

# European Parliament

## Delegation for relations with Israel

*27th European Parliament-Israel Interparliamentary Meeting  
Strasbourg, 19-20 November 2003*

*Report by Mr Willi Görlach, Chairman of the Delegation, to the Committee on  
Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy*

### **I. Introduction**

The interparliamentary meeting between the European Parliament delegation and Israel took place on 19-20 November 2003 in Strasbourg. This was the second time the two delegations had met within a year, mainly due to the fact that so far there had only been one meeting during the current parliamentary term, and the present political situation called for a more intensive exchange of ideas.

Before the actual meeting of the two parliamentary delegations, talks were held with President Cox and Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, vice-chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy. The interparliamentary meeting itself took place on 19 November, while bilateral talks with the political groups were held on the morning of 20 November, after a memorial service held in the Strasbourg synagogue for the victims of the terrorist attacks on Jewish institutions in Istanbul. In addition to President Cox and other senior representatives of the Parliament, members of the two delegations also attended the service.

The Israeli ambassador to the European Communities also took part in the meetings, and Commission representatives were present for part of the time.

The talks were held in a cordial and open atmosphere, and focused in particular on the political situation in Israel and the occupied territories.

### **II. Programme with the Delegation for relations with Israel on 19 November 2003**

#### **1. The current situation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority**

##### **a) The security situation**

According to the Israeli delegation, the situation had improved greatly since the construction of the protective barrier. Although 145 Israelis had been killed in suicide attacks since March 2002, the number of fatalities had recently dropped significantly, with only 20 % of suicide attacks

being successful. According to the Head of Mossad, who had spoken recently in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Knesset, around 40 terrorist attacks were to be expected in the future. In general, the Palestinian National Authority supported this terrorism.

The security fence had been planned for some time. In response to criticism from a number of MEPs, who said that the fence was comparable to the Berlin Wall, the Israeli delegation were keen to stress that the fence could not be compared to the Berlin Wall, as the latter had been intended to protect a political system, whereas this was a security fence, not a political barrier. As soon as terrorism stopped, talks could be held on the fence and its route. This was also true for the settlements: the Palestinian side needed to fulfil its obligations, and to take security aspects into account in their plans. The fence was also a source of fierce debate in Israel. Although the Likud party had initially been against it, the situation had now changed: the vast majority of people were afraid of attacks and wanted the fence to provide protection. It was now above all the left-wing groups which were in favour of the fence.

#### b) Relations between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian National Authority

High hopes were pinned on the new Palestinian Prime Minister, Abu Ala, who in his previous capacity as Speaker of the PLC had taken part some time ago in a dialogue organised by the European Parliament with the former Speaker of the Knesset, Avraham Burg. Yet the Israeli Government was at present condemned to passivity, until positive signals were received from the Palestinian side. Talks had been arranged for the following week between Sharon and Abu Ala.

#### c) Reforms of the Palestinian Authority

According to a number of the members of the Knesset, some progress had been made, e.g. in financial reforms, thanks to the commitment of the Palestinian Finance Minister. There was still some way to go before reforms were carried out in other fields such as the judicial system or the Parliament. Reforms of the Palestinian Authority were at the core of bilateral relations, and it would be advisable for the European Parliament to accompany the reform process. However the Israeli side supported anything which would result in peaceful developments. According to a Commission official, there had been progress in financial monitoring, but work still remained to be done. Further EU funding depended on the progress of reforms.

#### d) Education and cultural cooperation

Professor Doron from the University of Haifa, who was working on a UNESCO-funded project on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, reported first on her experiences, for example with role plays in which young people took on the role of someone belonging to a religion other than their own. This resulted in the young people having a greater acceptance and tolerance of other religions. Mr Seatter from the Commission made reference to the children's television programme 'Sesame Street', which had received EUR 2.5 million in funding from the EU, and which was being broadcast in Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories since October 2003. The Chairman of the Knesset delegation believed that the cultural work to be funded by the EU should prioritise projects aimed at combating anti-Semitism. Other possibilities included jointly organised study days on subjects such as the environment and water; in addition, an economic 'road map' could be drawn up.

e) Cooperation in research and technology

Mr Stockmann gave an summary of cooperation between Israel and the EU in this field: 623 projects had been funded under the Fifth Research Framework Programme, and 830 expressions of interest had already been received from Israeli firms for the Sixth Programme. In addition, Israel had expressed a strong interest in participating in the Galileo project.

f) The outcome of the EU-Israel Association Council of 18 November 2003

According to the Israeli ambassador and the Commission representative, talks had taken place in an open atmosphere. The Israeli side had now agreed to talks taking place between Marc Otte, the EU special envoy, and the Israeli Government after his meeting with Arafat.

g) The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly

Mr Imbeni, the Vice-President of the European Parliament responsible for Euro-Mediterranean affairs, reported on the plans to create a Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly. The plans for the Assembly had been adopted in October 2003 by a working group and then discussed at the Ministerial Conference which had taken place in Naples on 2-3 December 2003. According to these plans, 120 of the Assembly's 240 members would come from non-EU Mediterranean states, and the remaining 120 would consist of 75 members of the EU national parliaments and 45 members of the European Parliament. Three standing committees would be established, which would focus on the following: political, security and human rights issues; economic, financial, social and education issues; and quality of life, human exchanges and culture. Presidency of the Parliamentary Assembly would be held on a rotating basis. The Chairman of the Knesset Delegation expressed great interest in working together within this new parliamentary forum.

