



NEWSLETTER N° 4

FEBRUARY 2006

M. José Manuel BARROSO, Président de la Commission européenne à l'Assemblée nationale, Paris, le 24 janvier 2006



« Il faut cesser de laisser croire que l'Europe, ce sont les autres, c'est Bruxelles.
L'Europe c'est nous tous ! Nous sommes tous des acteurs de la construction européenne! »

« Monsieur le Président,

Mesdames et Messieurs les ministres,

Mesdames et Messieurs les députés,

(...) Si je me trouve devant vous aujourd'hui, c'est pour vous parler de la marche de l'Europe, bien sûr, mais c'est aussi pour revenir sur une réalité qui mérite d'être rappelée avec force et conviction, au lendemain des débats nourris et passionnés qu'a connus votre pays. (...)

L'année 2005 qui vient de s'achever a été une année charnière. Nous avons traversé des difficultés, certes, mais nous avons su les surmonter ensemble, comme le démontrent le bilan constructif du sommet de Hampton Court et la conclusion positive du Conseil européen de décembre, dans lesquels je vois une belle **preuve de vitalité de l'Europe**. (...)

C'est sous l'angle de cette **extraordinaire capacité de rebond** que je regarde le récent débat qui a eu lieu en France à l'occasion du référendum. Dans la décision du peuple français, qui s'est prononcé démocratiquement, je retiens, non pas un rejet de l'Europe, mais bien au contraire la **volonté des citoyens de se faire entendre pour être les acteurs de leur destin commun**.

- suite à la page 3

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Le mot du coordinateur du Secrétariat Général

L'Europe est l'affaire de tous, pas seulement de Bruxelles

Message clé du discours de M. BARROSO, ce 24 janvier, à l'Assemblée nationale française mais aussi message central pour la période de réflexion.

Cette Newsletter met particulièrement en lumière comment un Parlement national, le Folketing envisage et organise « le plan dialogue et démocratie » dans son pays.

Mais comme l'a souligné le Président BARROSO la réflexion débouche sur l'action. La réalisation des objectifs de solidarité, croissance et emploi modifiera la perception qu'ont les citoyens de l'Europe et par là changera la « donne institutionnelle ».

En parallèle, le Parlement européen a adopté le rapport DUFF/ VOGGENHUBER et a ouvert de nouvelles pistes, en particulier, celle d'une coopération interparlementaire toujours à renouveler.




En réponse, la lettre envoyée au Président du PE par les Présidents du Nationalrat autrichien, du Bundestag et de Eduskunta insiste sur le respect des traditions parlementaires et constitutionnelles de chaque Etat membre ; elle ne s'oppose pas pour autant à toutes formes d'une coopération interparlementaire à sauvegarder.

Le 2 février 2006

Philippe GODTS

Secrétariat général de la Commission

SOMMAIRE

-  A propos Le mot du coordinateur du Secrétariat général de la Commission
-  Editorial Discours de **M. José Manuel BARROSO**, Président de la Commission Européenne, Assemblée nationale, Paris, le 24 janvier 2006;
Interview of **Mr. Christan MEJDAHL**, Speaker of the Folketing (DK) ;
Interview of **Ms. Hana DANKOVA**, Permanent Representative of the Senate of the Czech Republic (CZ);
European Parliament resolution on the period of reflection ;
-  Brèves : *Visits of the President & Commissioners*
Réunions avec les représentants permanents des Parlements nationaux
EuropeAid Co-operation office page
In a new section the EuropeAid co-operation Office is the first of Commission services to explain its task in the wider EU context, and how National Parliaments are necessary in order to improve the EU development aid.



M. José Manuel BARROSO, Président de la Commission européenne

à l'Assemblée nationale, Paris, le 24 janvier 2006

- suite de la page 1

Le débat français a posé de **vraies questions**, qui exigent de nous de **vraies réponses**. Les citoyens ont le sentiment de ne pas être suffisamment écoutés ni entendus sur le projet européen. Ils nous interpellent tous vivement – **responsables politiques nationaux, institutions européennes** – pour nous demander des **réponses concrètes** à leurs préoccupations et pour nous inviter à assumer notre responsabilité commune à leur égard.

