



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 11 July 2013

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**PE 351
PESC 863
COEST 189
TU 3
ELARG 106
USA 30
COTRA 21
COWEB 102
COLAT 26
COMAG 68
COTER 92
BUDGET 40
COASI 113**

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Partial summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament **Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)** held in Brussels on 8-9 July 2013
Chair: Mr Brok (EPP, DE)

I. Exchange of views with Linas Antanas Linkevičius, Foreign Minister of Lithuania, on the enlargement priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency

Mr Linkevičius briefly introduced the Lithuanian Presidency's priorities: a credible Europe, a growing Europe and an open Europe (the official statement is included in the Annex).

He then turned to enlargement and said that the Presidency would play the part of an honest broker and would be proactive and constructive. On Iceland, he called for respect for the government's decision and hoped that the climate of dialogue could be preserved and the experience gained in the negotiations not wasted. On Turkey, the Minister felt that the decision to open negotiations on Chapter 22 while at the same time observing the development of the situation was a very good one. He considered that this decision would allow the EU to influence the process on the ground. As far as the Balkans were concerned, he indicated that the Presidency would follow a constructive approach. He hoped that accession negotiations with Serbia could be opened under the Lithuanian Presidency. But problems remained in the region, such as the name dispute in the case of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the dysfunctional State in BiH. Regarding Albania, Mr Linkevičius said that the process was not an easy one but he hoped nonetheless that the transition could be smooth.

Many questions raised in the subsequent debate dealt with the upcoming Vilnius summit on the Eastern Partnership, notably as regards expectations (Mr Salafranca (EPP, ES)), the approach vis-à-vis Belarus (Ms Gomes (S&D, PT), Mr Tannock (ECR, UK), Mr Roucek (S&D, CZ), Mr Paleckis (S&D, LT), Mr Kowal (ECR, PL)), the focus on human rights and the post-Vilnius situation (Ms Lochbihler (Greens/ALE, DE)), and the perspective for initialling the association agreements with Ukraine (Mr Tannock). Mr Linkevičius replied that expectations had to be managed and that attendance by heads of States would be a sign of success. He defended a practical approach, aimed at the concrete implementation of principles such as "more for more". He also said that he wanted to set a vision for beyond the summit. On Ukraine, he considered that the initialling of the agreement was still a possibility and he acknowledged the role played by the EP. He spoke of the Timoshenko case as representing a "painful obstacle" and a litmus test for the respect of the rule of law in Ukraine. He said that the Ukrainian authorities knew well what had to be done and time was running out. The Minister recalled that all this was not about technical discussions but geopolitics. On Georgia, Mr Linkevičius acknowledged the problems of cohabitation but added that the two sides were moving ahead and that the initialling of the agreement was

feasible. Concerning Moldova, he pointed out that the country was doing well and no further obstacles had to be raised; he also felt that visa liberalisation was the best support the EU could give that country. On Belarus, the Minister said that the release of political prisoners was a precondition that, if fulfilled - which was doable - could open up the possibility for Belarus to attend the Vilnius summit (at what level it remained to be seen). But he could not but take note that, for the time being, there was as yet no progress on this issue . Regarding the nuclear power plant near the Lithuanian border, the Minister voiced his concerns and stressed that this was not a simple bilateral problem, therefore the EU should speak with one voice.

Two Members, Mr Kacin (ALDE, SI) and Mr Roucek, called for the opening of Chapter 23 in the negotiations with Turkey. Mr Linkevičius stated that the Presidency's intention was indeed to be ambitious: it was ready to go further if conditions were met.

Ms Ojuland (ALDE, EE) was surprised that Russia had not been mentioned once in the discussion and she wondered if the Presidency was ready to include the Magnitsky case on the agenda of the Council. Mr Linkevičius declared that he was positive vis-à-vis Russia and dismissed the widespread idea of Lithuanians being Russophobic. He said that resetting did not mean deleting and commitments and obligations had to be respected. On the Magnitsky case he said that the Presidency would be impartial: it would not raise this issue in the Council but would not oppose it either, if any other Member State raised it.

II. Exchange of views with Samuel Zbogar, EU Special Representative for Kosovo

This item was cancelled

III. Exchange of views with Olof Skoog, newly appointed Head of EU Delegation to Indonesia (in compliance with the Declaration on Political Accountability of the HR/VP)

In camera. See separate document.

IV. Hearing on the Blacklisting of Hezbollah

In camera. See separate document.

