



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation
at the Fourth Part of the 2016 Ordinary Session
of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,
and its Parliamentary Mission to Malta,
the next country to hold the rotating Presidency
of the Council of the European Union**

Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

**Strasbourg, France and Valletta, Malta
October 10-19 2016**

From 10 to 19 October 2016, the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association sent a delegation of six parliamentarians to Strasbourg, France; and a delegation of four parliamentarians to Valletta, Malta to participate in the fourth part of the 2016 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and as part of a mission to the next country to hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The delegates were Mr. Scott Simms, M.P. and Head of the delegation (for the participation in PACE); Hon. Percy Downe, Senator; Hon. David Wells, Senator; Mr. Nick Whalen, M.P. (for the participation in PACE); Mr. David Tilson, M.P. (acting Head of the delegation for the mission to Malta); and Mr. Don Davies, M.P. The delegation was accompanied by Association Secretary, Ms. Guyanne Desforges, and Association Advisor, Mr. Maxime-Olivier Thibodeau.

PARTICIPATION IN THE FOURTH PART OF THE 2016 ORDINARY SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

From 10 to 13 October, the delegation participated in the fourth part-session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, for which Canada has observer status. The delegation was joined in Strasbourg by Mr. Alan Bowman, Deputy Head of Canada's Mission to the European Union (EU) and Canada's Permanent Observer to the Council of Europe.

A. Overview of the Agenda of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

During the fourth part-session a wide range of topics were debated in the Assembly and in its committees and political groups. The Assembly held debates on the following:

- Progress report of the Bureau and the Standing Committee;
- Observation of the parliamentary elections in Belarus (11 September 2016);
- Observation of the early parliamentary elections in Jordan (20 September 2016);
- The activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2015-2016;
- Children's rights related to surrogacy;
- Lessons from the "Panama Papers" to ensure fiscal and social justice;
- Sport for all: a bridge to equality, integration and social inclusion;
- Joint debate: Political consequences of the conflict in Ukraine; and Legal remedies for human rights violations on the Ukrainian territories outside the control of the Ukrainian authorities;
- Co-operation with the International Criminal Court: towards a concrete and expanded commitment;
- Current affairs debate: Situation in Turkey in the light of the attempted coup d'État;
- Female genital mutilation in Europe;
- Harmonising the protection of unaccompanied minors in Europe;
- The impact of European population dynamics on migration policies;
- Free debate.

The Assembly also heard from the following speakers:

- Mr. Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe;

- Mr. François Hollande, President of the French Republic;
- Mr. Jürgen Ligi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers;
- Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey;
- Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

B. Canadian Activities during the Session

1. Overview

The members of the delegation actively participated in proceedings of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, including plenary proceedings and committee meetings. The members also attended political group meetings. In addition, the delegation was briefed by Mr. Alan Bowman, and a special meeting was held with Ms. Mari Kiviniemi, Deputy Secretary General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Five special meetings were also held with representatives from member states of the Council of Europe, as well as an observer state, to discuss bilateral and EU-related issues: Malta, Bulgaria, Mexico, Romania and the United Kingdom (UK).

2. Briefing by Canada's Permanent Observer to the Council of Europe

Mr. Bowman, Deputy Head of Canada's Mission to the European Union and Canada's Permanent Observer to the Council of Europe, presented the delegation with an overview of Canada's role as an observer state in the Committee of Ministers and in PACE. He distributed a document that listed the following key areas of interest for Canada:

- Codexter (the Committee on counter-terrorism);
- the Committee on cooperation in criminal matters;
- the Committee on legal advisers in public international law;
- the Committee on democracy and governance;
- the Work program on women and children;
- the Joint Council of Europe – UNESCO work on recognition of credentials;
- the Cybercrime Committee;
- the Pompidou Group (border officials);
- the Work program on violence in sport;
- Canada's occasional cooperation with the European Court of Human Rights;
- Canada's interest in the Commission of Venice's work on Turkey, Ukraine and Poland;
- and Canada's candidacy to join Eurimages.

Mr. Bowman's document also mentioned Canada's financial contributions to the Council of Europe's work in Ukraine (the last major project ended in 2015; it is actively considering further support) and Eurimages (once Canada's candidacy has been approved).

- the Convention on the transfer of sentenced persons;
- the Convention on administrative assistance in fiscal matters;
- the Anti-Doping Convention;
- and the Cybercrime Convention.

Finally, the following Council of Europe Conventions that Canada signed, but has not ratified, were also mentioned in the document:

- the Convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications in Europe;
- the Additional Protocol to the Anti Doping Convention; and
- the Additional Protocol to the Cybercrime Convention on the criminalisation of racist or xenophobic acts.

