EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS

MINUTES

of the ordinary meeting of Thursday

21-09-2006

Paul-Henri SPAAK Building - Room 06B 01

BRUSSELS
CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS

MINUTES

of the ordinary meeting of

Thursday, 21 September 2006
from 10.00 to 11.30

Paul-Henri SPAAK Building – Room 06B 01

Brussels

CONTENTS

Page

1. Adoption of draft agenda ................................................................................................. 7
2. Approval of minutes of meeting of 14 June 2006 .............................................................. 8
3. Final draft agenda for the September II (25 to 28 September 2006) and October I (11 to 12 October 2006) part-sessions – scheduling of debates in plenary ......................................... 9
4. Statements by the President ............................................................................................. 11
4.1 The scheduled attendances of European Prime Ministers to the plenary in the context of the debate on "Future of Europe" .............................................................................................................................. 11
4.2 Meeting of the Conference of Presidents together with the incoming German Presidency in Berlin on 18 and 19 December 2006 ...................................................................... 12
4.3 Letter from Mr MAURO, Vice-President, asking for the Conference of Presidents to make a public statement defending the freedom of speech ......................................................... 13
4.4 Report by the President on his visit to Lebanon on 14 and 15 September 2006 ............ 14
5 Reform of parliamentary business ....................................................................................... 15
6. Summary report on the Commission’s 2007 legislative and work programme - Appraisal of implementation of the 2006 programme - Letter from Mr DAUL, Chairman of the Conference of Committee Chairmen ................................................................................ 16
7. Proposition to establish a Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EUROLAT) .................................................................................................................................................17

8. Proposal to revise the implementing provisions on delegation activities - Draft prepared by the secretariat and the political groups ..................................................................................................................................................18

9. Delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo from 6 to 11 November 2006 (political group week) - authorisation of 14 June 2006 to observe the EUFOR DR Congo operation there - Letter from Mr von WOGAU, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence ........................................................................................................................................19

10. Own-initiative reports and enhanced cooperation (Rules 45 and 47 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure) - Letter from Mr DAUL, Chairman of the Conference of Committee Chairmen ........................................................................................................................................20

11. Urgent matters and any other business ..................................................................................................................................................................................21

12. Items for information ........................................................................................................................................................................................................22

13. Date and place of next meeting ................................................................................................................................................................................................24
CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS

MINUTES

of the meeting of Thursday, 21 September 2006
from 10.00 to 11.30

Brussels

The meeting opened at 10.36 a.m., with Mr Josep BORRELL FONTELLES, President of the European Parliament, in the chair.

Present

Mr BORRELL FONTELLES, President

Political group Chairmen

Mr Vidal Quadras (acting) (EPP-ED)
Mr Schulz (PES)
Mr Watson (ALDE)
Mr Hugdhton (acting) (Greens/EFA)
Mr Wurtz (GUE/NGL)
Mr Farage (Co-Chair) (IND/DEM)
Mr Crowley (Co-Chair) (UEN)

Non-attached Members

Mrs Belohorska

Also present

Mr Priestley, Secretary-General

---

1 Present pursuant to Rule 23(2) of the Rules of Procedure.
Invited for items 3, 6 and 10 of the agenda

Mr DAUL, Chairman of the Conference of Committee Chairment

Invited for item 3 of the agenda

The Council

represented by  Mr  LOPEZ SABINO
Mr  DÍEZ PARRA
Mrs  GARABELLO

The Commission

represented by  Mr  FRUTUOUSO DE MELO
Mr  ANASTOPOULOS
Mrs  PREISING

The Economic and Social Committee

represented by  Mr  ALEXOPOULOS
Mr  OLIVEIRA

The Committee of Regions

represented by  Mrs  CHARLES-PIECK

* * *

Office of the President

Mrs  VERGER
Mr  AGUIRIANO NALDA
Mrs  OBERHAUSER
Mr  SAMPER
Mrs  MIGO
Mr  COSTELLO

1 Present for item 3
Office of the Secretary-General

Mr STRATIGAKIS
Mr CLARK

Secretariat

DG Presidency  Mr RÖMER/Mrs STENSBALE(1)/Mrs DUDZINSKA(1)/
               Mrs ALBANI/Mr URBIETA (1)/
DG Internal policies  Mr WELLE/Mr RIBERA D'ALCALÁ/Mrs VANDENBOSCH
DG External policies  Mr NICKEL/Mr PERILLO/Mrs ECKER
DG Information  Mrs F. RATTI/Mr DUCH GUILLOT
DG Finance  Mr VANHAEREN
Legal Service  Mr GARZÓN CLARIANA/Mr PENNERA

Mrs O. RATTI, Director for relations with the political groups.

