

**Meeting of the Committees on European Affairs
of the Visegrad group countries**

Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovak Republic

Častá – Papiernička

18 – 20 April 2005

Conclusions:

Topic 1: TEST OF SUBSIDIARITY (The Third Railway Package)

Following the deliberations concerning the testing course of the Third Railway Package compliance with the principle of subsidiarity in the national parliaments of the Visegrad Group Countries the representatives of the Committees on European Affairs stated that:

- a) they find it necessary to repeat the test of subsidiarity in a clear and understandable topic that should be generally agreed upon, with a new European legislative proposal that will be published by the European Commission, thus made available in all EU official languages;
- b) European Commission on submitting the proposals should follow all the formal requirements, particularly it should present the foundations upon which it is laid with a view to justify its compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality including the qualitative and quantitative indicators justifying such a proposal.

**Topic 2: LEGISLATIVE AND WORK PROGRAMME OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR 2005**

Following the introduction of the subject and expression of opinions on the Legislative and Work Programme of the European Commission, which was submitted by the European Commission on 26 January 2005, the representatives of the Committees on European Affairs of the Visegrad Group Countries:

- a) stated that it is necessary:
- that the European Commission adhere to the condition of timeliness,
 - that the Programme be submitted in all EU official languages and
 - that it present a complex document with a description of contents of the envisaged legislative proposals (i.e. with the legislative intent)
- b) expressed their expectation that the communication between the European Commission and the national parliaments will be visibly improved;
- c) concluded that there is a need to have a continuous and permanent co-operation between representatives of the individual ministries and the European Commission bodies and
- d) stated that there is a functioning cooperation between the national parliaments and governments in respective member states with back-up of specific expert parliamentary bodies (such as Department for European Affairs under the Committee on European Affairs operating in the Chancellery of the National Council of the Slovak Republic or Parliamentary Institute operating in the Chancellery of the Chamber of Deputies in the Czech Republic).

Topic 3: FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS WITHIN THE EU

Following the opening speech and the exchange of views concerning the issue of transition periods in the area of free movement of persons under the Accession Treaty the representatives of the Committees on European Affairs of the Visegrad Group Countries:

- a) stated that the example of those Member States which opened their labour markets for workers from the new Member States prove that the previous concerns on endangering national labour markets and social securities of the citizens were not proven;
- b) call upon the EU 15 Member States (with the exception of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden) with regard to point a) to repeal the transition periods in the area of free movement of labour force prior to the originally stated expiry date with a view to achieve the goals of the Lisbon strategy, principles enshrined in the Constitutional Treaty of the EU and the equal status for all the nationals of the European Union;

- c) welcomed the envisaged conference covering this issue to be held at the end of 2005 in Prague and called upon the representatives of the EU 25 Member States to participate in this event, with a view to share the practical experience within this area.

Topic 4: PROGRAMME OF THE FOLLOWING COSAC MEETING
(17 - 18 May 2005):

1. Lisbon Strategy

The representatives of the European Affairs Committees of the Visegrad Group Countries:

a) expressed their approval:

- of the revised goals of the Lisbon Strategy adopted at the European Council meeting in March 2005;
- of equal implementation of the content of all its three pillars;

b) observed that:

- for successful implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, it is necessary to update the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy on national level and to ensure the cohesion of the strategies in terms of goals and instruments necessary to achieve these goals;
- it is necessary to ensure that the Lisbon Strategy is closely connected with the new Financial Perspective and the regional, rural and agricultural policy at the European level;
- it is necessary to ensure that the national development strategies are connected with the national financial perspective, ministerial strategies and development plans of the regional and local entities at national level;

c) recommend to pay high attention:

- to resolution of the issue of the transition period set for the free movement of persons as well as creating a single EU market in the field of the services as an instrument that will facilitate effectiveness and competitiveness of the European economy;

- to the level of the physical infrastructure of the member states (notably energetics, traffic infrastructure, services of the network industry and measures to protect the environment);
- to financing and support of education, science and research development as an instrument to increase effectiveness and to introduce innovations to the economic sector.

2. Exchange of views on the implementation of the EU budget in Member States

Representatives of the Committees on European Affairs of the Visegrad Group Countries exchanged their views on the implementation of the EU budget on national level and with regard to the specific and complex nature of the subject:

- a) agreed on a continuation of monitoring of the financial issues;
- b) agreed on the fact that it would become a permanent point of agendas of the future V4 meetings.

3. The Role of national parliaments in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

Following the exchange of views about the role of the national parliaments in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice the representatives of the Committees on European Affairs of the Visegrad Group Countries stated that:

- a) they encourage parliamentarianism as the keystone in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and also as the way of elimination of the democratic deficit in legislating EU acts in this area;
- b) specific questions pertaining to the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice in each case are to be scrutinized by national parliaments due to their sensitivity and direct

impact on the citizens of the Member States (as for example European Arrest Warrant);

- c) they encourage strategies of European Neighborhood Policy, development of border cooperation and cross-border traffic between the EU Member States and facilitating the border crossings between the EU Member States and the neighboring non EU Member States;
- d) they regard as positive the fact of the establishing of the seat of the European Agency for Management of External Borders in Poland (Warsaw), which entertain the hopes that seats of EU bodies shall be established in the new EU Member States.

4. Request of Ukraine for the status of observer in the COSAC

Representatives of the Committees on European Affairs of the Visegrad Group Countries:

- encourage efforts of Ukraine to gain the status of an observer in the COSAC meetings and support the proposal of the delegation of Poland to amend the Rules of Procedure of COSAC.

Topic 5: ROLE OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN BRUSSELS AND HIS/HER CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Representatives of the Committees on European Affairs of the Visegrad Group Countries stated that:

- with regard to a need of strengthening the role of the national parliaments in European affairs and in order to ensure better communication and coordination of the relations with the European Parliament they consider the activities of the permanent

representative of the national parliament at the European Parliament in Brussels as essential and efficient.

Topic 6: PARTICIPATION OF THE SPECIALIZED PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES IN THE EUROPEAN LEGISLATION SCRUTINY

Representatives of the Committees on European Affairs of the Visegrad Group Countries:

- exchanged their views on the co-operation between the Committees on European Affairs with the other specialized committees in the national parliaments and they observed that such a co-operation is in existence in various forms and depending on the national specifics.

Topic 7: CROATIA

Representatives of the Committees on European Affairs of the Visegrad Group Countries:

- recognize the goodwill of Croatia to fulfil all the conditions concerning the accession process and encourage the opening of accession negotiations of the EU with Croatia as soon as possible.