

**ADDRESS BY Mr. ALI TEKIN,
MEMBER OF THE TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
AT THE MEETING OF THE CONVENTION
HELD BETWEEN 6-7 JUNE 2002**

ON THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

Mr. President

The national parliaments constitute one of the imperative supports of the Union in ensuring its democratic legitimacy. To this end, attainment of democratic legitimacy in the actions of the Union can only be possible by strengthening the role of the national parliaments within the Union.

Within the context of the efforts towards strengthening the democratic legitimacy in the European Union, we must be aware of the fact that the Union is composed of Member States having different constitutional and parliamentary traditions which would become a more pertinent issue following the completion of the process of enlargement. Therefore, I am of the opinion that a single uniform model for strengthening the role of the national parliaments within the Union would be inconsistent with the realities of the Community.

Given the fact that implementation of the Union law through constitutional arrangements is entirely within the responsibilities of the Member States, the national parliaments participate in the legislative process of the Union through the implementation of the Community's legal texts at national level and consequently participate in the process of executing democratic legitimacy within the Union.

Arrangements for political scrutiny of the decisions taken at the Council by the Government representatives of the Member States vary for every State. For some countries, Government representative participates and negotiates in the meetings of the Council on the basis of a mandate given by its national parliament, while some other members may use the method of "parliamentary reservation". Nevertheless different implementation procedures practiced by the Member States have not proved to be an obstacle on the decision-making process of the Union. This stems from the multi-cultural characteristic of the Union. Therefore, we are of the opinion that it would not be appropriate to establish a common procedure in this area.

We recognize the fact that there exist various practices with regard to cooperation between the national parliaments and the European Parliament and that, in general, members of the European Parliament do not take part in the workings of the national parliaments. We also recognize the tendency towards establishing a procedure for a closer cooperation between the two. While it would be difficult to adopt a single procedure in this regard, we are of the opinion that the existing cooperation can be enhanced by adopting practices that takes into consideration the parliamentary traditions of states.

It would be appropriate to amplify the opportunities for cooperation that have been provided by the current set-up without attempting to establish new platforms. We believe that it would be improper to create a new institution composed of representatives of the national parliaments. Such a development may have a negative effect on the balance established between the institutions of the Union. Though, we know that the present system has been the result of long and arduous explorations for the better.

We believe that the effective role of the national parliaments in the institutional architecture of the Union can be attained by enhancing the role of COSAC. COSAC has an effective role in maintaining cooperation at the EU level among the national parliaments. It enables the national parliaments to exchange information on the activities of the Union.

We consider that for reinforcing its role in the Union, COSAC could meet more often and be strengthened by a permanent secretariat so as to ensure the continuity of its proceedings. COSAC can undertake the responsibility for political scrutiny of compliance with the principle of subsidiarity concerning legislative proposals of the Commission. The possibilities on whether the political scrutiny should take place before (ex ante) or after (ex post) the adoption of the legislative act should also be assessed.

We have observed in our previous meetings that there is a common understanding on increasing the competences of the Union particularly in the field of foreign policy. We believe that the national parliaments should be consulted if new competences are to be conferred to the Union. A successful example in this regard has been the inclusion of the national parliaments during the drafting of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

I am of the opinion that if new competences are to be conferred to the Union, the national parliaments should be consulted. I also consider that this Convention which was established with the participation of the representatives from national parliaments and which has taken the responsibility to discuss the reforms as regards the future of the European Union and present its conclusions to the Intergovernmental Conference as a basis of discussion, could provide a successful model to this end.

Thank you.