



*Delegation for relations with South Asia*

11.11.2010

# REPORT

on the 8th EP/Pakistan Interparliamentary Meeting

Islamabad

30 October – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010

by

Ms. Jean Lambert, Chair of the Delegation

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11/11/2010 PK/am

## Introduction

The last time Members from the EP's Delegation for relations with South Asia visited Pakistan was in February 2009, when a Delegation from the EP, led by then Chair Robert Evans, held talks with parliamentarians from the National Assembly, including Deputy Speaker Dr. Faisal Karim Kundi.

While the newly constituted South Asia Delegation, after the 2009 European elections, felt that renewing Interparliamentary talks was clear priority, an earlier mission to Islamabad had to be postponed, mainly for logistical reasons. Following the disastrous monsoon rains & floods which hit the country in July, however, the Delegation renewed its efforts in order for talks to be revived in Islamabad; the EP Conference of Presidents, thus, swiftly gave to the Delegation an authorisation to proceed in mid-October, which allowed the mission to take place – and to convey to Pakistan the European Parliament's message of solidarity and sympathy in these times of need. A key priority for the Delegation was, therefore, to assess how the European Parliament would be able to offer its support to Pakistan in overcoming this additional challenge.

Thus, a two-member Delegation, led by Ms Jean Lambert (Greens/EFA, UK) who was accompanied by Thijs Berman (Socialists and Democrats, NL) visited Islamabad from the 30th October to November 1st, and held three intensive days of talks with:

- Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Gilani,
- National Assembly Speaker Dr Fehmida Mirza,
- Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah M. Qureshi,
- Minister of State for Economics and Finance Sd Hina Rabbani Khar,
- Ch. Nizar Ali Khan (PML/N), Leader of the opposition,
- Senator Mian Razza Rabbani, Chair of the Constitutional Reforms Committee
- Lt Gal (rtd) Nadeem Ahmad, Chair of the National Disaster Management Authority,
- M. Rauf Engin Soysal, UN Special Envoy for Pakistan,
- Ms Karen Allen, Deputy Representative, UNICEF,
- M. Martin Mogwamja, UNOCHA Resident Coordinator,
- M. Pascal Cuttat, Head of Delegation, ICRC,
- M. Rachid Benmessadoud, World Bank,
- M. Rune Stroem, Asian Development Bank,
- Representatives of the media and the civil society

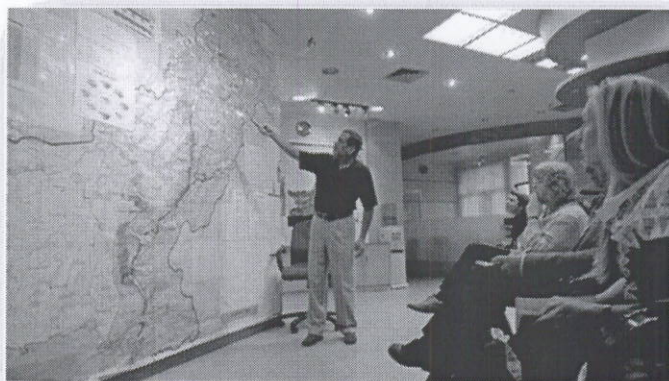
Members of the European Parliament Delegation also had the opportunity to overfly the Swat valley, taking part in a helicopter tour organised by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA): this enabled them to see with their own eyes the extent of the damage and the early reconstruction efforts undertaken by the authorities.

The EP Delegation therefore wishes to express its gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad and to the diplomatic authorities of Pakistan at the EU mission in Brussels for the facilitation of this visit; in a similar vein, the European Union Delegation in Islamabad spared no efforts, despite operating in a sometimes challenging environment, in devising an intensive programme of activities and meetings, which allowed the South Asia Delegation to make the most of its visit and to grasp realities on the ground.

## I. The July / September floods and their consequences

The Delegation followed extensive presentations on the issue, both from the EU's own ECHO teams –which have been deployed on the field- and from the actors that have been involved on behalf of the international community, such as UNOCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) or UNICEF. Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority Chair, Lt Gen (rtd) Nadeem Ahmad welcomed the Delegation in the NDMA's operations room, presenting a latest update on the situation and the efforts undertaken by the Pakistani authorities.

