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***Report on “Interparliamentary relations between the European Parliament and national Parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon”***

***2009-2014***

***Annual Report 2013/2014***

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## Preface

This term is coming to an end and therefore we would like to present you in this last annual report the developments in interparliamentary cooperation between the European Parliament and national Parliaments during this legislature. After more than two years of successful cooperation between us, this report will be the last report for which we as Vice-Presidents for relations with national Parliaments during this term will be responsible for. And it is the last report of Vice-President Martínez who will retire after having served 22 years in a national Parliament, 15 years in the European Parliament and several years in interparliamentary functions such as Vice-President of the WEU Assembly and Vice-President and President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. In other words, this is the right moment in time to take stock of achievements since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon until the end of this term and to pass on the baton to the newly elected European Parliament.

Interparliamentary cooperation has come a long way since the Convention on the Future of Europe and has experienced a real boost in recent years. This is reflected not least in a record number of Interparliamentary Committee Meetings organised in the EP premises, overall attracting more than one and a half thousand members of national Parliaments in the last four years and the recent revival of Joint Committee Meetings organised by the EP together with the presidency parliament. It is also demonstrated by the increase in comparative requests treated by the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation, the heightened acceptance of IPEX as *the* platform for Interparliamentary Exchange on European Union matters by national Parliaments, as well as by the decisiveness of the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments (EUSC) in establishing two new formats for specialised Interparliamentary Conferences.

In the last two years the Speakers' Conference (EUSC) has gained in importance due to the role attributed to interparliamentary cooperation by Article 9 of the Protocol (No 1) on the role of national Parliaments and has led the way in shaping the future of interparliamentary relations. The EUSC has achieved agreements on setting up two new formats for interparliamentary scrutiny in the area of CSFP/CSDP, following the dissolution of the WEU Parliamentary Assembly, and on economic governance in 2012 and 2013 respectively as a counterbalance to the trend of intergovernmental decision making among Member States. The first editions of these new Interparliamentary Conferences (IPCs) give rise to the prospect of a greater degree of parliamentary scrutiny and democratisation. Other than COSAC or the EUSC itself, this new "second generation" of interparliamentary fora is bringing together specialists in their fields of expertise. By bringing to the fore and by publicly debating matters which have been so far decided overnight behind closed doors at European level, this kind of fora have the potential to contribute to the development of a European public sphere for policy debates. Notwithstanding the EP's competences it remains to be seen whether these IPCs can constitute a trend for more democratic accountability and parliamentary scrutiny of EU policies.

In that new context, COSAC, which celebrated its 50th anniversary meeting in Vilnius in 2013, is experiencing some difficult challenges. This is partly due to its composition - mainly generalists from EU affairs committees - and partly due to its institutionalised character and strict rules of procedure. Instead of providing enough space for interparliamentary exchange and debates, which is COSAC's statutory purpose, it has become more a forum for national and European executives to pass down their views on parliamentarians. Prime ministers,

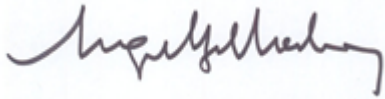
ministers, members of the European Commission and other representatives from the executive branch now account for almost two thirds of speakers. Parliamentarians introducing the debate, on the other hand, account for just 16 per cent of keynote speakers and are therefore the exception. At least on recent occasions, the EP delegation managed to convince the presidential Troika of COSAC to invite some MEPs, specialists in their respective areas of expertise, to inform the debates. This created intense interparliamentary debates illustrating what would be possible with some willingness.

The introduction of the provisions in Protocol No 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality contributed to raise national Parliaments' awareness for draft EU legislation at an early stage, even though parliaments/chambers implemented changes to their internal rules in order to benefit from this "early warning mechanism" in diverse ways and with varying results. The low number of just two "yellow cards", where national Parliaments triggered the compulsory review procedure provided for in Protocol No 2, shows that national Parliaments did not block draft EU legislation. To the contrary, the high number of contributions from national Parliaments addressing the content of draft legislative acts compared to the relatively low number of reasoned opinions which express subsidiarity concerns (in about a ratio of 4.5 to 1) shows an increasing interest in contributing actively to the political discussion at EU level.

While Interparliamentary Committee Meetings (ICMs) in recent years dealt with dossiers at an early legislative phase (especially dossiers linked to the adoption of the multiannual financial framework like major reforms of EU policies such as regional policy, agriculture and fisheries and multiannual spending programmes) the use of ICMs for a pre-legislative dialogue with national Parliaments reduced in 2013, also due to a decrease of relevant Commission proposals. However, the European Parliament does not actively participate in the pre-legislative political dialogue between the Commission and national Parliaments (so-called Barroso initiative) and does not monitor it systematically. Overall, the number of expert-to-expert meetings has increased since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon with no less than 58 ICMs between 2010 and 2014 as well as six Joint Parliamentary Meetings (JPMs) and five Joint Committee Meetings (JCMs). Over the years, ICMs have become the standard meeting format for full-committee meetings with national Parliaments but this has not precluded other formats like invitations to committee chairs only or standing invitations to national Parliaments. A road which will be explored further with the technical preconditions now put in place in the EP and in some national Parliaments, is the use of video-conferencing which would allow for even more meetings made to measure the specific needs of expert-to-experts exchanges, e.g. between rapporteurs.

In addition to the reporting on facts and figures we also present in this report a few trends in interparliamentary relations that have developed over the recent years, namely an enhanced formal involvement of national Parliaments within the EU institutional structure, the evolution of more institutionalised forms of sectorial cooperation between the European Parliament and national Parliaments and the need to reflect upon the role and nature of COSAC as a forum for interparliamentary exchange; a trend towards less bigger meetings dealing with broad political questions but with limited direct impact on the on-going parliamentary activity mirrored by a trend towards more specialised meetings on specific policies or pieces of draft legislation; and finally the invention of flexible and made-to-measure meeting formulas, technically supported by the use of video-conferencing.

The next EP legislature will be faced with renewed challenges in the field of interparliamentary cooperation stemming from ever-tightening economic conditions, growing international competition, geostrategic and political volatility, and the all-evident citizen apathy and disenchantment with the current process of European integration. On this last issue in particular, parliamentary cooperation can help to reinvigorate the European project. Democracy cannot be imposed from above but can only flourish when citizens participate in the process and when all institutions - at all levels - exercise their rights and responsibilities in an effective and consistent manner. Implicit in this is the principle that parliamentary scrutiny and accountability must be exercised at the level at which decisions are taken. Tensions and differences of opinion will always be inevitable; what matters most however is the will to work constructively together to overcome these and to steer the policies of the European Union and its Member States towards the founding principles of the Union and its principal objectives as stated in Articles 2 and 3 TEU.



Miguel Ángel Martínez  
Vice-President



Othmar Karas  
Vice-President



## 1. Introduction

For the third time since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon we present you an annual report on developments in interparliamentary relations between the European Parliament and national Parliaments. Unlike its precursors, the annual report for 2013/2014 does not only focus on developments in the reporting period. Instead, it also outlines the longer-term trends and prospects in interparliamentary cooperation. As we approach the end of this legislative term, and four years after the new provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon on interparliamentary cooperation and the role of national Parliaments came into operation, it is time to analyse the progress in implementing the new Treaty. To this end, a final chapter on the trends in interparliamentary relations in the period 2009-2014 has been added to this year's report.

## 2. Key developments and trends in interparliamentary cooperation

### 2.1 The Interparliamentary Conference on Economic Governance of the EU

*Recent developments in European economic governance, including the adoption of the intergovernmental Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG/"Fiscal Compact") and of several legislative measures - the so-called "Six Pack" and "Two Pack" - in reaction to the economic and financial crisis, have transformed European governance considerably. At the same time, these developments have raised a number of concerns, in particular about democratic legitimacy and accountability. While these fundamental principles have to be guaranteed at the level at which decisions are taken and implemented, the European Parliament has long held the view that interparliamentary cooperation has a crucial complementary role to play in that respect.<sup>1</sup> On the initiative of EP Committees involved in the area of economic governance, namely the Committees on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON), on Budget (BUDG) and on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL), and bolstered by the support of the EU Speakers' Conference for such a meeting, the EP proceeded to host an interparliamentary conference on the European Semester for Economic Policy Coordination in February 2012.*

One year later, in January 2013, the meeting was developed further and was renamed the *European Parliamentary Week on the European Semester*. The three interparliamentary committee meetings organised in the framework of this week were the most successful meetings in terms of turnout with a participation of an overall 100 members from 33 parliamentary chambers (from 26 Member States) and around 70 participating MEPs. The discussions focused on the European Semester, democracy and subsidiarity, the impact of the European Semester on austerity measures and growth prospects, the fight against youth unemployment, the social impact of economic adjustment programmes in Member States experiencing financial difficulties, as well as the role of the EU budget in supporting the achievement of Member States' European Semester objectives.

