



9 May 2016

## **Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments**

**Luxembourg, 22-24 May 2016**

### **Draft conclusions of the Presidency**

#### **Preliminary remarks**

The Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments was held in Luxembourg at the European Convention Center Luxembourg on 22-24 May 2016, and attended by the Speakers of Parliaments of ... Member States as well as by the President of the European Parliament and the President of the European Commission. Also taking part were the Speakers and Presidents of ... EU candidate countries and other countries attended as observers. The Conference was chaired by Mr Mars Di Bartolomeo, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg.

In his introduction, the Speaker stressed the inestimable added value of the European project, which is a project of peace, freedom, economic and social development based on our core values.

The Conference was divided into four sessions:

1. "Management of migration flows". The session began with a keynote presentation by...
2. "Strengthening of the European Union". The session began with keynote presentations by...
3. "Role of National Parliaments and interparliamentary cooperation". The session began with keynote presentations by...
4. "Ensure the security of citizens while respecting fundamental freedoms". The session began with keynote presentations by...

#### **Managing the Migration Flows**

1. The Speakers acknowledge that the European Union is facing a massive influx of refugees and migrants fleeing mostly Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and several African countries.
2. The Speakers are closely following the initiatives taken by the European Commission to address the refugee crisis, especially the adoption of the European Agenda on Migration.



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3. The Speakers note that following the closure of the Western Balkans route, thousands of refugees and migrants are currently stranded in Greece in deplorable conditions. In this context, the Speakers welcome the regulation adopted by the Council on 15 March 2016, setting up an EU emergency support mechanism to help Greece and other Member States overwhelmed by the arrival of large numbers of refugees. In addition, the Speakers welcome the decision taken by the European Commission on 16 December 2015 to adopt a record EU humanitarian aid budget for 2016, while global humanitarian needs are increasing due to the growing number of refugees and migrants, the increasing impact of natural disasters, climate change and the economic crisis.
4. The Speakers deeply regret the large number of victims and the number of migrants and refugees who risk their lives trying to reach Europe illegally. They emphasize the need to counter the practices of smugglers and stop the trafficking of human beings in the Aegean Sea, based on the EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling of 27 May 2015. The Speakers note with concern that the most vulnerable group in the smuggling of migrants are unaccompanied minor refugees and migrants.
5. The Speakers welcome that their claims made during the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments 2015 “to take concrete and immediate action to deal more effectively with the tragedies at sea caused by the increasing migration flows from the southern shores of the Mediterranean as well as to face the problems caused by waves of refugees arriving from eastern borders of the Schengen area” have been taken into account. In this sense, they particularly welcome the good cooperation between EU and NATO and the tremendous work undertaken by NATO in its action, especially in the Aegean Sea.
6. The Speakers plead for a strengthening of solidarity and responsibility within the EU. In this context, they support the decision of the European Council of 7 March 2016 to accelerate substantially the implementation of relocation and resettlement to alleviate the heavy burden that presently weighs on countries particularly affected by the massive influx of refugees and migrants.
7. The Speakers welcome the Communication from the European Commission on 6 April 2016 in which it presents the process for a reform of the Common European Asylum System options (CEAS) and developing safe and legal pathways to Europe and take note of the proposals presented on 4 May 2016. The Speakers reaffirm the need for a more humane, more solidarity-based and efficient European asylum policy, as well as a better structured legal migration policy.
8. The Speakers note with concern that the amalgam between “terrorists” and “refugees” as well as the amalgam between religious fanaticism and religious belief is gaining more and more ground. They highlight that refugees are also victims of the terrorist system and flee among others the massacres and killings of Daech. They express the need to not stigmatize those under the right to international protection.



