



Report

**Visit of the Honourable Noël A. Kinsella,
Speaker of the Senate,
and a Parliamentary Delegation,
Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina,**

September 7-16, 2012

The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate, and a delegation of senators visited Greece and Bosnia and Herzegovina from September 7 to 16, 2012.

The delegation has the honour of tabling its

Report

The official delegation led by Speaker Noël A. Kinsella was comprised of the following members:

The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, Senator, Speaker of the Senate;

Mrs. Ann Kinsella;

The Honourable James S. Cowan, Senator, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate;

The Honourable Leo Housakos, Senator;

Ms. Janelle Feldstein, Chief of Staff of the Speaker of the Senate; and

Ms. Marie-Eve Belzile, Secretary to the delegation.

Background – Greece

Canada and the Hellenic Republic have enjoyed close relations for more than 70 years. In 1942, during World War II, Greece opened its first diplomatic mission in Ottawa and Canada appointed Major-General Georges Vanier as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Greek government in exile. Not only do solid ties between Canada and the Hellenic Republic persist today, but they have been strengthened over the years through the bilateral cooperation between the two countries within such organisations as NATO, the United Nations, the OSCE and the Francophonie.

Greece is at the crossroads between Western Europe, southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean, lending it a unique perspective on regional, multilateral and European issues. One fifth of Greece's Balkan territory is made up of peninsulas. Over 9,000 islands and islets, nearly 200 of which are inhabited, crowd together in a fragmented geography.

A Senate delegation led by the Speaker of the Senate visited Greece as part of Canada's ongoing parliamentary diplomacy. The members of the delegation expressed Canada's solidarity and reaffirmed its friendship with Greece which was in the midst of a financial crisis and was facing unpopular austerity measures. The delegates first visited a Greek island to get an informed perspective on perceived differences between Greek life in the regions and in urban areas. They next visited Athens, capital of the Hellenic Republic, where they met with members of the Government and of Parliament.

Background – Bosnia and Herzegovina

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (known as the Dayton Agreement) signed in 1995 put an end to clashes between the three main ethnic groups in the country: the Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. The Agreement made Bosnia and Herzegovina a unified state consisting of two entities: the Bosniak-Croat

Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republika Srpska (Serb Republic). A district by the name of Brčko has also been created, which is not under the control of any government body. The central government is led by a presidential body composed of three members, one from each ethnic community, and the presidency rotates among the three members every eight months. The country has a population of approximately 3.9 million, about 46% of whom are Bosniaks, 38% Serbs and 15% Croats.

Ethnic tensions, corruption, fragility of government institutions and organized crime are impeding the country's growth. Government positions are assigned mainly according to ethnic origin, and political leaders generally take measures that favour their own ethnic group. Government representatives at all levels are faced with major difficulties in meeting demands related to reconstruction, economic recovery and rudimentary governance.

Since the end of the war, the international community has maintained a substantial domestic civil presence through the Office of the High Representative, the European Union's delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The goal is to help Bosnia and Herzegovina become a stable, viable and multi-ethnic state which cooperates with its neighbours. It is engaged in the process of membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Since the creation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, several departments of the Canadian government have played a significant role in the country's development. For example, Canada has taken part in peacekeeping, national security, reconstruction and institutional reform projects. As Canada is also a member of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) and its Steering Board, both created in 1995, it advises the High Representative on political, economic and security matters.

However, Canada's approach to the Balkans is in transition. Our role as a partner in the rebuilding of Bosnia and Herzegovina has gradually diminished. Hence it was important for the Senate delegation to visit the country, hear the opinions of the various stakeholders regarding the social, cultural and economic situation, and observe the progress made.

Objectives

The objectives of the visit were to:

- enhance relations between Canada, Greece, and Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- encourage ongoing parliamentary dialogue by further promoting parliamentary exchanges;
- highlight the range of Canada's interests in the region;
- discuss foreign policies with respect to issues of international and mutual interest;
- learn from the European economic crisis;
- promote educational exchanges;

- promote research sharing in the area of agriculture;
- promote collaboration between container shipping ports; and
- pursue good relations in all fields of contact.

Meetings – Rhodes (Greece)

In Rhodes, the delegation met with:

Mr. Ioannis Machairidis, Regional Governor of South Aegean; His Eminence Metropolitan Kyrillos of Rhodes; Mr. Stathis Kousournas, Mayor of Rhodes; and Father John Luke Gregory, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Rhodes and Parish Priest of the Franciscan Fathers Monastery.

Meeting with Mr. Ioannis Machairidis, Regional Governor of South Aegean

South Aegean is one of the 13 regions or “peripheries” of Greece, and is itself divided into 13 regional districts. Mr. Machairidis is its elected Governor.

Speaker Kinsella explained the potential advantages and benefits of parliamentary diplomacy. He outlined the objectives of this meeting in terms of the development of bilateral relations between the Greek regions and Canada, solidarity between the two peoples in this particularly stormy period, knowledge sharing, and increased exchanges. The Speaker mentioned Canada’s labour shortage and how an agreement on youth mobility would be beneficial to both countries. He also welcomed Greece’s support for Canada in its negotiations toward a free trade agreement with the European Union.

Mr. Machairidis wanted to know the opinion of the Speaker and senators on fiscal policy. The delegates discussed changes which might lead the state or the monetary system to form new policies. They explained that this issue had been studied by a Senate committee, resulting in a report which helped prevent Canada from foundering during the financial crisis of 2008. They concluded that it is important for the government to lay down clear rules and not let the rules be dictated solely by the markets.

