

21.04.2012

Presidency Conclusions
of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments
Warsaw, 20 – 21 April 2012

Introductory remarks:

1. The meeting of Conference of the Speakers of the European Union Parliaments was convened in Warsaw on 19 – 21 April 2012 upon the joint invitation of the Marshals of the Sejm and the Senate of the Republic of Poland. The meeting was attended by the Speakers (or their representatives) from 37 Houses of 24 European Union Member States and by the Vice-President of the European Parliament. The Conference was also attended by Speakers (or their representatives) of Parliaments of the 6 EU candidate countries. The representative of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia attended the Conference for the first time after the Republic of Serbia had been granted candidate status in 2012. The Conference was co-chaired by Mrs Ewa Kopacz, Marshal of the Sejm, and Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Senate.
2. The debate on “*The crisis of the European unity, what shall we do?*” was included in the agenda of the Conference at the request of the Speaker of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal. Mr Donald Tusk, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland and Mrs Maria Assunção Esteves, Speaker of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal presented the introductory speeches.

3. Mrs Ewa Kopacz, Marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland presented the point concerning “*The parliamentary control of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)*”. During their meeting in Brussels (4–5 April 2011) the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments had established the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), but agreement had not been reached on all the aspects related to the creation of the Conference. The Polish Presidency had initiated negotiations in order to reach a compromise on the unresolved issues. Mrs Ewa Kopacz, Marshal of the Sejm presented the course of those negotiations and the Presidency’s compromise proposal. Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Senate presented the conclusions from the debate.

4. The Conference encompassed a “one plus one” session on “*Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union – implications for the European Union Parliaments*”; the topic was introduced by Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Senate.

5. On Saturday 21 April 2012 the Conference focused on the topic “*The Parliament, public opinion and the media*”. The issue was presented by Mr André Flahaut, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Belgium. Since that point of the agenda had not been discussed at the meeting of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments in Brussels in 2011, the Conference had decided to postpone it to the next meeting of the Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments.

With regard to the point “The crisis of the European unity, what shall we do?”:

1. Speakers pointed to the fact that the current crisis in the European Union, which had not only an economic and financial dimension, but also a social dimension, contributed to aggravating problems related to European integration and might eventually impair the internal cohesion of the Union.

2. Speakers stressed that the scale of the crisis and its multi-sided nature required that the discussion on the future of the European Union should be conducted in a structured, rational and concrete manner, since only in such way could it become an effective instrument in the fight for the European unity.
3. Speakers noted that the European Union was based on common values shared by all and on trust, and that its goals could be only achieved through common will of the Member States. That is why solving the current European integration problems required political support from all the participants of the European project.
4. Speakers stressed that the difficult moment in which the European Union now found itself should be used as a catalyst for pro-European action.
5. Speakers agreed that successful implementation of the European project required an enhanced effort to restore balance as well as measures aimed at restoring confidence amongst the European Union citizens.
6. Speakers underlined that restoring momentum to the European project was not possible without taking into account the social dimension, hence it was necessary to take swift and determined measures to fight unemployment.
7. Speakers noted that the Treaty of Lisbon had strengthened the role of the national Parliaments and of the European Parliament, all of which could now play a more active role in the debate and initiatives aimed at deepening European integration. The national Parliaments and the European Parliament should act within their remit to help rebuild a coherent and solidarity-based European Union.
8. Speakers agreed that the European Union needed responsible and cooperating parliaments, which should assume the role of leaders and architects of integrated Europe.

With regard to the point “The parliamentary control of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)”:

The Speakers stressed the need for swift start of the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (hereinafter referred to as "Inter-Parliamentary Conference"), which was established by the decision of the Conference of the Speakers adopted during its meeting in Brussels in April 2011. Therefore the Conference of Speakers has supplemented the Conclusions of the Presidency as follows:

