

**Closing remarks at the occasion of the joint session with the President of the European
Parliament, Mr Jerzy Buzek,
on 29 March 2011**

Mr. President!

We can look back with satisfaction on an interesting and fruitful discussion.

Next week we will meet again at the Speakers Conference, where one of the subjects on the agenda is the future inter-parliamentary inspection of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including the Common Security and Defence Policy. The Houses of Parliament of the UK, with the support of the French Senate and the Lithuanian and Dutch Parliaments, have sent a position paper on this matter to the Belgian Presidency. Our main consideration is that it is vital for national parliaments to have oversight of matters of Common Foreign, Defence and Security policy. This is regarded as adding value to the work we do in our national parliaments in holding governments to account for their actions in the EU Council and European Council. We see future inter-parliamentary scrutiny primarily as a successor to the Western European's European Security and Defence Assembly, and would like to establish an Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security, following the example of a "Conference of Committees" under the authority of COSAC. The Conference would not be a new or existing institution. All national EU parliaments and the European Parliament would be full members of the Conference. Furthermore I recently promised my Norwegian counterpart, Dag Terje Andersen, to promote the possibility for the Norwegian Parliament and the Parliaments of other countries that are part of the European Economic Area, to attend these meetings as well. The organisational responsibility for the Conference would be borne by the parliaments of the troika countries, which would also have joint chairmanship.

I'm greatly looking forward to next week's discussion on this subject!

Mr. President!

It is evident that both the House of Representatives and the Senate feel a strong commitment to deal with EU-affairs comprehensively. Not only on their own, but together with their natural partners. This is OUR Europe. Perhaps one day we will really be able to say to our citizens and to each other – and I quote now from your inaugural speech: "there's no us and you; we can say loud and clear that this Europe belongs to us all."

I will now close this joint meeting, and would like to thank you all for your participation.