

Canada - Europe  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
Canada - Europe

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
respecting its participation at the Third Part of the 2009  
Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the  
Council of Europe**

**Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association**

**Strasbourg, France  
June 22-26, 2009**

# Report

## INTRODUCTION

The delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association travelled to Strasbourg, France, to attend the Third Part of the 2009 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The delegation consisted of Francine Lalonde, accompanied by Association Secretary Philippe Méla.

Sirine Hijal, Canada's Deputy Permanent Observer to the Council of Europe, joined the delegation and briefed delegates on the Council's recent activities and Canada's involvement.

### A. Overview

There was a full agenda<sup>1</sup> for the summer session covering a wide range of issues discussed by the committees, political groups and Assembly. The latter held regular debates on the following subjects:

- progress report of the Bureau of the Assembly and the Standing Committee;
- the situation in Belarus;
- the functioning of democratic institutions in Azerbaijan;
- activities of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in 2008: reinforcing economic and democratic stability;
- world economic institutions and the challenges of the financial crisis;
- reconsideration on substantive grounds of previously ratified credentials of the Ukrainian delegation (Rule 9 of the Assembly);
- the state of human rights in Europe:
  - the state of human rights in Europe: the need to eradicate impunity;
  - the state of human rights in Europe and the progress of the Assembly's monitoring procedure;
  - Europe's forgotten people: protecting the human rights of long-term displaced persons;
  - the functioning of democratic institutions in Armenia;
- debate under urgent procedure: the situation in Iran;
- the funding of public service broadcasting;
- renewable energies and the environment;
- nuclear energy and sustainable development;
- establishment of a "partner for democracy" status with the Parliamentary Assembly;
- teaching history in conflict and post-conflict areas;
- the urgent need to combat so-called "honour crimes";

---

<sup>1</sup> Detailed information on the session, transcriptions and summaries of all debates, and the resolutions and recommendations adopted are available on the Parliamentary Assembly's website at <http://assembly.coe.int/>.

- Draft Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority;
- Draft Protocol No. 3 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning Euroregional co-operation groupings (ECGs).

Speakers included several European political leaders and other invited guests, such as:

- Lluís Maria De Puig, President of the Parliamentary Assembly;
- Samuel Žbogar, Slovenian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers;
- Mary McAleese, President of Ireland;
- Theo-Ben Gurirab, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union;
- Thomas Mirow, President of the ERBD;
- Antonio Cassese, President of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, former President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia;
- Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International;
- Walter Kälin, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons;
- Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of Slovenia;
- Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

#### **B. Canadian activities during the session**

Ms. Lalonde participated actively in meetings of the socialist political group and committees, particularly the Political Affairs Committee, and the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs Committee.

Mr. Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, hosted a breakfast meeting for the delegation. He will step down from his duties when his term is over at the end of September 2009. Discussions focused on Canada's political situation, the Council's relations with transatlantic countries, and the crisis facing the Council of Europe since the Parliamentary Assembly rejected the names put forward by the Committee of Ministers and refused to hold elections for the new Secretary General. Mr. Davis was very concerned that Canada has not yet ratified certain agreements such as the Convention on Cybercrime and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. With respect to the second item, Ms. Hijal, Canada's Deputy Permanent Observer to the Council of Europe, pointed out that Canada has just passed legislation that would create the necessary legal foundation for ratifying the convention. Ms. Lalonde gave Mr. Davis a gift and a letter on behalf of the Canadian delegation, thanking him for his ongoing attention to Canadian concerns during his long years and many duties with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Ms. Lalonde and the Mexican delegation also held discussions. Senator Rosario Green, head of the delegation, and Ms. Lalonde agreed that mechanisms should be found within PACE so that Canada and Mexico, two observer delegations, can work together and enhance their visibility and effectiveness. Discussions also focused on a meeting of the group of rapporteurs on the Council of Europe's external relations, which will soon

discuss the Council's relationship with observer delegations to the Committee of Ministers.

During a meeting of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, which Ms. Lalonde attended at the executive's request, the Chairperson invited the Canadian delegation to play an active part in drafting the following four reports concerning the environment and governance of the oceans, which will be examined in depth at the fall session of PACE:

- the challenges posed by climate change;
- nuclear energy and sustainable development;
- renewable energies and the environment; and
- towards a new system of ocean governance – issues in the North Atlantic.

Ms. Lalonde spoke during the debate under urgent procedure on the situation in Iran. The text of her remarks follows:

#### Iran and the future of the international community

Following the uprising in Iran, which had happened as a consequence of the disputed presidential election held on 12 June 2009, there had been much interest from Western governments in that nation's affairs.

International interest in Iran was not new. Iran had been robbed of democracy once before in 1953. At that time, the leader of democratic forces in Iran, Mohammad Mosaddeq, had great hopes of introducing democracy and the rule of law to Iran. That dream had been taken away by the reaction of the West, particularly the response of the United States and of the United Kingdom, to the planned nationalisation of Iran's oil fields. Secret CIA documents from that time, which had only recently been revealed, showed that Mohammed Mossadeq had been put under house arrest while a Western-friendly figure, the Shah, was installed as leader. There had followed a period of turmoil for Iran which had included the 1979 overthrow of the Shah by Ayatollah Khomeini and the eight years of war with Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Young people in Iran wanted an end to oppression and the introduction of democracy. Their aspirations had been frustrated by the obvious fraud which had taken place during the June 2009 presidential elections. Irregularities included the fact that President Ahmadinejad had apparently secured massive majorities in regions where he was known to have little support. Moreover, although results were to have been counted centrally in Tehran, a process which would have taken days to complete, many results had, in fact, been in fact released within two hours of the polling stations closing.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hoseyni Khamenei had out-manoeuvred the forces of democracy which had opposed the regime and had ruled that President Ahmadinejad had won the election fairly and would remain in power. An ironic consequence of President George Bush's ejection of Saddam Hussein from Iraq's leadership was that Iran now had a free rein to act as it wished in the region.

The Council of Europe should express support for those who have lost their lives in the fight for democracy. It should also make clear that Iran's leaders would not enjoy

international immunity for their actions. Support and solidarity should be offered to those who had protested in the name of democracy<sup>2</sup>.

### **C. Background: The Council of Europe**

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organization that aims:

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

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 201 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. The Council's main institutions are the Committee of Ministers (the Council's 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 special guest status of Belarus, which had applied for membership in the Council of Europe in 1993, was suspended in January 1997 in the wake of the adoption of a new constitution in Belarus, which was widely seen as undemocratic.

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 of a range of issues of common interest to Europeans, and provides a forum for debate for national

---

<sup>2</sup> Full transcripts of the debates can be found under "Documents" on the PACE website at <http://assembly.coe.int/>.

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 and the International Organization for Migration. 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 the Holy See, Japan, Mexico and the United States), and the Parliamentary Assembly (where the other observers are Israel and Mexico).

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Francine Lalonde, M.P.  
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Third Part of the 2009 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Strasbourg, France
<b>DATES</b>	June 22-26, 2009
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Ms. Francine Lalonde, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Philippe Méla, Association Secretary
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$ 12,212.08</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 3,275.25</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 582.37</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 1,273.20</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$ 3.25</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 17,346.15</b>