EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH SWITZERLAND, ICELAND, AND NORWAY AND TO THE EEA JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of the

MEETING (Norway)

on

Tuesday, 20 March 2007

Brussels

CONTENTS

1. Adoption of the draft agenda.....2

2. Election of a first Vice-Chair of the Delegation.....2

3. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held in Strasbourg on 6 July 2006.....2

With a view to the 24th EU-Norway Interparliamentary Meeting to be held in Brussels on 26-27 March 2007

4. Briefing by :
   - Mr. Matthias BRINKMANN, Head of Unit, representing the European Commission. on EU Norway relations.....2

   followed by an exchange of views.....2

5. Consideration of the programme and the draft agenda of the Interparliamentary Meeting
   - Nomination of first EP speakers.....3

6. Any other business.....3

7. Date and place of the next meeting.....4

26 March 2007/KL/HO

Annexes: - List of participants

The meeting opened at 16:30 with Ms WALLIS in the chair. She apologised for the late start of the meeting as Ambassador SLETNES unfortunately was late.

1.
Draft agenda was adopted.

2.
Mrs WALLIS started by presenting Mr Aloyzas SAKALAS (PES) as the candidate from the PES Group for the 1st Vice-Chair, since Mrs Ewa HEDKVIST PETERSEN (PES) was no longer a member of the European Parliament. Mr SAKALAS confirmed his candidature and that he had duly up-dated his declaration of financial interests. Mr SAKALAS was elected 1st Vice-Chair by acclamation; he thanked the members for their support and proclaimed that he shall fulfil his duties in the Delegation.

3.
The minutes from the Strasbourg meeting on 6 July 2006 had been distributed to the member prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved.

With a view to the 25th EU-Norway Interparliamentary Meeting to be held in Brussels on 26-27 March 2007

4.
As Ambassador SLETNES unfortunately had still not joined the meeting, Mr BRINKMANN was invited to start his briefing.

Mr BRINKMANN started by bringing up the *enlargement* of the EU and of the EEA, and noted the importance of equal treatment between all Member States. He brought up the discussions between EU-Norway on financial aid to the new Member States. Furthermore, he said it is time to review the *agricultural product trade* between Norway and the EU, since negotiations are open but nothing seems to be happening in this area. There was also the *'salmon problem'*, as well as the issue of *energy security*, where Mr BRINKMANN especially noted the Green Paper on Sustainable Energy and on Maritime Policies, both from 2006, as well as the Northern Dimension Conference. Finally, he also discussed the Norwegian *EEA+ action plan*, and how there can clearly be noted an increase in Norwegian activity within the Union, both physically and in writing.

Mr JANOWSKI asked the first question, concerning the Norwegians view of *climate change* and the scientific work being done on this. The second question came from Mr SAKALAS, who wondered about the Norwegian *intentions of joining* the Union.

Mr BRINKMANN answered Mr JANOWSKI that this really was a question for the Norwegian Ambassador, but that it also is a concern of the Commission. He believes that Norway and the EU agrees on the importance to animals, indigenous populations and the environment as a whole to focus on the issue, especially in the Arctic regions where one can see the climate changes clearly. He mentioned the *Norwegian Solidarity Fund* as a good source for climate change issues. As for Mr SAKALAS' question, Mr BRINKMANN said that Norway had negotiated twice for membership of the EC, but that there had not been majority in the referenda held on the negotiation results. According to the latest opinion polls, there was not a majority for joining the Union. The problems with the constitution had brought much criticism towards the EU. He also said that it is only to be seen in the elections two years from now, but that he doubts any change regarding this in the near future. As it is now Mr BRINKMANN said, the Norwegians are *following acquis without say*, as the question of sovereignty is important for Norway; the Commission points however to the decreased sovereignty of Norway within the EEA.

Mrs WALLIS regretted that the Norwegian Ambassador had not showed up, but said that she would herself try to give some information on Norway's position as she had met with Ambassador SLETNES the previous week in Strasbourg. Mrs WALLIS continued by commenting on the increased activity from the Norwegians in the EU as regards the EEA+ action plan, and stated that this enhanced relationship is something that there ought to be further discussions about. She also asked Mr BRINKMANN for a more *coherent strategy from the Commission towards the High North*.

Mr BRINKMANN declared that he found it interesting, although not being an expert on the subject (High North). He underlined that energy, environment and maritime issues are overlapping with other policies and not just concern the High North. It is a priority for the Commission, but not The Priority. He would convey the concerns of the Delegation to the Commission.

5.
The Chair presented the draft programme and the draft agenda of the coming IPM between EU-Norway on 26-27 March 2007 in Brussels.

