



Main points of the report by the Working Group on National Parliaments submitted to the plenary session of the European Convention on 28 and 29 October 2002

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THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS: BETTER INFORMED, MORE INVOLVED

In line with the Laeken Declaration, the Working Group on National Parliaments is convinced of the role that national parliaments have to play in securing the legitimacy of the European Union.

The Working Party considers that the national parliaments must be able to keep a closer watch over the European policies of their governments and to monitor the principle of subsidiarity. Furthermore, it suggests improving the mechanisms to involve the parliaments more closely at European level.

The Working Group accordingly recommends:

- ▶ **acknowledging** the role of national parliaments in the Constitutional Treaty;
- ▶ **keeping the national parliaments more closely informed** by obliging the European Commission to forward directly to them all consultative texts or legislative proposals as well as the annual legislative and strategy programmes. These texts should be forwarded at the same time as they are forwarded to the European Parliament and the national governments via the Council of Ministers of the European Union. Such direct and exhaustive briefing should enable the national parliaments:
 - to monitor the **principle of subsidiarity** through an early warning mechanism (see the report of the Working Group on the Principle of Subsidiarity);

- to carry out **more effective scrutiny** of European policies; naturally each Member State would remain completely free to organise relations between its own parliament and its government;

- ▶ **closer cooperation and increased exchanges** between the national parliaments on the question of their role in European affairs. The main venue for exchange would be the COSAC (Conference of Community Affairs Bodies of the Parliaments of the European Community). COSAC should inter alia facilitate the exchange of good practice. It would establish a code of conduct to assist national parliaments in their monitoring of European policies;

- ▶ **greater involvement** of national parliaments in the preparation of broad European policy guidelines, possibly through:

- incorporating the Convention method in the Constitutional Treaty for preparing treaty amendments;
- organising European weeks involving national parliaments and European institutions, as well as the possibility of convening interparliamentary conferences on key issues as required;
- the Convention should examine the desirability of fora bringing together national parliaments and the European Parliament to debate, for example, the larger political orientations and strategy of the European Union.

