



Training Programmes for senior officials of the European Parliament

Under this scheme, which has the backing of the Secretary General of the European Parliament, Julian Priestley, senior EP officials may undertake attachments of at least 5 (up to 7 if weekends are included) in a company which is a member of one of the national schemes. These arrangements are coordinated by Tom Morgan of the EP's Training and Development Division in conjunction with Jean Guise, International Co-ordinator IABP. So far 3 such attachments have taken place.

Tom Morgan of the EP's Training and Development Division, through **Circulo de Empresarios**, spent a week looking at HR issues in two Companies, the **Carrefour** supermarket chain and **Iberdrola**, Spain's largest electrical supplier. **Robert Bray** (Legal Affairs Committee) spent a week with the Swedish Company **Albhns** studying Intellectual Property issues. This was arranged by **Svenskt Näringsliv und Politik**. **Sabina Magnano** (Environment Committee) is undertaking her attachment with **BASF**, a German-owned Chemicals company through the auspices of the **Industry and Parliament Trust** in the UK. She has spent 3 and a half days with BASF (UK), visiting the company's London office and Parliament, also some company plants and the Chemical Industries Association. She will later visit the company plant at Ludwigshafen and their Brussels office.

These attachments give companies valuable knowledge about work at the European level, better understanding of the political process and a better understanding of the work of EP officials. The officials benefit from meeting those having to cope with the consequences of political decisions.

Both IABP members and the EP secretariat are keen to extend these opportunities. In the next digest the Secretary General will report on his October visit to the European Parliament for discussions on expanding the scheme.

For further information and if you wish to participate in the scheme, please contact either [for European Parliament officials] Tom Morgan "tmorgan@europarl.eu.int" or [for IABP Members] Jean Guise "jean@iabp.org". JDG

IABP's Parliamentary Tax Code Review in Georgia

Observers said it was first time in the history of the new Parliament (with its huge majority and weakened constitutional powers) that "government had to listen". It happened after government passed to the Parliament for adoption a Tax Code – fundamental piece of legislation, covering every form of taxation to revitalize the economy and reduce corruption.

The IABP was approached by the business community and MPs to bring together all the stakeholders, Government, Parliament, business, legal, taxation experts and civil society groups, in a neutral forum, for the free exchange of ideas, information and approaches, with the IABP guaranteeing the transparency of the process. HM Ambassador Donald MacLaren hosted a preliminary working dinner for leading parliamentarians and businesses. Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee Mr. Roman Gotsiridze MP chaired the two-day round-table designed as a 'Committee of Inquiry', with all the chairs of the relevant committees, political faction leaders as well as the Government Minister and senior officials responsible for drafting the legislation.



Dutch and British Ambassadors joined the Round Table in Gudauri

"Right timing, right group composition and right format were key success factors of this process" said Mr. Mikheil Machavariani, the Vice Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia. Significant changes have been made by the Ministry of Finance as a result of the information that came out of this qualitatively new dialogue.

The round table was financially supported by the EU, US government through the National Democratic Institute and the Georgia Economic Growth Initiative. Non-financial contributors included Transparency International Georgia, Georgian Taxpayers Union and American Chamber of Commerce. The OSCE Mission to Georgia has agreed to co-finance the next round on October 22-23, which the Prime Minister is interested in attending.

Eka Meskhi, Representative of the Secretary General to Georgia

I would like to share the reflections generated within a month of my becoming a part of the IABP team.

IABP Georgia Business and Parliament emerging democracies model project funded by the European Commission has been designed to advance the development of a proper national scheme in this country. It is the first attempt to translate IABP methodology into a very specific and often contradictory language of the emerging democracies. The first IABP events – Gudauri Tax Code Review and Working Dinners hosted by HM Ambassador - demonstrate that the unique charm and efficiency of the organization have not been lost in translation.

My personal impression is in fact quite similar to the one expressed by our colleague Lindsay McCallum of the NZBPT – businessmen are definitely an easier lot to work with, in comparison to the MPs. And even more so in Georgia, where operating environment is extremely charged and politically sensitive, which is a characteristic feature of a post-revolutionary period. But here again, due to its flexibility and responsive approach IABP tries to turn problems into opportunities and still manages to be one step ahead of other analogues and donors who target their activities at capacity building of the Parliament.

I will be very happy to meet board members personally at the December board meeting hosted by us here in Georgia. I am sure that we will be able to provide a stimulating environment for exchange of various ideas and approaches, which will make IABP a more integrated organism.



Eka Meskhi, trained in English and Journalism, has gone through a distinctive path from being on the staff of the Delegation of the EU Commission to being an Arts Manager at the British Council operations in Georgia and Armenia. Her last "incarnation" before joining the IABP was as a Projects Manager for **maf** (Media Art Farm) – an NGO focusing on promoting contemporary visual arts.

British Ambassador writes on the December Meeting. See attached.