The proposal for nomination of first EP speakers was adopted, namely:

Item 2: Policies of the High North **Mrs Diana WALLIS**

Item 3: EEA legislation process
The Services Directive **Mrs Diana WALLIS**
EEA enlargements **Mr Mierczyslaw JANOWSKI (27/3)**

Item 4: Promotion of the decent work agenda **Mrs Marie PANAYOTOPOULOS (27/3)**

Item 5: Energy and environment **Mr Paul RÜBIG (26/3)**

Item 6: Maritime and Fisheries policies **Mr Alyn SMITH (t.b.c.)**

Item 7: Demographic developments **Mrs Marie PANAYOTOPOULOS (27/3)**

6.
The Chair briefed members on:
- The debate in April Plenary Session on Swiss-EU relations; especially the issue on the Swiss canton taxes. Following a statement from the Commission, the plenary would probably wind up the debate with a resolution. Mrs WALLIS also thanked members for their support for bringing this issue on the agenda.
- An EFTA Seminar on the Future EU Maritime Policy to be held in Brussels on 6 June 2007. Interested Members of the SINEEA Delegation would be in invited to the Seminar. Further information will be forwarded to members at a later stage.
- The Parliamentary Conference on the Northern Dimension held in Brussels on 28 February-1 March 2007. Mrs WALLIS noted the positive feedback from attendants to the Conference, and looked forward to the arranging of the Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum. She was of the opinion that the EP should play a leading role in this context.
- The establishment of a Commission Representation in Bern, Switzerland.

7.
The next EU-Norway Interparliamentary Meeting is scheduled to take place 26-27 March in Brussels.

*
* *

The meeting closed at 17:20.

DELTAGERLISTE/ANWESENHEITSLISTE/ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/LISTE DE PRESENCE/ELENCO DEI PRESENTI/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/DELTAGARLISTA

Til stede Anwesend Παρόντες Present Presentes Présents Presenti Aanwezig Läsnä Närvarande	Formandskabet/Vorstand/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Ufficio di Presidenza/Mesa/Puhemiehisto/J.L. Presidium: (*) WALLIS (P), BONDE (VP) Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Μέλη/Members/Diputados/Deputés/Deputati/Leden/Deputados/jäsenet/ BARSI-PATAKY, JANOWSKI, PANYOTOPOULOS-CASSIOT, SAKALAS Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suplentes/Suppleants/ Membri supplenti/Plaatsvervangers/Membros suplentes/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter:

Art. 147,7	
Art. 166,3	
Art. 162.6 Endv. Deltog/Weitere Teiln./ Συμμετείχαν επίσης/Also present Participaron igualmente/ Participaient également/ Hanno partecipato altresiτ/ Andere deelnemers/ Outros participantes/ Muut osallistujat/ Dessutom deltog	
(Dagsorden/Tagesordnung Pkt/Ημερήσια Διάταξη Σημεί/Point OJ/Punto OG/Agenda Punt/Ordem do dia-punto/punto orden del dia/ Esityslista Kohta/Föredragningslista punkt):	

* (P) =Formand/Vorsitzender/Πρόεδρος/Chairman/President/Presidente/Voorzitter/Presidente/Puhemies/Ordförande
(VP) =Næstform./Stellv. Vorsitz./?ντιπρόεδρος/Vice-Chairman/Vice-President/Vicepresidente/Varapuhemies Ondervoorz./Vice-Pres./Vicepres/Vice ordförande.

20 March 2007

Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung d. Vorsitzenden/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chairman/Por invitacion del presidente/Sur l'invitation du président/Su invito del presidente/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/A convite do presidente/Puhemiehen kutsusta/
På ordförandens inbjudan:

Radet/Rat/Συμβούλιο/Council/Consejo/Conseil/Consiglio/Raad/Conselho/Neuvosto/Radet: (*)
KRITIKOS

Kommissionen/Kommission/Επιτροπή/Commission/Comision/Commissione/Commissie/Commissão/Komissio/
Kommissionen: (*)
BRINKMANN

German Mission: Dr DEGEN
Swiss Mission: BORGHI

Andre deltagere/Andere Teilnehmer Επίσης Παρόντες/Also present Otros participantes/Autres participants/Altri partecipanti Andere aanwezigen/Outros participantes Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare		
Gruppernes sekretariat Sekretariat der Fraktionen Γραμματεία των Πολ. Ομάδων Secretariat political groups Secr. de los grupos politicos Secr. groupes politiques Segr. dei gruppi politici Secr. van de fracties Secr. dos grupos politicos Puolueryhmien sihteeristö Gruppernas sekretariat	PPE-DE PSE ALDE Verts/ALE GUE/NGL UEN EDD NI	HEISTER GUILLERME KRINGS
Cab. du Président		.
Cab. du Secrétaire Général		
Generaldirektorat Generaldirektion Γενική Διεύθυνση Directorate-General Dirección general Direction générale Direzione generale Directoraat-generaal Direcção general Contrôle financier Service juridique Pääosasto Generaldirektorat	I II III IV V VI VII VIII	SCHULTZ
Udvalgssekretariatet Ausschußsekretariat Γραμματεία επιτροπής Committee secretariat Secretaria de la comisión Secrétariat de la commission Segretariato della commissione Commissiesecretariaat Secretaria de comissão Valiokunnan sihteeristö Utskottssekretariatet		OLSEN
Assist./Βοηθός		d'AGOSTO, MOLLET, LIDEN