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9. The Speakers emphasize the need to welcome the refugees with humanity and dignity and to support them in their process of integration in their host country. Comprehension and mutual respect are the fundamental basis of the relationship between refugees and the host society.
10. The Speakers recognize that Turkey is a strategic partner for the EU, particularly regarding cooperation on migration. They compliment the Turkish population that is hosting 2.7 million refugees living on its territory. However, the Speakers wish that this cooperation on migration is separated from the EU accession negotiation process and that this cooperation is fulfilled while fully respecting the fundamental values of the EU.
11. The Speakers welcome the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan: support of refugees and migration management, activated on 29 November 2015. The Speakers note with satisfaction that much progress has been achieved already, including Turkey's opening of its labour market to Syrians under temporary protection, the introduction of new visa requirements for Syrians and other nationalities, stepped up security effort by the Turkish coast guard and police and enhanced information sharing.
12. With regard to the agreement reached between the EU and Turkey on 18 March 2016, the Speakers insist that the implementation of this Agreement must be fully in line with international and EU law relating to access to asylum and international protection and the implementation of fundamental rights and procedural guarantees. The Speakers recognize that the way the Agreement will be implemented is crucial and it is important to avoid collective and arbitrary expulsions. In addition, the Speakers emphasize that refugees require EU protection and an attitude of rejection is not the solution to this problem.
13. The Speakers thank and support humanitarian organisations, including the United Nations agencies, NGOs and organisations of the Red Cross for their commitment in supporting refugees and migrants.
14. The Speakers support the European Commission in its efforts deployed in the roadmap for restoring a fully functioning Schengen system. The Speakers are aware that restoring the normal functioning of the Schengen system must be combined with the full support towards Member States facing difficult circumstances. In the light of this, they welcome the proposal of the European Commission for a new Emergency Assistance instrument for faster crisis response within the EU. The Speakers follow the proposal on the reform of the "Dublin regulation" announced by the Commission.
15. The Speakers recognize that the need to strengthen the control of EU external borders goes along with increased support to Syrian refugees, to neighbouring countries of Syria as well as to Member States most affected by this crisis. The European Union must play a proactive role in implementing the peace and development process in these unstable regions. The Speakers welcome the set of measures proposed by the European Commission to secure the EU's external borders and look forward to the adoption of the Council on the proposal to establish a European Border and Coast Guard.



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16. The Speakers welcome the revised draft regulation for establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) included in the package of measures on “smart borders”. They are convinced that this Entry/Exit System will modernise the management of external borders by improving the quality and effectiveness of controls and help Member States deal with the increased volume of travellers entering and leaving the EU.

### **Strengthening the European Union**

17. The Speakers note that the “Rome Declaration”, signed on 14 September 2015 by 4 Parliaments/Chambers as well as, in the meantime, by 12 additional Parliaments/Chambers, supported by two candidate countries and still open for signature, calls for significantly greater political integration within the EU.
18. The Speakers acknowledge that the “Rome Declaration” seeks to transfer greater powers to the EU and its institutions as well as to give national Parliaments the chance to play a greater role in the decision-making process within the EU.
19. The Speakers emphasize that the EU must insist on its core values – human rights, democracy and the rule of law- and that these values can never be questioned. In this sense, the Speakers underscore that the EU must ensure the respect of the core values on which it is based.
20. The Speakers note that following the consequences of the financial and economic crisis, the social dimension of the EU needs to be strengthened. In the light of this, they highlight the need to further align the economic policies to social policies and to achieve a balance between economic and budgetary equilibrium and social equilibrium. The Speakers also recognize the need to strengthen the social dimension of the European semester.
21. The Speakers are concerned about the alarming rates of youth unemployment in the EU and desire that the EU becomes synonymous of opportunity for young Europeans to ensure that there is no lost generation.
22. The Speakers are closely following the package of proposals of the European Parliament for a reform of the electoral law of the EU.

### **The Role of National Parliaments and Interparliamentary Cooperation**

23. The Speakers emphasize the general willingness of national Parliaments to play a more active role in the European Union. They also welcome the wish of national Parliaments to be more involved in the debates around the European Semester and the National reform programs.



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24. The Speakers insist on the obviousness that the free trade Agreements TTIP and CETA are brought to national Parliaments.
25. The Speakers believe that the “green card” (enhanced political dialogue) would be, in addition to existing forms of parliamentary control and involvement, a practical tool for willing Parliaments to play a proactive role and to contribute further to the good functioning of the EU. They also recognize that some national Parliament would not be able to use the “green card” (enhanced political dialogue) because of internal constitutional traditions.
26. The Speakers welcome the efforts initiated under the three pilot projects as well as by the COSAC on introducing a “green card” (enhanced political dialogue), while noting that some questions related to the “green card” (enhanced political dialogue) remain open. In this sense, they welcome the decision of the Dutch Presidency to put this topic on the agenda of the LV COSAC, to be held in The Hague on 13-14 June 2016. They also look forward to the 25<sup>th</sup> Bi-Annual Report of COSAC that will present a follow-up work on this topic and encourage COSAC to continue discussions on the introduction of a “green card” (enhanced political dialogue).
27. The Speakers reiterate that the “yellow card” procedure needs improvement without Treaty change. In this sense, the Speakers support the COSAC in its demands to the Commission to strengthen efforts to ensure better quality and more timely responses to reasoned opinions.
28. The Speakers take note on the referendum on maintaining the UK in the EU planned on 23 June 2016 and on the agreement reached by the 28 countries of the European Union concerning a new settlement for the United Kingdom within the European Union. In this context, the Speakers acknowledge the “red card” mechanism that would permit national Parliaments to block EU legislation.
29. The Speakers welcome the agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council on 26 November 2015, which will enhance Europol’s mandate to ensure that it is fully equipped to counter the increase in cross-border crimes and terrorist threats.
30. The Speakers call on Member States to fully implement the instruments provided by the current and future Europol regulation.
31. The Speakers reaffirm that pursuant to Article 88 of the TFEU the scrutiny of Europol’s activities shall be carried out by the European Parliament together with national Parliaments. They shall constitute a Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group, established jointly by national Parliaments and the competent committee of the European Parliament. The Speakers emphasize that the modalities of scrutiny of Europol’s activities must be defined by the European Parliament, together with national Parliaments, while stressing that the European Parliament and national Parliaments are on equal footing and reminding that the new Europol regulation will enter into force on 1 May 2017.



