

Canada - Europe
Parliamentary Association



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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
Parliamentary Conference on Northern Dimension
Brussels, Belgium
February 28 to March 1, 2007**

A delegation of two parliamentarians from the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association travelled to Brussels, Belgium to participate in the Parliamentary Conference on Northern Dimension.

Report

This conference was held in Brussels and attended by Bob Mills, MP (Red Deer), Roy Cullen, MP (Etobicoke North). We were full participants at the conference.

February 28 - 9:00am-12:30pm

Meeting of Standing Committee of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic (SCPAR). This was an opportunity to update members of the Arctic group on our activities in the Arctic and particularly IPY. As a member of the drafting committee, I was able to share all details and listen to the plans of the other 7 Arctic countries. Both Roy and I provided input.

February 28 – 3:00pm-6:30 pm

March 1 – 9:00am-12:30 pm

The EU's New Northern Dimension Policy. This conference was attended by all of the major groups involved in the Arctic. The major players are the EU, Nordic Council, Arctic Council, SCPAR, Baltic Sea Parliamentarians, Norway and Russia.

Most of the concerns around the Arctic were discussed and discussion was led by a number of Keynote Speakers. Bob Mills was one of these speakers and emphasized 3 areas:

Canada and the IPY Program

Climate change and an update on G8+5 Climate Change Dialogue

Canada's involvement in EU Northern Dimension

Bob Mills was on the drafting committee and played a role in bringing the EU and Russia into agreement on the Conference Statement.

Working on this statement required extra hours on the evening of February 28 and morning of March 1, but we successfully got a statement we could all agree with. (See attached letter and Conference Statement).

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Mills, MP

Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association



CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION
THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

**DRAFT MINUTES
MEETING IN BRUSSELS**

28 February 2007

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND THE PROPOSED ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING IN OSLO 22 NOVEMBER 2006

The agenda was adopted. Item four in the draft agenda was deleted. The minutes from the meeting in Oslo was approved.

2. PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE ON THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

The members of the Committee discussed the draft conference statement for the Northern Dimension conference.

The *Norwegian* representative expressed the need of an energy dimension to the draft conference statement and an article concerning the Barents Sea.

The representative from the *Nordic Council* underlined that no new organisations should be established. The new forum should be a place to coordinate the efforts in the North.

The *Finnish* representative pointed to the renewal of the Northern Dimension as one of the successes of the Finland presidency of the EU the Second half of 2006.

The Finnish representative underlined that all EU member states parliaments should be able to participate in the Northern Dimension meetings.

There are already many parliamentary fora in North Europe, and not need of a new parliamentary body. New partnerships can be established in transports, logistics and energy. The Committee was informed of the planned Barents parliamentary conference in Finland in June 2007.

The *Swedish* representative expressed agreement with the views voiced by the representatives from the Nordic Council and Finland.

The *Canadian* representative underlined the need to address energy in the conference statement. The opening of the IPY and its legacy also need to be addressed. Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum is not instead of any other organisations. This needs to be addressed in the Conference Statement.

There is a need to improve human competence and increase peoples ability to participate.

The representative of the *European Parliament* made it clear that the Forum is not another parliamentary body, but something that will gather the existing organisations to give some directions on where the Northern Dimension should go in the future. She stressed that the debate must focus on the issues, not the structure.

The *Canadian* representative underlined the need to address energy; energy security, the need to diversify energy, alternative energy resources, and the use of cleaner energy linked to climate change.

The *Danish* representative supported the amendments by the Norwegian representative, and stronger focus on the peoples of the Arctic, the new situation caused by climate change and the need to strengthen the adaptive capacities of the Arctic peoples.

The *Russian* representative has observed a stronger focus from European Parliament and European Union to the North, but also a lack of good quality projects and their implementation under the Northern Dimension. He underlined the need for action and the need to create an Arctic parliamentary forum. The Speakers of parliament do not need to be involved.

The projects should start, but need to address the funding.

Northern Sea Route needs to address this in the Conference Statement as well as the UN second decade of indigenous peoples.