V. The situation in Egypt

EEAS Director Berger noted that there were two different narratives on Morsi. One was that he was the legitimate president because he had been democratically elected. The other that despite this, he had lost his democratic legitimacy. Mr Berger said that events in Egypt had profound repercussions in the region. He recalled that the EU had called for an inclusive democratic process and that it stood ready to help with the organisation of new elections.

EUSR Léon informed the Members of his multiple contacts with leading Egyptian personalities over the last few days, including a few representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood. He said that paradoxically, many human rights organisations had approved the "new revolution" by the army. He added that the EU had made clear that the army should not interfere in the democratic process and that there should not simply be a change of seats between the government and the opposition, but rather, the polarisation should be reduced through negotiation.

A representative of the Commission said that Egypt was a litmus test for the new ENP (incentive-based approach, more for more, etc.).

Mr Pinxten, Member of the Court of Auditors, presented the special report on EU assistance to Egypt. He pointed out that it had been drafted on the basis of a very strict methodology and that it concluded that EU assistance had not been effective in Egypt in the period 2007-2012 due to local conditions and to shortcomings in the way the EAS and the Commission had managed their cooperation with Egypt.

During the debate that followed, many asked what would come next and what position the EU would take. For Ms Brantner (Greens/ALE, DE), the EU should make clear to Egypt that it had two weeks (until the FAC) to go in the right direction otherwise there would be serious financial and political consequences. She also called on the EU to convene an international conference involving all the relevant actors. Ms Neyts suggested suspending financing to Egypt until it was back on the right track. Mr Alracchi (S&D, IT) was against

such an option, taking into account the need for resources for long term institution-building. Mr Panzeri (S&D, IT) was very critical of the EU: he took the view that there was a lack of any serious analysis of past EU policy towards Egypt aimed at clarifying whether the EU had done everything possible to avoid the present situation. In his view, the EU should step up its mediation efforts and increase financial support to Egypt because the worsening of the economic crisis could only worsen the overall situation of the country. Mr Danjean (EPP, FR) stressed that the EU lacked any leverage and criticised the EU's institutional formalism. Mr Howitt (S&D, UK) wondered if the EU had seen all this coming or had been taken completely by surprise.

EUSR Léon replied that the EU was not simply standing by and that it was sticking to its principles and values. On the Salafists he said that they were putting some pressure but overall their role had been rather a constructive one. Concerning the international conference, he considered this to be too premature at the present stage. Finally he rejected any accusation that the EU was naive. He pointed out that the EU worked with all the actors. The EU had indeed seen the present situation coming and had warned President Morsi of the possible outcome of his policy, but the latter had decided not to listen to the international community.

VI. Exchange of views with Pierre Vimont, Executive Secretary General of the EEAS, and João Vale de Almeida, EU Ambassador to the USA, on the US National Security Agency surveillance programme, surveillance bodies in various Member States and their impact on EU citizens' privacy (B7-0343/2013 RC1)

In camera. See separate document.

VII. Reports

a) Motion for a resolution on the 2012 Progress Report on Iceland and the post-election perspectives

AFET/7/13081

Deadline for tabling amendments: 4 September 2013

Debrief by Pat the Cope Gallagher on the 6th EU-Iceland JPC held in Reykjavik, Iceland, 26-28 June 2013

Mr Preda (EPP, RO) recalled that the Conference of Presidents had decided to send the motion of resolution back to the committee, for it to be amended following the new developments in the country. He was recommending the drafting of a very short text summarising the new political situation and in particular the unclear issue of the referendum. Both the question and the date were as yet undecided and it was not even certain whether a referendum was going to take place. All decisions had been postponed by the new government until after a debate in the parliament on the evaluation of the negotiations. Mr Färm (S&D, SE) said that this was a very unusual and regrettable situation but Iceland's position had to be fully respected. The EU should not shut the door nor provoke any negative reaction. He advised not to take the referendum for granted because the best option for the EU would be the freezing of the negotiations without a referendum.

b) General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014 - all sections

AFET/7/13252, 2013/2145(BUD)

Rapporteur: José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE)

Responsible: BUDG – Anne E. Jensen (ALDE)

Monika Hohlmeier (PPE)

Deadline for tabling amendments: 16 July 2013, 12.00

The rapporteur expressed his grave concern for the substantive cut of 12,5% in commitments for Heading 4 and considered it unacceptable. Ms Jäätteenmäki (ALDE, FI) noted that cuts for the Eastern Partnership went as far as 30%. Ms Gomes (S&D, PT) wondered how with such a budget the EU could become a global player. In her view, it was rather condemned to irrelevance.

