



MINUTES

of the meeting of 24 September 2020, 14.00-15.30

Brussels and Webex

The meeting opened at 14.00 on Thursday, 24 September 2020, with Antonio López-Istúriz White (Chair) presiding.

1. Adoption of the agenda (PE 646.227)

Agenda was approved.

2. Chair's announcements

None.

3. Exchange of views on the significance for Israel and the region of the agreements, signed on the 15th September 2020, between the State of Israel and the United Arab Emirates, and between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Bahrain - in the presence of:

- H.E. Ambassador Aharon Leshno-Yaar, Head of the Mission of Israel to the EU and NATO
- H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Issa Hamad Abushahab, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates to the Kingdom of Belgium
- H.E. Dr. Bahia Jawad Al Jishi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Kingdom of Belgium
- Mr. Fernando Gentilini, Managing Director, Middle East and North Africa, European External Action Service

The Chair Antonio López-Istúriz opened the meeting congratulating Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, as well as the United States, for hosting such a historical event and for the conclusion of the Abraham accords. He expressed the opinion that the commitment of normalization of relations is an important step, with clear benefits for the signatory countries and for the region. He recalled that the European Union, as stated by the VP/HR Borrell, supports the normalisation of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain and is ready to work to foster regional cooperation, for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Middle East.

The Chair referred to the window of opportunity offered by the accords, stating that in a region that is changing, the relations that supported the previous status quo are also changing. He stressed the importance that the EU positions itself in this new context and realizes that it has the ability and should have the political courage to engage with its partners for positive change.

He appealed to the Members to grasp this important moment, stressing that the EU should not be left outside these evolutions, and for that, disagreements should be put aside and shown that the EU is part of the solution.

Referring to the importance of regular dialogue and mutual understanding, the Chair reiterated the opinion that the meetings of the European Union - Israel Association Council should be resumed as soon as possible.

He also stressed that, for a comprehensive peace, there is the need that meaningful talks restart between Israeli and Palestinians, towards a negotiated and viable two-state solution that can bring long-lasting security and peace to both Israeli and Palestinian people.

Mr. Aharon Leshno-Yaar, Head of the Mission of Israel to the EU and NATO described the Accords as historic agreements which mark a momentous event in the history of the Middle East - in which UAE, Bahrain and Israel, boldly chose cooperation and dialogue over division. He further added that they will serve to advance security and stability across the region.

The Ambassador said that Israel was pleased to see the congratulatory statement by VP/HR Borrell on behalf of the EU27 and expressed the opinion that it would also be in the EU interest that more countries join this ‘circle of peace and turn their back to the circle of hate’.

He expressed the opinion that the EU could take a proactive role in working with Israel and its partners in the Abraham Accords to explore ways to strengthen and inject even more content into their cooperation.

Finally, he reassured that Israel is not turning its back to the Palestinian issue. He assured that the Abraham Accords do not erode prospects for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. He underlined that Israel is hoping that Palestinians will recognise that they can leverage the desire for normal relations with Israel to advance their own interests and that Europe should encourage them in this sense.

Mr. Mohamed Issa Hamad Abushahab, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the European Union, referred to the Abraham accord as historical and stressed that it was preceded by informal relations, for years, with Israel. Then, as things developed, it became natural to look at normalising relations with Israel. In an open, globalised world, the absence of a formal

relation made no sense and it would have been also incompatible with the United Arab Emirates development model.

He also stressed that, in parallel, there has been a growing feeling in the United Arab Emirates, that Arab - Israeli relations were at a dead end. That, after decades of isolation, things had not moved at all closer to peace, instead, animosity was feeding extremists on all sides and perpetuating prejudices. From United Arab Emirates perspective, it was time to try a different approach, to replace animosity with cooperation and to look for positive sum solutions that might be able to break the existent stalemate.

The Ambassador explained that these two dynamics merged in the first part of 2020, over the issue of annexation. He stated that, as the EU and other international partners, United Arab Emirates were extremely concerned about the lack of progress in the two-state talks, and, thought that any possible annexation would kill all prospects for a two-state solution.

He referred at their strong statements against the annexation plans, including articles in the Israeli press, addressing directly to the Israeli people and emphasizing that the annexation would jeopardize the prospects for normalising relations with the Arab world. He stressed the message was indicating a desire to move forward not backwards. Then, discussions intensified and the opportunity culminated with the Abraham Accord, where the United Arab Emirates, as the Ambassador stated, would formally establish bilateral relations with Israel and Israel would take annexation off the table.

