



## NEWSLETTER N° 6

JUIN / JUILLET 2006



### Sommet européen des 15 et 16 juin 2006

Débriefing et analyses se sont succédés : sur l'Europe des résultats, l'avenir de la Constitution européenne... En réponse aux analyses critiques relatives à une situation jugée par d'aucuns... critique, le président BARROSO a souhaité ne pas ajouter *le pessimisme au scepticisme*. C'est en démontrant sa valeur ajoutée que l'Union modifiera le contexte institutionnel. Il n'empêche, les chefs des principaux groupes politiques du Parlement européen ont regretté, le 20 juin dernier, le manque de volontarisme des Etats membres s'agissant du projet constitutionnel. Tonalité très proche au Parlement belge visité le même jour par le Président de la Commission. Le président de la Chambre, M. DE CROO a souligné la proximité tant géographique que « spirituelle » des deux assemblées tout en appelant au respect d'un système institutionnel communautaire classique. Mais l'assemblée belge a bien accueilli le projet de la Commission de mieux associer les PN. Ce projet s'est matérialisé un peu plus par l'inauguration à Copenhague, en présence de Mme WALLSTRÖM, du réseau d'échange d'informations IPEX

Dans une newsletter allégée qui sent déjà les vacances nous revenons sur ces trois points ci-après : **visite au Parlement belge, nouveau mécanisme de liaison aux Parlements nationaux** d'une part, mais aussi sur **l'inauguration de la base de données IPEX**.

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## *Visite du Président BARROSO au Parlement belge, Bruxelles le 20 juin 2006*



Voir le « *Compte rendu analytique de la Chambre des Représentants* » <http://www.lachambre.be/>

### **Herman De Croo, président de la Chambre** (...)

Le Parlement européen et le Parlement belge sont voisins, géographiquement et spirituellement. Pas plus tard qu'en octobre, nous avons tenu ici un débat sur l'avenir de l'UE. Nous sommes convaincus que l'UE répond à un besoin et qu'elle doit être pensée selon un modèle communautaire, avec une répartition des compétences précise, un processus décisionnel sur la base d'une majorité qualifiée et de la codécision. Nous ne souhaitons pas qu'il soit touché au droit d'initiative de la Commission.

Nous avons toujours soutenu la Commission et nous apprécions son soutien.

### **Anne-Marie Lizin, présidente du Sénat :** (...)

Du point de vue du Parlement national, je souhaiterais mettre en évidence les progrès qui ont été réalisés jusqu'à présent et qui ont mené à une plus grande transparence, à un meilleur suivi de la subsidiarité et de la proportionnalité, ainsi qu'à une simplification poussée de la législation. Nous avons travaillé sur la subsidiarité, liée au soutien de la Belgique à la Commission, qui est depuis toujours la clef de notre position.

### **José Manuel Barroso:** (...)

Aujourd'hui, les parlements nationaux sont les relais de plein droit d'actions importantes de l'Union européenne comme la stratégie de Lisbonne ou le Plan D, pour démocratie, dialogue et débat. Les actuels commissaires européens ont rendu plus d'une centaine de visites aux parlements nationaux. Ce rapprochement n'est pas seulement le

résultat de l'augmentation du nombre de commissaires. Il témoigne de notre volonté d'associer plus étroitement les parlements nationaux à l'élaboration des politiques européennes et d'instaurer à travers eux un dialogue avec le citoyen. Le Conseil européen a récemment approuvé ma suggestion de transmettre directement les propositions législatives aux parlements nationaux pour recueillir leurs observations. Cet effort de transparence me paraît une réelle avancée démocratique, d'autant que cette évolution va de pair avec le renforcement des prérogatives du Parlement européen. (...)

Parlons du Traité constitutionnel. La Commission reste attachée aux principes, valeurs et contenu du Traité, qui apporte un supplément démocratique à notre fonctionnement. La proposition du Conseil de fixer au deuxième semestre 2008 la relance d'un projet institutionnel est une bonne décision. Mais même durant la période de réflexion, nous n'avons pas démerité ; nous avons posé les jalons de l'avenir (perspectives financières pour sept ans, équilibre de la directive sur les services, première pierre d'une politique énergétique pour l'Europe), et c'est pourquoi, je ne suis pas pessimiste : il y a des domaines où les États membres et les citoyens réclament une avancée du processus d'intégration. Nous avons aussi ouvert le nouveau chantier d'une vraie politique de recherche, nous avons déployé la nouvelle gouvernance pour la croissance et l'emploi. Nous ne manquons donc pas de détermination ni d'ambition. Cependant, même si l'Europe agit, il faut être clair : le Traité de Nice est insuffisant. L'Europe doit réformer son fonctionnement institutionnel pour être plus efficace. Nous avons besoin de nouvelles règles pour que l'Europe puisse réaliser ses ambitions politiques. C'est pourquoi, j'ai proposé une approche à deux volets : répondre concrètement aux préoccupations des citoyens (emploi, sécurité, justice sociale) et laisser mûrir la dynamique de résolution de la question constitutionnelle. (...) Aujourd'hui, je voudrais vous dire que la Commission reste la force motrice de l'Union. (...)