Political groups

Mr PEDERSEN/Mr KAMP/Mr RYNGAERT/ Mr PAPI   (EPP-ED)
Mr HARLEY/Mr BEUMER/Mrs BAPTISTA/ Mr WINKLER   (PSE)
Mr BEELS/Mr RINALDI   (ALDE)
Mrs TSESTSI/Mr LINAZASORO   (Greens/ALE)
Mrs D’ALIMONTE   (GUE/NGL)
Mr VERHEISTRAETEN   (IND/DEM)
Mr BARRETT   (UEN)
Mr BUGALHO   (NI)

Mr KYST, Mrs LINNUS, Mr CALINOGLOU and Mr PEGAZZANO acted as secretary to the meeting.

---

1 Present for item 3
1. **Adoption of draft agenda**

The Conference of Presidents

- noted the draft agenda (PE 377.710/CPG) and adopted it in the form shown in these minutes.
2. Approval of minutes of meeting of 5 September 2006

The Conference of Presidents

- noted and approved the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of 5 September 2006 in Strasbourg (PE 377.662/CPG);
3. Final draft agenda for the September II (25 to 28 September 2006) and October I (11 to 12 October 2006) part-sessions – scheduling of debates in plenary

The Conference of Presidents

- noted the following documents:
  
  • a draft agenda for the September II (25 to 28 September 2006) and October I (11 to 12 October 2006) part-sessions,
  
  • a letter of 12 September 2006 from Mr GALEOTE QUECEDO on the consultation of the COR and the CES on the draft report "Housing and regional Policy" for a vote in plenary in due time (PE 377.724/CPG);
  
  • a letter of 5 September 2006 from Mr DAUL forwarding the recommendations issued by the Conference of Committee Chairmen concerning the scheduling of debates for the September II and October I 2006 part-sessions (PE 377.689/CPG and annex),

- considered the final draft agenda for the September II (25 to 28 September 2006) and October I (11 to 12 October 2006), on the basis of a note drawn up by the Directorate-General for the Presidency following meetings with the political group secretaries-general held on 20 September 2006, and adopted the proposals set out in that note, with the following amendments:

Tuesday, 26 September 2006

• decided that following a request by the Commission, the Commission statement on the Galileo programme (originally scheduled for Thursday, 28 September) should be taken after the report on Cohesion strategy (by Mrs KREHL);
Wednesday, 27 September 2006

- confirmed that due to the visit of Mr SINIORA, Prime Minister of Lebanon, to address a meeting of the Conference of Presidents open to all Members, the plenary will be suspended at 17.30; noted that the Conference of Presidents open to all Members will take place in the Chamber from 17.30 to 19.00 and that in line with the rules, no parallel meetings will be permitted.

Thursday, 28 September 2006

- agreed that the Commission statement on 'Future actions related to Patents' (originally scheduled for Tuesday, 26 September) should be taken after the Commission statement on the 'ASEM summit held in Helsinki on 10 and 11 September 2006'.
4. **Statements by the President**

4.1 The scheduled attendances of European Prime Ministers to the plenary in the context of the debate on "Future of Europe"

The Conference of Presidents

- heard a statement by the President informing the Conference of Presidents of the cancellation of the proposed visit of Mr PRODI, Prime Minister of Italy, to address the plenary sitting in Brussels in October 2006;

- heard the President confirm that Mr AHERN, Prime Minister of Ireland, will debate with Parliament the 'Future of Europe' at the Brussels plenary of November 29th from 15.00 to 16.30;

