



COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Milan URBÁNI  
Chairman

Bratislava, 27 June 2007  
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To: Mr. Vitalino Canas  
President  
Committee on European Affairs  
Assembleia da República  
Portuguese Republic

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Let me appreciate in the capacity of the Chairman of Committee on European Affairs of National Council of the Slovak Republic a gradual application of the European Commission initiative of direct communication of documents to the national parliaments, as well as carrying out the subsidiarity and proportionality checks within the COSAC domain. The direct communication of all initiative documents and recognizing the stipulations made by the national parliaments with regard to the mentioned documents shall certainly eliminate the so-called democratic deficit in the decision-making process in the European Union and contribute to the raising of the citizens' national European awareness.

At the same time I support the idea of openness and transparency of the Council of the European Union meetings, especially as regards the discussions about the proposals selected by the COSAC as a subject of subsidiarity and proportionality checks. These topics have already been on the COSAC agenda for a longer time, the regular discussions bearing their fruitful results.

When mentioning the Council of the European Union, I would like to draw your attention to an important fact which to a certain extent complicates the work of our Committee on European Affairs. Specifically, it happens too often that the Council finalises the agenda of its meetings very late. Sometimes the relevant documents - their final versions - are not available even one-two days prior to the meeting itself. Therefore, even though our committee disposes with the power to approve binding mandates for ministers attending respective Council meetings, it happens on a regular basis that the specific pieces of information from the ministers concerning the particular issues on the Council agenda are not available for us.

In the Slovak Republic, the mechanism of the binding mandates' approval for the ministers was set up with the objective to involve the national parliament into the decision-making processes of the European Union at the most intensive level. However, the established practice of the Council meetings' preparations prevents this control mechanism from being effective considerably. I am of the opinion, that in the future, COSAC should take account of this aspect of the European Affairs as well.

I consider the direct communication of the European Commission documents, the control of their compliance with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles, forwarding of the national parliaments' positions to the European Commission and the respective responses to be successful steps towards strengthening the national parliaments' role in the European Union. However, I am proposing to make another move towards the democratic deficit elimination. Let us appeal to the Council Presidency with the demand for the final versions of the Council meetings programs and final versions of documents to be prepared in a sufficient time advance. I am of the opinion, that COSAC is the most appropriate forum for this topic to be discussed since the COSAC Presidency corresponds with the Council one. For this reason I am asking you to put this item in the COSAC draft programme. In other case I would suggest that Mr. José Sócrates, Prime-Minister of the Portuguese Republic, addresses this issue during his speech on the Portuguese Presidency and the Future of Europe.

Dear Mr. Chairman, hereby I would like to ask you for your support concerning this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J. L. L.', written in a cursive style.