

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

*Delegation for relations with the Gulf States, including Yemen*

DGUL\_PV(2009)0128

## MINUTES

of the meeting of 28 January 2009, from 11.30 to 12.30

BRUSSELS

The meeting opened at 11.37 on Wednesday, 28 January 2009, with Tobias Pflüger (Vice-Chair) in the chair.

### 1. Adoption of draft agenda (PE 417.506)

The draft agenda was adopted without changes.

### 2. Adoption of minutes of the meeting of 8 April 2008 (PE 405.141)

The minutes were adopted without changes.

### 3. Announcements by the Chair

M. PFLUEGER:

- Welcomed a high ranking diplomatic Delegation comprising Saudi Ambassadors who are posted in European countries and are taking part in a study visit, organised by the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the EU, M. Abdallah Y. AL-MOUALLIMI. This visit mainly aims at grasping the EU-decision making mechanisms and is an excellent opportunity to build working links. M. PFLUEGER commended Ambassador AL MOUALLIMI for such a pro-active initiative and explained that a thorough discussion on EU/Saudi relations would take place under pt. 4.
- Reminded that the GCC suspended free trade negotiations with the EU last month. The reason advanced for this development, which marks the interruption of about 20 years of talks, has been the "political conditionality" and human rights clause, which always features on Free-Trade Agreements signed by the EU, and has always been a strong priority for the EP.
- Announced that a mission of the Bureau to Yemen could take place at the end of

February and reminded that the PSE Group has still not nominated a candidate for the chairmanship of the Delegation following the resignation of Ms Lilli Gruber. On grounds of political balance, a seat could however be allocated to the PSE group for the Bureau visit, provided a Member declares his availability by 6/2.

- Explained that Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser al-Sabah has formed a new cabinet, replacing the previous government which resigned in November after MPs demanded to grill the PM about an Iranian cleric's visit and corruption.

#### 4. Exchange of views on EU/Saudi Arabia relations with a Delegation of Saudi Ambassadors to EU Member-States

M. PFLUEGER welcomed again the Saudi Delegation and gave the floor to Ambassador AL MOUALLIMI, who introduced the Saudi Ambassadors accredited in the following countries: Spain, Austria, Germany, Italy, Greece, Sweden, France, Turkey, the Netherlands, Romania, Albania, Poland, Russia, Hungary, Denmark, Portugal, Switzerland, Ireland, the Czech Republic; the Delegation is led by HRH Prince Saud Bin Nayef Bin Abdulaziz AL SAUD and HH Prince Mansour Bin Khaled Al-Farhan AL SAUD.

M. PFLUEGER then presented his report on the mission to Saudi Arabia which took place in 25/30 October, and which was mainly an information and courtesy visit, allowing to convey certain key messages including on Human Rights to the Saudi authorities. M. PFLUEGER stressed that building bridges and creating opportunities for dialogue has been warmly welcomed on the Saudi side and that the added value of this mission had been raising awareness for the EP as a foreign policy actor and preparing the ground for the establishment of a working relationship at a later stage; M. PFLUEGER did however underline that, on security grounds, the freedom of movement of participants had been somewhat curtailed. On this specific issue, M. AL MOUALLIMI explained that, apart from being hospitable, the first priority of the authorities had been the safety of the Delegation - a parameter, reminded Ms DOYLE, which was also stressed as being a real concern by the EC Delegation in Riyadh as well as various EU diplomatic authorities; M. PFLUEGER admitted that this was indeed the case.

Moving on to an exchange of views on EU/Saudi relations, the following Members took the floor: PFLUEGER ; KRATSA ; SAIFI ; MANESCU ; LOUIS ; DOYLE ; PURVIS ; ROVSING, raising a number of issues and giving the Saudi side the opportunity to respond:

- Human Rights, Rights of Women:

The Saudi side appeared conscious of importance of these issues to the EP. "*We encourage you to provide your point of view*" as long as "*you are equipped with full knowledge on the situation in our country*". (AL MOUALLIMI).