C'est pourquoi j'en appelle aux femmes et aux hommes politiques, aux forces vives, aux intellectuels français : investissez-vous dans l'Europe, débattiez de l'Europe et expliquez l'Europe ! Il faut cesser de laisser croire que l'Europe, ce sont les autres, c'est Bruxelles. L'Europe c'est nous tous ! Nous sommes **tous** des acteurs de la construction européenne !

(...)

Je voudrais dire que nous n'avons **aucune raison d'appréhender l'avenir**. Moi-même ainsi que la Commission européenne, sommes, pour notre part, tout à fait confiants : l'Europe a les moyens de peser sur l'évolution du monde, car nous disposons d'atouts considérables.

Face à la mondialisation, la dimension européenne est la seule en mesure de faire la différence et de nous permettre de maîtriser ce processus. Songez aux défis énergétiques, à l'aide au développement notamment en Afrique ou à la lutte contre la criminalité et le terrorisme. Dans tous ces domaines, c'est bien de plus d'Europe dont nous avons besoin car aucun de nos Etats membres, même les plus grands, ne possède aujourd'hui de façon isolée les moyens pour y faire face.

Si nous nous préparons à optimiser les bénéfices de la mondialisation, l'ouverture mondiale des marchés et l'essor des nouvelles technologies - source d'activité et donc d'emploi - peuvent devenir une force d'entraînement puissante et positive, pour l'économie, le bien-être social, la sécurité, la culture.

Aujourd'hui, **l'heure est aux résultats**. Pour **retrouver la confiance et l'adhésion des citoyens**, nous devons nous attacher à satisfaire leurs trois priorités, que nous avons faites nôtres - la **prospérité**, la **solidarité** et la **sécurité**.

En redynamisant la croissance, par l'innovation, l'esprit

d'entreprise et la recherche, en soutenant en particulier les petites et moyennes entreprises, pour créer davantage d'emplois de meilleure qualité, nous favoriserons la **prospérité** indispensable à l'épanouissement de notre projet européen. (...)

En renforçant la dimension sociale de la création d'emplois, par la promotion de l'égalité des chances, l'anticipation des problèmes liés aux restructurations et la gestion du vieillissement de la population, nous donnerons corps au principe de **solidarité** qui est au coeur même de la construction européenne.

En améliorant la sécurité sanitaire et alimentaire, la protection des consommateurs, l'accès à la justice, le contrôle des frontières et la lutte contre le terrorisme, nous assurerons la **sécurité** à laquelle nos citoyens ont droit.

Le Conseil européen de décembre ayant dégagé notre horizon budgétaire, nous nous employons ainsi à traduire en **actions concrètes** la « stratégie de Lisbonne renouvelée ». Pour préserver et renforcer nos valeurs communes, il est urgent de moderniser nos politiques et de réformer nos économies.



Notre détermination est d'autant plus grande que le sommet informel de Hampton Court, en octobre dernier, a permis, (...) de dégager une **très forte convergence de vues** sur les dossiers urgents – universités et recherche, démographie, énergie, sécurité. Par-delà les clivages politiques, nous avons su retrouver un consensus et le sens de l'action, dans **l'intérêt commun de l'Europe**, parce que nous n'avons pas de temps à perdre et que nous voulons une **Europe qui gagne !**

Je suis d'ailleurs convaincu que le soutien de l'opinion en faveur de la modernisation des institutions que prévoit le projet de traité constitutionnel viendra en son temps,

lorsque les conditions seront réunies, une fois la confiance restaurée.

Oui nous avons besoin de réformer nos institutions et de nous doter des moyens nécessaires pour répondre plus efficacement aux défis du XXI^e siècle.

Mais je suis convaincu que ce sera la dynamique politique qui déclenchera la dynamique institutionnelle et non l'inverse !

Alors créons cette dynamique politique. En 2006, passons du discours aux **résultats**, et aux résultats **concrets**. (...)

Dans l'effort commun auquel nous devons tous contribuer,

vosre Assemblée, comme tous les parlements nationaux, a un rôle et une responsabilité particulière. C'est aussi à travers vous et avec vous que la légitimité de l'Europe sortira renforcée.

Alors unissons nos forces, parce que **c'est pour nos citoyens et ensemble que nous réussirons !**

José Manuel BARROSO

Do you know it?



