



D-IR\_PV(2010)1026

## **MINUTES**

of the meeting of Tuesday, 26 October 2010, from 11:30 to 13:30  
BRUSSELS

The meeting opened at 11:35 on Tuesday, 26 October, with Ms Barbara Lochbihler in the chair.

### **1. Adoption of the draft agenda**

The agenda was adopted without amendment. Ms van Brempt noted that it was difficult to attend the meeting as it conflicted with the meetings of many committees. It was explained that there was a limited number of slots for delegation meetings and that these inevitably clashed with committee meetings.

### **2. Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 16 September**

The minutes were adopted without amendment.

### **3. Chair's announcements**

Ms Lochbihler reminded members that the Conference of Presidents had placed specific conditions on the travel of the delegation for relations with Iran, notably the requirement for the death sentence on Ms Ashtiani to be lifted. Ms Lochbihler had written to President Buzek and the Chair of Delegation chairs, contending that the Iran delegation had been singled out for unequal treatment compared to other delegations. There had been no answer to this letter to date. She had also raised this issue in the meeting of the Conference of Delegation Chairs.

The EU Foreign Ministers had met on the previous day to discuss more restrictive measures that would be placed on Iran in addition to the United Nations sanctions. She gave details of these measures.

The Foreign Relations Committee on 5 October had held the first exchange of views on the

Iran report. She noted that there would be a substantial number of amendments and that the next discussion would take place later in the year.

On 14 October 2010 Ms Ashtiani's former lawyer, Mr Mostafaei, had addressed the Human Rights Sub-Committee. He had outlined developments in the case and had also given details of the Iranian penal system.

Ms Lochbihler had met with Mr Hassan Tajik, the Head of the European Department of the Iran Foreign Ministry. He was critical of the European Parliament's resolutions on Iran and the likely content of the forthcoming resolution but had stressed that his government remained open to dialogue, including a dialogue on the human rights issue.

On 19 October Delegation Chairs had held a working dinner with President Buzek and Baroness Ashton. Mrs Lochbihler had asked about future EU policy towards Iran and had referred to the "three pillar" approach of the European Parliament, which covered the internal situation including human rights; the nuclear dossier; and the role of Iran in the region. Baroness Ashton had agreed in principle with this approach but had stressed that the nuclear issue was the dominant concern and that it was important to concentrate on the talks in Vienna in early November. It was not clear that the External Action Service would have a broad view on Iran's policy.

Members of the Carnegie Foundation and other foundations were interested in how to remove Iran from its position of isolation as it would not improve the internal situation. Finally, Ms Lochbihler announced that Euronews in Farsi would be launched on the following day.

### *Jointly with the Committee on Foreign Affairs*

#### **4. Discussion on "The current situation of non-Persian ethnic groups in Iran - What prospects for a solution?", with speakers from the Congress of Nationalities for a Federal Iran: Mr. Miro Aliyar, Ms Sedigheh Adalati and Mr Nasser Boladai**

Ms Lochbihler noted that the meeting was being covered on web-stream. She informed members that the Iranian Ambassador had sent a letter of protest to her, claiming that inviting the current speakers to the meeting would serve to encourage separatist tendencies in Iran. Ms Lochbihler disagreed with this assertion and underlined that those invited to speak were in favour of a federal Iran in which the rights of all groups were respected.

The Congress included 16 political parties and supported a system for a federal Iran. She introduced the speakers. Mr Boladi represented the Baluchi people, Ms Adalatiani represented the Azeri people and Mr Aliyar represented the Kurdish people.

Mr Boladi stressed that his party wanted there to be a separation of power in Iran, a system of government that was common in any democratic country. It supported a secular state with no gender, religious, linguistic or ethnic discrimination. He argued that the Iranian government discriminated against ethnic minorities and noted that this issue had been raised by the United Nations. The theocratic nature of the government meant that the important posts were reserved for the Shia population. The death penalty was most widely used against ethnic minorities.