It is well known that weather disturbance combined with heavy monsoon rain on 21 and 22 July triggered flash floods and river floods in several parts of the country ; monsoon rains continued across the country especially in Khyber Pakhtunkwa (KPK) and Baluchistan, bringing about additional floods in the low lying areas of Punjab and Sindh. What is much less known, however, due to the fact that the international media have largely failed to report on this “slow motion Tsunami” is that, since July, fresh flooding has occasionally persisted – bringing the **total number of affected to 20.274.250 persons** (700,000 in Baluchistan – with an additional 600.000 IDPs affected living in Baluchistan, 3,800,000 in KPK, 8,200,000 in Punjab, 7,274,250 in Sindh, 200,000 in AJK and 100,000 in Gilgit-Baltistan). UNOCHA estimated that, in mid-October, 14 million persons were still in need of immediate humanitarian assistance, with 2 million houses damaged.



Presenting the situation, Lt Gen (rtd) Nadeem Ahmad, Chair of the NDMA, expressed his gratitude to the EP Delegation for “*coming at the right time to assess the situation - unique in so many aspects (geographical spread, loss on the economy)*”. This crisis, we were reminded, came on top of many successive ones (earthquake Oct. 2005, food 2008, conflict 2008/10) – and from this point of view, in all fairness to

Pakistan, it should be acknowledged, from the outset, that planning and implementation of development interventions would be highly challenging in *any* country. With fresh flooding not “*a phenomenon of the past*”, M. Ahmad stressed that “*I wish we could say we are over with the disaster*”.

Lt. Gen. Ahmad proceeded with detailing the relief operations undertaken by the NDMA and underlined that clear priorities existed such as building shelters, re-establishing farm-based livelihoods, health and education facilities, governmental infrastructure. On the other hand, the NDMA's key responsibilities were emergency relief operations: as far as reconstruction was concerned, federal decisions should be taken, with implementation at the local level. M. Ahmad expected nonetheless relief operations to continue for some time since, in some parts of the country (and despite pumping) “*as the rate of evaporation is 1 inch/day, this means that some areas will still be affected for another 2 months*” ; according to the NDMA estimates, **780.000 people were still displaced as a result of the floods** and living in camps (660.000 in Sindh and about 120.000 in Balochistan), whereas the maximum number in camps, at the peak of the crisis,

had been 3 million persons. The wider picture should however be taken into account, since an IDP crisis existed also prior to the floods: thus the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs put the estimate much higher, at over 1.5 million people still displaced (residing in around 3,100 collective facilities, camps and spontaneous settlements).

Thus, according to UNOCHA, 700,000 acres still remain under water, and these would take another 3-6 months to dry out. This means that a sizeable IDP caseload will still be unable to return, and a **protracted humanitarian emergency** affecting up to 600,000 people for at least six months is to be expected – without forgetting that draining of urban centers and agricultural land poses complex engineering challenges.



July/September floods: maximum extent

Furthermore, if, according to Lt Gen Ahmad this crisis had demonstrated the “*resilience of Pakistani people*” and the deep “*philanthropic nature of the society*”, it had also revealed some negative facts in **northern Sindh**, unknown not only to Pakistanis but “*even to Sindhis themselves*”: a “*vicious circle of endemic poverty*” characterised by pockets of “*chronic malnutrition, tuberculosis (...) and bonded labour*”; for the General, providing solutions to this untenable situation clearly was beyond the NDMA’s remit: “*the donor community should look at this on a long term basis, in order to provide with sustainable answers*” – allowing “*to break the shackles which tie this population to feudal landlords*”. The responsibilities of the local political class, in particular were pointed out – even though it was felt that such phenomena largely took place without politicians even knowing about it: “*you see, they live in Karachi*”. The magnitude of the problem was also discussed with UNICEF, which confirmed that this was also news to the international community – due to the generally poor access to northern Sindh: the floods had just allowed the discovery of this “*humanitarian terra incognita*”, but malnutrition’s chronic character was proven (stunting was mentioned). The Delegation nonetheless felt that it was already a very positive step that the NDMA was acknowledging openly the extent of the problem, without any intent to minimise it.

