

**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**European Board of Directors**  
**of the**  
**Global Parliamentarians on Habitat**

**Wednesday, the 4th of March 2009**

**10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m**

**Brussels, Belgium**

**Agenda**

1. Opening of the meeting by Mr. Constantin Traian Igaş, President of GPH-Europe)
2. Review and evaluation of the World Urban Forum IV in Nanjing, China, from 3 to 6 November 2008, by Mr. Götz, President of the GPH
3. Report on the activities of the GPH in the countries of the members of the Board.
4. Report on the findings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the legal comparative study on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda after the two workshops in Bucharest (April 2008) and Berlin (October 2008) by Mr Götz, President of the Board of Directors
5. Future GPH events
  - World Forum of the Global Parliamentarians
  - European Forum of the Global Parliamentarians
6. Any Other Business (AOB)
7. Summary and closure by Mr. Igaş, European President

## **Participants**

Hon. Peter Götz, MP, President of the GPH

Senator Constantin Traian Igaş, President of GPH-Europe

Hon. Jerko Rosin (Croatia), MP, Vice-President of GPH-Europe

Mrs. Birnur Şahinoglu (Turkey), MP (replacing Mr Nazmir Haluk Ozdalga, MP)

Mr Seres Denes (Romania), MP, GPH member

Mr Aurelio Juri (Slovenia), MEP, GPH member

Dr Anneke Assen (Netherlands), chairman of the former MPs, GPH member

## **Guests**

Mr. Marin Bobeş (Romania), MP

Ms. Kaharina Schmid (Germany) – interpreter

Mrs. Luminiţa Cercel (Romania) – senior adviser, Senate of Romania

Mr. Yavuz Çubukcu (Turkey), counselor, Permanent Delegation of Turkey to the EU

Ms. Ivana Liović (Croatia), senior adviser, Ministry of Environmental Protection

## **I. Opening of the meeting**

First of all, Mr Jean Bakole (UN-Habitat) welcomed the participants to the meeting and gave a brief report on UN-Habitat activities.

## **Membership**

Senator Constantin Traian Igaş, President of GPH-Europe, welcomed the participants and expressed the hope that Mr. Bobeş and Mrs. Şahinoglu will replace Mr. Ioan Țundrea and Mr. Petre Lificiu (Romania) within the European Board of Directors, since the latest two are no longer parliamentarians.

Mr. Aurelio Juri (Slovenia), member of the European Parliament, informed his colleagues MPs on his intention to retire from politics, in order to dedicate himself to journalism.

Hon. Peter Götz remarked that the **continuity** issue is a real challenge for GPH. He explained that according to the statutes and good practice of GPH, delegates which are not re-elected to their national parliaments may act within GPH as “invited members” until the next parliamentary elections, when they can join GPH in their full capacity. Even if former MPs can still be GPH members, it is obviously more difficult for them to attend GPH meetings all around the world.

## **II. Reports on former events**

Hon. Peter Götz, GPH President, gave a report and evaluation on the World Urban Forum IV which took place in Nanjing, China, between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2008. The main theme was “Cities and the climate changes”. Hon. Peter Götz emphasized importance of the future more intensified cooperation between the developed and developing countries of GPH. He further said that in China future of GPH was discussed, particularly in relation to enhancing the activities in Asia and Africa.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the legal study on “Implementing the goals and principles of the Habitat Agenda in national legislation of Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Romania and Turkey” was summarized by Hon. Peter Götz. The Final Report was distributed to the participants.

## **III. State of affairs in different European countries**

The members of the Board detailed the initiatives of their respective Parliaments and Governments in order to fight climate changes.

In this respect, senator Igaş gave the example of Romania, where the Government subsidizes 50% of the expenses due to thermal rehabilitation of the buildings, upon request from the owners. Mr. Denes Seres mentioned the “Green House Project”, an initiative of the Romanian Government by which the state subsidizes the costs of installment of renewable energy systems; he also mentioned the possibility for investors to pay less taxes in case they choose to raise a “green” building. Also, Mr Seres talked about the draft law on protection of green spaces, presently in examination by the Committee on Public Administration and Ecologic Balance of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies.

