

**Report: 27<sup>th</sup> EU-Norway Interparliamentary Meeting, 20 June 2011, Brussels, Belgium**

Summary:

- The 27<sup>th</sup> EU-Norway Interparliamentary Meeting was co-chaired by Pat the Cope Gallagher, Chair of the EP delegation and Ine Eriksen Søreide, Chairperson of the Norwegian delegation and Chair of the Storting's Foreign Affairs Committee.
- The EP delegation was present with 6 MEPs.
- Members have exchanged views on the EU-Norway relations, recent developments of the EEA, fisheries and EU Common Foreign and Security Policy / Common Security and Defence Policy as well as the situation in the Middle East and North Africa, including developments in Libya.
- The IPM approved a joint press release (attached) which emphasised the close political and economic ties between the EU and Norway and the vital cooperation in many important policy areas, such as Common Foreign and Security Policy, energy policy, High North region and environment.

General considerations and background:

The EU-Norway interparliamentary delegations meeting was established in 1982 and takes place traditionally once a year. Norway is closely linked to the European Union, however not a member state of the EU. Norway is member of the European Economic Area (EEA) and participates in CSDP and Schengen cooperation.

EU-Norway IPM

The Members of the European Parliament and Stortinget have exchanged views on the developments of the EU-Norway relations, including EEA relevant EU legislation and discussed the ongoing review of the European Economic Area.

The Norwegian delegation presented their viewpoints on the 3rd postal services directive, the data retention directive and the deposit guarantee scheme directive. Concerning the 3rd postal directive Laila Gustavsen (Stortinget) expressed the concerns of Norway and underlined that Norway presented its position to the EU and is now waiting for its reactions. Mr Gianluca Grippa, Head of Western Europe Unit, European External Action Service, stressed that the EU is open for a dialogue. Ine Eriksen Søreide (Chairperson Stortinget delegation) presented the controversy in the Norwegian public debate regarding the data retention directive, which is reflected in the narrow majority in favour of the directive's implementing law in Norway. As regards the deposit guarantee scheme directive, the Norwegian delegation highlighted that they would have to lower their standards if they implement the directive as they guarantee a higher deposit scheme than required by the EU. EP delegation's chair Pat the Cope Gallagher and Thomas Ulmer (MEP) responded that the directive could take exceptions into consideration, if amendments approved by ECON committee will be adopted in upcoming trilogue negotiations.

Michael Gahler (MEP) presented an overview of the Parliamentary Scrutiny of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy / Common Security and Defence Policy as

well as the EU responses to the situation in the Middle East and North Africa, including developments in Libya. He explained that in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty all military expenses still stay outside of the EU budget and consequently the European Parliament has no direct power in budgetary affairs. Nevertheless, civilian operations, and in particular police missions, such as "EULEX Kosovo" are under joint budgetary control of the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. The Norwegian delegation expressed the importance of the EU missions for Norway as they actively support a number of EU missions (altogether 9 so far), as well as a continuation of involvement of Norwegian parliament in scrutiny of CSDP after the demise of the WEU Assembly end of June 2011. Mr Gahler reassured the Norwegian delegation that there is political will in the EP to incorporate them in the new interparliamentary conference on CSDP, which should be established pursuant article 10 of protocol 1 of the consolidated EU Treaties, however he clarified there are no solutions yet found. A COSAC meeting in October might bring more clarity in this respect.

Chairman Pat the Cope Gallagher highlighted recent developments in the upcoming reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy: a will be presented by the Commission in the EP in mid-July In addition, he expressed concerns of the European Parliament about the sustainability of management of the mackerel stocks. The Norwegian delegation outlined that the reform proposal on the EU Common Fisheries Policy seems to be in line with the Norwegian approach to fisheries. The Norwegian Delegation called for stricter EU sanctions against the Faroe Islands and Iceland due to their unsustainable and unreasonable increase of the mackerel quota. Norway imposed a ban on Icelandic and Faroe vessels landings of mackerel catches since July 2010.

#### Next meeting

The 28<sup>th</sup> EU- Norway meeting will take place in 2012 in Norway, date to be detailed later.

#### Proposal for a follow-up:

Discussion on the CFP reform should continue with the Norwegian Parliament, in particular due to the fact that CFP was traditionally one of the major obstacles of EU membership for Norway.

\* \* \*