On the other hand, when it came, more generally, to coordination, many international organisations met by the Delegation regretted that there was sometimes some confusion; thus, while the NDMA strived to establish itself as the main governmental interlocutor on humanitarian action, other branches of the Government were not always sticking to this, meaning that there was, sometimes, competition on the field between Provincial Disaster Management Authority offices and governmental agencies. This being said, many interlocutors of the Delegation, such as UNICEF, acknowledged that the army, for instance, had done “*a terrific job in warning and evacuating the population*” and had saved many lives. UNICEF did however point out that its efforts on other field – for instance its polio immunization campaign for children- were hindered by well known problems, such as the lack of available statistical data, since **no reliable census** has taken place in Pakistan in decades.

It should be pointed out that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB) have quantified the damages caused by the floods in their **Damage Needs Assessment (DNA)**, which is an overview of sector level program strategies and policy options, based on cost of replacing what was lost with a build back better (BBB) / smarter factor: the aim is to provide the strategic underpinnings for medium to long-term post-floods reconstruction and recovery planning, prioritization, and programming. The cost of such a BBB intervention is estimated at

approx. 9,1 billion USD – covering detailed measures on irrigation, housing, agriculture, transport/communications, energy, livelihood support, education, health, water/sanitation. Whether the International Community would be able to help Pakistan in meeting this cost was the main topic to be examined by the Pakistan Development Forum, scheduled to take place in mid-November in Islamabad.

The DNA is, however, a different exercise from the UNOCHA **Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan** – which deals only with the immediate relief needs, without a reconstruction element. As the EP Delegation was told, at the end of October, the amount thus required was 2 billion USD – with **62% of this being still unmet**. Particularly on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, only 23% of the UN funding needs were covered, meaning that “*a desperate situation in the camps (...) with cases of malaria, dengue fever and even cholera due to the stagnant water*” was likely to continue.

## II. EU response: humanitarian aid and trade measures

### Emergency assistance...

The total amount of floods-related European assistance committed or pledged amounted, as of 25 October, to 415 million Euros: 150 million from the EU budget (ECHO), and 300 million in bilateral aid from the 27 Member-States (with, however, huge variations reflecting different historical ties or political priorities: thus, the French support, marginally bigger than Luxembourg's, amounted to one fiftieth of the one coming from the UK).



Swat valley after the floods - helicopter view

The international organisations and Government authorities met by the EP Delegation were, generally, very supportive of the role ECHO has played (“*highly competent, open door policy, good coordination*”). On top of the 150 million Euros already allocated, the EP Delegation was informed that the EU is however about to propose a major reshuffle in its ongoing assistance portfolio, redirecting **114 million euros** (in support of rehabilitation of community infrastructure and restoration of livelihoods in flood affected areas across the country). This is to be complemented with **another 18 million Euros** from the Instrument for Stability for support in repair of governance infrastructure and settling administrative and legal issues that affected the flood hit population (ID-cards, certificates, land registration, disputes, etc).

It should be remembered at this stage that, currently, about a quarter of the EU aid package is directed through the Government, with the rest channelled mostly thorough UN agencies and International NGOs ; when discussing the precise allocation of the € 114 million with Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, Minister of State for Economics and Finance, the EP Delegation was informed that the Government would wish “*50% of this amount to be granted via budget support*”, arguing

that this “*would create fiscal space*” for the Government while avoiding the danger of “*re-prioritisation*”. Since the funds in question are likely to be channelled via the Development Cooperation Instrument, Members of the EP Delegation pointed out that the Development Committee might have reservations on such a course of action – and that it would perhaps be wiser to re-examine this precise proposal.

#### ...and its limits

While fully acknowledging the extent of the problems Pakistan has to tackle, the EP Delegation also wanted to share frankly with their interlocutors in Government and Parliament the challenges elected representatives such as MEPs currently face with their electorate when defending international aid - especially since the European economies have not yet recovered from the recent financial & economic crisis: it is important that the EP can justify to European taxpayers that aid reaches the most vulnerable and that the right monitoring systems are in place to ensure transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, the EP Delegation raised directly the issue of **widening the tax base and ending tax exemptions** loopholes in Pakistan itself, feeling such measures are necessary under the Government's own reform programme towards economic stabilisation and sustained economic revival. Such steps would, on one hand, allow generating and enhancing the maximum possible domestic resource mobilisation for reconstruction and long term development, and, on the other, also demonstrate to the European taxpayer that all Pakistanis, irrespective of their income, are contributing to this effort according to their means.

