



Extraordinary Session of the Association of European Senates on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

Saint Petersburg, 13-15 November 2008

FINAL DECLARATION

The Heads of the Delegations of the upper parliamentary chambers, who participated in the extraordinary session of the Association of European Senates, dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and discussion of the role of European Senates in the current political context,

- congratulate the Council of the Federation on the occasion of this significant event and wish it success in further activities to strengthen institutions of representative democracy in Russia and development of European parliamentarism;

- note that multilateral contacts among the upper parliamentary chambers as well as their active participation in the work of international parliamentary organizations offer great possibilities for open and fruitful communications among the parliamentarians of various States, promote parliamentary diplomacy, and build confidence among the nations;

- believe that with the advent of a number of new threats to common security one of the Parliaments' priorities is to strengthen the international cooperation, as well as to reinforce European security based on common cultural and historic heritage and common views of European peoples on the fundamental values;

- strongly believe that the upper parliamentary chambers are called to play a special role in strengthening interaction between the Center and the

regions ensuring the representation of regional interests in the adoption of national legal acts and in the use by the State and civil society of effective tools of oversight over the fulfillment of adopted decisions;

- emphasize that in today's dynamically changing world the role of bicameral parliaments in the comprehensive development of a very important and presently relevant cultural, inter-confessional and inter-civilizational dialogue increases manifold;

- note with satisfaction that the positive effect of ever asserting bicameralism manifests itself both in the improved quality of adopted laws and in the effective system of legal initiatives screening and in higher requirements for their thorough elaboration;

- welcome the participation at this historical occasion of the representative of Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab world in the session of the Association of European Senates and look forward to a constructive relationship and fruitful exchanges, as the Association develops its role and work;

- express their firm conviction that the Association of European Senates will continue to fully support national legislative authorities in fostering parliamentary democracy, strengthening the rule of law, enhancing the interaction between the Association's members within the framework of international organizations and in strengthening the European identity.