



Delegation for relations with Israel

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MINUTES

of the meeting of 20 March 2013, from 15.00 to 16.30
Brussels

The meeting opened at 15.00 on Wednesday, 20 March 2013, with the Chair, Bastiaan Belder, in the chair.

The Chair welcomed the two speakers for that day, Irit Ben-Abba and Daniel Schwammenthal.

1. Adoption of draft agenda (PE 505.082)
The draft agenda was adopted.
2. Chair's announcements
The Chair made the following announcements:
 - He recalled to mind the very moving speech made by the Israeli President Shimon in plenary in Strasbourg on 13 March 2013.
 - He touched on the formation of the 33rd Israeli Government, with 22 ministers. He said that the former Minister for the Diaspora, Yuli Edelstein, who was well known to the delegation, would probably be elected as the Knesset's new Speaker.
 - President Obama had begun his visit to the Palestinian territories and Israel.
3. Exchange of views on economic issues (relations with the Palestinian Authority, Israel's economy) with Ms Irit Ben-Abba, Deputy Director General for Economic Affairs, Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry

Irit Ben-Abba, Deputy DG for Economic Affairs at the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry mentioned the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for Palestinian Affairs held on 19 March 2013 in Brussels. This donors conference had been presided over by Norway, with the EU's High Representative Ms Cathy Ashton and the Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in attendance. For the Israeli authorities, this had been an occasion to demonstrate that they were meeting their obligations towards the Palestinians under the Paris Protocol (1993)

and the Oslo Accords (1995).

On the controversial question of Israel's repayment of taxes owed to the Palestinian Authority, Ms Ben-Abba said that the situation was perfectly clear, in agreement with the Palestinians: Israel paid the amount owed, less Palestine's debts: electricity and water supplies and hospital expenditure. It was possible for the debts to total almost the same as the amount to be repaid. The Palestinians challenged this system of withholding at source, but did not dispute the amounts.

A COGAT officer gave details of the efforts made by the Israeli authorities to supply water and electricity in spite of the military clashes (in Gaza).

While procedures were still complex, the main problem holding back development was still lack of finance.

When making comparisons, the Palestinians came off very poorly both in regard to average water consumption (difference of 1 to 4) and to means chosen: Israel had developed its aquifer network, increased wastewater retreatment and established desalination techniques. On the Palestinian side, the lack of an aquifer network and the very poor quality of the water in general had placed desalination under a heavy financial and technical burden which international aid had not been yet able to overcome.

Ms Ben-Abba felt that the Palestinian strategy did not match the reality: too much water for agriculture which did not yield much, to the detriment of the population. No investment in other techniques despite a virtual freeze on the price charged to Palestinians which was still well below what Israelis paid.

The supply of electricity had not been settled by the Oslo Accords and there was still no trade agreement.

In Gaza, generation of electricity was an ongoing subject for discussion. The supply from the main generator could be stopped due to payment not being made.

An addition quota came from Egypt. Furthermore, new needs had sprung up, particularly for running the desalination plant.

In answer to a question on Palestinian resources, Ms Ben-Abba said it was deplorable that the Palestinians (and their donors) had not embarked on a strategy to set up the infrastructure needed to develop a genuine economy.

Regarding products from the settlements, she regretted the EU's stance of identifying these products in order to subject them to customs duties. She said Palestinian labour being employed by various Israeli businesses was important. She considered the labelling requirements to be a de facto boycott.

4. Exchange of views on the situation in Iran: 'The containment trap' by Daniel Schwammenthal, Director, Transatlantic Institute/AJC Brussels

Speaking on the Iranian nuclear threat (a subject of constant and prime concern), Daniel Schwammenthal (Transatlantic Institute, Brussels) gave a report with very mixed findings.

With the 'More for less' strategy adopted by the IAEA and the negotiating group, the technical installations techniques have not been closed down, the number of centrifuges was growing and Iran was winning time.

