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Delegation for Relations with Israel

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***Report by Ms Jana Hybášková, Chairwoman of the Delegation, for the
Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence
Policy***

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SUMMARY

The Delegation visit's objective was to contribute to the mutually recognized new spirit of bilateral relations between Israel and the EU, and to forge even closer links with the Knesset. The importance the EP gives to its relations with Israel was reflected both in the length of stay and the number of Members taking part. It was also the first delegation representing an enlarged EU of 25 member states, as half of the delegates came from 'new' Member States. Equally, the trip coincided with the meeting of EU-Israel Sub-Committee on Political Dialogue and Co-operation, preparations by the EU to operate EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah at the Gaza-Egypt border, and the background of the Gaza disengagement and the upcoming PLC elections.

The role the EP would play in observing the forthcoming PLC elections of January 25 was raised at all relevant meetings by the Delegation. MEPs assured the Israeli side that the Observers would fulfil their mission, aimed at strengthening the democratic process in Palestine, in an honest and impartial way. They also took the opportunity to remind the concerns expressed by the EU side at the last similar experience, i.e. the presidential elections of January 2005, including voters' registration in East Jerusalem. The Israeli side assured the EP it wished the elections to go ahead, but was not yet in a position to provide more information about the sticking issues, including contact details of election co-ordinators. Nevertheless, both parties expressed concerns about the role of Hamas and the risk of "legitimising" its cause through an election success, and it became clear that Israel will not allow Hamas candidates to campaign in East Jerusalem.

Having discussed the changing political situation in Israel at its meeting at the Knesset, the Delegation tackled concrete issues pertaining both to the EU-Israel ENP Action Plan, such as, the environment, terrorism, security, immigration, trafficking, and to current events in Iran, Lebanon and Syria. Suggestions were made by both parties to exchange experience by way of a conference on the fight against terrorism (financing and recruitment), and the participants agreed that there is a scope for the EU to be more actively engaged in environmental projects (e.g. water desalination) with the Palestinians, particularly in Gaza. The EU was also encouraged to promote Arab-Arab cooperation in these areas given its relations with the Middle East.

Most MEPs found with concern the social and economic situation in East Jerusalem, and the difficulty the security barrier poses for its residents and the Palestinians in general. However, they have also welcomed the statistical evidence that the barrier has saved Israeli lives by preventing the entry of suicide bombers. These issues were also raised at a meeting with NGOs, during which a work of an Israeli NGO surveying the exertion of power by the IDF at the security barrier checkpoints was presented. This meeting also allowed the Members to be briefed on the facts relating to allegations of the EU funds being used to produce Palestinian textbooks with an anti-Israeli/Jewish propaganda and inflammatory language. Most MEPs were concerned to find out that this situation remains unsatisfactory and that more transparency is needed by the EU and its Member States to clarify this. The Chair of the EP Delegation suggested organising a workshop on this topic in the EP in the first half of 2006, which was welcomed by the Israeli NGO concerned.

The EP Delegation also had the opportunity to visit the Upper Galilee, where it was briefed about the continuing policy of terrorism, including kidnapping and rocket attacks, by Hezbollah. Facing a not so distant Hezbollah's observation post, the Delegation learned about Hezbollah's financial and military support from Iran and Syria respectively. The IDF stressed the inability of the UNIFIL to prevent Hezbollah's actions, and underlined the importance of fully implementing UNSC resolution 1559 demanding a complete withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon.

Overall, the Delegation felt that this particular visit was both very timely and had items on its agenda, which could make concrete steps towards closer relations with Israel, such as on the EU-Israel Action Plan. The launch of the EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah, which coincided with the Delegation's visit, provided a rare opportunity to exchange views with both the Israeli side and the European Commission on the terms and significance of this unprecedented involvement of the EU in the region. Having met the Head of the EU BAM Rafah mission, Major-General Pietro Pistolese, Delegation members pledged to closely observe the mission's operation and to organize a hearing by the Delegation in the Parliament on the issue.

A. THE TALKS

The Delegation's visit to Israel, comprising 12 Members led by Chairwoman Jana Hybášková and lasting 5 full working days – one of the biggest and longest ever sent by the European Parliament – arrived in Israel on November 23, just two days after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon decided to quit Likud to form a new party "Kadima". These, under the impetus of Labour leader Amir Peretz, elected just on November 8, who withdrew Labour ministers from the coalition government, were set for March 28.

I. Talks with [Knesset](#) Representatives



Group picture in the Knesset, with Speaker Rivlin

The Speaker [Reuven Rivlin](#) (Likud) welcomed the Delegation to the Knesset; referring to recent attacks at the Israel/Lebanon border, the speaker called the EU to exert all its power to put a stop to terrorism. Indeed, *"this specific time, you, like us, have just seen the Hezbollah's serpent's head once again surfacing from its hideaway"*. Terrorism has its roots *"in Syria and Iran, nurtured by that same malevolence, like the President of Iran who has publicly called for the destruction of Israel"*.

1. Panel on Terror and Human Rights

Mr Rivlin emphasized that the EP-Knesset connection is one of the most

important for Israel. He also admitted that the Knesset is the parliament of the Jewish

democratic state, which bears some contradictions. Nevertheless, Israel will remain a Jewish state until necessitated otherwise. Out of the 7 million citizens 1,4 are Arab Israelis, who are entitled to full political rights and are represented by 12 Members.

Since 85% of the people are Jews, the rules of the game is accepted, which means that the majority (the Jews) should take responsibility for the minority (non-Jews). The discussion on this is currently in full swing.



Knesset Speaker Rivlin during the IPM

As in all parliaments, differences of opinion do exist: due to the situation in Israel, they could lead to civil war if the basic rule of the game was not always respected – that the minority abides by the rules of the majority: thus, a choice as "existential" for Israel as the ratification of the Oslo agreements was carried by a majority of a single vote.

While Mr Rivlin did remind that, principally in the past, "we had the feeling that, sometimes, European nations were biased against Israel" or, perhaps, "took democracy in Israel for granted", the "whole attitude towards Europe has changed: now we view you as friends and partners", even when there is criticism. Mr Rivlin praised the quality of the Knesset/EP Interparliamentary dialogue: "an exchange of views with friends, with whom we share common values and democratic principles".