The tourism situation in the South Aegean region was explained by Mr. Machairidis. He said that some 5.5 million tourists visit the island of Rhodes every year. Since the Greek economy depends mainly on tourism and the primary sector, the regions make a significant contribution to the national budget. Tourism promotion policies are developed by the central government, and the regions act in line with those policies. The governor indicated that in practice most of the work is controlled by Athens.

Meeting with His Eminence Metropolitan Kyrillos of Rhodes

His Eminence told the members of the delegation how he came to hold his current ecclesiastical position in the Orthodox Church. He said that he represents a religious minority in Greece.

The discussion turned to the Church's role in Greek schools and in the communities. Religious instruction in Greece begins in the family. Only certain topics are dealt with in the schools. Speaker Kinsella touched on the goal of increasing the number of educational exchanges between Canadian and Greek students.

Also addressed was the crisis in Syria and respect for religious freedoms, the cornerstone of all other freedoms. The internal strife was worrying, and could eventually be directed toward Christians. In the meantime, the Orthodox Church had already provided relief to some refugees.

Meeting with Mr. Stathis Kousournas, Mayor of Rhodes

At this meeting, Speaker Kinsella emphasized that Canada was a strong supporter of Greece in these difficult times. He also thanked Greece for supporting Canada during the negotiations toward a free trade agreement with the European Union. Canada is a gateway for trade with the United States and such an agreement can only be beneficial for both Canada and Greece.

Speaker Kinsella next spoke of the interest in increasing the number of student exchanges between Canada and Greece. He explained the advantages of this both for the students and for their country of origin. It was mentioned that exchanges between postsecondary educational institutions should not be limited to students, but also be accessible to academics and researchers.

The Speaker also noted that Canada was in the process of building a large naval fleet. This news prompted discussion of the importance and difficulty of obtaining sufficient skilled and specialized labour, and the need for exchanges.

Mr. Kousournas explained that the University of Rhodes was primarily known for its tourism program, while Senator Cowan described the desire of the Maritime provinces to promote trade, shipping and ocean sciences between Canada and its trading partners, and also to exchange information on best practices.

Meeting with Father John Luke Gregory, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Rhodes and Parish Priest of the Franciscan Fathers Monastery

The meeting with Father John Luke Gregory was an opportunity to examine relations between the different religions in Greece. It addressed freedom of religion across the country, as well as the crisis in Syria, giving rise to questions about the fate of non-Muslims.

Father John Luke Gregory maintained that many illegal immigrants, mainly crossing through Turkey, were already settling in the Rhodes region. He said that the Church was doing what it could to help, even though the economic crisis was not sparing the religious sector.

Speaker Kinsella informed Father John Luke Gregory of the diplomatic recognition of the Order of Malta by the Canadian government. They discussed resulting strategic considerations and advantages for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Meetings – Athens (Greece)

In Athens the delegation met with:

Mr. Karolos Papoulias, President of the Hellenic Republic; Mr. Antonis Samaras, Prime Minister of Greece; Mr. Evangelos Meimarakis, Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament; His Beatitude Ieronymos II, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece; Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Antonis Roupakiotis, Minister for Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, and Mr. Nikolas Kanellopoulos, Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights; Mr. Constantinos Arvanitopoulos, Minister of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports; Ms. Olga Kefalogianni, Minister of Tourism; Mr. Costas Mousouroulis, Minister for Shipping and the Aegean Sea; Mr. Notis Mitarakis, Deputy Minister of Development; Mr. Nikolaos Foskolos, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Athens; and Dr. David W. Rupp, Director of the Canadian Institute in Greece.

Meeting with Mr. Karolos Papoulias, President of the Hellenic Republic

The President of the Hellenic Republic is the Greek head of state. He welcomed the Senate delegation warmly and thanked Canada for supporting his nation in these difficult times. He felt that the Greek people had suffered enough from the economic crisis and that it was time for Europe to come to the aid not only of Greece but also of Spain, Portugal and Ireland.

With the political cohesion of Europe being tested, he spoke of the risk of the economic crisis and the lack of social cohesion degenerating into a democratic and institutional crisis. Competition is stiff. New emerging nations are gaining in self-confidence, and the President argued that Europe had to take action to remain competitive.

Speaker Kinsella conveyed the Governor General's greetings to the President of the Republic, and said that it was important for Canada to visit Greece to express its solidarity in these difficult times. He indicated that one of the aims of his visit was to promote exchanges of students and academics. He spoke of the national and personal benefits of this initiative, and expressed a desire to see the number of exchanges increase in the years ahead.

Speaker Kinsella also congratulated the Greek Parliament on its steps to overcome economic challenges, especially measures to dismantle bureaucratic regulations. He spoke of Canada's negotiations with the European Union on a free trade agreement. The conversation continued at length on the unparalleled economic opportunities that such an agreement would create for both Greece and Canada.

Meeting with Mr. Antonis Samaras, Prime Minister of Greece

The Prime Minister presented an overview of his country's economic and political situation. Greece's capacity to meet these challenges will depend on a number of factors, including refinancing of the banks, the decisions of the Troika, and foreign investment.

Also discussed was the importance of collegiality among parliamentarians from different parties in order to recover from difficult circumstances.

A final topic was Canada's huge investment to build a naval fleet, and the future repercussions on job creation that such a project will have. Canada's Atlantic Gateway and its competitive and strategic solutions were also discussed.

Meeting with Mr. Evangelos Meimarakis, Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament

Speaker Kinsella thanked his host for the invitation and for the Greek hospitality. He spoke of the flourishing relations between Canada and Greece and of the opportunities to strengthen the bonds of friendship between parliamentarians and citizens alike. The work that the government had done in terms of budgetary adjustment was impressive, but members of the delegation were aware of the efforts still needed in terms of structural reforms on the one hand and the social consequences of those reforms on the other.