The current weaknesses in the macro-economic framework in general and the **income tax system**, in particular, were debated widely; from what the Delegation was told, the tax to GDP ratio in Pakistan was just 9%, meaning the country ranked 155 of 179 countries surveyed. Thus, today, only about 1,6 million Pakistanis pay any income tax at all: this is 1% of the population - and effectively means the only social category that pays such taxes are the civil servants who, by definition, cannot avoid them. With the exception of **Ch. Nisar Ali Khan**, Leader of the opposition (PML-N), who felt that “*it is a myth that the rich do not pay taxes*”, this view was not really contested at other meetings which tackled the issue. As the EP Delegation was told, most landlords “*have never even seen an income tax declaration*” - with the debate for their taxation going on for the past 20 years. Since this was promised many times in the past, as some interlocutors of the Delegation stressed, “*credibility is now an issue*”, even though it was acknowledged that the presentation from the Government on such issues at the last Friends of Democratic Pakistan meeting in Brussels was “*the best seen in many years*”; as political will is clearly needed, it was therefore hoped that, as Prime Minister Gilani has stated, the floods could

now be turned into an opportunity and allow progress on this front.



It would be a mistake to consider that the fiscal problems Pakistan faces are a cause, not a symptom; the Delegation was therefore much encouraged by the strong words of **Speaker Fehmida Mirza** who, very openly, agreed that “*tax reform was an absolute priority*”, sharing with the Delegation her concern on indirect taxes: “*how do you want to tax the same people again and again?*”. While, therefore, a special one-time “*flood tax*” might be needed in the short term, this would not help alleviating the chronic problems

Pakistan faces with its fiscal deficit. As **Senator Rabbani**, Chair of the Constitutional Reforms Committee, stressed it to MEPs, so far *"it has been the élite which has prevented such steps from being taken. This is an intermix: bureaucracy -civil and military-, feudal lords, industrialists"*. If no measures are taken *"the middle class (...) will be crushed; once it goes, there will be a vacuum between the very rich and the ultra poor, which will result in a destabilisation effect"*. Therefore, the priority should be *"to get the upper class in the net"*.

### Trade, not aid

The EU remains Pakistan's major trade partner (worth € 7,6 billion) ; nonetheless, one of the main conclusions of the D-SAS delegation which had visited Pakistan back in February 2009, had been to call the European Commission to

*make every possible effort, especially in terms of trade policy, to ensure that the EU remains constructively engaged with Pakistan (...) While the EC-Pakistan 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Cooperation Agreement, agreed in 2004, is a step in the positive direction, MEPs are not convinced that, since, enough has been done.*

The same conclusion remains valid today (even more so) ; however, the discussion on examining the 2014 eligibility of Pakistan for the EU's special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance (known as GSP+) is ongoing since mid-2010, and the EC has now presented, following the floods, new proposals on "emergency autonomous trade preferences" for the next 3 years. These proposals amount to almost €900 million in import value, mainly on textiles.

**Prime Minister Gilani**, during a meeting with the EP Delegation, underlined that **market access** remained a key priority for Pakistan, stressing that trade facilitation would mean that *"the benefits trickle down much faster to the people"*; the "multiplier effect" of enhanced trade allows for progress on the overall socio/economic environment -- and, from this point of view, the initiative on the autonomous trade preferences was really appreciated. Pakistan, the PM reminded, counted today 2,5 million IDPs - and had already faced significant challenges even before the floods ; these were however unique since previous natural disasters, such as the 2005 earthquake, *"had been confined to one region. Now the whole country has been hit, including the food basket of Pakistan"*.



Always on the autonomous trade preferences, both **PM Gilani and Foreign Minister Qureshi** acknowledged the role the European Parliament would have to play in a post-Lisbon context, and hoped the process would be smooth in INTA -- a hope certainly shared by the South Asia Delegation; as to what

would happen at the expiry of these preferences, the PM expressed his conviction that, *"by 2014 we will be exporting under GSP+ to the EU"*. On the same issue, the Foreign Minister had underlined that Pakistan *"has ratified all 27 [related] international conventions not only because we want market access, but because this is our political agenda"*.