He also expressed the opinion that the accords have provided fresh momentum for negotiations on the two-state solution. He underlined that it will be up to the Palestinians and the Israelis to enter into negotiations and that the United Arab Emirates encourages both sides to seize this opportunity.

Dr. Bahia Jawad Al Jishi, Bahrain Ambassador to Belgium stressed that Bahrain has always been a commercial crossroad between East and West and has a legacy of diversity based on the values of tolerance, coexistence and respect for all religions, cultures and ethnicities. She referred at the recent accord as a courageous step and historical agreement which comes from a long coexistence in the society of the Kingdom of Bahrain, where all religions have coexisted.

Establishing relations with the State of Israel comes in line with the Kingdom willingness to establish peace in the Middle East and enhance regional security and stability and to end the Israeli - Palestinian conflict, while preserving the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and two-state solution.

The Vice-Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula (DARP), Marc Tarabella stressed that DARP Delegation welcomes the conclusion of Abraham Accords, which bring nations and people closer and expressed the wish they will pave the way for a stable and peaceful Middle East.

From DARP point of view, he called for the European Union (EU) and notably the European Parliament (EP) to take stock of the agreements and multiply their effects, aiming at finding a viable solution to the current conflict and dispute in the region. He also expressed the wish that the accords will pave the way to a fair and mutually satisfactory solution for the Palestinians under the principle of the two-state solution.

Mr Fernando Gentilini, managing director Middle East and Nord Africa, European External Action Service, referred to the VP/HR Josep Borrell statement on behalf of EU 27, underlining that, without any doubts, the EU welcomes this development, the announcement of normalisation, wishing for more of these.

He accentuated that there are many opportunities to be grasped, and the European Union should do its best to take this opportunity. The EU promotes dialogue, mutual understanding with and between its partners, one more reason to support the agreements. This process will benefit everyone, the signatory countries but also the other countries in the region as it will help stabilize the region as a whole.

The EU remains committed to a comprehensive and lasting peace for the entire region and stands ready to work with everybody, also with international partners, to move forward on this. The role of the United States has also to be recognised.

He mentioned that the EU is willing to strengthen its bilateral relations with all the three countries. In particular, when it comes to the meeting of the Association Council with Israel, this is the result of consensus among Member States. He stressed that the current developments could help this consensus to be reached.

On the Middle East Peace Process, he recalled that the EU remains committed to the peace process and stressed that it is necessary to think how to take advantage of these new developments. He underlined the importance for the two parties to talk again, and possibly, to move on. He stressed that the EU and its partners have to be united and accompany this process and assured that the European Union is ready to continue to play its role on that.

The Chair concluded underlining that the Delegation will continue to closely follow the implementation of the Israel - United Arab Emirates and Israel - Bahrain 'Abraham' accords and their possible extension to other Gulf or MENA countries, in cooperation with other delegations or committees.

He reiterated the importance of a first meeting, sooner rather than later, with the new Knesset, noting in the same time the difficulties caused by the raising of Covid-19 in Israel.

4. Any other business

None.

5. Date and place of the next meeting

The secretariat will inform.

The meeting closed at 15.30.

**ПРИСЪСТВЕН ЛИСТ/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/
ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE NIMEKIRI/KATAΣTACTH ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/
LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/POPIS NAZOČNÍH/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REGISTRŠ/DALYVIŲ SAŖAŠAS/
JELENĒTI IV/RÉGISTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŠCI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/
LISTĂ DE PREZENȚĂ/PREZENČNĂ LISTINA/SEZNAM NAVZOČÍH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/NÄRVAROLISTA**

<p>Бюро/Mesa/Předsednictvo/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Predsjedništvo/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/ Biuras/Elnökség/Prezidium/Birou/Predsednictvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)</p>	
<p>In the room: Antonio López-Istúriz White, Via webex: Bert-Jan Ruissen.</p>	
<p>Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Βουλευτές/Members/Députés/Zastupnici/Deputati/Deputāti/ Nariai/Képviselek/Membri/Leden/Poslowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter</p>	
<p>In the room: Pina Picierno, Frédérique Ries, Via webex: Anna Bonfrisco, Martina Michels.</p>	
<p>Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Zamjenici/ Supplenti/Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantysnariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanți/Náhradníci/ Namestniki/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter</p>	
<p>In the room: Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Asger Christensen.</p>	

