



## **Meeting of the Secretaries General of European Union Parliaments**

### **Minutes**

#### **14-15 February 2016, Luxembourg**

The meeting of the Secretaries General of the European Union Parliaments took place on 14-15 February 2016 at the European Convention Center Luxembourg in Luxembourg.

A meeting of the Secretaries General of the Troika was held ahead of the meeting.

The meeting was opened by the Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Mr Claude FRIESEISEN. In its opening speech, the Secretary General reviewed the six inter-parliamentary meetings that took place during the second semester of the Luxembourg EU Presidency: meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC, interparliamentary Conference for the CFSP and the CSDP, interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU and the plenary session of COSAC. Besides these three conferences, the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg held a meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Social Affairs and a meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Development Cooperation. In addition, the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has been tasked to organise a COSAC working group meeting.

H.E.Mr Mars DI BARTOLOMEO, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, welcomed the participants and insisted on strengthening the social dimension in the EU. In his welcoming speech, Mr Mars DI BARTOLOMEO mentioned the migrant crisis by stating that Europe needs a fortress of values and not one of barbed wire.

In session I, Mr FRIESEISEN presented the draft programme of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments to be held on 22-24 May 2016 in Luxembourg.

The Secretaries General endorsed the four topics to be discussed by the Speakers:

- 1) Management of migration flows (rescue and first reception of refugees, relocation and resettlement, respect of the Schengen acquis, protection of the external borders, peace, development cooperation);*
- 2) Strengthening the European Union (presentation of the Rome declaration "Greater European integration: the way forward", European solidarity/division, European social dimension, respect of fundamental rights, "electoral act");*
- 3) Role of National Parliaments and inter-parliamentary cooperation (enhanced political dialogue (green card), parliamentary scrutiny of Europol, European semester, consultations among Parliaments);*
- 4) Ensure the security of citizens while respecting fundamental rights (new means of fighting against terrorism, role of National parliaments).*



Mr FRIESEISEN concluded the presentation of the draft program of the Conference of the Speakers of the EU Parliaments by informing the General Secretaries that the Presidents will probably visit some symbolic spots in the wine village of Schengen and that they will have an audience with his Royal Highness the Grand Duke Henri.

Then, the Secretary General of the Dutch Senate, Mr Geert Jan HAMILTON, seized the opportunity to briefly present the Parliamentary Dimension of the Dutch Presidency.

In session II, the Secretaries General of the European Union Parliaments exchanged their views on questions related to IPEX. The Italian delegation, holding the IPEX Presidency, briefly presented the IPEX Annual Report. During the Italian Presidency, meetings and working groups were held in Rome, Brussels, Vienna and Luxembourg. Furthermore, the Italian delegation wanted to highlight the document, formulated during the last IPEX Board in Rome, regarding the purpose and mission of IPEX.

The Secretaries General approved the new IPEX Board which is composed as following: Luxembourg (Chamber of Deputies – Presidency), Italy (Chamber of Deputies and Senate), the Netherlands (Chamber of Deputies and Senate), Slovakia (National Council), Austria (National Council and Federal Council), Belgium (Chamber of Deputies and Senate), Denmark (Folketing), France (National Assembly and Senate), Germany (Bundestag), Poland (Sejm and Senate), Greece (Hellenic Parliament), Portugal (Assembly of the Republic), Rumania (Chamber of Deputies and Senate), the United Kingdom (House of Commons) and the European Parliament.

Luxembourg, Italy, Slovakia, the Netherlands and the European Parliament are ex officio members of the IPEX Board. The Luxembourg Presidency will send, in the following months, a letter of intent regarding the funding 2017-2018 of the information officer of IPEX.

The amended conclusions were adopted by consensus.

Finally, the Secretaries General decided that the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg will organise the meeting of the IPEX correspondents in autumn 2016.

The third session of the Meeting of the Secretaries General of the European Union Parliaments was dedicated to the “role of Parliaments in citizenship education”. Mr Harald DOSSI, Secretary General of the Austrian Parliament and Mrs Michèle SCHILT of the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, *Zentrum fir politesch Bildung* (Centre de l'éducation à la citoyenneté) took the floor as keynote speakers.

Mrs SCHILT briefly explained the concept of “citizenship education” and presented the best practice of Parliaments that play a key role in citizenship education. Mr DOSSI outlined to his counterparts the guidelines of programmes and projects of the Austrian Parliament regarding citizenship education.

The goal of citizenship education is among others to encourage young people to engage in politics, while providing an opportunity for parliaments to approach the citizens and to explain parliamentary work.

Several speakers emphasised the need to inform the public in a transparent way by using the Internet and to organise open house days or guided tours. Some stressed the importance of using appropriate language while reaching out to young people and appropriate methods such as



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organising role play and provide educational materials adapted to youth. Other participants informed on programs for young apprentices as well as encounters with parliamentarians where they have the possibility to engage in dialogue with young people. Some Parliaments focus on the active participation of young people in thematic workshops and teacher training. Several speakers also suggested that this topic should be deepened in the framework of a meeting of the ASGP.