



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 10 November 2014

15323/14

PE 372  
RELEX 909  
COEST 412  
ELARG 120  
COTER 80  
COHOM 153  
COLAC 71  
COMAG 98

**NOTE**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Delegations

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Subject: Partial summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament **Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)** held in Brussels on 3 and 4 November 2014

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The Committee, chaired by Mr BROK (EPP, DE), Mr PLENKOVIC (EPP, HR) and Mr COUSO-PERMUY (GUE/NGL, ES), held an exchange of views with President SANTOS of Colombia, who garnered their support for the peace talks.

AFET also held an exchange of views with Mr BARZANI, Chancellor of the Security Council of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq. MEPs expressed support for the Kurds in Iraq. Mr BARZANI urged the EU and the international community to engage further in this fight and to equip the Kurds with heavy weaponry.

The Committee was debriefed on the elections in Ukraine (26 October) by the OSCE/ODHIR and EP observation missions, and on the elections in Tunisia (on the same day) by the EP mission. Assessment of the elections in the two countries was globally positive.

**AFET discussed the ratification of the EU-Georgia agreement, and held an exchange of views with Herbert SALBER, European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia.**

***Item 4***

**Exchange of views with Herbert SALBER, European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia**

Ambassador SALBER was appointed as EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia on 8 July 2014. He briefed the committee on the implementation of his mandate to contribute to a peaceful settlement of conflicts in the region, including the crisis in Georgia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and to encourage regional cooperation.

Mr SALBER underlined the important impact of the crisis in Ukraine on the situations in both Georgia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict but he took the view that the situations were all different.

Georgia

Mr SALBER considered the Geneva International Discussions on the consequences of the 2008 conflict in Georgia as a necessary forum for conflict prevention and rehabilitation, given the tense political situation on the ground. He regretted the lack of progress in this process, which he described as fragile and attributed to the high political sensitivity of the discussions, which could not in practice be separated from status issues. He was hoping, however, that the next rounds (starting in December) would become more constructive, as he had identified some openings during the last round (October 2014), which he co-chaired.

The Ambassador felt that Russia had taken a constructive line in those recent weeks and achieved some positive results in its bilateral discussions with Georgia (e.g. in the areas of trade and transport). However he made it clear that the draft agreement proposed by Russia to Abkhazia was unhelpful and could be detrimental in terms of sovereignty. In his replies to the rapporteur on Georgia Mr MAMIKINS (S&D, LV), the S&D group and Ms FOTYGA (ECR, PL), he took the view that the draft agreement would not entail the "annexation" of Abkhazia, and observed that the recent Abkhazian counter-proposal to the agreement had toned down the content of the agreement (referring to a "strategic partnership" rather than "integration"). He regretted, however, that the agreement was likely to be signed before the end of 2014, as it was linked to Russian investment in the region.

The Ambassador stressed the need for confidence-building in the efforts to resolve the Georgian border conflict, and explained that he was trying to ensure that dialogue was maintained between the Georgian authorities and the breakaway territories. Ms FOTYGA was opposed to EU support for, or dialogue with, actors in the breakaway territories.

### Nagorno-Karabakh

On the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Ambassador SALBER supported the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group to find a solution, in particular at the last meetings in Baku and Yerevan with the respective presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia respectively. He also referred to the meeting organised in the margins of the NATO summit in Wales in September and to the summit hosted by the French President François HOLLANDE in Paris on 27 October 2014.

Supported by Ms GOMES (S&D, PT), Mr SALBER reiterated the need to develop confidence-building in this region. In his reply to the ECR group (Mr TANNOCK, UK), he did not rule out envisaging a CSDP peace-keeping mission at some stage, although there were no guarantees of its success. In his view, the hot conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh had the potential to escalate at any stage. In his replies to the S&D and ALDE groups, which expressed concerns about the destabilising role of Russia, the Ambassador said the position of Russia would be crucial to finding a solution.