## GSP+ eligibility: challenges ahead

While the EP Delegation was, indeed, certainly impressed with Pakistan's initiative to ratify on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010 the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as the Convention Against Torture (CAT), Members reminded that a strong human rights conditionality element was inherent in the **GSP+ exercise** - as recently seen with Sri Lanka failing to see the scheme extended. Pakistan's ratification of the ICCPR and the CAT could therefore allow progress also on trade matters, as long as the Conventions in question were effectively implemented: for this to take place, ratification should have been without reservations (as the EP had invited Islamabad to do by its Plenary Resolution on 20/5/2010<sup>1</sup>), or at least with reservations that would have been transparent and specific in scope.

Unfortunately, these **reservations to the ICCPR** currently apply to key provisions -such as freedom of opinion, right to life, elections, participation in public affairs, gender equality, torture and cruel punishment, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of opinion, liberty of movement, expulsion of aliens, as well as the recognition of statutory reporting to the UN's human rights committee. As things stand, therefore, the Delegation conveyed the fear that Pakistan may be accepting a number of human rights obligations under the ICCPR but not the Covenant as such --- which could hinder steps to GSP+ eligibility when the decision is taken. On the other hand, the Delegation was encouraged by the fact that this was discussed very openly with both Prime Minister Gilani and Foreign Minister Qureshi, who both had a grasp of the problem: while the Foreign Minister pleaded that "*at times, you have to be understanding (...) there are certain difficulties, at time we seriously have some capacity limitations*" and that "*there is a certain mindset...this is a big step forward*", the PM informed the Delegation that the Foreign Ministry was "*in the process of convening an intra-ministerial meeting to look into the matter*". It was therefore hoped that, at the expiry of the trade autonomous measures ("*a 3 year cushion*" - FM Qureshi) this would have been solved. Speaker Mirza, on her side, accepted that "*the situation was not ideal*", but stressed that "*we are evolving*" and that parliamentary resolutions on the ratifications were passed unanimously.

### III. Political landscape & constitutional reforms

#### Constitutional reforms: the XVIII<sup>th</sup> amendment

In April 2010 the two Houses of Parliament adopted, by unanimity, the 18th Amendment of the constitution; while this meant abolishing the notorious article 58(2)b, which allowed the President to dissolve Parliament at his discretion, the reforms went far beyond, restoring they key features of the 1973 constitution: a parliamentary system of government and significant competencies for the provinces. Thus, important matters such as social legislation, family law and criminal law will now be part of the provinces' exclusive competencies.

<sup>1</sup> Art. 14 ; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0194+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>



Explaining these reforms to the EP Delegation, **Senator Rabbani**, who chaired the Committee on Constitutional Reforms, underlined that the Constitution set as a limit the date of 30/6/2011 to complete the devolution; instead of waiting for the last day to go for a radical change (big bang scenario), it was preferred to follow a gradual process - even though the difficulties remained tremendous in financial & administrative terms, since this meant "*restructuring the states with 18 to 22 federal ministries transferred to the provinces*". In the past, the Senator regretted, the basic mindset in Pakistan had been to see in a strong Islamabad the guarantee of the country's unity - and this even meant, sometimes, "*questioning the patriotism of the provinces*".

The XVIII<sup>th</sup> amendment was, therefore, "*a major paradigm shift in our political culture*", which would resuscitate the quasi dormant **Council of Common Interest**, i.e. the body which brings together the PM and the Chief Ministers of each province - and which has only been convened 11 times in the past 30 years. Likewise, the **National Finance Commission** would be involved in defining the consequences of financial federalism; as was stressed by M. Nisar Ali Khan, Leader of the opposition, for the 1st time Punjab had thus accepted the Balochistan demand that the budget should not be redistributed by following the demographic criterion only; "*this would have been impossible under the Musharraf regime*" - which means that "*democracy provides the answers*", and "*devolution was the way*".