Nous avons des problèmes, mais il faut de la confiance pour réaliser la vision des pères fondateurs de l'Europe. Oscar Wilde a dit: « Le pessimiste est celui qui entre deux maux choisit les deux ». Nous regrettons de ne pas encore avoir de constitution, mais il ne faut pas y ajouter un manque de confiance dans l'imagination de l'Europe et sa volonté de rebondir.

## ***"Interparliamentary cooperation and the future of Europe including an exchange of information on the period of reflection and on the future of Europe"***

*Introductory address (excerpt)*

*Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the European Union*

*Copenhagen, Folketinget, June 30, 2006*

Speakers, Presidents, Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen

First of all I would like to thank all of you, and especially Speaker Mejdahl, for inviting me here to speak. Last year I was invited by Mrs Szili to the Speakers Conference in Budapest. That was the first time a Commissioner addressed a Speakers Conference; a great honour and privilege – and a very useful and productive meeting. With this “second time in a row”, I hope we have established a long lasting tradition.

We want that, and we need that – the Commission and the national parliaments. Because it is an important and demanding journey we have embarked upon:

- we have to make EU policies understandable and relevant to citizens;
- we have to listen and to deliver;
- we have to use the right mechanisms;
- we have to make the EU Institutions accountable and reliable to those they serve.

For this to succeed, we need to be forward looking and creative. For it to happen, we need co-operation. This Commission has put the question of relations with the national parliaments firmly on the political agenda. You may remember the initiative from February last year, when I proposed a ten point programme for the Commission’s relations with the national parliaments. Now we take those relations to the next level. *“The increased involvement of national parliaments can help make European policies more attuned to diverse circumstances and more effectively implemented”*, as we expressed it in our 10<sup>th</sup> of May decision.

As the first Vice President explicitly responsible for this important area, my ambition has been to sow the seed of a new approach towards the national parliaments. I believe we can now start harvesting.

\* \* \*

(...) We have now reached half time in the so called reflection period. Just like in many of the football matches in Germany these days, we have seen both good offensive and defensive play. I know some of you would have liked to see more yellow cards. Well, perhaps not in the matches in Germany...

(...) The first half of this “EU match” has taught us a few valuable lessons. We promised to listen – and we did. Through the so called Plan D, 660 activities and meetings have taken place in the Member States. A special Eurobarometer poll. A highly successful discussion website with over 700.000 hits and 10.000 contributions so far in three months. Interesting enough, the patterns are the same, irrespective of the source of information we are using. Let me mention a few examples of what citizens have told us:

- 1) Achievements of EU are recognised. EU is associated with positive expectations.
- 2) The more people are pro-European the more they consider globalisation an opportunity. But Europe is still not yet seen as part of the solution for globalisation.
- 3) The recent and upcoming enlargement needs better explanation. Especially the prospect of Turkish membership is a concern for many. People feel that these decisions have been taken above their heads and not “in their names”.
- 4) The EU is associated with security in many areas – social security, security against

terrorism and crime, security in health, living and environmental conditions, job security... "The EU can protect". Europe is expected to bring solutions in terms of security in the widest sense of the word and peace democracy, living standards as well as research, innovation and economic performance.

- 5) Citizens want Europe strong. There is a feeling of solidarity and a need for common solutions.

(...)

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Delivering concrete results and reconnecting with European citizens will create the favourable climate which is necessary for successful institutional reforms. And this is also the essence of what the Heads of State and Government concluded at the European Summit in Brussels two weeks ago. The so called twin track approach gives the necessary balance between the need to build a Europe of results, and the importance of securing an institutional settlement as soon as possible.

But the most concrete (and interesting) change for you, is perhaps the Commission's decision to "transmit directly all new proposals and consultation papers to the national parliaments, inviting them to react so as to improve the process of policy formulation". This is how we expressed it in our decision on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, which was part of the Commission's contribution to the European Summit.

I must admit I was perhaps a little bit surprised over how positive and accommodating the European Summit was to this Commission initiative. They also asked the Commission to take your comments into account, to acknowledge receipt and that we should "offer a reasoned response within an acceptable timeframe".