Ms Adalatiani noted that Iran's government was based on theocratic principles and "divine law" as the unique source of legitimacy, as well as the belief that the spiritual leader was the

interpreter of divine law in advance of the re-emergence of the 12th Imam. The spiritual leader was appointed for an undetermined period and had wide ranging powers. Non-Shia Iranians, who mainly came from the ethnic minorities, were marginalised in the constitution and were unable to practice their religious ceremonies freely. The only recognised religious groups were Muslims, Jews and Christians. There were serious limitations on the freedoms of the latter two groups with - in particular - severe penalties for conversion. The Baha'is were not permitted to worship. Only Shia Muslims were able to hold high posts in the government.

She argued that there had been a policy of assimilation throughout the last century and marginalisation of the non-Persian nationalities, with serious restrictions on non-Farsi mother tongue education. All official correspondence and texts were in Farsi with restrictions on publications in other languages. There was a high rate of illiteracy among non-Persian nationalities as children from ethnic minorities struggled to obtain an education. Only 10% of those with doctorate level education came from ethnic minorities.

The problems of ethnic minorities were most apparent among women who suffered from a "sexual apartheid" as second class citizens. There was no equality before the law between the sexes and women faced particular discrimination regarding marital and divorce law. The age of criminality was nine years for females and fifteen for males. Women could not hold senior government positions such as President. Stoning was the penalty for adultery. Women were subordinate to men in the family. Non-Persian women also suffered particularly from discrimination and were the most disadvantaged group in Iranian society. Finally she noted that Mrs Ashtiani, who is an ethnic Azeri, had not been able to understand the court proceedings that had taken place in Farsi and had also not understood the "confession" that she had signed.

Mr Aliyar noted that seven organisations had set up the Congress of Nationalities as an umbrella organisation and there were now 17 member organisations. It was important to make the world aware of what was really happening in Iran as there was a lot of ignorance about the situation of the non-Persian groups. Two thirds of the population in Iran came from non-Persian groups. The Iranian Minister for Education had stated that 70% of first year pupils in the country did not have Farsi as their mother tongue but the ethnic groups did not have proper recognition. The Congress called for a democratic, federal and secular Iran, which would ensure its territorial integrity and equal rights for all citizens. There was cooperation with the democratic Persian parties. The Congress condemned all terrorism, including state terrorism. It agreed with the use of nuclear energy for civilian purposes but did not want the Tehran government to have a nuclear bomb and supported international attempts to prevent this. The Congress called for a weapon-free Middle East. The EU policy on Iran had ignored the real situation in the country.

Ms Lochbihler referred to an Amnesty International report of 2006 which had stated that the lands and possessions of ethnic minorities had been confiscated and she asked whether this was still the case. She asked too about reports that political organisations representing ethnic minorities were working closely with countries outside Iran.

Mr Ehrenhauser asked whether there remained any possibilities for action within the political system in Iran.

Mrs van Brempt asked what a "federal Iran" really meant in terms of solutions for the situation of ethnic minorities.

Mr Gahler asked about contacts between the ethnic minorities and the ethnic Persian opposition to the government. He noted that in the past the Persian population had not displayed much sympathy for the ethnic minorities and wondered whether the recent

repression had led to a rapprochement between the two sides.

Mr Boladi stated that land confiscation had been taking place since the Pahlavi era and in Baluchistan this had led to clashes between Baluchis and non-Baluchis. Land sales had not been advertised in the Baluchi language, thus excluding the native population from purchasing the land. There had been inward migration of non-Baluchi peoples that had changed the demographic composition of the region. His organisation had been accused during the Pahlavi era of working for the Soviet Union and it was now accused of working for Israel and the USA. It had also been recently accused of being the "stooge of Berlusconi" following a conference of opposition groups in Italy

Mr Boladi's organisation wanted contact with all sides. The Congress had sought to have a conference in Iran in April 2009 to examine the nationalities issue in April 2009. It was clear that something would happen in Iran - although it was not apparent when - and it was essential to have an effective opposition. The Green movement had referred originally to the rights of minority groups; however in the later phases of their protests they had tended to neglect the issue. The Persian-based opposition was now realising that it needed the support of the ethnic minority groups and there was increasing recognition among ethnic Persians that Iran was a country of many nationalities. It was essential to work together to bring about change in Iran and the recent conference in Italy had been a great success in bringing together the range of opposition groups.

