

The Conference of the Speakers of the EU Parliaments

Bratislava, 25 May 2007

INTERPARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

**Speech by Mr. Christian Mejdahl,
Speaker of the Danish Folketinget
(Transcript)**

Mr. Chairman, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I am very happy to be able to follow up the speech by our host, the Speaker of the Slovak Parliament, Mr Pavol Paška. During the Conference in Copenhagen we decided to establish a working group to deal with the strengthening of the interparliamentary cooperation in Europe. I would like to thank the Working Group under the Slovak leadership. They have done a lot of important work and I will be very happy if we can fix the framework for the incoming Presidencies of the Conference of Speakers and I would also like to have a better, fairer distribution of the costs. A lot of work was put into the adoption of the Hague guidelines, but we are in the very happy situation that the interparliamentary cooperation develops very rapidly and we must at all times be ready to change the written guidelines so that they can live up to their objectives, i. e. to make our common activities as effective and efficient as possible.

That is why I think the Working Group should take a hard look on the different roles that the parliamentary fora are to have. I am talking about the Conference of Speakers, but also COSAC, and the joint meetings and the joint meetings of the sectoral committees. I believe that this Conference of Speakers should be the venue for debates about the general questions, about treaties and the framework for our cooperation. More concrete matters could then be dealt with by different fora. We need to be clear who does what, and it would be an advantage to plan meetings in a more fixed framework as mentioned in the Report from the Working Group.

Talking about practical cooperation, allow me, Mr. Chairman, to make a practical point; I will be brief. I am talking about the dispatching of staff members to the EU institutions. You all know that the Danish Parliament, the Folketing, I would not say invented, but anyway, the Folketing was the first parliament to send a member of the staff to Brussels. So I feel a certain responsibility for the well-being of this system. The European Parliament puts offices at the disposal of the civil servants sent there. The problem is that they have limited office space in the European Parliament, I recognise that. But we have reached the point where nearly all the national parliaments have dispatched the staff members to the European Parliament. So I would like to have general guidelines for that specific form of cooperation, including the number of offices for the national parliaments in the European Parliament to make sure that we are treated on an equal basis. And I suggest that this be part of our Conclusions of this particular Conference.

Thank you for your attention.