution will be found.

As the report calls for precise explanations to be submitted to the EP's competent Delegation by September 15th on this very point, it can be noted that these explanations were not provided by the European Commission on the occasion of the 26/6 meeting.

The following Members spoke during the debate which followed: Evans, Kohlicek, Gill. Members raised some practical questions over the US proposal of 3rd country resettlement but also stressed that Bhutan has to make a token gesture and at last accept some refugees back. They underlined that this message has to be conveyed to Council and Commission so that some action is undertaken in this respect.

## **6. Exchange of views on the current situation in Pakistan**

M. Evans indicated to Members that, since the D-SAARC Delegation visited the country last December, several worrying developments have taken place. Thus, Pakistan's Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry has become a focus for political opposition to the government of Pervez Musharraf, since he was suspended by the president in March.

Ever since Mr Chaudhry's suspension, lawyers have regularly protested, defying security restrictions, in all main urban centres. However, in the run-up to general elections, what began as small scale demonstrations have now become politicised rallies, attended by most opposition parties. In one such demonstration on 6 May in Lahore, Mr Chaudhry told a crowd of thousands that dictatorships which ignore the rule of law face "destruction" -- while 2 days of violence in Karachi left 41 people dead. Amnesty International has also recently condemned the arrests of several hundred political activists.

M. Khalid, Ambassador of Pakistan, attributed the current "rather charged atmosphere" to the fact that Pakistan now is in "pre-electoral times", after 8 peaceful years of economic growth.

He stressed that Mr Chaudhry's suspension is currently *sub judice* and that the Government has already stated that it will abide to the ruling of the Constitutional Court. The following Members spoke: Kohlicek, Evans, Gill, Mulder.

Ambassador Khalid stressed that as far as the general elections are concerned, "*a number of scenarios are aired every day*" and that "*many issues are up in the air*". No precisions were given regarding when the general elections would take place. M. Khalid nevertheless indicated that, constitutionally, the term of the National Assembly expires in November and that elections should therefore take place within 90 days under a care-taker government. The care-taker government would have to be sworn in before if early elections were to take place with the dissolution of the National Assembly before it exhausts its term.

Ambassador Khalid furthermore expressed the view that media restrictions, which applied mainly to TV live coverage ("*which gave the impression that the country was up in flames*") were now being lifted and expressed Pakistan's strong desire to consolidate ties with the EU, in particular as far as Interparliamentary exchanges are concerned.

## **7. Exchange of views on the next mission the Delegation will undertake in Sri Lanka & the Maldives, dates TBC 30 Sept -7 Oct**

The Chair indicated that preparations in view to this Mission are still ongoing and welcomed M. Patrick Mc MULLAN, from the Maldivian Mission to the EU (under accreditation) and M. Olivier COSTE, EC, DG RELEX, Desk Maldives.

The list of participants has been distributed electronically; M. Evans explained that, given current rules, all interested Members could not, unfortunately, be automatically part of the working group that is to travel but that several elements were taken into account when drawing the list (geographical balance, political balance, availability during the whole period the mission is planned to take place). No observations were formulated.

M. Evans further explained that the situation in Sri Lanka is somewhat volatile, and that defining a final programme at this stage would be a bit premature. Contacts have been undertaken with the Embassy of Sri Lanka, however, and visiting Trincomalee and Batticaloa does not seem to be problematic.

M. Mc Mullan underlined that, for the Maldives, the EU's input and help are seen as "invaluable" in the run-up to ensuring free and fair multi-party elections in 2008, which the EU will probably be invited to observe. The aim of the Maldivian mission to the EU, which is still being set up, will be to raise awareness on the Maldivian reform agenda and the works of the special Constitutional Majlis which aims at introducing parliamentary democracy according to a well-defined time-table.

M. Coste, on the other hand, stressed that the EC Delegation in Sri Lanka, accredited to the Maldives, is pleased with current developments, as the situation is improving towards multi-party democracy, and will provide all required assistance to the EP Delegation when devising a programme for its visit.

## **8. Any other business**

The Chair indicated that Ms Nicholson of Winterbourne will present her report on Kashmir at tomorrow's meeting of the Delegation for relations with India ; all Members are invited.

### **9. Date and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Delegation is foreseen to take place on Wednesday September 12th, 10:15-11:15, ASP 5 E-2.

The meeting closed at 17:40.

**ПРИСЪСТВЕН ЛИСТ/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/  
ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE NIMEKIRI/KATAΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/  
LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REĢISTRŠ/DALYVIŲ SAŖAŠAS/JELENLÉTI ÍV/  
REGISTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŠCI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/LISTÀ DE PREZENȚĂ/  
PREZENČNÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM NAVZOČIH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/DELTAGARLISTA**

Бюро/Mesa/Předsednictvo/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/Biuras/Elnökség/ Prezydium/Birou/Predsednictvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)
Robert Evans (P)
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Μέλη/Members/Députés/Deputati/Deputāti/Nariai/Képviselek/ Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Edit Bauer, Wolfgang Bulfon, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Nirj Deva, Jaromír Kohlíček, Jean Lambert, Jan Mulder, James Nicholson
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Supplenti/ Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantys nariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanți/Náhradníci/Namestniki/ Varajäsenet/Suppleanter
Philip Bradbourn, Eugenijus Gentvilas

178 (2)
Neena Gill, Jean Marie Beaupuy
183 (3)
46 (6) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/Päevakorra punkt/Ημερήσια Διάταξη Σημείο/Agenda item/Point OJ/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkés punktas/ Napirendi pont/Punt Agenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schůdce/ Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Föredragningslista punkt)