Le Président **BARROSO** a pris part à la réunion organisée ces 31 janvier et 1^{er} février 2006 par le Parlement Européen, en présence de M.M. **BORRELL** et **SCHÜSSEL**, sur la Stratégie de Lisbonne.



IPEX

Les services de la Commission ont participé à une réunion du groupe technique IPEX le 13 janvier 2006 au Parlement européen.

Le 2 février 2006 – Mme la Vice-présidente M. **WALLSTRÖM** a rencontré M. **FORSBERG** (Secrétaire général du Riksdag, Chef IPEX sortant) et M. **TVARNØ** (Secrétaire général du Folketing, Chef IPEX entrant).

Do you know it?



L'Assemblée nationale française se met un peu plus à l'heure de l'UE ; elle a décidé de publier une Newsletter sur les affaires européennes.



Les Parlements de 20 Etats Membres ont désormais un représentant permanent à Bruxelles.

A noter les arrivés récentes de Mme **POPOVIC** (Bundestag), Mme **LEXMANN** (National Council of the Slovak Republic) et de M. **KAROTAM** (Riigikogu – Estonie).

Do you know it? 

Visits of the President & Commissioners

Who	When	Where
 Président BARROSO	24/01/2006 30/01/2006	en présence de Mme WALLSTRÖM et M. BARROT, – session plénière de l'Assemblée Nationale, Paris (FR) and VP WALLSTRÖM – meeting with French Deputies and Senators (BE)
 Vice-présidente WALLSTRÖM	31/11 – 1/12/05 20/12/2005 18/01/2006 30/01/2006	réunion avec des membres du Comité européen du Bundesrat. Rencontres avec le président, la vice- présidente et divers membres du Parlement. (DE) visit au Parlement fédéral belge (BE) rencontre à Strasbourg avec le président du parlement finlandais (FI) and M. BARROSO – meeting with French Deputies and Senators (BE)
 Vice-président BARROT	16/11/2005 24/11/2005	participation à une conférence sur la politique européenne des transports à la délégation pour l'Union Européenne de l'Assemblée Nationale (FR) rencontre conjointe avec les commissions Trafic et Affaires économiques du Parlement, ainsi qu'avec des membres de la commission Affaires européennes (DK)
 Vice-président FRATTINI	16/11/2005	participation à l'audition de la commission des Affaires étrangères de la Chambre des Députés « Initiative de l'UE en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme » (IT)
 Commissioner ALMUNIA	08/12/2005	rencontre avec le président de la Chambre des Députés et les membres du comité budgétaire de la Chambre des Députés (CZ)
 Commissioner FIGEL'	20/01/2006	Commission des affaires européennes du Parlement slovaque sur le programme législatif et de travail de la Commission pour 2006 (SK)
 Commissioner FISCHER BOEL	04/11/2005 12/01/2006 31/01/2006	rencontres avec des commissions parlementaires (DK) visite du Parlement allemand (DE) Sénat sur des questions agricoles (FR)

Visits of the President & Commissioners - suite

<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Where</i>
 Commissioner GRYBAUSKAITE	22/11/2005	reçoit des parlementaires du Parlement (LT)
 Commissioner HÜBNER	29/11/2005	rencontre des parlementaires des pays VISEGRAD
 Commissioner KOVÁCS	19/12/2005	rencontre les membres de la commission des Affaires européennes du Parlement (HU)
	31/01/2006	Sénat pour un séminaire sur la contrefaçon (FR)
 Commissioner KROES	24/11/2005	audition devant le Parlement (IT)
 Commissioner McCREEVY	10/01/2006	rencontre avec le Sub-Committee de la House of Lords (UK)
 Commissioner POTOČNIK	14/12/2005	participation à la réunion des commissions des Affaires étrangères et des Affaires européennes de l'Assemblée nationale sur le programme législatif 2006 (SI)
 Commissioner REHN	10/11/2005	discours devant le Parlement (I'ARYM)
	11/11/2005	discours devant le Parlement (AL)
	06/12/2005	discours à la commission des Affaires étrangères de l'Assemblée nationale (FR)
	16/01/2006	reçoit des membres de la commission des Affaires étrangères de la House of Commons (UK)
 Commissioner ŠPIDLA	14/11/2005	participation et discours « Les périodes transitoires de la circulation libre des transitoires de la circulation libre des travailleurs » à la Conférence internationale au Parlement (CZ)



Mr. Christian MEJDAHL, Speaker of the Folketing

What specific role is the Folketing playing in the debates going on during the period of reflection?

