

Press Release

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Jordanian King and political leaders welcome PACE contribution to Middle East peace through parliamentary diplomacy, King expected to address the Assembly

Strasbourg, 20.08.2007 – René van der Linden, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), today ended an official visit to Jordan by expressing his hope that the revived Arab peace initiative and a possible US-sponsored conference would “create new opportunities and a momentum for peace” in the region, which all agreed depended above all on a resolution of the Palestinian problem.

Speaking following a private audience with King Abdullah II, as well as meetings with the Jordanian Prime Minister and the heads of both Houses of Parliament, the President also said there was general agreement that Europe should play “a stronger role” in the Middle East peace process.

All parties welcomed PACE's contribution to the Middle East peace process through parliamentary diplomacy. Mr van der Linden recalled the late King Hussein's address to the Assembly in 1995, and invited King Abdullah to address the Assembly in the near future.

Discussions also covered the question of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, a highlight of Mr van der Linden's presidency. The President expressed interest in the “Amman Message”, a statement of moderate Islamic principles drawn up – at King Abdullah's initiative – by the world's leading Islamic scholars and adopted by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in December 2005.

The President also agreed with his interlocutors on the importance of economic and financial support for fighting poverty in the Middle East region, especially in the Palestinian Territories, thereby helping to tackle one of the root causes of extremism.

Mr van der Linden will continue his discussions during visits to Israel (20-22 August) and the Palestinian Territories (23-24 August).

[Link to press release announcing visit](#)

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).