EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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

EEA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

on

Wednesday, 26 March 2008
Brussels

Contents

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held in Brussels on 11 October 2007

With a view to the 30th meeting of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee on 29 April 2008 in Svartsengi, Iceland

3. Consideration of the programme and the draft agenda for the Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting

4. Presentation of the draft reports on

   - ***The annual report on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2007***
     EP Co-Rapporteur: Mr Alyn SMITH (Greens/EFA - UK)
   - ***The Health Services in the EEA***
     EP Co-Rapporteur: Mr Paul RÜBIG (EPP-ED - Austria)

   Exchange of views

5. Presentation of the Working document on ***The EEA and its Future Perspectives*** and draft recommendations
   EP Co-Rapporteur : Mrs Diana WALLIS (ALDE - UK) **t.b.c.**

   Exchange of views

6. Any other business

7. Next meeting

The meeting opened at 11.00 with Mrs RAEVA in the Chair

Members excused: Mrs SKOTTOVA, Mr RÜBIG and Mrs WALLIS

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

Due to other engagements, Mrs Wallis, co-rapporteur for the Working document of the EEA and its Future Perspectives (item 5), was not able to attend the meeting today. The item was carried over to the next meeting.

Mr Rübig, co-rapporteur on the Health Services in the EEA was excused and item 4 (b) was postponed for the next meeting.

The draft agenda as modified was adopted.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held in Brussels on 11 October 2007

The minutes had been distributed to the members prior to the meeting.

The minutes were approved.

Mrs RAEVA made some short comments on two of the important proposals from the last meeting. First, on Mr JANOWSKIs proposal on the involvement of local and regional governments in EEA especially in the new member states Mrs RAEVA is looking forward to a better cooperation in this field. Visits of local and regional territorial representatives have taken place in the Parliament but we need to look more critical in the remaining time of this term to see how we continuity of the cooperation with local and regional territories within the EEA can be granted. Second, on the proposal by Mr SAKALAS concerning the European integration and security matters, ambassadors of the latest two new countries (Romania and Bulgaria) could be invited to a forthcoming meeting in Brussels.

Mrs PANAYOTOPOULOS-CASSIOTOU pointed out that even though we can contact representatives from regions and local governments we shouldn't forget the context of framework which is the Treaty. We shouldn't go beyond the powers bestowed upon us by the Treaty.

With a view to the 30th meeting of the EEA Joint Parliamentary Committee on 29 April 2008 in Svartsengi, Iceland

3. Consideration of the programme and the draft agenda for the Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting

The Chair presented the Programme and the draft JPC agenda.

Re Programme
The Programme is covering the 19th EU-Iceland Interparliamentary meeting **and** the First EU-West Nordic Council Interparliamentary meeting on 28 April **as well as** the 30th EEA JPC meeting on 29 April.

Re Draft JPC Agenda Tuesday 29 April
As seen in the agenda (item 4), energy will be the focus of the meeting. Energy Commissioner Mr Andris PIEBALGS had therefore been invited to Iceland to address the JPC on EU Energy policies and the use of renewable energy resources in Europe. Unfortunately Mr PIEBALGS is prevented to come. Mrs RAEVA suggested either to get someone from Mr PIEBALGS cabinet or a high level representative from the energy DG to participate both in the IPM, where energy matters also will be discussed, and in the EEA JPC meeting. The Chair would contact Mr PIELBALGS on this matter.

Mrs RAEVA also suggested that the current situation in Lichtenstein on taxation and secret accounts (Germany) as well as the tax regime in Switzerland could be raised and discussed at the JPC meeting. The Joint Committee/Surveillance Authority could also be asked to comment on this matter too. The Liechtenstein delegation to the JPC could also be asked to comment on this matter.

4. Presentation of the draft reports on

Mr SMITH, co-rapporteur on *The annual report on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement in 2007* had not yet received the first draft of the report from his co-rapporteur. Mr SMITH therefore suggested that the report could be circulated by e-mail to the members of the Committee as soon as it would be available.
The report was postponed to the next EEA prep. meeting.

As Mr RÜBIG was excused, his report will be postponed to the next prep. meeting.
As Mr RAEVA is also a member of the Employment Committee, and a new Commissioner is coming from Cyprus will attend a meeting of this committee, she suggested that if it is necessary, she would be able to help with the drafting of the report.

5. Presentation of the Working document on The EEA and its Future Perspectives and draft recommendations

As Mrs WALLIS might not be able to come to Iceland Mrs RAEVA said that we have to see how to present the report at the JPC meeting

As the EP Co-rapporteur Mrs Diana WALLIS was excused, the item was postponed to the next EEA prep. meeting.

6. Any other business

The Chair gave a briefing on the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region on 27-29 February 2008 in Rovaniemi. The

conclusions are also in written format and will be sent out by e-mail to the members of the delegation.