On religious rights, and the possibility of seeing one day churches and synagogues in Saudi Arabia, M. AL MOUALLIMI explained that "*we see no over-riding need at this time to establish permanent infrastructures*" and reminded that the few permanent residents who are non-muslims are free to exercise their religious freedoms "*in private facilities*".

Answering to a question from Ms MANESCU, who had participated to the mission to his country in November, M. AL MOUALLIMI reassured that Sharia codification has now

started: this proves there is a "*real legal reform*" ongoing, as "*there [may be] way to go, but we know the direction and have embarked on the journey*".

- (stalled) EU / GCC Free Trade Agreement talks

The Saudi side stressed that this issue had been at the core of previous meetings with Commissioner ASHTON and her services and expressed their optimism: "*there is no dispute on the basic fundamentals on Human Rights & Democracy*" (political conditionality clause). The "*negotiators, on both sides, should be able to find the right wording*". Furthermore, there is a "*readiness to resume negotiations on our side*".

- Situation in the Middle East

For most Members of the Saudi diplomatic corps, "*The solution to the problem is well known*": "*The Arab Peace Initiative is already 7 years old*" - and could be accepted as a working basis; "*its details could still be discussed / negotiated*", but "*time is not working in the advantage of peace*". Participants called the EU to support this plan resolutely and assert its presence on the world stage.

As to the new US administration, "*we are optimistic, but history has shown us we should not be too optimistic*". The fact that President Obama immediately decided to send a new middle east envoy (Senator Mitchell) is a "*positive sign, but we need more than that*".

- Energy cooperation

Saudi ambassadors felt that "*An [oil] pipeline from SA to Europe*", if ever built, would be in safe hands - compared to the situation now where "*your friends cut the gas supplies especially in wintertime*". "*We have shown we are a moderate and stable supplier*".

## 5. Any other business

No issues were raised under this point.

## 6. Date and place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Delegation is scheduled to take place on 31/3, at 15:00, in Brussels.

The meeting closed at 12.39.

**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 SAŪAŠAS/JELENLÉTI ÍV/  
REĢISTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŠCI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/LISTÁ DE PREZENÇÁ/  
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 (*)
Tobias Pflüger (VP), Avril Doyle (VP)
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Μέλη/Members/Députés/Deputati/Deputāti/Nariai/Képviselők/ Membri/Leden/Poslowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Albert Deß, Sajjad Karim,, Christian Rovsing, Tokia Saïfi, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Patrick Louis, Călin Cătălin Chiriță
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Supplenti/ Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantys nariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanți/Náhradníci/Namestniki/ Varajäsenet/Suppleanter
John Purvis

178 (2)
183 (3)
Othmar Karas, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou
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/Darbotvarkēs punktas/ Napirendi pont/Punt Agenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/ 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/Efter 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/Pēc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/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/Nðukogu/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 (\*)

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

Abdulwahab Alshawkani (Yemen Embassy), Abdallah Al MOUALLIMI (Saudi Arabia Embassy), ambassadors to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Europe

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

PPE-DE PSE ALDE Verts/ALE GUE/NGL IND/DEM UEN NI	R. Kriemeyer
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<p>Кабинет на председателя/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidendi kantselēi/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/Urząd predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli</p>	
<p>Кабинет на генералния секретар/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/Kabinett des Generalsekretærs/Peasekretäri büroo/Γραφείο Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du Secrétaire général/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Ġeneralsekretära 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/Urząd 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 COMM DG PERS DG INLO DG TRAD DG INTE DG FINS DG ITEC</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/Sekretariat 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/Secretariado da comissão/Sekretariat comisie/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeristö/Utskottssekretariatet</p>	
<p>Philippe Kamaris</p>	
<p>Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asystent/Pomočnik/Avustaja/Assistenten</p>	
<p>Kathleen Huygen</p>	

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