

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

### Introductory remarks

The Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) took place on 3-4 April 2014 in Athens.

The Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr. Evangelos MEIMARAKIS, underlined that Europe has an obligation to assume a leading role in international developments, one that corresponds with its economic weight to shape international geopolitical relations. In order to play this role effectively, Europe must have a united and robust position, based on international legitimacy and upholding international norms, avoiding internal contradictions, thus protecting both European and international interests. He stressed that today's geopolitical reality unequivocally demonstrates the need to intensify coordination of foreign policy at the level of the EU, so that the Union can increase its global influence.

The Inter-Parliamentary Conference was opened by the hosts Mr Konstantinos TSIARAS, Chair of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Parliament, and Mr Elmar BROK, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament.

In his welcoming speech, Mr. TSIARAS, referred to the need to formulate a truly common foreign, defence and security policy for Europe, as requested by the people and their governments. He underlined that the developments in Ukraine, as well as in the southern neighbourhood of Europe demonstrate the need for the EU to assume a greater role as a global security provider. Thereupon, Mr. Tsiaras presented the agenda of the Conference, and gave the floor to Mr. Brok who underlined that in order to address these growing threats and challenges on the eastern and southern neighbourhood it was essential to use the full potential of the Lisbon Treaty by combining European Union capacities and national capabilities in order to address common political priorities in Ukraine, as well as in Syria. Referring

to Ukraine, he stressed that its future could not lie in the hands of Russia and therefore this Conference needed to stand up clearly in rejecting Russian aggression towards Ukraine and make it clear that Europe should ensure conditions of peace, security and prosperity throughout the wider neighbourhood.

## **SESSION I**

In his speech entitled *Security challenges in Southern and Eastern Europe*, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Evangelos VENIZELOS, presented the historic and strategic position of Greece in the overall region of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. The Minister, thereupon referred extensively to all of the cases of instability and crises in the basin of the Mediterranean and elsewhere including the ongoing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, the civil war in Syria, the impact of the turmoil in countries such as Lebanon and Iraq, the increasingly polarized climate in Egypt and the conditions of near anarchy in Libya. The minister further reminded the Conference of the division of Cyprus, which has been ongoing for 40 years, as a result of the Turkish invasion and occupation, constituting major security challenges. Referring to the issue of Ukraine, in the debate that followed, he mentioned that any consideration to impose economic sanctions on Russia would be premature, if all diplomatic and political parameters were not exhausted and noted that much greater effort was needed by the EU Member States to overcome their national positions and bilateral interests in order to work towards a common EU approach on Ukraine and with Russia.

## **SESSION II**

The second day of Conference resumed with an intervention by Baroness Catherine ASHTON, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the subject of *Current priorities for the CFSP and CSDP, including the situation in Ukraine*. In briefing the conference participants on Ukraine, Baroness Ashton underlined that Russia has violated international law and infringed on another country's territorial integrity. The High Representative stressed that the de-escalation of the existing situation was a top priority for the EU, that by exercising necessary diplomatic and economic pressure on Russia and that even though good

relations between Ukraine and Russia were essential, the High Representative made clear that there could be no questioning of Ukraine's right to determine its own choices for about the future of the country. She underlined that the solution was not solely political, but economic as well and added that in order to tackle the problem economic stability and growth in Ukraine were necessary. The High Representative announced, moreover, that by the end of April trade barriers between Ukraine and the EU would be lifted and underlined that the IMF was also close to defining its contribution in this respect as well.

In the debate that followed, Baroness Ashton emphasised the need for Europe to be energy self-sufficient, which also meant exploring new ways and resources. The High Representative then referred in detail to actions and achievements during the course of her four-year tenure at the head of the EU's foreign and security policy. The High Representative expressed her satisfaction with developments in the field, and in particular in the three priorities she set out to pursue at the beginning of her mandate, namely, the establishment of the European External Action Service, the advancement of the EU's relations with its strategic partners and the further engagement of the Union in the neighborhood which have all been achieved to a large extent.