One of these principles is protecting the life of its citizens. For Israel, as a democratic state, there is "*no way we can negotiate with terror*": fighting terrorism is "*not a right, but a duty*"; thus, the Palestinians have to withdraw from the strategy of terror. "*Israelis thought Oslo could bring a new era; from now on, our people will not accept promises and live in an age of illusions*". The aim should therefore be to achieve a lasting peace, and not to leave unsolved questions for future generations.

There is, however, no consensus on how to achieve this. The unilateral dimension of the disengagement from Gaza did show that the society is split, and so are political parties, which is why early elections will take place. While PM Ariel Sharon "*has decided this is the time to move to the left*", new Labour leader Amir Peretz "*would be a tough opponent even if Likud was united – which it is not*". As the new Knesset will have to ratify each step of the Roadmap, the question new parliamentarians will have to face, therefore, is whether a roadmap can be implemented without negotiations and by continuing unilateral moves.

[Ms Colette Avital](#) (Labour) explained that, in Israel, daily life is a constant reminder that democracy cannot be taken for granted: in such a context, it is difficult to define where freedom of speech ends and becomes incitement to violence. Too many paradoxes and riddles lead to too much instability and uncertainty: "*a PM who leaves his own party*", "*a Knesset which dissolves itself*", the fact that "*there has not been a single Knesset to finish its term*". In conclusion, "***we are still shaping our identity***"; **from this point of view, Israel's experience in integrating**

new immigrants could be interesting for Europe.

On this specific topic, [Ms Naomi Blumenthal](#) (Likud), Chairwoman of the Israel-European Parliamentary League, added that Europe could learn from the mistakes Israel made. Regarding the context in which the IPM took place, she excused some Members of the Knesset for not being present, as *“we all want to be re-elected”*. The political landscape in Israel is witnessing some changes that are nothing short of “incredible”: the presence of European Parliamentarians is certainly opportune to understand the *“incredibility of Israeli politics”*. **Ms Blumenthal agreed with Speaker Rivlin that it can be "seen and felt" that EU/Israel relations are much better than in the past; on the disengagement plan, she admitted that Likud was against but that, "for the time being, it succeeds”**.

PM Sharon, and the Kadima party he has just founded are expected to run their campaign on the theme of the implementation of the roadmap. In general, the peace process is expected to dominate over other campaign themes, despite the fact that the real new "element", Amir Peretz, seen as a “working class hero”, will attempt to focus on social issues. But even he has officially stated that an undivided Jerusalem should be the eternal capital of Israel.

Asked about the participation of Hamas at the Palestinian elections of January 25, Ms Blumenthal replied “let them play, but according to the rules of the game – democracy”. She strongly doubted the ability of Hamas to transform into a genuine political player as long as its platform is just the destruction of Israel.

Mr [Yuli Edelstein](#) (Likud) agreed that *“it is high time to address the issue of immigration”*; he **acknowledged that, in Israel, despite its unique experience in terms of repatriation, there are still many needs not addressed adequately** (social inclusion, professional integration, housing). Commenting on the French riots in the suburbs, he did stress that *“none of us could avoid the comparison, all the time”*. **But in a democracy, the role of the legislative branch is to control the executive: the Knesset gave, thus, a hard time to IDF on issues like checkpoints or standards of behaviour towards the settlers and the protesters during the disengagement phase, trying to explain that “the same laws should apply irrespective of the slogans”**.

Similarly to Ms Blumenthal, Mr Edelstein underlined that it is very risky for Israel to accept the participation of Hamas given that its campaign is solely based on the destruction of Israel. This only basis is unacceptable and the experience with Hezbollah gives little hope that once elected Hamas will become responsible.

Taking the floor, Mr [Yuval Steinitz](#) (Likud), Chairman, Foreign Affairs & Defence Committee, stated that the **disengagement was strategically necessary, event though extremely painful**. He did, however, condemn very strongly the *“Machiavellian move”* of PM Sharon to create a new party. Although not being illegal, it was dangerous, immoral and against norms in democratic regimes. *“Never has the PM shifted to form a new party while in power. Now Likud is in threat to be very much weakened, if not destroyed by Sharon.”*

On the situation in the Middle East, he explained that the **war against Iraq was important in order to eliminate a brutal dictatorship and to eradicate its chemical arsenal**. It also sent a

strong message to Libya that Mr Khadafy would have to forget about his own nuclear ambitions- something which is still underestimated and which changed completely the attitude of Libya towards the international community.

A real concern is, however, Iran. Many Europeans fail to realise the specific nature of its nuclear programme: Iran aims at becoming *the* regional nuclear superpower. Iran:

- already has hundreds of long range missiles, able to reach Israel
- will complete within, 12 months, 5000kms range missiles - enough to reach London
- has admitted using 54 centrifuges to enrich uranium
- Could thus produce up to 30 nuclear bombs per year.

The US and Europe "*should therefore realise that we are talking about a fundamentalist, totalitarian regime which is about to become a global threat*". As appeasement policies will not work, Mr Steinitz warned that if Iran – a signatory of the NPT treaty, contrary to Israel – is allowed to break the NPT, "*this will herald the end of the Treaty*". Echoing the words late PM Begin had used commenting the destruction of the Osirak plant, Mr Steinitz warned that if Israel lays down its weapons, there will be another holocaust, and added that "*technically, any nuclear project is an industry project and, thus, vulnerable to air attacks*". **There will be no need for air strikes, however, if the international community reacts in time and “chooses a stick that is big enough and then waved so that it can be seen”.**

2. Panel discussion on Environmental Issues as a Bridge between nations

Mr [Eliezer Sandberg](#) (Shinui) explained that **jointly solving environmental issues should become a priority for both the Palestinians and Israelis**. As Israel subscribes to the EU's 6th Framework programme for research, there is a hope that the good relations between the EU and the Arab world could, more generally, be exploited in order to promote common projects. One of the greatest challenges the Middle East will be facing in the 21st century concerns water shortages. **A lack of water could cause conflicts, and from this point of view, water is linked to stability.**