The *West-Nordic Council* representative put forward some ideas for the Arctic window:

- Establish an Arctic desk officer in the EU-commission,
- That the European Parliament establishes a permanent Artic Delegation
- The Arctic countries and EU strengthen their cooperation regarding search and rescue in the High North
- Common approaches for adaptation to environmental changes

3. ARCTIC DIMENSIONS OF THE EU MARITIME POLICY

On 7 June 2006, the European Commission adopted a Green Paper on a Future Maritime Policy for the European Union. The Green Paper is sent on a

consultation, which will last until summer 2007. Mr John Richardson, Head of the EU Task Force for the Maritime policy, introduced the Committee to the Green Paper.

In his introduction by *Mr John Richardson*, Head of the Task Force for the Maritime policy, made the Committee aware of the very wide mandate the task force has, and it includes creating a more sustainable development of the oceans, “to restore our seas and produce more jobs”.

Global climate change is affecting the oceans; the shrinking of the Arctic sea ice is an accelerating process, fish stocks are moving, and the retreating of the ice makes resources in the Arctic more accessible and will result in an increase in shipping in the Arctic. There will be new ways to export the Russian goods to Europe.

Technology is in the front to further improve the systems to increase the safety in Maritime security and protect fragile ecosystem in the Arctic.

Mr Richardsen stated that the Antarctic has a charter for conservation, the Arctic needs a charter for sustainable development.

Ms Solberg pointed to the fact that one of the most important reasons of increased interest in the Arctic is the natural resources, and that we have a common interest to develop these resources in a sustainable way.

Mr Richardson welcomed contributions from SCPAR to the hearing on the Green Paper within the end of June 2007.

Mr Mills noted that many cruise ships are sailing around icebergs and that many ships will be sailing in Arctic waters in relation to IPY activities. This represents big challenges regarding rescue matters. The increased activities will lead to increased pollution which needs to be handled.

Mr Mills underlined the need to cooperate internationally to create a maritime policy.

Mr Sindal underlined the importance of maritime issues and sailing around the Arctic. Appreciate what the EU is doing, but it needs a broader international cooperation for instance solutions under UN – IMO.

Mr Richardson suggested that a tracking system for the whole arctic would make sense and agreed that rescue matters are important. Maybe there should be a special training for cruise ship captains for Arctic travelling.

Mr Richardson said the Task Force has taken account of other international maritime policies, and been inspired by them. The Arctic countries have not asked for the Arctic Ocean to be declared a PSSA under IMO. Mr Richardson pointed to the fact that EU is not a member of IMO, but an observer.

The aim is to develop a best possible marine policy and then promote this internationally.

Mr Sitnov pointed at the changes in the Russian north and the need for more data regarding the Russian waters in the Arctic, for instance on icebergs and bio

resources. Mr Sitnov proposed to develop an international system of polar stations in the Arctic.

4. STATUS OF THE WORK OF SCPAR

Ms Solberg referred to the last Committee meeting in Oslo when the question of the follow-up on proposal to make the UN Annual Treaty Event address treaties relevant to the Arctic. After communications with the UN treaty section the Chair has been informed that they will work to find a way to incorporate UN treaties relevant to the Arctic into the Annual Treaty Event in 2008.

Ms Bohlin reported that the opening of the IPY will take place in Rovaniemi and that there will be arranged a seminar in the Swedish parliament on IPY. There will be a discussion on Swedish policy of the North and climate change in the parliament.

Mr Stefansson reported that Arctic matters have been high on the agenda and gets increasing attention in Iceland. The main topics have been environmental issues, especially climate change, and maritime security.

There will be an IPY opening and a special introduction on the Arctic Portal March 1. There will be a Maritime transportation conference in Akureiry March 27-28 and an IPY conference in 2008.

The Northern Dimension is a very important tool in the cooperation in Northern Europe, and the Arctic region must be an important part of the Northern Dimension cooperation.

Mr Enestam informed the Committee of the IPY opening March 1 in Rovaniemi. There will be a seminar on the Arctic issues, especially IPY, in April in Rovaniemi. A Barents parliamentary conference will take place in June 11-12 in Rovaniemi.

