



## Ceann Comhairle

Ewa Kopacz,  
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12 January 2012

Dear Madam Speaker,  
Dear Mr. Speaker,

We wish to thank you for your correspondence concerning the format of the Interparliamentary Conference on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including the Common Security and Defence Policy. Your efforts to reach a suitable agreement on this matter are appreciated and we agree that the international situation places an onus on member states to reach agreement as soon as we can on the format of this conference.

Referring to your specific proposal which we understand has been discussed unilaterally between the Presidency and the President of the European Parliament we have a number of observations to make. We would maintain that given the special status of the CFSP and CSDP and its intergovernmental nature, national parliaments are in the best position to undertake parliamentary oversight of the policy and therefore this oversight should be interparliamentary. We believe that Article 10 of Protocol 1 of the Lisbon Treaty clearly provides the basis for this interparliamentary oversight.

The Joint Committees on European Union Affairs, on Foreign Affairs and Trade and on Justice, Defence and Equality will formally consider this matter in the coming weeks. However, following consultation with the Chairs of these Committees, we can state the main principles of our position as follows:


- All EU national parliaments and the European Parliament should be full members of the conference with each national parliament and the European Parliament having delegations consisting of 6 parliamentarians. The principle here is equal representation rather than the size of delegations and the presidency proposal of 4 members + 2 alternates would be acceptable as long as that applies to member state national parliaments and the European parliament equally.
- In addition we support the conclusions of the Conference of Speakers of National parliaments in April 2011. The establishment of a conference on CFSP/CSDP should replace the existing COFACC and CODAC meetings thus not creating any new standing institutions, the agenda should be set by the presiding country in which shall also preside over the conference and the Conference may adopt non-binding conclusions by consensus.

We would also favour the proposal that the existing COSAC troika secretariat provide the secretariat support that may be required. We look forward to further constructive dialogue on this matter and to working towards a solution at the forthcoming Secretaries General and Speakers Conferences.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Seán Barrett T.D.  
Ceann Comhairle  
Dáil Éireann



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Mr Paddy Burke  
Cathaoirleach  
Seanad Éireann