In a letter sent to the Speakers of all national Parliaments after the event, EP President Schulz underlined that the debates "allowed the participants to discuss in a very constructive atmosphere and in a spirit of genuine cooperation the various priorities and policies under the Semester and learn from each other's experiences in improving and implementing them",

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<sup>1</sup> See European Parliament Resolution of 1 December 2011, on the European Semester Policy Coordination, Preamble, pars. E, F and J.



which "reinforces the democratic dimension of the European semester both at national and EU levels."

In the meantime, the provisions of the Fiscal Compact foresee the organisation of an interparliamentary conference "...to discuss budgetary policies and other issues covered under [that] Treaty".<sup>2</sup> During the Speakers' Conference in Nicosia in April 2013, an agreement was reached to implement the provisions of Article 13 TSCG. This opens up new possibilities for parliamentary oversight via a more intensified interparliamentary cooperation in the framework of economic governance. Each year, in autumn, one Conference is to be organised by the Parliament of the Member State holding the presidency of the Council in its premises. The second is to be jointly organised by the EP and the Parliament of the Member State holding the presidency of the Council early each year in the premises of the EP in Brussels.

In line with this agreement, the first Conference on Article 13 was organised in Vilnius, on 16-17 October 2013. Parliamentarians discussed a broad range of issues pertaining to the economic governance of the EU such as: the framework for post-crisis economic governance; banking union and financial integration in the EU; and budgetary consolidation and structural reforms in Europe.

The second Conference on economic governance was co-organised by the EP and the Hellenic Parliament on 20-22 January 2014 in the EP premises in Brussels. The Conference attracted a record number of participants. Around 150 members of national Parliaments (MPs), 60 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and another 100 officials from national Parliaments took part in the three-day event which offered the opportunity to hold discussions on topics ranging from *Enhanced fiscal surveillance in EMU* to *The democratic legitimacy of economic adjustment programmes*. Like in previous years, the Conference combined a number of plenary sessions with parallel committee meetings of the Committees on Economic and Monetary Affairs, on Budget and on Employment and Social Affairs. It is worth noting that the EP official calendar for 2014 established a novelty, that is it now indicates a specific week which is marked as "European Parliamentary Week" during which the event is to take place. The next Conference on Article 13 TSCG is scheduled to take place in Rome in the autumn of 2014.

## **2.2 The yellow card on the proposal on the establishment of a European Public Prosecutor's Office ("EPPO proposal")**

*The Treaty of Lisbon is often labelled "the Treaty of Parliaments", not least because its Protocol No 2 provides the right to national Parliaments to scrutinise the compliance of draft EU legislation with the principle of subsidiarity. In 2012, for the first time since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, a Commission proposal triggered the so-called "yellow card" procedure, i.e. a compulsory review by the issuing institution. In September 2012 the Commission decided to withdraw its so-called "Monti II" proposal, although not on the grounds of non-compliance with the subsidiarity principle, but because it had concluded that the proposal was unlikely to "gather the necessary political support within the EP and the Council to enable its adoption".*

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<sup>2</sup> Article 13 TSCG.

In 2013 the compulsory review procedure ("yellow card") was triggered for a second time. Thirteen reasoned opinions were received from national Parliaments/chambers with respect to the Proposal for a Council Regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO).<sup>3</sup>

The reasoned opinions raised a number of objections to the proposal, including failure of the Commission to comply with essential procedural requirements, i.e., inclusion of a detailed statement in the Commission's explanatory memorandum; lack of sufficient substantiation of the added value of the establishment of the EPPO vis à vis the performance of the Member States' judicial systems; the belief that the "supranational model" of the EPPO would disproportionately limit the Member States' existing sovereignty in the field of criminal law, and the preference to strengthen the existing forms of cooperation such as OLAF, or to introduce preventing measures at the point of application of EU funds.

Within one month the Commission provided an analysis of the reasoned opinions.<sup>4</sup> In each case it concluded that its proposal complies with the principle of subsidiarity. The Commission therefore concluded overall that a withdrawal or amendment of the proposal was not required and that the proposal would be maintained. The Commission added, however, that it will take into account the reasoned opinions during the legislative process. The European Parliament has recently adopted its position in first reading based on a report of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs.<sup>5</sup>

### **2.3 Deepening interparliamentary cooperation in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**

*Following the Conclusions of the EU Speakers' Conference in Warsaw in 2012 the first Interparliamentary Conference for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) took place in Paphos (Cyprus). At the time the working methods for future meetings were decided, e.g. the size of delegations, the association of the EP to the organisation of the meetings and their frequency.*

In 2013, the second and third Conferences for CFSP/CSDP took place: in Dublin on 24-25 March organised by the Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*, focussing on conflict prevention, the comprehensive approach in the Horn of Africa and on the Middle East Peace Process, and on 4-6 September in Vilnius organised by the Lithuanian *Seimas*, focussing on the Eastern Partnership, the European Council meeting in December 2013 on defence and Syria.

In the run up to both Conferences, the European Parliament closely cooperated with the presidency parliament, in organising the Conference (agenda and invited speakers), contributing to the drafting of the conclusions, as well as in the work on the revision of the current rules of procedure.

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<sup>3</sup> COM (2013) 534. The ROs made up for 18 out of a total 56 votes, thus surpassing the threshold which is required for draft legislative acts falling in the scope of the area of freedom, security and justice (on the basis of Article 76 TFEU).

<sup>4</sup> COM (2013) 851, Communication of 27 November 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Position of the European Parliament adopted at first reading on 25 February 2014 with a view to the adoption of Regulation (EU) No .../2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council adapting to Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union a number of legal acts in the area of Justice providing for the use of the regulatory procedure with scrutiny; P7\_TC1-COD(2013)0220.

In accordance with the decisions of the EU Speakers' Conference and the Conclusions of the first IPC, an *ad hoc* review committee is currently conducting an initial review of the practical arrangements for these Conferences, with a view to submitting proposals for consideration to the Speakers' Conference which will be held in Rome in the spring of 2015. The main thrust of these recommendations is to work on improving the Conference based upon its current rules of procedure, such as ensuring more focussed debates, developing parallel workshops and producing shorter operational conclusions. There are still proposals discussed which go in the direction of developing the Conference into a fully-fledged parliamentary assembly. In line with the Conclusions of the EU Speakers' Conference in Stockholm 2010 the European Parliament is not in favour of such changes.

## **2.4 EU Parliaments in global governance**

Over the past decades governments have created a large number of international organisations and informal groupings. In many of these bodies, governments or their representatives make decisions or adopt policy orientations which affect the lives of people around the globe. Global governance must not be left to governments and diplomats alone, but must involve the citizens and their elected representatives. Parliamentarians must play a role in this process. While progress has been made in the recent past, and many of these organisations have some kind of parliamentary dimension, the current situation is still far from being satisfactory.

This is why the European Parliament Vice-Presidents responsible for relations with national Parliaments, Miguel Angel Martínez and Othmar Karas, organised a Parliamentary Forum on "EU Parliaments in global governance". The event took place on 18 February 2014 at the European Parliament premises in Brussels. It brought together 28 Members of national Parliaments from 16 Parliamentary Chambers in 14 countries, 8 Members of the European Parliament, representatives of EU institutions, international organisations and NGOs.

In a lively debate, conference participants discussed the role of parliaments and democracy in the age of "global domestic politics", the activities of Europe's Parliaments in multinational organisations and international fora, and presented global initiatives and networks that bring together Parliamentarians who work on the same topics.<sup>6</sup>

## **3. Institutional parliamentary cooperation**

### **3.1 The Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs (COSAC)**

*In 2013 COSAC, the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs, established in November 1989 in Paris, celebrated its 50th plenary session in Vilnius. It is unique in that it is the only interparliamentary forum enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon (Protocol No 1). The national Parliament of the Member State holding the rotating Council presidency plays a leading role in defining the direction and work of COSAC. It is supported by a Presidential Troika of which the European Parliament is a permanent member and can rely on the organisational backing of a small secretariat, hosted by the EP and led by an official seconded from a national Parliament ('Permanent Member').*

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<sup>6</sup> All meeting documents and background information are available on the conference website <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/webnp/cms/pid/1983>.

The trend towards a more consensual approach, established since the Polish presidency of COSAC in 2011, was consolidated in 2013. Throughout the Irish and the Lithuanian Presidencies the European Parliament contributed significantly to the works of COSAC. In the two plenary meetings in Dublin and Vilnius several Members of the European Parliament played an active role. The Irish Oireachtas and the Lithuanian Seimas invited four Members of the European Parliament to address the XLIX and L COSAC plenary meetings as keynote speakers and one MEP as first responder. Their speeches and responses to questions from the floor contributed to creating a truly European and interparliamentary debate on topics such as the development policy, the European elections 2014, democratic legitimacy in the EU, the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy and enlargement and neighbourhood policy. In addition, the composition of the EP delegations to Dublin and Vilnius included Members from several EP committees thus facilitating interventions by MEP specialised on the topics on the agenda.

