



Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula

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MINUTES

of the meeting of 12 July 2011, from 17h30 to 19h00
Brussels

The meeting opened at 17h30 on Tuesday, 12 July 2011, with Angelika Niebler (Chair) in the chair.

1. Adoption of draft agenda (PE 462.209)

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Approval of minutes of the meeting of 24 May 2011 (PE 462.189)

The minutes were approved.

3. Chair's announcements

The Chair informed the members that the report on the working visit to Oman was adopted by written procedure.

The members heard the Chair who took note of the answer received from the HR/VP Catherine Ashton on the need for a more ambitious European policy toward the GCC region in which Ms. Ashton underlined the need to intensify the relations between the two regions and to improve the EU's visibility, but with no specific comments.

4. Exchange of views on the situation in Yemen, with the participation of Mr. Ali Mohamed Almamari and Mr. Ali Hussein Ashal, members of the Yemeni Parliament, in the presence of Ms. Patricia Llobart Cussac, Head of Unit for Gulf countries, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen, EEAS

The Chair welcomed HE Mr. Abdulwhab AL SHAWKANI, the Ambassador of Yemen, as well as the Yemeni MPs present to the meeting: Mr. Ali Hussein Ashal and Mr. Ali Al-Mamari, representing the opposition, and Mr. Nabil Bash, representing the authorities in power.

Mr. Ashal and Mr. Almamari acknowledged the great attention the EU attaches to the developments in Yemen. They expressed their appreciation for the EU's mediation efforts in the latest events, between the various actors, but also for the political dialogue it held with the opposition even before the recent popular changes.

The two guests expressed the hope that the EP would express even stronger its concerns regarding the difficult situation in the country and would recognise that the existing political situation in Yemen makes up a fair amount of the country's problems. It was underlined that in no case could the existing government could be part of the proper solution to the current crisis and the GCC initiative, based on the principle that the regime has to be changed and that the time has come for the transition of power, has been welcome. Though some political and intellectual actors in the country believe - to some extent - that the transition of power should not be done, the GCC initiative has been supported by the current regime which received all the legal guarantees it required to that end. However, the President has refused in three occasions to sign the proposed agreement which has been modified three times at his request, thus inciting the recent tragic developments in the country.

The lack of the state authority and of its services led to erosion of the system's legality, created internal tensions and sparked warfare in different parts of Yemen. That led to the deepening of the economic crisis, and the population is suffering of the lack of proper services and of food and water shortages.

In that context the guests considered that the role to be played by the EU countries is a moral one and that more pressure should be put on the Yemeni authorities to accept the GCC initiative. The resolution adopted by the EP on 7 July 2011 has been appreciated, but the EP needs to follow the events very closely, to take a clearer stand and put more pressure on the Yemeni regime to allow its people enjoy its right to self determination.

Mr. Nabil Bash underlined the EU's support to Yemen, in particular in development area and also in developing a proper political dialogue. He also expressed gratitude to the GCC for the close support it shows to the country.

However, he emphasized that the main challenges the country faces are economic (such as water shortages) and pointed to the authorities' struggle to meet the daily needs of the population. He considered that the necessary solution has to come from inside, even though the response to the crisis might be different from that of other Arab countries. The system in Yemen, he pointed out, is not a repressive one like in other Arab countries, the President is democratically elected, as are the members of the House of Representatives, and a proper government is in place.

Therefore Mr. Bash was of the opinion that the events in the country are a response to the President's fight against terrorism. Terrorism is the reason why the whole country is currently suffering from violence, and the people should try to move forward to a new phase based on

dialogue and reconciliation. The authorities are willing to do that, based on constitutional rights. He also considered that there is no opposition in the streets of Yemen, the protests taking place in different places over the country are not pro- or anti-governmental; instead, there is a silent majority suffering from challenges that have a great impact upon their daily life and which has not yet voiced its concerns. Still, Mr. Bash considered, the government party is not responsible for all of those. Moreover, the government party considers that there is no other democratic way to make people's voices heard than through a referendum. Mr. Bash blamed the opposition groups and some regions which lay beyond the realm of the power for the current violence in Yemen. In his opinion, the opposition on the one hand would not be able to solve the country's problems, as they could not solve the problems between themselves (i.e. Houthis and Islamists) and on the other hand it has already placed itself outside the law, given that the fights between different opposition groups have already caused hundreds of innocent deaths.

Therefore Mr. Bash considered dialogue as the only possible answer to the country's problems and as the best and the less expensive way out of the current situation, which would allow avoiding further chaos and trauma to the population. A solution in line with the constitutional provisions would, in Mr. Bash's opinion, safeguard the country's stability and, consequently, the security both at national and regional level. In addition, concessions must be made by both sides in order to ensure that a winners/losers split would not appear. Mr. Bash acknowledged that Yemeni authorities need to cooperate with the international community, in particular with the EU, in order to establish a strong and fair regime, with strong institutions, based on decentralisation and regional autonomy.