- heard the President request the group leaders to confirm the planned invitation to Mr GYURCSANY, Prime Minister of Hungary to debate with Parliament the "Future of Europe";

- heard Mr CROWLEY, Chairman of the UEN Group, who said that such a debate would now mainly concentrate on Hungarian political situation rather than Future of Europe and that he therefore considered the invitation not timely;

- heard Mr WATSON, Chairman of the ALDE Group, who said that the debate would be extremely topical and give an opportunity to the Parliament to react in an appropriate manner to an interesting political situation having risen in a Member State;

- heard Mr WURTZ, Chairman of the GUE/NGL Group, who said that the invitation should only be sent in case the political group leaders would be certain that the debate focused on Future of Europe and not on internal politics of an individual Member State;

- heard Mr VIDAL-QUADRAS, acting Chairman of the EPP-ED Group, who said that the idea of such debates is to have a constructive debate on Future of Europe and that
inviting the Hungarian Prime Minister under the current circumstances could cause ambiguity on the purpose of these debates;

- heard Mr SCHULZ, Chairman of the PES Group, who said that not inviting the Hungarian Prime Minister would be taking a political position on what is happening in Hungary and that he warned against such a decision;

- heard Mr HUDGTON, acting Chairman of the Greens/EFA Group, who favoured the invitation and also similar invitations to be sent to Poland and Slovakia;

- heard Mrs BELOHORSKA, on behalf of the non-attached Members, who favoured the invitation to be sent to the Hungarian Prime Minister and stated that the Prime Minister of Slovakia should also be invited to a debate on Future of Europe;

- confirmed, following its previous debates, its invitation to Mr GYURCSANY, Prime Minister of Hungary to debate with Parliament the "Future of Europe".

4.2 Meeting of the Conference of Presidents together with the incoming German Presidency in Berlin on 18 and 19 December 2006

The Conference of Presidents

- heard a statement by the President indicating that a plenary sitting be held on the morning of 18 December from 11.00 to 13.00 with Mr VANHANEN, Prime Minister of Finland, on the conclusions of the Finnish Presidency (in order to allow Members to attend this sitting, the central register will be open as from 17 December 2006);

- heard the President state that the Conference of Presidents will meet the future German Presidency on 18 and 19 December 2006 in Berlin;

- took note of the draft programme and timing of the meeting with the German Presidency (PE 377.752/CPG);
- **noted** that Mr LAMMERT, President of the Bundestag, was in favour of the proposal to organise a public forum on the future of Europe with young Europeans in the German Parliament during the visit of the Conference of Presidents but that he had asked that this event be postponed to June 2007 when the Bundestag will itself arrange a similar event (PE 377.751/CPG);

- **heard** Mr SCHULZ, Chairman of the PES Group, who indicated that he would prefer that the public forum took place in December and offered his assistance together with the one of Mr POETTERING, Chairman of the EPP-ED Group, and Mr WATSON, Chairman of the ALDE Group, to seek support for this event in the German Bundestag;

- **invited** the President to ask formally the President of the Bundestag to reconsider the possibility of arranging a public forum on the premises of the Bundestag on the afternoon of 19th December 2006 in order to allow Parliament to continue the tradition to include an event of this nature in its meetings with the incoming Presidencies.

4.3 **Letter from Mr MAURO, Vice-President, asking for the Conference of Presidents to make a public statement defending the freedom of speech**

The Conference of Presidents

- **took note** of a letter by Mr MAURO, Vice-President, requesting that the Conference of Presidents make a public statement defending the principle of freedom of speech in the context of recent public reaction followed the comments made by Pope Benedict XVI on Islam (PE 377.767/CPG);

- **held** a brief exchange of views on the matter with statements by Mr CROWLEY, Mr WATSON, Mr VIDAL-QUADRAS, Mr WURTZ, Mr SCHULZ and Mr HUDGHTON and **considered** that, in view of the current intercultural dialogue and sincere inter-religious debate, such a statement by the President of Parliament or the Conference of Presidents or by other institutions would be inappropriate.
4.4 Report by the President on his visit to Lebanon on 14 and 15 September 2006