### *Items 5 and 6*

#### **Association Agreement between the EU and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other part**

AFET/8/00386 and AFET/8/01045, 2014/0086 (NLE) and 2014/2816 (INI)

Rapporteur: Andrejs MAMIKINS (S&D, LV)

Responsible: AFET, vote on 17 November 2014.

Opinion: INTA (Olli REHN, ALDE, FI), vote on 7 November 2014.

Vote in plenary: 15-18 December 2014

The Committee held its second exchange of views on the draft recommendation in favour of giving consent to the ratification of the Association Agreement with the Republic of Georgia, and on the draft motion for a resolution accompanying it.

All contributing groups (in addition to S&D: EPP, ECR, Greens/EFA) supported the ratification of the Association Agreement and the draft motion for a resolution.

The groups disagreed on two main issues;

- Provisions on selective justice: the EPP and ECR groups (see amendments 60-62 and 69-73) considered that the report should insist on this issue, so as to put pressure on the Georgian authorities before the association agreement is ratified. The Greens/EFA (see amendment 64) called for caution: by insisting on "selective justice" the incentive could be weakened, as the Georgian authorities were already making efforts in this area.
- Provisions on the role of Russia and on breakaway entities: the EPP and ECR groups (see amendments 22, 109, 113-115, 117-123) considered that the report should stress the role of Russia and refer more clearly to the occupation of the breakaway entities. The rapporteur took the view that the report related to Georgia rather than Russia, and should therefore focus on the support for Georgia.

Lastly, the ECR group considered that the path towards the integration of Georgia in the EU and NATO should be underlined in the motion for a resolution (see amendments 8, 26, 42).

The rapporteur was optimistic that compromises could be found on all issues.

### ***Item 7***

#### ***In association with the Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee Debriefing on the general elections in Ukraine (26/10/14) in presence of Tana DE ZULUETA (OSCE/ODIHR)***

##### Election Observation Missions

The Committee discussed the early parliamentary elections in Ukraine of 26 October 2014 with the Head of the EP Observation Delegation to Ukraine Andrej PLENKOVIĆ (EPP, HR) and Tana DE ZULUETA, Head of the long-term election observation mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR). The EP delegation was composed of 15 MEPs and was included in an International Election Observation Mission led by the long-term expert mission of the OSCE/ODIHR.

The reports by Ms DE ZULUETA and Mr PLENKOVIĆ showed similar conclusions: several problems had been reported, mainly on the procedure, though also tensions and violent incidents, however the overall assessment of the conduct of the elections was positive, especially when taking into account the challenging environment. Turnout was high (over 50%), although lower than expected.

#### Results of the elections

Ms DE ZULUETA indicated that no elections took place on the Crimean peninsula, as it is not under the control of the Ukrainian authorities, nor were elections possible in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions due to the hostile security environment in these areas, where illegal armed groups are operating. She reported that President Petro POROSHENKO Block party had won 132 seats and had entered coalition talks primarily with Mr YATSENIUK's Popular Front, which had won 82 seats. She stressed the unprecedented exclusion of the Communist Party of Ukraine from the elected assembly.

#### Positions of the political groups

The EPP and ECR, in particular, commended the results of the elections, noting the success of the main lists supporting closer ties with the EU. Those groups, together with the S&D, called for the quick formation of a parliament and government, so that reforms could go ahead.

#### "Elections" in Donetsk and Luhansk on 2 November 2014

The "elections" organised in Donetsk and Luhansk on 2 November 2014 were denounced by the EPP, the ECR and ALDE as illegitimate and contrary to the Minsk Protocol. The Chair, Mr BROK (EPP, DE), took the view that they had been steered from the outside and would render the situation even more challenging. He called on the EU to adopt a clear position on the issue and ensure that the Minsk Protocol is respected by all the parties.