Recently, the Committee of Ministers has been working mostly on the situation in Ukraine and the post-coup d'État situation in Turkey, especially regarding the human rights aspect.

Regarding the situation in Ukraine, Mr. Bowman recalled that the Council of Europe has provided democratic support and assured the delegation that he is following new developments closely. Regarding the situation in Turkey, Mr. Bowman noted that Canada is working on having a balanced approach.

Mr. Bowman noted that the conflict between Poland's government and the European Commission, regarding Poland's Constitutional Tribunal, has not had a positive outcome so far and will need to be followed. In that regard, he highlighted the importance of the Venice Commission, one of the Council of Europe's most important institutions.

Regarding Canada's candidacy to join Eurimages, which deals with international film co-productions, Mr. Bowman was optimistic that it would be accepted. Being a member of Eurimages would mean that Canada would have to contribute to its funding, with the hope that the returns for Canada would be greater than its contribution. He mentioned the films *Room*, a Canada-Ireland co-production, and *Brooklyn*, a Canada-Ireland-UK co-production, as recent successful examples in that field.

In response to questions from delegates, Mr. Bowman explained the ratification process challenges of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which was put forward as a mixed competency agreement by the European Commission. Mr. Bowman noted that the investment chapter, including the controversial investor-state dispute settlement mechanism, would not be part of the agreement as it is provisionally applied. After that, the 28 member states of the EU will have to ratify the agreement according to their own national process. If a member state decides to not ratify CETA, the provisions of the agreement that are not provisionally applied will not apply to that member state, according to Mr. Bowman. He argued that unanimity would be required to stop CETA's provisional application.

Mr. Bowman mentioned four countries that have issues with CETA: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria and Romania. In Belgium's case, Mr. Bowman explained that the consent of the regional governments is needed for the federal government to ratify the agreement. The Walloon government has already indicated that it will not consent to CETA's ratification in its present form.

Regarding the visa issue with respect to Romania and Bulgaria, Mr. Bowman argued that these two countries were trying to use the lift of visa restrictions for their countries in exchange for their support for CETA. He recalled that Minister McCallum met with Romanian and Bulgarian representatives in June 2016 and made a commitment that

both countries would be presented with a timeline to lift visa restrictions by early Fall 2016 (these timelines had not been made public yet).¹

Regarding the impact of the UK leaving the EU, or “Brexit”, on CETA’s ratification, Mr. Bowman recalled that until two years after the date that Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union is triggered, the UK will remain a full part of the EU. He also mentioned the four following reasons for the UK to support the EU agenda regarding CETA’s ratification:

1. CETA’s success would benefit the UK, because it is next in line for negotiating a similar agreement with the EU;
2. the UK would benefit from CETA for the two years during which it is still part of the EU;
3. the UK stated that it wants to be nice to its friends, hoping that its friends will be nice to it after it leaves the EU; and
4. it is in the UK’s best interests to establish a good relationship with EU trade officials, for future negotiations.

Regarding the driving forces behind the coup d’État in Turkey, Mr. Bowman explained that President Erdogan comes from a conservative, Islamic background and his complicated relationship with the Gulen movement and the old military guard. Since the July 2016 failed coup, Erdogan is purging the country, removing those he believes related to Gulen. According to Mr. Bowman, the Canadian government’s objective is to empower a court (possibly the Turkish Supreme Court) to hear cases related to the failed coup. The problem is that there is no official decision in that regard from the Turkish government to review.

3. Special meeting with Ms. Mari Kiviniemi, Deputy Secretary General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

A special meeting was held with Ms. Mari Kiviniemi, Deputy Secretary General of the OECD. Ms. Kiviniemi argued that low interest rates have led to more fiscal room in many countries, including Canada. She insisted on the importance of investing in public infrastructure, highlighting the stated intention of the newly elected Canadian government in that regard.

Ms. Kiviniemi brought the attention of the delegates to the following OECD publications that could be of interest for their work:

- [Education at a Glance 2016](#)
- [Society at a Glance 2016](#)
- [2016 Economic Survey for Canada](#)
- [International Migration Outlook 2016](#)
- [How’s Life in Canada? \(May 2016\)](#)

In answering questions from the delegates, Ms. Kiviniemi explained that the OECD uses national statistics for its country surveys, such as the 2016 Economic Survey for Canada. As a response to the difficulty of finding employment in Canada, she argued

¹ An [announcement](#) was made by the Canadian government on 31 October 2016 regarding its intention to lift visa restrictions for Romanians and Bulgarians on 1 December 2017.

that investing in the education system creates economic growth. As an example of such an investment, she noted that there are no tuition fees in Scandinavian countries.