- a. An Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is set up, in the spirit of the new parliamentary dimension of the Lisbon Treaty. The Inter-Parliamentary Conference is composed of delegations of the national Parliaments of the EU Member States and the European Parliament. This conference replaces the existing COFACC and CODACC meetings.
- b. Each of the EU Parliaments autonomously takes decisions on the composition of its delegation. The national Parliaments are represented by delegations composed of 6 Members of Parliament each. In the case of Parliaments consisting of two Chambers, the number of members of the delegation shall be allocated according to their internal agreement. The European Parliament is represented by a delegation composed of 16 Members of Parliament.
- c. Each national Parliament of a candidate country and each European member country of NATO (excluding those covered by sub-paragraph (b)) can be represented by a delegation composed of 4 observers.
- d. The Inter-Parliamentary Conference shall meet once in every six months in the country holding the six-monthly Council Presidency or in the European Parliament in Brussels. The Presidency shall decide the matter. Extraordinary meetings shall be held when deemed necessary or urgent.
- e. The meetings shall be presided over by the national Parliament of the Member State holding the rotating Council Presidency, in close cooperation with the European Parliament.
- f. The Inter-Parliamentary Conference secretariat shall be provided by the national Parliament of the Member State holding the 6-month Presidency

of the Council, in close cooperation with the European Parliament and the previous and the next Presidency.

- g. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union shall be invited to the meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference in order to set out the outlines and strategies of the common foreign and defence policy of the European Union.
- h. The Inter-Parliamentary Conference may adopt non-binding conclusions by consensus.
- i. The Inter-Parliamentary Conference shall approve its rules of procedure and working methods on the basis of the aforementioned principles.

The Conference of Speakers recommends conducting a review of these arrangements for the Inter-Parliamentary Conference after two years from its first meeting, and submitting conclusions from such review by the relevant Presidency of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments.

With regard to the point “Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union – implications for the European Union Parliaments”:

1. The Speakers discussed the signing of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union, aimed at ensuring the stability of the Eurozone and strengthening economic governance in the European Union. They agreed that the entry of the Treaty into force should help to overcome the economic crisis in the EU and ensure financial stability in Europe.
2. Bearing that in mind and having regard to the different constitutional requirements of Member States, the Speakers shared information on the ratification of the Treaty and the implementation of its provisions in Member States. They underlined that the rules enshrined in the Treaty should be fully respected, while at the same time these rules have to be implemented by the national parliaments in their budget responsibility.
3. The Speakers noted the potential of cooperation agreements between national governments and their parliaments to address social and economic issues of concern to citizens.

4. In the light of Article 13 of the Treaty, the Speakers stressed that cooperation between the national parliaments and the European Parliament should play an important role in the process of economic coordination and governance in the EU.

With regard to the point “Parliament, the public opinion and the media”:

1. The Speakers agreed that the media should play a crucial role in the functioning of parliamentary democracy, where the free press was the best guarantee of a free parliament, and where each MP’s freedom of speech was a fundamental principle.
2. The Speakers stressed that conducting studies on the presence of parliamentary topics in the media both in individual member states and on the European level would allow a quantifiable assessment of the impact of different types of media.
3. Noting the conclusions of the Meeting of Secretaries General held in Warsaw on 6 February 2012, the Speakers underlined the importance of ensuring maximum transparency and the most accurate and timely information on parliamentary activities by providing the relevant data online in freely accessible ways and formats, while promoting the adoption of open, common international standards favouring the treatment and re-use of the published data by all parties concerned.

With regard to IPEX (Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange):

1. The Speakers welcomed the conclusions from the meeting of the Secretaries-General of national Parliaments of the EU Member States and of the European Parliament concerning taking measures aimed at ensuring human as well as financial and technical resources in the parliaments to help them ensure timely and reliable submission of documents and information to IPEX. It has the aim to intensify the use of new functionalities available on the IPEX website and to enhance the transparency of the data published on that website.

2. The Speakers expressed their support for further development of IPEX in order to make it an even more credible tool of interparliamentary cooperation.

With regard to ratification of the Treaty of Accession with Croatia:
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1. The Speakers welcomed the signing of the Treaty of Accession with Croatia, on the basis of which Croatia would become a member of the European Union in July 2013.
2. The Speakers therefore urge the EU Members States and their national parliaments to conclude the ratification processes at the earliest convenience in order to facilitate the accession of Croatia as planned