### **SESSION III**

In his speech, entitled *Conclusions of the December Council: Developments in the Defence and Security Sector*, Minister for National Defence of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Dimitrios AVRAMOPOULOS, emphasised that recent geopolitical developments pointed to a close link between internal and external security and added that Europe had a duty to determine and defend its geopolitical interests. Mr. Avramopoulos noted that the Common Security and Defence Policy should focus on the fields of cyber-defence, maritime and energy security and it should develop synergies with the area of freedom, security and justice, in order to tackle illegal migration, organized crime, terrorism, but also to support third countries towards more effective border management, which is an issue burdening member states, especially in the EU borders. The Minister, concluded by stressing that it was imperative to

overcome the current fragmentation in the European defence market and achieve an improved cost-benefit impact, thereby ultimately enabling Europe to sustain a competitive defense industry and technological base. Responding to comments and interventions, he stated that member states governments had not yet overcome national preferences as representatives of their societies, although further progress towards a European orientation should have been accomplished.

In his intervention, Mr. Maciej Popowski, Deputy Secretary General for Inter-Institutional Affairs of the European External Action Service (EEAS) assessed interaction with NATO as substantial, underlining that the forthcoming Wales Summit will be prepared on the basis of the EU's December Council's outcome and conclusions . Deputy-Secretary General stressed that the defence mechanism market must be further developed in Europe, to the benefit of all its member states and thereby helping the demands by many EU member states to improve capability development in the face of reducing defence expenditures.

## WORKSHOPS

The first workshop, entitled *European Union Maritime Security Strategy: the maritime dimension of the Common Security and Defence Policy*, was chaired by Mr Yiannis KEFALOGIANNIS, Member of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Parliament. The rapporteur of the workshop was Ms Ana GOMES, Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament. The three speakers were Mr Nicola LATORRE, Chair of the Standing Defence Committee of the Italian Senate, Mr Walter HUHN, Brigadier General, Senior Military Adviser of the EEAS and Mr Loukas KATSIKAS, Director of the Athens Multinational Sealift Coordination Center (AMSCC). Mr Latorre, began by stressing that the maritime security strategy should be incorporated into EU policies in order to become comprehensive and sustainable. Mr Latorre also noted that Europe must provide protection to soldiers on duty as well as stressing the importance of strengthening FRONTEX. Mr Huhn then underlined the need to achieve a functional maritime security strategy, in order to ensure open and safe maritime corridors. He noted

that the aim is to approve the EU Maritime Security Strategy by June 2014 and then to immediately proceed to its implementation. Mr Katsikas then presented the activities and the mission of the AMSCC. In the debate that followed, it was stressed that there is need to avoid conflicting national strategies and to pursue at all institutional levels a coherent approach to implementing the Maritime Security Strategy as well as when investing in EU defence capabilities. Amongst the other topics raised, the environmental aspects of the maritime strategy were raised.

The second workshop examined recent developments in the Middle East. Mr. Nikolaos PANAGIOTOPOULOS, Member of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Parliament chaired the workshop and Mr. Paolo ALLI, Member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies was the rapporteur. The session began with a presentation by Mr Christian BERGER, Director in the EEAS for North Africa, Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq. Then the floor was given to Mr Averof NEOFYTOU, Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs of the House of Representatives, Republic of Cyprus. The final presentation as given by, Dr Thanos DOKOS, Director General, Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). In the discussion that followed several issues were raised, including the humanitarian tragedy as a result of Syria's civil war and its wider impact on the region; Egypt's domestic political situation; the Sunni-Shia division; concerns about the rise of radical Islamic groups and whether Islam is compatible with democracy; the future of Iraq and the Kurds; Iran's nuclear file; the resolution of the Palestinian problem; and the impact of the Arab revolts as a consequence of the Arab spring. In sum, the participants pointed to the importance of the Mediterranean for the Union's political, economic and security interests, thereby emphasising the need for the EU to play an increasingly active role in the region and to make the southern neighborhood a top priority for the Union's foreign policy.