Parliamentarians from the Arctic countries (Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Russia and Finland) and from the European Parliament (represented by Mrs Diana WALLIS, Vice President and Mrs Bilyana RAEVA, Chair of the SINEEA Delegation) met in Rovaniemi, Finland on 28-29 February 2008 to discuss Arctic policies.

At a **Joint Meeting** between **the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region** (SCPAR) and the **University of the Arctic Rectors' Forum**. An important mix of politics and policies, with feedback from the researchers. Mrs WALLIS gave an impressive keynote speech, which called for the EU to play a much more proactive role in the Arctic to create a dedicated Arctic policy in order to coordinate policy areas such as energy security and climate change.

Mrs RAVEA represented the EP at the **SCPAR meeting** where members were briefed by the Norwegian Foreign Office on its programme for the Arctic Council activities until 2009. Furthermore, the parliamentarians discussed the holding of the 8th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR) to take place in the Fairbanks, Alaska in the 10th of August 2008. Topics for the Conference are: Human Health in the Arctic - Adaptation to climate change - Development of rural energy resources - Maritime policies.
As all countries (Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Canada ant the USA (2008)) each have held a Conference, the meeting suggested that it would be welcomed if the EP would host the 9th CPAR in 2010 in one of its working places. This would promote the Arctic issues at the EU level. Mrs RAEVA and Mrs WALLIS have conveyed this message to the President of the EP. The Nordic Investment Bank briefed the meeting on the Northern Dimension Partnership on transport and Logistics.
Mrs RAEVA informed members that the First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum is to be held in the EP in early spring of 2009, probably in February or March, early enough not to collide with the preparations for Parliament elections.
As a follow-up of the 7th CPAR statement, the Committee was promoting the idea of having UN Treaties relevant to the Arctic as the scope of the next Annual treaty Event before initiating an audit of existing legal regimes that impact the Arctic.
Mrs RAEVA also wanted to mention how climate change influences and reflect current policies in the Arctic region. Warming of the oceans and melting of the Arctic ice changes the borders of the different countries which surround the Arctic Circle. This causes serious considerations regarding the exploitation of the resources under the ice. One of the issues which has started to be discussed and is going to need to be further discussed in the future is whether we need to change international law concerning the new shapes of maritime borders and the areas of influence of the most important countries around the Arctic Circle who all have interests in energy resources on the seabed in these areas.

Mr SMITH reported back on the suggested visit to Scotland. Mr SMITH has discussed with the Scottish Parliament authorities, who are very keen on the idea of hosting a meeting and have all the facilities needed. Depending on the subject the meeting could be a Joint Committee meeting with one of the Scottish Parliament Committees. As regards subject for discussion Mr SMITH suspects fisheries or perhaps some sort of energy theme as well could also be of interest given that we got a climate change bill on the process of going through the Scottish Parliament. Mrs RAEVA added that if there was anything that could be done to

assist with moving forward the invitation of Parliamentarians to Scotland the delegation is happy to help.
Mr SMITH also informed that he has been in Reykjavik at a conference on Iceland's relations with the EU in the Althingi recently. Mr SMITH intervened on the Lisbon treaty which was covered by the media.

Mrs PANAYOTOPOULOS-CASSIOTOU wanted to remind the delegation that whilst it is great and very important to have discussions with our various partners we also need to talk about/with young people, and exchanges between young people. But we also need to talk about vocational training. For example, we have European communications and we have the free area for employment. And therefore it is very important and extremely relevant for us to look into and see what type of contacts we could set up to involve young people in these partner countries in all of our initiatives. In its most resent conclusions the Council mentioned the idea of 2020 and the fact that young people have to be equipped for the labour market by that time.

Mr SAKALAS asked Mr SMITH if the problem with drinking water has been discussed in relations to the Scotland visit and if not if this shouldn't be included in our deliberations. Mr SMITH answered that the Water Directive discussion certainly could be included in the program. Mrs RAEVA added that drinking water was not discussed in Rovaniemi, rather the focus was on ice and snow changes in the last five years. But perhaps as the Water Directive is also going to be of our interest we could have it as a topic for the meeting.

Mrs RAEVA informed the meeting that Mr BONDE will be leaving the Parliament on the 8 May this year. Mrs RAEVA will look into if his successor will participate in the delegation.

7. Next meeting

The next Delegation meeting will take place on Tuesday 8 April at 11.00 in Brussels.

The meeting closed at 11.45

ATTENDANCE LIST

Members

RAEVA (Chair) - SAKALAS (Vice-Chair) - SMITH - PANAYOTOPOULOS-CASSIOTOU

Political Groups

KRINGS (PPE-DE) - ARNOLD (ALDE)

Members' Assistants

LIEBL - WANNINGER - MANIAKI-GRIVA - GUEORGUIEVA

Invitees

HOLLNER (Commission) - KÜCHLER (Council) - HALLGRIMSDÓTTIR (Icelandic Mission) - SCHULTZ (DG EXPO) - MRAK (Perm. Rep. Slovenia)

Secretariat

OLSEN - d'AGOSTO - ELGH