4. Bilateral meeting with parliamentarians from the Maltese delegation

A meeting was held with several members of the Maltese delegation to PACE primarily to discuss Brexit and migration issues. Regarding immigration, the Maltese delegates explained the differences between the North and South agendas that are put forward by different political parties in Europe. For example, far-right parties are exploiting the problems stemming from the migration crisis and the consequence of Libya's proximity. Instead of reinstating border controls, which would not solve the problem according to the Maltese delegates, one solution put forward could be to create points of entry in the EU that are efficient.

Regarding the issue of Brexit, the Maltese delegates recalled that the government of Malta expressed its opposition to it and that Brexit goes against Malta's best interests. They noted that while France and Germany are promoting tax harmonization within the EU, Malta and the UK are concerned that this project threatens their advantage of having a more favourable tax regime. They also noted that many Maltese people work and study in the UK and that both countries have a long standing relationship. Answering questions from the Canadian delegation about the "economic citizenship" that can be bought by foreigners from the Maltese government, the Maltese delegates explained that it is a controversial issue. According to them, the main objective of buying an "economic citizenship" would be to gain access to the UK.

5. Bilateral meeting with parliamentarians from the Bulgarian delegation

A meeting was held with several members of the Bulgarian delegation to PACE primarily to discuss the visa issue and CETA. Mr. Bowman also took part in this meeting. Regarding the visa issue, the Bulgarian delegates noted some recent developments; the Prime Ministers of both countries having agreed to lift visas starting at the beginning of 2018.

Regarding CETA, the Bulgarian delegates noted that some issues could arise from the socialists in the country, who are strongly opposed to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the free trade agreement being negotiated between the EU and the United States (US). Those who oppose CETA see it as an indirect way for the US to get access to the EU market. Mr. Bowman replied to this argument by explaining the main differences between CETA and TTIP (keeping in mind that no text has been made public yet for TTIP). Mr. Bowman also recalled that a bilateral investment treaty – entered into in 1992 – exists between Bulgaria and the US, and that modernizing it could be the best approach for Bulgaria with regards to its trade relationship with the US.

Other issues were discussed during that meeting, such as Brexit and immigration. The Bulgarian delegates expressed their disappointment about Brexit, noting that many Bulgarians work in the UK. They also noted that young people are leaving Bulgaria in great numbers to work abroad. Regarding the refugee crisis, they argued that most refugees pass through Bulgaria to reach Germany or other richer European countries. While the presence of xenophobic parties in certain European countries could lead to

border controls within EU member states, the pressure is rather on external borders at present.

6. Bilateral meeting with parliamentarians from the Mexican delegation

A meeting was held with several members of the Mexican delegation to PACE, primarily to discuss trade issues between the two countries. Mr. Bowman also took part in this meeting. The Mexican delegates explained that they are modernizing their trade agreement with the EU – entered into in 1999 – but that the process has been slowed down by certain events happening in the EU. They also expressed concerns about the upcoming election in the US and the possibility that Donald Trump would win, because he stated that he was against free trade. What would happen to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)? The Mexican delegates also explained that the possibility of Donald Trump winning is having a negative impact on foreign investments in Mexico.

The Mexican delegates recalled that the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement is currently before the Mexican Senate for approval. They also noted that the US election could have an impact on the ratification of the TPP, both candidates having expressed reservations with regard to the agreement. For the Mexican delegates, the TPP would be an opportunity to update certain aspects of international trade that were not considered in NAFTA, such as its environmental impacts and government and public sector acquisitions.

Mr. Bowman noted that while Mexico is lifting its restrictions on Canadian beef, Canada has announced that visa restrictions regarding Mexico will be lifted on 1 December 2016.

7. Bilateral meeting with parliamentarians from the Romanian delegation

A meeting was held with several members of the Romanian delegation to PACE primarily to discuss the visa issue and CETA. Mr. Bowman also took part in this meeting. The Romanian delegates noted that Canada and Romania have a positive relationship based, among other things, on the presence of CANDU technology in Romania and active military cooperation within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). They also mentioned that they supported CETA and were looking forward to its entry into force. However, they do not consider that the current government in Romania would be ready to sign CETA without a guarantee that the visa restrictions imposed by Canada would be lifted. They also consider that the Romanian government needs a mandate from the Romanian Parliament to have the authority to ratify CETA.

Regarding the visa issue, the Romanian delegates argued that Canada has applied a double standard to Romania, whose representatives are asking to be treated the same as other EU citizens. According to them, the problems identified in the past regarding networks of illegal immigrants have now been solved. They recalled that Canada sent a mission of experts to Romania in June 2016 and that their conclusions were positive. In that context, they do not see the use of sending another mission of experts or understand the reason for further delaying the lift on visa restrictions

8. Bilateral meeting with parliamentarians from the delegation of the United Kingdom

A meeting was held with several members of the UK delegation to PACE primarily to discuss Brexit and CETA. The British delegates recalled that immigration and trade were key issues in the debate surrounding Brexit. The British delegates expressed scepticism with respect to the argument that Brexit would allow the UK to exploit new markets. Why would the UK not have exploited these markets before? They also argued that there is a contradiction in the debate surrounding Brexit that stems from the fact that British people want to get back control – which really means leaving the single market – while keeping access to the single market.

