



NEWSLETTER N° 8

JUNE 2007



EUROPE'S NEW ROAMING REGULATION LOWERS CROSS BORDER COMMUNICATION BARRIER

Members of the European Parliament decided overwhelmingly on Wednesday 23 May, to listen to the voice of ordinary citizens by voting for an EU Regulation to substantially cut the charges for using mobile phones abroad. This EU Regulation, which the European Commission proposed in July 2006, was broadly supported by MEPs from all 27 EU Member States. On 7 June, the Council of EU Telecom Ministers agreed to follow the European Parliament's lead and to adopt the Regulation. It will enter into force later in June when it is published in the EU's Official Journal.

¹ In its opinion transmitted on 12 March 2007, the House of Lords supported the proposal of the Commission though commenting on the prevailing price level and the automatical expiration of the regulation.

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Le mot du coordinateur du Secrétariat Général

En attendant le Sommet des 21 et 22 juin 2007

Dans quelques jours, l'Union passera un cap. La période de réflexion et l'Europe des résultats - la décision sur le *roaming* l'illustre à la perfection - nous mènent, dans un cadre politique nouveau en France et aux Pays-Bas, à un nouvel espoir : celui de régler la question institutionnelle.

L'efficacité de l'action produit la confiance et celle-ci préside à une amélioration du jeu institutionnel qui doit rendre l'action encore plus efficace.

Les Parlements nationaux ont accompagné le mouvement. Ils ont appuyé, dans le débat sur la Stratégie de Lisbonne, le paquet énergétique et les propositions de lutte contre le changement climatique adoptées par le Sommet de Printemps. Ils ont suivi, lors des réunions de la COSAC, la route menant à la déclaration de Berlin, et ont appelé ensuite de leurs vœux un règlement de la question institutionnelle respectant fortement les valeurs de la Constitution. Dans un climat quasi conventionnel, ils ont participé aux deux fora interparlementaires coprésidés par la Présidence allemande et le Parlement européen sur le futur de l'Union ...



Mais la question des Parlements nationaux est désormais au cœur-même du règlement institutionnel. Le Premier Ministre Néerlandais a exposé au Parlement européen ses *fondamentaux* et parmi eux, il y a le renforcement de l'intervention des Parlements nationaux dans le contrôle de subsidiarité jusqu'à leur permettre de bloquer une proposition de la Commission. Pourtant, les Parlements nationaux ne demandent pas la carte rouge, la COSAC s'est prononcée à Berlin pour la carte jaune prévue par la Constitution tout en souhaitant le maintien du dialogue politique instauré par la Commission BARROSO. Ce dialogue va son chemin. La Commission a reçu plus de 95 avis de la part des Parlements nationaux et essaie d'en faire une première évaluation.

Sur toutes ces questions, la Newsletter contient de brèves nouvelles. Elle met également en exergue les dispositions prises par le Bundestag allemand afin de mieux suivre les affaires européennes et aborde une nouvelle dimension: celle du soutien des Parlements nationaux aux démocraties émergentes.

Le 15 juin 2007

Philippe GODTS
Secrétariat général de la Commission

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Europe's new roaming regulation lowers cross border communication barrier (suite)

The European Commission has repeatedly urged mobile operators to lower the charges for using mobile phones abroad. But these charges stubbornly remained high – on average four times more expensive than domestic mobile phone calls – a difference particularly felt by tourists and by small and medium-sized companies with cross-border business activities. To highlight the continuing problem, the Commission launched a consumer website on roaming tariffs from across the EU. It exposed excessive roaming prices of up to €12 euros for a 4-minute call. But even this but did not change the pricing behaviour of mobile operators. The Commission therefore proposed to intervene by regulating.

So, in July 2006 the European Commission proposed an EU Regulation to reduce mobile roaming charges within the EU.

This Regulation, as now approved by the European Parliament and Council, caps mobile roaming charges to consumers as well as between mobile operators and. These caps have been set at a fair level to encourage

competition among operators below these price caps. Due to the complex and non-transparent nature of the mobile roaming markets, simply reducing wholesale prices would not necessarily have meant that consumers would benefit from lower retail prices. Previous experience with roaming markets show that wholesale savings of roaming costs made by operators have, in general, not been passed on to consumers - a phenomenon noted in particular by the EU's national telecom regulators. This is why both the Commission and the European Parliament saw a need to intervene also at the retail level.