Наблюдатели/Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatlejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Osservatori/ Novērotāji/Stebėtojai/Megfigyelők/Osservatori/Waarnemers/Observatorzy/Observadores/Observatori/Pozorovatelia/Opazovalci/ Tarkkailijat/Observatörer

По покана на председателя/Por invitación del presidente/Na pozvání předsedy/After indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair(wo)man/Sur l'invitation du président/Su invito del presidente/Рэс пріе́ксэдэ́та́жа ўзаі́аіна́жума/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/Fuq stedina taç-'Chairman'/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/La invitația președintelui/Na pozwanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nōukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (\*)

Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Kommissionen/Kommission/Euroopa Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Commissione/Komisija/Bizottság/Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisia/Komissio/Kommissionen (\*)

COSTE, DASHWOOD, IVANOVA, MARENNE

Други институции/Otras instituciones/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner/Andere Organe/Muud institutsioonid/Άλλα θεσμικά όργανα/Other institutions/Autres institutions/Altre istituzioni/Citas iestādes/Kitos institucijos/Más intézmények/Istituzzjonijiet oħra/Andere instellingen/Inne instytucje/Outras Instituições/Alte instituții/Iné inštitúcie/Druge institucije/Muut toimielimet/Andra institutioner/organ

Други учасници/Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης Παρόντες/Other participants/Autres participants/Altri partecipanti/Citi klātesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Partecipanti oħra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Alți participanți/Iní účastníci/Dруги udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare

LUINTEL - Mission of Nepal  
CATOT, LECLERC, TAX - UNHCR  
FAUTRÉ - HRWF  
GARCÍA GUILLEN - SAFERWORLD

Секретариат на политическите групи/Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppernes sekretariat/Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktsioonide sekretariaat/Γραμματεία των Πολιτικών Ομάδων/Sekretariats of political groups/Secrétariat des groupes politiques/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politisko grupu sekretariāts/Fracijų sekretoriai/Képviseletcsoportok titkársága/Secretarjat gruppi politici/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secr. dos grupos políticos/Sekretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupin/Sekretariat političnih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristö/Gruppernas sekretariat

PPE-DE	BELLINO, GERSONY
PSE	DE CESARE, GERAGHTY
ALDE	
Verts/ALE	
GUE/NGL	
IND/DEM	
UEN	
ITS	
NI	

<p>Кабинет на председателя/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidendi kantslei/Γραφείο Προέδρου/President's Office/Cabinet du Président/Gabinetto del Presidente/Priekšsēdētāja kabinets/Pirmininko kabinetas/Elnöki hivatal/Kabinett tal-President/Kabinet van de Voorzitter/Gabinet Przewodniczącego/Gabinete do Presidente/Cabinet Preşedinte/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli</p>	
<p>Кабинет на генералния секретар/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/Kabinett des Generalsekretärs/Peasekretäri büroo/Γραφείο Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du Secrétaire général/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Generalsekretära kabinets/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinett tas-Segretarju Ġenerali/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Cabinet Secretar General/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urad generalnega sekretarja/Pääsihteerin kabinetti/Generalsekreterarens kansli</p>	
<p>Генерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/Directorate-General/Direction générale/Direzione generale/Generāldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/Direktorat Ġenerali/Direktoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat</p>	
<p>DG PRES DG IPOL DG EXPO DG INFO DG PERS DG IFIN DG TRED DG FINS</p>	<p>NUTTIN, MARCHYSHYN</p>
<p>Правна служба/Servicio Jurídico/Právní služba/Juridisk Tjeneste/Juristischer Dienst/Öigusteenistus/Νομική Υπηρεσία/Legal Service/Service juridique/Servizio giuridico/Juridiskais dienests/Teisės tarnyba/Jogi szolgálat/Servizz legali/Juridische Dienst/Wydział prawny/Serviço Jurídico/Serviciu Juridic/Právny servis/Pravna služba/Oikeudellinen yksikkö/Rättstjänsten</p>	
<p>Секретариат на комисията/Secretaría de la comisión/Sekretariát výboru/Udvalgssekretariatet/Ausschusseksretariat/Komisjoni sekretariaat/Γραμματεία επιτροπής/Committee secretariat/Secrétariat de la commission/Segreteria della commissione/Komitejas sekretariāts/Komiteto sekretoriatas/A bizottság titkársága/Sekretarjat tal-kumitat/Commissiesecretariaat/Sekretariat komisji/Sekretariado da comissão/Sekretariat comisie/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeristö/Utskottssekretariatet</p>	
<p>KAMARIS</p>	
<p>Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asystent/Pomočnik/Avustaja/Assistenten</p>	
<p>CARNAZZA</p>	

- \* (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chair(wo)man/Président/Priekšsēdētājs/Pirmininkas/Elnök/Chairman/Voorzitter/Przewodniczący/Preşedinte/Predseda/Predsednik/Puheenjohtaja/Ordförande
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- (M) = Член/Miembro/Člen/Medlem/Mitglied/Parlamendiliige/Μέλος/Member/Membre/Membro/Deputāts/Narys/Képviselő/Membro/Lid/Członek/Membro/Membro/Člen/Poslanec/Jäsen/Ledamot
- (F) = Длъжностно лице/Funcionario/Úředník/Tjenestemand/Beamter/Ametnik/Υπάλληλος/Official/Fonctionnaire/Funzionario/Ierēdnis/Pareigūnas/Tisztviselő/Ufficial/Ambtenaar/Urzednik/Funcionário/Funcionar/Úradník/Uradnik/Virkamies/Tjänsteman