

Sejm Marshal's Address
to the Conference of the Speakers of European Union Parliaments
(Copenhagen, 30th June 2006)

***Inter-parliamentary cooperation and the future of Europe,
including exchange of information on the period of reflection and
on the future of Europe***

The Polish Sejm is engaged in a very intense and multidimensional inter-parliamentary activity, as expressed in our participation in the works of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and of those of bilateral (set up separately) and trilateral (set up by the three countries together) Assemblies with Lithuania and Ukraine, in parliamentary meetings of the Visegrad Group, of the Regional Partnership and of many others.

Our meetings produced matter-of-fact statements delivered during the European debate, such as the joint appeal by the parliamentary Speakers of the Visegrad Group (Poland-the Czech Republic-Slovakia-Hungary), concerning the opening of labour markets to all citizens of the Union, or the recent appeal by the Presidents of the Parliaments of the Regional Partnership (the four countries mentioned plus Austria and Slovenia) to complete the process of ratification of the admission of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union.

Needless to say, inter-parliamentary cooperation has particular significance. Therefore I am glad that we are present today at the installation of the IPEX system, thanks to which we as national Parliaments shall obtain completely new opportunities to act. I also think that our positions that we send to the European Commission are worth publishing within IPEX; this way all of us could hold a truly European debate.

As regards more conventional forms of our cooperation, we are in favour of a continuation of the Joint Parliamentary Meetings according to the formula initiated in Brussels, in May. We also support regular meetings of our Parliaments' sectoral committees, modelled after COSAC conferences.

Within the framework of works of our own parliament, we pursue also our own studies of the issues related to the constitutional Treaty. Together with the European Parliament, we have been organizing the "What Union? What Future? What Europe" conference, due to be held in Cracow, in September, to be attended by the President of the European Parliament, by Union and Polish authorities in the field of European affairs and by leading Polish politicians.

In all these, we are not helped by acts of the sort of the European Parliament resolution that was adopted two weeks ago. That resolution attacked the Polish government not for its actions, but for its democratically selected composition, and for our commitment to the rights of the family, which was described as “homophobia.”

The introduction into the official language of this kind of neologisms, repugnant to the entire moral Judeo-Christian tradition, additionally combined with an actual attack against Polish democracy, breeds sharp divisions instead of building confidence and unity which are necessary and most important in the period of reflection.

Anyway, there was no reflection behind that act, perpetrated by the Parliament’s left-wing majority. And it is reflection on Europe that today we need most.

Ch.