

Introductory remarks at the Joint Parliamentary Meeting "Building a citizens Europe" 16-17 November 2009 by Speaker of the Riksdag Per Westerberg

Mr. President
Members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you from all over Europe to this Joint Parliamentary Meeting where you will discuss the parliamentary dimension of the future European Area of Freedom, Security and Justice – the so-called Stockholm programme.

Let me first thank President Buzek for the close and good cooperation in the preparation of this Joint Parliamentary Meeting.

Interparliamentary cooperation in the EU has become increasingly important and is performed within several frameworks as at the Speakers Conference and COSAC.

National parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning and to increase the democratic legitimacy of the European Union.

As national parliaments we are an active and constructive partner in helping to ensure that the measures taken by the EU are the best possible.

With the Lisbon Treaty, a specific provision on the role of national parliaments in the Union is, for the first time, introduced in the EU treaties.

This provision lists six different ways in which the national parliaments contribute actively to a well-functioning Union.

In relation to the area of freedom, security and justice national parliaments need to figure out how they are to contribute to the Union's work by helping to evaluate the implementation of the Union's policies and participate in the evaluation of Eurojust's activities and the political monitoring of Europol.

The role of the National Parliaments in this regard shall be defined in the regulations that, according to the Treaty, shall be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. The main purpose of the regulations is to lay down the structure, working methods, field of action and tasks of Eurojust and Europol.

Consequently, in the conclusions from the Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the European Union in Paris earlier this year the Speakers emphasised the role of national parliaments in the drawing-up of new priorities for European action in the assessment and monitoring of the construction of a European area of freedom, security and justice.

To follow up on the conclusions from the EU Speakers Conference, and because it is valuable to discuss these issues with parliamentarians who deal with them on daily basis, this JPM on the Stockholm Programme was arranged.

During the Swedish Presidency, certain aspects already have been highlighted at two of the interparliamentary meetings hosted by the Riksdag: The COSAC-meeting on 4-6 October addressed the subject as a main priority of the Swedish EU Presidency in a general political discussion.

The interparliamentary meeting on 11-12 October examined the issue of a balanced approach to legal security and the fight against organised crime, with a special focus on trafficking.

The headline for this JPM is called "Building a Citizen's Europe". The main issues on the agenda will highlight some of the matters that need to be scrutinized during the years 2010-2014, but also, where new working methods need to be introduced. Furthermore, the Swedish Minister for Justice will give us her vision of how the coming multi-annual programme will focus on and tackle new challenges.

Once again I extend a very warm welcome to you all, and I wish you good luck during the meeting.