Solutions exist, such as **desalination and water recycling**, which could be beneficial to all: the Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians. Thus, terrorists would never target such projects. Furthermore, people need to drink every day: "*we don't have to wait for a Palestinian state to start projects*", especially since the cost of small desalination projects is much less than commonly thought. Practical arrangements and solutions can always be found, such as, for Israel, to pay with gas to get water from the Palestinians – so that the proceeds are not used by terrorist groups. Stressing a sense of urgency, Mr Sandberg said: "***those projects are needed immediately and the EU can do it. Gas projects with the necessary Middle East partners are also feasible quickly, but the responsibility should also come from the neighbouring Arab countries. So far, this is not coming.***"

On other topics, Mr Sandberg expressed his confidence that the democratic process in Palestine would go forward, as "*the potential for the seeds of democracy also exists in the Middle East*". He did express, however, some concern **over the past misuse of EU funds**, which "*didn't really go to the places they should, especially in the 1990s.*"

Mr. Yaakov Kedar, deputy Director General, MFA explained that there is already a strong **collaboration with the Palestinian Water Authority**, as well as an agreement between

Israel and the Palestinians not to target water facilities – as everybody is aware that, if current patterns continue, within 25 years there will be shortages. Mr Kedar insisted upon the pragmatism usually shown in dealing with the issue. New water facilities (desalination and water) are being built for the Palestinians, where Israel will not even have the possibility to “close the tap”. There is also already cooperation with Oman, despite the fact that it doesn’t even maintain diplomatic relations with Israel. He also added: *"Arab-Arab cooperation on water and environment is perhaps even more important to support by the EU than Israel-PLC cooperation."*

Mr Gideon Bromberg, Director of [Friends of the Earth / Middle East](#), stressed that for an NGO to take the floor at an Interparliamentary meeting is, in itself, a credit to Israeli democracy. Friends of the Earth regroups the Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians in the belief that solving environmental problems is a bridge for peace-building. An example is the ["Good Water Neighbours"](#) initiative to rehabilitate the Jordan, as **95% of the fresh water has been diverted, turning the river into sewage**. Mr Bromberg was, however, critical of the governmental approach: desalination is not a panacea, and carries environmental costs. Likewise, when we encourage an export-focused agriculture, *“we end up exporting the little water we have”*.

II. Meeting with Vice-Prime Minister Shimon Peres

Referring to the EU presence at the Rafah border, Mr [Shimon Peres](#) stated that *"Europe proved it is also a political power and not just an economic one"*. Israel has faced a dilemma: not making Gaza a prison on the one hand, and on the other not allowing terrorism be imported to Israel. **The answer has proved to be the EU, something "unimaginable one year ago. Europe fulfilled every promise it made. This may be hard to admit openly, but we do appreciate it."**



Vice PM Shimon Peres with Jana Hybášková, the Chair (right), and M. Zbigniew Zaleski, MEP

Mr Peres went on to underline the increasing role of economics in today's globalised world ; China, for instance, is in a process of deep change because to the prior economics reform it undertook, and which *"got [it] out of the communist world. This didn't happen because of Bush's speech."* But the conflict of the Middle East is also a conflict between traditional Islam and modernity: *"every Muslim is not a terrorist, but every terrorist is a Muslim"*.

Referring to his latest essay, "the Privatisation of Peace", and while admitting that there are limits (security cannot be privatised, for instance), Mr Peres explained that Europe can help bring the Middle East into modernity by taking two measures:

- Admitting Israel and Palestine to NATO and the EU, but as participants without voting rights. This will be a tremendous democratisation incentive that will also boost Human Rights.

- Promote private-public partnership in its aid to the Palestinians, which would ensure that for each Euro of public aid, another Euro would be invested privately. Thus, ***"you will build a system that will be parallel to inefficient governments; instead of sponsoring corruption, you will build infrastructure"***.

On the internal political situation in Israel, Mr Peres declared not to be too impressed by current polls explaining that *"they are like perfume - nice to smell, hard to swallow"*. He did forecast, however, that no single party would get a majority in the March 28 early elections. This would mean that a coalition would have to be formed. There is a strong hope that the next ruling coalition will *"dismiss the old fashioned right wing approach of not allowing Palestinian statehood"*, especially since *"Sharon has changed"*. As far as his next moves are concerned, *"everybody has a different Kadima (way to move ahead)"*.

III. Discussion with the President of the Supreme Court

Mr Aharon Barak, President of [the Supreme Court](#), explained that the decision taken at the creation of the state of Israel was that the Constitution would be written chapter by chapter, each of them having the strength of a Basic Law. Therefore, Basic Laws are not prepared by the Government but by the Parliament. **In a landmark 1995 case, it was judged that the Basic Laws are indeed the “Supreme Laws of the Land” – meaning that Israel is a Parliamentary Constitutional Democracy.**



Mr Barak with Ms Beňová, 2nd Vice-Chair

Therefore, *"Israel has a Constitution, but a crippled one"*; for, if the Basic Laws are indeed norms superior to other acts, some of them can still be amended by the Knesset by a simple majority. **The Knesset has now undertaken to consolidate all Basic Laws in a single document. When this work is over, the final result, i.e. a single Constitution, should then be subject of a referendum.**

A “legal activism” of the Supreme Court does exist. It is, however, counterbalanced by the fact that, as Mr Barak half-jokingly put it, *“my founding fathers are still around”* – meaning that the judiciary is also under review, sometimes by the authors of the very first Basic Laws of the country. **The last two Basic Laws to have been adopted, in 1992, dealt with Human Rights, but, as they do not apply retroactively, this means that the old legislation is still protected against any “constitutionality check”. For human rights in Israel, there exists a pre-1992 and a post-1992 era.**

Before 1992, the only way for the Supreme Court to change mentalities was to include a justification in its rulings according to which: *“as Israel is a democracy, and Human Rights are at the core of democracy, it is presumed that these rights should be protected”*. In other words, the basic presumption was that no statute should violate human rights unless it expressly said so.

After 1992 and the adoption of the Basic Law on Dignity and Liberty, all new laws are checked against these new criteria, which are widely interpreted. Therefore, dignity is seen as implying respect of the free will of the individual and the development of his personality, but also free

speech and equality issues. This is despite the fact that the Knesset, probably, wished to leave some of these aspects open. Since then, as the Knesset has been very careful in adopting Basic Laws, it can be said that there has been no abuse of the Basic Law concept.