There was arranged a workshop on ICT in December last year, and finally the parliamentary elections in Finland will be March 18.

Mr Mills informed the Committee about the launched of IPY in Ottawa March 1 and the importance of IPY in Canada. One of the projects is to bring 100 youths to the Arctic, and another one is to bring top CEOs on a sea voyage in the Arctic to explain what is happening.

During March a Clean Air Act and an Environment Act will be discussed in the Canadian parliament. Environment is the number one topic on the public agenda in Canada.

Mills reported from the G-8 + 5- meeting which has agreed to set target on greenhouse gas emissions. A report will be delivered in Tokyo the summer of 2008.

Mr Kleist reported of a positive development in Denmark where the government has given 60 millions DKK to the IPY. Around 3000 scientists will travel to Greenland during the IPY.

Kleist also reported on protests in connection with the situation for the sledge dogs in Greenland, where the lack of snow the last years has made the owner kill them.

Ms *Jeilid* reported of a meeting in Saami Parliamentary Council which will take place next week and where the Northern Dimension will be on the agenda. There will be election to the Saami parliament in Finland parallel to the parliamentary election March 18.

The indigenous peoples IPY was opened in Kautokeino February 14 and was a very successful event.

Ms *Gudmundsdottir* reported to the Committee that the Faeroe Islands has applied for membership in Nordic Council. Further climate change causes great concern and is an important topic in the Nordic cooperation.

The Secretary gave a report from the "Arctic Frontiers" conference which took place in Tromsø in 21-26 January 2007.

5. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be in Reykjavik 1. June.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Appendix 2

Parliamentary Conference on the Northern Dimension

Conference Statement

1 March 2007

Members of the European Parliament, of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, of the Baltic Assembly, of the Nordic Council, and of the network of Barents parliamentarians, met at the Parliamentary Conference on the Northern Dimension in the European Parliament in Brussels on 28 February - 1 March 2007 to debate the new Northern Dimension policy and to prepare for the arranging of a Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum.

The two main themes for discussion were the Northern Dimension policies related to the Arctic Region and to the Baltic Sea region.

The participants of the Conference having regard to the Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document and the Political Declaration on the Northern Dimension Policy approved on 24 November 2006, welcome the updated, more permanent, high profile, and structured Northern Dimension Policy that came into force on 1 January 2007 and support the suggestion to hold a Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum which could improve the role of the parliamentarians of the Northern Dimension region in the implementation of the new Northern Dimension Policy.

The Parliamentary Conference on the Northern Dimension:

1. supports the increased focus on a joint ownership of the new policy by all actors involved; emphasizes, in this context, the importance of Iceland, Norway and Russia being active partners of the new Northern Dimension policy; further notes that the principle of joint ownership should not only apply to the Northern Dimension partners, but to all stakeholders in the region including the regional councils of the North and their parliamentary bodies;
2. supports the overall aim of the Northern Dimension to provide a common framework for the promotion of dialogue and concrete cooperation, strengthening stability, well-being and intensified economic cooperation, promotion of economic integration and competitiveness and sustainable development in Northern Europe;
3. considers the desire to make the Northern Dimension policy a regional expression of the four EU/Russia Common Spaces a constructive and much wanted step forward; believes that it is important that the Northern Dimension aims at filling the four EU/Russia Common Spaces with concrete content, while at the same time focusing on other issues of specific relevance in the North such

as its fragile environment, indigenous peoples' issues, cultural diversity and health and social well-being; calls on, to this end, all owners of the Northern Dimension policy to actively work towards achieving the Northern Dimension objectives, as they also are expressed in the Northern Dimension Arctic Window;