It can also be noted with satisfaction that other Parliaments engaged wholeheartedly in the discussions and contributed to the liveliness of the COSAC debates. With keynote speakers from national Parliaments and the EP the interparliamentary nature of debates at COSAC meetings was clearly fostered. Moreover, the invitation of the former President of the European Parliament, Pat Cox, to Vilnius, where he delivered a strong testimony of the European Parliament's parliamentary diplomacy exemplified by his mission to Ukraine added another facet to the interparliamentary exchange.

Both presidency Parliaments made successful attempts to innovate and refresh the format of COSAC meetings by, *inter alia*, introducing a panel discussion, providing a forum to young citizens representing minority groups and scheduling (well attended and lively) informal lunch-time sessions on parliamentary practices in selective EU scrutiny and on the role of national Parliaments in shaping and scrutinising EU decision-making respectively. In addition to the ordinary COSAC meeting, the Lithuanian presidency organised a series of connected side events, such as a 'Baltic Sea Parliamentary Forum' and the first ever 'COSAC Women's Forum' which could become an avenue to explore further in the future.

COSAC plenary meetings are traditionally preceded by meetings of the main political groups that are either presided or co- presided by the Co-Chairs of the EP delegation. The Lithuanian presidency, for the first time, asked COSAC delegates from national Parliaments to register for the meeting including giving an indication of their political affiliation which facilitated the organisation of group meetings and increased the attendance remarkably. The minutes of the L COSAC meeting were the first ones to indicate the political family affiliation of speakers, thus contributing to the politicisation of COSAC.

It became obvious during COSAC meetings and in the bi-annual reports in 2013 that a number of national Parliaments are frustrated by their insufficient involvement in European affairs, including their powers of scrutiny of their governments. These Parliaments are putting pressure for a greater involvement in the European decision-making process, in particular the legislative process, with or without Treaty changes. As a result, the EP delegation, representing an EU institution, had to insist time and again that the EU Treaties have to be respected. It also had to remind national Parliaments, when it came to the adoption of the Contributions and the Conclusions, that the European Parliament is also a member of COSAC, and that, as a consequence, the adopted texts have to respect the role and prerogatives of the EP as a Union institution. Where this approach was unsuccessful the EP delegation had to dissociate itself from the decisions taken by highlighting that it rejected

"any interpretation of proposals contained in the Contribution [...] which would go beyond the letter or the spirit of the Treaties [...] and the current balance between national and European parliamentary institutions".

### **3.2 The Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the EU (EUSC)**

*The EUSC is the steering body of interparliamentary cooperation and meets in the spring of each year in the country that held the EU Council presidency during the second semester of the previous year. The EUSC is preceded by a preparatory meeting of the Secretaries General of the participating countries.<sup>7</sup>*

The EU Speakers' Conference which took place in Nicosia from 21 to 23 April 2013, with the active involvement of President Martin Schulz, reached an agreement on the modalities of the implementation of Article 13 TSCG (→ 2.1).

When discussing the role of EU national Parliaments and the European Parliament in enhancing democracy and human rights in third countries, Speakers stressed that peer to peer partnership and assistance could help towards establishing well-functioning Parliaments, which should be characterised by mutual and reciprocal respect, equal and effective representation, transparency, accountability and effectiveness at both national and international level. Speakers encouraged national Parliaments and the European Parliament to pursue their activities in this domain, including technical assistance, exchange and twinning programmes.

The Speakers also discussed how to bring citizens closer to the European Union and concluded that Parliaments should act as facilitators of debates on EU matters (both at the national level and at an interparliamentary level) and that interparliamentary cooperation should include the exchange of information on providing further impetus to raising awareness among the citizens on their rights and on EU topics in general. They especially emphasised the need to encourage citizens to exercise their electoral rights and stress the need to ensure that the relevance of the decisions taken at the EU level, as well as the impact on their lives is abundantly clear to the citizens in order to foster citizens' participation in the elections for the European Parliament.

With regard to the question about what parliaments could do to strengthen social cohesion in times of austerity, the Speakers underlined that parliaments of the European Union have to ensure that the implementation of the European Semester is conducted in a democratic and transparent way, respecting the principle of democratic accountability. Further, that parliaments should be closely involved in shaping and implementing the framework for stronger economic and social reforms at the national level.

The Speakers also welcomed the increased efforts and means to promote IPEX (→ 6.1) as the main technical support instrument for the exchange of information between EU Parliaments and with European institutions on EU related issues. They endorsed the proposal that IPEX should host documents for further interparliamentary conferences (→ 2.1 and 2.3) alongside the existing webpage for the Conference of Speakers.

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<sup>7</sup> All documents relating to EUSCs and the preparatory meetings of Secretaries General can be accessed via the IPEX website [www.ipex.eu](http://www.ipex.eu).

### **3.3. Relations with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)**

*The Agreement between the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe signed in 2007 obliged the two institutions to strive for better cooperation and coordination of activities. Both institutions changed their respective rules of procedures accordingly which put special emphasis on effective working relations between the competent committees on both sides. Also the EP Conference of Presidents had regular exchanges with the Presidential Committee of PACE in order to scrutinize the state of relations and the fields of improvements. A so-called Joint Informal Body of representatives from EP committees and from PACE agreed on the procedure for the involvement of the European Parliament in the nomination of judges to the European Court of Human Rights.*

However, it was stated at various occasions that the spirit of the agreements and declarations was implemented too rarely into concrete action. In particular, the monitoring of fundamental rights bears the risk of establishing parallel structures and parallel standards in the two assemblies. Eventually, the accession of the European Union to the European Convention of Human Rights opens a strong opportunity to overcome the risk of getting deeper into a counter-productive competition.

Disagreement within the EU Council of Ministers has further delayed the accession of the European Union to the European Convention of Human Rights. Hopefully this will be achieved in 2014. If this is the case, it will constitute an opportunity for a closer cooperation between the European Parliament and the Council of Europe at political, as well as administrative level. The meeting of the Conference of Presidents with the Presidential Committee of the political groups of the Parliamentary Assembly on 9 January 2014 underlined the need for more complementarity and better synergies between the two institutions in matters of common concern. In his speech at the Winter Session 2014 of the Parliamentary Assembly, President Schulz spoke in favour of a deeper and sustainable cooperation in particular in the field of election observation.

## **4. Interparliamentary meetings**

### **4.1 Interparliamentary Meetings - more focussed exchanges between experts**

*Over recent years a set of three main formats of interparliamentary meetings have been developed to provide fora for the exchange of information and views on chosen topics. Interparliamentary Committee Meetings (ICM) are meetings that are organised on the initiative of one or more EP committees with the assistance of the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments. They bring together Members of specialised EP committees and corresponding committees of national Parliaments. These meetings should not be confused with Joint Committee Meetings (JCM) or Joint Parliamentary Meetings (JPM) which are jointly organised by the European Parliament and the Parliament of the country that holds the presidency of the Council of the EU. JPMs are meetings on broad political topics while JCMs are meetings between sectoral committees of the EP and committees of the national Parliaments and mainly cover the policy areas where the EU has legislative powers under the ordinary legislative procedure.*

In 2013, 17 Interparliamentary Committee Meetings and workshops were organised. This marks the highest number of ICMs ever recorded, involving 14 standing and special EP committees. A total of 374 Members from national Parliaments (plus 9 from non-EU

countries) and 396 MEPs participated in these meetings. Topics discussed ranged from the *free movement for citizens*, to the *European Semester for economic policy coordination* (for which the three most directly concerned EP committees joined forces), to the *common European sales law*, to the *future of European defence*. In addition, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy co-hosted a Joint Committee Meeting with its Lithuanian counterpart on the *EU internal energy market for the 21st century*, one of the most important priorities of the Lithuanian presidency. This meeting was attended by 32 Members from national Parliaments (plus four from non-EU countries).

In addition to the EPW (→ 2.1) the most successful single interparliamentary meeting in terms of attendance was the ICM of the Committees on Legal Affairs and on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on the "Creation of an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice: State of play regarding police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters" which was attended by 35 members from 21 national Parliaments (26 chambers), including Croatia and Norway. Success, however, cannot be measured according to numbers only, since some of the meetings organised in 2013 like in previous years intentionally took the format of Chairs-only meetings with a view to allowing for more focussed discussion.

Compared to 2012, the thematic focus of ICMs in 2013 shifted away from topics linked to the legislative agenda of the Parliament's committees and addressed, *inter alia*, broader questions like "Do citizens enjoy free movement?", "Policy coherence for development: how the European Parliament and national Parliaments can work together", "Women's response to the crisis" and "The future of European Defence". However, meetings on specific legislative proposals were continued (e.g. on gender balance in company boards; the common European sales law; Europol).