Specifically on the situation in the occupied territories, Mr Barak explained that, from an Israeli perspective, national law applies in Israel, including Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. In the occupied territories, however, what applies instead is the Geneva Convention, Military Decrees and the Hague Conventions. But **the Supreme Court has ruled that in occupied territories the military, as officials representing the state, are also accountable for their acts according to Israeli law; something which explains why there are, roughly, 300 such cases every year. "Whenever we find that Israel has violated Human Rights, we say so"**.

In Israel itself, Mr Barak admitted that while it is true that on the law-book there may be no discrimination against Israeli Arabs, the situation on the ground is different: this is certainly not an easy process for Israel's society. Israel, indeed, is "a Jewish democratic state"; while there is no landmark ruling that would clarify how these two characteristics inter-relate, for Mr Barak this means that *"every Jew has a key to enter the house: the right to return; but once in the house, everyone enjoys equal rights"*.

IV. Talks with Officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Governmental Organisations

1. Meeting with the Center for Political Research, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

In his introduction, Mr Benny Barak of the Centre argued that 2 parameters are going to be decisive during the "very fateful" early elections of March 28: the future of the peace process and the shape of Israel's socio/economic model. In addition, we might witness a move from a pattern of emotional voting, based on identity criteria, to a vote where the issue of poverty will play a dominant role across party lines. Other considerations that may come into play include:

- demographic evolution in Israel
- Weapons of Mass Destruction as an increasing danger,
- proposed ways to deal with terrorism

In other words, there are patterns that may help explain the changes witnessed currently in Israel's political arena:

- **Demography supersedes geography,**
- **Strategic consolidation supersedes strategic depth.**

After this introduction, the rest of the discussion centred on:

EU-Israel relations

Despite its technical nature, the Rafah border agreement is a proof that the political climate toward the EU has really changed. Israel welcomes EU's active participation in the region, *"beyond just writing checks for the PA"*. Acquiring a real foothold on the ground also has its symbolic value, but it is hoped that the EU Mission will not follow the UNIFIL example, in

South Lebanon.

Prospects for reform in the Arab world

Mr Zeevi Brocker focused on an "*unstable regional system*", which "*sees the re-emergence of Hezbollah as a threat*". **Reforms in the Arab world, essentially cosmetic (as in Egypt) should not hide the fact that there is no fundamental change.** As for the Hamas, it may, in the short run, appear pragmatic, but its real views on Israel remain unchanged.

The Hamas

Both officials appeared quite convinced that the Hamas will use the PLC elections in order to emulate the paradigm of the Hezbollah, as they share the same anti-western and anti-Israeli ideology. Hezbollah, they reminded, drew legitimacy from the democratic process in Lebanon, got represented in the Lebanese government "*and now it feels its tactics are successful – while it is behind the recent terrorist attacks in the region of the Sheba farms (Golan Heights)*". In short, Israel "*does not believe in a Hamas ability to transform in a democratic political party – Never*".

The future of the Roadmap

Mr Barak commented that PM Sharon's departure from the Likud shows, precisely, his commitment. Nonetheless, "*the timetable set was unrealistic*" and "*we are not yet in the 1st phase*" as "*disengagement from Gaza was a pre-1st phase measure*". In any case, it is unrealistic to expect any real progress until the Israeli elections. Mr Barak repeated the need for direct negotiations with the PA and warned that, should the next GAC conclusions articulate the traditional European concerns regarding, for example, East Jerusalem – this would "*prejudge on the results of the negotiations*".

Assessment of the shortcomings of the Barcelona process

Mr Barak was quite critical on the recent Barcelona summit, one of "*mutual recrimination*". For Egypt, embarrassed by shortcomings in its own political process, "*raising the Middle East smokescreen was convenient*". **Ten years after the start of the Barcelona process, instead of democratic reforms in the Middle East, what is constantly seen is "European aid as a social security check". There is clearly an element of frustration.**

Iran as a nuclear threat

Mr Alon Bar, Director for Disarmament, underlined that, when Khomeini gained power, one could perhaps dismiss his posturing on Israel as rhetoric. But after 25 years of constant indoctrination "*Iran, now, truly believes that Israel is its arch-enemy*". It could even be said that Iran's vision of the region for the next 25 years fails to include Israel *at all*. In this regard, **Mr Barak underlined that developments in Iraq play a crucial role for the Middle East situation. Failure there will challenge regimes in Jordan and embolden regimes such as Iran.**

At the same time, Iran violates the NPT and refuses to cooperate with the IAEA. Israel tries to keep a low profile, "*as we don't want to turn this into just another bilateral Iran-Israel dispute*". Israel, however, has been trying to convince the world for years now, that Iran had such a

programme, “with very little success”. The IAEA investigation of 2 ½ years ago found some evidence, but no “smoking gun”, assessing that Iran was in a state of “non compliance”. But one wonders, insisted Mr Bar, whether Europe is more preoccupied with solving the diplomatic crisis that has ensued than addressing the real problem.

Iran’s new leadership, he stressed, is now enriching uranium, while the international community fails even to have this issue brought at the Security Council. It should be understood, nonetheless, that Teheran will never address the matter as long as “they see that they can go on buying time”. Yet, **sanctions against Iran could be effective if there was a real will**: “if you don’t want to call them sanctions, fine, but at least the EU could send some signals”, concluded Mr Bar. For instance, **Iran receives about \$1 million per year from the IAEA and the withdrawal of this even relatively small amount is likely to be effective**.

2. Working breakfast with Mr Etsion, Deputy Head of the National Security Council

Warning against the “**Hezbollahisation of Hamas**”, Mr Ran Etsion repeated that the main fear of the Israeli side regarding the Hamas was the risk that it will emulate the Hezbollah, another terrorist organisation which is using democracy for its own means, in order to legitimise its existence. This risk, likewise, of seeing “*Islamic parties running for elections in European countries*” should not be discounted.

If, therefore, the Hamas does not undertake any reforms – as the PLO did, in its time – before the PLC elections, “*the system will adapt to the Hamas and not the other way round.*” “*Either you have a paramilitary wing, or you haven't*”, he added, explaining that it would be over-simplistic to think that Israeli policy is just to ride behind the US in Middle East affairs. **For Mr Etsion, the real question is whether Arab societies can become fully democratic. Liberalisation is different from democratisation: “just look at them – to a degree, they have free elections, look at what kind of regime this brings”.**

3. Working breakfast with Mr Jacob Rosen, Political Advisor to the Mayor of Jerusalem



Mr Rosen with the Chair

Mr Rosen explained that, currently, one is faced with an uncertain, even kaleidoscopic situation in both Israeli and Palestinian politics: “*we are not certain the PA will not attempt to delay the elections. The Fatah’s old guard has been shown the way out, and will not acquiesce easily*”.

