

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE
MEETING OF SECRETARIES GENERAL
OF EU PARLIAMENTS
COPENHAGEN
10 FEBRUARY 2006**

The Secretaries General of EU parliaments and the parliaments of the acceding and candidate countries met in Copenhagen on 10 February 2006. The main objective of the meeting was to prepare the Conference of the Speakers of EU Parliaments, which will be held in Copenhagen on 29 June – 2 July 2006.

Henrik Tvarnø, The Secretary General of the Danish Parliament chaired the meeting.

Agenda:

The following agenda for the meeting of Secretaries General was agreed upon:

1. Programme and agenda for the next Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments.
2. Progress report on the development of IPEX
3. Exchange of information between the EU Parliaments on the period of reflection.
4. “The future role of national parliaments in the EU – seen from Brussels”. Address by Mr. Bo Manderup Jensen, Principal Adviser to the office of the President of the Commission.
5. Exchange of information on the results of our national debates on the Commission’s annual Legislative and Work Programme.
6. Report from working groups: Rationalisation of European Interparliamentary organisations and “Assistance to parliaments of new and emerging democracies”.

Conclusions of the sitting

Speech of welcome

During his speech of welcome, the Secretary General of the Danish Parliament, Mr Henrik Tvarnø, announced the launch of the website for the Conference of Speakers – www.eu-speakers.org - created by the Danish Parliament. He declared that the Danish Presidency would make the website and database available for future Presidencies of the Conference of Speakers.

The Deputy Secretary General of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Francesco Posteraro, asked the Danish Presidency to submit the technical specifications of the database and CMS behind the website of the Conference of Speakers.

1) Adoption of agenda for the Conference of Speakers

The draft agenda for the next Conference of Speakers in June was adopted (see annex 1).

A decision was made to invite representatives of the Candidate and Accessing Countries to the Conference of Speakers.

The proposal to invite Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Speaker of the Norwegian Parliament, to address the Conference of Speakers and share his views on the “EU and the EEA” was also adopted.

The Secretaries General also agreed to invite the Vice-President of the European Commission, Mrs. Margot Walström, to present the Commission’s findings from the period of reflection and exchange views on what further steps could be taken.

The Secretaries General agreed that the Speaker of the Danish Parliament, Mr. Christian Mejdahl and the Speaker of the French Senate, should be rapporteurs on the period of reflection and the future of the EU. In addition, it was agreed that the Speaker of the Austrian Parliament (Nationalrat) Mr. Kohl, and the President of the European Parliament, Mr. Borrel, should present a joint report on the outcome of the “Joint Parliamentary meeting” planned to take place in the European Parliament on 8-9 May 2006. The Danish Parliament was asked to prepare a written report on the question for the Conference.

Finally the secretaries general agreed to recommend that Speakers should try to restrict their interventions to less than four minutes. However, rapporteurs would be granted fifteen minutes. This was in accordance with the practice used in Budapest.

It was decided to open the meeting to the press.

The Secretaries General endorsed the language regime adopted in Budapest.

2) IPEX:

The Secretaries General approved the proposed guidelines for IPEX and the proposed composition of the Board for the period going from June 2006 to the next Conference of Speakers in 2007. The following Member State parliaments will be represented on the Board: Denmark, Hungary, The Slovak Republic, The European Parliament, France, The

United Kingdom, Italy and Finland. COSAC and ECPRD were appointed as associate members.

The Secretary General of the Danish Parliament, Mr Henrik Tvarnø, was appointed Chairman of the Board from June 2006 to the Conference of Speakers in 2007.

There were no comments from the Secretaries General on the proposed Guidelines for the Calendar for Interparliamentary Cooperation.

It was agreed that the official date for launching IPEX would be 29 June 2006.

3) Exchange of information between the EU Parliaments on the period of reflection

There was a brief exchange of information between the Secretaries General on the national debates that would be taking place during the period of reflection.

The Secretary General of the European Parliament, Mr. Julian Priestly, circulated an advance copy of the letter of invitation for a Parliamentary Meeting on the Future of Europe on 8-9 May that would take place in the European Parliament.

It was agreed that the Speaker of the Danish Parliament should send a letter to the European Commission concerning the transmission of information and EU documents, including responses to opinions or resolutions adopted by national parliaments on white papers, green papers and communications, from the Commission to national parliaments and the IPEX database.

4) “The future role of National Parliaments in the EU – seen from Brussels”. Address by Mr. Bo Manderup Jensen, Principal Adviser in the office of the President of the Commission

The Secretaries General welcomed the interesting intervention by Mr Bo Manderup Jensen. No items were concluded.

