



EU Speakers' Conference

Stockholm, 14-15 May 2010

Progress report on the Lisbon forum debate

SVERIGES  
RIKSDAG 

The upcoming meeting of Speakers of EU Parliaments may be seen as a pit-stop in the debate on interparliamentary cooperation in the era of the Lisbon Treaty. The Swedish EUSC Presidency hereby submits this report on the IPEX forum debate on interparliamentary cooperation in the era of the Lisbon Treaty for consideration at the meeting of the EU Speakers in Stockholm on 14–15 May 2010. The report outlines the open process of deliberation commissioned by the Speakers of EU Parliaments at the extra EU Speakers' Conference in December 2009. On the basis of the debate, a proposal for a revision of the Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments is put forward. Also, proposals for a common approach to coordination in the planning of interparliamentary meetings and monitoring in the area of freedom security and justice are presented.

Following the meetings in December 2009, the Swedish EUSC Presidency, with technical assistance from the European Parliament, prepared for the IPEX forum-based debate between the EU parliaments. The forum was launched on 28 January 2010. In all debates, Parliaments/Chambers have submitted comments either by posting them on the forum or by sending them to the Presidency's mailbox for publication on the forum debate site.

Meeting of the Secretaries-General on 8 March – preparations for the EU Speakers' Conference

The Secretaries-General encouraged the *Brussels representatives*, while avoiding bureaucratisation and overly rigid procedures, to work along the lines they had agreed on, in order to contribute to a systematic exchange of information concerning dossiers currently under debate. After a period of trial, the new method should be evaluated.

The meeting also proposed that the Speakers' Conference should ask COSAC, by means of the biannual report, to provide the Speakers' Conference with basic findings on how parliaments use the *subsidiarity compliance procedure* and the Barroso initiative *political dialogue*, as well as on experiences of the working methods of the national parliaments' Brussels representatives.

The Swedish EUSC Presidency was commissioned to provide some basics on the IPEX forum on the other two areas remaining from the Speakers' meeting in December: "the future role of the EU Speakers Conference" and "monitoring in the area of freedom, security and justice" (please see below).

Coordination in the planning of interparliamentary meetings

The meeting of the Secretaries-General concluded that the issue of coordination in the planning of interparliamentary meetings should focus on the role of the EU trio presidency. In order to strengthen continuity between consecutive trios and the connection with the EU Speakers' Conference, it was concluded that the planning coordination process should be managed by an *extended "trio-plus" formation*.

By the end of March, the Swedish EUSC Presidency submitted a new draft annex to the EU IPC Guidelines, built on the trio-plus concept, for continued debate. The trio-plus formation would include the parliaments of the incoming trio, the first EUSC Presidency parliament in the trio to follow and also the European Parliament. Comments have been received from the Belgian Senate and the Danish Parliament, arguing that strengthening continuity by adding a fourth national parliament to the trio is not necessary. Instead, they favour a trio concept, with a possibility for consultations between current and incoming trio parliaments.

The Swedish EUSC Presidency considers it important to ensure continuity in the planning process. If the trio-plus concept is considered impractical one might, as a compromise, envisage adding a provision in the annex to the effect that the last national parliament in each trio shall provide information to, and coordinate with, the first in the following trio.¹

The Swedish EUSC Presidency proposes to commission the Secretaries-General to choose one of these two possibilities, and to revise the EU IPC Guidelines' annex accordingly.

Revision of the Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments²

On 1 April, the Swedish EUSC Presidency posted a proposal for a revision of the Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments for debate. In the background paper, the Presidency elaborated on a limited scope for revision, primarily aiming to increase visibility in how the Conference operates by bringing the guidelines up to date and to codify complementary accords and practices reached during the past decade, while keeping the present structure and wording as far as possible.³

In accordance with Article 10 of the present guidelines, the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament submitted a proposal for amendment of the Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers on 23 April.⁴

Evaluation and monitoring in the area of freedom, security and justice⁵

Interparliamentary cooperation regarding the area of freedom, security and justice was identified as an issue of priority for debate at the meetings in December 2009. On 14 April, the Swedish EUSC Presidency posted a debate suggesting that the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments ought to focus on ensuring the involvement of parliaments in the drafting of regulations on parliamentary participation regarding Europol and Eurojust. The Swedish EUSC Presidency suggests that the Conference focus on ensuring the involvement of parliaments in the drafting of regulations on parliamentary participation regarding Europol and Eurojust.

¹ This alternative would mean amending the proposal for a revised EU IPC Guidelines annex as follows:

Delete in the 1st paragraph lines 2-3 "the next forthcoming EU Speakers' Conference Presidency parliament in the trio to follow" and **Insert** a new 5th paragraph: "The last national parliament in each EU trio presidency shall provide information to and coordinate with the first in the following trio, so as to ensure continuity in the planning of meeting programmes of the two trio presidencies."

² Please see *Proposal for amendment of the Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments*.

³ This debate has generated comments from the Belgian Senate and the Irish Parliament.

⁴ The proposed amendment is based on the background paper issued by the Swedish EUSC Presidency on the IPEX forum and the comments that this has generated up to and including 22 April.

⁵ Please see *Background note on evaluation and monitoring in the area of freedom, security and justice*.

Cooperation between the national parliaments and the European Parliament⁶

On the initiative of the Danish Parliament, a new thread of debate was opened on 19 April, concerning cooperation between the national parliaments and the European Parliament regarding exchange of information and interparliamentary meetings.

The continued process

The Swedish EUSC Presidency foresees that the Speakers will reach a conclusion regarding the Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments. Moreover, the Speakers will elaborate on a common approach to coordination in the planning of interparliamentary meetings, in order to commission the Secretaries-General to make the necessary updates in the annex to the Hague Guidelines on Interparliamentary Cooperation. A common approach to continued discussions when it comes to evaluation and monitoring in the area of freedom security and justice is also foreseen.

Discussions on other issues of priority identified in the open process of deliberation, such as the role of COSAC and remaining issues concerning subsidiarity and information exchange are passed on to the next (i.e. Belgian) EUSC Presidency.

⁶ Please see contribution from the Danish Parliament on *Cooperation between the national parliaments and the European Parliament*.