The British delegates recalled that the UK has not negotiated a trade deal in forty years. They noted that it is unlikely that CETA's ratification would be blocked by the UK, because the agreement would be in the UK's interest as a starting point for a future trade deal with Canada. The appetite for a possible multilateral agreement between Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the UK was also discussed. The British delegates noted that the UK also wishes to conclude trade deals with India and China. They agreed that it was too soon at this point to judge if Brexit will be beneficial for the UK or not.

C. Canadian Interventions in Assembly Debates

Canadian delegates participated in Assembly debates during the part-session, making twelve interventions in debates on a range of topics. Links to the delegates' speeches are reproduced below.

a. Tuesday, 11 October 2016

- The activities of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2015-2016

Mr. Scott Simms and Mr. Nick Whalen delivered speeches on the activities of the OECD in 2015-2016.²

- Lessons from the “Panama Papers” to ensure fiscal and social justice

Mr. Don Davies, Senator Percy Downe and Senator David Wells delivered speeches in the context of the debate on the lessons from the “Panama Papers” to ensure fiscal and social justice.³

b. Wednesday, 12 October 2016

- Sport for all: a bridge to equality, integration and social inclusion

Senator David Wells and Mr. Scott Simms were unable to speak, but tabled speeches in the context of the debate on sport for all: a bridge to equality, integration and social inclusion.⁴

² Mr. Simms and Mr. Whalen's speeches are available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Records/2016/E/1610111000E.htm>.

³ Mr. Davies, Senator Downe and Senator Wells' speeches are available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Records/2016/E/1610111530E.htm>.

⁴ Senator Wells and Mr. Simms' speeches are available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Records/2016/E/1610121000ADD1E.htm>.

- Joint debate: Political consequences of the conflict in Ukraine and Legal remedies for human rights violations on the Ukrainian territories outside the control of the Ukrainian authorities

Senator Percy Downe, Mr. Don Davies and Mr. Nick Whalen delivered speeches in the context of the joint debate on the political consequences of the conflict in Ukraine and the legal remedies for human rights violations on the Ukrainian territories outside the control of the Ukrainian authorities.⁵

- Co-operation with the International Criminal Court: towards a concrete and expanded commitment

Mr. Don Davies delivered a speech in the context of the debate on the co-operation with the International Criminal Court: towards a concrete and expanded commitment.⁶

c. Thursday, 13 October 2016

- Current affairs debate: Situation in Turkey in the light of the attempted coup d'État

Mr. David Tilson delivered a speech in the context of the current affairs debate on the situation in Turkey in the light of the attempted coup d'État.⁷

Mr. Scott Simms was unable to speak, but tabled a speech on the same matter.⁸

- Harmonising the protection of unaccompanied minors

Mr. David Tilson and Senator David Wells delivered speeches in the context of the debate on harmonising the protection of unaccompanied minors.⁹

PARLIAMENTARY MISSION TO MALTA, THE NEXT COUNTRY TO HOLD THE ROTATING PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

From 17 to 19 October 2016, the delegation participated in a parliamentary mission to Malta, the country that will hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU from January to June 2017. During that mission, the delegation met with Maltese and EU parliamentarians, government officials, representatives from non-governmental organizations, political and economic experts, and business and labour groups. In

⁵ Senator Downe, Mr. Davies and Mr. Whalen's speeches are available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Records/2016/E/1610121530E.htm>.

⁶ Mr. Davies' speech is available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Records/2016/E/1610121530E.htm>.

⁷ Mr. Tilson's speech is available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Records/2016/E/1610131000E.htm>.

⁸ Mr. Simms' speech is available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Records/2016/E/1610131000ADD1E.htm>.

⁹ Mr. Tilson and Senator Wells' speeches are available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/Records/2016/E/1610131530E.htm>.

addition, the delegation was briefed by officials from the High Commission of Canada, based in Rome. The discussions held during these meetings pertained to Malta's priorities for its upcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union; key issues in Canada-EU and Canada-Malta relations, including CETA; and other important issues facing Malta and the EU, including migration.

A. Briefing with Canada's Honorary Consul to Malta

The delegation met with Mr. Pier Luca Demajo, Canada's Honorary Consul to Malta. Mr. Demajo brought the delegates' attention to a publication by Ernst & Young, "[EY's Malta Attractiveness Survey 2016 – The future is today](#)". He stressed the importance of Malta's bilingualism (Maltese and English are the two official languages) for its development. Mr. Demajo explained that Malta's three leading industries are:

- tourism, with 1.2 million visitors a year by air and sea;
- financial services, e-gaming and information technology (for financial services in particular); and
- manufacturing.