#### Electoral reforms in the aftermath of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> amendment

On the basis of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> amendment, the federal parliament now needs to adopt the relevant primary legislation; this also applies to electoral reforms in order to provide a credible and transparent framework for the next parliamentary elections, due in 2013. These issues include candidacy requirements, transparency (particularly as regards election results), the neutrality of care-taker governments, election tribunals (including their timing and appointment mechanism), the electoral roll and electoral offences.

On the other hand, 83 EU recommendations on all these issues already exist - and are included in the elections report of the last 2008 EU EOM, led by Chief Observer M. Galher MEP (EPP, D); unfortunately, although they were widely accepted by the political stakeholders, very few of them have been addressed so far. With the EU committed to support democratic Pakistan, and to work with it to address electoral reforms on the basis of the EU EOM recommendations, two programmes of cooperation assistance focus specifically on support to the National Assembly: for the EP Delegation, the Election Commission of Pakistan has of course an important role to play but it can not substitute the Parliament in addressing the legislative framework.

The DSAS delegation would therefore recommend tapping into the successful example of the Parliamentary Committee for constitutional reforms, and creating an all-party Select Committee within the National Assembly to deal specifically with the matter. The issue was raised with the Speaker, who felt that "*eventually this will come, this is a priority...but resources are a problem*"

#### Political landscape: contrasted views

Met in separate meetings, **Speaker Fehmida Mirza** (PPPP) and **Ch. Nisar Ali Khan**, Leader of the opposition (PML-N) often addressed the same subjects, but from very different prisms - vividly demonstrating to the EP Delegation the variety of political viewpoints which can be observed in modern democratic Pakistan. Thus, the Speaker underlined the Parliament "*was*

*becoming stronger each day*", whereas the Leader of the Opposition lamented that *"even now, many decisions are taken outside the National Assembly, which is just rubber-stamping"*.

Both, however, agreed on the sacrifices the country had done to return to democracy; the Speaker acknowledged that *"a policy of reconciliation is difficult"*, stressing that *"this is what we are following"*, even though *"consensus takes time to build"*. On the other hand, for the opposition, *"if Benazir Bhutto was alive today, this would be a different Pakistan"*: unfortunately, *"the spirit of 2008 is no longer"*. Ch. Nisar Ali Khan underlined the opposition still wanted to work with the Government, but was prevented from doing so from a *"total lack of transparency; corruption persists – and this is the single biggest problem the people of Pakistan want to see addressed"*.

On this precise issue, the Speaker had insisted that *"we believe in transparency"*, which was why *"the Chairmanship of important Committees, such as the Public Accounts Committee, has been left to the opposition"*. The opposition, however, argued that it was still blocking at the National Assembly the accountability bill since, the way it was currently presented, *"this would be a recipe for disaster"*. Ch. Nisar Ali Khan stressed that the bill should apply to everybody *"including the army"* and should be approved in a bipartisan way, also in order to facilitate *"international legal cooperation on anti-corruption cases"*. Furthermore, while for the Speaker *"the judiciary is clearly independent"*, the opposition saw *"constant war between them and the government"*.

Both the Speaker and the Leader of the opposition, however, underlined the necessity to preserve the democratic process; Dr Mirza reminded that National Security had thus been debated, albeit in camera, at the National Assembly - and, for the first time, in presence of the law enforcement agencies. Military successes in the Swat valley, she insisted, were possible only because of the political ownership of the process. Likewise, Ch. Nisar Ali Khan stressed that the role of the Army during the post-floods response was commendable, but *"the Army was at the disposal of the Government; they should not get the credit separately"*: the Speaker was also keen to underline civilian supremacy over the military, stressing that the Army had helped, but *"was paid for it"*, and *"at the Prime Minister's permission and orders"*. Thus, if, for the Leader of the Opposition one couldn't *"bet on the Government completing its tenure"*, change should only come *"through the democratic process"*.

## IV. Conclusions

- First and foremost, the EP South Asia Delegation would like to reaffirm, in the name of the European Parliament, its sympathy and solidarity with all those who have been affected by the floods; the Delegation will continue to observe developments on the post-floods response and work in order for the issue to remain on the European agenda.