Voting in East Jerusalem

Specifically **regarding the situation in East Jerusalem, he reminded that there was an agreement, albeit imperfect, reached at Camp David to allow vote by post**. According to Civil Service Common Sense, it is likely that this scenario will be repeated, although “*presently, we don’t see how we could allow Hamas candidates to campaign*”. This is not a black-or-white world: there are provocateurs on both sides. Many PLC candidates will try getting arrested

exactly when the media are present. Others wouldn't have run anyway, but will now tell that it was Israel who prevented them.

As far as registration of voters is concerned, there are only few changes to expect. Those who really want to register can do it in many ways – for instance, by registering in Ramallah.

Emigration from Jerusalem on economics grounds – some consequences

Housing in Jerusalem has never been subsidised. It is to "*satellite cities*", where both secular and orthodox Jews migrate for economic reasons. Poverty in Israel does exist and even Likud supporters acknowledge that Benjamin Netanyahu's ultraliberal policies went too far. A backlash is expected at the early elections of March 28, and will likely profit Labour. While it is still too early to speak of what parties will constitute the next ruling coalition, "*there will be a solid block of 65 MPs to which you can talk to.*"

Arab Jerusalem

It should also be reminded that **out of the 760,000 inhabitants of Jerusalem, 1/3 of them are Arabs. While they have the right to vote at local elections, they refuse to do so, as they see voting as tantamount to accepting Israel's sovereignty. As a result, they don't have a single local council member that could protect their interests;** some of them have, therefore, started having second thoughts.

V. Meeting with Ms Shapira-Shabirow, International Relations advisor (Labour)

Ms Avital Shapira-Shabirow, advisor of new Labour leader Amir Peretz, insisted on the link between Israel's economic/social environment and the peace process. **Settlers are the first victims of current governmental policies, as they are often driven not by any political or religious extremism, but by purely economic reasons.** Mr Peretz plans to switch priorities, diverting the funds which are currently spent on settlement expansion to education and health.

Furthermore, Mr Peretz would also return back to negotiations with the Palestinians, without the current patronising attitude of arguing that Israel has "*no partner*" or "*not a democratic one*": the region is more ripe now than ever before to achieve a final settlement. **Issues such as the status of Jerusalem, borders, etc, are "on the table but should be discussed after the elections".**



Ms Shapira-Shabirow, during the meeting

There is therefore room to be optimistic "*if Labour becomes the 2nd biggest party in an overall more dovish new Knesset*". Yet, this picture could be tremendously affected in case of a suicide attack shortly before the elections. Nevertheless, **the successful disengagement from Gaza proved that the psychological fear according to which "once we withdraw from the settlements, we trigger a civil war" was not justified.**

VI. Seminar at the Bar-Ilan University, in cooperation with IASEI

The [Israeli Association for the Study of European Integration](#), founded in 1992, brings together academics involved in researching Europe with practitioners active in European affairs. It provides a forum for debate, a site for information about European studies, and is itself directly involved in promoting research and establishing research networks.

Thus, the round table which took place with the Delegation in the framework of the seminar on the Institutional Aspects of the EU-Israel Action Plan, with the participation of IASEI Director Dr Sharon Pardo, Dean Yaffa Zilbershatz, Dr Rachel Frid, Ministry of Justice and Dr Nellie Munin, Israeli EU Mission, focused on how the EP can make a difference in developing EU-Israel relations, in the context of the EU's new Neighbourhood Policy. In the words of the Chair of the Delegation, ***"it is necessary to depoliticise our relations", and a way to achieve this, practically, is the EU-Israel action plan.***

The discussion therefore underlined the need, for the Israeli side, to see the Internal Market extending fully to Israel including, if possible, freedom of movement. Other topics raised included the future of the Constitutional project in Europe, the Financial Perspective, and more specifically, how the European Neighbourhood Policy can be perceived as an instrument of social engineering and peace promotion.

VII. Field trip to the Lebanese border

The Delegation visited the Northern District, in the Upper Galilee (Shlomi, and observation post Adamit). The tour was organised by the Israeli Defence Forces porte-parole service and allowed Members to get a clearer picture of the situation on the ground and the dangers faced daily by Israel – the military and civilians – due to the fact that **Southern Lebanon is effectively controlled by the Syrian-backed Hezbollah ("Hezbollah belt").**



Commander Livni showing Hezbollah watchtowers and outposts - just some hundreds of meters away

As explained by the Commander of Division 300, Chen Livni, the 'blue line', dividing Israel and Lebanon, is approx. 2 km wide and takes up to 800-1000 km² and is controlled formally by the UN, but effectively by Hezbollah which counts up to 2000 men. **Hezbollah is well equipped, trained in Syria and financed by Iran. Iran further supports Hezbollah's activities by the presence of its revolutionary guards which count in hundreds.** Israel has withdrawn from the blue line and limits its activities to reactions to Hezbollah's provocations and intimidations, such as kidnapping of soldiers and rocket shooting across the line.

The IDF follow strict rules of engagement as not to give a pretext to the Hezbollah to claim that there was provocation from the Israeli side. Fire may be opened only in self-defence and to protect civilians. Hezbollah uses kidnapped soldiers as an exchange for the liberation of terrorists from

Israeli prisons. Israel is still missing two soldiers kidnapped by Hezbollah in 1985. There were examples in 2005 (the most recent two days before the arrival of the Delegation, severely wounding an officer and a soldier) of the Hezbollah firing mortar shells or rockets from the Lebanese territory into Israel.

Given that it takes only approx. 2 minutes for a missile to reach its territory, Israel's possibility to defend itself is seriously constrained. As a result, **the blue line is used by Hezbollah as a training ground and a testing ground for their weapons.**

Hezbollah's presence in south Lebanon is not limited to terrorism. It has also imposed itself as the only provider of public services in a number of urban areas and largely controls access to the population there. **The Lebanese army has virtually no control of this territory.**

Hezbollah's weapons include advanced night vision tools and communication systems, light weapons and missiles (Katusa, TOW I and II).