According to Mr. Demajo, Malta did not suffer as much as the rest of the EU following the last financial crisis. He also explained that Malta has a two-party political system without any major difference between these two parties. Mr. Demajo noted a recent loss of faith in the population with respect to its politicians, arguing that the current allegations of corruption within the government – linked to the "Panama papers" scandal – are not helping. Mr. Demajo considers that it is a bad timing for Malta to hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU. The country is not ready and is already busy organizing the events surrounding the fact that Valletta will be the cultural capital of the EU in 2018.

In answering questions from the delegates about the possibility of buying a Maltese "economic citizenship", Mr. Demajo explained that this controversial transaction costs one million Euros, 600,000 of which must be invested in the Maltese economy. It costs another 50,000 Euros for each additional member of the family who is brought in. According to Mr. Demajo, it is mostly Russians, Chinese, people from other Asian countries and people from certain South-American countries who are buying "economic citizenship".

Regarding the effect of Brexit on Malta, Mr. Demajo noted that the UK supported Malta in keeping its actual fiscal regime. He explained that he is not convinced that Brexit will actually happen, arguing that there is still a possibility to find a way out. In his view, it would be extremely difficult to detach the UK from the EU's economy. Mr. Demajo explained Malta's strategic position for the UK and the EU, as a mid-way for European investors in North Africa. These investors use Malta as a "safe base" to conduct their business in North African countries, which they consider unsafe.

Mr. Demajo and the delegates also discussed the issue of migration. According to Mr. Demajo, the solutions put forward to solve the migration crisis – such as blocking the borders – have been ineffective. He does not know if there is any truth to the rumour that Malta and Italy have a deal according to which Italy takes in all the migrants trying to reach Malta, but he did highlight that no more migrants are arriving in Malta. Mr.

Demajo considers that migration will be at the centre of Malta's Presidency of the Council of the EU.

B. Meeting with the Speaker of the House of Representatives in the Parliament of Malta

The delegation then met with Hon. Angelo Farrugia, the Speaker of the House of Representatives in the Parliament of Malta. Mr. Farrugia noted the presence of an important Maltese diaspora in Canada. He considers that Malta's first Presidency of the Council of the EU will be a strong challenge, in a context where there is a gap between the "Brussels bubble" and the citizens of the different European countries. Mr. Farrugia identified the following priorities for Malta during its Presidency of the Council of the EU:

1. Europe's neighbourhood policy, where security is central and threats coming from bordering countries – such as Libya – need to be taken into account;
2. migration, where a swift implementation of already agreed-upon measures is needed;
3. an integrated maritime policy, where the EU needs to ensure that it takes advantage of every opportunity;
4. internal markets, where there is a need, among other things, for a "digital single market";
5. growth and jobs; and
6. climate change.

Regarding Canada-Malta relations, Mr. Farrugia noted that the two countries share common values: human rights, the rule of law and good governance around the world. He also noted the importance of CETA for both countries.

C. Meeting with representatives of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry

The delegation's meeting with representatives of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry coincided with budget day for the Maltese government. Regarding the impact of Brexit on the Maltese economy, the representatives of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry noted that some positive effects on investments – because of some companies re-locating from the UK to Malta – have been noticed. According to them, France and Germany must be careful not to make their Brexit package too attractive, so as not to encourage other EU member states to leave.

Regarding CETA, the representatives of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry mentioned that both parties represented in the Maltese Parliament support the agreement.

D. Meeting with representatives of Malta Enterprise

The delegation then met with representatives of Malta Enterprise, the Maltese government's economic development agency. These representatives explained that Malta Enterprise tries to build a supply chain around the manufacturing industry and offers support to the automotive industry and to small and medium enterprises (which have less than 100 employees). Malta Enterprise also tries to exploit Malta's competitive edge due to its location. Among other projects, it focuses on specialized

training for certain sectors of activity, in collaboration with colleges that offer training in these sectors. The representatives of Malta Enterprise noted that financial services and e-gaming are outside of its mandate.

Regarding CETA's ratification, they noted that the Maltese government is pro-trade. However, Brexit has changed the priorities within the EU and it is too soon to know what will happen with regard to these two files.

E. Meeting with the Head of the International Organization for Migration, Malta

The delegation then met with Mr. Federico Soda, the Head of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Malta. Mr. Soda explained that IOM was founded 65 years ago to deal with the displaced persons following World War II, that it has approximately 10,000 employees, a budget of \$2 billion US dollars and that it works on every aspect of migration and the situation of refugees. According to him, the organization is particularly relevant in the present context of the migration crisis.

