

Canada - Europe
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
Canada - Europe

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the Second Part of the 2011
Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the
Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Mission to Poland,
the country that will next hold the rotating Presidency of the
Council of the European Union**

Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

**Warsaw, Poland and Strasbourg, France
April 11 to 20, 2011**

Report

Introduction

From 11 to 20 April 2011, a delegation of two parliamentarians from the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association (CEPA) travelled to Strasbourg, France, to participate in the Second Part of the 2011 Ordinary Session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and to Warsaw, Poland, for meetings on the upcoming Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). The delegation was led by the Honourable Senator Percy Downe and included the Honourable Senator Michael MacDonald. The delegation was accompanied by association secretary Philippe Méla and advisor Karin Phillips to Strasbourg, and by Karin Phillips to Warsaw.

In preparation for the meetings, delegates were briefed prior to departure by officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, and His Excellency Zenon Kosiniak-Kamysz, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Canada. They were then joined in Strasbourg by Beatrice Maille and Caroline Simpson from Canada's Embassy to Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, which is also responsible for representing Canada at the Council of Europe. The delegation was hosted in Warsaw by His Excellency Daniel Costello, Canada's Ambassador to the Republic of Poland. Jeannette Stovel and Malgorzata Kuczynska from the Embassy of Canada to the Republic of Poland accompanied the delegation to their meetings in Warsaw.

This report provides an overview of the delegation's participation in the Second Part of the 2011 Ordinary Session of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as well as meetings attended in Warsaw focussing on the priorities of Poland's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the EU.

The Second Part of the 2011 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

A. Background on the Council of Europe¹

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation which aims to:

- protect human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;
- promote awareness and encourage the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity;
- find common solutions to the challenges facing European society: such as discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance, bioethics and cloning, terrorism, trafficking in human beings, organised crime and corruption, cybercrime, violence against children; and
- consolidate democratic stability in Europe by backing political, legislative and constitutional reform.²

¹ Unless otherwise noted, this information is based upon a briefing note provided to CEPA by DFAIT

² Council of Europe, "Council of Europe in Brief," <http://www.coe.int/aboutCoe/index.asp?page=nosObjectifs&l=en>.

Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe has now reached a membership of 47 countries from the Azores to Azerbaijan, and from Iceland to Cyprus, with Montenegro joining as its newest member in May 2007. The Council's main objective is to promote and defend democratic development and human rights, and to hold member governments accountable for their performance in these areas. However, it is also very active in fostering international cooperation and policy coordination in a number of other areas, including legal cooperation, education, culture, heritage, environmental protection, health care, and social cohesion. The Council of Europe is responsible for the development of more than 200 European treaties or conventions, many of which are open to non-member states, in policy areas such as human rights, the fight against organized crime, the prevention of torture, data protection and cultural co-operation.³

The Council's main institutions are the Committee of Ministers (its decision making body, composed of member states' foreign ministers or their deputies), the Parliamentary Assembly, the Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

The Parliamentary Assembly consists of 636 members (318 representatives and 318 substitutes), who are elected or appointed by the national parliaments of the 47 Council of Europe member states from among their members. The parliaments of Canada, Israel and Mexico currently hold observer status with PACE.

The Assembly elects the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the judges of the European Court of Human Rights and the Council's Commissioner for Human Rights. It is consulted on all new international treaties drafted by the Council, holds the Council and member governments accountable, engages in studies on a range of issues of common interest to Europeans and provides a common forum for debate for national parliamentarians. The Assembly has played an important role in the process of democratization in Central and Eastern Europe and actively monitors developments in member countries, including national elections. It meets four times a year in Strasbourg, with committee meetings taking place more frequently. Council and Assembly decisions and debates are often reported widely in the European media.

The Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly bring together policy and decision-makers from a range of politically, culturally, and geographically diverse countries. Together, the Council and Assembly provide the primary forum for the formation of a trans-European political community committed to democracy and human rights. The Parliamentary Assembly also provides parliamentary oversight functions for several key international organizations, including the OECD, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

This wide-ranging role in international policy-making and in the promotion and protection of democracy and human rights makes the Council and Assembly an important venue for pursuing and advancing Canada's multilateral and bilateral engagement in Europe. Canada is an observer to both the Committee of Ministers, where it has participated actively in a number of policy areas (the other observers are

³ For a complete list of the Council of Europe's treaties, see:
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeTraites.asp?CM=8&CL=ENG>.

the Holy See, Japan, Mexico and the United States) and the Parliamentary Assembly (where the other observers are Israel and Mexico). Since gaining observer status, the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association has sent delegations to participate in the four annual part sessions of PACE.

B. Overview of the Second Part of the 2011 Ordinary Session of PACE

The spring session included a full order of business⁴ with a wide range of topics being debated in committees⁵, political groups⁶ and in the Assembly.⁷ A central topic of discussion in both the Assembly and committees was reform of the Council of Europe, including: focusing on its core expertise of democracy building and human rights promotion; enhancing cooperation with the European Union; and demonstrating its relevance to the current international context. Another main topic of debate throughout the session was the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue, which focuses on the promotion of dialogue between the different religions in Europe.

Finally, the democratic uprisings in North Africa and the conflict in Libya and its implications⁸ were also key debate topics in the Assembly. Indeed, the large-scale arrival of irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on Europe's southern shores, a situation exacerbated by the recent conflict in Libya, was the focus of the urgent procedure debate, while the situation in Northern Africa more generally was the topic of the current affairs debate. Other debate topics in the Assembly were:

- Progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee, which focussed on:
 - Parliamentary Assembly Reform;
 - Cooperation with the European Parliament;

4 The Agenda of the session is available at: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc11/EDOC12537.pdf>.

5 There are 10 regular PACE committees: the Political Affairs Committee; the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights; the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee; the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development; the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, the Committee on Culture, Science and Education; the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs; the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men; the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs; and the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by member states of the Council of Europe.

6 A political group is the equivalent of a parliamentary party or caucus. There are five political groups in PACE: the Socialist Group (SOC), the Group of the European People's Party (EPPP/CD), the European Democratic Group (EDG), the Liberal, Democratic and Reformers Group (ALDE), and the Group of the Unified European Left (UEL).

7 Regular Assembly debates focus on a draft resolution (a decision or statement by the Assembly) and/or recommendation (a proposal addressed to the Committee of Ministers), as well as an explanatory memorandum, which are prepared by a rapporteur for the relevant standing committee. The committee adopts - and usually amends - the resolution prior to the Assembly debate. Assembly debates open with a statement from the rapporteur (s), followed by statements from representatives of the five political groups, after which the debate is opened to other speakers. Speakers have to register in advance. Speakers unable to participate in the debated due to time constraints can submit their intervention in writing, so it becomes part of the official record.

8 Beginning with demonstrations in Tunisia in December 2010, political unrest has spread across the Middle East and North Africa. In February 2011, street protests in Libya were met with violence by the Libyan Government, which resulted in the United Nations Security Council passing two resolutions (1970 and 1973) calling for the end of violence and the authorization of the use of military force by the international community to protect the civilian population in the country. This situation has exacerbated existing difficulties related to large scale migration of both economic migrants and asylum seekers arriving in European Mediterranean coastal states from different parts of Africa via Libya. The large scale of this migration has overwhelmed the capacity of some European Union Member States, including Malta and Italy. See Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, "The large-scale arrival of irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on Europe's southern shores," 13 April, 2011, <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc11/EDOC12581.htm>.

- Proposals to observe the early presidential election in Kazakhstan and parliamentary elections in Turkey;
- Responses to various committee requests and proposals;
- Over-indebtedness of states: a danger for democracy and human rights;
- The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue;
- Combating poverty;
- The honouring of obligations and commitments by Georgia;
- The need to assess progress in the implementation of the Bern Convention;
- Education against violence at school;
- Safeguarding children and young people from obesity and type 2 diabetes;
- Rural women in Europe;
- The death penalty in Council of Europe member and observer states – a violation of human rights;
- Strengthening torture prevention mechanisms in Europe;
- Water – a source of conflict;
- Unaccompanied children in Europe: issues of arrival, stay and return; and
- Protecting migrant women in the labour market.