4. draws attention to the priority areas for the Northern Dimension policy: the Baltic Sea, the Kaliningrad oblast with its opportunities for development given its particular geographical situation, as well as the extensive Arctic and Sub-arctic areas including the Barents Region;
5. underlines the role of the Arctic as an early warning area for global climate change; stresses that rapid Arctic warming is likely to have major implications for the whole planet and needs to be addressed globally; emphasizes that climate change and increased ultraviolet radiation in the Arctic have a major impact on the social, cultural and economic well-being of Arctic people; notes, in this context, the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region's call for, in its resolution of 4 August 2006, the adoption of a clear cut, visible and dynamic Arctic policy within the Northern Dimension; underlines that mapping, recognizing and use of indigenous peoples traditional knowledge as a basis for developing the principles of vulnerability and adaptation capacity as a possible tool for future spatial planning, institutional frame working and mitigate measures, to prepare all residents of the High North for the new situation on climate change;
6. recognizes the significance and the potential that the International Polar Year 2007/2008 holds for the promotion of the Arctic region and the development of Arctic science, as well as for the possibility of creating a Charter for Arctic Governance;
7. emphasizes the importance to ensure that the exploitation of the resources and the management of the marine environment in the Barents Sea area is done in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner;
8. underlines the economic significance of the Baltic Sea region with its high growth rates, strong science base and high innovation potential to Europe as a whole; supports, to this end, the work for a Baltic Sea Strategy for the Northern Dimension in order to create favourable conditions for a prosperous, socially balanced, and ecologically sustainable development of the Baltic Sea region; calls attention to the fragile environmental status of the Baltic Sea;
9. emphasizes that the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership is a successful example of practical achievements within the Northern Dimension, stresses the importance of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Health and Social Well-Being; asks, in this context, all Northern Dimension partners to examine the possibility of applying the Partnership model to other priority areas such as transport and logistics, as well as energy;
10. calls on closer cooperation regarding marine security, especially regarding search and rescue matters;

11. calls attention to the principle of co-financing from Northern Dimension partners, as well as from international and private financial institutions where appropriate, as the general rule of funding Northern Dimension activities; asks all owners of the Northern Dimension policy to ensure that sufficient means are allocated to Northern Dimension projects and actions; welcomes in this context the streamlining of the EU funding of the Northern Dimension policy under the new European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI); encourages strong involvement of international regional organizations, international financial institutions, regional and local public organizations, other public bodies and private sources in the implementation of the Northern Dimension policy;
12. welcomes the clearer institutional set-up for Northern Dimension cooperation, coordination and consultation; emphasizes, in this context, that it is of crucial importance for the credibility and implementation of the Northern Dimension to strengthen coordination and cooperation at various levels among European, national, regional, sub-regional, and local authorities, based on the principle of subsidiarity;
13. recognizes the somewhat unstructured overlap of competencies between parliamentary fora in the northern regions; calls for, to this end, the arranging of a recurrent event, a Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum, with a flexible structure and ownership, to promote the coordination and exchange of views between different institutions for regional cooperation in the North;
14. highlights that a Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum would provide representatives of the parliaments of the EU Member States, the European Parliament, the parliaments of Iceland, Norway and Russia, together with the parliaments of the Northern Dimension observer states Canada and the USA and the elected representatives from indigenous peoples' and regional parliamentary assemblies, opportunities for discussion, new initiatives and oversight; emphasizes that it would further bring about a greater democratic legitimacy to the Northern Dimension as it would constitute an essential component in facilitating democratic parliamentary monitoring of the Northern Dimension policy;
15. emphasizes that a Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum could improve the role of the parliamentarians of the Northern Dimension region from the Ural mountains to the Atlantic Ocean in the implementation of the new Northern Dimension policy, including the improvement of the conditions for border crossing of people and goods;

calls on the President of the European Parliament and the Speakers of the parliaments of Iceland, Norway and Russia to prepare for the arranging of the Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum to be held every two years in order to discuss issues of common concern and examine the evolution of the new Northern Dimension policy.

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Parliamentary Conference on Northern Dimension
DESTINATION	Brussels, Belgium
DATES	February 28 to March 1, 2007
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Roy Cullen, M.P. Mr. Bob Mills, M.P.
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 7,116.77
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 1,766.34
PER DIEMS	\$ 515.38
TOTAL	\$ 9,398.49