### *International assistance*

- The EP Delegation is dismayed by the fact that, despite the aid which came from the EU and its member-states, the emergency targets set by the UNOCHA under the Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan are still far from being met; the Delegation would welcome any additional aid that could help meet these targets, either from the EU budget, either directly from the Member States - while noting their very uneven contribution.

### *Macroeconomic reforms*

- The EP Delegation is encouraged by the fact that the root solutions to the macro-economic problems of Pakistan are understood domestically and that decisive efforts to address them, such as widening the tax base, are about to be undertaken; the Delegation would welcome, with the implementation of such reforms, parallel progress on debt relief / debt alleviation.

### *EU/Pakistan trade relations*

- Especially in view of the "slow rolling tsunami" that hit Pakistan, the D-SAS delegation believes that the emergency autonomous trade measures proposal submitted by the EC was more than justified; the Delegation is therefore looking forward to reporting back on this issue to the EP's own International Trade Committee, where it would call for a smooth and swift examination of the EC's trade proposals.
- The EP Delegation also welcomes warmly the ratification of the ICCPR and the CAT. The Delegation would however suggest to the Government of Pakistan to consider withdrawing or reformulating the reservations which have been submitted, in order to facilitate subsequent GSP+ eligibility; reformulation could mean making the reservations in question specific and transparent in nature, thus abiding to the general rules which the UN Human Rights Committee has laid on incompatibility of reservations with the ICCPR.

### *Interparliamentary cooperation*

- The Delegation would very much welcome a visit from their counterparts of all parties of the National Assembly in order to develop stronger relations between the two bodies and continue the discussions from this visit, tackling, more specifically, electoral reforms issues.

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# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH SOUTH ASIA

*8<sup>th</sup> EP/Pakistan Interparliamentary Meeting, Islamabad*

**30 October - 1 November 2010**

### **list of participants**

#### Members

**Ms Jean LAMBERT**  
*Chair of South Asia Delegation*

#### Group

Greens/EFA

#### Country

GB

**Mr Thijs BERMAN**  
*Development Committee*  
*Chair of the Delegation for relations with Afghanistan*

S-D

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#### European Parliament Officials

Mr Philippe KAMARIS

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DG EXPO

#### Political advisors

Ms Sabine MEYER

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH SOUTH ASIA

**PRESS RELEASE**

Islamabad, November 1<sup>st</sup>

**EP Delegation for Relations with South Asia rounds up talks in the framework of the 8<sup>th</sup> EP/Pakistan Interparliamentary Meeting**

A 4-strong delegation, led by Ms Jean Lambert (Greens/UK), Chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with South Asia, visited Pakistan from Oct 30<sup>th</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup> for the 8<sup>th</sup> EP/Pakistan Interparliamentary meeting.

The Members of European Parliament (MEPs) met with Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Speaker Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Qureshi, Senator Mian Raza Rabbani, opposition leader (PML-N) Nisar Ali Khan and Lt. Gen. Nadeem Ahmed, Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority. Representatives of the international community and of the civil society were also met by MEPs during their stay in Islamabad.

Reflecting a key priority area for the European Parliament, MEPs flew to flood-affected areas in order to see with their own eyes the catastrophic results of the July monsoon rains and reaffirmed their sympathy and solidarity with all those who have been affected, recognising the further pressures placed on the authorities of Pakistan in protecting its people. The EP Delegation understands that, for the Government, "trade, not aid" is an important goal and generally welcomes the trade related proposals the European Commission has already tabled in these times of need. The EP Delegation also welcomes, in the same vein, the stated efforts of the Government in order to widen the tax base and trust this will lead to the necessary economic reforms.

The Delegation is also encouraged by the steps Pakistan has taken in order to ensure its eligibility for the additional trade preferences foreseen by the GSP+ instrument, and namely the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and of the Convention against torture (CAT). These two key international conventions on human rights, however, will have to be fully implemented for the EU's special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance to apply as well. MEPs shared with fellow parliamentarians their strong concern that the reservations that have accompanied the ratification process could hinder this implementation.