During the course of the session the Assembly heard from several European political and religious leaders, including:

- His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania;
- His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, Vatican;
- Professor Mehmet Görmez, Chairperson of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey;
- Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar, Chief Rabbi of Russia;
- Prelate Bernhard Felmberg, Plenipotentiary Representative of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany to the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union;
- Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers; and
- Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey.

Detailed information about the session, the transcripts and summaries of all the debates, reports discussed, and the resolutions and recommendations adopted are available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website:

http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=http://assembly.coe.int/Sessions/2011/ESession2011_2.htm

C. Canadian Activities during the Session

Briefing from Ms. Maille, Counsellor, Political, Economic and Public Affairs, Embassy of Canada to Belgium and the Duchy Kingdom of Luxembourg

The delegation was briefed on recent developments within the Council of Europe by Ms. Maille from the Embassy of Canada to Belgium and the Duchy Kingdom of Luxembourg. Canada's Ambassador to Belgium and Luxemburg also serves as Canada's Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe. Ms. Maille discussed Turkey's current Chairmanship of the Council of Europe, which has been perceived by member states as well organized and focused. She also outlined the possible priorities of the forthcoming Ukrainian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. Ms. Maille highlighted ongoing reform efforts at the Council of Europe, as well as its changing relationship with the EU, including the EU's possible accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. The delegation in turn stressed the importance of the Canadian Embassy maintaining its presence at the Council of Europe.

Participation in Committee and Assembly Debates

The delegation participated actively in both committees and Assembly debates. Delegates attended the Political Affairs Committee, which focused on: amending a draft report on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue; a study examining Iran's nuclear program, and hearing from NGOs on the political situation in Belarus. They also attended the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, which focused on developing a draft resolution on the large scale arrival of irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on Europe's southern shores.

The Honourable Senator Percy Downe delivered two speeches in the Assembly. The first speech was an intervention in the urgent procedure debate on the large scale arrival of irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on Europe's southern shores. Senator Downe focused on Canadian efforts to address the humanitarian needs of those fleeing the conflict in Libya, as well as Canada's own experiences of the spontaneous arrival of migrants. Senator Downe's second intervention was in the current affairs debate on the situation in North Africa. The speech focused on Canadian efforts to promote democracy, human rights and economic development in Egypt as well as the wider region; and Canada's engagement in implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 that called upon UN Member States to take "all necessary measures" to protect civilians under threat of attack by the Libyan Government.⁹ For a verbatim record of these debates, please see: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, "2011 Ordinary Session (Second Part) Report, Sixteenth Sitting," 14 April 2011.

<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/Records/2011/E/1104141000E.htm>

⁹ United Nations Security Council, "Security Council approves 'No-fly Zone' over Libya authorizing all necessary measures to protect civilians by a vote of 10 in favour with 5 abstentions," 17 March, 2011, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10200.doc.htm#Resolution>

Senator Downe was then interviewed by German Broadcaster ARD¹⁰ on Canadian experiences with the spontaneous arrival of migrants, as well as Canadian efforts to promote democracy and civil society in North Africa.

Meetings with Other Parliamentarians

In preparation for its visit to Poland, the Canadian delegation met with Mr. Piotr Wach, a member of Poland's PACE delegation and the European People's Party. In a wide ranging informal discussion, Mr. Wach responded to the delegation's questions about Poland's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the EU, as well as economic and political developments in Poland. He focused on Poland's economic growth, highlighting the important role that local and regional governments have played in economic development. He also indicated that among the downsides of Poland's economic growth were changes in the social structure, resulting in a decline in social solidarity. With respect to foreign affairs, Mr. Wach told the delegation that Poland's relations with its neighbours, including Germany and Russia, had greatly improved. In his view, one of the main challenges facing Poland's EU Council Presidency would be dealing with the impact of the democratic uprisings in North Africa and the EU's changing relationship with the region, while ensuring that Poland's other priorities for the Presidency remain intact, such as its focus on ensuring political and economic stability in Eastern Europe through the EU's Eastern Partnership.