5) Exchange of information on the results of the national debates on the Commission’s annual Legislative and Work Programme

The Secretary General of the Danish Parliament, Mr Tvarnø, stated that the Danish Parliament will prepare an updated report on the question of raising national European awareness that would include additional responses from parliaments. It was decided that the final report should include an additional chapter on the possibility of involving national parliaments at an even earlier stage in the pre-legislative cycle through scrutiny of the Commission’s “Annual Policy Strategy” which is normally presented in March. It was finally agreed to recommend that the following issues would be addressed by the Speakers:

- National Parliaments should be encouraged to hold an annual debate on the Commissions Legislative and Work Programme (LWP).
- The Speakers should encourage the Commission to translate the LWP and its annexes into all official languages.
- The Commission should be encouraged to improve the quality of the LWP by providing more detailed information on the individual proposals – including preliminary information from impact assessments. Priority as well as non-priority proposals should be included in the annexes of the LWP – as the distinction between the two can at times seem arbitrary.
- How national parliaments can be involved at an even earlier stage in the pre-legislative cycle of the Commission
- How the IPEX website could best be used to promote the debate on the annual LWP and to improve the exchange of information during the debate by the national parliaments

6) Report from working groups: Rationalisation of European Interparliamentary organisations and “Assistance to parliaments of new and emerging democracies”.

The Secretaries General took note of the conclusions of the working group on the rationalisation of European Interparliamentary Organisations, which met in Copenhagen on 9 February (see Annex 2). According to the conclusions, which were circulated at the Secretaries General meeting, the Danish Presidency should prepare a factual background note for the Conference of Speakers on the issue of rationalising Interparliamentary organisations. The report should identify problems arising from the practical implementation of the Hague Guidelines and should include a review of parliamentary systems of the parliaments participating in the Conference of Speakers with regard to the number of members and meeting days in each parliament.

The report should not include conclusions or recommendations.

The Chairman of the Working Group on “*Assistance to parliaments of new and emerging democracies*”, Mr. Palanza gave a brief report on the progress of the working group. It was agreed that the Speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies should prepare a report for the Conference of Speakers.

ANNEX 1:

Danish Parliament



Copenhagen 8 February 2006

Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments

Copenhagen, 29 June – 2 July 2006

Draft agenda

1. Interparliamentary cooperation and the future of Europe
 - a) Exchange of information on the period of reflection and on the future of Europe
 - b) Parliamentary aspects of the Constitutional Treaty and the future issues relating to the Treaty
 - Address by Mrs Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission
 - Rapporteur: Mr Christian Mejdahl, Speaker of the Danish Parliament
 - Co-rapporteur: The French Senate
2. Exchange of information on the debates going on in the national parliaments on the annual Commission Legislative and Work Programme: “Raising National European Awareness”
3. Rationalisation of European interparliamentary organisations
 - Report from working group
4. “Assistance to Parliaments of new and emerging democracies”
 - Introduction by Mr Pier Ferdinando Casini, Speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies
5. “The EU seen from the outside – why the EEA is a good alternative to the EU for Norway”
 - Address by Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Speaker of the Norwegian Parliament (tbc)
6. Official launch of the IPEX project

7. Any other business

ANNEX 2:

9 February 2006

Conclusions of the Working group on Rationalization of Interparliamentary Organizations

The Working Group established by the Conference of Speakers in Budapest on 6 – 7 May 2005 met in Copenhagen on 9 February to begin deliberations on the efficiency and possible rationalization of European Interparliamentary Organizations.

The Following Conclusions prepared by the Danish Presidency were submitted to the meeting of Secretaries General on 10 February 2006:

A Report shall be prepared by the Danish Presidency for the Conference of Speakers.

- The Report shall be based on the Thierse Report submitted to the Conference of Speakers in Budapest, results of the questionnaire prepared by the Danish Presidency and the conclusions of the seminar in Warsaw on Supranational Parliamentary and Interparliamentary Assemblies.
- The Report shall include a review of parliamentary systems of the parliaments participating in the Conference of Speakers with regard to the number of members and meeting days in each parliament.
- The Report shall identify problems arising from the practical implementation of the Hague Guidelines.
- The Report shall not draw any conclusions or recommendations regarding the rationalization of European Interparliamentary Cooperation, however it shall provide a factual basis for future political debate.

All EU Parliaments are invited to contribute to the report. Additional meetings of the Working Group are not envisioned, as the necessary consultations between the members of the Working Group will be provided through e-mail exchanges.

The Speaker of the Danish Parliament, Mr. Christian Mejdahl will submit the Report to the forthcoming Conference of Speakers.

ANNEX 3:

CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF EU PARLIAMENTS

WORKING GROUP ON ASSISTANCE TO PARLIAMENTS OF NEW AND EMERGING DEMOCRACIES

The **Working Group on assistance to the parliaments of new and emerging democracies** was set up within the Conference of the Speakers of the EU Parliaments on the basis of the conclusions of the Conference of Speakers held in Budapest last May, to ensure better coordination and greater effectiveness to **international parliamentary assistance activities** performed by the parliaments of the European Union.