Ms Lochihler referred to the map of ethnic minorities that was in the dossier.

Ms Adalati noted that land confiscation had been part of the Shah's assimilation policy and that it continued under the current regime.

Mr Aliyar noted that there had been confiscation of the property of the Baha'i and the Kurdish activists and there was probably also confiscation of the property of other ethnic groups. He rejected accusations that his organisation was supported by the USA and Israel. He looked forward to Iran adopting a federal system on the model of Switzerland. There was growing awareness on the part of ethnic Persians of the rights of other ethnic groups in Iran but there was still a need to overcome some prejudices.

Ms Adalati stressed that many ethnic Persians opposed the Islamic Republic; however some still did not recognise the rights of other ethnic groups to self determination.

Mr Lechner asked whether non-Farsi languages were actually prohibited in the official environment and also whether the ethnic minorities were represented in the Iranian parliament. He enquired too whether the different ethnic groups had anything in common rather than simply their opposition to the regime.

Ms Adalanti stated children could not speak their mother tongue at school and reminded members of the case of Ms Ashtiani. Mr Aliyar stressed that it was only possible to speak one's mother tongue in non-official circles, such as on the streets or at home. Mr Boladi referred to the United Nations report which had noted that interpreters were not available in courts for non-Farsi speakers and which had recommended that this situation should be rectified.

Ms Lochbihler then gave the floor to a speaker from the Kurdistan Democratic Party. He noted that Iran was a very multi-cultural society that was in divergence with the current political structure. Human rights violations were inherent in the constitution that was based on one branch of Shia Islam and elevated the position of a particular group - "Khamenei's band". The regime was ready to destroy the economy of Iran in advance of its goals. It was essential for all supporters of democracy in the world to work together to promote a democratic regime

in Iran. The European Parliament should raise these issues more and campaign for human rights in Iran. He claimed that there were more than four million Kurds and that the map in the dossier which was produced by the CIA was not accurate.

Ms Lochbihler agreed that there should be adequate reference material from the European Union in the dossier.

Mr Aliyar stressed that Article 15 in the Iranian constitution did not guarantee language freedom to the non-Persian people. There was private education in some ethnic minority languages but there were serious obstacles and there was no government support.

Ms Lochbihler thanked all the speakers and their valuable input.

## **5. Any other business**

Ms Lochbihler noted that the award winning Iranian human rights lawyer, Shadi Sadr, would be attending a lunch meeting on 28 October.

## **6. Date and place of next meeting**

The next scheduled meeting was to be held on 30 November 2010, at 15:00 - 16:00. The revised agenda would cover the situation of Iranian refugees in Turkey. This would replace the original topic of religious minorities, which could be discussed in the early part of 2011.

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

Бюро/Mesa/Předsednictvo/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/Biuras/Elnökség/ Prezydium/Birou/Předsednictvo/Předsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)
Barbara Lochbihler, Kurt Lechner, Cornelia Ernst
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Μέλη/Members/Députés/Deputati/Deputāti/Nariai/Képviselők/ Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Dan Jørgensen, Marco Scurria, Kathleen Van Brempt
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Supplenti/ Aizstājēji/Pavadouojantys nariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanți/Náhradníci/Namestniki/ Varajäsenet/Suppleanter
George Sabin Cutas, martin Ehrenhauser, Marita Ulvskov

187 (2)
Michael Gahler
193 (3)
46 (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/Darbotvarkēs punktas/ Napirendi pont/Punt Agenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/ Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Föredragningslista punkt)

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

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 tač-'Chairman'/ 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
Miro Aliyar, Sedigheh Adalatiand, Nasser Boladai

Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nõukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/Conselho/ Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)
Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Kommissionen/Kommission/Euroopa Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Commissione/Komisija/Bizottság/ Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisia/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)
Yilmaz, Giuseppe Busini, Patricia Llombart
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 ohra/Andere instellingen/Inne instytucje/Outras Instituições/Alte instituții/Iné inštitúcie/Druge institucije/Muut toimielimet/Andra institutioner/organ

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 ohra/Andere aanwezigen/ Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Alți participanți/Ini účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare	
A. Hasen Nezhad Nisi, Galit Peter, Sara Mohammadi, Ahangari Kawa, Roni Alaser, Barnow A, O'Dowd, Manoucher Saleki, Anwar Mirsattari, Ali Samad, Emil June, Carolin O'Callaghan, Eva Krockow, Claire Donlon, Rebecca Grannemann, Shijn Billiet, Peter S., Galit Peter, P. Accard, Christian Wagner	
Секретариат на политическите групи/Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppernes sekretariat/ Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktsioonide sekretariaat/Γραμματεία των Πολιτικών Ομάδων/Secretariats of political groups/Secrétariat des groupes politiques/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politisko grupu sekretariāts/Frakciju sekretoriai/Képviseletcsoportok titkársága/Sekretarjat gruppi politici/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secr. dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupin/Sekretariat političnih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristöt/Gruppernas sekretariat	
PPE	Rino Trombetta, Chang
S&D	E. Mamedon
ALDE	
ECR	
Verts/ALE	Sabine Meyer
GUE/NGL	
EFD	
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Кабинет на председателя/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidendi kantsleii/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 Președinte/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli	
Кабинет на генералния секретар/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/Kabinett des Generalsekretärs/Peasekretäri büroo/Γραφείο Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du Secrétaire général/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Generalsekretära kabinets/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinett tas-Segretarju Generali/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Cabinet Secretar General/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urad generalnega sekretarja/Pääsihteerin kabinetti/Generalsekreterarens kansli	
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DG PRES DG IPOL DG EXPO DG COMM DG PERS DG INLO DG TRAD DG INTE DG FINS DG ITEC	Rosemary Opacic; Sandro D'Angelo
Правна служба/Servicio Jurídico/Právní služba/Juridisk Tjeneste/Juristischer Dienst/Öigusteenistus/Νομική Υπηρεσία/Legal Service/Service juridique/Servizio giuridico/Juridiskais dienests/Teisės tarnyba/Jogi szolgálat/Servizz legali/Juridische Dienst/Wydział prawny/Serviço Jurídico/Serviciu Juridic/Právny servis/Pravna služba/Oikeudellinen yksikkö/Rättstjänsten	
Секретариат на комисията/Secretaría de la comisión/Sekretariat výboru/Udvalgssekretariatet/Ausschusseksretariat/Komisjoni sekretariaat/Γραμματεία επιτροπής/Committee secretariat/Secrétariat de la commission/Segreteria della commissione/Komitejas sekretariāts/Komiteto sekretoriatas/A bizottság titkársága/Sekretarjat tal-kumitat/Commissiesecretariaat/Sekretariat komisji/Sekretariado da comissão/Sekretariat comisie/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeristö/Utskottssekretariatet	
Tim Boden	
Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asystent/Pomočnik/Avustaja/Assistenten	
Ainhoa Markuleta	

- \* (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chair(wo)man/Président/Priekšsēdētājs/Pirmininkas/Elnök/Chairman/Voorzitter/Przewodniczący/Președinte/Predseda/Predsednik/Puheenjohtaja/Ordförande
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- (F) = Длъжностно лице/Funcionario/Úředník/Tjenestemand/Beamter/Ametnik/Υπάλληλος/Official/Fonctionnaire/Funzionario/Ierēdnis/Pareigūnas/Tisztviselő/Ufficial/Ambtenaar/Urzędnik/Funcionário/Funcionar/Úradník/Urادnik/Virkamies/Tjänsteman