



Delegation for Northern cooperation and for relations with Switzerland and Norway and to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee

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MINUTES

of the meeting of 4 May 2022, 15.00-17.00

Room Salvador de Madariaga SDM S.5

Strasbourg

The meeting opened at 15.07 on Wednesday, 4 May 2022, with Andreas Schwab (Chair) presiding.

1. Adoption of the draft Agenda

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Election of the first DEEA Vice-Chair

Following the departure of the former first Vice-Chair, Mr Giegold, a new first Vice-Chair was appointed. **Mr Claude GRUFFAT (The Greens, FR)** proposed **Ms Anna DEPARNAY-GRUNENBERG (The Greens, DE)**. She was the only candidate and was elected by acclamation.

3. State of play of the EU-Switzerland relations, including EU-Swiss cooperation in relation to the war in Ukraine.

Members exchanged views with **Mr Benedikt WÜRTH, Chair of the Swiss delegation to the EP**. Mr WÜRTH underscored that the recent events in Ukraine have brought the EU and Switzerland closer. He regretted that the breakdown of the IFA negotiations had overshadowed EU-Swiss relations for the last year, assuring Members that Switzerland remained a trustworthy and reliable partner. He provided information about the Swiss government's negotiation guidelines for a future EU-Switzerland relation of 23 February 2022, reaffirming their will to continue the bilateral path. He reported that the EU and Switzerland were holding explanatory talks and hoped that both sides would be soon ready to adopt a formal new negotiating mandate. Finally, he referred to the good cooperation in relation to the war in Ukraine and underlined that Switzerland is applying all EU sanctions against Russia.

Mr GRUDLER (Renew, FR) applauded the Federal Council's guidelines for a new relationship with the EU and considered it was a good starting point to know what kind of relationship Switzerland wanted to have with the EU. He voiced his reserves about the sectoral approach; he considered that an institutional framework regulating EU-Switzerland relations was necessary. He welcomed the good cooperation on Ukraine and the fact that Switzerland was aligned with EU sanctions, which had not been the case in 2014. He reflected about the existing momentum for EU-Switzerland relations and hoped that both sides were able to seize this opportunity. Finally, he asked about the upcoming popular vote on raising Switzerland's contribution to Frontex, to be held next 15 May.

Mr PANZA (ID, IT) enquired about Switzerland's plans in relation to trans-border workers. He also asked about how the alignment of Switzerland with EU sanctions was affecting the country's historical neutrality. Finally, as REGIO future rapporteur for the revision of the trans-European transport network, a crucial infrastructure for the EU and Switzerland, he asked Mr Würth's views on how this network is currently working in his country.

Mr MARKEY (EPP, IE) underlined the importance of keeping Europe's unity in support of Ukraine and against Russia. With the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, he believed that the differences between the EU and Switzerland were very small and the opportunities big.

Mr KRASNODEBSKI (ECR, PL) asked how the war in Ukraine had changed Swiss citizens' views of the EU and the new opportunities arising for Switzerland and the EU. He also reflected about the current refugee influx, which is also affecting Switzerland. He considered that it was necessary to revisit the EU relocation mechanism.

Ms DEPARNAY-GRUNENBERG (The Greens, DE) enquired how Switzerland is dealing with the effects of the war in Ukraine on energy and agriculture, in particular about the country's dependency on cereal and wheat from Ukraine.

Ms SCHALDEMOSE (S&D, DK) called for a fresh start in EU-Switzerland relations. The war in Ukraine has changed the positions of many Member States on fundamental issues (Finland and Sweden are considering joining NATO and Denmark would hold a referendum on its opt-out of EU defence policy). She encouraged both sides to take this momentum and start afresh.

Mr WÜRTH agreed that the war in Ukraine had created a new momentum for the EU and Switzerland. Regarding sectoral/horizontal cooperation, he called for pragmatism. In this view, the goal would be a combination of both as far as it works for both sides. As regards the upcoming popular vote on Frontex, he was optimistic. According to the surveys, over 70% of the voters would support that Switzerland continues to contribute to Frontex. Concerning cross border workers, the Swiss position would remain the same. He emphasised the importance of cross border workers for neighbouring regions and the interest of both sides that the existing scheme worked well. In relation to Swiss neutrality in the context of the war of Ukraine, he considered that the traditional concept of neutrality needed to be reviewed. He pointed out that there was no debate in Switzerland about joining NATO or sending arms to Ukraine, but they are committed to applying EU sanctions and contributing with humanitarian aid and receiving refugees. He also acknowledged that this war had shown how dependent Switzerland and other European countries are on energy and agriculture and the need to work together to reduce that dependency.

Mr SCHWAB welcomed Mr WÜRTH's positive and constructive message and called for pragmatism. In his view, all bilateral agreements need to be covered by an overarching umbrella, which gives them consistency. He asked how the European Parliament could help the Swiss Parliament to overcome the existing difficulties. Mr WÜRTH indicated that the main problem continued to be the free movement of people. This is still a very sensitive issue for Swiss citizens. Mr SCHWAB suggested that both Parliaments take a leading role in defining a cooperation that works for both sides and suggested that during the next IPM meeting they could hold a structured dialogue on the remaining open issues and move forward.

Mr WÜRTH agreed on the need to be pragmatic and constructive and hoped that new Federal Council's proposal could be the basis for a new mandate. He underlined that this proposal also took into account those issues that would have the support of the Swiss population in a popular vote.

Mr SCHWAB offered to organise a new meeting in July, in the same format as this meeting, if the Swiss colleagues thought that could help to move things forward.

