

**ADDRESS OF THE SPEAKER OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES OF THE
PARLIAMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC MR. MILOSLAV VLČEK AT THE
CONFERENCE OF THE SPEAKERS OF EU PARLIAMENTS**

„INTERPARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION“

(Bratislava, May 24 – May 27, 2007)

Dear ladies and gentlemen!

First and foremost, please let me say that I am extremely pleased to be able to participate at such an important meeting of the Conference of the Speakers of EU Parliaments.

Interparliamentary cooperation plays an important role in the debate on the future of the Constitutional Treaty. In the period to come- which will be marked by the discussion on changes of the treaty fundamentals – it will be necessary to answer the fundamental question again, i.e. what position shall the National Parliaments have within the institutional EU structure and how shall the National Parliaments be engaged into the decision making mechanisms. The National Parliaments shall maintain at least such level of involvement in the Union processes guaranteed by the draft of the Constitutional Treaty. Therefore, this concerns the principle of subsidiarity and the possibility to create a treaty-based interparliamentary cooperation. Furthermore, it is necessary to answer the question whether or not the new control mechanism based on interparliamentary cooperation of National Parliaments shall be promoted into the new treaty similarly to the principles now applied to control of Europol activities. The question of interparliamentary control of Common Foreign and Security Policy will depend on the type of cooperation in this particular field.

When I think about cooperation of National Parliaments and respective forms of such cooperation, I conceive that we shall consider utilisation of mutual contacts to consult reforms of structural security of EU. In other words, we shall determine to what extent we will contribute to the project often referred to as the European Constitution. After, all, one of the possible alternatives of the approval process related to this important document is to entrust the National Parliaments with this task. This is surely one of the fundamental questions of today. And despite of divergence of views among the politicians from individual countries it all appears to be clear: it is necessary to reach an agreement with respect to how to adjust the wording from the factual point of view as well as how to conclude agreement on negotiation process and proposal approval. I think that this is where we could help to fulfil the goals many of us mentioned in the discussion Topic No. 1 – Future of Europe.

Above all, allow me to express my consent with the standpoint of the working group related to better cooperation of National Parliaments and the European Parliament. I support the opinion that it is really necessary to deepen the existing forms of cooperation as opposed to creating new ones.

In our opinion the group shall continue in its work related to “moderate” revision of the Haag Guidelines. And this is not only to round-off its mandate in the course of the upcoming presidency, but mainly because to make sure these guidelines correspond to the current course of events.

The Czech Republic will enjoy the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2009. We also consider the adoption of the new system of rotating presidency of the Conference of the Speakers of EU Parliaments a priority in line with the conclusions of the working group. We support the option suggesting that the Parliament of the member country holding the Presidency of the Council in the second half of the respective year shall also have the Presidency of the Conference whereas all discussions are to be organised in the first half of the subsequent year. In our opinion this option will not only bring better coordination into the interparliamentary meetings, but also offers transparency and prevents inexplicitness.

To conclude, let me appreciate the activities of the working group under the Slovak Presidency aimed at improvement of interparliamentary cooperation. The Draft revision of the Guidelines for interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union prepared by this working group serves not only as an inspiration for the discussion at this conference, but also brings along a reason for further assessment of questions related to cooperation of National Parliaments.

Thank you for your attention.