The year 2013 saw a development of new features in ICMs such as meetings on the equal and effective application of EU law (on environment), on the implementation of an EU strategic framework and action plan (on human rights and democracy) and the parliamentary scrutiny of expenditure. With the public interparliamentary discussion on economic governance as a complement to the intergovernmental decision-making procedure behind closed doors, another more recent feature was continued in 2013 (and 2014). If this trend was to continue, a new form of interparliamentary arena could develop in the future - a forum for parliamentary scrutiny, for a reality check how EU laws are implemented on the ground and a forum to bring topics to an open fore at European level where governments take decisions overnight. In short: a ground for more democratic accountability and scrutiny.

#### **4.2 Bilateral visits - a flexible and efficient formula**

*Bilateral visits offer the opportunity for a more informal and focused dialogue on the initiative of the visiting Parliament/Chamber. The European Parliament offers logistical support by providing meeting rooms and interpretation as well as covering expenses for working lunches in its premises.*

As in previous years, bilateral visits were rather frequent in 2013 with the UK parliament (both chambers) being the most active. Arguably the potential of bilateral visits has not been exploited to the full, as only 19 parliamentary chambers (including the Nordic Council) availed themselves of this important type of interparliamentary cooperation. This is all the more surprising since in this type of meeting national Parliamentarians have the opportunity to set their own agenda and conduct discussions with key players in the European Parliament



over matters which are of interest to them. In 2013 an increased number of 13 bilateral visits took place on the level of officials, an opportunity used by seven chambers for internal vocational training purposes. A full overview of the 43 bilateral visits in 2013, in which 124 MPs and 167 staff from national Parliaments participated, is provided in annex III.

#### **4.3 Videoconferencing: Going forward**

*Videoconferencing offers a lot of opportunities for interparliamentary cooperation. Over the last couple of years, the EP services developed a technical solution which enables videoconferencing with excellent image and sound quality and interpretation into several languages.*

Since 2013 this technology is offered as a permanent service in the European Parliament, and its official launch was accompanied by several promotion activities. In September 2013, the EU affairs officers from national Parliament could witness the capability of the new technology in a live multilingual videoconference between the EP in Brussels, the Lithuanian Parliament in Vilnius and the Portuguese Parliament in Lisbon. The European Parliament has also offered national Parliaments the possibility of joining one of its regular interparliamentary meetings via videoconference, and will aim to do so in the future whenever possible.

For practical reasons the new system is still subject to certain limitations, for instance regarding the number of EP meeting rooms equipped with this technology, the number of interpretation channels made available to the participating sites or the maximum number of such videoconferences with interpretation that can be held at the EP per week. In addition, it is important to note that a videoconference with a national Parliament can only be established if the equipment used by that national Parliament meets the same technical standards as the EP system. Experience underlines the importance of conducting technical tests at administrative level before a videoconference with a national Parliament is planned in greater detail.

In autumn 2013 the EP services therefore launched a technical survey among national Parliaments to gather up-to-date data on their videoconferencing equipment. In early 2014 the results were shared with all national Parliaments, which should facilitate the organisation of videoconferences in the future.

#### **5. The "early warning mechanism" - Protocol No 2 to the Treaty of Lisbon**

*One of the most significant developments in the EU legal architecture over the last years has been the implementation of Protocol No 2 to the Treaty of Lisbon. The Protocol gives national Parliaments the right to scrutinise draft EU legislative acts which do not come under the exclusive competence of the European Union, and oppose their adoption if they consider that the principle of subsidiarity has not been complied with. The Protocol provides a procedure for compulsory review by the issuing institution, normally this being the Commission, of a legislative proposal when reasoned opinions received exceed set thresholds.<sup>8</sup> Two procedures, colloquially known as the "yellow" and "orange" cards, are foreseen (in the latter case, the obligations are more stringent).*

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<sup>8</sup> One third of NPs voting against a proposal, or one fourth for matters in the area of Home and Justice Affairs.

This "early warning mechanism" has brought about changes to the working methods of the European Parliament, including modifications to its Rules of Procedure. From their side, national Parliaments have used this opportunity to scrutinise not only aspects relating to the principle of subsidiarity, but a range of other issues, including the substance of legislative proposals. Reflective of this, is the fact that from the 1546 submissions received from national Parliaments since the entry into force of the Protocol to the end of December 2013 (on a total of 439 legislative acts submitted to NPs for scrutiny) only 276 are "reasoned opinions", i.e. submissions opposing the adoption of a legislative act on the grounds of an alleged breach of the principle of subsidiarity. The remainder 1270 are what we refer to as "contributions" and discuss all sorts of other issues.

For 2013 in particular, 87 reasoned opinions were sent in respect of 115 draft legislative acts that were submitted for parliamentary scrutiny. National Parliaments sent an additional 226 contributions. This compares with 71 reasoned opinions and 221 contributions that were submitted in 2012 with respect to 79 draft legislative acts that came within the scope of Protocol No 2 in that year. One can therefore observe a slightly diminishing trend in relative terms between the two years, albeit in absolute numbers the amount of both reasoned opinions and contributions in 2013 is higher than that of 2012.

## **6. Tools for exchanging information and for networking**

### **6.1 Interparliamentary EU information exchange - IPEX**

*The platform for Interparliamentary EU information Exchange (IPEX) was established in response to a recommendation by the EU Speakers Conference in Rome in 2000 and was inaugurated at the EU Speakers' Conference in Copenhagen in 2006. Since then, national Parliaments of the EU, the European Parliament as well as candidate countries have contributed by uploading information related to EU matters. On 1 July 2011, after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009, a renewed website was launched to meet the new challenges ahead.*

During the year 2013, new IPEX features have been developed: two new subpages were created in the EUSC page in order to archive all documents related to the new Interparliamentary Conferences established by the EU Speakers' Conference at its meetings in Warsaw 2012 and in Nicosia 2013.

In the past two years, IPEX has been adapted to receive documents via the new European Commission platform for communication, called eTrustEx. This new platform became fully operational at the end of August 2013 and IPEX, together with national Parliaments, was the first recipient of documents sent by the European Commission through this new and secured channel of communication. In October 2013, the European Commission met the IPEX request to receive all those documents too which were previously sent exclusively to the Council; in consequence the European Parliament receives those documents now directly too. IPEX also included Croatia among the participating Parliaments and made Croatian the 24th navigation language in time for its accession on 1 July 2013.

When national Parliaments' reasoned opinions triggered a second "yellow card" in late October 2013, this was quickly known, also thanks to the timely uploading of the reasoned opinions issued by the national Parliaments on IPEX. A contributing factor has also been the

availability of English translations of the relevant documents. This is becoming a common feature more and more.

In 2013, the number of news on events and subjects related to EU matters in the "NEWS" section of the website posted by national Parliaments increased, thereby contributing to the exchange of information related not only to parliamentary scrutiny.

## **6.2 European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation - ECPRD**

*In 2013 the ECPRD run jointly by the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe included 65 parliamentary chambers from 53 countries and European institutions (including 41 Parliaments/Chambers in EU Member States). 119 Correspondents and Deputy Correspondents represent their respective parliament in the network and contribute to main ECPRD activities which consist of an intense exchange of information and best practice.*

Two hundred fifty four requests were submitted to the network and triggered 6328 replies which are in both cases fewer than in 2012. This decrease can be explained with high probability by the fact that the institution making the most requests, the German *Bundestag*, had elections and thus did not put forward the usual amount of requests.

The European Parliament replied in 33 cases, which is a smaller number than other parliaments, due to the fact that it reacts only to requests on parliamentary practice and procedures. More importantly, the European Parliament profited from its membership in the network and, in 2013, it submitted eight requests at the demand of different services of the House. Two requests were linked to the upcoming European Elections and concerned specific matters relevant to the end of mandate of MEPs. Another request provided data on the names of female parliamentarians in Europe and contributed substantially to the organisation of the "'Women in Parliaments - Global Forum' (WIP) 2013 Annual Summit", held in the European Parliament in November 2013. Other requests, such as one on travel agencies and another one on the external relations of parliaments, collected benchmarking data for on-going projects in the EP administration. The European Parliament invested again a significant budget into the improvement and further development of the ECPRD website.

The results and achievements of the past years show ECPRD as a real success story of interparliamentary cooperation on the level of administrations in parliaments. The information distributed through the network can hardly be found elsewhere. The seminars offer a space for experts in parliament for whom it is normally quite difficult to meet their counterparts for an exchange on best practices. The model of ECPRD is a source of inspiration for similar projects in world, in particular in Africa and Latin America.

## **7. Trends in interparliamentary relations 2009-2014**

The evolution of developments in the relations between the European Parliament and national Parliaments over the last five years has been spearheaded by the institutional and legal changes brought about by the Treaty of Lisbon, including the expanded scope of competences of the European Union, and moulded in an environment marked by the international economic and monetary crisis. The crisis, in particular, has prompted important new legal and other developments at the EU level. Many of these, however, raise serious questions about the degree to which principles relevant to parliamentarism, such as the principles of

accountability and transparency, are safeguarded. More specifically, new mechanisms created at the EU level on the initiative of the executive bodies (for instance, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM)) marginalise to a significant degree the role of parliaments, including the European Parliament.

