



Report from the Secretariat of the Intergroup

Bureau Meeting of the Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development”

**January 27th, 2010
European Parliament, Brussels**

The Bureau meeting of the Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development” enabled to take stock of the work done in 2009 and shape the future.

Mr Skylakakis (Greece, EPP, ENVI Committee) was unanimously appointed as Chair of the new “Mediterranean” subgroup.

The Bureau of the Intergroup decided to set up a subgroup on the “Arctic”.

Furthermore, the Chairs of the various subgroups presented their priorities for 2010. The ambitious draft agenda prepared on the basis of these priorities was discussed and adopted.



1. Welcoming words by Struan Stevenson, Chair of the Intergroup

Mr Stevenson recalled that the Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development” remains the biggest Intergroup in the European Parliament (EP) with the support of four political groups, namely the EPP, S&D, ALDE and ECR. With the setting up of two regional subgroups on the Mediterranean and the Arctic, the Intergroup has nearly 200 members coming from all political groups.

He thanked EBCD – European Bureau for Conservation and Development - and IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature – for their good work as Secretariat while insisting on the credibility that both organisations give to the Intergroup.

Mr Stevenson stressed the ambitious and exciting agenda of the Intergroup which will perfectly fit into the EU program. The quality and good timing of meetings organised explain why the European Commission has been so keen to work with the Intergroup since the beginning.

2. Subgroup on the Mediterranean – Appointment of the Chair

Mr Skylakakis (Greece, EPP, ENVI Committee) has been appointed as Chair of the new “Mediterranean” subgroup.

New composition of the Bureau of the Intergroup: see annex 1.

3. Subgroup on the Arctic

Given the strong interest expressed by several Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in the Arctic issue, a new regional subgroup has been set up. Ms Symons (EBCD) informed that the MEP leader of this subgroup would be identified in the coming weeks.



4. Presentation by each Chair of their priorities under the Intergroup for 2010

Ms Symons (EBCD) explained that the draft agenda proposed had been drawn up on the basis of the issues put forward by each Chair of the subgroups. To choose these topics, Chairs used the outcomes of the meetings organised between them and stakeholders.

Ms Coleman (IUCN) thanked each Chair for their full involvement in the Intergroup.

► Priorities - Subgroup on “Fisheries” – Chair: Mr Gallagher (Ireland, ALDE, PECH Committee)

Mr Gallagher identified the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as the key issue for this year. Meetings organised will contribute significantly to the on-going discussion on the CFP reform. A seminar on the **sustainable use of fish meal and fish oil** will be held in March. He also mentioned a meeting on the **future of the aquaculture sector**. Ms Symons (EBCD) explained that EBCD had been asked by the Spanish Presidency to organise such a meeting in May or June under the Intergroup.

Ms Gutierrez-Cortines (Chair of the Subgroup on “Water”) insisted on the fact that Spain is at the forefront for research in the field of surveillance and control system.

Another critical issue is illegal fishing. A **trip to Sierra Leone, Mauritania and Senegal** in May will enable MEPs to see the situation of the fisheries sector in these countries.

In this regard, Mr Stevenson mentioned the IUCN Network of West African Parliamentarians on Environment as an excellent interlocutor. A hearing could be organised in September to report back the trip.

► Priorities - Subgroup on “Water” – Chair: Ms Gutierrez-Cortines (Spain, EPP, ENVI Committee)

Ms Gutierrez-Cortines underscored the importance of having a new approach of the territory and land use. This approach should be systemic including biodiversity, agriculture, water etc. She reiterated the necessity to reflect on all topics related to water in a holistic way by working closely with the other subgroups of the Intergroup and the European Water Forum she created and chairs.



The subgroup should start with “**Water and climate change**”. This meeting will touch upon the scientific approach of climate change and water. **Biodiversity** and good management of rivers is the second topic put forward. Owing to the difficulties for a real understanding of the water issue, the third issue proposed is related to the **transboundary water**.

Mr Prodi (Chair of the Subgroup on “Energy and Industry”) considers that climate change adaptation with regard to water is threefold:

- Longer droughts;
- Less days of rain but more intense rainfalls; and
- Less snow.

