



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 23 January 2014**

**5636/14**

**PE 27  
PESC 70  
ELARG 4  
COWEB 15  
COASI 13  
AELE 2  
IRAN 1  
COMEM 15  
CULT 8  
COHOM 15**

**NOTE**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Delegations

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Subject: Summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament **Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)** held in Brussels on 20 and 21 January 2014  
Chair: Mr Brok (EPP, DE)

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**Presentation of the Hellenic Presidency's priorities. Adoption of a number of motions for resolution on the progress reports of some Western Balkans countries. Relations with Switzerland. Future of the Eastern Partnership. Hearing on Iran. A busy two-day AFET meeting.**

- I. Debriefing on the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council and presentation of the priorities of the Hellenic Presidency by Evangelos VENIZELOS, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister of the Hellenic Republic**

Deputy Prime Minister VENIZELOS first of all presented the results of the FAC which had been held earlier in the day.

Regarding the Presidency's priorities, Mr VENIZELOS stressed that enlargement was not a specific priority - as it had been for the last Hellenic Presidency - but that it was nonetheless an issue of interest. The Presidency, he added, would mainly focus on implementation of decisions taken by the last GAC and by the EC. Enlargement was a key element with a view to the upcoming EP elections, and the Presidency would address it dynamically and focus on practical steps.

On Turkey, Deputy Prime Minister VENIZELOS welcomed the opening of negotiations on chapter 22 after three years of standstill. He noted that Turkey was experiencing an institutional crisis and regretted that it still did not recognise one Member State. However, he pointed out that there were chapters in which progress could be made so as to maintain the momentum. A stable and European Turkey was a priority of Greek foreign policy, he concluded.

Most of the questions asked in the debate referred to CFSP issues rather than enlargement. Ukraine was raised by many. Most speakers voiced their concern regarding violent developments in the country. The Greens group (Ms CRONBERG (FI) and Mr DEMESMAEKER (BE)) did not conceal its disappointment at the FAC conclusions on the ground that expressing concern was not enough in their view. Mr BROK (EPP, DE) and Mr LISEK (EPP, PL) noted that the whole EU Eastern Partnership policy was falling apart and called on the FAC to pay more attention to what was happening at the EU Eastern border and to relations with Russia. Mr BÜTIKOFER (Greens/EFA, DE) felt, however, that the EU was too interested in neighbouring countries, thereby neglecting more important issues such as the transatlantic agenda.

Mr VENIZELOS pointed out that Ukraine had been on the FAC agenda over the last months as a standing item and that it would continue to be examined. He noted that the dilemma was not whether Ukraine would choose the EU or Russia but rather whether it could emerge from the crisis. The Russian loan had saved Ukraine from bankruptcy. For Deputy Prime Minister VENIZELOS a sincere reflection on EU strategy towards its neighbours and Russia was needed. He noted indeed that there were a number of ambiguities in EU policy towards Russia, notably because of Member States' bilateral relations with this country, which had an impact on policy at EU level. Relations had to be more aligned. The huge pressure from Russia in the field of energy also had to be taken into account and the Deputy Prime Minister regretted that nobody wanted to deal with gas prices.

On the CAR, Mr TANNOCK (ECR, UK) welcomed the launch of a CDSP operation, while Ms GOMES (S&D, PT) wondered if the EU was waiting for another genocide to happen. Deputy Prime Minister VENIZELOS said a decision had been taken not to activate the battlegroups and made it clear that Greece would participate in the CSDP operation as far as training was concerned but would send no troops on the ground.

The conflict in Syria and the hopes for the upcoming Geneva II conference and Iran's participation were also raised in the debate. Mr VENIZELOS insisted on the importance of the opposition's participation in the Geneva conference but regretted that divisions remained inside the opposition. Concerning the disposal of Syrian chemical weapons, he stated that this was a UN competence but some EU Member States had offered their contribution. He excluded any environmental risk for the Mediterranean Sea.

Few questions were asked on enlargement. On FYROM, Mr VAJGL (ALDE, SI) called on the Presidency to make progress. The Deputy Prime Minister announced his upcoming visit to Skopje. He noted that the Greek position was responsible, moderate and respected the UN procedure. He claimed that FYROM's argument that they could not change their constitution was not a valid one as all EU Member States had to change their constitution to accede. He also said that the main problem was indeed not the name itself but rather FYROM's application of the Copenhagen criteria.

On Turkey, Mr VENIZELOS said that he hoped Turkey would not export its crisis and acknowledged that Greece had serious problems with Turkey. In reply to invitations to seize the momentum and allow for a breakthrough in the Cyprus problem (for example Ms OOMEN-RUIJTEN (EPP, NL)), the Deputy Prime Minister pointed out that there was momentum on Cyprus if there was momentum in Turkey because it was up to Turkey to take the initiative. The dialogue between the two communities had to lead to a federal solution to be accepted by referendum by the population.