The third workshop examined the deployment of military forces under CSDP and focus in particular on a discussion of the wide variety of decision making procedures and practices amongst national parliaments and the European Parliament. Mr. Lazaros TSAVDARIDIS, Chair of the Special Standing Committee on Armament Programs and Contracts of the Hellenic Parliament chaired the third workshop and Mr Audronius AŽUBALIS, Deputy Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania was the rapporteur. The speakers opening the discussion were Ms Angelien EIJSINK, Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives of the States General of the Netherlands, Mr. Ioan Mircea PASCU, Member of Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament and Mr. Roderich KIESEWETTER, Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the German Bundestag.. Ms Eijsink, began by stressing the need for a coherent defense and security policy and underlined the importance of the conclusions produced by Conferences such as this IPC. Ms Eijsink stated that the Battle Groups represented a potentially important set of forces available to the EU for immediate reaction to crises and therefore for contributing to the security of EU citizens. However, she noted that they were not yet operational, mainly due to the different decision making procedures of national Parliaments. Mr. Pascu, said that we should not forget that the fact that the Battlegroups had not been deployed was due to down to the political of the Member States as well as emphasising that interparliamentary cooperation among the parliament whose Member Stats were part of the same Battlegroup could be an important means of improving parliamentary oversight and understanding of different national decision-making procedures and practices. . Mr PASCU also mentioned the need to address capability shortfalls and financial burden-sharing as pre-requisites for helping Member States to follow up their decisions to launch operations with the forces necessary to deploy. Mr. Kiesewetter, underlined the fact that EU security decisions are also dependent on decisions taken by actors other than the Union and stated that Germany was in favor of further developing

CSDP. He also described the role of the German Parliament in the approval of missions and the current state of debates on parliamentary practice and decisions.

During the debate that followed there was an intense discussion about whether Parliamentary procedures should be improved to allow for immediate reactions to emergency crises and whether Parliaments' approval burdened the whole procedure for such rapid deployment. The issue of financing the costly Battlegroups was a major focus of debate, taking into consideration EU defense budget limitations and the tight limit of 5- 10 days for deployment. The importance of political will as well as the need to improve cooperation of units with common characteristics was raised several times during the discussion. A number of participants underlined that the Treaty also provided for core groups and enhanced cooperation between countries willing to achieve more tangible results in this area.

#### AD HOC REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

The Ad Hoc Review Committee that convened in Athens during the Inter-Parliamentary Conference decided to recommend the adoption of the acronym IPC-CFSP/CSDP. It also adopted the Report of the Seminar of the 21<sup>st</sup> February for the review of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference and the best practices paper (with a minor addition underlined in the text), for submission to, and consideration by, the Italian Presidency.

#### Report on the Seminar of the 21<sup>st</sup> February for the review of the Rules of Procedure of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for CFSP CSDP

The Working Group of the Ad Hoc Review Committee (Working Group) convened on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014 in Athens in order to review the recommendations and the amendments of the Rules of Procedure of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and

Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy submitted by the national Parliaments.

A working document of the seminar based on the Synopsis prepared in Vilnius by the Working Group was drawn up by the Hellenic Presidency, which included all new amendment and comments sent by the national Parliaments.

The Working Group consisted of the representatives of the Presidency Trio – Ireland, Lithuania, Greece – Cyprus, Italy and the European Parliament. Mr. Pat Breen, Mr. Benediktas Juodka, Mr. Konstantinos Tsiaras, Mr. Averof Neofytou and Mr. Elio Vito represented their respective Parliaments. Mr. Elmar Brok, who was not able to attend the seminar due to unforeseen developments during his visit to Ukraine, was represented at senior staff level.

The Working Group reviewed in detail all amendments and recommendations based on the following categorisation:

Category 1 – proposals compatible with the Treaty and the Warsaw Conclusions.

Category 2 – proposals for arrangements not foreseen in the Treaty.

Category 3 – proposals in contradiction with the Warsaw Conclusions.

Category 4 – proposals to be further examined.

Amendments under Category 3 were not examined, as they were contradictory to the Warsaw Conclusions.

#### Category 1 – proposals compatible with the Treaty and the Warsaw Conclusions.

##### Amendments to the Preamble - Par. 1

The Working Group identified three proposals for the adoption of an acronym for the meeting, which were not linked to specific parliamentary committees: "IPC-CFSP", "IPC-CFSP/CSDP" and "IPC-FASDP", to be further discussed by the Ad Hoc Review Committee



(AHRC) in Athens. The Ad Hoc Review Committee that convened in Athens during the Inter-Parliamentary Conference decided to recommend the adoption of the acronym IPC-CFSP/CSDP.