These price caps (also called "Eurotariff") will fall further in 2008 and 2009 (see table). For calling home while abroad, consumers will save the most in countries where operators impose very high charges. These savings are expected to be of up to 70%. For example, an Irish customer making a four-minute call home from Malta would not pay €1.96 as before, but at most €1.96+VAT according to the Regulation, while for a Cypriot in Belgium it would drop from €12.00 to €1.96+VAT.



"In a record time of only 10 months, a political agreement could be reached on the EU Roaming Regulation, thanks to the impressive support of the European Parliament and the negotiation skills of the German Presidency," concluded EU Telecoms Commissioner Viviane Reding. "This means that already from this summer, mobile phone customers will start benefiting from substantially reduced roaming charges when travelling from one EU country to another. Europe's internal market will finally become truly borderless, even for mobile phone bills."

	Summer 2007	Summer 2008	Summer 2009
Maximum limit for the Eurotariff for calls made abroad	49 cent	46 cent	43 cent
Maximum limit for the Eurotariff for calls received abroad	24 cent	22 cent	19 cent
Maximum Inter-Operator tariff	30 cent	28 cent	26 cent

Stocktaking – National Parliament opinions

(October 2006 – 8 June 2007)

Since October 2006, the Commission has received 97 opinions from 23 National assemblies on 51 of its proposals. Around 30 opinions "expressed concerns" on the proposals of the Commission with only 6 opinions objecting them (4 from the Dutch Parliament).

Around a third of the NP opinions were issued in the framework of two subsidiarity and proportionality tests carried in the framework of the COSAC :

15 opinions concerned the 'divorce proposal': 12 out of these were positive (with 3 lightly critical on the subsidiarity justification); opinions from the Dutch and Czech Parliaments were negative.

15 opinions concerned the proposal concerning the full accomplishment of the internal market of Community postal services; the French, Belgian, Luxembourg and German Parliaments expressed their reserve on certain parts of the proposals.

Other 67 opinions concerned different Commission documents; some proposals resulted in more than a single opinion: proposals on the protection of soil, on road infrastructure, on the EIT and on European critical infrastructures, green papers on tobacco smoke, on modernising labour law, on diplomatic and consular protection and on the review of the consumer acquis as well as the communications 'A European vision for the oceans and seas' and the Annual Policy Strategy 2008.

3^e Forum interparlementaire sur le futur de l'Union européenne

Le troisième forum interparlementaire Parlement européen/Parlement nationaux sur le futur de l'Union européenne co-présidé par Norbert Lammert, Président du Bundestag allemand et M. Pötering Président du Parlement européen, s'est focalisé les 11 et 12 juin 2007 sur l'architecture institutionnelle et le contenu d'un nouveau traité. Maintenir la substance de la Constitution a été le maître mot. Quant aux Parlements nationaux, il faut améliorer leur rôle mais les intervenants ne se sont pas prononcés en faveur de l'octroi d'un carton rouge comme le propose le Gouvernement néerlandais.

Le Bundestag allemand : 800 kilomètres d'un bureau à l'autre



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Depuis le début de cette année, Bruxelles a une attraction de plus. Le Bundestag allemand s'est doté d'un **bureau de liaison** au cœur du quartier européen, au Square de Meeûs 40, non loin de la Place du Luxembourg, tout près du Parlement européen. L'emplacement est primordial, car il s'agit d'être au plus près des développements sur la scène européenne. La composition est unique pour les parlements nationaux représentés à Bruxelles : aux côtés de l'administration du Bundestag, l'on trouve des représentants de tous les groupes parlementaires du Bundestag allemand. L'objectif est de conjuguer toutes ces forces en vue de l'observation en amont et de l'information du Bundestag allemand dans son ensemble. « Nous devons encore surmonter quelques défis logistiques et organisationnels, mais il est clair dès maintenant que la synergie entre les collègues de l'administration et des groupes parlementaires ne pourra être que bénéfique pour le Bundestag » souligne Vesna Popovic qui représente le service Europe du Bundestag au bureau de liaison.

Elle est également la représentante du Bundestag allemand au Parlement européen à Bruxelles depuis novembre 2005. A proximité des représentants des autres parlements nationaux, elle dispose d'un bureau que le Parlement européen a réservé pour le Bundestag tout comme il l'a fait pour les 23 autres parlements actuellement présents à Bruxelles. Elle y travaille d'ailleurs une bonne partie de la journée, l'échange quotidien d'informations avec les représentants des parlements nationaux étant essentiel. Rien ne vaut par ailleurs les bruits de couloir pour générer l'alerte précoce. Les contacts directs avec les collègues du Parlement européen et des parlements nationaux permettent un échange intensif et sans doute unique en son genre.