Systemic approach has a huge potential to address this challenge.

The OSCE is chaired this year by Kazakhstan. As Representative on Environmental Issues, Mr Stevenson has been asked to organize a meeting in October. This meeting will be co-chaired by Ms Gutierrez-Cortines and gather high level speakers such as Mr Leinen (MEP, Chair of the ENVI Committee), Mr Potocnik (new Commissioner for Environment). Mr Stevenson committed to try to convince the OSCE and Kazakhstan to have it under the Intergroup. He added that linkages between water and conflicts are getting closer and closer.

► **Priorities - Subgroup on “Energy and Industry”** – Chair: Mr Prodi (Italy, S&D, ENVI Committee)

Mr Prodi proposed a new title for the subgroup: “Energy and Natural resources” in order to give a stronger focus on energy and, in particular energy scarcity. Civilisations should be more aware of the limitation of resources and the waste issue should be tackled efficiently. This observation inspired the topics identified by Mr Prodi:

- **Hydrogen production and energy storage;**
- **Smart and super grids; and**
- **Raw material shortage**



Mr Stevenson and Ms Gutierrez-Cortines denounced the adverse impacts of some hydraulic and wind farms installations on biodiversity and thus on climate change adaptation and mitigation. Mr Stevenson gave the example of the biggest wind farm settled in an inappropriate place in Scotland which led to cut down numerous trees.

► Priorities - Subgroup on “Mountains, Islands and Sparsely Populated Regions” –

Chair: Mr Arsenis (Greece, S&D, ENVI Committee)

Mr Arsenis underlined the potential of forests to mitigate and adapt to climate change. It is therefore of paramount important to have resilient trees to climate change. On this issue, Mr Stevenson mentioned the US experience: some farmers are paid by carbon emitters to plant trees.

Desertification is an issue of concern. Islands are losing their lands and biodiversity they contain, thus compromising chance to adapt. This is the reason why Mr Arsenis agrees on merging the two following topics: **increasing climate resilience in islands, mountains and sparsely populated regions** and **tackling desertification**.

Even if Mediterranean islands are not the only places where this phenomenon occurs, they are unique because of their environmental, economic and social vulnerability. Another issue Mr Arsenis would like to discuss under the subgroup is the **Natura 2000 Network and more precisely** habitats connectivity and road less areas.

► Priorities - Subgroup on the “Mediterranean” – *Chair: Mr Skylakakis (Greece, EPP, ENVI Committee)*

Mr Skylakakis echoed to what Mr Arsenis had previously said on the high vulnerability of the Mediterranean area to climate change. It is already affected and the situation will get worse in the decades to come, he said. Devastating fires that Greece has known for several years stem from droughts and rising temperatures. **Forest fires** is a key issue under which we should go beyond protection. Prevention is the priority as well as forest plantation. When there is less forest, there is less humidity, more forest fires and consequently less forest. This is a vicious circle we have to stop. In this respect, a good forest management is needed.



Another matter is **invasive alien species**: fish passing through the Suez Canal is a concrete example which helps population understand one of the effects of climate change, thus contributing to **raise awareness** about climate change implications. It is also an issue among others which need further integrated **research and a better integration into policy**.

► **Priorities - Subgroup on “Forestry”** – Chair: Mr Franco (France, EPP, ITRE Committee)

Mr Franco started by highlighting close linkages between the Mediterranean and Forestry subgroups which should work together on several issues. For instance, **forest fires** is a matter of common interest. However, the scope of the meeting should be broader and not be limited to the Mediterranean area.

Deforestation and illegal logging are issues of paramount importance for the subgroup. We should work towards modifying the behaviours, Mr Franco said. Mr Prodi argued that hydrogen could contribute to decreasing deforestation. Besides, forest is beneficial to **biodiversity**. The International Year of Biodiversity represents a great opportunity to tackle the forest and biodiversity issues.

According to Mr Franco, there is no point producing new regulations as long as we don't assess the implementation of the existing regulations. On this point, Mr Goerens informed that the OECD had carried out an assessment of the implementation of the current legislation.