The Commission representative explained that the Commission could do nothing but implement the MFF agreement, whose ceiling had to be respected; he acknowledged that the decision of where to cut was a difficult one, but he drew MEPs' attention to the fact that the commitments for humanitarian aid had been increased.

The rapporteur replied that he could not understand why the Commission had decided to concentrate the cuts in the first year of the MFF, taking into account the fact that the MFF endorsed an global increase of 3% for EU external action over the next 7 years

VIII. Votes

a) **Recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS on the EU policy towards Belarus**

AFET/7/11651, 2013/2036(INI)

Rapporteur: Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D)

Responsible: AFET –

The recommendation - heavily amended - was adopted by 55 votes in favour, 1 against and 5 abstentions.

IX. Next meeting(s)

2 September 2013, 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)

Speech by Linas Linkevičius, Minister of Foreign affairs, at the European Parliament, Foreign Affairs Committee

09 July 2013

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

I am greatly honoured to take up your invitation to present the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of Ministers. I highly appreciate the efforts and fruitful results of the Irish Presidency and I have to admit that we have inherited a very ambitious agenda.

Let me remind you that almost a decade ago, during the Irish Presidency, Lithuania together with other nine Member States joined the European family. The fact that we are taking over our first presidency from the country that welcomed us is of symbolic significance.

Now it is our turn – we have a great pleasure to welcome a new, already the 28th, Member State of the European Union. And I would like to extend a special greeting to Mr Picula, who has just joined this committee. The Croatia's accession is a huge achievement of both, Croatia and the European Union itself. Further enlargement demonstrated once again the attractiveness of European integration and confirmed, even in time of crisis, the vitality of the European model of development.

The Lithuanian Presidency also coincides with the 10 year anniversary of the Thessaloniki Summit, which laid a milestone in the European Union's relations with the Western Balkans. The declaration contained two core elements: it confirmed that the future of the Balkans is within the European Union, but it also made clear that the principle of conditionality lies at the very heart of the enlargement process. The Thessaloniki Declaration was a first step - it was supposed to provide us with common ground on which we should build and improve our enlargement strategy. But we must admit - there is still some unfinished homework on the EU side.

Lithuania has always been a strong supporter not only of further EU integration, but also of EU openness, in particular as regards the EU neighbourhood in all of its geographical dimensions. Let me take this opportunity to remind you briefly of the three central goals of our Presidency which all connect with enlargement: a credible, growing and open Europe. The essential element of the open Europe approach is the successful management of the enlargement process. We believe that now is a good time to reflect together on how it could be improved.

There are three aspects on which I would like to focus briefly:

1. Firstly, enlargement should be a synchronized policy. European integration being an on-going and dynamic process is a moving target for the candidate countries. The Accession process has to follow and reflect general developments within the EU. We need to find ways to connect better the accession process to all that is happening in the EU.
2. Secondly, EU enlargement should be an inclusive dialogue. Twenty years after the EU defined the paramount prerequisites of the EU membership we feel a need to reflect more on how EU could drive forward the fulfillment of Copenhagen criteria, especially the requirements for democratic governance. The capacity of the EU to put pressure on national governments to adopt the democratic rules of the game seems to be limited. And the creation of formal institutions is not sufficient for the functioning of democracy. As long as civil society is not free or able to participate in democratic processes, democracy remains an illusion.
Therefore enlargement strategy should shift its focus more towards the civil society dimension with the aim of encouraging and activating bottom-up approaches in reform and policy-making processes.
3. Thirdly, enlargement policy should follow a proactive approach.
Waiting and expecting the neighbouring countries to emulate the EU and to solve their own problems on their way towards us is neither fair nor a good strategy. We need to be active partners. We must send clear messages to our interlocutors and speak with one voice. And this one voice should avoid setting double standards, recognizing that the EU cannot be a hostage of bilateral disputes and interests.

Following these three cornerstones of our approach, three common misperceptions should be clarified. First, EU integration starts at home. The internal developments in aspiring countries are primarily the matter of responsibility of these countries themselves. Secondly, the EU is a voluntary and democratic club. If some of our neighbours do not want to follow the EU integration path, this is their choice that we must respect. Thirdly, the EU is a soft but not a blind power. If there is a huge gap between the rhetoric of European integration and the reality on the ground, the EU should react appropriately.