Avec des locaux à l'extérieur du Parlement européen, le Bundestag introduit une nouvelle dimension à sa présence à Bruxelles et se donne un nouveau défi, celui de construire un réseau d'informations vers Berlin, mais aussi

avec les institutions européennes et les autres institutions représentées à Bruxelles. L'idée est d'alerter le Bundestag sur les développements dans les institutions aussi tôt que possible. Il faut savoir ce qui s'annonce à la Commission, ce qui se négocie au Conseil, ce dont on connaît la constellation des forces, les tendances, le calendrier de délibération. Par ailleurs, il est utile de communiquer au Bundestag les informations sur les réunions de commissions, conférences, séminaires d'actualité à Bruxelles. Enfin, le bureau de liaison du Bundestag est aussi un centre d'informations sur le Bundestag pour les acteurs européens, sur les acteurs européens pour les intéressés du Bundestag. Mais surtout le bureau de liaison se veut le lien direct, le système d'alerte précoce entre Bruxelles et Berlin. Les fonctionnaires de l'administration sont chargés de l'information du Bundestag dans son ensemble et en particulier des commissions parlementaires, les collaborateurs des groupes parlementaires sont en charge de l'information de leur groupe parlementaire respectif mais aussi des relations entre leur groupe parlementaire et le groupe parlementaire correspondant du Parlement européen ainsi que le groupe allemand au sein du groupe parlementaire européen.



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A environ 800 kilomètres à l'Est se trouve l'autre partie de la nouvelle **unité Europe du Bundestag** : une nouvelle équipe chargée entre autre de saisir les informations en provenance de Bruxelles, d'approfondir les analyses mais aussi d'apporter une contribution à la fixation de priorités concernant les thèmes européens au Bundestag allemand. Il n'en a pas toujours été ainsi. Pendant des décennies, le Bundestag allemand a dû s'en tenir essentiellement aux informations des ministères fédéraux pour se forger une opinion sur l'actualité européenne. La politique européenne au Bundestag était surtout l'œuvre de la commission des affaires

de l'Union européenne (voir l'interview du Président de la commission des affaires de l'UE Matthias Wissmann dans le Newsletter N° 7). Les commissions spécialisées du Bundestag s'engagent désormais davantage dans le débat européen dans le but d'apporter également leur concours à la formation de la volonté politique européenne au Bundestag et à un meilleur contrôle de l'activité du gouvernement fédéral.

Dans le cadre de la ratification par le Bundestag allemand du Traité sur la Constitution de l'Union européenne en mai 2005, le Bundestag allemand a décidé d'améliorer sa capacité européenne et d'adopter un nouvel accord entre le Bundestag et le Gouvernement fédéral jetant les bases d'une information plus extensive entre l'exécutif et le législatif et d'un contrôle accru du Bundestag. Par ailleurs, il fut décidé de prendre les mesures nécessaires afin de renforcer la capacité d'action du Bundestag en matière européenne et de mener à bien l'observation de la subsidiarité.

Ceci a conduit à la mise en place du bureau de liaison mais aussi au renforcement des capacités à Berlin par la mise en place d'une nouvelle Unité Europe au sein de l'administration du Bundestag chapeautant les activités d'alerte précoce et de fixation de priorités. L'idée était de créer une structure à la disposition de l'ensemble du Bundestag et de ses commissions. L'équipe berlinoise est chargée de prendre connaissance des derniers textes adoptés par la Commission européenne et transmis au Conseil et au Parlement européen, de faire des propositions aux groupes parlementaires sur l'importance concernant une éventuelle délibération en commission. L'objectif est d'aboutir au terme d'une modification du Règlement du Bundestag à ce que les propositions de règlement, de directives ou autres textes de la

Commission dont l'importance est considérée comme primordiale, soient délibérées au moment opportun et sur la base d'informations adéquates afin que le Bundestag puisse user pleinement de ses droits de participation et de contrôle sur les questions de politique européenne.

A cet égard, l'Accord entre le gouvernement fédéral et le Bundestag allemand du 28 septembre 2006, constitue un élément essentiel renforçant les droits d'information et de contrôle du Parlement. Désormais, le Bundestag aura accès aux informations issues des groupes de travail du Conseil, des réunions de formations informelles du Conseil ou autres réunions auxquelles le gouvernement participe. Cela permettra au Bundestag de mieux cibler que par le passé son action sur le gouvernement fédéral dans le processus législatif européen. L'accord gouvernement fédéral/Bundestag allemand prévoit que le gouvernement fédéral ne saurait dans les négociations au Conseil s'écarter de la position du Bundestag lorsque celui-ci a fait usage de son droit de prendre position que dans un certain nombre de cas limités et définis clairement. Pour la première fois est prévu dans cet accord le cas de réserve parlementaire dont certains parlements nationaux jouissent déjà depuis longtemps.