Concerning the GCC initiative, it is still on the table and it could lead towards a pacific transition of power, but all the challenges should be considered and all extremist paths should be overcome. For that reason, the support of the whole international community is needed, not only that of the Islamic countries, since Yemen wants to be a stable state, well anchored in its region, with a proper role to play and willing to attract investment and trade. In addition, Mr. Bash stated that Yemen's neighbours have to play a positive role, to help Yemen - a poor country - in its development, and should not bring greater difficulties. At the same time, Yemen has to find the necessary solutions on its own and not bring greater difficulties for its neighbours.

Ms. Patricia Llobard Cussac (EEAS) presented the EEAS's assessment on the situation in Yemen. She underlined the complexity of the challenges in Yemen since the protests started in February, but also well beyond that. The international community has been very much involved in Yemen over the recent years, in promoting a national dialogue, in promoting discussions and understanding between the different parties (i.e. between the ruling party, the opposition, and the civil society), in encouraging the government to enter an international dialogue and advance in the economic, social and political reforms.

Following the protests that erupted in February the situation deteriorated continuously, with serious violence taking place in different places, against the protesters but also against the president and his entourage, and continuous instability. Ms. Llobard Cussac pointed out to the EU's continuous work, together with the GCC, to find a solution for a political transition. A draft agreement for the transition of power has been brokered by the GCC Secretary General and put on the table. Nevertheless, President Saleh refused three times to sign it, though the last version has been signed by the opposition and though some members of the ruling party were also in its favour. Despite that, the proposal is still on the table and a political agreement is still possible within its lines. Nevertheless, despite the current political stalemate in the country, the international community remains engaged and continues talking to all the relevant partners, whether international, regional or domestic partners.

Emphasizing the worsening security situation on the ground, Ms. Lombard Cussac informed the members that some of the EU countries missions on the ground have been closed and only a few missions stayed, including the EU delegation, with a very restricted number of personnel. The EU Ambassador remains engaged, he keeps discussing with all the parties involved and trying to enable a rapid end of the political stalemate.

It is clear that the political situation is having an enormous impact on the Yemeni population, both in terms of violence and of the day-to-day life, through prices' increase and food and fuel shortages. Fuel shortages also have a huge impact on the capacity of the international organisations to distribute humanitarian assistance to those in need; the number of the internally displaced people continues to increase, even though their situation cannot be fully assessed due to access problems, notably in the South.

Despite the EU's deep involvement in helping the Yemenis meet the challenges they were facing even before the protests started in February and despite its efforts to help deliver to the population the necessary basic services, the current political stalemate and violence across the country led to a worrying deterioration of the economic, social and humanitarian situation.

While emphasizing the EU's position asking for a peaceful and orderly political transition, in line with the Constitution, Ms. Lombard Cussac reiterated the EU's calls on all those involved to act with responsibility and for those responsible for violence to be held accountable and brought to justice.

Underlining that the delegation is trying to offer support that could alleviate Yemeni people's sufferings, Ms. Niebler took note of the very unstable situation and pointed out to the attacks and continuous violence against peaceful demonstrators, against civilians, things unacceptable for the European Union. Moreover, the setback in finding political solutions to the current situation has been done at the cost of the citizens, which is also intolerable for the EP members.

Mr. Fox pointed out the importance of Yemen's stability for the whole region and that of preventing Yemen becoming a failed state. He welcomed the GCC initiative and in particular the lead taken by Saudi Arabia in trying to arrange a peaceful transition of power in Yemen. He agreed to Mr. Ashad and Mr. Almamari saying that the current regime in the country has to go immediately. Commenting on Mr. Bash's statements, he considered that the most important opposition in the country is the silent majority, suffering from a very bad government led for the last 21 years by President Saleh, government which is responsible for the very bad economic situation of the country. Expressing hope that the EU could be a partner in Yemen's development and help improve the condition of people, he considered however that that would be very difficult unless there is a proper partner in Yemen, and not a corrupt government that uses the aid money as bribe to various tribes to help it maintain power. For that reason he considered that it is essential that President Saleh goes, in a peaceful manner, and that the corrupt government is replaced. He asked the guests to take back home the message that President Saleh is the problem, and not part of a solution.

Mr. Kraemer advised the Yemeni people to refrain from reacting emotionally and aggressively and the opposition to make sure that they could offer a good alternative when President Saleh goes. He expressed concerns that, in case the opposition was not properly prepared, a vacuum of power could lead to a civil war and asked the representatives of the opposition to present their projects for governing after the transition of power. Mr. Kraemer asked Mr. Bash to explain why, since he praised the GCC initiative and the role of Saudi Arabia in mediating the signing of the proposed agreement, that agreement has not yet been signed.

Mr. Almamari agreed that all responsible for violence and attacks, including the attack against

the President's mosque, must be brought to justice and punished. He informed the members that civilians were killed again in some Yemeni cities the day preceding the meeting and questioned the regime's offer for dialogue under those circumstances. The revolution in Yemen has been a peaceful one, the young people demonstrated peacefully, but they were met by the regime's violence. Thus the government's legitimacy has been lost.