*The following Members participated in the mission: Ms Jean Lambert (Greens, UK) and M. Thijs Berman (Socialists and Democrats, the Netherlands), as well as officials from the EP Secretariat / Political Groups (Greens).*

*For more information:*

*[www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu)*

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**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTH ASIA**

**8<sup>th</sup> EP/Pakistan Interparliamentary Meeting, Islamabad  
30 October - 1 November 2010**

**PROGRAMME**

<b>Saturday, 30 October</b>		<b>ISLAMABAD</b>
03:30 am	arrival of the Delegation Flight QR 398 at Benazir Bhutto Islamabad Airport transfer to <i>Serena Hotel, Khayaban-e-Suhrawardy, Islamabad, Pakistan</i>	
09:40-10:15	Briefing by the European Union HoD, M. Jan de Kok <i>Serena Hotel</i>	
10:30-11:30	Meeting with Ms. Karen Allen, Deputy Representative UNICEF <i>90 Margalla Road, F-8/2</i>	
12:00 - 13:00	Meeting with Mr. Rune Stroem, Asian Development Bank <i>Level 8, Serena Office Complex, Khayaban e Suharwardy</i>	
13:15 - 14:15	Meeting with M. Rauf Engin Soysal, UN Special Envoy for assistance to Pakistan <i>Serena Hotel, Mashroobat Lobby lounge</i>	
14:30 - 15:30	Meeting with M. Rachid Benmessadoud, World Bank, <i>Serena Hotel, Jhelum Meeting room</i>	
16:00-17:00	Meeting with Lt General (rtd) Nadeem Ahmed, Chair of the National Disaster Management Authority, <i>Operations Room, NDMA, Prime Minister's Secretariat</i>	
17:30 - 18:15	Meeting with Mr Martin Mogwamja, UNOCHA Humanitarian Coordinator <i>Serena Hotel, Indus meeting room</i>	
18:30 - 20:00	Reception, Eu Delegation HoD residence, <i>64 Ataturk Road, G6/3</i>	
<b>Sunday, 31 October</b>		<b>ISLAMABAD + VICINITY</b>
09:00-10:00	Operational briefing by M. John Hayward, ECHO on post-floods operations <i>Serena Hotel</i>	
10:30	Transfer to Army Heliport for field-trip  Briefing by National Disaster Management Authority  Flood affected areas (Kalam, Bahrain, Madain):	

overfly by Army / NDMA helicopter

Briefing at Khuzahela Army base on early recovery and reconstruction operations  
*XVIth division HQ*

- 17:00 Return to Islamabad
- 17:30 - 18:30 Meeting with M. Pascal Cuttat,  
Head of Delegation, ICRC , 12, Street 83, G 6/4
- 18:30-19:30 Meeting with Ms Simona Gallota, on IfS programmes  
(Instrument for Stability / Pakistan), Serena Hotel, Lobby

**Monday, 1 November**

**ISLAMABAD**

- 09:30-10:20 Meeting with Senator Rabbani on XVIIIth amendment / regional devolution issues  
*National Assembly*
- 10:30-11:30 Meeting with Speaker, Dr Fehmida Mirza,  
*Speakers office, National Assembly*
- 12:30 – 14:00 Working lunch with the Leader of the Opposition,  
Ch. Nisar Ali Khan, (PML-N)  
*Zamana restaurant, Serena Hotel*
- 14:30-15:30 Meeting with Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani (PPP),  
*in presence of*  
Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, Minister of State for Economics and Finance  
*Prime Minister House*
- 16:00 - 17:30 Meeting with Mr Makhdoom Shah M. Qureshi, Foreign Minister  
*Ministry of Foreign Affairs,*  
*Constitution Avenue, G5*
- 17:45 – 18:15 *Coordination meeting with Ambassador de Kok , HoD, Serena Hotel*
- 18:30 - 19:30 Press Conference  
*Sheesh Mahall Hall 1, Serena Hotel*
- 19:40 - 21:00 Working dinner with Press Correspondents & Civil society  
*Emmanuel Giroud (AFP), Orla Guerin (BBC), Dr Moeed Peerzada (Dunya), Ms*  
*Mariana Baabar (The News), Ms Samina Ahmed (ICG)*
- 21:00 - 21:30 Transfer to the Benazir Bhutto Int'l Airport
- 21:45 – 22:15 *Final debriefing with EU Delegation*
- 03:10 Flight TG350 ISB/BKK