Une chose est sûre, grâce au renforcement des capacités et des possibilités de participation du Bundestag allemand en matière européenne, la discussion sur l'Europe au Bundestag allemand est à même de s'intensifier et de s'élargir. Ceci ne peut être que bénéfique face aux problèmes de déficits en matière de légitimité et d'adhésion du citoyen aux projets européens.

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COSAC meeting - Berlin, 13-15 May 2007

Representatives of the European affairs committees of National Parliaments discussed in Berlin various issues, including the future of Europe, with participation of Chancellor Angela Merkel; subsidiarity and proportionality checks and cooperation with the Commission and the Council; the Annual Policy Strategy 2008, with participation of Vice President Margot Wallström; the climate change; the eastern dimension; and procedural issues.

COSAC lent its full support to the efforts of the German Presidency aiming at an institutional settlement to be in place before 2009 European elections. National Parliaments and the European Parliament should be kept fully involved and their views should be taken into account during an IGC, if it is convened by the European Council in June. The Role of National Parliaments in the new institutional settlement should be at least as strong as that foreseen in the Constitutional Treaty ('yellow card').

COSAC welcomed the new Commission mechanism of sending its documents to National Parliaments. The Commission should reply to National Parliaments' opinions within two months and react visibly if there is a significant number of converging views on a proposal ('critical mass' issue). COSAC asked all parties, including national assemblies themselves as well as the Commission and the Council to upload proposals and related correspondence on the IPEX website.

National Parliaments called on the Commission to better explain its proposals with regard to subsidiarity and proportionality principles and with regard to the choice of the legal base. It called for a standardized procedure for the presentation of the Commission's consultation papers, which should also be translated into all languages.

NPs wished to be informed at an early stage about Commission policy plans. Their positions should be taken into account in the Commission's Legislative and Work Programme 2008. Moreover, COSAC decided to carry at least two subsidiarity and proportionality checks on Commission proposals each year. The selection would be based on the CLWP.



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Presentation of the Commission's Annual Policy Strategy (APS) for 2008

**XXXVII COSAC
Bundestag, Berlin 15 May 2007**

Chairman, Honourable Members,

Last Thursday I presented the 2006 Annual Report on the Commission's relations with the national parliaments. I did that with great satisfaction. And the report was welcomed with as great satisfaction by my colleagues.

Our relations have developed significantly over the past two years. I am very happy for all the positive feedback and the inspiring engagement and activity by your parliaments, and by my Commission colleagues.

Together the Commission and the national parliaments can improve the process of policy formulation. That is a welcome contribution to democratising the EU. Our discussions contribute both to better EU policies and to a better understanding of EU issues. Together we increase the shared ownership of the European project.

That is why I'm so pleased to meet with you to discuss the Commission's Annual Policy Strategy for 2008.

The Commission adopted the Annual Policy Strategy on 21 February and sent it to Parliament and Council and to your parliaments at the same time.

In this strategy we define our main policy priorities and key initiatives for next year. We also propose an appropriate allocation of staff to match our policies.

Limited additional resources will be used exclusively to cover needs due to enlargement, in line with the Commission's previous commitments. All other needs will have to be served through internal redeployment within the Commission.



Margot Wallström, Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Institutional affairs and communication strategy

2008 will clearly be an important year for the European construction. Having celebrated the 50 year anniversary of the Rome Treaty in 2007 with the Berlin Declaration, 2008 will be an opportunity to look forward. What better impetus could we think of to this process than a clear and constructive institutional settlement?

The Commission fully supports the efforts of the German Presidency in this regard and will contribute to its work as effectively as possible. We need an institutional reform to make Europe more democratic and efficient. We need to build a renewed consensus about our common future and to send a positive signal to the citizens in good time before the European elections in 2009.

Meanwhile, we will see a further consolidation of the Union. In 2008, we expect to see a number of Member States joining the Schengen area which will allow EU citizens to travel freely in a Europe of 27. We also hope to see additional Member States adopt the Euro as their currency, once they fulfil the defined criteria.

Following on from the Single Market Review and the Social Reality Check which will be presented in 2007, the Commission will launch a series of initiatives. We need to make sure that the Single Market continues to deliver on its economic promise and that it allows citizens to reap the benefits.