This should apply to questions on subsidiarity and proportionality in particular. I leave it to you to deliberate on how much that "in particular" could be stretched (and in what direction...). But one

thing is sure: since the proposed mechanism does not refer only to subsidiarity or proportionality, it can not possibly be argued that the Constitution has been anticipated. It is altogether based on the current Treaties.

And that is the only option available to us right now – to work with the current treaties. We cannot introduce new formal procedures. We cannot anticipate the Constitution. But there is a lot we can do.

(...) I am happy to be able today to present to you how the Commission will start transmitting documents to the national parliaments. You will also receive in the next few days a letter from President Barroso and me, where we explain the details.

The national parliaments will receive the same documents and metadata as the Commission sends to the European Parliament. All chambers should receive the texts on adoption, and when the own language version is ready. They could also select a procedural language for cases where the own language is unavailable. I can guarantee you that there will be a hard pressure to eliminate the delays in translation.

And when it comes to the Commission's reactions: we could very well change a proposal in the light of comments from national parliaments. The Commission always retains the right to amend its proposals in the light of new information and new circumstances. → → →

But this should be seen as part and parcel of the ongoing process of continuously assessing initiatives, not as a separate exercise.

(...)

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(...) When we meet for the next EU Speakers Conference, I hope Speaker Mejdahl has been proven right for his report conclusions on co-operation with the Commission. And I hope we will have an interesting discussion on the new dynamic in European politics that the national parliaments gave through their comments on Commission proposals.

And I also hope that because of this, European affairs have finally started to get firmly anchored in the national parliaments and political parties, and in the national democratic traditions.

So the results we will have in a year's time will depend just as much on your national parliaments as on the Commission. We are mutually reinforcing.

Thank you.

*Margot WALLSTRÖM*

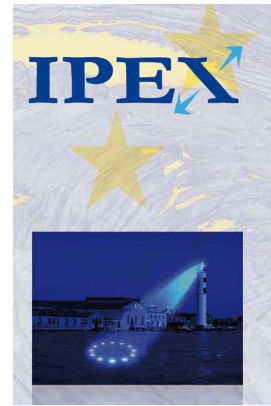
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### **Speakers' recommendations have been implemented**

As of 1 July 2006, IPEX – Interparliamentary EU information Exchange – is finally available to help national parliaments stay up-to-date with the decision making process in the EU parliaments as well as relevant scrutiny activities.

### **Important EU-information only a mouse click away**

What had started out as a recommendation at the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments in Rome in 2000 concerning guidelines to establish forms of enhanced cooperation in order to improve the quality of legislation within the EU Framework is now a reality! What the Secretaries General approved in February, the Speakers of EU parliaments accepted in July. The national parliaments now have at their disposal a website and a database that will enable parliaments to exchange EU information and documentation with the click of a mouse.

The Rome recommendations were made even more concrete in the guidelines for Interparliamentary Cooperation in the EU, which were agreed upon by the Conference of Speakers in The Hague in 2004, when the objective of IPEX was stated:

”The objective of IPEX...is to support interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union by providing a platform for the electronic exchange of EU-related information between parliaments in the Union including a calendar of meetings and forums for exchange of views on subsidiarity control. Each parliament/chamber has an IPEX correspondent to represent the parliament.”

The Secretaries General decided to set up a working group to deal with these issues. Swedish Secretary General Mr. Anders Forsberg has chaired the group.

### **A network of Correspondents – A new website**

As a result, a network of IPEX Correspondents, consisting of one person from each chamber of each member state, acceding state and candidate state and one from the European Parliament, now exists. A website has been created with generous assistance from the IT-department of the European Parliament. In the database of the site, users will find all related documents from the EU institutions, starting from 1 January 2006, concerning a specific procedure as well as information about the relevant scrutiny activities in the EU parliaments.

On a password-protected section of the site, a Bulletin Board, which serves as a forum for the informal exchange of information amongst civil servants, has also been established.

### **The IPEX Board is now in place**

As of 1 July 2006, the new IPEX organisation is in place, which means that a Board, chaired by Denmark, has replaced the previous Steering Group. Other countries and parties on the Board are Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia the UK and the European Parliament. The ECPRD and COSAC are associate Board members.

“Central Support” is a special support function designed to aid the correspondents, both at a technical level as well as on a fact based level, but also to manage the daily maintenance of the web site. It will do its best to help out, should you have any problems or questions. Please address any such issues to [centralsupport@ipex.eu](mailto:centralsupport@ipex.eu)

### **Visit us and see for yourself**

Why not take the time to visit the IPEX web site at [www.ipex.eu](http://www.ipex.eu) and see for yourself. Log in as “ipexguest” (username and password).

*Bengt Eriksson  
Swedish Parliament*

