



CONCLUSIONS DRAWN UP BY THE PRESIDENCY

Preliminary remarks

- 1) The Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the European Union met, at the joint invitation of the Presidents of the French Parliament, in Paris on February 26-28, 2009. The Speakers (or their representatives) of thirty-nine Chambers from the twenty-seven member states of the European Union as well as the President of the European Parliament participated in this Conference. The Speakers of the Parliaments of three candidate countries for membership also took part in the Conference. The Conference was co-chaired by Mr. Bernard Accoyer, President of the French National Assembly and Mr. Gerard Larcher, President of the French Senate.
- 2) As in 2008, during the Conference of Lisbon, the first meeting was given over to debates dealing, in an informal atmosphere, with the institutional future of the Union and the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon by national Parliaments. Subsequently the Conference debated the following topics: Europe, crisis management and the involvement of Parliaments, the preparation of the parliamentary dimension of the presidency of the European Union and the future of Europe for the year 2030. The President of the French Republic, Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, received the Speakers of Parliaments on February 27.
- 3) The topic concerning the *“Institutional future of the Union and the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon by national Parliaments”*¹ was introduced by Mr. Bernard Accoyer, President of

¹ This work took place using the one-plus-one format already used at the Conference of Lisbon, i.e. with one President or representative and one adviser for each Chamber or Parliament.

the French National Assembly who presented a report on this question. The following then made speeches: Mr. Jaime Gama, President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, Mr. Miloslav Vlcek, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, Mr. Premysl Sobotka, President of the Senate of the Czech Republic and Mr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament. During the debate which followed the Speakers underlined the major role played by the European Union in the response to the economic and financial crisis and to other new challenges such as climate change. They noted the responsibility of national Parliaments and the European Parliament in bringing citizens closer to European institutions. Numerous Speakers expressed their wish to promote pragmatic cross-the-board coordination between the national Parliaments, respecting the specificities and the competences of each. They considered it necessary to broaden the monitoring of subsidiarity and proportionality by developing all the possibilities of flexible fast and effective coordination. Certain Speakers proposed a reflection on the means to strengthen the monitoring of the European security and defense policy.

- 4) The topic concerning “*Europe and crisis managment. The involvement of Parliaments*” was opened by Mr. Bernard Accoyer, President of the French National Assembly. The following then made speeches. Mr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament, Mr. Antonio Tajani, Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr. Miloslav Vlcek, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, who particularly noted the role to be played by parliamentary diplomacy in contributing to the search for peace in the Middle East following the Gaza crisis and Mr. Per Westerberg, President of the Swedish Parliament. During the debate which followed the Speakers noted that protectionism could in no circumstances represent a reply to the economic and financial crisis, considering that in this crisis, which has a global dimension and which also has effects on emerging countries, it is essential to strengthen solidarity and cooperation between states.
- 5) The topic concerning the “*preparation of the parliamentary dimension of a presidency of the European Union*” was introduced by Mr. Gérard Larcher, President of the French Senate. Mrs Katalin Szili, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Hungary

presented a report on the practice of Parliaments concerning the presidencies of the Union. Mr. Bronislaw Komorowski, President of the Polish Sejm then invited the Speakers to participate in the ceremonies commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the first free elections in Poland in the post-war period, on June 2 and 3, 2009 in Warsaw.

- 6) The topic concerning “*the future of Europe for 2030*” was introduced by Mr. Bernard Accoyer, President of the French National Assembly. The following then made speeches: Mr. Bruno Le Maire, French Minister for European Affaires, Mr. Felipe Gonzalez, President of the Reflection Group on the Future of Europe and Mr. Premysl Sobotka, Speaker of the Senate of the Czech Republic, who hoped that a debate on the idea of establishing a European Senate could be held. During the discussion the Speakers recalled the great expectations concerning Europe and its responsibilities during the financial crisis. They stressed the protection of social cohesion. Underlining the uncertain nature of forecasts they debated numerous questions such as economic and financial reform, the management of the flux of migration, climate change, European security and defense as well as institutional questions.

Conclusions of the Presidency

Concerning the institutional future of the Union and the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon by the national Parliaments

- 1) The Speakers observe the continuation of the ratification process of the Treaty of Lisbon which provides the Union with a renewed institutional framework liable to bring Europe closer to its citizens, in particular thanks to the strengthening of the prerogatives of Parliament whether it be those of the national Parliaments or those of the European Parliament. They observed that the European Council of December 11-12, 2008 laid down the path to make it possible for the treaty to come into force before the end of 2009 by committing itself to supplying the necessary legal guarantees which seek to address the concerns expressed by the Irish people.
- 2) The Speakers consider it important that national Parliaments, having respect to their constitutional rules and their parliamentary traditions,

should be in a position to fully implement their new rights and powers which the application of the Treaty of Lisbon would grant them so as to contribute to the smooth functioning of the European Union.