Against this backdrop, the Speaker of the Danish Parliament, Christian Mejdahl, current Chair of the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments, was asked to ensure a follow-up on this topic. In agreement with the other parliaments belonging to the Troika, Speaker Mejdahl invited President Casini to promote and coordinate the Working Group.

President Casini, in agreement with Speaker Mejdahl, subsequently invited all the Speakers of parliaments of the European Union to take part in the initiative and to appoint an official from their administrations to sit on the technical group responsible for drawing up an inventory of the initiatives taken to assist the above mentioned parliaments. Twenty-four Parliamentary Assemblies joined the working group (the list is annexed hereto), each of which appointed an official from their administration to sit on said **technical group**. At the invitation of President Casini, the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, also appointed an official from the Commission who the technical group can turn to obtain information regarding the work and the funds provided by the Union to assist parliaments.

The technical group, coordinated by the Italian Chamber of Deputies in agreement with the Danish Parliament, immediately set about its inventorying work. On the basis of the replies to a questionnaire and web site searches, a draft **documentation report** was drawn up, containing notes on the work of all the main international organisations and the European Union, together with Country notes on the activities of the parliaments and other institutions of the member states of the European Union, and some of the most active non-EU countries in this field (USA, Canada etc.). The report contains a great deal of important information on the organisations which are providing technical assistance to parliaments and on the methods used and the orders of magnitude of the financial resources being devoted to it. Particular attention is paid to the numerous activities funded out of Community resources under development programmes designed to strengthen democratic institutions.

The survey, which is still being completed and fine-tuned, clearly revealed the wide variety and the complexity of the activities being run to assist the parliaments of the new and emerging democracies, and the network of linkages between the initiatives of one or

more European parliaments and the international organisations or non-EU countries.

This dossier was debated at the first meeting of the technical group in Brussels at the European Parliament on 2 February. On the basis of the comments that emerged from that meeting, and subsequent to it, the contents of the dossier were further supplemented and amended, subdividing it into four parts, following the suggestions raised there:

1. executive summary;
2. assistance from Europe;
3. assistance from other countries;
4. assistance from international organisations.

The discussion on 2 February produced a convergence of ideas around the general objectives and working methods of the group, which will continue its work immediately, focusing attention on exploiting to the full the wealth of expertise and experience of the European parliaments in providing technical assistance. It was agreed that the exchange of information on the various initiatives under way should be enhanced in order to prevent overlapping and duplication, while ensuring the greatest possible efficiency in the use of the funds allocated for it. The technical group will further discuss the exchange of information and assessments with the official from the European Commission, who was present at the first meeting.

As agreed in Brussels, the technical group will meet once again in the coming weeks to examine issues and strategies for its work and will then proceed to draft a technical report. This report will be submitted to the Speakers taking part in the initiative, who could then respond to it in writing or, if possible, meet again to finalise the final report which could be submitted to the Conference of Speakers in Copenhagen next June.

CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF EU PARLIAMENTS

**WORKING GROUP ON ASSISTANCE TO PARLIAMENTS
OF NEW AND EMERGING DEMOCRACIES**

Chairman: Pier Ferdinando Casini

Country	Chamber	Speaker
BELGIUM	<i>Chambre des Représentants</i>	Herman DE CROO
	<i>Sénat</i>	Anne-Marie LIZIN
CZECH REPUBLIC	<i>Senate</i>	Premysl SOBOTKA
DENMARK	<i>Folketinget</i>	Christian MEJDAHL
ESTONIA	<i>Riigikogu</i>	Ene ERGMA
FINLAND	<i>Eduskunta</i>	Paavo LIPPONEN
FRANCE	<i>Assemblée Nationale</i>	Jean-Louis DEBRÉ
	<i>Sénat</i>	Christian PONCELET
GERMANY	<i>Bundestag</i>	Norbert LAMMERT
GREECE	<i>Vouli ton ellinon</i>	Anna BENAKI-PSAROUDA
HUNGARY	<i>National Assembly</i>	Katalin SZILI
ITALY	<i>Camera dei deputati</i>	Pier Ferdinando CASINI
	<i>Senato della Repubblica</i>	Marcello PERA
LITHUANIA	<i>Seimas</i>	Arturas PAULASKAS
LUXEMBURG	<i>Chambre des députés</i>	Lucien WEILER
MALTA	<i>House of the Representatives</i>	Anton TABONE
POLAND	<i>Senat</i>	Bogdan BORUSEWICZ
ROMANIA	<i>Chamber of deputies</i>	Adrian NĂSTASE
SLOVAKIA	<i>National Council</i>	Béla BUGÁR (Deputy Speaker)
	<i>Congreso de los Diputados</i>	Manuel Marin GONZALES
SPAIN	<i>Senado</i>	Francisco Javier ROJO GARCÍA
	<i>House of Commons</i>	Alan HASELHURST (Deputy Speaker)
UNITED KINGDOM	<i>House of Lords</i>	LORD GRENFELL (Deputy Speaker)
	EU PARLIAMENT	Josep Borrell FONTELLES

