Attached: programme of the visit.

A delegation from the Committee on Constitutional affairs of the European Parliament went to Stockholm in the framework of the upcoming Swedish Presidency. The delegation, composed of Jo Leinen (Chair of the AFCO committee), Elmar Brok, Aurelio Juri and Andrew Duff, met researchers from the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies (SIEPS), Members of the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) and the Minister for EU Affairs, Mrs Cecilia Malmström.

Meeting at SIEPS

At the meeting with representatives from the SIEPS, the members of the AFCO delegation had an exchange of views with Mrs Anna Stellinger, Director of the SIEPS, Mr Carl Fredrik Bergström, Doctor of Laws/Researcher, Mr Göran von Sydow, Researcher in Political Science and Mrs Anna Södersten, Researcher in Law. Two representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, Mr Thomas Belius, Deputy Director and Mrs Matilda Rotkirch, responsible for Institutional Affairs, also participated in the discussion.

After a short presentation of the SIEPS, its representative gave an overview of their current works regarding the upcoming Swedish presidency. The country will be facing several difficulties, in a rather tricky context, be it the shortness of the second semester, the follow up of the European elections, or the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Concerning the domestic context, the country is very unlikely to suffer from a governmental crisis during its presidency, since a majority Government is in office, which is unusual in Sweden. In addition, the Government can benefit from the growing support of the population for Europe that can be seen in recent opinion polls.
Five main issues can be identified for the Swedish presidency. First, climate change will be a key issue for the Government if it is to gain internal political support over its presidency. Secondly, the Stockholm programme will be also a major topic, especially as regards asylum and immigration. Thirdly, the Baltic Sea Strategy will be a matter of great interest for the country. Fourthly, enlargement is to remain an important issue, notably concerning Croatia, or the possible application of Iceland. Fifthly the presidency will pay a particular attention to the Eastern partnership. Finally, the economic crisis will be a problem with which the presidency is likely to have to deal with during all its term.

Regarding the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the representatives from the SIEPS believed it was not a controversial issue any longer in Sweden. After a rather long procedure, the Lagrådet, the body playing the role of a Constitutional Court (such body not existing formally in Sweden) decided that there was no need to amend the Constitution before ratifying the Treaty. And if the length can be accounted for by the complexity of the system, the Government has had a rather "wait and see" position, notably as regards the procedure in Ireland. In conclusion, it was said that there should be a reflexion on the future modifications of the Treaties, and on the way the modifications should be ratified by the Members, in the light of their likely effects on national constitutions.

The legal guarantees that should be granted to Ireland were also discussed, everyone agreeing on the difficulty of such task. Ireland does not wish to opt out (contrary to Denmark with the Maastricht Treaty), so the nature of these guaranties remains rather unclear. Solving this problem without reopening the global package of Lisbon will be very complex.

The nomination of the future Commission is also an issue which the Swedish presidency will have to deal with. The Government is in favour of an early designation of the President, the need for an interlocutor being strong in a period of troubles. At the same time, this early nomination might raise difficulties in the framework of the global negotiations for the most important posts.

If the Lisbon Treaty is to be adopted, the Swedish presidency will have to work a lot on its implementation. Coordination with the Spanish and the Belgian presidencies will be crucial, notably on the consequences of the end of classic rotating presidencies. And if the Lisbon Treaty fails to be adopted, the Swedish presidency will have to handle many problems, such as the size of the Commission as provided for in the Nice Treaty, and the drawing up of a rotation list for Commissioners.

Concerning the willingness of Sweden to become a member of the Eurozone in the short term, it was said that support for Euro is growing among the population; still this increase is slower than that of the support for the European Union.

**Lunch at the Riksdag**

Mr Göran Lennmarker, Mr Björn Hamilton, from the Committee of Foreign Affairs, Mrs Margareda Cederfelt, from the Committee of Constitutional Affairs, and Mrs
Marina Pettersson from the Committee of European Union Affairs were attending the lunch.

The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in Ireland and in Czech Republic was widely discussed during the lunch. If the Irish were to say "Yes" to the Lisbon Treaty in the second referendum, the Czech Senate would be in a delicate position. Indeed, if the citizens of a Member State changed their mind on the Treaty, the hindering of the ratification procedure by one chamber of one national parliament could hardly be seen as "democratic".

These problems linked to the ratification process reveal that in an enlarged European Union, there is a strong need for a global reflexion on the modification of the Treaties. Europe cannot afford to remain stuck for so many years in such procedures.

As regards the participation rate for the European elections, Members of the Riksdag assume that the citizens are unable to figure out what the struggle at stake is, and what the various positions towards this struggle are. According to the AFCO delegation, the election of the President of the Commission, combined with the use of New Information Technologies, could be an appropriate answer to that, being a way to personalize the poll, and thus to raise interest over these elections.

