



# EU Speakers' Conference

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Stockholm, 14-15 May 2010

## Proposal for amendment of the Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments

(As of 23 April 2010)

*The Swedish EUSC Presidency's background paper on a revision of the Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers was posted on the IPEX forum on 1 April. The Belgian Senate and the Houses of the Oireachtas (Ireland) has responded and suggests adjustments (enclosed in annex). The Presidency, taking into account the suggested adjustments, puts forward a revised proposal for amendment of the guidelines, in accordance with Article 10 of the present guidelines for debate and, if possible, adoption by the Speakers' Conference in Stockholm on 14–15 May 2010.*

# Guidelines for the Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments

The "rules and procedures" for the Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments. The Guidelines were adopted at the Conference held in Rome 22–24 September 2000 and revised at the Conference held in Stockholm 14–15 May 2010.

## Article 1

(Membership and method of operation)

1. The Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments is made up of the Speakers of the national parliaments of the EU member states and the President of the European Parliament, who take part in meetings on an equal basis.
2. The activities of the Conference respect the autonomy and constitutional position of each participating Speaker.
3. Speakers can be represented by a Deputy Speaker/Vice-President of their Chamber.
4. Meetings of the Conference shall operate by consensus.

## Article 2

(Objectives)

1. The Conference of Speakers, with full respect for the different powers vested in its members, aims at safeguarding and promoting the role of parliaments and carrying out common work in support of the activity of parliaments.
2. To this end the Conference is a forum for the exchange of opinions, information and experiences, as well as for the promotion of research activities and common action, among the Speakers, on topics related to the role of parliaments and the organisation of parliamentary functions, also with respect to the forms and instruments of interparliamentary cooperation.
3. The Conference shall oversee the coordination of interparliamentary EU activities.

## Article 3

(Presidency and meetings)

1. The Conference meets on an annual basis upon the invitation of the Speaker(s) of the presiding parliament.
2. The parliament of the member state holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of a calendar year will normally hold the Presidency of the Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments and organise the meeting of the Conference of Speakers in the first half of the following calendar year.
3. The Secretaries-General shall submit proposals in situations where the relevant parliament is unable to assume the Presidency of the Conference of Speakers according to the above procedures.
4. At the end of each meeting, the Conference shall decide which parliaments will assume the two subsequent Presidencies.
5. The Presidency of the Conference starts from the end of the previous meeting.

6. Upon a proposal by one of the Speakers, seconded by a two-third majority of the Conference's members, an extraordinary meeting may be convened.

## **Article 4**

(Agenda)

1. The dates and draft agendas of meetings are communicated to the Speakers not later than three months prior to ordinary meetings and one month prior to extraordinary meetings.
2. The Presidency prepares a final draft agenda for the meeting, taking into account suggestions from other Speakers and from Secretaries-General during the preparatory meeting in accordance with Article 8.
3. The final draft agenda, reports and working papers are circulated, as a rule, no later than two weeks prior to meetings.

## **Article 5**

(Conclusions)

1. The Presidency is responsible for the preparation of conclusions from the meeting of the Conference. The Presidency conclusions should reflect the common view of the Conference.
2. The Presidency and any member of the Conference's members may make public opinions and points of view expressed during meetings. Should they do so, they should state clearly that these opinions have not been confirmed by the Conference as a whole.
3. The Presidency conclusions shall be sent to the members of the Conference. The Presidency shall also send its conclusions to the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Council, the President-in-Office of the General Affairs Council and to the COSAC Troika. The Presidency conclusions shall be published on the EU Speakers section of the IPEX website.

## **Article 6**

(Working groups)

1. Upon a proposal by one of the members, the Conference can establish working groups aimed at addressing matters concerning the role of parliaments and the organisation of interparliamentary cooperation and parliamentary functions.
2. The Conference shall define the criteria for setting up each working group and shall entrust one of the members with coordination. The Conference shall also decide at which meeting the conclusions of a working group are to be placed on the agenda.
3. The working groups shall present one or more reports to the Conference.

## **Article 7**

(Languages)

1. During the meetings of the Conference, simultaneous interpretation is provided from and into official EU languages upon request according to the following:
  - The technical facilities for the interpretation are provided and covered by the presiding

parliament.

-Other practicalities, including languages to be used as base languages for translation, are defined and organised by the presiding parliament.

- Parliaments are entitled to bring their own interpreters. Those not bringing their own interpreters may request the presiding parliament to provide interpreters for them at their own cost.

- All parliaments choosing to use the languages provided by the presiding parliament share equally the cost of interpreters for all these languages.

2. Written papers are circulated in French and English. A translation into other languages may be provided by the parliament concerned.

## **Article 8**

(Secretaries-General)

1. The Secretaries-General shall meet to consult on the draft agenda or for any other mutual consultation.
2. The Secretaries-General of the member parliaments shall assist their respective Speakers during the meetings of the Conference.
3. The presiding parliament is in charge of organising such meetings following – where possible – the same criteria laid down for the Conference itself, with the exception of the working languages, which are limited to English and French.

## **Article 9**

(Adoption of and amendments to the guidelines for the Conference)

1. These guidelines shall be adopted by consensus.
2. Any member may propose amendments to these guidelines.
3. Proposed amendments shall be sent – in writing – in English and French to all Speakers, not later than three weeks prior to the meeting of the Conference; such amendments shall be placed on the agenda of the meeting.
4. Official versions of these rules shall be drawn up in English and French; translations into the official languages of the European Union shall be edited by the national parliaments concerned.

# Annex – proposed adjustments

## The Belgian Senate

### Article 2

By putting the proposed new paragraph after paragraph 1, the amendment breaks the link between the two existing paragraphs expressed by “To this end” at the beginning of the second old paragraph. Perhaps, it would be better to put the new paragraph at the end, since it gives the Conference a practical task, whereas the tasks mentioned in the two old paragraphs are more of a conceptual nature

### Article 7 (new numbering)

2. Written papers are circulated in French and English ~~and —where relevant— in the language of the host parliament~~. A translation into other languages may be provided by the parliament concerned.

## The Houses of the Oireachtas

### Article 5 (new numbering)

1. The Presidency is responsible for the preparation of conclusions, *which are entitled ‘Presidency Conclusions’* ~~from the meeting of the Conference~~. The **Presidency** conclusions should reflect the common view of the Conference. *The Presidency conclusions should respect the autonomy and constitutional position of each participating Speaker and should not include statements of a political nature. The Presidency Conclusions are not binding on individual parliaments.*
2. The Presidency and any member of the Conference's members may make public opinions and points of view expressed during meetings. Should they do so, they should state clearly that these opinions have not been confirmed by the Conference as a whole *and are not binding on the Conference*.
3. The **Presidency** conclusions shall be sent to the members of the Conference. The Presidency shall also send ~~the its~~ conclusions ~~from the Conference~~ to the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Council, the President-in-Office of the General Affairs Council and to the COSAC Troika. The **Presidency** conclusions shall be published on the EU Speakers section of the IPEX website.