The Conference of Presidents

- heard the President present a succinct report on his official visit to Lebanon on 14 and 15 September 2006 (PE 377.768/CPG);

- held a short exchange of views on the report with statements by Mr SCHULZ, Mr HUDGHTON and Mr WATSON thanking the President and the relevant services for an excellent overview of the situation in Lebanon;

- considered, following an invitation by the President, the possibility of reducing both the number of Members and accompanying staff to participate in the ad hoc delegation to Lebanon, Israel and Palestine authorised by the Conference of Presidents on 13 September 2006 in view of the security situation and the heavy burden such a large delegation would impose on the Lebanese authorities; and agreed to reconsider the composition of the delegation at the next meeting.
Reform of parliamentary business

This item was postponed to the next meeting following the preparatory meeting of the Secretaries-General of political groups on Tuesday 19 September 2006.
6. **Summary report on the Commission's 2007 legislative and work programme - Appraisal of implementation of the 2006 programme - Letter from Mr DAUL, Chairman of the Conference of Committee Chairmen**

The Conference of Presidents

- **noted** a letter of 15 September 2006 from Mr DAUL on the Commission’s legislative and work programme for 2007 - contribution from the Conference of Committee Chairmen; Annex - Summary Report (PE 377.732/CPG and annex);

- **heard** Mr DAUL present the key aspects of the summary report submitted by the Conference of Committee Chairmen and which sets out the European Parliament's priorities for 2007;

- **noted** a statement by the President indicating that the findings of the Conference of Committee Chairs concerning the recent trend of the Commission to change its annual strategy and legislative programme through the mid-term review was liable to reduce the reliability of the annual exercise and should be carefully looked into by Parliament;

- **heard** Mr WATSON, Chairman of the ALDE Group, who congratulated the Conference of Committee Chairs for their sound assessment of the Annual Policy Strategy and of the transparent way of conducting the work on the summary report in co-operation with the political groups;

- **heard** Mr SCHULZ, Chairman of the PES Group, who agreed substantially with the recommendations put forward by the Conference of Committee Chairs;

- **supported** the proposals as submitted by the Conference of Committee Chairs and **asked** the President to convey the summary report to the European Commission.
7. **Proposition to establish a Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EUROLAT)**

This item was postponed to the next meeting following the preparatory meeting of the Secretaries-General of the political groups on Tuesday 19 September 2006 and pending the availability of a note to be prepared by the services.
8. **Proposal to revise the implementing provisions on delegation activities - Draft prepared by the secretariat and the political groups**

   The Conference of Presidents, taking a decision without debate,

   - noted the following documents:
     
     • a document dated 19 September 2006 entitled «Implementing Provisions Governing the Work of Delegations - Final Draft » (PE 375.270/CPG/REV.4), prepared by the secretariat and the political groups;
     
     • a document dated 19 September 2006 from the coordination of the political groups with the title “Common reaction by EP Groups on the Rev.1 version of the non paper on "Implementing provisions governing the work of delegations"” (PE 377.760/CPG)
     
     • a letter of 4 July 2006 from Mr OBIOLS on the remarks by the Conference of Delegation Chairmen concerning the draft reform; Annex: optimising the role and activities of the delegations (PE 375.290/CPG);
     
     • a letter of 31 May 2006 from Mr OBIOLS on a fresh proposal to revise the implementing provisions on delegation activities; Annex 1: amendments; Annex 2: list of delegations and their responsibilities (PE 375.106/CPG and annexes).

   - adopted the new “Implementing Provisions Governing the Work of Delegations” as set out in the draft (document PE 375.270/CPG/REV.4) and instructed the secretariat to publish the text on Parliament’s intranet and internet pages following a legal and linguistic verification.
9. **Delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo from 6 to 11 November 2006 (political group week) - authorisation of 14 June 2006 to observe the EUFOR DR Congo operation there - Letter from Mr von WOGAU, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence**

The Conference of Presidents, taking a decision without debate,

- noted the above-mentioned letter dated 12 September 2006 from Mr von WOGAU (PE 371.343/CPG/COMPL);

