



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ПАРЛАМЕНТ PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EVROPSKÝ PARLAMENT EUROPA-PARLAMENTET
EUROPÄISCHES PARLAMENT EUROOPA PARLAMENT ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN PARLAIMINT NA HEORPA PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EIROPAS PARLAMENTS
EUROPOS PARLAMENTAS EURÓPAI PARLAMENT IL-PARLAMENT EWROPEW EUROPEES PARLEMENT
PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI PARLAMENTO EUROPEU PARLAMENTUL EUROPEAN
EURÓPSKY PARLAMENT EVROPSKI PARLAMENT EUROOPAN PARLAMENTTI EUROPAPARLAMENTET

Directorate-General for Internal Policies
Directorate C - Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

09.12.2011

Report on the FEMM Committee delegation visit to Israel and the Palestinian territory, 1 - 4 November 2011

COMPOSITION

Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL), Chair of the Committee
Gesine Meissner (ALDE)
Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Greens/EFA)
Nicole Sinclair (NI)
Bastiaan Belder (EFD), Chair of the Delegation for relations with Israel
Auken Margrete (Greens/EFA), Vice-Chair of the Delegation for relations with the
Palestinian Legislative Council

Members were accompanied by Sabina Magnano and Zoltán Pethő from the committee secretariat and the following political advisors to groups and non-attached Members: Valborg Linden Jonsten (S-D Group), Tom Feeley (ALDE Group), Malin Bjork (GUE/NGL Group), Dick Jan Diepenbroek (EFD Group), Gary Cartwright (Non-attached).

PURPOSE

The delegation visit took place in the context of the work of the FEMM committee on the situation of women in conflicts areas. The purpose of the visit was on, the one side, to learn about the gender equality policies in the region and, on the other side, to learn about the specific impacts of conflicts situations on women's everyday life. In this context, a visit to the Gaza Strip - organised by UNRWA - also took place to learn about the humanitarian situation in the area.

PRESS

A press statement was issued by the Committee Chair following the delegation visit.

MEETINGS

(See full programme in enclosed Annex I)

1 November 2011

1. Briefing from Mr Andrew Standley, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the State of Israel

Mr Standley gave a briefing to the Members of the delegation about the economic, political and social situation in Israel with a particular focus on women's rights and gender equality.

2. Meeting with representatives of the Council of Women's Organizations in Israel

Ms Aviva Kohlmann, Vice President of the CWOI, described the work of the Council and gave an overview of its history, goals and programmes. She also emphasized the international connections of the Council as an affiliate of the International Council of Women and the International Council of Jewish Women.

Dr. Sharon Shenhav spoke about gender equality issues in Israel and the Palestinian territory, with an emphasis on the issues of marriages and divorces in the communities with the different religions. Prof. Mina Westman, Chair of the Status of Women Committee, described the work of her organisation on women's issues and highlighted the problem of the gender pay gap in Israel. She mentioned the efforts to encourage women entrepreneurship, including courses to help women to start and expand small businesses and addressing gender inequality in the academic world, giving the specific example of efforts made at the University of Tel Aviv.

Members asked further questions about civil marriage and divorce; the role of the media and the role of the politicians in eliminating discrimination against women.

3. Briefing from Mr John Gatt-Rutter, Acting Representative, Office of the European Union Representative - West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA

Mr Gatt-Rutter gave a briefing to the Members of the delegation about the economic, political and social situation in the Palestinian Territory with a particular focus on women's rights and gender equality. Mr Sergio Piccolo, Head of Operations presented in details the use of the financial support from the EU to the Palestinian Territory. The questions from Members related to how the proper use of the funds is ensured, and to the role of women in the reform process.

2 November 2011

4. Visit to various projects in Gaza organised by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)

Visit to Girls' School in Beach Camp – Gaza City

For this point of the visit the committee delegation was joined by the Members of the European Parliament Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council, who were visiting the Gaza Strip at the same time.

Members of the delegation received a briefing by a representative of the UNRWA Education Department and took a tour of the school.

Visit to Equality in Action Project – UNRWA’s Gender Initiative, Community Based Organisation, Deir El-Balah – Middle Area

Members received a briefing by Gender Initiative Project Coordinator Najwa Lobbad on UNRWA's grassroots initiatives for women's empowerment.

Meeting with UNRWA Gaza Women's Committee (UGWC) – UNRWA Gaza Field Office

The delegation met with the following focal points and members of the UGWC to discuss the situation of women in Gaza and the role of women in UNRWA Gaza.

