



16 November 2006

Mr Jari Vilén  
Chairperson of the Grand Committee  
Eduskunta

Dear Mr. Vilén,

I would like to thank you for your letter dated 7 November 2006 regarding the subsidiarity check on selected legislative projects of the European Union by the national parliaments and their public discussion within the framework of Council meetings.

On behalf of COSAC you have suggested that the Council meetings dealing with the EU projects selected for subsidiarity checks by national parliaments should be accessible to the general public. Your request relates specifically to Commission's proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 as regards jurisdiction and introducing rules concerning applicable law in matrimonial matters (COM(2006) 399 final) and to Commission's proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 97/67/EC concerning the full accomplishment of internal market of Community postal services (COM(2006) 594 final).

I am pleased to inform you that the presentation of the Commission's proposal concerning postal services in the Council on 11 December will be open to the public in accordance with Article 8.1 of the Council Rules of Procedure (2006/683/EC, Euratom).

As pointed out the proposal concerning jurisdiction and applicable law in matrimonial matters is not subject to co-decision procedure and open deliberation according to Article 8.2 of the Council Rules of Procedure can be conducted on the basis of proposal by the Presidency unless otherwise decided by the Council or Coreper. Discussion concerning this proposal has started at the working party level but the Council deliberations will not take place during the Finnish Presidency.

As you know, transparency has a central role during the Finnish Presidency. We have implemented in full the new overall policy on transparency since the beginning of July. Thus the number of public deliberations and debates has significantly increased. The public sessions have also been transmitted live on the internet. I am of the opinion that this is one important step towards bringing Union closer to the citizens as interested parties have the possibility to easily follow the public sessions that concern their everyday life. Transparency is also an important element in the realization of subsidiarity and proportionality principles in the functioning of the Union. The efficiency and targeting of Union level action requires further improvement. I would like to express my appreciation to the related work of COSAC in the field of subsidiarity principle.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Matti Vanhanen', with a stylized, flowing script.

Matti Vanhanen

Prime Minister