He underlined that the articles 115 and 116 of the Yemeni Constitution do contain provisions, in case of a political transition, for an interim occupancy by the Vice-President, for 60 days, until elections could be held. Therefore there is no danger, in his opinion, for a vacuum of power. The Yemen opposition wants a state of law, a stable situation, and proper institutions, in case of a transfer of power. A Forum of the opposition parties has put forward a national plan for an alternative based on a properly enforced law and a new type of society, with proper rights for the people.

The Yemeni Ambassador, Mr. Al Shawkani, expressed his opinion that all the parties involved should concentrate on the practical steps to be taken in order to solve the problems, instead of accusing each other. The complexity of the situation in Yemen needs to be considered carefully before expressing a position. As for the GCC initiative, everyone believes that it is the way out of the problems, including President Saleh who, only two days before, expressed his agreement to it. It was not the agreement that the President rejected, but the protocol envisaged for signing it. The Ambassador stated that the attack on the President came two days after the President had expressed his willingness to sign the agreement, which shows that not only the country, but also its President, is victim of terrorism. Moreover, the Vice-President is currently making big efforts to re-establish stability and the basic services to the population and to find best ways for the implementation of the GCC initiative.

Answering Mr. Fox's statement on the urgent need for a transfer of power by President Saleh, Mr. Bash stated that the Yemeni President is ready to cease power, but he wants that to be done in a democratic way. For that reason the President has asked for early elections to be organised. He stated the EU could be requested to monitor such elections, to see that the transfer of power can be done peacefully through the ballot boxes, instead of political arrangements.

The Chair reminded the EP resolutions of 7 April and 7 July, in which the EP has called for a peaceful transition of power, in respect of the Constitution and of human rights, but nothing has happened yet. She condemned the Yemeni government for letting its people go hungry for months, for not ensuring that aid organisations have access to the people, for allowing the chaos that prevents even the basic medicines from being provided to the injured people. The European Union, as the rest of the international community, are willing to help the Yemeni people, but it cannot wait in vain for months for the proper measures to be taken by those in charge in Yemen. She reiterated the call for the immediate signature and implementation of the agreement mediated by the GCC for the transfer of power, and requested the Ambassador to pass the message to President Saleh. The Chair asked the guests present to the meeting, representing both the regime and the opposition, to do their best and take their responsibilities in their country in order to ensure that as quickly as possible new elections would be called in Yemen, to enable a peaceful change of power, avoid a civil war, and allow the people to fully enjoy their rights.

5. Any other business

6. Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 5 October 2011

The meeting closed at 19h00.

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

Бюро/Mesa/Předsednictvo/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/Biuras/Elnökség/ Prezydium/Birou/Predsednictvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)
Angelika Niebler (P), Holger Kraemer (VP1)
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Μέλη/Members/Députés/Deputati/Deputāti/Nariai/Képviselők/ Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Ashley Fox, Jacek Włosowicz
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Supplenti/ Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantys nariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleantī/Náhradníci/Namestniki/ Varajäsenet/Suppleanter
Paul Rübig

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/Darbotvarkės punktas/ Napirendi pont/Punt fuq l-aġenda/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/Obserwatorzy/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 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

Mr Ali Mohamed Almamari and Mr Ali Hussein Ashal, members of the Yemeni Parliament

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 (*)

Европейска служба за външна дейност/Европска 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 Działañ 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 (*)

Patricia Llobart-Cussac

Willem Brinkmann

Ignacio Sobrino

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
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 oħra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Alți participanți/Iní účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare

Mubarak Alhajri, Kuwait embassy

Marcel Pirard, GCC Delegation

Siraj O. Ayaz, Saudi embassy

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/Képviselőcsoportok titkársága/Sekretarjat gruppi poliitici/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secr. dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupin/Sekretariat poliitčnih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristö/Gruppernas sekretariat

PPE	Mauro Belardinnelli
S&D	Jean-François Vallin
ALDE	Harmegnies
ECR	
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 Președinte/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmanens kansli

Elyès Ghanmi

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/Ġenerālsekretära 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

Генерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/ Directorate-General/Direction générale/Direzione generale/Generāldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/Direktorat Ġenerali/Direktoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/ Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat	
DG PRES DG IPOL DG EXPO DG COMM DG PERS DG INLO DG TRAD DG INTE DG FINS DG ITEC	Hannah Collins, Laurens Hueting, Adrian Shahbaz, Myriam Goinard
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/Sekretariát výboru/Udvalgssekretariatet/Ausschusseksretariat/Komisjoni sekretariáat/Γραμματεία επιτροπής/Committee secretariat/Secrétariat de la commission/Segreteria della commissione/Komitejas sekretariāts/Komiteto sekretoriatas/A bizottság titkársága/Sekretarjat tal-kumitat/Commissiesecretariaat/Sekretariat komisji/ Secretariado da comissão/Sekretariat comisie/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeriistö/Utskottssekretariatet	
Simona Moroianu	
Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asyistent/Pomočnik/ Avustaja/Assistenten	
Lars Nielsen	

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