## **II. Debriefing by David O'Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer of the EEAS, on the negotiations for an Institutional Framework Agreement governing EU-Switzerland relations**

*This item was held in camera*

### **III. Public hearing - "EU strategy towards Iran after Geneva"**

Mr Walter POSCH, researcher at the *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, and Mr Rouzbeh PARSI, Senior Lecturer at the Section for Human Rights Studies, Department of History, Lund University (Sweden), were invited as experts. Ms MUÑIZ (S&D, ES), rapporteur, introduced the hearing, insisting on the importance of making sure that the recent positive development in the Iranian nuclear file and on EU-Iran relations were sustainable. She underlined the potential stabilising role of Iran in the region and called for cooperation with Iran in fields other than the nuclear one.

Both Mr POSCH and Mr PARSI insisted on the need to open new channels of communication with Iran and approved the idea of establishing an EU delegation in Teheran. For dialogue, an actual relationship had to be established and that required mutual respect, they argued. For the experts, once the nuclear file was solved, cooperation in other areas, such as security, drug trafficking, etc., should be promoted. MEPs were largely in favour of constructive engagement with Iran following the success of the Geneva talks, considering that the EU and Iran had some common interests. Different opinions were expressed on the real impact of sanctions and their role in allowing the recent positive development in the nuclear file. The two experts were also divided on this analysis.

The EEAS representative added a note of warning. While he acknowledged that areas of possible cooperation between Iran and the EU would be explored once the climate was appropriate, he stressed the risk of proceeding with haste. He noted that the transition under way was extremely delicate and possible cooperation should start in non-political and non-controversial areas. With regard to the EU vision on the future of relations with Iran and the possibility of establishing a delegation, the EEAS representative pointed out that these were not unilateral decisions by the EU, but had to be developed jointly with Iran.

### **IV. Debriefing by Tarja Cronberg on the 4th EP-Iran IPM in Tehran, Iran, on 12 - 18 December 2013**

Ms CRONBERG (Greens/EFA, FI) said that the EP delegation's interlocutors in Iran included the Foreign Affairs Minister and other authorities, Members of the Parliament, UN representatives, EU ambassadors, Sakharov Prize winners and representatives of civil society. She said that there was a feeling of hope in the country and a wish to break the isolation. NGOs, for example, were more free

now, despite the difficulties of obtaining international financing, and it had been possible to raise human rights issues even with hardliners. She said that at the meeting with EU ambassadors there was a widespread consensus on the need to have an EU representative in Iran. For Ms CRONBERG, an EU special envoy could pave the way to a fully fledged delegation. A visit from the EU special representative for human rights, Mr LAMBRINIDIS, would also be conducive to strengthened dialogue with Iran. Finally, according to Ms CRONBERG, any sort of exchange had to be promoted, so as to keep "the window open".

**V. Exchange of views with Yves ROSSIER, Swiss Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on global foreign policy issues and state of play in EU-Switzerland relations** (*in association with the Delegation for relations with Switzerland and Norway and to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee*)

Mr ROSSIER outlined the main features of Swiss foreign policy, insisting in particular on the importance that Switzerland attached to the implementation of international humanitarian law, human rights, mediation and reconciliation in case of conflicts etc. On relations with the EU, Mr ROSSIER noted that Switzerland was the 4th partner of the EU. He rebutted the argument that his country was following a "pick and choose" policy vis-à-vis the EU and explained the historic Swiss reticence in engaging in foreign organisations. On the framework agreement with the EU, he said that Switzerland had adopted the mandate for negotiations and regretted that the EU had not yet done so because of an internal on-going debate.

The vast majority of questions raised in the debate dealt with the upcoming referendum on immigration quotas, to be held in Switzerland in February. Mr ROSSIER considered that economic migration was beneficial for his country and confirmed that his Government was campaigning along these lines. He clearly said that the Government had no plan B if the other side won.

On Swiss mistrust of the European Court of Justice, whose competence was the most contentious issue in the institutional framework agreement to be negotiated with the EU, Mr ROSSIER evoked historical reasons linked to the role played in past centuries by foreign tribunals.

## **VI. Exchange of views with Massoud BARZANI, President of the Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq, on the situation in Iraq**

President BARZANI delivered the speech, the English translation of which is attached in the Annex. He called on the EP to show solidarity with the people of Kurdistan and to help seek recognition of the crimes against the Kurdistan people in Iraq as crimes of genocide. He explained that the relative stability and security in Kurdistan was due to the policy of tolerance and peaceful co-existence between the various religious and ethnic communities in Kurdistan. He urged the EU to support the political process in Iraq and called for greater international assistance to Kurdistan, which, thanks to its open policy, had become a haven for many refugees and IDPs.