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32. In order to define the modalities of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group, the Speakers propose to adopt a step by step approach and to ask a Working Group, composed by the troika of the Conference of Speakers, to consider scrutiny mechanisms and to present a draft proposal, after consulting other Parliaments/Chambers. This Working Group would send this preliminary draft to all Parliaments/Chambers before the interparliamentary meeting organised by the LIBE committee at the European Parliament in autumn 2016. Thus, the Parliaments/Chambers have the chance to discuss and comment this preliminary draft. Finally, based on the preliminary draft and the ensuing discussions, the Working Group will prepare and submit a draft text by 16 December 2016, allowing Parliaments/Chambers to amend the text until February 2017 ahead of the next Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments, so that it can be adopted then.

### **Ensuring the Security of Citizens while Respecting Fundamental Freedoms**

33. The Speakers strongly condemn the heinous and cowardly attacks perpetrated in recent months in Europe and in many other countries in the whole world, and they express their condolences to the victims and their families. These deadly attacks are targeting the European values of freedom, democracy and the respect for human rights and the rule of law. In this sense, the Speakers confirm that the best answer to terrorism is that of freedom and the rule of law.

34. The Speakers underscore that the EU itself is a symbol of rights and freedoms and is a reference model for the protection of fundamental rights and respect for fundamental liberties towards not only EU citizens but also to those living within its borders.

35. The Speakers reaffirm the added value of a “European Union of security” and the need to employ in a coordinated way the framework and the instruments put in place by the European Commission.

36. The Speakers emphasize that the EU must fight against terrorism, radicalisation leading to terrorism and recruitment as well as financing linked to terrorism while safeguarding the solidarity and the unity between Member States. In this sense, they follow with particular interest the development of the European Agenda on Security for the period 2015-2020. In addition, the Speakers look forward to the “New EU strategy on foreign and security policy” which will be presented by the High Representative/Vice-President, Federica Mogherini in June 2016. They recall that national Parliaments have submitted proposals on the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as well as on the issue of migration as their contribution to the preparation of the “EU Global Strategy”.

37. The Speakers are closely following the implementation of the Joint Action on Human Rights and Democracy for the period 2015-2019, adopted by the Council on 20 July 2015, which reaffirms the EU’s commitment to promote and protect human rights and to support democracy worldwide.



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38. The Speakers note with concern the security threats posed by terrorism and highlight the need to improve the cooperation among European intelligence services, national experts on fight against terrorism and other authorities. They also invite Member States to share information with Europol and Eurojust in the fight against terrorism and organized crime. The Speakers recognize that substantial progress has already been made at Member State and EU level to enhance the collective ability to combat terrorism. In this sense, they take note of the directive on Passenger Name Records (PNR), adopted during the plenary session on 14 April 2016.
39. The Speakers note with concern the growing phenomenon of “foreign terrorist fighters” and highlight that priority should be given to preventing radicalization and recruitment of European citizens by terrorist organizations. In addition, the Speakers stress the need to ensure that those already radicalized follow deradicalization programs and cannot convey terrorist propaganda messages or hate speech. In this sense, the Speakers look forward to the code of conduct against hate speech online developed by the European Commission and reaffirm the need to proactively exchange information about those people most at risk of being radicalized.

#### **IPEX (Interparliamentary EU information exchange)**

40. The Speakers welcome the conclusions on IPEX adopted at the Meeting of the Secretaries General of European Union Parliaments held in Luxembourg on 14-15 February 2016.
41. The Speakers note with satisfaction that, during these last years, IPEX has become a reliable and effective tool to exchange documents and information relevant for interparliamentary cooperation, thanks also to the continuous commitment of the European Parliament.
42. The Speakers thank the Italian Presidency for its work and results produced during the year of the Italian Chairmanship of the IPEX Board, in particular in their efforts to implement the new guidelines, adopted in Rome on 13 March 2015. The Speakers also would like to thank the Austrian Parliament for hosting the annual meeting of the IPEX correspondents, the Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg and the European Parliament for hosting the Board meetings, the Belgian Senate for its availability to formally employ the IPEX information officer and the European Parliament for providing logistics and the infrastructure.
43. The Speakers call the Luxembourg Presidency to continue the discussions on a Digital Strategy, meant to provide IPEX with a comprehensive and efficient strategy with the view of a mid-term work programme to be carried out by the rotating presidency.