Through the social reality check the Commission will take stock of the social situation in the EU and help address people's access to rights and opportunities.

2008 will also be an important year in terms of laying the ground for the future financing of the EU through a review of the multi-annual financial framework for 2007-2013 by the Commission.

The strategic objectives defined by this Commission at the beginning of its mandate remain valid. Prosperity, solidarity, security and freedom, and a strong and open Europe in the world summarise the core ambitions of the Commission. We see through opinion polls, consultations and our dialogue with citizens that they correspond to people's real priorities for Europe.

We also see, however, that a number of highly important issues are not confined to one or the other of the strategic objectives. They need to be taken forward in synergy across policy

areas, and they have a shelf life beyond 2008. In the APS decision, the Commission specifically highlights three cross-cutting priorities for 2008.

- Firstly, energy and climate change, where we will implement the Energy and Climate Change Package adopted by the Commission and supported by the March European Council. We will continue to push for a European gas network and electricity grid. We intend to take further steps to promote energy efficiency and sustainable energy. And we plan to enforce the competition and internal market rules in the energy sector. Furthermore, the Commission will push for new commitments by the EU and global stakeholders to reduce CO₂ emissions beyond 2012 when the Kyoto protocol expires.
- Secondly, the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs remains the Commission's main instrument for promoting a more prosperous, environmentally responsible and socially inclusive Europe. In partnership with the Member States, we are making good progress and need to seize the opportunity and press ahead with further reforms.
- Thirdly, migration in its various facets has become a key challenge for the EU. Labour migration, properly managed, can make a positive contribution to our economies and to our societies, not least because of the demographic situation. We also plan to propose further measures to achieve a Common European Asylum System by 2010. Finally, preventing illegal migration, combating the ruthless business of human trafficking and protecting our common external borders will require further action by the EU in 2008. (...)



(...)The APS in many ways exists as a recognition of one of the Commission's special roles – initiating legislation. The Commission has a broader role to bring fresh ideas and policy directions to Europe, but at the core of this is its legislative role. We are committed to exercising this responsibility to the highest possible standards. That means making proposals after full consultation and after detailed impact assessment. It also means legislating only when it is the best option – only when we have considered whether self-regulation or soft law measures could be more effective or quicker.

Let me be clear: if legislation is necessary, the Commission will legislate. Just look at the figures: over the last ten years, the Commission has brought forward an average of 489 proposals a year. Last year's figure was very close to this, at 474. Of course the global figures hide different trends – in recent years, we have made a high number of enlargement-linked proposals as well as codification proposals.

But even if you look at this politically rather than statistically, the same message comes through. This year will see a wide range of legislation – on energy, on emissions, on immigration, on defence procurement, on health services, on the internal market.

Europe expects an active Commission initiating action to respond to these and other challenges. And in many cases we will respond through legislation.

Let me also underline a novelty in our strategy for 2008. Following the example of the Commission's Legislative and Work Programme for 2007, communication priorities are an integral part of our policy strategy. Focusing our messages on a limited number of issues that are of key concern to people, and communicating these clearly, reflects and contributes to our overall communication strategy and strengthens our policies.

The APS is only the beginning of a process leading to the adoption in October of the Commission's Legislative and Work Programme for 2008. I want the national parliaments' input into that process. So I very much welcome COSAC's initiative to have a discussion here today. And I'm looking forward to the results of the deliberations you will have back home in your parliaments.

It is important that we together explore the best ways to ensure that your parliaments can channel your views on where Europe should put its political weight. It is important that the Commission pays close attention to what you have to say. It is important that we all play our part in the process of policy formulation.

Let today be the start of that frank and constructive dialogue on the Annual Policy Strategy. Thank you.

Margot WALLSTRÖM

FLASH NOTES



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>
✓ 26/02/2007	⇒ energy package
✓ 05/03/2007	⇒ Annual Policy Strategy for 2008
✓ 26/03/2007	⇒ communication of flexicurity ⇒ Green Paper "Modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21 st century"
✓ 30/03/2007	⇒ social services of general interest

Do you know it? 