<p>209 (7)</p>	
<p>In the room: Marc Tarabella (DARP), Erin Incir, Via webex: Juan Ignacio Zoido Alvarez.</p>	
<p>216 (3)</p>	
<p>56 (8) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/ Ραevakovra punkt/Σημείο της ημερήσιας διάταξης/Agenda item/Point OJ/Τοčka dnevnoĝ reda/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkēs punktas/Napirendi pont/Punt Aĝenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schůdze/Τοčka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Punkt på föredragningslistan)</p>	
<p>In the room: Ambassador Aharon Leshno-Yaar, Mission of Israel to the EU and NATO, Ambassador Mohamed Issa Hamad Abushahab, Embassy of the U.A.E to European Union, and Mr. Fernando Gentilini, Managing Director Middle East and North Africa, EEAS Webex: Ambassador Bahia Jawad Al Jishi, Embassy of Bahrain to Belgium.</p>	<p>Pt 3</p>

Наблюдатели/Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatlejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Promatrači/Osservatori/Nověrotáji/Stebétojai/Megfigyelők/Osservatori/Waamemers/Observatorzy/Observadores/Observatori/Pozorovatelia/Opazovalci/Tarkkailijat/Observatörer

По покана на председателя/Par invitación del presidente/Na pozvání předsedy/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair/Sur l'invitation du président/ Na poziv predsjednika/Su invito del presidente/Pēc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/ Fuq stedina taç-Chairman'/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/La invitația președintelui/ Na pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nöukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Vijeće/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)

Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Kommissionen/Kommission/Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Komisija/Commissione/Bizottság/Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisja/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)
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Vincenzo Greco - Near A.2.

Европейска служба за външна дейност/Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior/Европска служба про vnější činnost/EU-Udenrigstjenesten/Europäischer Auswärtiger Dienst/Euroopa välissteenistus/Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Εξωτερικής Δράσης/European External Action service/Service européen pour l'action extérieure/Europiska služba za vanjsko djelovanje/Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna/Eiropas Ārējās darbības dienests/Europos išorės veiksmų tarnyba/Európai Külügyi Szolgálat/Servizz Ewropew għall-Azzjoni Esterna/Europese dienst voor extern optreden/Europejska Sluzba Działañ Zewnętrznych/Serviço Europeu para a Acção Externa/Serviciul european pentru acțiune externă/Európska služba pre vonkajšiu činnost/Европска служба за zunanje delovanje/Euroopan ulkosuhdehallinto/Europeiska avdelningen för yttre åtgärd (*)

In the room:
 Mr. Fernando Gentilini, Managing Director Middle East and North Africa, EEAS
 Elise Beretz, desk officer
 Webex:
 Neal Mac Call, Head of division, Middle East II - Israel, occupied Palestinian territories and Middle East peace process (MENA.2)
 Michele Merloni, desk officer

Други институции и органи/Otras instituciones y organismos/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner og organer/Andere Organe und Einrichtungen/Muud institutsioonid ja organid/Λοιπά θεσμικά όργανα και οργανισμοί/Other institutions and bodies/Autres institutions et organes/Druge institucije i tijela/Altre istituzioni e altri organi/Citas iestādes un struktūras/Kitos institucijos ir įstaigos/Más intézmények és szervek/Istituzjonijiet u korpi ohra/Andere instellingen en organen/Inne instytucje i organy/Outras instituições e outros órgãos/Alte instituții și organe/Iné inštitúcie a orgány/Muut toimielimet ja elimet/Andra institutioner och organ

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Други учасници/Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης παρόντες/Other participants/Autres participants/Drugi sudionici/Altri partecipanti/Citi klātesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Partecipanti ohra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni ucześnicy/Outros participantes/Alți participanți/Iní účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare

Mission of Israel to the EU & NATO: Michal Philosoph, Andrea Cucchini.

UAE Embassy: Humaid AlGhfeili, Ghalia Humaidan.

Bassam Marzooq, Ali Taleb.

