

**Opinion of the Committee on European Affairs of the Hellenic Parliament
concerning the proposals of the European Convention's Praesidium
on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union**

Athens, 12.3.03

The Committee on European Affairs ,

- considering the draft protocol of the European Convention's Praesidium on the role of national parliaments in the European Union as well as the Protocol on Subsidiarity and Proportionality (doc. CONV 579/03-27-2-2003)
- considering article 9 paragraph 2 of the Draft Constitutional Treaty that provides the control of national parliaments on the application of the principle of subsidiarity (CONV 528/ 03 - 6.2.2003)
- considering the report of Working Group IV of the European Convention, on the role of national parliaments, (CONV 353/02-22.10.2002) and the respective debate in the Plenary Session of the Convention, on October 28, 2002 (CONV 387/02)
- considering the report of Working Group I of the European Convention on Subsidiarity (CONV 286/02-23.9.2002) and the respective debate in the Plenary Session of the Convention on October 3 and 4, 2002 (CONV 331/02)
- considering the Declaration on the Future of the European Union, which was attached to the Nice Treaty,
- considering the Declaration of the European Council of Laeken, on the Future of the European Union,
- considering the Protocol attached to the Treaty of Amsterdam, on the role of national parliaments,
- considering its Opinion which was adopted unanimously on May 31, 2002, on the role of National Parliaments in the European Union,
- considering the Copenhagen parliamentary Guidelines for relations between Governments and Parliaments on Community issues, which were agreed at the XXVIII COSAC meeting in Brussels, on 27-1-2003,

A. assessing that a declaration on the future of the European Union, which points out the need to examine the role of national parliaments in the process of European integration is included in the Treaty of Nice,

B. assessing that the Declaration of the European Council of Laeken recognises the contribution of national parliaments in the legitimization of the European plan, as well as the need for greater democratization and transparency in the European Union,

C. assessing that a more legitimized European Union presupposes greater participation of national parliaments in its activities, especially through a more effective control of the European activity of Governments and through the control of the application of the principle of subsidiarity,

1. Considers that the proposals by the Presidium of the European Convention on the role of national parliaments lead to the right direction, especially in what concerns the national parliaments' ability to control the application of the principle of subsidiarity, the strengthening of their being informed by the Commission, the Council and the Court of Auditors, as well as the institutionalization of cooperation between the national parliaments and the European Parliament towards a more effective inter-parliamentary cooperation,

2. Deems, however, necessary, that the proposed upgrading of the role of national parliaments is awarded, in its totality, constitutional recognition, by relevant provision in the chapter of the

Treaty on institutions; also deems that the proposed upgrading becomes more substantial in order to express in a better way the contribution of national parliaments in the legitimized function of the Union,

3. Points out that the information of national parliaments, as strengthened by the draft protocol on the role of national parliaments (par.1,2,6 and 7), could technically be improved by a continuous numeration and by reference to the origin of information per institution; the obligation for information should also extend to all European Union institutions which take part in the legislative process, that is, to include the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions,

4. Stresses that the time for examining the legislative proposals of the Commission (par.4 of the protocol) should also concern the submission of amended proposals, limiting itself, in this respect,

5. Proposes that the Council meetings (par.5 of the protocol) should be communicated in the form of Minutes, with special reference being made to any reservations or positions expressed by Parliaments,

6. Deems necessary to underline that the inter-parliamentary cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments (par.8 of the protocol) should be expressed for reasons of effectiveness, especially at the COSAC level,

7. Proposes that the role of COSAC (par.9 of the protocol) be clarified in a better way, following the model of the Amsterdam Treaty Protocol, and be strengthened, for example, by the obligation of the Union's legislative institutions to respond to its positions,

8. Underlines the importance attached to the recognition by the Constitutional Treaty of the national parliaments' possibility to control the application of the principle of subsidiarity and proposes to improve the terms of its application by the restructuring of par. 7 of the protocol on the application of the principle of subsidiarity, following the model of par.6 and 7 (pointing out that the necessary number of parliaments should be equal to the two thirds of the total) and by providing for (in par.9) the obligation of the Commission to communicate to national parliaments its report concerning the application of the principle of subsidiarity,

9. Assigns its Chairman to take any necessary measure in order to communicate the present Opinion to the European Convention, the Greek Government, the Committees on European Affairs of the other national parliaments and the parliaments of candidate countries.