The Folketing has been given a pivotal role in coordinating and organising activities and in disseminating information to the general public during the period of reflection. In August 2005, the Danish Government decided that Denmark's activities should be channelled through Parliament. Under the heading "Citizens' Agenda", the European Affairs Committee of the Folketing and a number of non-governmental organisations agreed on a thematic, financial, and organisational framework for the Danish *period of reflection*.

An agreement was reached that the following five general questions should be addressed in the debates going on during the period of reflection:

1. Which of the cross-border policy related problems which Europe is facing should be given special emphasis – and which role should the EU play in this respect?
2. Which of the problems related to the European Union's institutional and political framework are the biggest and how may they be resolved?
3. How should the discussion on the future of Europe and a possible new treaty be conducted in order to ensure a broad and thorough debate while, at the same time, providing legitimacy?
4. How can we strengthen the citizens' involvement in the EU?
5. Where are the borders of Europe?

The Danish Parliament will sum up the outcome of the Danish *period of reflection* during the spring of 2006 and submit a report to the Government prior to the European Council's June 2006 summit.

Could you give us an idea of how the Danish Parliament is preparing its information strategy on the future of Europe?

The Danish Parliament's information strategy is not based on a classical one-way information campaign aimed at *influencing* the citizens' views or their values.

The point of departure might be said to generate debate among citizens and civil society by offering public funding for meetings, publications and other activities concerning European affairs and to provide factual and non-biased information about EU-matters. The Folketing has, for instance, set up an EU Information Centre where ordinary citizens can get non-biased and non-political answers to their questions concerning the EU. The Centre operates a telephone hotline and hosts the largest Danish EU website http://www.euo.dk/euo_en/

As regards the debate on the future of Europe, public funding was already made available in the run-up to the Danish referendum on the Constitutional Treaty which was scheduled to take place in September 2005. However, following the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in France and in the Netherlands, Denmark decided to postpone its referendum and to bring all planned initiatives to a halt.

In spite of this, the Danish political parties agreed in August 2005 that the debate on the future of Europe should be continued in Denmark during the *period of reflection* and that it should be sustained through

public financing. The political parties agreed that the overall financial framework for the activities during the period of reflection should amount to euro 2.3 million.

The European Affairs Committee of the Folketing was called upon to coordinate these activities. On this basis, the European Affairs Committee decided on 4 November to launch a number of activities in Parliament including, a nationally televised hearing on the future of the EU, a Danish EU Youth Parliament, and two specialised conferences on complicated but important issues such as comitology and the role of the European Court of Justice.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Danish Parliament on 17 January 2006 launched a special website called "Citizens' agenda" aimed at providing citizens with access to information and reports from the many debates going on in Denmark on the future of the EU (<http://www.citizensagenda.dk/>). The website will include a calendar showing the future EU events which will take place in Denmark in the course of the *period of reflection*.



Could you tell us something about your plans for the Conference of Speakers scheduled for June 2006 in Copenhagen?

I can mention that one of the main points on the Conference agenda will be an exchange of views on the future of the European Union and the Constitutional Treaty in the context of the *period of reflection*.

The Conference will focus on improving future inter-parliamentary cooperation between the national parliaments and between the national parliaments and the European Parliament. The Danish Presidency will also draw up a report considering the possibility of rationalising inter-parliamentary meetings.

The Conference will also evaluate the experience which national parliaments have drawn from implementing the declaration "Raising National European Awareness", which calls on national parliaments to examine the Commission's annual Legislative and Work Programme.

Finally, I can inform you that the IPEX website, which will provide an electronic means of exchanging information between EU parliaments, according to plan, will be officially launched at the Conference of Speakers in Copenhagen.

The draft agenda of the Conference of Speakers will be prepared by the Secretaries General of parliaments at their Copenhagen Meeting 9-10 February and subsequently circulated to the delegations.

Will the Conference comprise the feedback from the debates held throughout the European Union in the framework of the period of reflection?

