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**Address by Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen at a
Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments in Copenhagen June,
30, 2006**

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Ladies and gentlemen, Your excellencies,

I am honoured to speak before such a distinguished audience of speakers of parliaments. I would - like Mr. Mejdahl - like to welcome you all to Copenhagen. I hope that you will have some fruitful discussions on the future of the EU and on interparliamentary cooperation. And I hope that you will enjoy your stay in Copenhagen.

This conference takes place at a time where the question of the role of national parliaments in the EU is more in focus than ever before. For many years Denmark has been a firm proponent of a strengthened role for national parliaments. And we will continue to support greater involvement of national parliaments.

I am therefore satisfied that we were able to agree to take a step in that direction at the European summit two weeks ago. The European Council decided to increase the openness of the EU legislative process and to strengthen the role of national parliaments. From now on all Council deliberations under the co-decision procedure shall be public. And national parliaments will now be consulted on all new proposals for legislation. They will play a role with regard to the control of subsidiarity, which is in some respects similar to what was foreseen in the Constitutional Treaty.

It is important that the voice of national parliaments is added to those of the European institutions. The involvement of national parliaments lends an important source of legitimacy to EU-decision making. It is a source of control by elected representatives of national electorates. And it is an important source of inspiration to the work done on the European scene.

In addition, the inter-parliamentary cooperation between national parliaments and with the European Parliament is essential when it comes to developing a real European public discourse on European politics. A discourse, which does not only take place within and among the institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg. But a discourse, which transcends the borders of Europe and connects to our citizens throughout the continent.

One of the EU's main challenges today is exactly that - to reconnect the European project to the citizens. I believe that you - the national parliaments - have a very important part to play in that respect.

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I would like to focus my remarks today on three issues, which were all at the centre of discussions at the European Council's session in Brussels two weeks ago:

Firstly, the main challenges facing the European Union - "A Europe of Results".

Secondly, the question of the Constitutional Treaty and the way ahead.

And thirdly, the question of the Union's further enlargement.

All three issues are closely interlinked. And they all link up with the question of how to reconnect our citizens with the European project.

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1. The main challenges facing Europe - ("A Europe of results")

Let me begin with a few remarks on the main challenges facing Europe.

Europe faces two major challenges in the years ahead. One is how Europe is to tackle globalisation in the broadest sense. The other is what I would call "the people challenge". How do we ensure that citizens will support the development of the European cooperation and will feel that the EU is also of benefit for them?