Mr. Soda noted that IOM is an inter-governmental organization – which became a United Nations agency after long discussions – with 165 member states, China having joined the organization recently (Russia is not a member, neither is any Gulf state). Mr. Soda argued that while migrants crossing the Mediterranean are not a new phenomenon, the deterioration of the situation in Libya and shipwrecks near Italian coast lines made the situation more known to the public. He noted that there has been a change in the way people are smuggled, “rubber dinghies” – designed to sink – are now being used by smugglers who know the existence of the “Rescue at Sea” operations.

According to Mr. Soda, at the end of 2015, the IOM had a case load of 70% of people entitled to international protection and 30% of people not entitled to it. The situation is now reversed: the IOM is dealing with 70% of people who are not entitled to international protection, who left their country to find employment, for example. Mr. Soda noted that Italy is responsible for approximately 50% of the people rescued at sea. He argued that Europe should be doing better in dealing with the migration crisis; it has more tools at its disposal than other parties involved.

Mr. Soda mentioned certain consequences of the migration crisis: demographic issues, environmental issues and issues related to instability (radicalism, terrorism, but also youth populations crossing North Africa). According to him, if migration and environmental issues were totally separate 10 years ago, the environmental issues related to migration cannot be ignored anymore: land degradation, climate change (leading to cyclones and floods), water issues, urbanization (presence of slums). For the different governments involved, the resulting challenge is to connect the different aspects of the migration crisis and react effectively.

F. Meeting with the representative of the Today Public Policy Institute

The delegation met with Mr. Martin Scicluna, Director General of the Today Public Policy Institute, a Maltese think tank that is not related to a political party. Regarding the Malta-EU relation, Mr. Scicluna noted the wide sweeping changes that took place in Malta since its accession to the EU, in 2004, and to the Eurozone, in 2008. He also noted that Standard & Poor's recently raised Malta's international credit rating to A- for the first time in 20 years. Mr. Scicluna mentioned that there are more refugees in

Europe now than at any other time since World War II. According to him, the migration crisis hit the weakest EU economies the most and fueled an anti-immigration reaction and a dramatic development, such as the halt of the Schengen area, an anti-EU sentiment and a desire to control borders.

Mr. Scicluna considers that it is almost impossible to know the impact of Brexit on the EU and the UK, but he is convinced that the impact on Malta will be important. Mr. Scicluna noted that the debate surrounding Brexit, together with the migration crisis, is allowing the expression of some racism and xenophobia. He also noted in that regard that Malta's acceptance structures for migrants need improvement and funding.

Regarding the issue of climate change, Mr. Scicluna noted that Malta is a party to the Paris Agreement and was a party to the Kyoto Agreement in 1997. According to him, Malta will be unrecognizable, "at best", in only 10 years. The probability of more floods and droughts, the lack of water and desertification, to name a few examples, will be devastating on Malta. Mr. Scicluna expressed the concern that no measures are in place – or even contemplated – to deal with this situation.

The issue of CETA's ratification led Mr. Scicluna to argue that the upcoming difficulties following Brexit are highlighted in the current development of the Belgian region of Wallonia refusing to let Belgium sign the agreement. In his view, Malta's position on CETA is not an issue.

G. Meeting with representatives of the European Asylum Support Office

The delegation then met with representatives of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), an EU agency. These representatives noted that EASO's work is integrated with the work of the European Parliament. The representatives also noted that in May 2015, the European Commission issued a European migration agenda in response to the crisis, which resulted in a roadmap. That roadmap led, among other things, to the creation of "hot spots": camps set up to receive migrants, register them and allow them to make asylum claims. EASO established nine of these camps in Greece, for example.

At present, EASO does not have its own staff; it depends on member states to deploy people. A new regulation has been proposed to transform the support office into a more ambitious EU Asylum Agency. Over the next two or three years, this new regulation would allow the organization to hire between 50 and 500 staff members with an increased budget. It would also create a mandatory pool of experts – detached from member states – who could be deployed. The major changes following the entry into force of the new regulation include some monitoring by the organization in each member state (a measure that is very controversial within member states) and the capacity to intervene where needed.

The EASO representatives noted that the Dublin Regulation has created a permanent relocation mechanism to deal with the migration crisis. They also noted that each EU member state has created a "Dublin unit", to deal with the implementation of the regulation, in which EASO is very active. According to the EASO representatives, member states use EASO's services or not, as they see fit, the same way they do not all respect the agreement between the EU and Turkey pertaining to the relocation of migrants. For example, the UK does not participate in the relocation program: it does its

own relocation. In answer to questions from the delegates, the EASO representatives explained that asylum seekers whose claims are rejected are dealt with differently in each member state. The new approach in the EU at present is to focus on border protection and quickly return these asylum seekers whose claims are rejected. They also explained that, when these asylum seekers cannot be sent back in the country they left, they can be resettled in third countries through other channels.