Speaker Meimarakis spoke of the impacts of the economic crisis his country was experiencing, and the fiscal measures taken by his government to rectify the situation. He explained that Greece had been obliged to take quick action, which had been a cause of social discontent. In his opinion the country had served as a prototype for the European model, and the European Parliament and the United States had been slow to take action. He said that Greece's struggle was now the struggle of all of Europe, and that to be able to find positive, beneficial solutions, nations had to cooperate.

Speaker Meimarakis mentioned that the Greek Parliament was to ratify the youth mobility accord, which would allow Greek's young people to benefit from and enrich their knowledge and experience by learning about the culture and values of the visited country.

At the end of his address, Speaker Meimarakis presented Speaker Kinsella with the gold medal of the Hellenic Parliament to mark his brilliant career and impressive accomplishments.

Speaker Kinsella thanked his counterpart warmly, commenting on the productive meetings that the Senate delegation had had thus far. He testified to the progress made by Greece in these difficult times.

He also spoke positively of the relations between Canada and Greece and expressed enthusiasm for future cooperation between the two nations on education. Speaker Kinsella then discussed the importance of establishing ties between the national legislatures. He made a point of thanking Greece for supporting Canada in its free trade negotiations with the European Union.

Speaker Kinsella mentioned the 127th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union which will be held in Quebec City in October 2012, expressing his hope that the Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament would attend along with a delegation. Again with the aim of

strengthening relations, the Speaker spoke of the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program organized by the Parliament of Canada, and delivered a letter of invitation.

Meeting with His Beatitude Ieronymos II, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece

His Beatitude, head of the Orthodox Church in Greece, welcomed the members of the delegation. He said that he was among those who had urged Greece to enter the European Union. He felt that many errors had been committed since that time.

The Speaker said that Canada was negotiating a free trade agreement with the European Union and that he was confident that Greece would soon be prosperous again. He went on to inquire about the viewpoint of the Orthodox community given the current climate in Greece.

His Beatitude spoke in particular of the differences of opinion between his country and the leaders of the European Union. He also addressed the issues of the country's low agri-food production and illegal immigration, stating that he considers the latter to be a problem which extends beyond the national borders of Greece.

Senator Housakos briefly explained the importance and role of the Greek Orthodox community in Quebec.

Meeting with Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos, Minister of Foreign Affairs

The meeting took place in a congenial atmosphere, with Speaker Kinsella stating that the main objective of the visit was to convey Canada's solidarity with Greece. He emphasized Canada's respect for the efforts and sacrifices of the Greek people to improve the situation in their country.

Both parties mentioned the importance of the Greek community in Canada and how it constitutes a bridge of friendship between the two states. From that perspective, they discussed the advantages of the youth travel initiative.

The Minister indicated that he intended to visit Canada around the end of October. He stressed the value for both countries of promoting economic cooperation. Speaker Kinsella agreed, reminding the Minister that Canada would host the 127th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and that he wanted to observe on that occasion the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations. Next he thanked Greece for supporting Canada in its negotiations toward a free trade agreement with the European Union, an agreement which would be to their mutual benefit.

The meeting ended with a discussion about Canada's desire for strategic cooperation with Greece as a point of access to European markets.

Meeting with Mr. Antonis Roupakiotis, Minister for Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, and Nikolas Kanellopoulos, Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights

During this conversation, the issue of human rights and freedom of religion was raised, along with the problem of illegal immigration to Greece.

Mention was made of the Canadian government's plan to create an office of religious freedom to ensure the defence of persecuted religious minorities. Speaker Kinsella explained the importance of bilateral relations and parliamentary dialogue to learning about practices in other countries.

The Minister said that illegal immigration to Greece poses social and security problems which impact human rights. Thousands of illegal immigrants enter the country every month with no documentation and no identification. This new phenomenon makes employment and anti-crime efforts even more difficult. In his view, illegal immigration should be regarded not solely as a Greek problem but as a general European problem. It demands solutions and enforcement that are both domestic and European, and the economic support of the European Union.

Meeting with Mr. Constantinos Arvanitopoulos, Minister of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports

The Minister reported on the educational reforms needed in Greece, including the privatization of certain universities, institutional consolidation, evaluation of the school system and faculty, and reassignment of human resources. He noted that there was some opposition to the plan by sector unions.

The delegates discussed certain difficulties created by the high cost of maintaining school buildings. This problem is shared by the Greek authorities.

With regard to student exchanges, Greece offers competitive rates to foreign students, but it is often faced with language barriers, as courses are offered primarily in Greek. One foreign student brings about \$8,000 a year into the local economy. In Greece, foreign students make up less than 10% of the student population.

The conversation ended following a brief discussion of the new Hellenic studies programs offered by certain Canadian universities.

Meeting with Ms. Olga Kefalogianni, Minister of Tourism

Tourism is an important sector of the Greek economy, representing about 15.5% of the gross domestic product and 19% of the country's labour market.

The Minister of Tourism and the members of the Senate delegation discussed various options for increasing investment and the number of tourists travelling to Greece from North America, which is a priority for the Greek government. Among the options discussed, student exchanges were an easily accessible opportunity, as was an air transportation agreement between Canada and Greece.

Another topic was the performances by the Cirque du Soleil in Athens. Both parties agreed that this colourful show helps to create bonds between the two countries, not only by attracting numerous tourists but also by enhancing the image of the Greek capital.