- noted that the mission had been postponed and that the new proposed dates for the mission were 6 to 9 November 2006;

- recalled that the *ad hoc* delegation is to consist of seven Members, to be nominated by the political groups on the basis of the rolling d'Hondt system, where possible from among those members of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence that visited the headquarters of the EUFOR DR Congo military operation 10 and 11 July 2006 in Potsdam, and among members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the members of the delegation having observed (the first round of) the presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo on 30 July 2006;

- authorised, on an exceptional basis and in view of the major political significance, the sending of an *ad hoc* delegation to observe the military operation EUFOR DR Congo from 6 to 9 November 2006, i.e. during a week reserved for meetings of the political groups.
10. **Own-initiative reports and enhanced cooperation (Rules 45 and 47 of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure) - Letter from Mr DAUL, Chairman of the Conference of Committee Chairmen**

The Conference of Presidents, taking a decision without debate,

- noted the following documents:

  - a letter of 5 September 2006 from Mr DAUL on the recommendations of the Conference of Committee Chairmen concerning own-initiative reports (Rule 45 of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure) approved by the parliamentary committees at the Conference of Committee Chairmen of 5 September 2006 (PE 377.690/CPG and annexes);

  - a letter of 5 September 2006 from Mr DAUL on the recommendation of the Conference of Committee Chairmen of 4 September 2006 on enhanced cooperation (Rule 47) between committees (PE 377.691/CPG and annex).

- authorised (pursuant to Rule 45 of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure) the drawing-up of the non-legislative reports appearing on the list attached to the letter of 5 September 2006 from Mr DAUL (Chairman of the Conference of Committee Chairmen), without prejudice to the general debate on the organisation of Parliament's work in the future;

- authorised (pursuant to Rule 47 of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure) the application of the provisions governing enhanced cooperation between committees on the request attached to the letter 5 September 2006 from Mr DAUL.
11. **Urgent matters and any other business**

None.
12. Items for information

The Conference of Presidents,

Interinstitutional correspondence

- a letter dated 8 September 2006 from Mr KOSONEN, President-in-office of the Council, accepting 10 MEPs to attend the 12th United Nations Conference on climate change (COP 12) from 6 to 17 November 2006 in Nairobi (PE 377.735/CPG);

- a letter of 1 September 2006 from Mr BARROSO, President of the Commission, on the appointment of three Members representing the EP in a personal capacity to the Pharmaceutical Forum (Ms ROTH-BEHREND, Ms GROSSETÊTE and Mr CHATZIMARKAKIS) (PE 377.723/CPG);

External correspondence

- a letter from Mr Oscar BERGER PERDONO, President of the Republic of Guatemala, announcing that he will attend the EP’s part-session in December 2006 (11 to 14 December) (PE 377.734/CPG);

- a letter of 29 August 2006 from Mr Ali AHANI, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Brussels, on a letter to the group chairmen concerning the invitation sent to Ms RAJAVI to visit the EP (PE 377.733/CPG and annex);

- a letter 25 August 2006 from Mrs ITZIK, Speaker of the Knesset (PE 377.670/CPG);

- a letter of 23 July 2006 from Sheikh AL THANI accepting the invitation to visit plenary on 15 November 2006 in Strasbourg (PE 371.144/CPG/Ann);

Internal correspondence

- a letter of 12 September 2006 from Mr SCHRÖDER on sending a delegation to observe the second round of parliamentary and presidential elections on 29 October
2006 in the Democratic Republic of Congo - invitation - financial statement (PE 377.716/CPG);

- 2 letters of 5 and 20 September 2006 from Mr LICANDRO on the appointment of a full committee members and a substitutes (PPE/DE Group) (PE 377.720/CPG and Annex);

- a letter of 30 August 2006 from Mr SCHULZ on changes to the composition of members (PSE Group) in the committees and delegations (PE 377.721/CPG).
13. **Date and place of next meeting**

The Conference of Presidents

- decided to hold its next ordinary meeting Thursday, 28 September 2006, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, in Room R 1.1 of the Louise Weiss Building in Strasbourg.

* * *

The meeting closed at 11.30

* * *