## *Item 9*

### *In association with the Subcommittee on Human Rights*

#### **Exchange of views with Jerzy POMIANOWSKI, Executive Director of the European Endowment For Democracy (EED) on the presentation of the EED Annual Report**

Mr POMIANOWSKI presented the EED. A joint effort of Member States (12 funding MS + Switzerland) and EU institutions (funding from the Commission), this independent private law foundation supports local actors involved in democratic change in the EU Neighbourhood. Its board of governors is chaired by Mr BROK (AFET Chair, EPP, DE), its executive committee by Mr LAMBSDORFF (ALDE, DE).

He presented the first annual report of the EED and stressed the gap-filling nature of its work, due to the flexibility of its instruments, which make it possible to react quickly.

The activity of the EED and its added value were supported by Mr GRZYB (rapporteur, EPP, PL) and by most groups (EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, Greens).

Mr POMIANOWSKI noted that support for democracy and civil society was shrinking at the global level and stressed the need for sustained MS funding. This was supported by Mr GRZYB and by the Greens, who called on all Member States to contribute to the funding.

The only issue of disagreement among the MEPS concerned the geographic mandate and intervention of the EED. Mr POMIANOWSKI considered that the overall volume of the grants was balanced between the east and the south. He was supported in this view by Ms FOTYGA (ECR, PL), whereas PANZERI (S&D, IT) and Mr LAMBSDORF took the view that most actions were directed at the eastern neighbourhood, and that therefore further development was needed to the south of the EU. However, Mr POMIANOWSKI hoped that the EED would be able to extend its geographical mandate to other countries. He was supported by Mr PREDA (EPP, RO) and Mr BÜTIKOFER (Greens, DE), whereas Mr GRZYB considered that such extension would be difficult.

Lastly, Mr POMIANOWSKI underlined the difficulty of having to show quick results, whereas he considered that the most effective interventions in the EED area achieved results in the long term. Strategic choices favouring long-term results were supported by Mr GRZYB, ALDE and the Greens.

## *Item 10*

### **Exchange of views with Masrour BARZANI, Chancellor of the Security Council of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq**

Mr BARZANI described the dire security and humanitarian situation facing Kurds in Iraq and gave an update on the fight against IS. He regretted that intervention by the international community was often too weak and came too late, resulting in genocides which could otherwise have been prevented.

Mr BARZANI described the regional and international threat from IS as unprecedented and stressed that an increasing number of foreign fighters were being recruited by IS. For reasons of efficiency and shared responsibility, he indicated that the only possible way to succeed against IS was for the international community, with determined leadership from the EU, to define a strategy together with the Security Council of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

While grateful for the humanitarian aid provided by the EU and the Member States, and for the international coalition's airstrikes, he asked for more support and explained that fighting on the ground was crucial. He called for the delivery of heavy artillery and advanced weapons to the Kurds, who are faced with the sophisticated military assets and large amount of resources of IS. He blamed the Iraqi government for having cut off the resources of the Kurds and for preventing their access to heavy weapons.

Most MEPs considered that the Kurds of Iraq should receive further support, with the EPP group focusing on military support (weaponry and training) and the S&D stressing the need for a quicker and stronger engagement by the international community and for more support to the refugees.

In his replies to the S&D and ECR groups, Mr BARZANI regretted the fact that the Iraqi government was not respecting the rights of the Kurds and that the lack of inclusiveness had led people to join the ranks of ISIL.

The ECR and Greens groups supported Mr BARZANI in his calls to the international community to help cut off the IS' resources (assets freeze and travel bans). Mr BARZANI indicated that 3 to 6 billion dollars a day were generated by the illegal sale of oil by IS.

In his reply to the S&D group, Mr BARZANI considered that the Kurdish independence referendum should be carried out in the near future, as this was a right of the people. Ms CEBALLOS (Greens, SE) and Ms SAKORAFI (GUE, EL) wondered whether the referendum would increase instability in the current context.

Many MEPs asked questions on the relations between the Kurds of Iraq and other regional actors. Mr BARZANI expressed the hope that Turkey would be more supportive now that Turkish hostages had been released and the presidential elections were over. He supported the peace talks and the interests of the Kurds in all the countries where they were established.

