

## ***FINAL DECLARATION OF THE 4TH MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN SENATES***

*The Presidents of the Upper Houses,  
gathered at the Spanish Senate on February 28th, 2003,  
for the Fourth Meeting of the Association of European Senates,  
under the Presidency of His Excellency Mr. Juan José Lucas,*

- aware that the monitoring function constitutes today the central core of parliamentary activity;
- stating the important contribution of the Upper Houses in their function of monitoring our democratic regimes, due to the peculiarities of their representation;
- knowing that the close ties between governments and stable majorities have altered the significance of the classical mechanisms for parliamentary monitoring, thus entailing a better definition of the position of the minority groups;
- stating the important contribution that can be made from the Upper Houses to the greater transparency of political life, through public debates and the contrast between the multiple political options, with the support of new technologies;
- wishing to reinforce the role of the National Parliaments in the process of building Europe, so as to bring the citizens closer to their governing bodies when they are acting in the sphere of foreign policy and European Union affairs;

## ***HEREBY DECLARE***

1. their will to continue working together with a view to sharing their experiences, maintaining the impulse of democracy in their respective States and strengthen the legitimacy of the European Union,
2. their conviction that the existence of dual-chamber Parliaments reinforces the monitoring function entrusted to the legislative power by introducing diversification elements in political representation,
3. their firm will to deepen their reflections on the transformations in the monitoring function and their consequences on the structure and functions of the Upper Houses,

## ***EXPRESS***

- Their satisfaction for the offer of the Senate of the Czech Republic to organize the V Meeting of the Association of European Senats in September 2003.
- Their gratefulness for the proposals made by the Senate of Poland, the Bundesrat of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Swiss Senate, to host the meetings of the Association of European Senats of 2004, 2005 and 2006.

*The Presidents of the Upper Houses of the Member States of the European Union, and of the candidate countries*

**ALSO DECLARE**

that they have examined with interest the intense work so far done by the European Convention regarding the role of National Parliaments in the legislative process of the European Union.