



FINAL DECLARATION OF THE THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN SENATES

The Presidents of the Delegations of the Upper Chambers, members of the Association of European Senates, have participated in the Thirteenth Conference of the Association of European Senates on “The Senate and its mechanisms for collaboration with the regions and the local entities”, held on 17 June 2011, in Madrid.

The Presidents of the Delegations:

- Reaffirm the need to reinforce bicameralism as a fundamental element of a more complete parliamentary democracy; and to continue to contribute through stable multilateral forums for debate, to spreading knowledge of its advantages within the common European area.
- Highlight the role of the Upper Chambers in the process for approval of laws as a guarantee of better quality in the development of the legislative function.
- Recognize the importance of their contribution to the function of controlling the Government, as they complement, and enlarge upon the corresponding role of the Lower Chambers.
- Stress the advantages of a more reflective consideration by Upper Chambers of public issues which are of special concern to citizens.
- Highlight their contribution to the transparency of politics, through the public nature of their debates and the promotion of new technologies for accessing information.
- Attach value to the importance of cooperation between the European Senates, through the exchange of opinions, experiences and good parliamentary practices.
- State their determination to continue to foment the common values of Europe in regard to democracy, the rule of law, political pluralism, equality and the fight against gender violence, the respect for minorities and mutual cooperation.



The Presidents of the Delegations:

- Highlight the important role of the Senates as a link between the regional, local and European levels.
- Advocate promoting the possibilities offered in the Senates of contributing towards making the participation of the regional and local entities more visible in the adoption of common political positions which would strengthen the parliamentary democracy.
- State their intention of continuing to work together in order to delve more deeply into considering the different forms of collaboration possible between the Senates and the regional and local entities.
- Are pleased with the success of the implementation and launching of the early warning mechanism introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon last year, with the participation of the Parliamentary Chambers and, for the first time, the participation of the Regional Parliaments, which thus enter into the scope of European decision making.
- Look favourably upon the evolution of the constitutional role of the Committee of the Regions and advocate a better coordination of politics and of regional and local matters through this Institution.
- Feel it necessary to reinforce the role of the local and regional authorities in the definition and coordination of policies in order to consolidate the economic recovery and better define a sustainable strategy for growth and employment.
- Applaud, in this sense, the express mention of the need for participation and a greater involvement of the regional and local entities in the European strategy for 2020.
- Encourage a greater collaboration on the part of the different European regions in the debate which will begin this month in the European Commission on the new European Union's Cohesion Policy, which can contribute to the current negotiations concerning the future presentation of the Financial Perspectives for 2014-2020.



The Presidents of the Delegations:

- Want to express their decisive support for the aspirations of the democracies and the better opportunities of the people living along the southern coast of the Mediterranean.
- Reaffirm their deep concern for the economic and financial crisis worldwide and are aware of the importance of maintaining a common view of the challenges facing the world economy. They also encourage the different countries to foment their financial recovery by the adoption of coordinated measures.

The Presidents of the Delegations:

- Reaffirm their intention to continue organizing annual conferences of the Association of European Senates.
- Wish to thank Mr. Manuel Chaves, the third Vice President of the Spanish Government, for his valuable contribution as Speaker at this Conference.
- Are looking forward to the next meeting of the Association to be held in France in 2012.
- Recall that on the occasion of the Bicentennial celebration of that institution, the Senate of the Netherlands has offered to welcome the Meeting of the Association in 2015.