The Parliamentary Mission to Poland, the country that will Next hold the rotating presidency of the council of the European Union

After attending the Second Ordinary 2011 Part Session of PACE, the Canadian delegation travelled to Warsaw, Poland, the next country that will hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU (henceforth the rotating EU Presidency). The purpose of this visit was for Canadian parliamentarians to learn about Poland's priorities for its Presidency of the Council of the EU which will begin in July 2011. The visit further provided Canadian parliamentarians with the opportunity to advance Canadian positions on key EU-related issues and learn about policy debates and developments within the EU more generally, as well as promote bilateral relations. During the course of its visit, the delegation had the opportunity to meet with government officials, Polish parliamentarians, representatives of think tanks, Polish government officials and Canadian diplomats.

A. Background Information¹¹

The Council of the European Union is one of the main decision-making bodies in the EU. It is made up of 27 national government ministers representing each of the EU Member States in a broad range of policy areas, including: foreign and security policy, economic and financial affairs, social policy and health, transport, the environment, agriculture, fisheries, education, justice and home affairs. It is responsible for the approval of the EU's budget and the development of legislation in these policy areas, authorities it shares with the European Parliament.

¹⁰ ARD stands for "Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," or "Consortium of public-law broadcasting institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany": <http://www.ard.de>.

¹¹ European Union, "Panorama of the European Union," http://ec.europa.eu/publications/booklets/eu_glance/79/en.pdf.

The Council of the European Union is chaired by a rotating EU Presidency country. The rotating EU Presidency follows a troika formula whereby three EU Member States develop a common 18 month programme that sets out the policy agenda for the European Union in all areas, except for foreign and security policy. During the course of its EU Presidency, the Member State is responsible for chairing the different Council meetings and working groups of the Council; finding consensus between the different Member States; and formulating proposals for compromises to be made between different Member States.¹² In addition, the EU Presidency country also plays an important role in negotiating with other EU institutions with legislative authority, such as the European Parliament.

As result of the entry into force of the *Treaty of Lisbon* in December 2009, the European Union's Foreign Affairs Council, which is made up of the Foreign Ministers of the EU Member States and is responsible for developing the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, is no longer chaired by the rotating EU Presidency Country. Furthermore, the rotating EU Presidency country is also no longer responsible for chairing the European Council, the meeting of EU heads of state and government which is responsible for establishing the EU's "general political direction and priorities."¹³ Under the *Treaty of Lisbon*, a new position of President was created to chair the European Council.

Since 2002, the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association has regularly sent delegations to the countries holding the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU. From 2005 onwards, these visits have taken place in the months leading up to a country's rotating EU Presidency, when the program and priorities are still under development.

B. Program and Summary of Discussions

Briefing by Ambassador Daniel Costello, Embassy of Canada to the Republic of Poland

Ambassador Costello provided the Canadian delegation with an overview of Canada's priorities with regards to relations with the EU and Poland. The Ambassador indicated that key foreign policy priorities in Canada-EU relations include: the Arctic, ongoing negotiations towards the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and the promotion of democracy and human rights. Canadian concerns include the EU's proposal to implement the Fuel Quality Directive,¹⁴ which could be considered a potential trade barrier discriminating against oil sourced from Canadian oil sands, which could in turn possibly impact the ongoing CETA negotiations. Meanwhile, objections to

12 Government of Poland, "What are the main tasks of the Presidency," <http://www.prezycjajue.gov.pl/en/what-is-the-presidency/what-are-the-main-tasks-of-the-presidency>.

13 See http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/index_en.htm

14 The European Commission has introduced a Fuel Quality Directive which aims to: tighten environmental quality standards for a number of fuel parameters, enabling more widespread use of ethanol in petrol; and introducing a mechanism for reporting and reduction of the life cycle greenhouse gas emissions from fuel. The Fuel Quality Directive introduces a binding target for 2020 of reducing by 6% the life cycle greenhouse gas emissions from the energy supplied from a variety of sources, including oil sands. As part of the implementation of the Directive, the European Commission will evaluate and assign values to the greenhouse gas emissions over the life cycle of a variety of fuel sources, including the oil sands. European Union, "Fuel Quality Directive," 17 December 2008, <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/08/800>.

