

MEETING OF SECRETARIES GENERAL OF EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENTS

MINUTES

26–27 January 2014, Vilnius

The Meeting of Secretaries General of European Union Parliaments took place on 26-27 January 2014 in the new Plenary Hall of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania in Vilnius.

The Meeting was opened by the host Mr Jonas MILERIUS, Secretary General of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. The participants were welcomed by H. E. Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

In session I, Mr Jonas MILERIUS presented the draft programme of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments to be held on 6–8 April 2014 in Vilnius. The Secretaries General endorsed the four topics to be discussed by the Speakers: 1) *The Role of Parliaments in Tackling the Consequences of the Economic and Financial Crisis*; 2) *Five Years after Coming into Force of the Treaty of Lisbon: Lessons of Subsidiarity Checks in Parliaments*; 3) *Interparliamentary Cooperation with the Eastern Partnership Countries*; 4) *Interparliamentary Cooperation in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice*.

During the debate Mr Harald DOSSI, Secretary General of the Austrian Federal Assembly, reminded of the request made earlier by Ms Barbara PRAMMER, President of the National Council, to mark the International Roma Day in the morning of 8 April 2014. This request was supported by the Croatian and Greek delegations. After the matter had been considered, Mr Jonas MILERIUS proposed that on 8 April, just before the start of the session *Interparliamentary Cooperation in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice*, Ms Barbara PRAMMER could be given the floor to speak on the proposed topic. A declaration by the Conference could also be adopted to that end. The delegations agreed to these proposals.

Mr Harald DOSSI also suggested holding a “1+1” debate during the last session of the Conference on *Interparliamentary Cooperation in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice*. This suggestion was supported by Dr Rhodri WALTERS, Reading Clerk and Head of the Overseas Office of the UK House of Lords. Mr Paolo VISCA, Head of the EU Affairs Department of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, opposed the proposal. After consideration Mr Jonas MILERIUS announced that the Seimas would consult the Parliaments of the Presidency

Trio and the European Parliament on the issue and inform other Parliaments on the decision in the near future.

In session II, Dr Horst RISSE, Secretary General of the German Bundestag, presented the IPEX Annual Report 2013-2014, the Written Report on the Work of IPEX in 2013 and the draft Conclusions on IPEX. The Lithuanian, Danish and German delegations proposed to amend the Conclusions by supplementing it with paragraph 9. The Conclusions, as amended, were adopted by consensus. It was agreed to upload the adopted documents on IPEX and on the Presidency website of the Seimas.

During session II, the new composition of the IPEX Board for the years 2014-2015 was approved. Upon the proposal of Dr Horst RISSE, the outgoing Chair of the IPEX Board, the new IPEX Board was agreed by consensus to include Parliaments of the following Member States: Lithuania, Italy, Luxemburg, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the United Kingdom and the European Parliament. The Meeting also agreed to include the Hellenic Parliament in the Board, after such a request was made by Mr Athanassios PAPAIOANNOU, Secretary General of the Hellenic Parliament.

Upon the nomination by Dr Horst RISSE, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania was approved as the new Chair of the IPEX Board for the years 2014-2015.

In session III, views were exchanged on *Coordination of European Union Affairs in Parliamentary Administrations*. The following speakers presented the best practice of their respective Parliaments: Dr Horst RISSE, Secretary General of the German Bundestag, Mr Claes MÅRTENSSON, Deputy Secretary General of the Swedish Riksdag, and Mr Jean-Pierre BLOCH, Director of the European Affairs Service of the French National Assembly. Presentations were followed by the debate, in which the Secretaries General unanimously commended the topic of the discussion and proposed to return to it again in the near future.

At the end of the Meeting, Mr Jonas MILERIUS invited the Secretaries General to visit the Hall of the Act of 11 March Building I of the Seimas, as this was the Hall where the Conference of Speakers on 6-8 April 2014 would take place. In the Hall of the Act of 11 March the Secretaries General were shown a video about the historic importance of the Hall. Mr Jonas MILERIUS took the opportunity to thank Dr Rhodri WALTERS, Reading Clerk and Head of the Overseas Office of the UK House of Lords, for his longstanding parliamentary service in view of his forthcoming retirement.

N.B. All presentations and documents of the Meeting as well as its audio-video recording and the photo archive can be found on the Presidency website of the Seimas at www.eu2013.lrs.lt.