Within this environment tensions between national Parliaments and EU bodies, including the European Parliament, are often evident, as many - though not all - national Parliaments have been deeply concerned about a perceived loss of their traditional role as people's expression of democratic will. Against this adverse economic, social and political background, nonetheless, interparliamentary relations have continued to develop with a view to responding to old and new challenges, to strengthen the ability of each parliament and all together to hold accountable the actions of the executive, to increase transparency, to promote dialogue and best practices, and to seek to reconcile differences. At least seven trends can be identified and are highlighted below.

The first trend refers to the enhanced formal involvement of national Parliaments within the EU institutional architecture. Article 12 TEU makes it clear that national Parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union. This principle is substantiated in Protocol No 2 to the Treaty of Lisbon which empowers national Parliaments to scrutinise EU draft legislation not falling under the exclusive competence of the Union. Yet, despite the fact that the Protocol has opened a way for national Parliaments to engage with EU bodies on matters beyond the principle of subsidiarity,<sup>9</sup> it has not escaped criticism. In particular, critics argue that the period for parliamentary scrutiny (eight weeks) which is provided under the Protocol is insufficient and that the replies of the Commission were too generalised and submitted with a long delay. The fact that national Parliaments have so far produced only two instances of compulsory review ("yellow cards") via the Protocol has also been criticised.

One could deduce that, despite efforts, be it through COSAC or informal meetings or through intensified informal coordination efforts via EP-based representatives of their administrations, national Parliaments have not yet managed to establish effective forms of cooperation on Protocol No 2 among themselves. The low number of yellow cards, however, could also be interpreted as evidence of a more scrupulous respect for the principle of subsidiarity by the European Commission. A third possible interpretation for the low number of yellow cards is the fact that not all Parliaments take the same view of a given proposed legal measure. It is particularly interesting to note that even within the same Parliament, the two Chambers may disagree on the compliance of a proposal with the principle of subsidiarity. For its part, the European Parliament has so far taken a mainly reflective position, given that the implementation of the Protocol relates primarily to the European Commission which is typically the issuing institution. However, on 4th February 2014 a resolution of the Parliament adopted by the Plenary tackles expressly the subject of subsidiarity and reproduces some of the main criticisms voiced in relation to the operation of the Protocol.<sup>10</sup>

A second trend in the area of interparliamentary relations over the last five years has been for interparliamentary "Conferences" to be decided by means of a political agreement in the EU

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<sup>9</sup> This is borne out of the fact that almost 80 per cent of the written submissions of national Parliaments in relation to draft legislative acts falling under the scope of Protocol 2 do not challenge their validity in terms of the principle of subsidiarity.

<sup>10</sup> European Parliament resolution of 4 February 2014 on EU Regulatory Fitness and Subsidiarity and Proportionality - 19th report on Better Lawmaking covering the year 2011 (2013/2077(INI)), points 21-30.

Speakers' Conference (EUSC). A notable example is the Conference on Common Foreign and Security Policy/Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/CSDP), which was established by the EUSC in its meeting in Warsaw in April 2012. According to observers, the IPC on CFSP and CSDP is steadily becoming the interparliamentary platform for EU's foreign, security and defence policy scrutiny, while avoiding the creation of new structures or assemblies. Regularly attended by over 100 national MPs and by a 16-MEP delegation, it provides a unique opportunity for an interparliamentary debate with the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the Commission on key EU foreign policy issues. More recently, in Nicosia in April 2013, the EUSC reached an agreement on the establishment and general principles governing the organisation of the Conference based on Article 13 TSCG. In both cases the interparliamentary fora established with the help of the EUSC reflect, on the one hand, the expanded activities at EU level of matters traditionally regulated at the domestic level and, on the other, the concern of parliaments to be involved in exercising accountability and scrutiny over these activities which by and large are driven by the executive.

A third trend is for interparliamentary means of cooperation to be provided for by the Treaties. This is evident in the inclusion of Article 88 TFEU, on the scrutiny of Europol. This contrasts with the traditional situation, where interparliamentary meetings were largely organised outside the scope of legal reference, with the notable exception of COSAC which is provided for in Article 10 of Protocol No 1 to the Treaty. It is also noteworthy that these means of interparliamentary cooperation adopt a more permanent, regular structure and often necessitate discussions between the various parliaments on their scope and modalities. The adoption of a regulation on parliamentary scrutiny of Europol is specifically foreseen in Article 88 TFEU using the ordinary legislative procedure. At the EU Speakers' Conference in Stockholm in 2010 and the Brussels Conference in 2011 the Speakers agreed on the need for scrutiny of Europol through an interparliamentary body bringing together representatives from national Parliaments and the European Parliament on a regular basis. The EP Committee on Civil Liberties (LIBE) was then entrusted with organising regular meetings on Europol with the corresponding committees of national Parliaments. In line with this, since 2010, annual ICMs have been organised by LIBE, most recently on 14 November 2013 on the provisions concerning parliamentary scrutiny of Europol's activities. This matter, together with other provisions of the Europol proposal, is currently negotiated between Parliament and Council following the adoption of Parliament's first reading position on 25 February 2014. Pending an agreement with Council, it is worth noting that this is the first area in which interparliamentary cooperation will be regulated by means of EU legislation. The strong involvement of EUSC in these areas also indicates that this body will continue to be an important forum for debate on issues such as democratic accountability and governance, and a catalyst for future developments in the area of interparliamentary relations. During its meeting in April 2014 in Vilnius, the EUSC addressed again "Interparliamentary Cooperation in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice", pointing to the desire of EUSC to be involved in the area of parliamentary scrutiny of Europol and the evaluation of the activities of Eurojust.

A fourth trend regards the fact that some forms of interparliamentary cooperation are diminishing in importance. In particular, the number of both joint parliamentary meetings (JPMs) and joint committee meetings (JCMs) has been decreasing significantly to the point that no JPMs have been organised since 2012 (in contrast with two per year previously). This trend reflects partly certain significant organisational difficulties which reduce the appetite

for them, and partly the fact that - particularly with respect to JPMs - they have limited direct impact on the on-going parliamentary activity and are suited for more general discussions.<sup>11</sup>

A fifth and rather related trend is that some existing fora of interparliamentary relations are in need of some reflection as to their future. COSAC is the body which can be cited as a notable example in this respect. In autumn 2013, COSAC celebrated its 50th biannual meeting. While the statutory role of COSAC is to be "a body for exchanging information and best practices between Parliaments of the European Union, in particular on the practical aspects of parliamentary scrutiny"<sup>12</sup>, during the last five years discussions at COSAC meetings were dominated by members of the national and European executives. These made up for around 60 per cent of keynote speakers. In contrast, less than 30 per cent of speakers came from the parliamentary sphere.<sup>13</sup> In all nine COSAC meetings from the Swedish presidency (2009) to the Lithuanian presidency (2013) just 16 per cent of debates were of purely interparliamentary nature, while in 63 per cent of debates the selected keynote speakers came only from executives (either European or national) without the involvement of members of parliament. One is therefore prompted to ask whether the purpose of exchanging information and best practices between parliaments which is favoured by the European Parliament remains the focus of COSAC's recent proceedings. However, it seems that for many national Parliaments the dialogue with the European Union executive is an essential part of the COSAC activities.

The involvement of MEPs from specialised committees in COSAC has not resolved the basic problem borne in its foundational composition, as a conference of members of parliamentary committees for EU Affairs with a generalist approach who put the focus of their contributions more on institutional matters than on (individual, specialised) policies. In the same vein, it could be observed that discussions between MEPs and national parliamentarians about specific policy areas tend to be held outside the COSAC framework. In light of the above, one might note the trend that the aim of creating an interparliamentary sphere of debate, at least on important specific areas of legislative action, currently tends to be realised within separate specialist fora rather than via COSAC.

A sixth trend is that, in contrast to the two previous trends, some other formats of cooperation are gaining in both numbers and importance. In particular, in line with the recommendations of the EP Steering Group for relations with national Parliaments, the number of interparliamentary committee meetings (ICMs) has been steadily increasing.<sup>14</sup> All in all, about 60 ICMs have been organised since 2009 on a great number of issues. Moreover, again in accordance with the recommendations of the Steering Group, committees now reflect on the foreseen ICMs six months in advance and send their proposals for validation first to the Conference of Committee Chairs and finally to the Conference of Presidents.<sup>15</sup> Following this

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<sup>11</sup> It may be reminded that JPMs were established in the aftermath of the rejection of the draft European Constitution as a means to invigorate the debate on European integration.

<sup>12</sup> COSAC Rules of Procedure, Article 5.2.

<sup>13</sup> 21 Members of the European Commission, including President Barroso (twice) and VP Šefčovič (10 times), the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy (once), the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (once), and EU officials (two) as well as six Prime Ministers, 18 national ministers and one national official; 10 active MEPs and two former EP Presidents as well as 11 active members of national Parliaments. The remaining speakers were three young citizens, five representatives from universities, institutes, foundations and two business representatives (together 10 speakers; 12 per cent).