4. Preparations for the 57th EEA JPC meeting, which will take place in Oslo, on 23-25 May 2022

The Chair informed Members about the upcoming 57th EEA JPC meeting and regretted that only three Members had expressed their wish to take part in the mission. He was not able to travel to Oslo due to another mission. He conveyed the disappointment of the EEA EFTA Bureau Members at the low level of participation by MEPs.

He took this opportunity to recall that the DEEA covered 10 different bodies, so it was difficult to attend and contribute to all the meetings. He recalled his 2019 proposal to appoint leading Members for each body/group of bodies, which would allow the European Parliament to follow more closely and participate more actively in each forum.

Ms SCHALDEMOSE (S&D, DK) agreed that the DEEA has many tasks. E-meetings are an option, but in order to create stronger links and have more interesting conversations, in-person meetings are necessary. She asked for more flexibility when it comes to substitute Members' participation and offered her support.

Mr KRASNODEBSKI (ECR, PL) suggested avoiding ‘green weeks’ as those weeks Members had several missions to attend.

Mr BERGKVIST Erik, S&D (SE) also expressed his commitment to participate actively in the work of the delegation and underlined the need to have in person meetings if possible. However, he highlighted that Members’ agendas were very full with invitations to travel, so it was difficult to attend all meetings.

5. Any other business

No other business was discussed.

The meeting closed at 16.27

**ПРИСЪСТВЕН ЛИСТ/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/
 ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE NIMEKIRI/KATASTAΣH ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/
 LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/POPIS NAZOČNIH/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REĢISTRS/DALYVIŲ SĀRAŠAS/
 JELENLÉTI ÍV/REĢISTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŚCI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/
 LISTĀ DE PREZENTĀ/PREZENČNÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM NAVZOČIH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/NÄRVAROLISTA**

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Claudia Gamon, Andreas Schwab
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Bouλευτές/Members/Députés/Zastupnici/Deputati/Deputāti/ Nariai/Képviselők/Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputati/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Erik Bergkvist, Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg, Christophe Grudler, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Colm Markey, Alessandro Panza, Emma Wiesner
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Zamjenici/ Supplenti/Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantysnariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanți/Náhradníci/ Namestniki/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter
Claude Gruffat, Christel Schaldemose

209 (7)	
216 (3)	
56 (8) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/ Pāievakorra punkt/Σημείο της ημερήσιας διάταξης/Agenda item/Point OJ/Točka dnevnog reda/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkēs punktas/Napirendi pont/Punt Aģenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Punkt på föredragningslistan)	
Mr Benedikt Würtz, Chair of the Swiss Delegation to the EP	Item 4

Наблюдатели/Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatiejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Promatrači/
Osservatori/Nověrotáji/Stebétojai/Megfigyelök/Osservaturi/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/Esimene kutsel/Mε πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair/Sur l'invitation du président/ Na poziv
predsjednika/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 invitación președintelui/
Na pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nōukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Vijeće/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/
Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)

Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Komissionen/Kommission/Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Komisija/Commissione/Bizottság/
Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisia/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)

Европейска служба за външна дейност/Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior/Evropská služba pro vnitřní činnost/
EU-Udenrigstjenesten/Europäischer Auswärtiger Dienst/Euroopa väliseenistus/Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Εξωτερικής Δράσης/European
External Action Service/Service européen pour l'action extérieure/Europska služba za vanjsko djelovanje/Servizio europeo per l'azione
esterna/Eiropas Ārējās darbības dienests/Europos išorės veiksmų tarnyba/Európai Külügyi Szolgálat/Servizz Ewropew ghall-Azzjoni
Externa/Europese dienst voor extern optreden/Européjska Služba Działalń Zewnętrznych/Serviço Europeu para a Ação Externa/
Serviciul european pentru acțiune externă/Európska služba pre vonkajšiu činnosť/Evropska služba za zunanje delovanje/Euroopan
ulkosuhdehallinto/Europeiska avdelningen för yttrre åtgärd (*)

Други институции и органи/Otras instituciones y organismos/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner og organer/Andere
Organe und Einrichtungen/Muud institutsioonid ja organid/Λοιπά θεσμικά όργανα και οργανισμοί/Other institutions and bodies/Autres
institutions et organes/Druge institucije i tijela/Altre istituzioni e altri organi/Citas iestādes un struktūras/Kitos institucijos ir įstaigos/
Más intézmények és szervek/Istituzzjonijiet u korpi oħra/Andere instellingen en organen/Inne instytucje i organy/Outras instituições
e outros órgãos/Alte instituições și organe/Iné inštitúcie a orgány/Muut toimielimet ja elimet/Andra institutioner och organ

Други участници/Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης παρόντες/Other participants/Autres participants/Drugi sudionici/Altri partecipanti/Cíti klátesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Parteicipanti ohra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Altı participantı/Iní účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare

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/Secrétaire des groupes politiques/Tajništvo klubova zastupnika/Segreteria grupperi politici/Politisko grupu sekretariáts/Frakcijų sekretoriai/Képviselőcsoportok titkársága/Segretariat gruppi političi/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secretariado dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupín/Sekretariat političnih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristöt/De politiska gruppernas sekretariat

PPE	
S&D	Jorgen Siil
Renew	Anna Cicha
ID	Alexandre Heuzey
Verts/ALE	
ECR	
The Left	
NI	

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Генерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/ Directorate-General/Direction générale/Glavna uprava/Direzione generale/Generaldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/ Direttorato Generali/Directoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/Pääsasto/Generaldirektorat	
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Adam Isaacs, Maria Álvarez López	
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Rosa-Maria Licop Cabo	

- * (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chairman/Président/Predsjednik/Priekšsēdētājs/
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Tjänsteman