Meeting with Mr. Costas Mousouroulis, Minister for Shipping and the Aegean Sea

Shipping is a major contributor to the economy of Greece, whose merchant fleet ranks fifth in the world and first in Europe in terms of deadweight tonnes. The main objective of this meeting was to promote Canada's Atlantic Gateway.

Several topics were raised in this regard to try to persuade Greece to take advantage of the various opportunities that this major project can offer. The Atlantic Gateway provides new shipping possibilities. The Speaker explained the advantages of the Atlantic Gateway and Trade Corridor for better access to the North American market, in particular the connections between container shipping ports and road and rail networks in Canada and the United States. He added that Canada offers a competitive advantage over the United States because it cuts down travel time by one day. Finally, he told the Minister about certain ports, such as Halifax in Nova Scotia, which offer customs pre-clearance services for merchandise going to the United States. This procedure helps to speed up the transit of goods and to relieve congestion at facilities, thereby achieving significant savings of time and money.

Canada has signed a free trade agreement with the United States. When merchandise is routed through the Atlantic Corridor, it becomes a gateway to the entire North American continent. Finally, the additional need for skilled and specialized labour created by the Atlantic Gateway opens the way to new student exchange and entrepreneurial agreements.

The Minister received this information positively. He was concerned about security measures for merchandise heading to the United States by train from Canada and about the current Greek position toward Europe.

Meeting with Mr. Notis Mitarakis, Deputy Minister of Development

The Speaker opened the discussion by introducing the members of the Senate delegation. He discussed the Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to be held in Quebec City, and made known his intention to take that occasion to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Greece.

The discussion addressed the importance of bilateral relations. Trade and shipping with eastern Canada were encouraged, as was participation in Canada's Parliamentary Officers' Study Program.

Finally, the members of the Senate delegation described the first part of their visit to a region, on the island of Rhodes, and reiterated the advantages of international student mobility. It was mentioned that only 3% of Canadian students will do undergraduate studies in foreign universities. The Deputy Minister commented that Greece had the opposite problem. Many students leave Greece to study in major European universities

while the country takes in tourist revenue. Greece is losing an asset it cannot afford to lose.

The Deputy Minister explained that the current trade problem is due to the mistrust of foreign investors. Bad publicity is a factor here, as Greece, stricken by a serious economic crisis, is lacking in credibility. Some regulations need to be revised, and he feels that many industry sectors need to be privatized if the country is to prosper once again.

Meeting with Mr. Nikolaos Foskolos, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Athens

Speaker Kinsella began the discussion by briefly describing the meeting in Rhodes with Father John Luke Gregory. The Archbishop compared the religious situation in the regions with the situation in Athens.

Questions were raised regarding the funding of churches and other institutions. The discussion then turned to religious instruction in schools, although the Orthodox Church model is the only one recognized by the Greek state.

The Speaker inquired about the country's key social concerns. Illegal immigration prompted discussion, and the Archbishop pointed out that many of the immigrants are practising Catholics.

The importance of religion in society was considered along with the need to bridge the gap between cultures. Speaker Kinsella concluded by describing the Canadian government's initiative of creating an office of religious freedom.

Meeting with Dr. David W. Rupp, Director of the Canadian Institute in Greece

Professor Rupp explained that the Canadian Institute in Greece is a not-for-profit organization which relies on private investment for its operation and funding. The Institute encourages research in areas that relate to Greek heritage – ancient, Byzantine and modern – through its academic programs, its facilities and library in Athens, and the granting of fellowships and internships for Canadian students. The Institute also sponsors Canadian cultural activities in Greece.

The delegates were interested in the archaeological fieldwork being done under the aegis of the Institute, and were impressed by the large number of Canadian undergraduate and graduate students participating each year. Speaker Kinsella provided information on Canadian foundations that support cultural activities.

Activities

In Rhodes, the delegates attended a Roman Catholic mass celebrated by Father John Luke Gregory, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Rhodes and Parish Priest for the Franciscan Fathers Monastery. The delegates had met Father Luke the day before during an official visit. In honour of the delegation, the Canadian national anthem was played on the organ as its members entered St. Patrick's Church. During the religious celebration, Father Luke read an address to the Canadian delegation from the Right

Reverend Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Custos of the Holy Land, saluting the delegation's efforts to offer support and friendship to the Greek people, admiring the work done by the Order of Malta and expressing gratitude for the delegation's concerns for the Syrian people.

In Athens, the members of the delegation took part in a round table along with Canadian and Greek investors. They discussed in particular the business climate in Greece and the austerity measures taken by the government to counter the economic crisis.

The delegation attended a Cirque du Soleil performance in Athens in the company of the Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament and the Canadian Ambassador to Greece.

The delegates also had the opportunity to visit the Vorres Museum, the Acropolis Museum and the Acropolis itself.

Meetings – Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

In Sarajevo, the delegation met with:

Ambassador Fletcher M. Burton, Head of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ms. Mary Ann Hennessey, Head of Office for the Council of Europe (CoE) in Sarajevo; Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ms. Ulrike Hartmann, Office of the High Representative (OHR); Mr. Milorad Živković, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Mr. Ognjen Tadić, Second Deputy Speaker, House of Peoples; His Excellency Mr. Jakob Finci, Leader of the Jewish community of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Switzerland; Mr. Vjekoslav Bevanda, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Dr. Mustafa Cerić, Reisu-l-ulema (Grand Mufti) of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Mr. Zlatko Lagumdžija, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Major General Robert Brieger (Austria), EUFOR commander at Camp Butmir; Mr. Bradley Collins and Mrs. Bethany Collins, founders of the Sports Foundation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Mr. Martin Raguž, Senator, House of Peoples; and Cardinal Vinko Puljić, Archbishop of Vrhbosna-Sarajevo.