Секретариат на политическите групи/Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppemes sekretariat/Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktsioonide sekretariaat/Γραμματεία των Πολιτικών Ομάδων/Secretariats of political groups/Secrétariat des groupes politiques/Tajništva klubova zastupnika/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politiske grupu sekretariāts/Frakciju sekretoriai/Képviseletcsoportok titkársága/Sekretarijat grupi političi/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secretariado dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupin/Sekretariat političnih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristö/De politiska gruppemas sekretariat

PPE	Room: Alexandra Entrena.
S&D	Room: Zoltán Simon.
Renew	
Verts/ALE	Webex: Maria Giovanna Manieri.
ID	Webex: Alexandre Heuzey.
ECR	Webex: Elise Coolegem, Walter Van Luik.
GUE/NGL	
NI	

Кабинет на председателя/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidenti kantslei/Γραφείο του Προέδρου/President's Office/Cabinet du Président/Ured predsednika/Gabinetto del Presidente/Priekšsēdētāja kabinets/Pimminiko kabinetas/Elnöki hivatal/Kabinett tal-President/Kabinet van de Voorzitter/Gabinet Przewodniczącego/Gabinete do Presidente/Cabinet Preşedinte/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli

Webex: June O'Keefe.

Кабинет на генералния секретар/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/Kabinett des Generalsekretärs/Peasekretäri büroo/Γραφείο του Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du Secrétaire général/Ured glavnog tajnika/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Generalsekretära kabinets/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinett tas-Segretarju Ġenerali/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Cabinet Secretar General/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urad generalnega sekretarja/Päsihteerin kabinetti/Generalsekreterarens kansli

Γενерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/ Directorate-General/Direction générale/Glavna uprava/Direzione generale/Generāldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/ Direttorat Generali/Direktoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat	
DG PRES DG IPOL DG EXPO DG EPRS DG COMM DG PERS DG INLO DG TRAD DG LINC DG FINS DG ITEC DG SAFE	Webex: François Massoulié, Roberto Bendini, AFET secretariat, Room: Ainhoa Markuleta. Webex : Beatrix Immenkamp.
Правна служба/Servicio Jurídico/Právní služba/Juridisk Tjeneste/Juristischer Dienst/Öigusteenistus/Νομική Υπηρεσία/Legal Service/ Service juridique/Pravna služba/Servizio giuridico/Juridiskais dienests/Teisės tarnyba/Jogi szolgálat/Servizz legali/Juridische Dienst/ Wydział prawny/Serviço Jurídico/Serviciu Juridic/Právny servis/Oikeudellinen yksikkö/Rättstjänsten	
Секретариат на комисията/Secretaría de la comisión/Sekretariát výboru/Udvalgssekretariatet/Ausschusssekretariat/Komisjoni sekretariaat/Γραμματεία της επιτροπής/Committee secretariat/Secrétariat de la commission/Tajništvo odbora/Segreteria della commissione/Komitejas sekretariāts/Komiteto sekretariatas/A bizottság titkársága/Sekretarjat tal-kumitat/Commissiesecretariaat/ Sekretariat komisji/Sekretariado da comissão/Sekretariat comisie/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeristö/Utskottssekretariatet	
Camelia Oaida.	
Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asyistent/Pomočnik/ Avustaja/Assistenten	
Barbara Ajmi.	

- * (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chairman/Président/Predsjednik/Priekšsēdētājs/
Pirmininkas/Elnök/Chairman/Voorzitter/Przewodniczący/Preşedinte/Predseda/Predsednik/Puheenjohtaja/Ordförande
- (VP) = Заместник-председател/Vicepresidente/Místopředseda/Næstformand/Stellvertretender Vorsitzender/Aseesimees/Αντιπρόεδρος/
Vice-Chair/Potpredsjednik/Vice-Président/Potpredsjednik/Priekšsēdētāja vietnieks/Pirmininko pavaduotojas/Alelnök/ Vīci
'Chairman'/Ondervoorzitter/Wiceprzewodniczący/Vice-Présidente/Vicepreşedinte/Podpredseda/Podpredsednik/
Varapuheenjohtaja/Vice ordförande
- (M) = Член/Miembro/Člen/Medlem/Mitglied/Parlamendiliige/Βουλευτής/Member/Membre/Član/Membro/Deputāts/Narys/Képviselő/
Memburu/Lid/Członek/Membro/Memburu/Člen/Poslanec/Jāsen/Ledamot
- (F) = Длъжностно лице/Funcionario/Úředník/Tjenestemand/Beamter/Ametnik/Υπάλληλος/Official/Fonctionnaire/Dužnosnik/
Funzionario/Ierēdnis/Pareigūnas/Tisztviselő/Ufficjal/Ambtenaar/UrządNIK/Funcionário/Funcionar/Úradník/Uradnik/Virkamies/
Tjänsteman