Hezbollah positions shown on the map (Cpt Cohen)

Both Commander Livni and Captain Cohen, Chief Liaison Officer to Lebanon, appeared quite disillusioned with the role UNIFIL plays. UN forces may only observe, and even when they witness a gross violation of the cease-fire, the whole reporting process via the New York UN Headquarters is extremely cumbersome. In any case, **Hezbollah's obvious presence in Lebanon is a proof that the country has failed to respect the terms of UNSC resolution 1559 demanding the dismantlement of the terrorist organisation within Lebanese jurisdiction.**

VIII. Meetings with NGOs

1. Field-trip around Jerusalem with Ir Amim

During the field visit, which included seeing the controversial settlements of Gilo, Abu Dhis, Har Homma, M. Amos Gil, director of research of [Ir Amim](#), defended the idea of a "*dignified separation between Israel and Palestine*", an idea which enjoys cross-party support in Israel. However, **a final settlement has to recognise that Jerusalem has always been divided.** The current policy of re-drawing the boundaries of a "great Jerusalem", in conjunction with the route the wall follows, aims at maximising territorial gains while minimising Palestinian pressure (fait accompli tactics).



Mr Gil explaining settlement expansion around Jerusalem

The Wall is not only a public relations disaster for Israel, but it also has the perverse effect of bringing back the Arab population which had previously left and

now is afraid to be stranded "outside". This being said, the international community should understand that fear is a very real factor in Israel: during the intifada, 300 casualties were counted in Jerusalem alone.

Yet, even the Israeli Government, in the words of Justice Minister Livni, has stated publicly that the separation fence will serve as "*the future border of the state of Israel*" and that "*the High Court of Justice, in its rulings over the fence, is drawing the country's borders*": a proof that **the route of the wall/ security fence is not a neutral one, and obeys to political priorities at least as much as security ones.**

2. Geneva Initiative

Mr Levy, former advisor to Minister Yossi Beilin, reminded that when the [Geneva Initiative](#) plan was conceived, "*we were at the heart of the intifada, at a time when it seemed there was no hope for peace*". **The Plan, however, arrived at a detailed model agreement of solutions that could apply to issues as complicated as the borders, refugees, or settlements.** A non-binding proposal that triggered public debate, some of its ideas were later put to practice, such as the disengagement.

- *The Disengagement*

The most important lesson learnt is that, "*for the first time, the state of Israel prevailed over the state of the settlers*". Therefore, "*disengagement is something doable*", that can be repeated elsewhere. Mr Levy warned, however, against a "fool's consensus": **further unilateral withdrawals will not help build a strong Palestinian Authority.** The reason, perhaps underestimated, is that the widespread Palestinian perception is that Israel left Gaza because of the intifada, and not thanks to Abu Mazem's diplomatic skills. As a result, in Palestine, those who advocate negotiations rather than conflict have not been strengthened.

- *Israeli politics*

Cynical as this may seem, there is nobody to believe PM Sharon when he says there will be no other disengagements: the Kadima campaign will probably be built upon this "internalisation", in order to attract, precisely, the Israelis who favour pursuit of the disengagement policy while mistrusting the Palestinian's ability to arrive at a negotiated solution.

- *Sponsoring a viable 2 state solution*

It is necessary to preserve the dignity of both sides; **a "Swiss cheese" border pattern in the West Bank cannot be accepted by the Palestinians. The EU, however, has an increased role to play within the Quartet, using the "carrot" of the EU neighbourhood policy, together**

with the EU-Israel association agreement and cultivating linkages with the civil society.

The EP, monitoring how EU funds are spent, could wonder whether the European taxpayer is really keen on (i) paying 2,3 or 4 times for the same Palestinian airport, (ii) having to bear the costs of the closure system applied to the West Bank, which is the real cause of the decline of the Palestinian economy.

3. The International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem ([ICEJ](#))

Taking the floor, Mr Buhler focused on the fact that the EU represents the largest donor financing the Palestinian Authority - almost €500 million per year. Yet, **the European taxpayer's money is still channelled to the PA in ways that contribute to the prevailing culture of corruption whilst failing to address the real causes of Palestinian poverty.**

Minister Dhalan has thus admitted that 4 billion euros "*have gone down the drain*"; Al Jazeera estimated that, at the time of his death, Yassir Arafat's fortune was 6,5 billion USD. Notwithstanding the efforts undertaken by President Abbas, "*the engrained culture of corruption appears to have worsened*".

Mr Buhler furthermore underlined that the Palestinian regime itself supports terrorism - as, for instance, many members of the al-Aqsa Martyr Brigades are being paid regularly by the PA. As the al-Aqsa Brigades are outlawed by the EU as a terrorist organisation, how the EU tolerates funding them, even indirectly, is completely incomprehensible. The EU should focus on a policy of zero tolerance of terror and corruption, and freeze all funding to Syria, Iran and the PA until they ban the Hezbollah and Hamas.

Indeed, it is unacceptable that "*the Hamas will be allowed to participate in EU-funded elections*". Mr Buhler furthermore accused the UNRWA of, effectively, being a "*self-proliferation refugee programme*" that has even been suspected of supporting terrorism. The refugee camps in Gaza should therefore be "*scrapped immediately*", as should UNRWA, to be replaced by a new organisation.

4. Mossawa Center for Human Rights

[Mossawa](#) focuses on the defence of the Israeli Arab minority which represents a sizeable 20% of the population. Mossawa director Jaffar Farah insisted that, on the ground, these Israeli citizens are victims of discriminations that turn them into 2nd class citizens. He substantiated this conclusion by [comparative statistics](#) such as government expenditure on health and education, percentage below the poverty line, infant mortality, etc.

The government does not dispute that discrimination exists, added Mr Farah, but pays usually only a lip-service to the need to take specific measures. These policies are pursued to the point of caricature in the 45 unrecognised Bedouin villages of the Negev Desert, where water and electricity are still lacking. The result is more than worrying: "*57% of the Israelis think that their Arab compatriots should emigrate*".

To promote peace in the region, Arab Israelis should be encouraged to participate in Israel's democracy; Arab members of the Knesset have a role to play, at least for non-

Zionist parties. While there are encouraging signs from Amir Peretz, there is an increasing frustration from the Arab community that *“the labour party is not delivering”*.

