

## Report on the Seminar of the 21<sup>st</sup> February for the review of the Rules of Procedure of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for CFSP CSDP

The Working Group of the Ad Hoc Review Committee (Working Group) convened on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014 in Athens in order to review the recommendations and the amendments of the Rules of Procedure of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy submitted by the national Parliaments.

A working document of the seminar based on the Synopsis prepared in Vilnius by the Working Group was drawn up by the Hellenic Presidency, which included all new amendment and comments sent by the national Parliaments.

The Working Group consisted of the representatives of the Presidency Trio – Ireland, Lithuania, Greece – Cyprus, Italy and the European Parliament. Mr. Pat Breen, Mr. Benediktas Juodka, Mr. Konstantinos Tsiaras, Mr. Averof Neofytou and Mr. Elio Vito represented their respective Parliaments. Mr. Elmar Brok, who was not able to attend the seminar due to unforeseen developments during his visit to Ukraine, was represented at senior staff level.

The Working Group reviewed in detail all amendments and recommendations based on the following categorisation:

Category 1 – proposals compatible with the Treaty and the Warsaw Conclusions.

Category 2 – proposals for arrangements not foreseen in the Treaty.

Category 3 – proposals in contradiction with the Warsaw Conclusions.

Category 4 – proposals to be further examined.

Amendments under Category 3 were not examined, as they were contradictory to the Warsaw Conclusions.

### Category 1 – proposals compatible with the Treaty and the Warsaw Conclusions.

#### Amendments to the Preamble - Par. 1

The Working Group identified three proposals for the adoption of an acronym for the meeting, which were not linked to specific parliamentary committees: "IPC-CFSP", "IPC-CFSP/CSDP" and "IPC-FASDP", to be further discussed by the Ad Hoc Review Committee (AHRC) in Athens.

Amendment proposal to Article 3.1 (Latvia, *Saeima*) was accepted as an improvement to the wording:

*3.1. The Inter-Parliamentary Conference shall convene once every six months in the country of the Presidency Parliament or in the European Parliament in Brussels. Extraordinary meetings shall be held when deemed necessary or urgent. The Presidency Parliament shall decide on the matters.* ~~*Extraordinary meetings shall be held when deemed necessary or urgent.*~~

#### Category 2 – proposals for arrangements not foreseen in the Treaty.

Amendment proposal to Article 2-2.3 (Spain, *Cortes Generales*): the Working Group recommended inserting the word “discuss” to the original article.

Therefore the Working Group proposes that the Article 2–2.3 is amended as follows:

*The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union shall be invited to the meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference to set out and **discuss** the priorities and strategies of the EU in the area of CFSP and CSDP.*

#### Category 4 – proposals to be further examined.

New Article 10 (Latvia, *Saeima*): in order to guarantee cost effectiveness, the Working Group proposed that the Rules of Procedure should be drawn up in English and French, thus the two working languages of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference.

New Article 10 (Cyprus, *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*): The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* withdrew the amendment on the establishment of a fact-finding mission.

Considering the rest of the amendments and recommendations with a positive spirit, and following the Hellenic Parliament’s proposal, the Working Group deemed appropriate to assemble them in a Best Practices Guide as most of them relate to improvements that can be pursued without changes to the Rules of Procedure (RoP).

#### BEST PRACTICES

- ***On participation to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference:*** *the RoP have been understood clearly that each national Parliament may designate up to six delegates and the European Parliament up to sixteen delegates from the competent parliamentary committees to participate in the Inter-Parliamentary Conference.*

- ***On the Presidential Troika:*** *the institutionalisation of the Presidential Troika of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference, following the model of COSAC, is not deemed necessary. In practice the Presidency Parliament in close cooperation with the European Parliament and with the preceding and following Presidencies works to prepare the Inter-Parliamentary Conference and, when necessary, to coordinate positions, on current or urgent matters linked to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference. Input from national delegations is always well received.*
- ***On the communication and cooperation between delegations:*** *the network of parliaments' representatives in Brussels has proven to be an effective and appropriate way to facilitate communication and cooperation between delegations due to its permanence and regular updating.*
- ***On the quality of debates:*** *the Inter-Parliamentary Conference has already successfully evolved by holding topical debates, working groups and breakout sessions which should be further developed as a useful tool for improving the effectiveness and quality of exchanges between delegates. The contribution from invited specialists to address the Inter-Parliamentary Conference in the framework of workshops was also positively assessed. In the same spirit, suggestions to consider shifting the balance from lengthy plenary presentations by the speakers to more time for questions and answers, in particular between delegates, should be further explored in order to ensure that each Parliament/Chamber present is able to contribute during each debate.*
- ***On the principle of consensus:*** *in line with the principle of consensus no exception should be made in the decision making processes.*
- ***On the secretariat support to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference :*** *for the sake of efficiency and in order to guarantee cost effectiveness and the involvement of all delegations to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference , the establishment of a permanent secretariat as well as any other form of institutionalization is considered inappropriate. Therefore the publishing of a transfer report or any other official document should be a prerogative of the Presidency Parliament and considered on a case by case basis.*
- ***On draft conclusions of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference:*** *it is widely agreed that the practice of circulating draft Conclusions (in English and*

*French) in good time before the relevant meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for any amendments should be continued. However, considering the need to respond to timely events and topical matters it would be artificial to set unrealistic deadlines on the Presidency Parliament but to instead to work on the principle of providing draft conclusions as early as possible ahead of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference .*

- ***On the presence of the High Representative:*** *the consistent participation of the High Representative in the Inter-Parliamentary Conference is proven both fruitful as well as useful to the debate on the priorities and strategies of the EU in the area of CFSP-CSDP. It has also been judged a useful plenary session to raise unforeseen topical issues. Any additional input by the EEAS to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference is positively perceived by the delegations.*
- ***On the political groups:*** *the Presidency Parliament has already provided space for political groups organised along the lines of the European political parties to convene informal meetings prior to meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference.*
- ***On the communication of the related documents:*** *the Presidency Parliament shall ensure that all documents pertaining to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference meeting for which it is responsible are made available on the IPEX website.*