- Ms Hanan Siam, Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development,
- Ms Hana Mattar, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (Women section),
- Ms Islah Hasaneya, Centre for Women's Legal Research and Consulting,
- Ms Ibtesam Al-Zaaneen, General Union of Palestinian Woman,
- Ms Fatima Al-Wehaidi, Women Affairs Technical Committee,
- Ms Amal Siam, Woman Affairs Center.

Lunch Meeting with Acting Director of UNRWA Operations – Christer Nordahl

The visit to the Gaza Strip was concluded by a working lunch hosted by Mr Christer Nordahl, Acting Director of UNRWA Operations.

5. Meeting in the Yabous Cultural Center

The delegation met the following representatives of non-governmental organisations and women's rights activists:

- Ms Rania Elias, Director – Yabous Cultural Center
- Ms Rana Nashashibi, Director – Palestinian Counselling Center
- Ms Nora Carmi, Coordinator of Community Development and Women’s Programs – Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
- Ms Siham Rachid, UN Women – Program Manager for Millennium Development Goals program
- Ms Maha Abu Dayyeh, Executive Director – Woman Center for Legal Aid and Counselling

Each participant briefly introduced its activity to the Members of the delegation, which was followed by an exchange of views focusing on the impact of the conflict

situation on the life of Palestinian women in Jerusalem, other parts of Israel and the Palestinian Territory.

3 November 2011

6. Meeting in the Knesset with Ms Tzipi Hotovely, Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women and Ms Orit Zuaretz, Chair of the Subcommittee on Trafficking in Women

Following the mutual introduction of the Members of the Knesset and Members of the delegation, MEPs asked questions relating to women's rights and gender equality issues in Israel. Concerning the deteriorating gender pay gap, Members of the Knesset acknowledged the problem and also added that it is a human rights issue, which is being addressed in Israel. The Members exchanged views about the existing legislation on marriage and divorce, in particular as regards rules governing religious and civil marriages.

To questions on the legislation on prostitution, Ms Zuaretz answered that there are upcoming bills in the Knesset on punishing prostitution. As regards trafficking in women, Israel is a target country of trafficking for both work and sexual purposes.

MEPs learned that maternity leave provisions in Israel have been recently extended in length from 14 to 26 weeks; however there are no parental, nor paternity leave provisions in Israel.

After answering questions from MEPs, Members of the Knesset asked questions about gender equality policies in the European Union.

7. Meeting with Ms Vered Swed, Director, Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women

The Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women was legally established in 1998 as part of the Prime Minister's Office. The purpose of the Authority was to advance the status of women in Israel and coordinate between governmental and non-governmental bodies acting to promote the status of women. Ms Swed presented the work of the Authority to the Members of the delegation, which was followed by an exchange of views on the situation of women and gender equality in Israel.

8. Meeting with representatives of Israeli people to people NGOs

Ms Yvette Nahmia-Messinas, from *Supporting Women's Healing Processes Through Touch and Movement* introduced the activity of the organisation, which focuses on the cooperation between Israel and Palestinian women, also by producing and trading handicrafts.

9. Meeting with Dr. Salam Fayyad, Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority

The Prime Minister received the delegation in his office, where he presented the work of the Palestinian government promoting women's rights and gender equality. Gender

perspective is amongst the main policies guiding the work of his government. Besides the five female Ministers in the Palestinian government, the Capital Market Authority, and the Statistical Bureau are also headed by women. Dr. Fayyad stressed the need to consider women at the lower level posts in order to achieve adequate representation of women in the public administration. He added that gender stereotypes are not tolerated in the administration and vocational training is equally ensured for female workers.

Women's labour force participation in Palestine is around 15% as against 67% of men's, even if there are slightly more female students in the education than males. Women are also overrepresented amongst the teachers, therefore it is crucial to pay attention to the pay scale of education labour force.

The Prime Minister said that honour killings must be eradicated by all means and in connection to this, he mentioned that a new penal code - free of all discrimination - is about to be introduced.

To questions of Members, the Prime Minister confirmed that there was a need to involve more women into the reconciliation process.

10. Meeting with women Ministers in the Palestinian government

The delegation met the following five female Ministers in the Palestinian government:

- Ms Rabiha Diab, Minister of Women's Affairs,
- Ms Magda El Masri, Minister of Social Affairs,
- Ms Siham Barghouti, Minister of Culture,
- Ms Lamis Alalami, Minister of Education,
- Ms Khulood Duaibes, Minister of Tourism.

Each Minister introduced her portfolio with a particular emphasis on the gender perspective. After the introduction, the exchange of views focused on how the Ministers address women's issues and gender equality in the policy areas for which they are responsible, i.e. how gender mainstreaming is implemented in the respective areas.

