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IPEX – Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange

What is IPEX?

The objective of the IPEX website¹ is to support interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union, including exchange of views on the subsidiarity control. This is done by providing a platform for the electronic exchange of EU-related information between parliaments in the union.

The objective is stated in the Guidelines for Interparliamentary Cooperation in the EU, agreed on by the Conference of EU Speakers in The Hague 2004.

IPEX was set up following a decision at the EU Speakers Conference in Rome 2000. The Secretaries General were asked to find ways to promote closer links between parliaments in the Union. A working group with this task, chaired by Swedish Secretary General Anders Forsberg was set up.

In the beginning of 2004 the first IPEX website was introduced. The current website comprises a structured collection of EU-information in national parliaments with links to web pages that contain relevant information about EU-matters as well as working procedures for the respective parliament.

Who participates?

Today all EU countries but three have appointed IPEX-correspondents. Almost every parliament/chamber have also provided links on the IPEX website. Also some of the candidate countries participate in the work. The correspondents act as a contact point at the respective parliament and assume responsibility for the correctness of the links from the parliament or chamber in question to the IPEX website.

The work with developing the IPEX website is led by a steering group with representatives from Denmark, France, Italy, Poland, Sweden, the UK, ECPRD and the COSAC-secretariat. Secretary General Anders Forsberg chairs the steering group.

¹[http:// www.ecprd.org/ipex/index.asp](http://www.ecprd.org/ipex/index.asp)

The next phase

In the conclusions from EU Speakers Conference in The Hague 2004, it was stressed that IPEX will serve as an important tool for the exchange of information, for example by directly distributing legislative proposals from the European Commission to the IPEX database.

A study on the future IPEX website has now been turned into a system requirements specification. The goal is to launch a new IPEX website before the summer 2005.

The system will allow for:

- ***Exchange of information*** between parliaments on pending EU matters. One such field of interest will be keeping track of subsidiarity issues. By an intuitive and easy-to-use scoreboard mechanism, it will for instance be possible to see what issues are still open to subsidiarity consideration, and what standpoint a particular parliament/chamber has taken on a specific issue. A few symbols will reveal the status of a specific legal act for a particular country. To maintain integrity, each country will have access to an exclusive part of the database. The information in that part is maintained and updated by the country in question.
- ***A Calendar*** listing EU interparliamentary conferences, for instance meetings of COSAC, sectional committees as well as other parliamentary networks will be available. The calendar will also include agendas and contact information.
- ***A Bulletin board*** to further widen the possibilities for an informal exchange of views between parliaments will also be maintained, enabling parliamentary staff to send questions and/or comments to each other about current matters.

Technical information

The current IPEX web site resides on the ECPRD server². The site is a portal web site, i.e.; it comprises a number of relevant links to the web sites of those national parliaments that are part of the IPEX network. The links point to web pages that contain relevant information about EU matters as well as relevant working procedures for the respective parliament. The next step is to launch a new web site, built around a database. The aim is that parliaments that take part in the IPEX network can then e.g. upload

² www.ecprd.org

proposals from the European Commission. By assigning various status values to the documents, it will be possible for any country to follow the development of specific issues and also to keep track of the standpoint of other countries.