At the 2006 Conference of Speakers, the debates on the future of the European Union and the *period of reflection* will provide a good opportunity for Speakers to give some feedback from the national debates. However, one should bear in mind that the Conference will be held subsequent to the evaluation of the *period of reflection* which will take place at the meeting of the European Council in June. The Conference of Speakers would therefore serve as a first opportunity for national parliaments to discuss how to proceed following the conclusions of the European Council.

The Danish Presidency of the Speakers Conference will prepare a report on the national and European debates which have taken place throughout the EU in conjunction with the meeting in Copenhagen.

Does your assembly intend to take part in the subsidiarity check to be conducted under the auspices of the COSAC? If so, has it already chosen the Commission proposal(s) it would like to scrutinize?

Yes, on 12 January 2006, the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament submitted a short list of proposals to the Austrian Presidency of COSAC. The proposals are 1) Proposal for a Regulation in view of setting up the powers and the financing of teams of national experts of Member States to provide technical and operational assistance to Member States in the activities dealing with the control and surveillance of the external borders, 2) Proposal for a directive on enforcement in the field of road safety.

I consider the COSAC subsidiarity test very useful. It facilitates the exchange of information and best practise between national parliaments when dealing with specific EU draft legislation and thereby contributes to obtaining a better European awareness in our parliaments.

I do not believe in setting up a second parliamentary chamber next to the European Parliament, but finds that COSAC can function as a platform for an improved exchange of information in relation to the scrutiny of EU matters in general, while also functioning as a forum which can manage to monitor subsidiarity. I hope that IPEX can play a constructive role in this process by facilitating an improved exchange of electronic information between the various parliaments.

Christian MEJDAHL



EUROPEAID CO-OPERATION OFFICE PAGE

EU's development activities, a common task for Member States and the Commission which needs the support of the National Parliaments !

During the preparation of the UN General Assembly of September 2005 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said that the world now has the means to eradicate poverty. This did not come as news to Europe. After all, Europe (Member States and the Commission together) is the largest donor in the world (approx. 55% of Official Development Assistance in 2004). However, these efforts have not achieved the ultimate aim: to give all people on earth at least the basic living conditions. There were mainly three reasons: the combined financial effort was not sufficient; EC, Member States and other donors provided aid in a dispersed way; and the needs of the beneficiary countries were primarily defined by the donors. The approval of a common Development Policy Statement (DPS), in December 2005, may make 2006 the year of a new start. The National Parliaments will have an important role. And not only by ensuring that EuropeAid Co-operation Office, the Commission's instrument to implement the development policy, has the necessary means to perform as well as possible.

The DPS is a document that was adopted by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission. For the first time the common values, general objectives, principles and means of the development policy for the Community and the Member States are defined in a common text. Poverty reduction is the main aim. This can not only be achieved with more means. Perhaps more importantly are more coherence with other policies, co-operation and complementarity between EC, Member States and other donors activities - or the 'three Cs' that the Commission has consistently promoted - ; and giving more responsibility to the receiving countries. The document describes in a second part what the specific tasks for the Commission are, specifying the Community's added value (global presence, experience etc) and its possibilities to improve the coherence of EU aid.

The National Parliaments, a necessary partner

This DPS, as well as other major decisions which have been made in 2005 (renewal of the 0.7% objective, commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness etc), need the support of the Members of the National Parliaments.

Firstly, National Parliaments have to approve the strategies and the budgets that provide the means for the national development activities, but also directly or indirectly for the Community actions. Secondly, your role is important to ensure that development is a mainstreaming factor in the other policy domains (trade, sanitary norms, common agriculture policy etc), and that national development actions are streamlined with what was agreed on EU level. This is necessary in order to achieve sustainable development, in the EU as well as in the developing countries. In time bringing more development aid means together will be the sole possibility to make the aid really coherent.

And thirdly: through National Parliaments the European citizen can be informed about what their tax money is used for, and why this development aid is in their interest, too.