MEPs congratulated the Kurdish Regional Government for the stability and security that it was able to ensure on its territory and also welcomed the impressive religious freedom that religious minorities could enjoy.

On the status of Kurdistan, Mr BARZANI said that Kurdish people had the right to self-determination in Iraq and the right to independence, but not through violence. In other words, their rights should not be enforced at the expense of others. Moreover, the regional government was ready to help Baghdad in fighting terrorism and would do all it could to facilitate an agreement between the PKK and Turkey. On the spill-over effects of the Syrian conflict, Mr BARZANI voiced his concern at terrorist organisations linked to al-Qaeda and active in Syria, but reassured members that they would not be able to get into Kurdistan or be active on its borders.

## **VII. Presentation by Riccardo REDAELLI (Centre on Southern System and Wider Mediterranean) and Andrea PLEBANI (Italian Institute for International Political Studies) of the study on the conditions, challenges and possibilities for relocating Camp Hurriya's residents**

*This item was held in camera.*

## VIII. Vote

### a) **2013 progress report on Bosnia and Herzegovina**

AFET/7/14250, 2013/2884(RSP)

*Rapporteur: Doris PACK (PPE)*

During the debate that preceded the vote, Ms PACK (EPP, DE) again deplored the lack of progress by BiH despite the efforts made by the Commission to help the country to find a formula to accommodate the *Sejdi-Finci* ruling by the ECHR. The rapporteur stressed how important this was in order for BiH to move forward and deal with much more important problems such as the reform of the judiciary. Ms PACK also called on EU leaders to be more present in BiH, as they had been for Serbia. Shadow rapporteurs shared the views of the rapporteur. Mr TANNNOCK (ECR, UK) noted that he had always been sceptical on the Dayton agreements and therefore was not surprised now by the situation in Bosnia. The draft motion for resolution was adopted by 45 votes in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions.

### b) **2013 progress report on Montenegro**

AFET/7/14245, 2013/2882(RSP)

*Rapporteur: Charles TANNOCK (ECR)*

Owing to lack of time there was no debate before the vote.

The draft motion for resolution was adopted by 52 votes in favour and 3 against.

### c) **2013 progress report on FYRoM**

AFET/7/14249, 2013/2883(RSP)

*Rapporteur: Richard HOWITT (S&D)*

The only contentious issue discussed before the vote was that of bilingualism which, as drafted in the compromise, seemed to be compulsory. The rapporteur made it clear that this was not his intention but was ready to modify the draft so as to avoid any misunderstanding. The draft motion for resolution was adopted by 48 votes in favour, 4 against and 6 abstentions.

**d) Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation between the European Community and the Republic of Indonesia, with the exception of matters related to readmission**

AFET/7/14410, \*\*\* 2013/0120A(NLE) 11250/2013 – C7-0351/2013

*Rapporteur: Ana GOMES (S&D)*

The legislative resolution was adopted by 53 votes in favour and 1 against.

**e) Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation between the European Community and the Republic of Indonesia, with the exception of matters related to readmission**

AFET/7/12572

*Rapporteur: Ana GOMES (S&D)*

The draft motion for resolution was adopted by 52 votes in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

**f) Ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)**

AFET/7/14550, 2013/2955(RSP)

*Rapporteur: Arnaud DANJEAN (PPE)*

The vote was postponed to the meeting of 27 January.

## **IX. Reports**

**a) Assessing and setting priorities for EU relations with the Eastern partnership countries**

AFET/7/13300, 2013/2149(INI)

*Rapporteur: Paweł Robert KOWAL (ECR)*

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 11 February 2014*

The Chair proposed postponing the deadline for amendments because of the continuing evolving situation in Ukraine. It was agreed to set the deadline for 11 February and to vote on 3 March.



The rapporteur called on colleagues not to treat this report as a report on Ukraine only. He insisted that it was instead the last chance for this EP to set out its vision for the whole Eastern Partnership. He also invited members not to table amendments on specific countries otherwise it would become a report on Nagorno-Karabakh. Many MEPs did not agree on this point and considered that on the contrary frozen conflicts and the EU's role in solving them should be addressed. The rapporteur then agreed, provided that all frozen conflicts would be dealt with so as to ensure consistency.

Some members warned that this report could be interpreted as a desire to export EU values, an approach that had to be rejected. Neighbourhood countries should be able to choose between different alternatives, provided that this choice remained free and exempt from any sort of military or economic blackmailing.

Mr SCHULZ (Greens/EFA, DE) and Ms LUPCEVA (S&D, BG) regretted the failure of EU communication strategy: the EU had not been able to explain the impact and the benefits of the Association Agreements with the EU to the population of Eastern countries. Mr Schulz thought that the EU now had to work out lower levels of cooperation with countries that had chosen not to sign the agreements. Mr VAJGL (ALDE, SI) thought that the EU had not only failed in its communication strategy, but also in its political approach vis-à-vis Ukraine: it had put the Ukrainian Government's back against the wall on one specific issue, while it should have done so with more general political questions.