Meeting with Ambassador Fletcher M. Burton, Head of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ms. Mary Ann Hennessey, Head of Office for the Council of Europe (CoE) in Sarajevo; Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina; and Ms. Ulrike Hartmann, Office of the High Representative (OHR)

The discussion began with a brief overview of the country's political, geopolitical and economic situation. The international participants explained that Bosnia and Herzegovina is experiencing economic difficulties because of the global economic crisis, and those difficulties are being heightened by the slow progress in implementing reforms. Prevailing mistrust and competition between the different political parties have made it more difficult to take important decisions. Because of growing ethnic tensions, the political system finds itself at an impasse. The functionality of the state is being challenged.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has made Euro-Atlantic integration a priority for foreign policy. In June 2008, the country signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union. However the process has come to a halt and the Agreement is still not in effect because the requisite reforms have not been made. To help move things forward and accelerate the implementation of reforms, the European Union has stepped up its presence, and in August 2011 it appointed a special representative to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before this appointment, this role was filled by the High Representative.

In 2009, Bosnia and Herzegovina asked to join the Membership Action Plan (MAP) of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Plan contributes to reform efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a view to its accession to NATO. One year later, Bosnia and Herzegovina was invited to join the MAP, on the condition that it transfer defence assets to the state government. This transfer has been blocked due to disagreement between state and government entities.

The issue of the electoral system was raised. Problems facing Bosnia and Herzegovina were presented, and the representatives of the international community then explained the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in *Sejdic and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Essentially, they said that the claimants, Mr. Dervo Sejdić and Mr. Jakob Finci, are nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina who are of Roma and Jewish origin. In anticipation of the general elections of 2006, Mr. Finci indicated to the central electoral commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina that he wished to stand as a candidate for the presidency and the House of Peoples in the Parliamentary Assembly. The commission informed him that he could not do so because he is of Jewish origin. In its preamble, the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina establishes a distinction between two categories of citizens: the “constituent peoples” (the Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs) and “others” (Jews, Roma, other national minorities, and those declaring no ethnic affiliation). The House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly (the upper chamber) and the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina are solely comprised of persons from the three constituent peoples. The Court concluded in 2009 that the constitutional provisions under which the claimants were unable to stand as candidates in the elections are in violation of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and its Protocols and must be deemed discriminatory. Bosnia and Herzegovina had six months to comply with the judgment. This period had long expired and no reform had been made. A joint parliamentary committee formed in 2011 to draft the constitutional amendments necessary to implement the decision was unable to reach an agreement. Credible efforts to conform to the Sejdic-Finci decision are a requirement for the Stabilization and Association Agreement to come into effect between the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Inability to resolve this problem could result in expulsion measures by the Council of Europe or other punitive measures. Finally, investment opportunities in Bosnia and Herzegovina were discussed. The members of the international community indicated that certain fields such as green energy, tourism and forestry could prove profitable.

Meeting with Mr. Milorad Živković, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Ognjen Tadić, Second Deputy Speaker, House of Peoples, and various parliamentarians

Speaker Živković thanked Canada for its assistance with mine clearance, reconstruction, and creation of democratic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was also grateful for its support in the process of Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession to NATO. He emphasized that the two nations could still improve their bilateral relations, in particular by developing economic ties and reopening a consular office in Sarajevo.

Speaker Kinsella thanked Mr. Živković for the hospitality received and introduced the parliamentarians in the delegation. He explained Canadian multiculturalism, linguistic duality and the importance of parliamentary diplomacy. He also emphasized how useful it is, for the entire Canadian population, to have different political parties in parliament and to be able to consider the merit of policies proposed to improve the lives of Canadians. The members of the delegation spoke of the tensions that sometimes exist between parliamentarians with opposing ideas, but also of their general collegiality, to the benefit of democracy and the well-being of Canadian society.

Speaker Živković in turn introduced the parliamentarians who were accompanying him. He spoke of some significant differences which he believed to exist between Canadian and Bosnian politics. The discussion then focused on the importance of Canada for Bosnia and Herzegovina, in terms of both the human connections between the two countries and the economic support that Canadian investors can provide. Given the high rate of unemployment in the country, the two groups discussed opportunities for investment in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the gaps that must be filled to improve the economic situation. The main issues were lack of expertise, technologies and financial resources.

Speaker Kinsella explained that Canada, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, wanted to be part of the European market, so it was currently negotiating a free trade agreement with the European Union. The exchange of commercial goods and processes will be much easier when the two nations are parties to a common agreement. In the meantime, the issue was to develop concrete exchange and investment projects focusing on areas such as the mobility of students and specialists in different fields, including forestry, mining and renewable energy. The Canadian delegates nonetheless wished to make it clear that an environment conducive to trade first requires a peaceful social and political climate, which is fundamental to any investment project.

The meeting closed with a discussion initiated by Speaker Kinsella about the ports used by Bosnia and Herzegovina to transport merchandise. He spoke of Canada's Atlantic Gateway, its advantages, and upcoming developments in shipping.

Meeting with His Excellency Mr. Jakob Finci, Leader of the Jewish Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Switzerland

His Excellency warmly welcomed the members of the delegation and began by explaining the origins of the Jewish community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He said that the community maintains ties with all of the country's communities, whatever their ethnic origin. Then, at the request of Speaker Kinsella, he commented in detail on the constitutional barriers which led him to file a complaint under the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, to which his country is a signatory.

Among other things, he explained that the preamble to the Constitution names Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs as constituent peoples. Because of his Jewish origin, therefore, he was not qualified to stand as a candidate for elections to the House of Peoples or the state presidency. The European Court of Human Rights found in his favour in 2009. It invited the government to amend the relevant provisions of the national constitution and the electoral act, so as to guarantee that all citizens, whatever their ethnic affiliation, can exercise their right to run as candidates and vote.