<sup>14</sup> Steering Group on relations with national Parliaments: 'Recommendations to the Conference of Presidents', recommendation 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, recommendation 1.

a calendar listing all interparliamentary events is published and disseminated to all national Parliaments. The whole process of prior consideration and validation of planned ICMs aims at better coordination of interparliamentary activities and the avoidance of overlaps. To this end, this calendar also includes the interparliamentary activities of the presidency Parliament.<sup>16</sup> Yet, it must be noted that significant divergences exist between EP committees in the area of ICMs. Whilst, for instance, certain committees organise one or more ICMs on an annual basis, certain others have not organised any ICM during the last five years. What is more, despite the general predilection for ICMs, evidence from questionnaires and internal surveys on these meetings also points to the need for continuous reflection of their format, substance and timing.

It is the case, for example, that the "one-size-fits-all" approach hitherto followed in respect of ICMs may no longer best serve the interests of individual committees. In this regard, a noteworthy development during more recent years has been the organisation of chairs-only meetings. Certain committees, such as the Committees on Economic and Monetary Affairs and on Foreign Affairs have been organising such meetings with a view to a more focused discussion. Indeed it seems that the future of ICMs is to move towards more diversified formats, in line with the needs and objectives of each organising committee.

A final trend that can be observed refers to the increasing importance of technology in the area of interparliamentary relations. Videoconferencing, for instance, is gradually gaining ground as a means of holding interparliamentary meetings, offering significant advantages in terms of costs and travel time. What is more, IPEX has been completely revamped and is now available in all 24 official EU languages offering a reliable, timely platform for exchange of information. The interlink of technology with traditional and new means of interparliamentary relations is evident, amongst others, in relation to such fora as the EU Speakers' Conference, the Conferences on CFSP/CSDP and on Article 13 TSCG for which IPEX has dedicated pages hosting all relevant documents. Additionally, IPEX is instrumental to the implementation of Protocol No 2, serving as the main platform of available information of the various stages of parliamentary scrutiny in each EU Parliament/Chamber together with relevant documents, including reasoned opinions and contributions. With respect to the ECPRD too, technology has brought about significant improvements. Thanks to the financial investment of the European Parliament, the ECPRD website has become the central platform for exchanging and storing comparative information on parliamentary practices. An electronic workflow helps to organise smoothly the transmission of requests and replies and has been fully accepted by all participants of the network. A powerful search engine allows for exploiting better the knowledge database in order to save time, to avoid double work and finally to achieve best access to information. All these examples show the potential of technology to facilitate interparliamentary cooperation in many respects.

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<sup>16</sup> An overview on interparliamentary activities of the presidency parliaments can be obtained at: [www.IPEX.eu](http://www.IPEX.eu).



## **ANNEX TO THE 2013 ANNUAL REPORT**

- I. COSAC Meetings - Topics and Keynote Speakers**
- II. Interparliamentary Committee Meetings and other interparliamentary meetings**
- III. Bilateral Visits (including videoconferences)**
- IV. Early Warning Mechanism Data**
- V. ECPRD: List of comparative requests launched by the EP & List of Seminars and Statutory Meetings**

## ANNEX 1 - COSAC Meetings - Topics and Keynote Speakers

EVENT	TOPICS	KEYNOTE SPEAKERS / PANELLISTS
Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC, 27-28 January 2013, Dublin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priorities of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union</li> <li>• The future of Europe : towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Brendan HOWLIN, T.D., Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform</li> <li>• Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration</li> </ul>
XLIX COSAC (Plenary Meeting), 23-25 June 2013, Dublin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking Stock and Looking to the Future</li> <li>• The Future of European Integration</li> <li>• Delivering on Development</li> <li>• A European Future for Young Citizens</li> <li>• Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy – Maintaining Momentum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Taoiseach Mr Enda KENNY T.D., Prime Minister of Ireland</li> <li>• Mr Herman DE CROO, Former Speaker of the Belgian House of Representatives, and Mr Brendan HALLIGAN, Chairperson, Institute of International and European Affairs</li> <li>• Panel discussion with Dr Mo IBRAHIM, Chairman, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, <b>Ms Michèle STRIFFLER, Vice-president of the Development Committee of the European Parliament</b>, and Mr Barry ANDREWS, Chief Executive, GOAL</li> <li>• Mr Ruairi QUINN TD, Minister for Education and Skills, and interventions by three young European citizens: Nevin ÖZTOP (Turkey), Rachel CREEVY (Ireland), Marietta HERFORT (Hungary)</li> <li>• Mr Valentin INZKO, High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Mr Erwan FOUÉRE, Associate Senior Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, first responder: <b>Mr Miguel Ángel MARTÍNEZ, Vice President of the European Parliament</b></li> </ul>
Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC, 7-8 July 2013 Vilnius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union</li> <li>• Towards a Political and Economic Union: Next Steps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Linas LINKEVIČIUS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania</li> <li>• Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration</li> </ul>

<p>L COSAC Meeting (Plenary Meeting), 27-29 October 2013, Vilnius</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State of Play of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union</li> <li>• The jubilee L COSAC Meeting - Contribution of COSAC to strengthening of interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union</li> <li>• European Elections 2014: Platform for Debate on the EU Future with Its Citizens</li>   <li>• Parliamentary diplomacy – the EP-Ukraine – a case study</li> <li>• Implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy</li>   <li>• Democratic Legitimacy in the EU and the role of EU Parliaments</li>   <li>• Digital Agenda: challenges and perspectives: Cyber security - Benefits for business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H. E. Algirdas BUTKEVIČIUS, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania</li> <li>• Mr Laurent FABIUS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France</li>   <li>• <b>Mr Pat COX</b>, Former President of the European Parliament and <b>Mr Andrew DUFF</b>, Member of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament, rapporteur on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014</li> <li>• <b>Mr Pat COX</b>, Former President of the European Parliament</li> <li>• Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration, and <b>Ms Pervenche BERÈS</b>, Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament</li> <li>• Ms Eva KJER HANSEN, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Folketing, Mr Dominic HANNIGAN, Chair of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs of the Irish Houses of the Oireachtas, and <b>Mr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING</b>, Former President of the European Parliament, Member of the European Parliament</li> <li>• Mr Rudolf Peter ROY, Head of division for Security Policy and Sanctions of the European External Action Service, and Mr Ilja LAURS, Chief Executive Officer of GetJar, winner of “European Manager of the Year 2011 Award”, presented by the European Business Press (EBP)</li> </ul>
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## ANNEX II

### EP Interparliamentary Committee Meetings with national Parliaments in Brussels & other interparliamentary meetings (\*) Statistical information for 2013

(\*) all events are ICMs unless otherwise mentioned.

			National Parliaments			EP
<u>Committee</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>MP</u>	<u>National Parliament</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>MEP</u>
<b>JURI</b>	<u>Workshop</u> on Civil law and Justice: "Do EU Citizens enjoy free movement"	23 January	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>ECON/BUDG/ EMPL</b>	Parliamentary week in the framework of The European Semester	28-30 January	<b>100</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>AFET/SEDE</b>	<u>Exchange of views</u> with Foreign Affairs Ministers Carl Bildt & Radoslaw Sikorski: Towards a European Global Strategy:	21 February	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>FEMM</b>	Interparliamentary committee meeting on "Women's response to the crisis"	7 March	<b>14</b> + 2 TR	<b>13</b> + TR	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>ENVI</b>	Interparliamentary committee meeting on "Equal and effective application of EU environmental law-why it is not happening?"	26 March	<b>27</b> + 1 HR	<b>16</b> + 1 HR	<b>20</b> + 1 HR	<b>27</b>
<b>DEVE</b>	Interparliamentary committee meeting on "Policy coherence for development: how the European Parliament and national Parliaments can work together?"	23 April	<b>28</b> + 1 HR + 2 NO	<b>1</b> +1NR	<b>18</b> +1HR +1NO	<b>8</b>
<b>AFET/SEDE</b>	<u>Exchange of views</u> on " The future of European Defence: a NATO perspective" and Conference on " Understanding Political Islam: views from within"	6-7 May	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>CRIM</b>	Interparliamentary committee meeting on "Fighting organised crime, corruption and money laundering"	7 May	<b>19</b> + 4 HR + 2 NO	<b>12</b> + HR + NO	<b>12</b> + HR + NO	<b>12</b>
<b>JURI/FEMM</b>	<u>Exchange of views</u> Improving gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges	19 June	<b>12</b> + 1 HR	<b>9</b> + 1 HR	<b>10</b> + 1 HR	<b>8</b>

**EP Interparliamentary Committee Meetings with national Parliaments in Brussels  
& other interparliamentary meetings (\*)  
Statistical information for 2013**

(\*) all events are ICMs unless otherwise mentioned.