**b) The EU foreign policy in a world of cultural and religious differences**

AFET/7/13699, 2013/2167(INI)

*Rapporteur: Marietta GIANNAKOU (PPE)*

Responsible: AFET – Opinions: CULT – Georgios PAPANIKOLAOU (PPE)

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 23 January 2014, 12.00*

Following the rapporteur's presentation of the main lines of her report, members pointed out a number of issues. Ms LUPCEVA (S&D, BG) considered it important not to give the impression that the EU was seeking to export its values, but rather to promote the context for their expression. Ms NICOLAI (ALDE, RO) rejected any idea of a clash of civilisations and called for a balanced report which would avoid giving any impression of EU superiority.

## **X. Any other business**

At the beginning of the meeting Mr KIRILOV (S&D, BU) called on the Chair to provide some explanations on his statement on the need to take fingerprints from East Europeans who abused social benefits in Germany, a statement which had created indignation in his country. Mr BROK replied that he was not retracting anything and that the whole press article had to be read in its context. He had always been a champion of free movement and had criticised Mr CAMERON for his stance on the subject, but abuses had to be avoided in order to protect this freedom. He also added that he had not referred only to Bulgarians and Romanians.

## **XI. Next meeting(s)**

- 27 January 2014, 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)

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**Full text of the address delivered by Massoud Barzani, President of the Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq - 21 January 2014**

First, I would like to thank the EU Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee for inviting us here today. There is no doubt that the EU has an extremely important role to play and there is considerable potential for cooperation in many areas between the EU and Federal Iraqi Government as well as the KRG, particularly in economic and trade interest. As you are aware there is an agreement between the EU and the Iraqi Federal government, We hope the KRG will have a role to play within the framework of this agreement, to bring closer together the EU and our country, and the EU parliament and the Kurdistan Region.

I would like to here today to just briefly you of the tragic situation of the people of Kurdistan. They have suffered because of a number of hostile campaigns aimed at them in Iraq. We have been victims of chemical weapons and the infamous Anfal campaign in which 182,000 people disappeared, of which we have only been able to recover the remains of about 4,000 of them from mass graves across the southern Iraqi deserts. The search continues for the remaining victims. In the chemical attack on Halabja, in the space of just a few minutes, 5,000 innocent civilians, mostly women and children, were gassed to death.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We in the Kurdistan Region have adopted the policy of tolerance and peaceful co-existence and the accepting of each other. In the aftermath of the 1991 March uprising in Iraqi Kurdistan, we did not set out seek revenge against the people who oppressed us. Again, after the fall of the regime in 2003, we did not take resort to revenge against anyone. We opened a new chapter with our own people and with others, and this greatly helped us focus our efforts on rebuilding our country and lessen the pains and suffering of our people. As a result of this policy, the Kurdistan Region enjoys a high degree of security and stability. This has also helped many international companies from different countries to come to invest in Kurdistan. As a simple example, before 2003, per capita income in Kurdistan was less than 500 US dollars; now it is more than 5000 US dollars. We are at the beginning of the road in building democratic institutions, and we need your help and expertise to build these institutions. We would like you to show solidarity with the rights of the people of Kurdistan. We also call on you to expend all your efforts to recognize the genocide against our people. We also would like you to work with the relevant parties to establish an EU representation office in the Kurdistan Region, which would help enhancing economic ties between Kurdistan and the EU countries.

We would also like to urge you to support the political process in Iraq on the basis of the Iraqi Constitution and democracy and federalism, and in the fight against terrorism. Unfortunately, terrorism has become a dangerous phenomenon targeting all the peoples of the world. We ourselves have suffered a great deal from terrorism, but we are steadfast in our fight against it, as there is no other way in dealing with terrorism.

We have adopted the policy of tolerance and religious freedom. Women in Kurdistan play their role in building our society and institutions. We now host 250,000 Syrian refugees, mostly Kurds, but there are Arabs and Christians among them too. We are also hosting 200,000 Iraqi Arabs from center and south of the country, who fled to Kurdistan from threat of terrorism and in search of security. There are now 10,000 Christian families who have also fled from other parts of Iraq. In addition to this, some 15,000 people from the Anbar province have fled to Kurdistan.

We are proud of the fact that Kurdistan has become a haven for so many people. However, I must point out that the assistance from the international community for these refugees has not been in par with the assistance provided to refugees in other countries in the region.

As a factor of stability, we in the Kurdistan Region will continue with our policy and do all we can with other Iraqi groups to resolve our problems and to build the institutions of the state. We reiterate our commitment to the Iraqi Constitution. Once again, I would like to ask you for your support and assistance. Thank you very much.

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