H. Joint meeting of the Parliament of Malta Foreign and European Affairs Committee, the Economic and Financial Affairs Committee and the Environment Committee

The delegation participated in a joint meeting with the Parliament of Malta's Foreign and European Affairs Committee, the Economic and Financial Affairs Committee and the Environment Committee.¹⁰ Among other subjects, delegates and Maltese Parliamentarians discussed the Maltese diaspora in Canada, Malta's Presidency of the Council of the EU, Brexit, the migration crisis and the issue of refugees in Canada and Europe, CETA, as well as climate change in light of the Paris Agreement. Malta's financial services sector and tax incentives, its e-gaming industry and the need for workers – and related labour conditions – resulting from Malta's economic growth were issues also raised by Maltese parliamentarians.

I. Meeting with representatives of the Malta – European Union Steering & Action Committee

The delegation then met with representatives of the Malta – European Union Steering & Action Committee (MEUSAC), which is a government organization under the responsibility of – and at arm's length from – Malta's Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties. The representatives noted that some problems raised by Belgium, Romania and Bulgaria kept CETA from being approved by the Council of the EU the day before (October 18), as planned. They explained that the EU is funding an important part of MEUSAC's work.

MEUSAC was first set up in 1999 to prepare Malta's accession to the EU and to manage the transition period that followed, including the derogations that resulted from the accession negotiations. It was revitalized in 2008 for consulting the Maltese population on EU matters. MEUSAC consists of government representatives, and representatives of the civil society. It also consists of sectorial committees with a wider representation, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and gets involved in open consultations with representatives of the business sector. MEUSAC is also mandated to disseminate information regarding Malta's EU membership. MEUSAC also provides information on EU funding and identifies projects for which NGOs and agencies could receive funding, for example. The organization also acts as a think tank on issues pertaining to the EU.

The MEUSAC representatives noted that while there is a general approval of the EU within the Maltese population, some concerns pertain to the migration crisis and the

¹⁰ The joint meeting was open to the public, streamed live on the Internet and shown on Malta's parliamentary television channel. The video recording of the meeting can be accessed on the Parliament of Malta's website: <http://conference.connectedviews.com/?i=malta-SCFE&session=7347> (it starts at 15:50).

EU's response to the crisis. Brexit has also raised some questions in Malta about the kind of EU that the Maltese want. According to them, there is a unanimous consensus in Malta in favour of its EU membership. The MEUSAC representatives mentioned that Malta's Presidency priorities will be announced in April 2017, in an event highlighting the 60th anniversary of the European Commission.

J. Meeting with Malta's Minister for Foreign Affairs

The delegation then met with the Hon. George W. Vella, Malta's Minister for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Vella considers CETA to be a done deal, as far as Malta is concerned: it is very positive in every aspect. He considers that the resistance from the Belgian Walloons is not really about CETA: it is rather about the opposition between the Flemish and the Walloons. Mr. Vella noted that – even though the two agreements are totally different – CETA is being linked to TTIP, to which some EU member states are strongly opposed.

Regarding Brexit, Mr. Vella considers that, once article 50 of the Treaty on European Union is triggered, two years will be too short to negotiate the UK's separation from the EU. In his view, Malta will find itself to be somehow an orphan without the UK in the EU. Mr. Vella warned that a marathon of discussions is coming between the two parties. While it would be in the UK's interest to try to stay as close as possible to the EU, the EU cannot allow the UK to keep access to the single market because of the message it would send to the other member states. From a positive point of view, Mr. Vella noted that Brexit could be beneficial for Malta: some financial services businesses could relocate from the UK to Malta.

Regarding the situation in Ukraine, Mr. Vella argued that Ukraine is really a part of Russia and that NATO members were naïve to think that Russia would have let Ukraine become a member of NATO at its border. He considers that the US has relinquished its obligations on the European front and that Russia has the upper hand. He also noticed a lack of involvement from the US in Syria, where Russia is playing an unparalleled role.

According to Mr. Vella, Malta's Presidency of the Council of the EU will focus on migration, unemployment and a Mediterranean angle due to Malta's particular situation and location. He would like to bring the attention of the EU to Southern issues, especially from Africa. He expressed worries regarding the unstable political situation in Libya and the role of that country in the migration crisis, as well as the problem of the smuggling of people and drugs. Mr. Vella noted that some oil producing countries are influencing wars and financing terrorism.