**Meeting at the Riksdag**

Mr Göran Lennmarker, Mr Björn Hamilton, from the Committee of Foreign Affairs, and Mrs Margareda Cederfelt, from the Committee of Constitutional Affairs were still present at the meeting that followed the lunch, and were joined by Mr Tobias Krantz, from the Committee on Constitutional Affairs.

According to the Members of the Riksdag, there are four areas that can be considered priorities for the Swedish presidency, namely the economic crisis, climate change, the Baltic Sea Strategy and external affairs. The economic crisis could be used as a leverage to fasten the move from fossil fuels to renewable energies. Focus should be on demand, especially on energy efficiency, and not on supply. Concerning the Baltic Sea, all Member States should be involved in the Strategy, that should always been considered within the framework of the European Union. Finally, the Middle East peace process, relations with Russia, and security for countries bordering Russia will be important foreign affairs issues.

Enlargement was also discussed, the Members of the Riksdag claiming that they were very much in favour of the continuation of the process. In Sweden, which is a net contributor to the European Union budget, the opinion is that the cost of enlargement is higher than that of non-enlargement. So the process with the Balkan countries should be completed in a short term, and countries bordering Russia should be considered fully entitled to join the European Union. In the latter countries, sovereignty is a condition for democracy, even if they are under a dictatorship today. In response, the Members of the AFCO delegation said that the enlargement process would be very unlikely to continue if the Lisbon Treaty did not enter into force.

Concerning the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the members of the AFCO delegation suggested that representatives from the Riksdag should go and meet
Members of the Czech Senate in order to expose them their view on the Treaty. Coming from a medium sized country that joined the European Union rather recently, the Swedish find themselves in an appropriate position to discuss with the Czechs.

Members of the AFCO delegation considered that Sweden should prepare for the possible rapid entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which could occur before the end of 2009. Until now, focus has been made on the ratification process and not on the concrete consequences of the entry into force.

Regarding the European External Action Service (EEAS), members of the AFCO delegation believed that there would be a long struggle upon which institution, Commission or the Council, EEAS should be incorporated to. In any case, the EEAS will have to deal with two governing bodies.

**Dinner with the Minister for European Union Affairs**

![Meeting with EU Minister Malmström](image)

Apart from Mrs Malmström, Mrs Maria Åsenius, State Secretary, Mrs Kajsa Haag, Political advisor and Mrs Matilda Rotkirch, responsible for Institutional Affairs were present at the dinner.

The discussion dealt a lot with the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Members of the AFCO delegation warned the Minister that a failure of the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty would mean the end of the enlargement process. Many Member States would indeed oppose to the continuation of the process without a new treaty.

Answering to the suggestion from the delegation to organise an extraordinary European Council on the 3rd of July, the Minister answered that the Swedish have no plans to hold such a summit.

Regarding the nomination of the future Commission, members of the AFCO delegation said that if the Czech were ready to postpone the June European Council in order to give the European Parliament more time to designate their representatives in the consultation procedure for the nomination of the President, then the European Parliament should show some flexibility.
The Swedish have not decided yet who will be the next Commissioner, notably because the shape of the future Commission remains uncertain. Members of the AFCO delegation warned the Minister that other Member States had already designated their Commissioners, and that those designated would be able to start discussing the attribution of portfolios once the new President is known.

Mrs Malmström informed the members of the delegation that some Member States have not yet prepared the legal basis concerning the suggestion that the additional Members of the European Parliament should sit as observers once the Treaty enters into force. Such a measure could create difficulties in Member States where there are several constituencies.

The discussion ended on the questions of access to document and lobbying. Concerning the first dossier, the Minister was hoping that the Parliament would vote on the legislative text before the end of the legislature. On the second issue, she said that the Council was rather sceptical about the idea of a common register, as required by the Parliament; the scope of this register should first be clarified for the Council services.
AFCO delegation to Stockholm
30-03-2009

PROGRAMME

Sunday, 29 March 2009

Evening  Some AFCO-Members arrive in Stockholm.
           Staying in the Hotel Reisen, Skeppsbron 12, Stockholm

Monday, 30 March 2009

08.50    Meeting in the hotel lobby and departure with taxi to SIEPS.

09.30 – 11.30 Meeting with SIEPS – the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies -
                Venue: SIEPS, Svante Arrhenius väg 21 A, Stockholm

13.00 – 14.30 Lunch at the Riksdag
                Venue: Partimatsalen, Riksdagen,
                Entrance : Riksgatan 1

14.45 – 16.30 Meeting with Members from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on EU Affairs and Committee on the Constitution
                Venue: Riksdagen, Riksgatan 2
                Coffee will be served

18.30    Dinner with Mrs Malmström, Minister for EU Affairs
                Venue: Gästmatsalarna, Rosenbad
                Address : Rosenbad 4

Tuesday, 31 March 2009

Morning   AFCO departs from Stockholm

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