Specific issues which should raise concern are the following:

- *New citizenship law*

If an Arab Israeli marries with a Palestinian of the West Bank, his/her partner cannot emigrate to live with him in Israel. 20,000 families are already suffering from such prohibitions.

- *EU-Israel scientific cooperation programmes*

These involve 409 researchers from Israel. Out of them, there is not a single Arab Israeli academic/researcher. This should be followed and tackled by the EP

5. B'Tselem ("in the image of")

On behalf of the main Human Rights organisation of Israel, Ms Jessica Montell explained that [B'Tselem](#) monitors the situation on West Bank and the Gaza strip. It would be a mistake to think that the occupation is finished in Gaza, as Israel still controls the sea border and most of the land border. She did remind that it was PM Sharon's chief political advisor Dov Weissglass who described disengagement as *“putting the peace process in formaldehyde”*.

- *The separation barrier*

80% is inside the West Bank. The route the barrier follows effectively cuts the West Bank in 3 separate parts, and *“this has nothing to do with security. It is all about settlements and securing the expansion of future ones”*, i.e. the manipulation of a real security concern. She did lament that most Israelis do not *want* to know the facts, as an immense majority supports the barrier but only 20% acknowledge that they know its route.

- *Demolition of houses*

This **form of collective punishment**, used indiscriminately by the IDF, constitutes a *“blatant violation of humanitarian law”* and of the Geneva conventions. 17.000 Palestinians have become homeless as a result. There have been no demolitions since February 2005, when a Governmental Committee concluded that there was:

- no evidence that the measure was effective
- clear evidence that it increased Palestinian hostility
- clear evidence that the measure harms Israel's international reputation

Ms Montell expressed the hope that "administrative detention", without pressing charges and without being granted the right to appear before court will, likewise, be re-assessed.

6. The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP)

Dr Arnon Groiss explained that the [CMIP](#) examines the content of school textbooks used in the Middle East to determine whether children are being taught to accept and recognize the right of the “other” to exist. In June 2005, the CMIP presented its most recent report on the new Palestinian National Authority textbooks for all grades, examining how they conceive the idea of peace and how they look at the other. The main findings were that:

- **the opponent is not recognised as legitimate**
- **a heavy tendency to use stereotypes**
- **there is no seeking peace through reconciliation**

Specifically on Jews/Israelis, it is true there are not many derogatory terms to be used. However,

- Israel is seen as a source of harm and the illegitimate occupier of all Palestine.
- the textbooks never explain what parts of Palestine should be liberated,
- Jewish holy places, if mentioned at all, are described as exclusively Muslim
- Jerusalem is presented as exclusively Arab
- there is no reference whatsoever to Jewish history, culture, civilisation, or any broad historic ties to the land
- Jews, in general, "have no right to be here". Israel is only mentioned twice - as a signatory of the Oslo agreement.

Furthermore, the idea of violent struggle for liberation, enhanced by the traditional concept of Jihad/martyrdom, is generally promoted. It can, thus, be argued that the **textbooks implicitly support terrorist activities, and never reject them.** One of the textbooks even quotes, from the well known tsarist forgery "The protocols of the elders of Zion", that "*the aim of the Jews is world dominance*".

Dr Groiss concluded that these "*not encouraging conclusions*" have, since, been shared with some of the EU Member States that funded such textbooks, such as Finland, the Netherlands, or Belgium. In some cases, funding has been suspended and the books are being withdrawn. **The lesson for the future is not to release funding to any publication which have not been submitted and reviewed by the EU beforehand.**

7. *Yesh Gvul* ("There is a limit!")

[Yesh Gvul](#), which arose in response to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, campaigns against the occupation by backing soldiers who refuse to serve in the occupied territories. The Israeli military code itself obliges soldiers to take responsibility for their acts and to refuse executing an illegal order.

"*Refusniks are not pacifists*", otherwise there wouldn't be a high percentage of them being officers, elite forces members, or even air force pilots. 28 of the latter group condemned the "targeted assassinations" they were called to carry out as "immoral and illegal", and have publicly proclaimed their refusal to carry out such sorties, an initiative which had an enormous political impact.

The IDF, when it acts as an army of occupation, betrays its very name: occupation, in itself, is "*an act of state terror*" as "*Israel is not to be defended at the gates of Beirut*". Which explains why, in democratic Israel, there is such a strong movement against the occupation. In a country

of less than 7 million, 4000 soldiers have refused to serve beyond the '67 borders and 1000 of them are serving or have served prison sentences – sometimes repeatedly.

8. Machsom Watch - women for human rights

[Machsom Watch](#) was founded in January 2001 in response to repeated reports about human rights abuses of Palestinians at Israeli checkpoints. Every day, except on Yom Kippur, Machsom Watch members monitor the situation at the checkpoints in the West Bank: for it is there that Israel, by restricting the freedom of movement, “*starts ruining the Palestinian society*”.

A non-violent organisation, Machsom Watch is open exclusively to women, but denies being feminist: old and young ladies are also mothers, or grandmothers, of soldiers and have thus developed a special relationship with the army: “*we know whom to scream at*”. Which is why “*IDF officers do read our booklets*” – even if they don’t necessarily reply.

The goals of the group are to monitor the behaviour of soldiers, to ensure that the human rights of Palestinians attempting to enter Israel are protected, and to report back. It can thus be said that, today, there is much less physical violence than before, but verbal and behavioural violence has increased. **The worst situation is in Hebron**, where the presence of a 500 especially violent settlers has resulted in the city being divided in areas H1 and H2, something which makes impossible the daily life of 65,000 Arabs.

In general, the Israeli society has failed to realise the hardship that checkpoints put on the Palestinians. “Security” seems to be a magic word which can justify everything. Each day, thousands of Palestinians have to wait for hours to be “checked”. In 2004, 53 babies were actually born at checkpoints; some of the newborns died there, due to lack of medical support. Likewise, the magnetic card system Israel has devised for the Arab population illustrates the terrible inhumanity of an administrative bureaucracy: 180,000 people (out of a total 3 million) are barred entry at any time.