His Excellency went on to note that, in becoming a member of the Council of Europe in 2002 and ratifying the Convention and its Protocols, Bosnia and Herzegovina was committed to revising its electoral legislation. Similarly, in ratifying a stabilization and association agreement with the European Union in 2008, Bosnia and Herzegovina committed itself to amending its electoral legislation pertaining to members of the presidency and senators in the House of Peoples within a period of one to two years, so as to conform to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and the country's commitments following accession to the Council of Europe. It was for the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina to amend the Constitution, not the international community. Despite the formation of a commission to assist in the process, no agreement had yet been reached.

He added that another problem raised by certain groups in the country was that the Constitution had been drafted and adopted without the application of procedures to give it democratic legitimacy. It was negotiated and published in English, a foreign language in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and therefore stands as the unique case of a constitution never officially published in the official languages of the country in question. He further noted that most people in the country acknowledged the need to amend the Constitution. However, those discussions were opening the door to a multitude of changes demanded by all the cultural groups. He concluded by saying that the international community had recognized the last elections, but in his view it would not do so again if the Constitution was not reformed in time for the next elections in 2014.

The members of the Canadian delegation asked some questions about the upcoming censuses and about mixed marriages. His Excellency added that he was seeing some degree of political consensus, suggesting a desire to make the changes necessary for Bosnia and Herzegovina to become a stable and prosperous country with functional

institutions so that it can join the European Union, as opposed to keeping the current Constitution and paying the price in economic, social and political terms.

The conversation closed with some positive comments on the international meeting called "Living together is the future" held earlier in the week in Sarajevo, which His Excellency had attended.

Meeting with Mr. Vjekoslav Bevanda, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Prime Minister welcomed the Canadian parliamentary delegation and thanked Canada for its accomplishments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He saluted Canada's support in the training of military personnel, peacekeeping education, reinforcement of policing and the mine clearance process. He also mentioned the importance of Canadian support for the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Speaker Kinsella, in turn, thanked the Prime Minister for granting a meeting to the Canadian delegation. He cited the objectives of its visit, including the importance of discussions with Bosnian parliamentarians within the framework of parliamentary diplomacy. Next he introduced the members of the delegation, pointing out that the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate was included as well as a senator from one of Canada's linguistic and cultural minorities. This diversity was cited as evidence of Canadian multiculturalism, which is also reflected in debates in the Parliament of Canada. He spoke of the importance of the different political parties, which debate the merits of various policies proposed for the benefit of all Canadians.

The Speaker next raised the issue of youth mobility, referring to it as an initiative which looks to the future. He explained its advantages for both the host country and the country of origin, and expressed a desire to see an increase in the number of bilateral agreements between Canada and Bosnia and Herzegovina in such common fields as mining, forestry, agriculture and energy.

The Prime Minister thanked Speaker Kinsella, and added that Bosnia and Herzegovina had funds available to invest in rebuilding its road system. He encouraged Canada to participate in such investment. Finally he expressed the wish that the delegation's meetings would be productive.

Meeting with Dr. Mustafa Cerić, Reis-ul-ulema (Grand Mufti) of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Several subjects were raised at this meeting. His Eminence described the various Muslim communities of the Balkans and North America. He spoke of the motion in the Parliament of Canada condemning genocide, the youth-oriented Islamic conference in Toronto in 2011 to celebrate and strengthen the unity, faith and identity of North American Muslims, and delays in obtaining a visa to travel to Canada.

Speaker Kinsella stated the objectives of the visit, emphasizing the importance of meeting with a country's spiritual leaders to learn about public opinion and the

difficulties being encountered by the various communities. Religious leaders are important to civil society: they help to create a multicultural, multi-faith society.

His Eminence spoke of the problems that the different ethnic groups created for Bosnia and Herzegovina. He cited certain ambiguities in the Dayton Agreement which in his view were reason to amend it. As the international community viewed the Muslims' situation as being very delicate, religious prejudices were also involved.

Speaker Kinsella mentioned the constitutional benefit of being a member of a multicultural society. He wished to advance discussions to promote cultural diversity within the national unit.

The two parties were delighted to have had the opportunity for this conversation, and expressed a wish to continue it later, possibly in Canada.

Meeting with Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Dayton Agreement established the Office of the High Representative, a special international institution responsible for supervising implementation of the civil aspects of the Agreement. The High Representative has extensive executive powers to that end, although limited use is made of them. He is advised on political, economic and security issues by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), of which Canada is a member.

The PIC wants to close the Office of the High Representative and transfer its international responsibilities for reform to an organ of the European Union so that the country can continue making progress toward Euro-Atlantic integration. Closure of the Office is being blocked, however, because the country is not meeting the conditions set by the PIC. Those conditions include the division of state and defence assets between the federal government and the government entities, and a positive assessment by the Council of the political and security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The High Representative explained his role in detail, as well as the staff cuts made at the Office in recent years with a view to its eventual closure.

The discussion then turned to the additional assistance that Canada could provide to Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example with institution building, because of the multicultural and multilingual nature of Canada.

Speaker Kinsella asked for details on the next parliamentary elections. The topics discussed were the electoral vote, which was democratically criticized because the majority of Bosnians vote for the representative of their ethnic origin; oversight of regional elections; and the particular situation of the municipality of Mostar, the only region that will not be voting in the upcoming elections.