Visits of the President & Commissioners



Président **BARROSO**

Who

When

Where

29-30/03/07

visit at the Saimas of the Republic of Lithuania (with Commissioner Grybauskaite)
Meeting with V. Muntianas, Chairmen of the Seimas (**LT**)

13/04/2007

discours devant l'Assemblée de la République, le Parlement national Portugais, Lisbonne (**PT**)



Vice-présidente **WALLSTRÖM**

06/02/2007

meeting with the Members of the EU Affairs Committee and the Committee on Taxation of the Swedish parliament (in Brussels)

12/02/2007

COSAC Chairpersons meeting, Berlin (**DE**)

19/03/2007

meeting with the members of the Committee on Culture of the Swedish parliament (in Brussels)

19/04/2007

meeting with the Committees for European Affairs of both Houses and the Subsidiarity Committee of the Dutch parliament (**NL**)

03/05/2007

meeting with the Members of the EU Committee, House of Lords (**UK**)

15/05/2007

speech on the APS 2008 in the XXXVII COSAC, Berlin (**DE**)



Vice-président **VERHEUGEN**

- 10/01/2007 meeting with the Bundesratpraesident, Dr Ringstorff (in Brussels)
- 11/01/2007 meeting with the SPD Fraktion of the Deutschen Bundestag Arbeitsgruppe Haushalt
- 12/01/2007 participation in the Ausserordentliche Klausur der SPD Bundestagfraktion in Brussels
- 23/01/2007 meeting with the Parlamentskreis Mittelstand der CDU/CSU Bundestagfraktion in Brussels
- 05/02/2007 meeting with "Parlamentarischer Beirat" for Sustainable Development of the Deutschen Bundestag in Brussels
- Opening of the German Bundestag Liaison office in Brussels
- Dinner with EP President Pottering and Those Members of national Parliaments Responsible for the Lisbon Growth and Jobs Agenda, in Brussels
- 07/03/2007 participation in the Ministerpraesidentenkonferenz der Deutschen Laender in Brussels
- 17/03/2007 brunch with Members of Parliament in Warsaw from the Foreign Affairs And European Affairs Committee of The Polish Parliament (**PL**)
- 12/04/2007 meeting with Lithuanian Members of Parliament from the Economics Committee (**LT**)
- 15/05/2007 meeting with SPD Landtagsfraktion Bayern (**DE**)



Vice-président **BARROT**

- 26/02/2007 meeting with TRAN Committee and with TRAN Committees of National Parliaments at the European Parliament (in Brussels)
- 29/03/2007 meeting with the European Affairs Committee and the Transport Committee of the Hellenic Parliaments (**GR**)



Vice-président **FRATTINI**

16/02/2007

meeting with National Parliament (**BG**)

21/02/2007

meeting with MEPs from the Parliamentary Commission on European Affairs and Human Rights (**HU**)

01/03/2007

meeting with members of the EU Committees of the Austrian Parliament (**AT**)

15/03/2007

relation sur le conflit d'intérêt – Chambre des Députés (**IT**)

"Commissione Infazia" – Chambre des Députés (**IT**)

16/03/2007

meeting with the National Parliament (**RO**)

28/03/2007

rencontre avec les Membres de la Chambre des Députés du Luxembourg



Commissioner **BORG**

06/03/2007

meeting with the Joint Committee on European Affairs and the Joint Committee on Communications Marine and Natural Resources (**IE**)



Commissioner **GRYBAUSKAITE**

29-30/03/07

visit at the Saimas of the Republic of Lithuania (with President Barroso)
Reunion avec le Président du Parlement lithuanien (Seimas) M. Muntianas (**LT**)



Commissioner **POTOČNIK**

19/03/2007

presentation of the 7th Framework Programme and Annual Policy Strategy for 2008, Slovenian Parliament, Ljubljana (**SI**)



Commissioner **KYPRIANOU**

08/05/2007

meeting with the Health Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania (in Brussels)



Commissioner **KOVÁCS**

10/01/2007

meeting with Members of the House of

Lords EU Committe (in Brussels)



Commissioner
FERRERO-WALDNER

06/02/2007 meeting with Members of the Taxation and Custom Committee of the Swedish Parliament (in Brussels)
26//05/2007 Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the EU, Bratislava **(SL)**

03/05/2007 meeting with Foreign Affairs and European Affairs Committees, Lisbon **(PT)**



Commissioner **ŠPIDLA**

20/03/2007 intervention in the conference panel "Europe Today" in the Czech Senate **(CZ)**

02/04/2007 meeting with selected Members of the House of Deputies of Czech Parliament Regarding the EYEO **(CZ)**

19/04/2007 meeting with the Committee for Social Affairs and Employment of Bundestag (in Brussels)

30/04/2007 meeting with Belgian Senator Ms de Bethune concerning Gender issues (in Brussels)

03/05/2007 meeting with members of Bundestag regarding the Green Paper on Labour Law and SSGI (in Brussels)

09/05/2007 speech at the conference on EU Social Policy organised by the Czech Senate Committee for EU Affairs **(CZ)**



Commissioner **MANDELSON**

10/01/2007 meeting with EU sub-committee, House of Lords, **(UK)**

24/05/2007 meeting with Vice-President of the National Parliament, Mr. Silva **(PT)**

Meeting with European Affairs Committee, Economic Affairs, Innovation and Regional Development Committee **(PT)**



Commissioner **PIEBALGS**

- 30/01/2007 meeting with French Deputies and Senators (in Brussels)
- 05/02/2007 meeting with Latvian Joint Parl. Meeting and with members Committees Foreign Affairs, Economy and Environment, Riga (**LV**)
- 13/02/2007 hearing Senate Italy, Rome (**IT**)
- 26/02/2007 Dutch Members of Parliament / Roundtable Committees Environment and Economy, The Hague, (**NL**)
- 05/03/2007 speech at House of Commons / Shared platform with Lord Truscott, Parl. under Secretary of State Energy
- 19/03/2007 joint meeting House of Parliament Committees EU Affairs, Environment, Economic Committee and Senate Committee on EU Affairs, Prague (**CZ**)
- 29/03/2007 meeting CSU Group Bundestag, Berlin (**DE**)
- 25/05/2007 opening Parliamentary Conference "Developing Energy Community in South East Europe", Sofia (**BG**)



Commissioner **KUNEVA**

- 15/03/2007 meeting in the Bundestag with the Committee for Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, Berlin (**DE**)
- 23/05/2007 meeting with the Chair and members of the UE Scrutiny Committee of the House of Lords, London (**UK**)



Commissioner **ORBAN**

- 25/04/2007 meeting with EU Commission of the Bundestag , Berlin (**DE**)

Do you know it?

Le Parlement européen a tenu sa **3^e réunion jointe avec les Parlements nationaux sur la Stratégie de Lisbonne** à Bruxelles, les 5 et 6 février 2007. La réunion a été coprésidée par le Président du PE, M. Pöttering, le Président du Bundestag, M. Lammert et la Vice-présidente du Bundesrat, Mme Kastner.

Le Président Barroso et, pour la Présidence en exercice du Conseil, M. De Maizere ont introduit les débats de la plénière. La nécessité d'une implication forte de tous les acteurs concernés a été soulignée, les bons résultats économiques et en emploi devant être approfondis. Les intervenants en plénière se sont focalisés sur la question des propositions en énergie et sur le changement climatique. Ils ont soutenu une action vigoureuse de l'Union dans ces secteurs. Ces débats avaient été préparés la veille par des ateliers consacrés à l'énergie, au marché intérieur et au capital humain.

Do you know it?

On 28 February and 1 March 2007 the European Parliament organized an **inter-parliamentary meeting "Eurozone – converging or drifting apart?"** It was co-chaired by Ms Pervenche Berès, Chairperson of the EP's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, and Ms Edelgard Bulmahn, Chairperson of the Economic and Technological Committee at the German Parliament.

The debate was split into three parts:

Part I – How to deal with divergence and how to seek convergence?;

Part II – Governance and convergence: the state of play;

Part III – Will convergence strengthen the role of the Euro in the globalised world?

The role of the Euro in a globalised world: reform of international financial institutions and global imbalances. Among distinguished guests there were the American Nobel Price winner, Mr Joseph Stiglitz, the ECB President, Mr Jean-Claude Trichet and the Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, Mr Joaquín Almunia.

Do you know it?

La Conférence des Présidents des Parlements de l'Union européenne qui s'est tenue à Bratislava du 24 au 27 mai 2007 a accueilli favorablement le mécanisme de dialogue politique mis en place par la Commission. Il l'a encouragée à publier ses réponses aux Parlements nationaux sur le site web IPEX, a pris note des débats en cours dans les assemblées sur l'APS 2008 et a encouragé les Parlements à examiner le programme législatif et de travail de la Commission. La Conférence s'est également félicitée de l'engagement de la Commission à améliorer sa coopération s'agissant du soutien aux nouvelles démocraties émergentes.

Assistance from Parliament to Parliament: a new goal for interparliamentary cooperation in the EU



Alessandro Palanza, Deputy Secretary General of the Italian Chamber of Deputies

Providing assistance to Parliaments of new or emerging democracies is an increasingly important mission for EU Parliaments and Institutions.

Fully-fledged parliamentary institutions are synonymous with democratisation, and their sound functioning is a fundamental prerequisite of democracy. Hence strengthening parliaments is a straightforward and effective way of implementing programmes of Institution building and reinforcing. All the national and international organizations which conduct cooperation programmes of this kind are becoming increasingly active in this field, albeit without any form of coordination among themselves.