Yes, also in the EU not all people have all they need to have a decent life. And they too need to be helped. Development aid, however, is necessary to maintain peace and stability all over the world, a precondition to guarantee better living conditions here and outside the EU. And to reduce the need to leave one's country. (nkb)

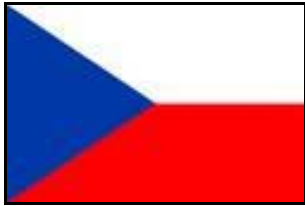
EuropeAid, the Community's development in practice

EuropeAid Co-operation office was set up in 2001 to strengthen the management of Community development aid, to increase quality and to step-up the delivery of aid. The office is responsible for the implementation of the long term policy as defined by the Directorates for External Relations and Development. Since 2001 the working has been further improved, amongst others by strengthening most of the delegations.

The result of the improved EuropeAid is certainly visible. EuropeAid has now co-operation activities with more than 160 partner countries, territories and regional organisations in the world, and its development assistance spending (= paid) has amounted to €6.2 billion in 2004. Backlogs of not spent development aid money have been reduced even faster than expected; programming is more focused to the real needs in the beneficiary countries, and involving them more in the different parts of the project cycle, i.a. through providing more budget aid to countries who fulfil the necessary conditions. (nkb)

To learn more about EU development aid:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/index_en.htm
or contact Martyn Pennington (martyn.pennington@cec.eu.int) for information sessions.

Nico KEPPENS



MS. HANA DANKOVA

Permanent Representative of the Senate of the Czech Republic

You were appointed as the Permanent Representative of the Senate of the Czech Republic. Why did your assembly take this decision? What are the principal aspects of your job and mission?

The Senate and especially its Committee on European Affairs have been always active in European matters. Until the accession to the European Union the then Senate Committee on European Integration dealt with the implementation of the *acquis communautaire* into the Czech legal system and monitored the accession process of the Czech Republic to the EU. The Committee, for example, established a Subcommittee for the Intergovernmental Conference 2004 and organized public hearings on different questions.

With the accession to the EU, the Senate has started *ex ante* scrutiny of EU legislation, which is provided for by the new Rules of Procedure. This means an even greater involvement in the EU legislation process. Therefore, having information on EU dossiers of interest to the Senate well in advance has become crucial. That is also why the Senate decided to establish its permanent office in Brussels in November 2004.

One of my key duties is to provide the senators and my colleagues in the Independent Division on European Affairs of the Senate with information on the documents, which have been selected for scrutiny by the Senate. It will become even more relevant in my job to draw attention to important documents to be released by the Commission, which could have a significant impact on the Czech Republic. The flow of information works of course also vice versa, so the other part of my job in Brussels is to inform other national parliaments via its representatives in Brussels and the EU institutions about the activities of the Czech Senate on the EU agenda. I cooperate closely also with the diplomats from the Czech Permanent Representation to the EU and with the offices of Czech MEPs. It would, of course, be nice, if I had a colleague here from the Chamber of Deputies, so that we could cover even more of the agenda.

How does the Czech Senate currently monitor the EU law? Does it involve any particular committees of the both assemblies?

Since 1 May 2004, the Senate has been dealing with concrete initiatives after they have been released by the relevant European institution and transmitted electronically to the Senate by the Government. The Senate, via its plenary session, can present its opinion to the Government before the latter decides on a legislative

initiative in the Council of the EU. This has already been the case with the major political dossiers like for example the Financial Perspectives 2007 - 2013, the Services Directive, the structural funds regulations and the sugar reform. The Senate also has the right of parliamentary reserve for a maximum period of 35 days, applicable to legislative acts only, but not to communication documents or measures in the second pillar.



In the selection of documents and subsequent proceedings two Senate committees are in a special position – the European Affairs Committee and the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Committee. It is these two Committees (so called designated committees) that select the documents to be dealt with by the Senate. The European Affairs Committee is responsible for the first pillar and the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Committee for matters falling under the second and third pillars. In their respective areas, the designated committees can ask one or more of the specialized committees (e.g. Economic, Agriculture and Transport Committee) to give its opinion on a particular matter. The committees can also ask the Government for all necessary information in order to analyse the legislative initiatives in a qualified way. As neither of the designated (the Committee on European Affairs and the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Committee) nor any other committees can act for the Senate – contrary to the situation in many national parliaments – , they may only recommend that the plenary session of the Senate adopts a resolution on a given matter.

How is the Senate involved in the debate in the framework of the period of reflection initiated by Heads of State and Government at the EU summit in last June?