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

### 27th EP/Israel Interparliamentary Meeting

Wednesday 19 November 2003

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Thursday 20 November 2003

STRASBOURG

### PROGRAMME

<b>Wednesday 19 November 2003</b>
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- 07h50      Arrival of the Knesset Delegation in Strasbourg [flight AF 7300, from Paris (*confirmed*)] and transfer to
- Hôtel **MAISON ROUGE**  
Rue des Francs-Bourgeois, 4  
F- 67000-Strasbourg  
*Tel. (33) 03 88 32 08 60. - Fax. (33) 03 88 22 43 73*
- 09h30      Depart hotel to
- 10h00      Arrival at the European Parliament -" Louise Weiss" entrance
- The Israeli Delegation will be welcomed by Mrs Cristina Gutierrez-Cortines, 1st Vice-Chair of the EP Delegation*
- 10h30      Meeting with Mr. Pat **Cox**, President of the European Parliament (*confirmed*)  
*Room : R5.1*
- 11h00      Meeting with Baroness **Nicholson of Winterbourne**, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy (*confirmed*)  
*Room : R5.1*

- 11h45 Attend plenary session of the European Parliament (diplomats' gallery)  
Welcome by the Chair
- 12h15 Introduction of the European Parliament and guided tour of the building
- 13h00 Lunch hosted by the EP delegation for relations with Israel  
*Building : Winston Churchill - Members restaurant (private room)*
- 15h00-17h45 Working session EP- Knesset  
*Room : R 5.1*
- 17h45 Meeting with Mr Willi **De Clercq**, president of the "Intergroup Israël"  
*Room.: R 5.1 (confirmed)*
- 18h15 Meeting with Ms **Muscardini**, Vice-President, and Mr Franz **Turchi**, member  
of the Union for Europe of Nations Group (*confirmed*)  
*Room.: R 5.1*
- 18h45 Return to hotel
- 20h15 Leave hotel for
- 20h30 Dinner hosted by Mr. Gerhard **Schmid**, Vice-President of the European  
Parliament on behalf of the President, Mr Pat Cox  
  
*Restaurant Kammerzell  
16 Place de la Cathedrale  
67000 STRASBOURG  
Tel : +33 (0)3 88 32 42 14*

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<b>Thursday 20 November 2003</b>
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- 07h40 Leave hotel to the Synagogue of Strasbourg
- 08h30 Departure to the European Parliament
- 09h00-09h30 Meeting with Mr. Daniel **Cohn-Bendit**, co-president of the Group of the

Greens / European Free Alliance [V/ALE] **(confirmed)**

Room : R 5.1

- 09h30-10h00 Meeting with Mr. Enrique **Baron Crespo**, president of the Group of the Party of European Socialists [PSE] **(confirmed)**  
Room : R 5.1
- 10h00-10h30 Meeting with Ms. Karin **Riis-Jorgensen**, Mr Jean-Thomas **Nordmann** and Mr **Joan Vallvé**, Members of the group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party [ELDR] **(confirmed)**  
Room : R 5.1
- 10h30-11h00 Meeting with Mr. Armin **Laschet**, Member of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats [EPP-ED] **(confirmed)**  
Room : R 5.1
- 11h00-11h30 Meeting with M. Sami **Nair**, Mme Yasmine **Boudjenah** et M. Jonas **Sjöstedt**, Members of the Confederal Group of the European United Left / Nordic Green Left [GUE/NGL] **(confirmed)**  
Room : R 5.1
- 11h30 Meeting with the Bureau of the EP Delegation for relations with Palestine **(confirmed)**  
Room : R 5.1
- 13h00 Lunch hosted by Mr Willi **Görlach**, Chair of the European Parliament delegation for relations with Israel **(confirmed)**  
*Members' restaurant, Salon privé  
Building Louise Weiss*
- 15h00 Visit of the city of Strasbourg **(confirmed)**
- Departure of the Knesset delegation to Strasbourg airport
- 19h20 Departure of flight nr AF 7319 to Paris

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# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

### 27th Interparliamentary Meeting European Parliament/Israel

Wednesday, 19 November 2003

15:00 – 17:45

Room R 5.1  
Louise Weiss building

## STRASBOURG

### AGENDA

**15:00 -15:45 (under the chairmanship of Ms Cristina Gutierrez-Cortines)**

1. The current situation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority:

- The security situation
- Reforms in the Palestinian Authority
- The perspectives regarding the Road Map

**15:45 - 17:00 (under the chairmanship of Mr. Cristina Gutierrez-Cortines)**

2. The EU-Israeli relationship :

- The results of the EU/Israel Association Council of 18 November 2003
- Items of special interest:
  - education
  - the 6th frame work programme for research and technological development
  - Convention and enlargement
- Fight against terrorism

**17:00 - 17:45 (under the chairmanship of Mr Jan Dhaene)**

3. The EP-Knesset parliamentary relations:

- Follow-up to the last EP delegation visit to Israel (17-21 May 2003)
- Future activities of the two delegations
- The Euromed Parliamentary Forum, *in presence of Mr Renzo Imbeni, Vice-President of the European Parliament*

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

### **27<sup>th</sup> Interparliamentary Meeting EP/ ISRAEL**

- Strasbourg, 19-20 November 2003 -

#### **ISRAELI DELEGATION**

##### *Members of the Knesset*

Mrs	Noami	<a href="#">BLUMENTHAL</a>	- Likud
Mr	Issac	<a href="#">HERZOG</a>	- Labor-Meimad
Mr	Yuli-Yoel	<a href="#">EDELSTEIN</a>	- Likud
Mr	Chemi	<a href="#">DORON</a>	- Shinui

##### *Israeli Mission to the EU*

Mr	Oded	<b>ERAN</b>	Head of Mission
Ms	Simomna	<b>HALPERIN</b>	1st Secretary, relations with the EP

Prof. Aviva **DORON**, Chair Holder UNESCO chair in inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue at the University of Haifa

Mr. Gilbert **ROOS**, Honorary consul