IX. Presentation of the EU Border Assistance Mission operations

General Pistolese, Head of the [EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah](#), explained that it will be in the European power to stop the operations and close the border if checks are not done in the proper way. European standards for border identification exist already: Schengen standards. A permanent compound inside Gaza will be established for the 72-strong EU mission, so that that European presence among the Palestinian population is seen. Furthermore, all 25 Members states are welcome to contribute in personnel or equipment. In the strict sense, however, the Rafah Border Assistance Mission has nothing to do with the discussions on establishing a West Bank - Gaza link.

X. Meeting with President Moshe Katsav

Welcoming the EU presence in Rafah, the [President of Israel](#) insisted that this is the proof that **the relation between Israel and the EU is developing positively and that "the time of suspicion and hesitation seems to be over"**.

In Palestine, as well, there is room for hope as "*for the 1st time, we have a serious and honest partner whom we can trust – Abu Mazem*". There has also been a decline in terrorist activities although **it remains to be seen how President Abbas will implement his slogan of “one authority, one law, one leadership”**.

Therefore, one should not be over-optimistic: Hamas / Islamic Jihad have recently been strengthened. After the disengagement, terrorists and weapons are circulating freely in the Gaza strip, while Hamas has no intention to be dismantled. If Hamas agreed not to dismantle but at least to disarm, then its participation at the PLC elections could be envisaged. Mr Katsav expressed the wish that the EU's election observation mission will be effective, although he made it clear that he felt unsure about whether President Abbas would be strengthened by their outcome – "*and I can't see anyone that could replace him*".

While he declared his support to the EU for its role in helping the Palestinian society, he also warned Europe not to be naive: "*it is an illusion to believe that Hamas, which already controls all the mosques in Gaza and a majority in the West Bank, may renounce its aims as a result of financial aid*". What Mr Katsav proposes to the EU is to add a conditionality clause to its aid: that the EU will completely cut links with the PA if terror continues and Hamas refuses to disarm - explaining that this will make the Hamas think twice, and also reinforce politically President Abbas.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

30th EP/Israel Interparliamentary Meeting

23 - 28 November 2005
JERUSALEM

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Wednesday 23 November

Individual arrival and own arrangements for transport to

*KING DAVID Hotel, 23 King David Street
94101 JERUSALEM*

- | | | |
|-------|--|----------------------|
| 13.30 | Chair : Meeting with Mr Alan Seatter, EC | The King David Hotel |
| 15h00 | Interparliamentary Meetings at the Knesset:
○ Panel on Terror and Human Rights
○ Panel on Environmental Issues as a Bridge between nations | |
| 19.00 | Dinner hosted by the Knesset | The Knesset |

Thursday 24 November

- | | | |
|-------|--|-----------------------------|
| 10.15 | Tour of the Supreme Court | |
| 10.45 | Meeting with Mr Aharon Barak, President of the Supreme Court, | |
| 11.30 | Meeting with Messrs Benny Barak and Zeevi Brocker,
The Center for Political Research, | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| 12:30 | Meeting with Mr. Alon Bar, Director for Disarmament,
Division for Strategic Affairs, | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| 13.45 | Lunch with Messrs Yossi Gal, Deputy Director General for Economic Affairs,
Ran Curiel, Deputy Director General for Western Europe | Restaurant the Taverna |
| 15:45 | Meeting with General Pietro Pistolese, Head of the EU Border Assistance Mission in
Rafah | |
| 16.00 | Meeting with Ms Avital Shapira- Shabirow, International Relations advisor of | |

- 17.15 Seminar on EU-Israel Action Plan at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan in cooperation with IASEI (Israeli Association for the Study of European Integration)
- 20.45 Dinner hosted by Ms. Hybášková, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with Israel
King David Hotel

Friday, 25 November

- 9.00-10.00 Working Breakfast with Mr Ran Etsion, Deputy Head of National Security Council
King David Hotel
- 11.00-11.45 Meeting with Vice Prime-Minister Shimon Peres
Tel Aviv
- PM : Visit to the North / Border with Lebanon - Military briefing

Saturday, 26 November

- 08.30 Ir Amim: Visit to the fence
- 10.30 Visit of Jerusalem by Mr Daniel Rossing, Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations
- 14.30 Meetings with NGOs: King David Hotel
Geneva Initiative (Daniel Levy)
- 15.00 Mossawa Centre, (Jafar Farah) followed by
- 15.40 B'tSelem, (Jessica Montell) followed by
- 16.30 Mahsom Watch,
- 17.30 Yesh Gvul

Sunday, 27 November

- 08.30 Meeting with Mr Jacob Rosen, Political Advisor to the Mayor of Jerusalem
- 10.00 Visit to the Yad Vashem memorial and Wreath laying ceremony
- 12.00 Press Conference
- 13.45 Lunch with Representatives of the Jewish Agency
Holiday Inn
- 17.30 Meeting with the President of the State of Israel, Mr Moshe Katsav

Monday, 28 November

Departure of the EP Delegation

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Participants

OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION

<u>Members</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Committees</u>
Ms Jana HYBÁŠKOVÁ, <i>Chair</i>	PPE-DE	Czech Republic	Foreign Affairs
Mr Bastiaan BELDER <i>1st Vice-Chair</i>	IND/DEM	Netherlands	Foreign Affairs
Ms Monika BEŇOVÁ <i>2nd Vice-Chair</i>	PSE	Slovakia	Foreign Affairs
Mr Alejandro CERCAS	PSE	Spain	Culture and Education
Mr Marek CZARNECKI	NI	Poland	Legal Affairs
Mr David HAMMERSTEIN MINTZ	Verts/ALE	Spain	Petitions Industry, Research and Energy
Ms Cristina GUTIÉRREZ-CORTINES	PPE-DE	Spain	Budgetary Control Industry, Research and Energy
Ms Edith MASTENBROEK	PSE	Netherlands	Budgetary Control Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
Mr Marek Maciej SIWIEC	PSE	Poland	Foreign Affairs
Mr Peter ŠŤASTNÝ	PPE-DE	Slovakia	International Trade, Vice-Chair
Mr Hannu TAKKULA	ALDE	Finland	Culture and Education
Mr Zbigniew ZALESKI	PPE-DE	Poland	Development

Abbreviations:

PPE-DE	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats
PSE	Group of the Party of European Socialists
ALDE	Group of the Alliance of Democrats and Liberals of Europe
Verts/ALE	<u>Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance</u>
IND/DEM	Independence and Democracy Group
NI	Non attached members

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