11. Meeting and working dinner with Ms Janet Mikhail, Mayor of Ramallah

Members of the delegation met Ms Janet Mikhail, Mayor of the city of Ramallah at her office at the municipality, where the Mayor presented the latest developments in Ramallah and the living conditions of women in the city.

After the meeting, the delegation attended a working dinner hosted by the Mayor, where MEPs could discuss the situation of Palestinian women with the following leading female figures of the Palestinian public sphere:

- Ms Kamel Jbeil - Council Member,
- Ms Maha Shihadeh - P.R Director at Ramallah Municipality & President of YWCA / Ramallah,

- Ms Rana Habayeb - Mayor's office manager,
- Ms Nijmeh Ghanem - Representative of the American Federation of Ramallah - Palestine,
- Ms Khaleda Jarrar - Member of Palestinian Legislative Council,
- Dr. Mariam Saleh - Member of Palestinian Legislative Council,
- Ms Amal Mughrabi - President of Business Women Forum,
- Ms Rima Tarazi- Woman Activist - Founder of the General Union of Palestinian Women - Founder of Edward Said Music Conservatory.

4 November 2011

12. Meetings with local civil society working in the field of gender equality

Members of the delegation had two consecutive meetings with the following representatives of two Israeli NGOs working in the field of gender equality:

- Ms Amal Elsana-Alh'jooj, Co-Executive Director – AJEEC - Arab Jewish Center for Equality Empowerment and Cooperation
- Ms Nina Sebba, MachsomWatch (association of Israeli women who watch the checkpoints)

Ms Elsana-Alh'jooj presented the activity of her organisation, which targets women in the Bedouin community in the Negev. She emphasised the poverty and lack of education in the area. Amongst the major challenges for women she listed the patriarchal, male-dominated society; the issue that women cannot register land under their name; the demographic situation and the barriers to work, such as the lack of infrastructure.

Ms Nina Sebba from MachsomWatch explained how this grassroots movement was organised from individual Israeli women, who started to watch the checkpoints and gather and disseminate their experiences to the public on their website. The movement is against the occupation and through their activity it raises awareness of the public of the difficulties of the people living in the occupied territories. Currently MachsomWatch has several hundred participants, who monitor different checkpoints in a continuous rotation with each other.



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ПАРЛАМЕНТ PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EVROPSKÝ PARLAMENT EUROPA-PARLAMENTET
EUROPÄISCHES PARLAMENT EUROOPA PARLAMENT ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN PARLAIMINT NA HEORPA PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EIROPAS PARLAMENTS
EUROPOS PARLAMENTAS EURÓPAI PARLAMENT IL-PARLAMENT EWROPEW EUROPEES PARLEMENT
PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI PARLAMENTO EUROPEU PARLAMENTUL EUROPEAN
EURÓPSKY PARLAMENT EVROPSKI PARLAMENT EUROOPAN PARLAMENTTI EUROPAPARLAMENTET

Directorate-General for Internal Policies
Directorate C - Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Annex I

10 November 2011

Delegation to Israel and the Palestinian territory, 1-4 November 2011

Final programme

Tuesday, 1 November

Afternoon Individual arrival in Tel Aviv on Tuesday, 1 November 2011.

16.15 **Meeting of participants at the Ben Gurion Airport:**
Meeting point: Greeter's Hall, next to Entrance 03

16.30 **Transfer by bus from Tel Aviv Airport to the Delegation European Union to the State of Israel in Ramat Gan**

Meetings at the Delegation of the European Union to the State of Israel

Address: Shoham Street, 5, Paz Building, 16th floor, Ramat Gan

17.50 Briefing from Mr Andrew Standley, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the State of Israel

18.00 Meeting with representatives of the Council of Women's Organizations in Israel

With the participation of:

- Ms Aviva Kohlmann, Vice President
- Prof. Mina Westman, Chair of Status of Women Committee
- Dr. Sharon Shenhav, Status of Women Committee

Meeting at the Office of the European Union Representative - West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA

Address: 5 George Adam Smith Street, Jerusalem

20.35 Briefing from Mr John Gatt-Rutter, Acting Representative

*Transfer to the hotel in Jerusalem:
The AMERICAN COLONY HOTEL
One Louis Vincent Street
Jerusalem
Tel: +972 2 627 9777
Fax: +972 2 627 9779
Email: reserv@amcol.co.il
<http://www.americancolony.com>*

