

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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## DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH INDIA

D-IN PV 2/09

### DRAFT MINUTES

of the meeting of 5 March 2009  
from 11h30 to 12h30

BRUSSELS

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Brussels, 5 March 2009  
XN/nal

1. Adoption of draft agenda

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Adoption of the draft minutes of the meeting of 4 February 2009

The draft minutes of the meeting of 4 February 2009 were adopted.

3. Chair's announcements

In her opening comments Chair Neena Gill informed the Members that the Election Commission of India has announced that elections to elect a new Lok Sabha will take place in five phases from 16 April to 13 May 2009. This makes it impossible for the EP to organize a visit to India before the next legislature. She also announced that the report prepared by Sajjid KARIM on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement, that was discussed during the last meeting of the Delegation, was voted at the Committee of International Trade with several amendments and will now go to the plenary.

The Chair made a reference to the fifth round of the EU-India Human Rights Dialogue which took place in Delhi on 27<sup>th</sup> February, and invited the Commission to provide a brief summary of the proceedings.

Mr. Jean-Christian Rémond, representing the European Commission, explained that the Dialogue had taken place with the appropriate level of participation and in a positive working environment. While views on some issues remain divergent, the dialogue nevertheless facilitated understanding. Multilateral issues covered included measures to improve coordination in the work of the UN-HRC, and the implementation of various international conventions, in particular the Convention against Torture, and the second optional Protocol to the ICCPR aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

Bilateral issues included the HR balance when dealing with proceedings on terrorism, minorities – particularly the Christian minorities in Orissa -, gender equality, child labour, HR defenders, racism and xenophobia, and EU-financed NGO activities in India.

4. Exchange of views with H. Exc. Dr. J. BHAGWATI, Ambassador of India to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union:

The main topic of the meeting was an exchange of views (the first one since his appointment in September 2008) between India's new Ambassador to the EU, Dr J. Bhagwati, and the Delegation .

The Chair expressed her deep appreciation at the presence of the Ambassador. She briefly introduced him and highlighted some of the issues that were of interest to the EP.

The Ambassador opened with a review of the scope of EU-India relations, explaining how at political level these manifested themselves through Summits and Ministerial meetings, and how fora such as ASEM and SAARC also provided platforms for interaction. Trade and economic relations are flourishing, as are those in science and technology and in a wide range of other technical areas. Energy and Climate Change are areas of common interest needing close coordination, and EU development cooperation is assisting India in its fight against poverty.

On the economic front the Ambassador said that India has perhaps been less hard hit than many other economies. GDP growth rates, while falling from a 2008 high of around 7.8% to some 5.3% in the last quarter, are still respectable. While further falls were likely, India's growth is essentially domestic-driven and less dependent on trade with other countries suffering from the slow-down. Fiscal and monetary policies were both being tweaked to stimulate growth – the latter by a recent interest cut from the Central Bank. But base rate still remains at around 5%.

Domestic politics were the issue of the moment, with elections to be held during the period from mid-April to mid-May. With around 714 million registered voters (of whom up to 60% could be expected to vote) this would be a massive logistical exercise. India was proud of the stability of its coalition government since the last elections to the lower house in 2004. This stability had in particular been demonstrated when the government survived the non-confidence vote in July 2008 over its position on the US nuclear deal. On this latter issue India looked forward to working with the EU on civil nuclear power. While the Ambassador was well aware of the differing views on this of various EU Member States he nevertheless considered that nuclear power would inevitably in the future form a significant part of India's energy mix.

On regional relations, Dr Bhagwati said that his Government is very much concerned about the situation in Sri Lanka and particularly about civilian casualties. He reminded MEPs that the LTTE is proscribed in India. On terrorism he considered it important that the Indian perspective be understood. The Mumbai incident was not an isolated one: it followed the 2008 attack on its embassy in Kabul, the 2001 attack on its Parliament, and several others.

The presentation was followed by a series of questions. Mr. CASACA expressed the opinion that India should be more present in the world global governance. Mr. TANNOCK spoke on Kashmir, on Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. He also referred to the one-lack car as a great economic achievement. Mrs. DE VITS asked about the impact of the global financial crisis and the measures taken by India to mitigate its effects. She also spoke about the need to develop more water supply projects. Mr. MENENDEZ DEL VALLE raised the issues of the death penalty and of the reform of the UN. He concluded by a question on the debate around the award-winning movie "Slumdog Millionaire" .

Replying to those questions from Members, the Ambassador was non-committal over the possible activities of Islamic extremists in Bangladesh. On the other hand he re-confirmed his conviction that the Taliban "ruled the roost" in certain parts of Pakistan, and considered this unacceptable. The EU should be deeply concerned, and further cooperation was needed. He welcomed the exchange that would take place in the Working Group on Counter-Terrorism in (in principle) June. Meanwhile India continues to interact with Pakistan, though business-as-usual would not be possible unless the Pakistani authorities started dismantling the terrorist infrastructure on their soil and ensured that those responsible for the Mumbai attacks were taken to court;

The Ambassador said that a single global financial regulatory system would not be an appropriate mechanism for avoiding future financial crises such as the present one, though close coordination was needed. India will play its role in this respect – notably at the forthcoming G20 meeting in London in April. He believed firmly in the need for reinforced multilateralism, as propounded in the EU-India Joint Action Plan, and in the need for reform in international institutions such as the UNSC, the World Bank and the IMF, in order that changing world realities be better reflected.

As regard the death penalty Ambassador Bhagwati informed the Members that while it was still on the books in India, it was subject to many controls and appeal processes, and had not been applied for many years. Finally he was aware of some of the controversy surrounding the “Slumdog Millionaire” film, but considered that it was “only a film” and that some artistic license was permitted.