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>National Parliaments</u>			<u>EP</u>
			<u>MP</u>	<u>National Parliament</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>MEP</u>
<b>LIBE/JURI</b>	Interparliamentary committee meeting on "Creation of an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice: State of play regarding police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters"	20 June	32 + 1 HR + 3 NO	19 + HR + NO	24 + HR + NO	28
<b>JURI</b>	<u>Workshop</u> on "The proposal for a Common European Sales Law: the way forward"	10 July	7	6	6	6
<b>ECON</b>	<u>Exchange of views</u> "The 2013 cycle of the European Semester"	17 September	14	12	12	20
<b>AFET/DROI</b>	Interparliamentary committee meeting on "The implementation of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy"	25 September	19	12	13	18
<b>AFET/SEDE</b>	<u>Meeting opened to the chairs of EU relevant national committees</u> "The future of European Defence"	5 November	14	10	9	25
<b>CONT</b>	Interparliamentary committee meeting on "Towards better spending - Models of parliamentary scrutiny of expenditure"	14 November	18	13	13	8
<b>LIBE</b>	<u>Meeting opened to the chairs of EU relevant national committees</u> European Union Agency for law enforcement cooperation and training (Europol) and repeal of decisions 2009/371/JHA and 2005/681/JHA	14 November	7	6	6	43
<b>REGI</b>	Interparliamentary committee meeting on "Towards productive investment for growth and cohesion through improved synergies between local, national and EU level to deliver the EU 2020 strategy"	27 November	25	15	15	21
<b>ITRE</b>	<u>Joint Committee Meeting</u> on "The EU Internal Energy Market for the 21st Century"	17 December	30 + 3 NO + 1 TR + 2 XK	16 +NO+TR+XK	18 +NO+TR +XK	60
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>18 interparliamentary meetings</u></b>		<b><u>404 + 23</u></b>			

**EP Interparliamentary Committee Meetings with national Parliaments  
& other interparliamentary meetings (\*) in Brussels  
Statistical information for 2014**

(\*) all events are ICMs unless otherwise mentioned.

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>National Parliaments</u>			<u>EP</u>
			<u>MP</u>	<u>National Parliament</u>	<u>Chamber</u>	<u>MEP</u>
<b>ECON/BUDG/ EMPL</b>	<b><u>European Parliamentary Week</u> Interparliamentary Conference on Economic Governance of the European Union (Article 13 TSCG) The European Semester Cycles 2013 and 2014</b>	20-22 January	<b>136</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>58</b>
	<b><u>Parliamentary Forum</u> Hosted by Miguel Angel Martínez &amp; Othmar Karas, VPs "EU Parliaments in global governance"</b>	18 February	<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>FEMM</b>	<b>Interparliamentary committee meeting on "Preventing violence against women - A challenge for all"</b>	5 March	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>LIBE</b>	<b><u>Joint Committee Meeting</u> on "Future Priorities in the Field of Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs"</b>	19 March	<b>37</b> +1 AL + 2 XK + 2 ME + 1 TR	<b>24</b> + AL + XK + ME + TR	<b>19</b> + AL + XK + ME + TR	<b>60</b>
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>4 interparliamentary meetings</u></b>		<b><u>235</u> + 6</b>			

## ANNEX III

DG PRESIDENCY - Relations with National Parliaments Legislative Dialogue Unit - Institutional Cooperation Unit			
Bilateral visits - 2013			
<u>Date</u>	<u>Country / Chamber</u>	<u>Committee / Other</u>	<u>Type of visit</u>
<b><u>JAN/FEB</u></b>			
22 Jan	<b>UK - House of Lords</b>	Sub-Committee C EEAS visit to Brussels	Members' Working Visit
23 Jan	<b>UK - House of Lords</b>	Sub-Committee D Energy Inquiry	Members' Working Visit
28 Jan	<b>UK - IE</b>	European Affairs Committee of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly	Members' Working Visit
30 Jan	<b>UK - House of Lords</b>	Sub-Committees E & F Protocol 36 Inquiry	Members' Working Visit
31 Jan	<b>UK - House of Commons</b>	Public Administration Select Committee	Members' Working Visit
<b><u>MARCH/APRIL</u></b>			
04-05 March	<b>FI - Eduskunta</b>	Delegation of the Grand Committee of the Finnish Parliament	Members' Working Visit
04-05 March	<b>LT- Seimas</b>	Committee on European Affairs & Committee on Foreign Affairs	BUDG, ECON, ITRE, AFET, IMCO
07-08 March	<b>LT- Seimas</b>	Pre Presidential Visit	AGRI, ENVI, REGI, EMPL
18-19 March	<b>LT- Seimas</b>	Pre Presidential Visit	ECON, BUDG
09 Apr	<b>FR - Assemblée Nationale</b>	Member of the EU Affairs Committee	Members' Working Visit
22 Apr	<b>IE - Oireachtas</b>	Delegation from the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade	Members' Working Visit
<b><u>MAY/JUNE</u></b>			
13 May	<b>UK - House of Commons</b>	European Scrutiny Committee	Members' Working Visit
14-16 May	<b>EE - Riigikogu</b>	Officials delegation	Study Visit
27 May	<b>NL - Tweede Kamer</b>	Health Committee	ENVI Committee Members
30 May	<b>UK - House of Commons</b>	Officials delegation	Study Visit
25 June	<b>UK - House of Commons</b>	Transport Select Committee	Members' Working Visit
26 June	<b>Nordic Council</b>	Welfare Committee	Members' Working Visit
27 June	<b>UK - House of Commons</b>	Officials delegation	ENVI, ITRE
<b><u>JULY/AUG</u></b>			



<b>SEPT/OCT</b>			
24 Sep	<b>PL - Senat</b>	Chairs and members of 14 Committees	ITRE and LIBE
24-25 Sep	<b>SE - Riksdag</b>	Officials delegation	Meetings with officials from EP Committees
25-26 Sep	<b>LV - Saeima</b>	Speaker, Director General and various	Preparation for Latvian Presidency
26 Sep	<b>NL - Tweede Kamer</b>	Study Visit	Working lunch with MEPs
02 Oct	<b>UK - House of Lords</b>	EU Committee Economic and Financial Affairs	Members' Working Visit
02 Oct	<b>RO - Chamber of Deputies</b>	Speaker of the Chamber	Meeting with MEP Hannes Swoboda
14 Oct	<b>NL - Tweede Kamer</b>	Committee Assistants	Meetings with MEP Marietje Schaake and officials
14 Oct	<b>Nordic Council</b>	Delegation	Members' Working Visit
15 Oct	<b>IT - Senato della Repubblica</b>	Senators delegation	Members' Working Visit
17 Oct	<b>FR - Assemblée Nationale</b>	Member of the EU Affairs Committee	Member's Working Visit on endocrine disruptors
17 Oct	<b>UK - House of Commons</b>	Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee	Officials' Study Visit
17 Oct	<b>UK - House of Lords</b>	Sub-Committees A, B and E	Members' Working Visit
30 Oct	<b>FR - Sénat</b>		LIBE, FEMM
<b>NOV/DEC</b>			
04 Nov	<b>UK - House of Lords</b>	EU External Affairs Sub-Committee	Members' Working Visit
04-05 Nov	<b>DK - Folketing</b>	Officials delegation	Study Visit
04-05 Nov	<b>SE - Riksdag</b>	EU Coordination Department	Officials' Working Visit
07 Nov	<b>UK - House of Commons</b>	Welsh Affairs Committee	Members' Working Visit
12 Nov	<b>UK - House of Lords</b>	Sub-Committee on Internal Market, Infrastructure and Employment	Members' Working Visit
13 Nov	<b>UK - House of Commons &amp; UK - House of Lords</b>	Srutiny Unit and Library & Lords Economic Affairs Committee	Officials' Study Visit
25 Nov	<b>EE - Riigikogu</b>	EU Affairs Committee	Members' Working Visit
27 Nov	<b>Nordic Council</b>	Nordic Council Presidium	Members' Working Visit
26 Nov	<b>NL - Tweede Kamer</b>	Human Resources Managers	Guided tour in the EP
02 Dec	<b>AT Parliament</b>	EU Affairs Department	Officials' Study Visit
03 Dec	<b>DK - Folketing</b>	Officials delegation	Committee meetings
04 Dec	<b>ES - Cortes</b>	EU Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs Committee	Members' Working Visit