Wednesday, 2 November

- 06:30** **Departure from Jerusalem by bus to Gaza via Erez.**
- 08:30** **Pick up at Palestinian side of crossing**
- 10:00 – 10:45** **Visit to Girls' School in Beach Camp – Gaza City**
– Briefing by UNRWA Education Department and tour of school
- 11:15 – 12:00** **Visit to Equality in Action Project – UNRWA's Gender Initiative, Community Based Organisation, Deir El-Balah – Middle Area.**
– Briefing by Gender Initiative Project Coordinator Najwa Lobbad on UNRWA's grass roots initiatives for women's empowerment
- 12:30 – 13:30** **Meeting with UNRWA Gaza Women's Committee (UGWC) – UNRWA Gaza Field Office**
– Meeting with focal points and members of the UGWC to discuss the situation of women in Gaza and the role of women in UNRWA Gaza
With the participation of:
– Ms Hanan Siam, Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development,
– Ms Hana Mattar, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (Women section),
– Ms Islah Hasaneya, Centre for Women's Legal Research and Consulting,
– Ms Ibtesam Al-Zaaneen, General Union of Palestinian Woman,
– Ms Fatima Al-Wehaidi, Women Affairs Technical Committee,
– Ms Amal Siam, Woman Affairs Center.
- 13:30 – 14:30** **Lunch Meeting with Acting Director of UNRWA Operations – Christer Nordahl**
- 14:30** **Return to crossing at Erez and transfer by bus to Jerusalem**
- - -
- 18:20** **Meeting in the Yabous Cultural Center**
Address: 8 Zahra street, East Jerusalem

With the participation of:

- Ms Rania Elias, Director – Yabous Cultural Center
- Ms Rana Nashashibi, Director – Palestinian Counseling Center
- Ms Nora Carmi, Coordinator of Community Development and Women's Programs – Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
- Ms Siham Rachid, UN Women – Program Manager for Millennium Development Goals program
- Ms Maha Abu Dayyeh, Executive Director – Woman Center for Legal Aid and Counseling

Thursday, 3 November

9:15 *Departure from the hotel for the Knesset by bus*

10:00 Meetings in the Knesset

Address: Knesset, Kiryat Ben Gurion, Jerusalem 91950

- Ms Tzipi Hotovely, Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women
- Ms Orit Zuretz, Chair of the Subcommittee on Trafficking in Women

12:00 Meeting with Ms Vered Swed, Director, Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women

Address: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 Yitzhak Rabin Blvd., Kiryat Ben-Gurion, Jerusalem 91950

13.00 Meeting with Israeli P2P NGOs

Address: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 Yitzhak Rabin Blvd., Kiryat Ben-Gurion, Jerusalem 91950

14:00 Departure for Ramallah

15:00 Meeting with Dr. Salam Fayyad, Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority

Address: Prime Minister's Office, Ramallah

16:15 Meeting with women Ministers in the Palestinian government

- Ms Rabiha Diab, Minister of Women's Affairs,
- Ms Magda El Masri, Minister of Social Affairs,
- Ms Siham Barghouti, Minister of Culture,
- Ms Lamis Alalami, Minister of Education,
- Ms Khulood Duaibes, Minister of Tourism (tbc).

Address: Best Eastern Hotel, Ersal Street, Bireh, Ramallah

18.30 Meeting with Ms Janet Mikhail, Mayor of Ramallah

Address: Ramallah Municipality

19.00 **Working dinner hosted by Ms Janet Mikhail, Mayor of Ramallah**
With the participation of leading women figures in different fields:

- Ms Kamel Jbeil - Council Member
- Ms Maha Shihadeh - P.R Director at Ramallah Municipality & President of YWCA / Ramallah
- Ms Rana Habayeb - Mayor's office manager
- Ms Nijmeh Ghanem - Representative of the American Federation of Ramallah - Palestine
- Ms Khaleda Jarrar - Member of Palestinian Legislative Council
- Dr. Mariam Saleh - Member of Palestinian Legislative Council
- Ms Amal Mughrabi - President of Business Women Forum
- Ms Rima Tarazi- Woman Activist - Founder of the General Union of Palestinian Women - Founder of Edward Said Music Conservatory

Address: Ramallah

Transfer to the hotel.

Friday, 4 November

Check-out from the hotel before departure.

Transfer by bus to Ramat Gan

Meetings with local civil society working in the field of gender equality

Address: Shoham Street, 5, Paz Building, 16th floor, Ramat Gan

- 10.20 Ms Amal Elsana-Alh'jooj, Co-Executive Director – AJEEC - Arab Jewish Center for Equality Empowerment and Cooperation,
- 11.05 MachsomWatch (association of Israeli women who watch the checkpoints)

12:00 *Departure for Tel Aviv airport*