The Senate is known for its support of public hearings and discussions with different groups of civil society and it will play its part during the period of reflection as well. In the Senate we have so far gathered ideas of what kind of activities would be appropriate and suitable, on which the senators will have the final say. I think that the programme of the planned activities could be become known during the next two months. Currently, we are having discussions with the government about how to best coordinate our activities. The government has launched a large information campaign on the EU, its different policies, institutions and their relevance for the citizens. It is in the interest of all parties to create synergies in this process so that no overlapping occurs.

Does your assembly intend to take part in the subsidiarity check to be conducted under the auspices of the COSAC? If so, has it already chosen the Commission proposal(s) it would like to scrutinize?

Yes. The Senate also took part in the previous subsidiarity check exercise by COSAC on the so called Third railway package. This time the EU Affairs Committee of the Senate has selected seven different legislative proposals, a list of which has been already handed over to the COSAC Secretariat. I would like to mention that the subsidiarity principle, the subsidiarity check and the role of COSAC in it are considered to be very important by the EU Affaires Committee. For the last COSAC meeting in London, the chairman of the EU Affairs Committee, Mr Sefzig, submitted a discussion paper with the title: How and why should COSAC foster enhancement of cooperation of national parliaments through control of subsidiarity. In this paper, he speaks up for the mechanism for a mutual exchange of information about the results of scrutiny by national parliaments. He also proposes that the COSAC Secretariat should take on the task of informing the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament whenever one third of the chambers of national parliaments raises an objection to the infringement of the subsidiarity principle. In his eyes, this could contribute to the national parliaments' readiness to implement EU legislative acts and also to raising the awareness for EU matters in the member states.

Hana DANKOVA



Réunions avec les représentants permanents des Parlements nationaux

La Commission a pris part à des réunions d'information avec les représentants permanents des Parlements nationaux :

<i>Date</i>	<i>Sujet</i>	<i>En présence notamment de :</i>
✓ 17/10/2005	Better Regulation for Growth and Job	Mr. SANTIAGO DOS SANTOS (DG ENTR)
✓ 07/11/2005	Public transport services	Mr. FAROSS (DG TREN)
✓ 05/12/2005	Education et Formation Programme Jeunesse	Mme PEPIN (DG EAC)
✓ 23/01/2006	Demographic change in Europe	M. OP DE BEKE et M. OTT (DG EMPL)
✓ 30/01/2006	Return of illegally – staying third country nationals	M. SCHIEFFER et Mme ADAMO (DG JLS)

On 19 January 2006 European Parliament adopted by a large majority (385/125/51) the Resolution on the period of reflection.

European Parliament resolution on the period of reflection: the structure, subjects and context for an assessment of the debate on the European Union

The European Parliament,

(...)

10. Proposes to use the current period of reflection to re-launch the constitutional project on the basis of a broad public debate about the future of European integration; resolves that this European dialogue – whose results should not be prejudged – should aim to clarify, deepen and democratise the consensus around the Constitution and address criticisms and find solutions where expectations have not been met;

11. Welcomes the beginnings of a broad debate about the Union's policy direction but stresses that this must take place within the context of overcoming the constitutional crisis, and that policy prescriptions at EU level must relate directly to the rules, powers and procedures of the EU institutions as well as to the competences conferred on the EU by the Member States and should identify the issues that are common throughout Europe;

12. Suggests that this new dialogue, which should be seen as a chance to promote European democracy, should be conducted and coordinated across the Union, structured by common themes and in realistic stages according to an agreed framework for evaluation, and designed to lead to decisive political choices;

13. Insists that the public debate be engaged within both the European and the national framework; warns that narrowly focused national debates will do little to change national stereotypes, and also that an imposed dialogue without political goals would become nebulous, even vacuous, thereby giving rise to increased disaffection on the part of European citizens;

14. Proposes that the European Parliament and national parliaments should jointly organise conferences – 'Parliamentary Forums' – in order to stimulate the debate and to shape, step by step, the necessary political conclusions; will invite the other EU institutions to contribute to the Forums;

15. Recognises the critical importance for the European Union and in particular for Parliament of avoiding another setback in the constitutional process; commits itself therefore to playing a leading role in the European dialogue in association with the national parliaments, in particular by publishing 'European Papers' on each of the big issues facing the Union, which may be used as a common European template for the national debates and which, together with contributions from national parliaments, should be used as the basis for the deliberations of the Parliamentary Forums;

(...)