Hon. Jerko Rosin (Croatia) made reference to the issue of **solidarity** – global crisis easily oversteps boundaries; global problems thus need to be tackled through solidarity. In relation to the continuity within GPH, Mr. Rosin expressed that thoughts and decision of GPH members should remain and be passed over to the new ones. Legislative work in Croatian Parliament has lately been intense: many new laws have been aligned with the EU, and many country-specific laws have been enforced (i.e. concerning rural and island areas). On the issue of energy, not only do we need more

energy, but lower energy needs, too. To finish, he pointed out that often the Parliament is opposed by ecologic organizations which do not agree with the proposals, while they don't suggest any other alternatives – for examples, these organizations do not agree with wind mills, because they hurt birds.

Dr Anneke Assen reported that government in Netherlands is subsidizing “sustainable construction”, including the renovation of the existing stock. Subsidizing is also done through taxing policy – sustainable building is subject to lower taxation.

Mrs Birnur Şahinoglu (Turkey), for the first time to a GPH meeting, stated that she came on behalf of Mr Yazer Ozdalga but she would like to participate to GPH activities in the future. As member of the Environment Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, she intends to use her professional experience as an engineer in order to improve citizen's conditions of living, in rural areas of Turkey especially. A study is being carried in Turkey at present, and the results will help the MPs to have a better image on what it is to be done next.

Hon Peter Götz talked about the new ecologist projects actually on debate in Germany. New environmental regulations in Germany – some of which are still not enforced – are dealing with relationship between financial crisis and energy efficiency, and between crisis and climate change investments and programs. Those programs are handled by German cities, municipalities and Landers, and foresee allocation of approx. 10 billion euros. He talked about the construction of malls (big commercial centers), which will no longer be allowed to extend within the cities.

All the participants agreed on the fact that climate changes are perhaps the most difficult challenge facing humanity. The economic crisis presently on stake will pass after a certain period of time, but the real challenges – climate change, peace and security for the people – are the real issues at stake.

At the same time, the participants agreed that the city pollution can be stopped only by reducing the population, by making better conditions for the people living in rural areas – a better infrastructure, so they no longer migrate to the cities.

#### **IV. Report on the comparative study**

Dr Anneke Assen (Netherlands), chairman of the former MPs and a GPH member, and Hon. Peter Götz reported on the comparative study. Study was executed and financed by Germany. It covers several European countries. One of the main findings of the study is that compared to the Western Europe, Eastern European countries have more privately owned housing. Where there is less private ownership (Western Europe), it is easier to regulate and enforce certain laws. In many countries “Habitat legislation” is in force, usually not under this name.

## **V. Future GPH events**

Senator Igaş and Mr Peter Götz hoped for the fact that all the present European MPs will be able to come to Nairobi (Kenya), for the next GPH meeting. The meeting is supposed to take place on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, in the premises of the UN Habitat, within the framework of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Governing Council of UN Habitat (30 March-3 April 2009). A new organization of GPH will be discussed on this occasion, and a new statute.

Then, World and European Forum of Global Parliamentarians were discussed. It was first foreseen to have the World Forum in 2009 and the European Forum in year 2010. However, due to the need to economize, it was in principle agreed that both events take place simultaneously, probably in 2010.

Members of the European Board of Directors jointly expressed their view that it would be good to organize the events in Europe. Hon. Peter Götz-president of GPH and Hon. Constantin Traian Igaş-president of GPH-Europe asked about the possibility of organizing the events in Croatia, hopefully in the city of Split or Dubrovnik. Hon. Jerko Rosin-vice-president of GPH Europe promised to provide the Board with an answer in due time. He was further encouraged to give some feedback prior to the next GPH meeting in Nairobi.

## **VI. Summary and closure**

Senator Constantin Traian Igaş declared the meeting is closed and thanked all the participants for their contribution to such a friendly and fruitful discussion.