The High Representative began to briefly explain why the residents of Mostar were unable to vote. The fifth largest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mostar used to be composed of two distinct entities physically separated by the Neretva River. These

entities were reunited in a single municipality after the war. West of the river, the population is mostly Croat and Catholic, while east of the river live mainly Bosniaks and Muslims.

In 2010, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared the status of the city of Mostar to be unconstitutional, since the number of members of Parliament was not representative of the population. Mostar's electoral system had to be modified before the terms of office of the elected politicians ended in 2012. Implementation of the court's decision was essential not only to guarantee the rule of law, but also to ensure that the residents of Mostar had the right to vote in the local elections of October 2012. Despite these requirements, no agreement has been reached to date.

The High Representative added that, despite the ethnic disparities which make problem solving so difficult, the main concerns of the citizens of Mostar, wherever they may live in the city, are still jobs and the economy. Yet he does not see these concerns being addressed by the politicians.

Meeting with Mr. Zlatko Lagumdžija, Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Minister welcomed his guests and thanked them personally for their interest in his country. He also thanked Canada for its reconstruction and mine clearance work. He emphasized the close ties existing between Canada and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and said he hoped to see their relationship continue and intensify.

The Speaker said that his visit with a parliamentary delegation was being made within the context of parliamentary diplomacy. He explained the Canadian parliamentary system and the multicultural nature of Canadian society. Among other things, he mentioned linguistic duality, but also the multitude of languages spoken across the country, the different provinces and territories of Canada and their characteristics, and the bicameral parliamentary system and its advantages. The delegation also elaborated on the different aspects of Canadian political life, presenting the democratic character of its institutions and the debates in Parliament. Lastly, mention was made of the legal status of linguistic duality and Canadian multiculturalism.

Speaker Kinsella presented the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program and encouraged the Minister to promote it within his parliament.

The Canadian delegation identified three agreement proposals as being among the objectives of their meeting. The first was an agreement on avoiding double taxation, to encourage Canadian investment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Next, the advantages of an agreement on youth mobility were discussed. A third and parallel proposal was for a bilateral agreement on international youth mobility, to facilitate international vocational, internship or travel experiences.

Encouraged by these proposals, the Minister said he would try to take action on an agreement to avoid double taxation. He said that he was very interested in the other two proposals and that they were particularly topical. However he explained that, in order to take action on them, it had to be possible for Bosnian citizens to easily procure a

passport and a visa. He therefore requested Canada's immediate attention to the issue of reopening a consular office in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This sort of Canadian initiative would also foster trade and tourism.

Finally, the Minister said that Bosnia and Herzegovina was currently negotiating agreements on pipelines, social security and support for civil affairs. He said that the priority for foreign policy was the Euro-Atlantic integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The two parties wished to promote bilateral cooperation between their countries. The Speaker emphasized that Canada would continue to support Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration, and mentioned that the new technologies should facilitate passport and visa procedures.

Meeting with Major General Robert Brieger (Austria), EUFOR commander at Camp Butmir

Speaker Kinsella and General Brieger discussed a variety of questions, including the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and expectations for the future. The General described the role of EUFOR, a multinational component of the European Union's task force with the primary mission of keeping the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He mentioned the importance of supporting the efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to maintain a safe and secure environment and building training capacities and support, both for the defence ministry and for the country's armed forces. He commented that their mission now had more to do with instruction and training than with ensuring security.

Although peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains fragile, the general security situation no longer requires a massive military presence. The General said that EUFOR was maintaining close ties with various international organizations, notably the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union and the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. In response to questions from delegation members, he elaborated on the obstacles to instructing the various armed groups or police officers given the tripartite system in the country, and on the regions presenting the most difficulties.

The discussion next turned to the process of mine clearance. The parties spoke of the responsibilities of the state and the international community with respect to mine clearance, its funding, and the problems encountered. The General indicated that this continued to be a priority for EUFOR because of the high number of victims each year, more than a decade after the end of the war.

The General thanked the delegation for its interest in the work being done by the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Meeting with Cardinal Vinko Puljić, Archbishop of Vrhbosna-Sarajevo

The Cardinal presented the delegation with the position of the Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He stressed that Bosnia and Herzegovina was a multi-ethnic,

multi-religious country which was obliged to offer equal rights to all its citizens, not just on paper but also in practice.

Speaker Kinsella congratulated the diocese for organizing an international meeting on religions in Sarajevo entitled "Living together is the future." He said that Canada, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, describes itself as a multicultural and multi-faith country. Therefore it was important for the delegation to understand the social challenges of Bosnia and Herzegovina by talking to parliamentarians and politicians from the three ethnic groups, as well as the leaders of the country's Muslim, Serbian Orthodox and Catholic communities. He recalled the words of Pope Benedict XVI on the importance of dialogue for relations among religions.

The Cardinal cited various problems which in his opinion are preventing open dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He briefly explained the structure of the Catholic Church in the country, pointing out that some 820,000 Catholics lived there before the war. Today, according to Church statistics, the Catholic population has fallen to around 460,000. He felt that Roman Catholics had been hit hard by the war, and that a substantial number had been forced to leave the country. Finally, he believed that international dialogue would help to move Bosnia and Herzegovina toward the constitutional state that is desired by all.

He also noted that administrative complications, crime, threats and other issues made it difficult for the Croat people to recover their pre-war properties.

They also engaged in discussions of how to foster student mobility. Speaker Kinsella explained that Canada has 96 universities across the country, 13 of which are Catholic. The Cardinal was of the view that, due to the serious unemployment problems in his country, solutions were needed for keeping young Bosnian graduates at home and offering them attractive jobs. He felt that this was the best way of engaging the population in a dialogue of peace and reconciliation.