2005/2146 (INI)

Agence Europe, 23/01/2006

« Le Parlement européen a fait ce qu'il pouvait à propos de la réflexion sur l'avenir de l'Europe en général et de la Constitution en particulier. Puisque les positions des groupes politiques et des différents groupements nationaux divergent sensiblement, il ne pouvait pas indiquer dès maintenant une orientation, et il a logiquement laissé ouvertes toutes les options. D'ailleurs, le but de son débat de cette semaine était de définir la méthode et la structure de la réflexion. Prétendre en définir dès maintenant le résultat -ainsi que certains parlementaires ont essayé de faire- n'aurait pas eu de sens. A quoi bon inviter les parlements nationaux et la société civile à une réflexion commune, si c'est pour leur présenter a priori le point d'arrivée? (...)



(...) Sauvegarder la coopération avec les Parlements nationaux. *Ce n'est pas seulement le résultat de la réflexion qui est incertain. Même la procédure semble remise en cause, dans un de ses aspects essentiels, par la lettre des parlements des trois pays qui se partageront la présidence du Conseil de l'Union d'ici mi-2007, l'Autriche pendant le semestre en cours, la Finlande pendant le prochain semestre et l'Allemagne au premier semestre 2007, qui ont en pratique rejeté l'idée d'être associés au Parlement européen dans une série de forums parlementaires visant à définir des orientations communes et de formuler des «recommandations» au Conseil européen (voir notre bulletin N° 9112). Hubert Haenel, président de la «délégation pour l'Union européenne» du Sénat français, a estimé mercredi que cette démarche représente «le signe d'une prise de conscience par les parlements nationaux du fait qu'ils ne peuvent véritablement coopérer avec le Parlement européen, de manière fructueuse, que si cette coopération se déroule sur un pied d'égalité », et il a précisé: « Cela signifie que les initiatives à prendre et les sujets à traiter ne doivent pas être définis seulement par le Parlement européen, et que les parlements nationaux doivent d'abord se retrouver, échanger leurs idées entre eux et définir les grands axes d'une position qui leur est commune avant de rencontrer leurs collègues parlementaires européens». *L'idée que les Parlements nationaux soient en mesure de définir des orientations communes sur l'avenir de la Constitution est audacieuse: ils risquent plutôt de parvenir à des choix divergents. Mais il faut éviter les querelles de procédure, en sauvegardant le climat de collaboration efficace et pro-européenne qui s'était établi entre parlementaires européens et nationaux pendant la Convention. Ce climat est un patrimoine indispensable qui ne doit d'aucune manière être dispersé, notamment pour la bonne application du principe de «subsidiarité».**

En conclusion, il est positif que le Parlement européen ait pris des initiatives pour donner un contenu et un sens à la réflexion sur l'avenir de l'Europe et du traité constitutionnel, en donnant l'exemple aux gouvernements qui paraissent assoupis. Mais on doit être conscient que rien n'est réglé et que la direction à prendre pour sauver la Constitution demeure totalement ouverte. «

Agence Europe, 23/01/2006

Letter of the Presidents of the Austrian Nationalrat, Eduskunta (FI) and Bundestag (DE) to Mr. Josep BORRELL FONTELLES, President of the European Parliament

„(...)First of all we would like to thank the European Parliament for all its initiatives to promote the European dialogue on the future of the Union. We also highly appreciate that the European Parliament seeks the cooperation with the national parliaments with regard to the reflection period.

However (...) it is proposed that “the European Parliament and national parliaments jointly organise conferences – Parliamentary Forums - in order to stimulate the debate and to shape, step by step, the necessary political conclusions”.

In this regard we are not in a position to commit national parliaments to such a series of conferences or parliamentary fora. Due to the fact that 13 countries have already ratified the constitutional treaty and 12 countries have not, the national parliaments have very different approaches towards the debate on the future of Europe and there is neither a need nor a mechanism to find a joint strategy of national parliaments on how to engage in a lasting debate.

Furthermore national parliaments do not have the resources to engage in such a broad and long lasting process of a series of conferences and parliamentary fora, and they would not like to be seen just as an appendix to the European Parliament in such a process.(...)”