5. Any other business

There was no other business.

6. Date and place of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Delegation will be announced later.

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The meeting closed at 13h00.

**DELTAGERLISTE/ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KATAΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/LIITE RECORD  
OF ATTENDANCE/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/LISTE DE PRESENCE/ELENCO DEI  
PRESENTI/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA DE PRESENCAS/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/DELTAGARLISTA**

Til stede	Formandskabet/Vorstand/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Ufficio di Presidenza/Mesa/Puhemieshistö/J.L. Presidium: (*) GILL (P)
Anwesend	Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Μέλη/Members/Diputados/Deputés/Deputati/Leden/Deputados/Jäsenet/Ledamöter: busPhilip Bushill-Matthews (excused) Mia De Vits; Harald Ettl (excused); Charles Tannock
Παρόντες	Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/?ναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suplentes/Suppléants/ Membri supplenti/Plaatsvervangers/Membros suplentes/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter: Paulo Casaca; Emilio Menéndez del Valle
Present	
Presentes	
Présents	
Presenti	
Aanwezig	
Lasna	
Närvarande	
Art. 178,2	
Art. 183,3	
Endv. Deltog/Weitere Teiln./ Συμμετείχαν επίσης/Also present Participaron igualmente/ Participaient également/ Hanno partecipato altresì/ Andere deelnemers/ Outros participantes/ Muut osallistujat/ Dessutom deltog	
(Dagsorden/Tagesordnung Pkt/Ημερήσια Διάταξη Σημεί/Point OJ/Punto OG/Agenda Punt/Ordem do dia Punto/punto orden del dia/Esityslist Kohta/ Föredragningslista punkt):	

- \* (P) = Formand/Vorsitzender/Πρόεδρος/Chairman/President/Presidente/Voorzitter/Presidente/Puhemies/Ordförande  
(VP) = Næstform./Stellv. Vorsitz./?ντιπρόεδρος/Vice-Chairman/Vice-President/Vicepresidente/Varapuhemies/Ondervoorz./  
Vice-Pres./Vicepres/Vice ordförande.

Til stede den/Anwesend am/Παρών στις/Present on/Present le/Presente il/Aanwezig op/Presente em/Presenteel/Läsna/Närvarande den.

<p>Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung d. Vorsitzenden/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chairman/Por invitacion del presidente/Sur l'invitation du président/Su invito del presidente/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/A convite do presidente/Puhemiehen kutsusta/ På ordförandens inbjudan: S.E. M. BHAGWATI, Ambassador of India to the EU</p> <p>Rådet/Rat/Συμβούλιο/Council/Consejo/Conseil/Consiglio/Raad/Conselho/Neuvosto/Rådet: (*)</p> <p>Kommissionen/Kommission/Επιτροπή/Commission/Comision/Commissione/Commissie/Comissão/Komissio/Kommissionen: (*) REMOND; WILKINSON, PIAZZA; KENTRSCHYNSKY; GENOVESE; TASCI, CHAIBI; CMANANA (EC DELEGATION IN INDIA) Cour des comptes: C.E.S.:</p>		
<p>Andre deltagere/Andere Teilnehmer Επίσης Παρόντες/Also present Otros participantes/Autres participants/Altri partecipanti Andere aanwezigen/Outros participantes Muut osallistajat/Övriga deltagare</p>		<p>Embassad'Inde: GHOSH; LOKESH MADI (EESC)</p>
<p>Gruppernes sekretariat Sekretariat der Fraktionen Γραμματεία των Πολ. Ομάδων Secretariat political groups Secr. De los grupos políticos Secr. Groupes politiques Segr. Dei gruppi politici Secr. Van de fracties Secr. Dos grupos politicos Puolueryhmien sihteeristö Gruppernas sekretariat</p>	<p>PPE-DE PSE ALDE Verts/ALE GUE/NGL IND/DEM UEN NI ITS</p>	<p>CARTER; YAHUNG DE CESARE, BATAILLE, EBERLEN COHEN; ALCAE MEYER</p>
<p>Cab. Du Président</p>		
<p>Cab. Du Secrétaire Général</p>		
<p>Generaldirektorat Generaldirektion Γενική Διεύθυνση Directorate-General Dirección general Direction générale Direzione generale Directoraat-generaal Direcção general Contrôle financier Service juridique Pääosasto Generaldirektorat</p>	<p>I II III IV V VI VII</p>	<p>SUBHAN; OPACIC</p>
<p>Udvalgssekretariatet Ausschubsekretariat Γραμματεία επιτροπής Committee secretariat Secretaria de la comisión Secrétariat de la commission Segretariato della commissione Commissiesecretariaat Secretaria de comissão Valiokunnan sihteeristö Utskottssekretariatet</p>		<p>NUTTIN</p>
<p>Assist./Βοηθός</p>		<p>AZPIRI LEJARDI; VERGNES</p>

\* (P) = Formand/Pres./Πρόεδρος/Chairman/President/Voorzitter/Puhemies/Ordförande

(VP) = Næstform./Vize-Pres./ντιπρόεδρος/Vice-Chairman/Vice-President/Ondervoorz./Vice-pres/Varapuhemies/Vice ordförande.

(M) = Medlem./Mitglied/Μέλος/Member/Miembro/Membre/Membro/Lid/Membro/Jasen/Ledamot

(F) = Tjenestemand/Beamter/Υπάλληλος/Official/Funcionario/Fonctionnaire/Funzionario/Ambtenaar/Functionario/Virkamies/Tjänsteman