the oil sands more generally among Members of the European Parliament could also affect the European Parliament's ratification of CETA. The Ambassador highlighted Canadian efforts to promote bilateral cooperation with Poland in energy security focussing in particular on regulatory and technical cooperation related to nuclear energy and shale gas. The Ambassador then provided an overview of Polish politics, as well as the country's approach to its rotating EU Presidency. Ambassador Costello indicated that many were looking to Poland to define the nature of the rotating EU Presidency in the post-Lisbon era, as previous Presidency countries had been too distracted by internal difficulties to carry out their programs successfully.

Meeting with Adam Balcer, Pawel Zerka and Igor Swiecicki from *demosEuropa*

The delegation met with Adam Balcer, Director of the "EU enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy" programme of *demosEuropa - Centre for European Strategy*, an independent research institution which aims to provide strategic insights into key aspects of the European Union, including the functioning of its institutions and policies.¹⁵ Mr. Balcer was also accompanied by two analysts: Pawel Zerka and Igor Swiecicki. Mr. Balcer highlighted the priorities of Poland's rotating EU Presidency, including the EU's Eastern Partnership, a program that aims to promote political and economic cooperation between the EU and its Eastern neighbours, including: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. According to Mr. Balcer, Poland should focus on producing tangible results related to the Eastern Partnership – such as a possible free trade agreement with Moldova – to provide inspiration for the region. He added that Poland needs to enhance its own investment in the region through greater provision of official development assistance and foreign direct investment, as well as strengthened people to people ties.

Mr. Balcer further highlighted how Poland's Presidency priorities had shifted as a result of tensions between key EU member states. He indicated that Poland was now shying away from European Security and Defence Policy as priority for its Presidency in response to tensions between France, the United Kingdom and Germany over military intervention in Libya. Senator Downe raised the issue of NATO and questioned whether support for the organization remained as high in Poland as it had in the past. Mr. Balcer indicated that there had been a political shift in Poland away from the United States towards the EU in relation to defence due to low public support for Polish participation in military missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Canadian delegates then raised the issue of trade and inquired as to whether there were any sectors in Poland that were opposed to free trade and/or CETA. In particular, Senator MacDonald raised the issue of trade in agriculture. Mr. Balcer indicated that there was resistance from Poland's Peasant Party to free trade in agriculture in the grain sector, where Polish competitiveness was challenged by cheaper grain from Ukraine.

Finally, delegates asked about Turkish accession to the EU. Mr. Balcer indicated that Polish support for Turkish accession was due to geopolitical concerns. From the Polish perspective, Turkish EU accession would reduce the possibility of Russian-Turkish

15 Demos Europa, "About us," http://www.demoseuropa.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=214&Itemid=111

cooperation in Eastern Europe, which could in turn threaten Poland's interests in the region. Mr. Balcer argued that Russia's geopolitical significance was often overstated and greater focus should be placed on Turkey's rising influence as broker between the Middle East, North Africa and the West.

Meeting with Mr. Maciej Szpunar, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ambassador Costello hosted a lunch with the Canadian delegation and Mr. Maciej Szpunar, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who provided an overview of Poland's priorities for its upcoming Presidency of the Council of the EU. According to Mr. Szpunar, Poland has three main priorities: focusing on economic development through deeper integration of the internal market; improving EU security, particularly in the area of energy security; and promoting openness through the Eastern Partnership. Mr. Szpunar indicated that one of the main challenges for Poland's EU Presidency would be to ensure that the EU's focus remains on Eastern Europe, as it responds to the changes in North Africa. The delegates raised the importance of CETA and suggested that the conclusion of this agreement during Poland's rotating EU Presidency would be beneficial to both countries. The Ambassador also highlighted the importance of bilateral cooperation in the area of energy security related to shale gas exploration in Poland, as well as the need to work together to respond to Canada's concerns about the EU's proposed "Fuel Quality Directive."