Mr BARZANI called on the international community to support the moderate Syrian opposition rather than making an alliance with Bashar AL ASSAD, and believed that this would help the fight against IS.

Lastly, in his replies to the ALDE group and Ms CEBALLOS, he implied that the influence of Iran in the region could be useful in the fight against IS.

### ***Item 11***

#### ***In association with the Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries and the Arab Maghreb Union***

##### **Debriefing on general elections in Tunisia (26/10/14)**

The Committee discussed the parliamentary elections in Tunisia of 26 October 2014 with the Head of the EP Observation Delegation Mr GAHLER (EPP, DE). The EP delegation was composed of 7 MEPs and acted in coordination with the EU's long-term Election Observation Mission, headed by Ms NEYTS-UYTTEBROECK (ADLE, BE), which will pursue its work until the end of the presidential elections, scheduled on 23 November (first round), and in December 2014 (second round).

Tunisia was commended by all MEPs for the preparation and conduct of the elections, which had been positively assessed by the EP observation delegation. However a number of reservations were expressed: the turnout had not been as high as might have been expected given the number of registrations (Mr GAHLER), and the participation of women and of young people in the elections had been weak (Mr GAHLER; Ms GABRIEL, EPP, BU; Ms VERGIAT, GUE, FR; Mr KAHN, S&D, UK). Mr VERGIAT also criticised the fact that the bipolarisation of the debate had drawn attention away from the socio-economic issues of interest to the citizens.



According to the MEPs, the results of the elections made it complicated for the most successful party (Nidaa Tounès, the main anti-Islamist formation, which won 85 of the 217 parliamentary seats) to build a coalition.

MEPs shared the view that the example of Tunisia was positive for the region, and that these elections were a decisive step in the stabilisation of the country. They agreed that the EU should support this process but remain vigilant in view of the challenges ahead.

### *Item 12*

**Conclusion of a protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement between the EC and Tunisia, to take account of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU**  
**AFET/8/00038, 2009/0174(NLE)**

**Rapporteur: Elmar BROK (EPP, DE)**

**Responsible: AFET**

**Deadline for tabling amendments: 11 November 2014**

In the absence of the rapporteur, there was no discussion on this item. Chair COUSO PERMUY indicated that the vote would take place in AFET on 1 December 2014 and in plenary in January 2015.

### *Item 14*

***In association with the Delegation for relations with the countries of the Andean Community***  
**Exchange of views with Juan Manuel SANTOS CALDERÓN, President of Colombia**

President SANTOS provided the Committee with an update on the situation in Columbia, stressing that the economy was quite healthy and the social indicators were on the right track. He also updated the Committee on the peace talks, for which he was trying to garner political support.

The President explained that, following a secret phase of peace talks, he had agreed with the FARC a list of five items on which they had started negotiating. They had reached an agreement on three of them, i.e., land and rural development, political participation and drug trafficking. He asserted that peace would be achieved if they reached an agreement on the two remaining items: transitional justice (with the victims being placed at the centre of the process) and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR). He also indicated that he was in parallel talks (secret phase) with the National Liberation Army.

MEPs from across the political groups expressed support for the peace talks. In his reply to the S&D group, President SANTOS said that he would not accept a bilateral ceasefire with the FARC until the peace talks had been concluded. To the ALDE group, he replied that peace talks with the FARC would enable a lasting peace, and that the government would then have the resources to fight illegal groups.

The S&D and GUE groups stressed the importance of making progress on human rights and protection of human rights activists, and on victims' rights and restitution.

The EPP and ECR groups, as opposed to the Greens, commended the implementation and positive results of the trade agreement between the EU and Columbia and Peru. President SANTOS concluded by saying that he believed in free trade (taking the example of the Pacific Alliance) and was keen on promoting good relations with all countries, including neighbouring countries.

### ***Item 17***

#### **Next meetings**

17 November 2014

1-2 December 2014

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