



Joint Interparliamentary Council

Conseil interparlementaire mixte

Minutes

Meeting No. 118

March 14, 2012

The Joint Interparliamentary Council met this day at 4:05 p.m., *in camera*, in room 356-S of the Centre Block, the Honourable David Tkachuk, Senator, presiding.

Representing the Senate: Hon. David Tkachuk and Hon. Marie-P. Poulin, Senators.

Representing the House of Commons: Hon. Rob Merrifield, Philip Toone, Massimo Pacetti and Gordon Brown, MPs.

In attendance:

From the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate: Jeremy LeBlanc, Deputy Principal Clerk, Parliamentary Associations; and Gérald Lafrenière, Deputy Principal Clerk, Parliamentary Exchanges.

From the Senate: Nicole Proulx, Director of Finance, Finance and Procurement Directorate; and Julie Pilon, Manager, Financial Policy, Planning and Corporate Reporting; Finance and Procurement Directorate

From the House of Commons: Gilles Larocque, Senior Financial Advisor, Policy and Financial Planning.

1. Approval of Minutes:

On motion of Mr. Brown, the minutes of the meeting of March 7, 2012 were approved.

2. Association Budgets:

The Clerk of the Council presented an overview of proposed cuts to the envelope for Parliamentary Associations.

3. Consideration of the report from the Subcommittee on Restructuring Parliamentary Associations:

Mr. Merrifield presented an overview of the recommendations contained in the report of the Subcommittee on Restructuring Parliamentary Associations. The Council considered a series of recommendations contained in the report and agreed to the following:

That the Council continue to insist on the inclusion of rationale and objectives in each association's budget submission; that the objectives be measurable and that success or lack of success in achieving these results be included in the reports presented to Parliament on activities.

That, in addition to presenting reports to each Chamber, copies be forwarded electronically to members of the Council following their presentation to both Houses.

That the Council develop foreign policy priorities for associations following an annual briefing from the Minister of Foreign Affairs or from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).

That each multilateral association or regional coordinating group hold an annual briefing with the DFAIT officials who are responsible for their area and that the information obtained be used in activity and budgetary planning;

That each association or regional coordinating group report to the Council on the outcome of this briefing either in a separate report or as part of their annual budget submission.

That travel by association chairs, co-chairs or a small executive committee, in order to prepare an agenda for subsequent activities, be strongly discouraged by the Council and that teleconferences or videoconferences be encouraged instead.

That association delegations be composed of the minimum number that allows the delegation to achieve its goals, while ensuring appropriate representation of parties and Houses.

That no staff member accompany delegations composed of a single parliamentarian unless the Council has granted approval following a request from a given association.

That delegations, of four or less parliamentarians, be accompanied only by one staff member unless the Council has granted approval following a request from a given association.

That the Co-Chairs of the Council write to the whips of all parties in both Houses to point out the high costs associated with late airline ticket purchases and requesting that they select delegates no later than four weeks prior to an event.

That the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate (IIA) be asked to track the cost of purchasing tickets through AMEX versus the cost of other flights available under identical conditions, but available through another agency, and that findings be presented to the Council in September 2012.

That IIA be asked to analyze the potential savings that could be realized if more restrictive tickets were purchased, given the number of changes and cancellations that occur, as well as the associated penalties and that findings be presented to the Council in September 2012.

That IIA be asked to analyze the feasibility and potential savings of using flight passes for some international travel and that findings be presented to the Council by June 2012.

That IIA be mandated to develop service standards for incoming delegations and report its suggestions to the Council by June 2012.

That the Council forbid full meals from being served at annual general meetings, but allow receptions to be hosted following the meeting.

That the Co-Chairs of the Council write to the whips of all parties, in both Houses, in order to transmit the desire of association chairs/co-chairs to be consulted on the selection of delegates as well as their willingness to provide feedback to the whips following activities.

That the rationale submitted by each applicant for a trip be transmitted to the whips by the association secretary.

That the Annual Report on Parliamentary Associations' Activities and Expenditures be modified to include the priorities established by the Council and that the report be formally presented to each House.

At 5:12 p.m., the Council adjourned to the call of the Co-Chairs

Eric Janse
Clerk