- 3) In this regard, they welcome the success of the initiative put forward by the President of the European Commission, and approved by the European Council, to directly transmit the drafts of the Commission to national Parliaments so as to gather their opinions, in particular on the conformity of said drafts with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. The Speakers also commend the work carried out by the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees (COSAC) in the testing of this new type of monitoring. They particularly recognize the effectiveness of the pilot exercises in subsidiarity which encourage national Parliaments to examine certain drafts which have been pre-selected together. In addition they welcome the results obtained by the COSAC work group on cooperation in matters concerning subsidiarity and proportionality. It is for these reasons that:

- they encourage Parliaments or Chambers which raise a possible problem concerning subsidiarity to exchange information on the way to proceed as quickly as possible, and in any case before the eight-week period elapses;

- they encourage informal exchanges of information concerning subsidiarity, in particular by means of the representatives of national Parliaments to the European Union.

- 4) The Speakers underline the necessity of strengthening cooperation between national Parliaments through the use of IPEX which could play a key role in the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon concerning the monitoring of subsidiarity. The Speakers welcome in this context the imminent introduction of a more efficient system of exchange of documents between national Parliaments thanks to IPEX. So as to render the site more functional, they invite national Parliaments to publish the summaries, in English or French, and other languages, of their most important positions and opinions concerning subsidiarity.

- 5) The Speakers note that a new stage in the implementation of the new parliamentary prerogatives could be reached from the beginning of the next term of the European Parliament. In the spirit of the step taken by the European Commission and the spirit of article 4 of the protocol (no.2) on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality accompanying the Treaty of Lisbon, the Speakers invite the Council of the European Union to directly transmit to national Parliaments, beginning on September 1, 2009, in an informal manner, the draft legislative acts which do not proceed from the European Commission.
- 6) The Speakers invite the national Parliaments to intensify their cooperation in the area of the monitoring of subsidiarity and proportionality, possibly by addressing a common letter to the President of the European Commission when a significant number of Parliaments or Chambers had identified difficulties linked to the respect of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality in the same draft European act. Such a step would have the effect of strengthening the opinions expressed by the national Parliaments.
- 7) The Speakers highlight the importance of the role of national Parliaments in the assessment and the monitoring of the construction of a European freedom, security and justice area. They emphasize the role of national Parliaments in the drawing-up of new priorities for European action in these matters. To achieve this, one of the inter-parliamentary meetings organized this year could deal with this question before the European Council announces the new programme which will replace the Hague Programme.
- 8) Given the role of national Parliaments in the smooth functioning of the European Union, the Speakers consider it useful that national Parliaments and the European Parliament debate, in an appropriate manner, the conclusions of the Reflection Group on the Future of Europe for 2030, before the presentation of its report to the European Council in June 2010.

Concerning the Involvement of Parliaments in Crisis Management

- 9) The Speakers commend the fact that the European Union has actively contributed to the resolution of many serious crises both of a regional

and of a world dimension which Europe has had to face over recent months.

- 10) The Speakers underline the role Parliaments play within the European Union so that citizens may be fully informed, Government action may be monitored and that answers may be put forward at times of crisis.
- 11) The Speakers underline the importance of avoiding protectionism, considering it inefficient in the context of a global crisis and they stress the need for solidarity.
- 12) The Speakers expect that the European Union will speak with a single voice in order to play its full role in the reform of the international finance system, to strengthen the coordination of the national recovery plans and to launch a cooperative dynamic in the common interest. They also hope that tangible results in these fields might bring Europe closer to its citizens on the eve of the European elections.

Concerning Parliamentary practices for EU presidencies

- 13) The Speakers acknowledge the quality of the exchanges which took place during the inter-parliamentary meetings held during the Slovenian, French and Czech presidencies and invite the national Parliaments and the European Parliament to strengthen their cooperation on these subjects, in particular through the exchange of good practices.
- 14) The Speakers welcome the report on the preparation of the parliamentary dimension of the European presidency. They request the publication of the report on the IPEX site so that it may be made available to Parliaments and updated as required.

The Future of Europe for the Year 2030

- 15) The Speakers hope that the work of the reflection group on the future of Europe, chaired by M. Felipe Gonzalez, may enable the European Union, in a world which has become multi-polar, to map out avenues for the future, not only for itself but also in order to have its partners understand its conception of the main issues facing the world in the

decades to come. It will be fundamental in this context to reflect upon both European values and the European identity to enable the drawing-up of common proposals to be implemented between now and 2030.

- 16) The Speakers also welcome the fact that the remit of the reflection group includes the task of paying particular attention to the means to be used to better address citizens and to answer their expectations and needs. They indeed underline that the support of European citizens for European institutions is a key element for the future development of the European Union. They welcome the intention of the group's President, upon the completion of its work, to present a final report setting out clear and comprehensible recommendations for all.
- 17) The Speakers note that the reflection group should determine the best way to work in the long term for the stability and prosperity of both the Union and its surrounding regions. To this effect, they consider that it will be necessary to reflect deeply upon the European Union's policy towards its neighbours.