EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Delegation for Relations with Switzerland, Iceland and Norway and to the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee

EEA

MINUTES

of the meeting of

8 May 2007

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Mr Gudlaugur Thór THÓRDARSON
(Independence Party, Iceland)

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Enclosed: attendance list

9 May 2007/KL/HO

The meeting opened at 9.05 with Mrs WALLIS in the chair.

Members excused: Mrs ROTH-BEHRENDT, Mr BONDE and Mrs STIHLER

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

Since there were no comments made on the draft agenda, it was adopted. As Mr BONDE and Mr SMITH were not able to attend the meeting the items on Soft Legislation and on Maritime Policy were postponed for the next EEA delegation meeting.

2. Approval of the minutes from the meeting in Brussels on 20 March 2007

The minutes had been distributed to the members prior to the meeting. There were no comments on the minutes, so the minutes were approved.

3. Consideration of the programme and the draft agenda for the EEA JPC meeting

The Chair noted that the CH-IPM is to take place in Bad Ragaz in Switzerland on Sunday 24 June to Tuesday 26 June prior to the EEA JPC meeting in Vaduz on 26-27 June. A general outlining of the programme and draft agenda was made and special attention was given to the fact that members should inform the secretariat if they would attend both of the meetings or just one of them. Mr Joe BORG, Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, would address the JPC meeting on the 27 June on the Future Maritime Policy of the EU. Mr Michael AYRAL, Director, Regulatory Policy, DG Enterprise and Industry, would address the JPC on better lawmaking in the EU, linked to the item on Soft Law in the EEA (rapporteur BONDE).

4. Consideration of the draft reports on The Annual Report on the functioning of the EEA in 2006

Co-rapporteurs: Mrs Diana WALLIS (ALDE, UK)
Mr Gudlaugur Thór THÓRDARSON (Independence Party, Iceland)

Mrs WALLIS gave the floor to Mr Matthias BRINKMANN, Head of Unit, representing the European Commission, to update members on the events and progress of the EEA in 2006.

Mr BRINKMANN started by saying that the EEA work is going well, and that the biggest event right now has been the enlargement with Bulgaria and Romania in January 2007. It has not gone as smoothly as expected and hoped for, specifically in regard to the equal treatment and financial contributions as the EEA EFTA side had not shared the same opinion in these matters. Whilst the technical issues went quite quickly, this has been more difficult, and the negotiations did not manage to give a result in time for January 2007, and so there has been a situation of having two States being members of the EU but not members of the EEA . In March, negotiations ended with the sum of €60 million until 2009. On 27th of April the Joint Committee decided on 70 acts to be incorporated in the EEA Agreement. He mentioned article 82.1A, 82.1B and 82.1C of the Agreement, where 82.1C could be useful in adapting to the new circumstances and an ad hoc group had been established to solve the remaining problems. Finally and in relation to the enlargement, he also mentioned negotiations on emission trading schemes, horizontal food laws as well as the vital importance of progress in the field of free movement of persons, specifically Third Country persons with family members in the EU.

Mr JANOWSKI mentioned the two different financial mechanisms, namely the EEA financial mechanism and the Norwegian bilateral contribution, and asked whether the amount of €60 million relates to both of these. He also asked whether Switzerland as standing outside of the EEA Agreement is providing any form of aid to Bulgaria and Romania.

Mrs WALLIS asked for a comment on the work of the free movement of persons, namely non-active persons such as students.

Mr BRINKMANN answered Mr JANOWSKI that the €60 million is accounted for both contributions and they account for roughly 50/50 of the amount. Concerning Swiss contributions, nothing has been finalised for Bulgaria and Romania as of now, and there has not yet been an answer to the Commission letter that was sent regarding this. Regarding free movement of non-active persons, students are highly welcomed, but the problem lies with the non-active persons with insufficient funds which might burden the social security system of the host country.

Mrs WALLIS noted that there will be a preparatory meeting on 4 June where issues on Switzerland will be further discussed.

Mr SAKALAS, First Vice-Chair, continued on the question on free movement and the future possible enlargement of the Schengen Agreement, and who those candidates could be.

Mr BRINKMANN stated that all of the Member States obviously would be possible candidates, and that Norway and Iceland already are in. There have been talks with both Switzerland and Liechtenstein, and once the necessary changes in these countries have been made, they can opt for joining the Schengen area. He specifically mentioned the cooperation on the fight against fiscal fraud, where Liechtenstein had not yet started to negotiate.

5. Any other business

Mrs WALLIS mentioned two items, namely the EFTA Seminar on the Future EU Maritime Policy and the outcome of a Parliamentary Forum of the Northern Dimension Parliamentary Conference on 28 February - 1 March 2007. The former item has been postponed until autumn and a specific date will be presented later. Concerning the latter, such a Forum should take place every two years, first time in the spring of 2009. There would be no new institution created but rather a coordination of the existing parliamentary assemblies' policies within the Northern Dimension (the Baltic Sea Region and the Arctic Region). The European Parliament Conference of Presidents will consider this proposal at one of its next meetings.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting of the SINEEA delegation is scheduled for 4 June 2007 in Brussels to prepare for the CH IPM in Bad Ragaz.

The EFTA side has expressed the wish to hold the autumn EEA JPC meeting in Strasbourg. The Secretariat is looking into the possibility to hold the meeting during the November Session (14-15/11). Holding the meeting in Strasbourg gives the EFTA side the possibility of observing the plenary sittings and creates contacts to the political groups.

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The meeting finished at 9.45.

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), SAKALAS (VP) Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Μέλη/Members/Diputados/Deputés/Deputati/Leden/Deputados/jäsenet/ JANOWSKI, SKOTTOVA Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suplentes/Suppleants/ Membri supplenti/Plaatsvervangers/Membros suplentes/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter: Apologies: BONDE, ROTH-BEHRENDT, STIHLER

Art. 147,7	
Art. 166,3	
Art. 162.6 Endv. Deltog/Weitere Teiln./ Συμμετείχαν επίσης/Also present Participaron igualmente/ Participaient également/ Hanno partecipato altresιτ/ 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

Norway Mission: DJUPVIK
German Mission: Dr DEGEN

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 CRAYENCOUR
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, LIDEN