Amendment proposal to Article 3.1 (Latvia, *Saeima*) was accepted as an improvement to the wording:

*3.1. The Inter-Parliamentary Conference shall convene once every six months in the country of the Presidency Parliament or in the European Parliament in Brussels. Extraordinary meetings shall be held when deemed necessary or urgent. The Presidency Parliament shall decide on the matters.* ~~*Extraordinary meetings shall be held when deemed necessary or urgent.*~~

Category 2 – proposals for arrangements not foreseen in the Treaty.

Amendment proposal to Article 2-2.3 (Spain, *Cortes Generales*): the Working Group recommended inserting the word “discuss” to the original article.

Therefore the Working Group proposes that the Article 2–2.3 is amended as follows:

*The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union shall be invited to the meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference to set out and **discuss** the priorities and strategies of the EU in the area of CFSP and CSDP.*

Category 4 – proposals to be further examined.

New Article 10 (Latvia, *Saeima*): in order to guarantee cost effectiveness, the Working Group proposed that the Rules of Procedure should be drawn up in English and French, thus the two working languages of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference.

New Article 10 (Cyprus, *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*): The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* withdrew the amendment on the establishment of a fact-finding mission.

Considering the rest of the amendments and recommendations with a positive spirit, and following the Hellenic Parliament’s proposal, the Working Group deemed appropriate to assemble them in a Best Practices Guide as most of them relate to improvements that can be pursued without changes to the Rules of Procedure (RoP).

## BEST PRACTICES

- **On participation to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference:** the RoP have been understood clearly that each national Parliament may designate up to six delegates and the European Parliament up to sixteen delegates from the competent parliamentary committees to participate in the Inter-Parliamentary Conference.
- **On the Presidential Troika:** the institutionalisation of the Presidential Troika of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference, following the model of COSAC, is not deemed necessary. In practice the Presidency Parliament in close cooperation with the European Parliament and with the preceding and following Presidencies works to prepare the Inter-Parliamentary Conference and, when necessary, to coordinate positions, on current or urgent matters linked to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference. Input from national delegations is always well received.
- **On the communication and cooperation between delegations:** the network of parliaments' representatives in Brussels has proven to be an effective and appropriate way to facilitate communication and cooperation between delegations due to its permanence and regular updating.
- **On the quality of debates:** the Inter-Parliamentary Conference has already successfully evolved by holding topical debates, working groups and breakout sessions which should be further developed as a useful tool for improving the effectiveness and quality of exchanges between delegates. The contribution from invited specialists to address the Inter-Parliamentary Conference in the framework of workshops was also positively assessed. In the same spirit, suggestions to consider shifting the balance from lengthy plenary presentations by the speakers to more time for questions and answers, in particular between delegates, should be further explored in order to ensure that each Parliament/Chamber present is able to contribute during each debate.
- **On the principle of consensus:** in line with the principle of consensus no exception should be made in the decision making processes.
- **On the secretariat support to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference :** for the sake of efficiency and in order to guarantee cost effectiveness and the involvement of all delegations to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference , the establishment of a permanent secretariat as well as any other form of institutionalization is considered

*inappropriate. Therefore the publishing of a transfer report or any other official document should be a prerogative of the Presidency Parliament and considered on a case by case basis.*

- ***On draft conclusions of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference:*** *it is widely agreed that the practice of circulating draft Conclusions (in English and French) in good time before the relevant meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for any amendments should be continued. However, considering the need to respond to timely events and topical matters it would be artificial to set unrealistic deadlines on the Presidency Parliament but to instead to work on the principle of providing draft conclusions as early as possible ahead of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference .*
- ***On the presence of the High Representative:*** *the consistent participation of the High Representative in the Inter-Parliamentary Conference is proven both fruitful as well as useful to the debate on the priorities and strategies of the EU in the area of CFSP-CSDP. It has also been judged a useful plenary session to raise unforeseen topical issues. The adopted conclusions by the Inter-Parliamentary Conference will be attached to the invitation sent to the High Representative to attend the following meeting, as an incentive for further discussion and commentary. Any additional input by the EEAS to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference is positively perceived by the delegations.*
- ***On the political groups:*** *the Presidency Parliament has already provided space for political groups organised along the lines of the European political parties to convene informal meetings prior to meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference.*
- ***On the communication of the related documents:*** *the Presidency Parliament shall ensure that all documents pertaining to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference meeting for which it is responsible are made available on the IPEX website.*