Meeting with Representatives from the Polish Institute of International Affairs

The Canadian delegation met with representatives from the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), including Director Marcin Zaborowski, Ms. Beata Wojna, Mr. Ernest Wyciszkievicz, and Mr. Bartosz Wisniewski. Established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PISM is an international policy think tank that works for all branches of government. After providing a brief overview of Poland's EU Presidency priorities, Mr. Zaborowski turned the discussion over to the delegates, who inquired into Poland's decision not to participate in NATO's military campaign in Libya. According to PISM representatives, reasons for Poland's decision included: its past and ongoing commitment of military

resources to the missions in Afghanistan and Iraq which have been unpopular; the fact that the mission did not originate from NATO; and the risks of the mission extending both in terms of time and scope and of greater civilian casualties. Senator Downe observed that Europe seemed to be moving away from NATO and wondered whether this would lead to a new European military force.

He also inquired about tensions within Europe over migration issues and wondered how Poland would address increasing migration pressures in the future. PISM representatives indicated that Poland was currently a transit country for migrants seeking greater opportunities in other EU Member States, but was not considered an immigration country yet. They further indicated that the EU lacked coordination in the area of asylum and immigration policy and many EU Member States had not learned how to manage diversity.

Senator MacDonald inquired into Poland's shale gas exploration. PISM representatives indicated that shale gas exploration was in its early stages of development with 20 drillings having been completed this year. While there was cautious optimism, they indicated that there were questions surrounding both its economic efficiency and long term environmental impact. They further noted that much of the country's current interest in shale gas was geopolitical to avoid energy dependence on foreign sources, rather than based on strong commercial domestic support.

Meeting with Members of the Senate European Union Affairs Committee

The meeting with Senator Edmund Wittbrodt and Senator Janusz Kachon focused on Poland's economic situation and in particular, its future adoption of the Euro. Senator Wittbrodt indicated that the adoption of the Euro was necessary both because it was included as a criteria of its accession agreement with the EU. Furthermore, as Poland is not part of the Euro zone, it cannot participate in fiscal and monetary policy making within the EU and therefore has less influence within the EU as a result.¹⁶ The Senators said that Poland was watching the experience of Slovakia and Slovenia in their respective adoptions of the Euro to determine its own timing and process for proceeding. The discussion then turned to Canada-EU trade relations, where both the Polish Senators and Canadian delegates agreed that discussions related to Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO), fisheries and energy sources such as shale gas and the oil sands should be based upon science rather than emotion. Senator Wittbrodt indicated that there was a greater need for acceptance among the Polish population of nuclear energy for it to become a more viable option for meeting the country's energy needs. Senator MacDonald then raised the possibility of using clean coal technology in Poland as another possible alternative.

Meeting with Marek Borowski, M.P., Chair of the Committee of the Liaison with Poles Abroad

The Canadian delegation met with Marek Borowski, Member of Parliament and Chair of the Committee of the Liaison with Poles Abroad, who described his experiences with Polish Diasporas in both Canada and the United States. He indicated that both countries were multicultural but had different approaches to ethnic diversity. He noted how the Polish Diaspora in Canada had built a strong community that still maintained their linkages to Poland. The discussion then turned to the priorities of Poland's EU Presidency. Mr. Borowski indicated that the country's Presidency priorities reflected the key challenges facing the EU, including responding the financial crisis and ensuring economic growth, as well as promoting stability on its Eastern borders through the Eastern Partnership. Senator Downe raised the issue of immigration and multiculturalism in Poland, and Mr. Borowski indicated that Poland remained a transit country for migrants but acknowledged that Poland soon could face an increase in immigration that could be brought about by the country's increasing prosperity. Senator Downe also inquired into how Polish views regarding nuclear energy had been affected by the nuclear disaster in Fukushima Japan. Mr. Borowski described how the Polish public remained quite split on the issue of nuclear energy and there was a need for a

¹⁶ The "Euro zone" refers to EU Member States who have adopted the Euro as their currency. Poland has yet to adopt the Euro as their currency.

serious public debate in the country focussing on the costs of nuclear energy versus alternative sources, rather than simply on the safety of the technology.