Speaker Kinsella's comments on academic matters also prompted the Cardinal to say that the assets of the Catholic Church that were seized under the Communist regime had not been returned, and that ecclesiastical institutions such as the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Sarajevo were still not eligible for funding.

In conclusion, Speaker Kinsella wanted to express Canada's solidarity with the ethnic and religious communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Canada has a large community of Bosnian origin, and was grateful for its accomplishments in the building of the country. He hoped that the Bosnian people would work together for the good of their own country.

Meetings – Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

In Mostar, the delegation met with:

Mr. Ljubo Bešlić, Mayor of Mostar, and Mr. Murat Ćorić, Speaker of the Mostar Municipal Council; as well as Mr. Grigorije of Zahumlje-Herzegovina, Bishop for the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Meeting with Mr. Ljubo Bešlić, Mayor of Mostar, and Mr. Murat Ćorić, Speaker of the Mostar Municipal Council

The Canadian delegation was given a warm welcome. Mayor Bešlić underscored the importance of Canada for the Bosnian people. He said that the country was developing its democratic system, and that although much remained to be done, the people had to be congratulated for the progress made thus far. He mentioned that the municipality of Mostar had been deeply affected by the war. It is a complex city with equally complex institutions. The decision of the Constitutional Court was raised, and the Mayor briefly explained the composition of the municipal council and the three entities represented. He also said that, despite their different origins, the councillors maintained cordial relations.

The Mayor also addressed the tourism situation in Mostar. Now listed as a world heritage site of war by UNESCO, the city receives 800,000 to a million tourists every year from all over the world. New hotels are going up to receive these tourists. He also mentioned that being close to the Adriatic coast and the cities of Dubrovnik and Medjugorje was helping to bring in more tourists, since the economic recession had affected the region.

The Mayor also explained that Mostar has a population of about 120,000, over a quarter of whom are students. Before the war, the city was particularly well developed industrially. He was delighted to see the reconstruction of those industries, chiefly metallurgy and electrical, even though Mostar was still far from its past glories.

Speaker Kinsella said that he found the Mayor's presentation interesting, and wanted to propose a few ideas for supporting the municipality of Mostar. First, he suggested twinning the city with a city in Canada. Many Canadian cities participate in these twinning projects, which foster dialogue, tourism and investment. Since the city of Mostar has a high percentage of students relative to its population, the Speaker also suggested promoting student exchanges and mobility. The Mayor said he welcomed the proposals made.

Mr. Ćorić noted that Mostar had to improve its transit services to accommodate the tourists—especially since Croatia, a neighbouring country, would be joining the European Union in 2013. He mentioned the importance of better communication, roads, airports, and an efficient rail network. The discussion turned to the type of industries in the region and the infrastructures available. Mention was made of exporting knowledge from Canada to improve the regional economy and reduce the high unemployment.

Finally, the Mayor asked Canada to facilitate the issuing of visas for Bosnian citizens.

Meeting with Mr. Grigorije of Zahumlje-Herzegovina, Bishop for the Serbian Orthodox Church

At this meeting, Speaker Kinsella stressed the importance for the delegation of meeting the religious leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to understand the social, political and religious climate in the country. He explained that Canada too was a multicultural and multi-denominational country.

Bishop Grigorije explained the situation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Mostar and its proximity to the Church in Croatia. Discussion focused on religious instruction in the region's schools and the difficulties encountered by the Church after the war, the reconstruction of holy places and the rebuilding of community life.

Activities

In Sarajevo, the delegation members met with Mr. Bradley Collins and Mrs. Bethany Collins, founders of the Sports Foundation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a group of young Bosnian hockey players, who testified to the success of the Foundation. They explained to the delegates how the work of Mr. and Mrs. Collins has helped Bosnian young people take charge of their lives, acquire a work ethic, and maintain hope for a better future in these post-war times.

The delegation laid a wreath at the monument to children victim of the Siege of Sarajevo, in the city of Sarajevo, and paid their respects.

The members of the delegation were received by Mr. Martin Raguž, Senator in the House of Peoples, at an informal dinner in Sarajevo. The parliamentarians were able to discuss the Bosnian political climate, cultural differences, and the industries in the regions.

The delegates were received for lunch in Mostar by Mr. Božo Ljubić, First Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives. The parliamentarians discussed in particular the upcoming legislative elections and trade between the two countries.

Acknowledgments

The members of the Canadian delegation wish to thank the Honourable Evangelos Meimarakis, Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament, the Honourable Sulejman Tihić, Speaker of the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Honourable Milorad Živković, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who received the official visit in their respective countries, for their warm welcome and generous hospitality. The delegation also wishes to thank the protocol staff of the Greek government and of the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who ensured the visit went smoothly.

The members of the delegation also express their gratitude to the staff of the Canadian embassies in Athens and Budapest. Special thanks to Mr. Robert W. Peck, Canadian Ambassador to Greece, and Ms. Tamara Guttman, then Canadian Ambassador to Hungary, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, who helped prepare the scheduling

and accompanied the delegation throughout its visit. Thanks also go to Ms. Allison Stewart, Ms. Zoe Delibasis and Mr. Brian Ebel, all of whom played a role in the organization and implementation of the visit.

Finally, the delegates wish to thank the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Library of Parliament for the documentation provided in preparation for their trip.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella
Speaker of the Senate

Travel Costs

Visit of the Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate,
and a Parliamentary Delegation, Greece and Bosnia and
Herzegovina

TRAVEL	\$46,482
ACCOMMODATION	\$6,196
PER DIEMS	\$3,779
PROTOCOL	\$6,889
MISCELLANEOUS	\$6,953
TOTAL	\$70,299