K. Meeting with representatives of the General Workers Union

The delegation then met with representatives of the General Workers Union (GWU), Malta's largest trade union. These representatives explained that GWU is involved in diverse sectors of activity, such as manufacturing and construction. They noted that Malta's economy is doing well and that they are very satisfied with the government's budget, presented two days before, which shows that the government listened to their recommendations. They consider that Malta was not prepared for the growth it has experienced recently. If unemployment is not a problem in Malta – the unemployment rate is at 2.5%, the lower rate in the EU – they consider that the education system

needs an overhaul. The GWU representatives argued that the education students are getting at the secondary, college and university levels is too different from the reality of work. They also argued that information regarding trade unions needs to be included in the students' curriculum.

In answer to questions from the delegates, the GWU representatives explained that Malta has one of the highest union rates in the EU: approximately 30 to 35% in the public sector and even higher in the private sector, which is GWU's main focus. They mentioned that the minimum wage in Malta is not enough to guarantee a decent living (no collective agreement provides minimum wage) and that the average wage is approximately 15,000 Euros a year.

The GWU representatives explained that the main concern in Malta – and in the EU as a whole – is immigration, even though Italy is taking most migrants at present. They noted that not all migrants arrive by boat: some migrants come to Malta by plane from Italy with temporary work permits. The GWU representatives argued that Malta is encountering problems with the integration of immigrants and the application of immigrant workers' rights. Digitization and the mobility of workers were also mentioned as current challenges for the GWU.

L. Meeting with Members of the European Parliament

The delegation then met with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The delegates learned that Maltese parliamentarians do not work full time (Parliament sits on Monday to Wednesday, from 6:00pm to 9:00pm); they need another job. The MEPs stressed the importance of Brexit for the EU and for Malta. They argued that there will be a lot of debate and negotiation before article 50 of the Treaty on European Union is triggered. Also, it is unlikely that all negotiations would be over within two years following that date. Their only certainty is that the UK will be the biggest loser at the end of this process, even if they wish for it to be in a good position.

Regarding CETA, the MEPs noted that it got tangled up with TTIP, which is the worst thing that could have happened to it. Even within the European People's Party (to which the MEPs belonged), normally pro-trade, CETA is being questioned. As a possible explanation for this situation, the MEPs suggested that the EU institutions might not have communicated sufficiently with regard to the agreement. They argued that the lack of transparency surrounding the process led some member states' populations to be critical of the agreement. As for TTIP, they noted that nobody even knows what it is yet: even the MEPs have not seen its text.

M. Meeting with representatives of Malta Marittima

The delegation then met with representatives of Malta Marittima, a government agency under the Ministry for Competitiveness and Digital Maritime and Services Economy. These representatives informed the delegates that Malta Marittima started its operations recently, in April 2016. They explained that Malta has the biggest maritime activity in the EU, in terms of gross tonnage. The Malta Marittima representatives announced that Malta's declaration regarding its Presidency of the Council of the EU, in April 2017, will be a good opportunity to revisit its maritime policy and the objectives of the Blue Growth strategy – the development of maritime transport.

The Malta Marittima representatives mentioned that there will be a conference of the International Ocean Governance Policy in October 2017. Among other subjects of interest that they will address at that conference, they mentioned:

- the possibility of a mutual recognition of skippers (for small boats);
- nautical tourism (excluding the activity surrounding cruise ships);
- future investments; and
- a sustainable use of the oceans.

They expressed the hope that an integrated maritime policy would be elaborated during that conference. They mentioned that one major government project is to build more marinas to be able to receive more boats; they are deploying efforts to have more ships register in Malta. They explained the success of ship registration in Malta with the following advantages:

- the attractive environment that has been created;
- the size of the register;
- the success of the tax tonnage system;
- Malta's good reputation;
- the flexibility of Malta's system;
- other financial incentives;
- the fact that banks are confident in Malta's system (which has been tried and tested) for their investments.

They also mentioned the need to change the youth's perception of the maritime industry, to attract new workers. In that regard, they consider that education is paramount and they are trying to team up with universities to build programs that correspond to the needs of the maritime industry.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Scott Simms, President
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Fourth Part of the 2016 Session of the PACE and Parliamentary Mission to Malta
DESTINATION	Strasbourg, France and Valetta, Malta
DATES	October 10-19, 2016
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Percy Downe Hon. David Wells
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Scott Simms, M.P., Head of the delegation Mr. Don Davies, M.P. Mr. David Tilson, M.P. Mr. Nick Whalen, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Guyanne Desforges Association Secretary Mr. Maxime-Olivier Thibodeau Analyst
TRANSPORTATION	\$48,486.71
ACCOMMODATION	\$21,198.08
HOSPITALITY	\$2,872.57
PER DIEMS	\$9,423.60
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$410.79
MISCELLANEOUS	\$76.00
TOTAL	\$82,467.75