More centrifuges, a growing stock of enriched uranium, all this was bringing Iran closer to the virtual status of a nuclear-weapon State.

Strategies on the nature and imminence of the threat clashed.

The Israelis wanted to make the West aware of this threat and they always left open the possibility that they might take direct action.

Where and when should the 'red line' that must not be crossed be drawn? The lack of an firm answer to this question could lead to alarming scenarios of economic disorder (oil prices, etc.).

The Chair thanked the two speakers.

5. Date and place of next meeting
24 April 2013

The meeting closed at 16.30.

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

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Bastiaan Belder.	
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Μέλη/Members/Députés/Deputati/Deputāti/Nariai/Képviselők/ Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter	
Diane Dodds, Sari Essayah, Hynek Fajmon, Frédérique Ries, Hannu Takkula, Niki Tzavela.	
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Supplenti/ Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantys nariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleantî/Náhradníci/Namestniki/ Varajäsenet/Suppleanter	
Auke Zijlstra.	

187 (2)	
193 (3)	
49 (6) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/Päevakorra punkt/Ημερήσια Διάταξη Σημείο/Agenda item/Point OJ/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkés punktas/ Napirendi pont/Punt fuq l-aġenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/ Točka UL/Esityslista kohta/Föredragningslista punkt)	
Irit Ben-Abba, Israeli Ministry Foreign Affairs	Pt 3
Daniel Schwammenthal, Transatlantic Institute, AJC	Pt 4

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

<p>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 tal-President/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/La invitația președintelui/Na pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan</p>

<p>Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nõukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)</p>
<p>Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Kommissionen/Kommission/Euroopa Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Commissione/Komisija/Bizottság/Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisia/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)</p>
<p>Европейска служба за външна дейност/Европскá služba pro vnější činnost/EU-Udenrigstjenesten/Europäischer Auswärtiger Dienst/Euroopa välisteenistus/Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Εξωτερικής Δράσης/European External Action service/Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior/Service européen pour l'action extérieure/Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna/Eiropas Ārējās darbības dienests/Europos išorės veiksmų tarnyba/Európai Külügyi Szolgálat/Servizz Ewropew għall-Azzjoni Esterna/Europese dienst voor extern optreden/Europejska Służba Działań Zewnętrznych/Serviço Europeu para a Acção Externa/Serviciul european pentru actiune externă/Európska služba pre vonkajšiu činnost/Evropska služba za zunanje delovanje/Euroopan ulkosuhdehallinto/Europeiska avdelningen för yttre åtgärd (*)</p>
<p>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 toimeilimet/Andra institutioner/organ</p>

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/Alti partecipanti/Iní účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare

Yael Ravia-Zadok (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Adi Ashkenazi (Israeli Ministry of Regional Cooperation), David Saranga (Israeli Mission to the EU), Eddy Sanfilipo (AJC TAI), Joshua Goodman (TAI), Katerina Hrudnikova (EJU), Yossi Lempkowicz (Promoting Tolerance Ltd & European Jewish Press), Raquel Lages (European Friends of Israel).

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PPE

Jorge Soutullo

S&D

Jörgen Siil

ALDE

Isabelle de Crayencour

ECR

Sarka Syrova

Verts/ALE

GUE/NGL

EFD

NI

Кабинет на председателя/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidendi kantselei/Γραφείο Προέδρου/President's Office/Cabinet du Président/Gabinetto del Presidente/Priekšsēdētāja kabinets/Pirmininko kabinetas/Elnöki hivatal/Kabinett tal-President/Kabinet van de Voorzitter/Gabinet Przewodniczącego/Gabinete do Presidente/Cabinet Preşedinte/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli

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Christian Garrigues.	
Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asystent/Pomočnik/ Avustaja/Assistenten	
Barbara Ajmi.	

- * (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Fornand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chair(wo)man/Président/Priekšsēdētājs/Pirmininkas/
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