



12TH MEETING OF PRESIDENTS OF PARLIAMENTS
OF THE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP+ COUNTRIES
WARSAW, 4-5 NOVEMBER 2010



STENOGRAPHIC RECORD OF THE MEETING

FIRST DAY OF THE MEETING, 4TH NOVEMBER 2010 [1ST SESSION ON *THE EUROPEAN UNION VIS-À-VIS THE CHALLENGE OF ENERGY SECURITY*]

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

I would like to welcome all representatives of the member states of the Regional Partnership, including all the guests and speakers. I would like to welcome the President of the Austrian Nationalrat, Ms. Barbara Prammer, Speaker of the Senate of the Czech Republic, Mr Přemysl Sobotka, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, Ms. Miroslava Němcová, Speaker of the National Council of Slovenia, Mr Blaž Kavčič, Speaker of the National Assembly of Slovenia, Mr Pavel Gantar, Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary, Mr László Kövér, President of the National Assembly of Bulgaria, Ms. Tsetska Tsacheva, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, Mr Luka Bebić, Vice President of the Senate of Romania, Mr Teodor Meleşcanu. I would also like to welcome a member of the Commission responsible for energy and community affairs, Mr Günther Oettinger and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland and Minister for Economy, Mr Waldemar Pawlak.

Dear Presidents, Dear Commissioner, Dear Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you again to the houses of the Polish Parliament, which hosts the 12th meeting of the member states of the Regional Partnership, whose government level was established in June 2001, and was soon after enhanced by a parliamentary level. Today's summit in Warsaw is taking place at a very important moment for Eastern Europe: in 2011 two countries of the region, Hungary and Poland, are going to preside over the work of the European Union Council. That is why we have decided to devote our meeting, which is taking place less than two months before the Hungarian presidency, to a debate on energy security and the Eastern Partnership of the European Union. The debate on energy security shall be introduced by Mr Günther Oettinger, the Commissioner for energy. The Commissioner's speech will be supplemented by the Minister for Economy and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, Mr Waldemar Pawlak, who is going to talk about the same issues, but from the perspective of Poland, which is going to preside over the work of the European Union next year. Tomorrow we will be able to debate on the Eastern Partnership of the European Union with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. Our two-day meeting will be wrapped up in a joint statement, the draft version of which will be presented to you for further debate or negotiations later today.

Dear Commissioner, the floor is yours.

Mr Günther Oettinger, Member of the European Commission responsible for Energy:

Dear President Borusewicz, Excellencies, Deputy Prime Minister Pawlak, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, thank you for presenting me with an opportunity to address not only government representatives with whom I have a regular dialogue via the Energy Council, but also you, distinguished representatives of national parliaments.



You are key partners for all our policies, as highlighted in the Lisbon Treaty. Therefore, I very much welcome this chance to present to you our Energy 2020 Strategy. This conference focuses on energy security and I know how sensitive an issue this is in this region. The Commission has been fighting for years to increase the security of supply for both electricity and gas of countries in this region. Recent experience with the suppliers through the Yamal pipeline shows that in order to enhance the security of supply and our buyer position vis-à-vis our supply partners we need investments in cross-border infrastructures. This is why I am

glad that all the countries in the region are making good use of the European funds to create new infrastructure projects, vital for the gas supply, diversification and security of supply. Tangible results of this European support are already becoming reality. The European Energy Programme for Recovery supports the security of gas supply of the region with a number of infrastructure projects. The Commission is ready to provide assistance to the ambition of the V4+ cooperation to take further steps in the realisation of the North-South interconnections in the region to accomplish further integration and thus enhance the security of supply, seeing that the investments in the region will increase the level of interconnectivity and infrastructure robustness in Central and Eastern Europe.

The inauguration of the Romania-Hungary interconnector in October this year was an important step towards that goal. Let me assure you that the Commission remains committed to support the investments in cross-border gas and electricity infrastructure.

To this end, I will be presenting a new communication on infrastructure in the course of this month. However, energy security today cannot be seen anymore without a broader view of our common European energy policy. The inclusion of energy policy in the European Union Treaty, in particular, calls for a new outlook on how to pursue our key objectives of security of supply – competitiveness and sustainability – in the context of an increased need for affordability. This is what we aimed for in the new European energy strategy for 2011-2020. The challenges facing us in the energy policy are too overwhelming to be resolved by one member state standing alone.

The unpredictability of energy security, the volatility of energy prices and delays in new technology and infrastructure investments call for a new governance in energy policy. For Europe, our task will be easier, quicker and cost-effective, if we act together. There is an urgent need for true Europeanization of energy policy. The energy challenge is one of the greatest tests which Europe has had to face. Unlike the economic and financial crisis, it could take decades to put our energy system onto a new, more sustainable and secure path. That does not mean we can put off decisions, we need urgent and ambitious decisions today to prepare the

economy for a low carbon, efficient and democratic energy future. Postponing these decisions will have major implications both in terms of higher cost and lower security. This is why we are also here today: to make sure that the European energy strategy for 2020 is well prepared, well understood and well implemented. Everyone in this room has a role to play in the next stage of Europe's energy strategy. We have clear policy goals: competitiveness, security of supply and sustainability. These are now laid down in the Lisbon Treaty and reappear in the national energy goals of member states and Europe's regions. We have the legislation to create an open and competitive European energy market. The adoption of the third internal energy market package last year was a major step forward. And I want to ensure that all the internal market legislation is also fully transposed as quickly as possible in national laws. Here, I very much count on your support. The European networks of transmission system operators for gas and electricity have already started work. And we're on track for the European Agency for the cooperation of energy regulators to be fully operational early next year.

Let me reassure you on four points:

First, we are not reinventing energy policy. The new strategy builds on what we have achieved in the last four years since the Commission first proposed the 2020 energy and climate targets.

Second, we are committed to our longer-term vision of a largely decarbonised economy by 2050. Many decisions between now and 2020 will shape our energy mix outlook by 2050. We must not lose this perspective.

Third, major investment decisions of radical strategic importance need to be taken in the coming years. Some regions of the European Union could lose more than 1/3 of their generation capacity before 2020, while the demand for electricity could increase significantly with the uptake of electric mobility. Current renewable energy schemes have been hard hit by the economic crisis. New gas import networks will be needed to replace falling domestic output. The new strategy must create a confidence and stability to underpin the investment decisions. And, finally, we need to learn from the lessons of the past. On energy efficiency: national energy efficiency action plans have been discouraging, leaving vast potential untapped. The move towards renewable fuels in transport is also happening too slowly. On technology: we are losing path.

For example, the independent 2020 renewable energy attractiveness index now cites the US and China as the best investment opportunities for renewable energy. Internationally, global energy markets are becoming tighter with developing Asian countries and the Middle East accounting for most of the growth in global demand.

Yet, the European Union still hesitates to commit itself to a common external voice. To reach our 2020 ambitions we need to be bolder, more effective and more ambitious than ever before. We need to mobilise every sector and social group and we need to reassert our international leadership in sustainable energy and energy market reform. The strategy I am preparing will be debated in the Commission on the 9th of November.

However, I would gladly present its key proposals to you today to hear your opinion.

First and foremost, I want to put the spotlight on the demand side, as everyone is an energy consumer. