

Riigikogu esimees

Tallinn, 14 March 2011 1-12/46

Mr Danny Pieters
Speaker of the Belgian Senate

Mr André Flahaut
Speaker of the Belgian House of
Representatives

Dear Speakers, dear Colleagues

Re: Conference of European Union Speakers, Brussels, 3 – 5 April 2011

Thank you for your letter of 25 February and for your invitation to the national parliaments to express their views to the Belgian Presidency on the proposal regarding the organization of inter-parliamentary scrutiny of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including the Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/CSDP).

The National Defence Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu have discussed the subject at their sittings respectively on 14 June 2010 and on 15 February 2011. Both committees have adopted their positions on the subject (annexed to this letter).

While stressing that the responsibility for parliamentary scrutiny of CFSP/CSDP lies with national parliaments, we support the continuation of exchange of information and best practice and cooperation between the respective subject committees of national parliaments. We believe that existing structures for inter-parliamentary cooperation between relevant subject committees and the European Parliament (e.g. the Conference of Foreign Affairs Committee Chairs and the Conference of Defence Committee Chairs) should be used.

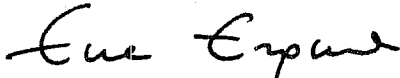
We do not support creation of any new institutions or a permanent secretariat. The delegations of the Conference shall consist of chairmen of the relevant subject committees of national parliaments and the European Parliament (plus one personnel member for each chairman). The EU candidate countries and the European non-EU NATO countries shall be represented as observers and if needed, the Conference may invite non-EU states and international security organisations.

The Conference shall meet regularly twice a year. The meetings shall be presided over by the national parliament of the Member State holding the rotating Council Presidency and the Conference shall have its seat in the Presidency's national parliament. The national parliaments of the troika countries should be responsible for organising the meetings, and the administrative expenses connected with it should be kept as small as possible.

The Conference may express opinions and adopt non-binding conclusions, but the main objective of the meetings shall be exchange of information and as a rule no formal documents are expected to be adopted.

I look forward to seeing you in Brussels on 3-5 April.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ene Ergma', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ene Ergma
President of the Rikigogu