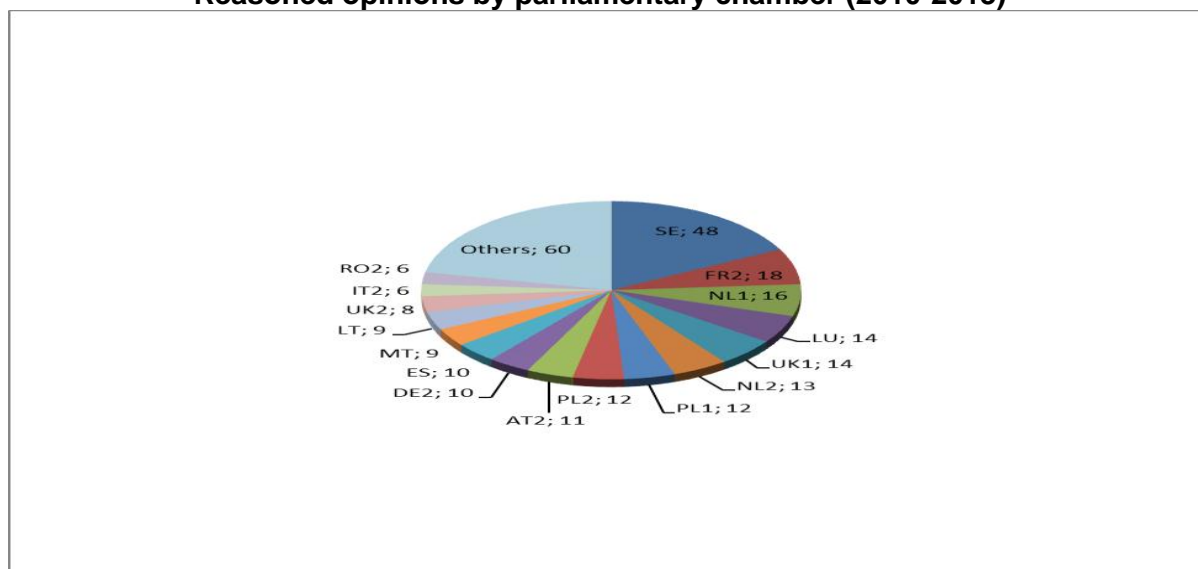
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OF  
NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS/CHAMBERS  
USED IN ANNEX IV**

AT1	Austria	Nationalrat	IT1	Italy	Camera dei Deputati
AT2	Austria	Bundesrat	IT2	Italy	Senato della Repubblica
BE1	Belgium	Chambre des Représentants	LV	Latvia	Saeima
BE2	Belgium	Sénat	LT	Lithuania	Seimas
BG	Bulgaria	Narodno sabranie	LU	Luxembourg	Chambre des Députés
CY	Cyprus	Vouli ton Antiprosopon	MT	Malta	Kamra tad-Deputati
CZ1	Czech Republic	Poslanecká sněmovna	NL1	Netherlands	Tweede Kamer
CZ2	Czech Republic	Senát	NL2	Netherlands	Eerste Kamer
HR	Croatia	Hrvatski Sabor	PL1	Poland	Sejm
DK	Denmark	Folketinget	PL2	Poland	Senat
EE	Estonia	Riigikogu	PT	Portugal	Assembleia da República
FI	Finland	Eduskunta	RO1	Romania	Camera Deputaților
FR1	France	Assemblée nationale	RO2	Romania	Senatul
FR2	France	Sénat	SK	Slovak Republic	Národná rada
DE1	Germany	Bundestag	SI1	Slovenia	Državni zbor
DE2	Germany	Bundesrat	SI2	Slovenia	Državni svet
EL	Greece	Vouli ton Ellinon	ES	Spain	Congreso de los Diputados
HU	Hungary	Országgyűlés	ES	Spain	Senado
IE1	Ireland	Dáil Éireann	SE	Sweden	Riksdagen
IE2	Ireland	Seanad Éireann	UK1	United Kingdom	House of Commons
			UK2	United Kingdom	House of Lords

## ANNEX IV

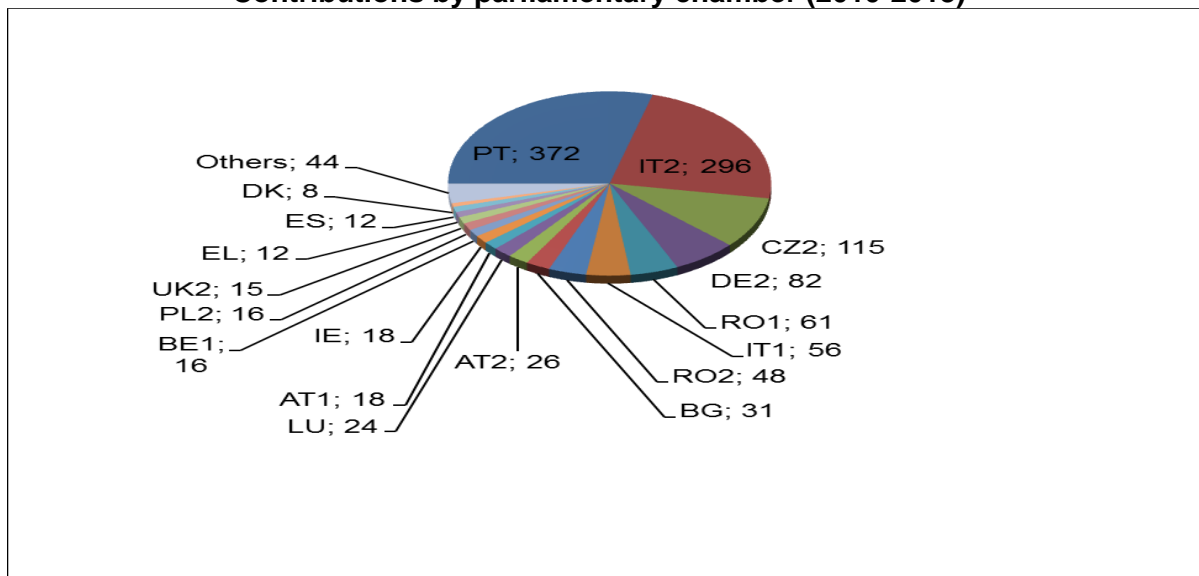
### Early Warning Mechanism Data

Reasoned opinions by parliamentary chamber (2010-2013)<sup>17</sup>



<sup>17</sup> Parliaments/chambers with five or less Reasoned Opinions summarised in "Others": 5 ROs: CY, IT1; 4 ROs: DK, RO1; 3 ROs: BE1, CZ1, CZ2, DE1, EL, FI, PT, SK; 2 ROs: AT1, BE2, BG, IE\*, IE1, LV; 1 RO: EE, FR1, HU, IE2, NL\*, SI1; 0 ROs: HR, SI2 (\*= jointly by both chambers).

**Contributions by parliamentary chamber (2010-2013)<sup>18</sup>**



<sup>18</sup> Parliaments/chambers with five or less Contributions summarised in "Others": 5 Contributions: PL1; 4 Contributions: CY; CZ1, EE, LT, UK1; 3 Contributions: FR2, NL2; 2 R Contributions: FI, FR1, MT, NL1; 1 Contributions: BE2; DE1, HU, LV, SE; 0 Contributions: HR, SI1, SI2, SK.

## ANNEX V

### ECPRD

#### A. Issues on which political bodies and administrative services of the European Parliament consulted the ECPRD network in 2013 through comparative requests:

- Office furniture and ICT equipment for Members
- External relations of parliaments
- Breach of the principle of subsidiarity in Article 8 Protocol No 2 Treaty of Lisbon - provisions related to parliaments
- Legal obligations regarding terminations of assistants' employment contracts
- Names of women parliamentarians in the EU
- Rules on taking office as member of a national Parliament
- Comparison of Audit opinions by Supreme Audit Institutions in the framework of parliamentary control of the implementation of national budgets (now with the documents)

#### B. 2013 ECPRD Seminars and Statutory meetings

Event	Place	Date
<b>2013 Seminars</b>		
"Share experiences and solutions for an ICT based Parliament"	Baku	28-29 November
"Modern technologies to support parliamentary activities - traditions and challenges"	Saint Petersburg	19-21 September
"New Fiscal Frameworks"	Vienna	20-21 June
Procedures and Practices for Debating and Approving Long Term National Strategies in Parliaments	Tallinn	30-31 May
"Parliamentary libraries and archives and their role in the preservation and conservation of the historical and cultural heritage of their countries"	Paris	31 May - 1 June
Seminar "Parli@ments on the Net XI - Realising the digital parliament"	London	2-3 May
"Parliamentary Research and the Plurality of Information Sources available to Members of Parliament"	Prague	3-5 April
<b>2013 Statutory meetings</b>		
Annual Conference of Correspondents	Warsaw	17-19 October
Meeting of the Executive Committee	Vienna	12-13 September
Meeting of the Executive Committee	Stockholm	21-22 March

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European Parliament  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/webnp/>**







ΕΒΡΟΠΕΪΣΚΙ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤΟ ΕΥΡΩΠΕΟ  
EVROPSKÝ PARLAMENT EUROPA-PARLAMENTET  
EUROPÄISCHES PARLAMENT  
EUROOPA PARLAMENT EYΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN PARLAIMINT NA ĦEORPA  
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EURÓPSKY PARLAMENT  
EVROPSKI PARLAMENT EUROOPAN PARLAMENTTI  
EUROPAPARLAMENTET