

Concluding remarks, Per Westerberg, Speaker of the Riksdag

The extra EU Speakers' Conference Preparing for the Lisbon Treaty - consequences for national parliaments and for cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments

Stockholm, 11-12 December

Dear colleagues,
Dear friends,

Many of you have highlighted the complexity of the issues that must be considered when we address issues of priority. We have identified some differences in how we regard these priority issues, although I also find there is a high degree of consensus in many respects.

We need to identify pragmatic solutions in order to facilitate our future cooperation and improve the responsiveness of interparliamentary cooperation. This includes, for instance, improved coordination and planning of interparliamentary activities. This also means we should not create new tools for cooperation. Instead we should enhance existing cooperation tools and our exchange of information: as far as IPEX is concerned by adding summaries in English or French.

In addition, exchange of information through IPEX could be complemented with early informal information exchanges using the network of national representatives in Brussels. This early exchange of information could include unofficial information on the situation of subsidiarity controls, before a reasoned opinion has been adopted.

One vital objective is to bring the EU closer to citizens, thereby increasing the legitimacy of European integration. It has been suggested that one contribution to this process would be to enhance cooperation between national parliaments and the European Parliament, taking into account the different roles of the parliaments in the legislative process. Also, joint actions have been called for in order to achieve closer cooperation in the monitoring of the area freedom, security and justice.

As I mentioned in the morning, I had hoped our meeting today would provide an important opportunity to agree on a format for the continued process. For my part, I believe we did just that!

Dear colleagues and friends,

Ahead of us now lies a process of open deliberation and today our work of identifying modes of cooperation between our parliaments in the light of the new Treaty has only just begun. I believe we have a lot to do before we meet again on 14-15 May here in Stockholm. The ordinary EU Speakers' meeting will be held in the Chamber, situated in the East Wing of this building.

As I mentioned earlier, the format of the EU Speakers' Conference has previously been under discussion and today we tried something new. Some of you have also commented positively on this new design. I welcome any additional reflections you may have on the format used today.

Your points of view will enable us to evaluate and perhaps elaborate future working methods for the EU Speakers' Conference.

Let me first thank all of you who have submitted valuable written contributions. These contributions will be most useful in the process that lies ahead of us. The EUSC Presidency will make sure that they are uploaded onto the open forum for deliberation.

Let me finish by thanking all of you for participating in the debate, for your lively discussion as well as your thoughtful reflections. A special thanks to our three colleagues who chaired the three working groups. I also would like to thank the staff of the Riksdag who, with their efforts, made this meeting possible given the slim schedule for preparation we were afforded.

Now a buffet lunch is served in the Grand Gallery, the Riksdag's main banqueting venue.

Thank you.