

Working Group IV

Working document 37

Working group IV – "Role of National Parliaments"

Subject: **The comments by Ms Renée Wagener to the draft final report of
Working Group IV on National Parliaments (WD 032 - WG IV)**

Members of Working Group IV will find hereafter comments by Ms Renée Wagener, representative of the Parliament of Luxembourg, alternate member of the Convention.

Drafting proposals presented by Renée Wagener, alternate member of the Convention, for the draft final report of Working Group IV on National Parliaments

As announced during the meeting of 10 October, my drafting proposals are more or less a reproduction of several paragraphs contained in Mr. Kiljunen's document 20. I just shortened or adapted some phrases. The drafting proposals are in italics.

III. National scrutiny systems

10. The Group acknowledged that even when national parliaments were given the power to scrutinise the action of their governments, they were not always making full use of it. The Working Group agreed that a more systematic exchange of information between national parliaments about methods and experiences could play an essential role in increasing knowledge and awareness of European affairs and thus improve further the efficiency of national parliamentary scrutiny. This is the primary role of COSAC ¹, and we are encouraged that proposals for reform of COSAC currently being advanced by the Danish Presidency should enable this role to be carried out more effectively than in the past. In our view COSAC should consider drafting a code of conduct for national parliaments setting out desirable minimum standards for effective national parliamentary scrutiny *on the basis of the recommendations formulated by the Working Group*.

20. The Working Group recommends the following measures:

- ***Basic principles for the parliamentary work on EU-matters***

- a) *Widest possible scope: The parliamentary scrutiny should cover all matters handled and decided in the EU.*

¹ COSAC is the abbreviation of its name in French: Conférence des organes spécialisés dans les affaires communautaires in French.

b) Earliest possible involvement: The Parliament should form its position on a particular matter in the beginning of the procedure (i.e. right after the Commission has presented its proposal) and it should follow the matter all the way through the decision-making procedure in the EU.

c) Widest possible participation: All MPs should participate in the handling of the EU matters through work and preparation in the specialised committees.

d) Widest possible transparency: The handling of the EU matters should be public. Publicity is guaranteed thorough complete access to documents and public registers.

- *The Plenary, the Foreign Affairs Committee or the EU Affairs Committee should formulate the Parliament's position, eventually based on an opinion of one or several of the specialised Committees, who follow EU affairs on their own field.*
- *The National Parliaments should consider the appointment of their own representative at the European institutions and located in the EP in order to have an independent source of information on the activities of the institutions in the Union, especially the European Parliament.*
- *All legislative proposals and other matters of interest should be followed through the whole decision-making process. The scrutiny should start at the beginning of the EU decision-making process, after the Commission proposal is adopted, when the Parliament formulates its position as described above.*
- *The Ministers should provide the Parliament or a Committee with information on matters to be dealt with in a European Council beforehand and without delay after a meeting of the European Council. When presenting the agenda of the upcoming Council meeting, the Ministers should also report to the Parliament the results of the previous Council meeting. The Parliament should also be provided with a written report on the Council meetings.*
- *An amended version ...*
