

5.12.2019

Meeting of the Secretaries General of the European Union Parliaments**Helsinki, 26–27 January 2020**

Dear Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to the meeting of the Secretaries General of the European Union Parliaments at the Eduskunta in Helsinki on 26 – 27 January 2020.

Our agenda will follow the usual format, focusing on the preparations for the Helsinki Speakers' Conference on 17 – 19 May. Klaus Welle has agreed to give a presentation on the European Parliament after the European elections and we look forward to the usual briefings about arrangements during the upcoming Presidencies. We will also have the usual discussion and conclusions on IPEX.

As you know, the Vienna Speakers' Conference asked the incoming Finnish Presidency to convene a working group on updating the Lisbon Guidelines on inter-parliamentary cooperation in the EU and on the use of technology to enhance inter-parliamentary cooperation. The Eduskunta was also to prepare a common understanding on the Interparliamentary Committee Meeting for the evaluation of Eurojust.

I propose that we discuss these three documents in a session devoted more broadly to the current state of inter-parliamentary cooperation in the EU. As a fourth (and background) document, I wish to draw your attention to the most recent COSAC Bi-Annual Report. The COSAC BAR records high levels of dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the subsidiarity mechanism and political dialogue as vehicles for national parliaments to influence EU legislation. I believe that we as Secretaries General need to take note of this.

The COSAC Bi-Annual Report also records that a plurality of parliaments are open to the idea that we explore re-inventing the current COSAC secretariat as the nucleus of a standing secretariat for the other permanent inter-parliamentary conferences, or some of them. I stress that any such move would involve complex political and administrative issues, and thus would need to be prepared exhaustively. On the other hand, the issue of arranging secretariat functions – and continuity – for the other conferences does need to be discussed. I am not going to propose any conclusions on this subject in Helsinki, but I am hoping that we

could have an open preliminary debate, as the subject is likely to recur at future meetings.

I would like to inform you that the formal invitations to the Speakers' Conference will be sent at a later date.

Looking forward to greeting you all in person in Helsinki, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Maija-Leena Paavola'.

Maija-Leena Paavola
Secretary General of the Eduskunta