Despite different and sometimes worrisome dynamics in the region, there are some very positive developments. The agreement between Serbia and Kosovo is of crucial importance since it contributes to the overall stability of the region and ensures that both of them can proceed on their respective European paths. It is also a clear signal that even the most difficult decisions can be made if there is strong motivation and political will. Similar agreements, which we believe can be echoed in different parts of the region, would make the European perspective even closer and more visible.

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

This year we have the possibility to upgrade the status of four countries: to start negotiations with Serbia, to take a decision to start accession negotiations with former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to grant candidate status to Albania and to start negotiations on Stabilization and Association Agreement with Kosovo. In addition to these opportunities, we also need to maintain the momentum of the accession negotiations with Montenegro and Turkey.

- Turkey

During the Irish Presidency, EU-Turkey negotiations gained political momentum, which should be maximised as much as possible. The Lithuanian Presidency is committed to maintaining this momentum. The decision to open the Chapter 22 [Regional policy and structural instruments] creates an opportunity to restart the talks on other chapters, while recent events in Turkey confirm that Turkey needs more reform and that Turkish society is ready to participate actively in these processes. As the EU accession process is the most effective tool we have to influence the reform agenda in Turkey, we firmly believe that constructive dialogue with Turkey and progress in EU accession negotiations would be a strong incentive to deliver tangible results.

- Montenegro

In line with the new approach to enlargement, the main focus during the Lithuanian Presidency will be on the two essential chapters related to the rule of law, namely Chapters 23 and 24. Depending on the progress of Montenegro in implementing the necessary requirements, our Presidency will seek consensus among the EU Member States on opening these chapters by the end of the year. We strongly believe that such a breakthrough would give an impetus to the overall negotiation process with Montenegro, but we want to be sure that the reform process is following a quality-driven approach.

- Iceland

Lithuania as well as the Council as a whole respects the decision of the Icelandic government to put accession negotiations with the EU on hold until the outcome of a national referendum. We hope that EU membership negotiations will continue and we strongly encourage both sides to use all the achievements of negotiations for the further development of EU-Iceland cooperation.

- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

As the question to start EU negotiations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was not discussed during the General Affairs Council in June due to the internal political situation in the country, we will aim for Council conclusions during the Lithuanian Presidency on the beginning of EU negotiations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The country must show political will to follow the path of EU integration by fully implementing the so-called ‘March 1st agreement’, by making further progress in developing good neighborly relations and by seeking a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue. Progress in all these areas will be conducive to reaching a positive decision among the EU Member States.

- Serbia and Kosovo

In June the EU Member States supported Serbia's way forward to the European Union and agreed to open negotiations with Kosovo on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. These decisions were a consequence of great political will and concessions from both sides during the Belgrade-Priština Dialogue. It is of vital importance to keep the positive momentum and continue to implement the Belgrade – Priština Agreement. The success of the dialogue is a success for all of us as it strengthens European Union as a global player.

The Lithuanian Presidency will aim to ensure that the framework for negotiations with Serbia is agreed in the Council by the end of the year. We will put all our efforts into encouraging Kosovo to continue implementation of EU reforms, and we will actively promote the process of negotiations for an SAA with Kosovo.

- Albania

Some weeks ago Albania underwent a very important test of its political and institutional system. Albania's national elections to the Parliament were held in an orderly manner. I would like to encourage a smooth transition, which can lead the way towards candidate status. I would also reiterate that all political parties are responsible for ensuring people's confidence in the electoral process.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Lithuanian Presidency will try to keep Bosnia and Herzegovina on the European path. However, the situation in the country is complex and difficult. Considering recent developments in the region, the country is lagging behind on the EU integration agenda. Nevertheless, decisions must come from within the country, according to local ownership principle, and should not be prescribed by the EU. Political will and unity are required in order to reach needed agreements, which are in turn a fundamental prerequisite if Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to apply for EU membership.

Dear Members of the Parliament,

I am confident that enlargement will remain a strong and successful policy, but I also believe that we need to do more to enhance its credibility. And this house of democracy has a valuable voice in every aspect of enlargement process. We have a lot of work ahead of us and we are ready to make the most of every single opportunity for further tangible advancement.

I am here today not only to answer your questions but also to seek your views, your ideas and your perspectives. A close dialogue with European Parliament is particularly important given the complex nature of the issues we must resolve together.

Let me conclude by saying how proud I am to be here today. Lithuania is example par excellence of the success story that is EU enlargement. Our return to Europe showed that there are no curtains or barriers that can keep us separate. However, the European map is far from being complete. On their path to Europe, our neighbours need not only perspectives, but also signposts on where to turn next. And we cannot retreat. We have given a promise that must be maintained.

Thank you.