In the same area cooperation between parliaments at different stages of development is also tremendously increasing under the pressure of direct requests from parliament to parliament.

Most EU-national parliaments are providing assistance to other parliaments. Likewise the EU also provides assistance to new or emerging democracies (NEDs) under several programmes managed by the European Commission.

Surprisingly, up until now the European Commission and the EU-national parliaments have operated with virtually no linkage or coordination. This lack of coordination risks duplication and inefficiency as well as a significant waste of resources.

EU-national parliaments have been receiving an increasing number of requests for technical assistance directly from the parliaments of countries all over the world. Parliaments are best equipped to meet those requests and possess the best expertise regarding both the political and the technical dimensions of parliamentary experience. However, they do not have sufficient financial resources (for financing travels, hotels, simultaneous translation) and they are finding it difficult to meet these demands.

On the other hand the European Commission, while having substantial resources at its disposal, only responds to some of these requests for assistance, and even then it does so using a tendering system that does not take into account the special role and unique know-how of EU Parliaments and their administrations. Furthermore Members of Parliament and parliamentary officials - if their Parliament is formally involved - offer their contribution at no cost, except for overhead, while the projects funded by the EU Commission include considerable costs for general administration and human resources.

In this framework there appears to be a clear need for coordination amongst the National Parliaments themselves and with the Commission by means of:

- an effective system for the exchange of information;

- improving current procedures and practices for managing EU assistance programmes and funds when parliaments are involved
- new forms of inter-parliamentary cooperation masterminded by the Commission as was the case for many TAIEX projects.

It would also be appropriate, as a second step, to set up cooperation at European and global levels in order to better take into account the requests of recipient Parliaments and the role of the International organizations.

Against this backdrop, the EU Speakers' Conference launched a project on the assistance to Parliaments of new or emerging democracy (NEDs) aimed at promoting cooperation among the EU Parliaments and EU Institutions, notably the European Commission.

The process started with the establishment of a specific Working Group of Speakers on the assistance to new or emerging democracies in 2006, in accordance with the Conclusions of the Speakers Conference in Budapest in 2005.

The Working Group was supported by a technical group which benefited from the cooperation of European Commission officials.

The Conference of Speakers (Copenhagen July 2006) approved the Final Report of the Working Group which contained several proposals with respect to the establishment of an effective exchange of information between EU Parliaments and the European Commission as well as to the improvement of current procedures and practices for managing EU assistance programmes and funds when parliaments are involved.

Subsequently, the Copenhagen Conference mandated the Slovak Parliament, in cooperation with the Danish and Italian Parliaments, to take appropriate steps to implement the objectives set out in the Final Report.

To this end the Slovak, Danish and Italian Parliaments set up a task force - composed of three senior officials – which explored different options to better ensure an efficient and cost-effective exchange of information and enhanced cooperation with the Commission.

Then, the Slovak Presidency - based on the work of the Task force - reported to the recent session of the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliament in Bratislava (24-26 May 2007) which took some important decisions for implementing the NEDs project.

A first set of decisions concern cooperation with the Commission, which should focus on:

- developing a procedure for consultation with the representatives of the parliamentary administrations when drafting programmes, projects and strategies for technical assistance involving parliamentary assistance;
- exchanging information with National Parliaments about programmes, calls for tender, requests for parliamentary assistance submitted directly to the national parliaments;
- enabling Member States' Parliaments to access EU funding in the framework of EU external assistance schemes.

A second set of decision of the Speakers concern the exchange of information which should be established by:

- implementing a database on assistance to NEDs within the IPEX Website including information from EU parliaments and the European Commission;
- expanding the coordination and the exchange of information on NEDs Europe-wide by using the ECPRD (European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation) and worldwide by asking the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) to assess the feasibility of a global information network.

The implementation of these proposals requires the commitment and active role of the European Commission.

President Barroso – replying to a letter from the Slovak Speaker, Mr Paska – confirmed the Commission’s commitment to cooperating with Parliaments on the NEDs project.

The EU Speakers welcomed the commitment expressed by the Commission and mandated the Task Force to carry on its activities under the authority of the incoming Presidency Parliament.

The Bratislava conclusions are an important step as the Speakers agreed on clear goals and tools. The implementation of the conclusions would therefore allow all players involved in the assistance to the new or emerging democracies – notably the EU Parliaments and the European Commission – to strengthen the efficiency of their action in this field.



Photo: Bratislava