► **Priorities - Subgroup on “Cooperation and Development”** – Chair: Mr Goerens (Luxembourg, ALDE, DEVE Committee)

Mr Goerens identified four priorities:

- **Follow up to the COP 15 – Climate Change Summit.** The subgroup should bring an added value through making consistent proposals. Financial aspects deserve a particular attention. In Copenhagen, Developed countries committed to give US\$ 30 billion for immediate action till 2012 and US\$ 100 billion annually by 2020 to mitigate and adapt to climate change. All efforts have to be put to ensure that this amount of money is additional to the other resources.



- **Taxation and fiscal aspects.** How do we intend to organise financing at EU level? Mr Goerens asked. Several proposals are on the table such as the Tobin tax.
- **Access to renewable energy:** joint ventures etc
- **Global governance:** the G20 means that 180 countries are excluded from the process, which is not acceptable.

► **Priorities - Subgroup on “Agriculture”** – Chair: Mr Capoulas Santos (Portugal, S&D, AGRI Committee)

The Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the key priority. The subgroup “Agriculture” will contribute to the broad debate to be launched by the European Commission in the coming months. To this end, three issues should be tackled:

- **Public goods**, which could be seen as a justification to legitimate the new CAP.
- **Food security/right to food:** it is also an important matter for the subgroup “Cooperation and Development”
- **Promotion for a sustainable agriculture**

► **Priorities - Subgroup on “Transport and Tourism”** – Chair: Mr Koch (Germany, EPP, TRAN Committee)

Mr Koch apologised for not participating in the meeting due to another commitment. He was replaced by his assistant, Ms Schachov, who explained the priorities for the subgroup:

- **Green logistics**
- **Sustainable tourism.** The subgroup should look at both the implications of climate change and biodiversity on tourism and the impacts of tourism on climate change and biodiversity. Ms Gutierrez-Cortines argued that tourism should touch upon cultural heritage, since climate change represents a threat to several places. Venice is a perfect example of this situation.
- **Internal market of the maritime traffic**



5. Intergroup Website and Newsletter

The Secretariat of the Intergroup did not have time to give an update on the website and the newsletter.

The website is a valuable tool which gives more visibility to the Intergroup. In addition to the information on the Intergroup, EBCD posts every week relevant official documents, articles etc which are related to the Intergroup activities. A space will be dedicated to the EP works in the coming weeks.

The newsletter is mainly composed of articles written by MEPs and the Secretariat as well as a summary of the Intergroup activities. It is widely distributed to MEPs and stakeholders. The Secretariat proposes to open the newsletter to stakeholders by allowing them to write articles.



COMPOSITION OF THE BUREAU OF THE INTERGROUP

Chair of the Intergroup:

MEP Struan Stevenson (UK, ECR, PECH Committee)

Subgroup on “Agriculture” –

Chair: MEP Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (Portugal, S&D, AGRI Committee)

Subgroup on “Forestry” –

Chair: MEP Gaston Franco (France, EPP, ITRE Committee)

Subgroup on “Fisheries” –

Chair: MEP Pat the Cope Gallagher (Ireland, ALDE, FISH Committee)

Subgroup on “Energy & Industry” –

Chair: MEP Vittorio Prodi (Italy, S&D, ENVI Committee)

Subgroup on “Mountains, Islands and Sparsely Populated Regions” –

Chair: MEP Kriton Arsenis (Greece, S&D, ENVI Committee)

Subgroup on “Water and Nature Conservation” –

Chair: Ms Gutierrez-Cortines (Spain, EPP, ENVI Committee)

Subgroup on “Transport and Tourism” –

Chair: MEP Dieter- Lebrecht Koch (Germany, EPP, TRAN Committee)

Subgroup on “Cooperation et Development” –

Chair: MEP Charles Goerens (Luxembourg, ALDE, DEVE Committee)

Subgroup on the “Mediterranean” –

Chair: MEP Theodoros Skylakakis (Greece, EPP, ENVI Committee)

Subgroup on the “Arctic” – Chair: to be decided