Meeting with Tadeusz Iwinski, M.P, Deputy Chair of the Polish Delegation to PACE

The Canadian delegation met with Tadeusz Iwinski, Member of Parliament and Deputy Chair of the Polish Delegation to PACE. Canadian delegates raised questions regarding relations between Poland and Belarus, as it was a focus of discussions at the Council of Europe. Mr. Iwinski provided an overview of efforts by Poland, the Council of Europe and the EU to engage the Belarus government in a dialogue on human rights, civil liberties and free elections in the country. As current efforts were being met with significant resistance, Mr. Iwinski concluded that the situation could not be solved at the present stage.

Meeting with Bartlomiej Nowak, Director of the Centre for International Relations

The Canadian delegation had the opportunity to meet with Bartlomiej Nowak, Director of the Centre for International Relations, an independent, non-governmental think-tank that focuses on the study of international relations and foreign policy issues of importance to Poland, Europe and transatlantic relations.¹⁷ Mr. Nowak highlighted the two key challenges facing Poland's rotating EU Presidency, including parliamentary elections in Poland in October 2011 and the possibility of problems in the Eurozone that the EU would have to respond to. However, as Poland does not participate in the Eurozone, it has little input in fiscal policy-making decisions. Mr. Nowak noted that recently there was an increasing trend within the EU, where policy making was driven by Member States rather than EU institutions. According to Mr. Nowak, it would be up to the Polish Presidency to restore this balance.

Delegates raised the issue of security, and Mr. Nowak indicated that strengthening the European Security and Defence Policy as an EU Presidency priority was now being downplayed by Poland due to a breakdown in cooperation between France, the UK and Germany over intervention in North Africa. Senator Downe asked Mr. Nowak whether Poland's relationship with the United States had changed in recent years. Mr. Nowak indicated that in Poland, the US was no longer perceived as a superpower and main guarantor of Polish security. This perception was influenced by the decision of the US not to intervene in the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008, as well as President Obama's decision to cancel the proposed anti-ballistic missile defence system in Poland in 2009.

Meeting with Mr. Piotr Ogrodzinski, Director of the America's Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The informal discussion with Mr. Piotr Ogrodzinski focused initially on Polish politics and the possible influence of the fall election on Poland's EU Presidency. Senator Downe highlighted the importance of CETA negotiations. Mr. Ogrodzinski noted European concerns regarding barriers to trade, such as interprovincial trade regulations. He further indicated that much of the opposition to the agreement was the result of

17 Center for International Relations, "Mission Statement," <http://csm.org.pl/en/about-us.html>

environmental issues becoming ideological within the European Parliament. Ambassador Costello stressed the importance of Canada and Poland working together on these issues.

Meeting with Members of the Poland-Canada Parliamentary Group

The delegation met with Andrzej Cwierz, M.P., Chair of the Poland-Canada Parliamentary Group, as well as other members of the group, including Andrzej Olechowski, M.P and Senator Jan Olech. After some opening remarks, participants discussed different ways in which Canada and Poland could promote bilateral cooperation. Senator MacDonald highlighted Canada's expertise in shale gas, as well as coal gasification and invited the Poland-Canada Parliamentary Group to Canada to pursue a closer dialogue in this area. Polish M.P.s suggested that further cooperation could occur at the academic and technical levels through university exchanges. Senator MacDonald indicated that he would follow up on this issue with Cape Breton University. Polish M.P.s also expressed an interest in greater cooperation in the agri-food sector, in particular Canada's fertilizer industry. Both sides agreed that Poland's EU Presidency offered an opportunity to foster greater cooperation between the two countries on these issues, as well as others. The Council of Europe was also seen as another arena in which Canada and Poland could pursue closer cooperation.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. David Tilson, M.P.
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Second Part of the 2011 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Parliamentary Mission to Poland, the country that will next hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union
DESTINATION	Warsaw, Poland and Strasbourg, France
DATES	April 11 to 20, 2011
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Hon. Percy Downe, Senator The Hon. Michael MacDonald (Warsaw)
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Mr. Philippe Méla, Association Secretary Ms. Karin Phillips, Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 20,729.73
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 5,956.44
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 3,063.94
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 307.15
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 0.00
TOTAL	\$ 30,057.26

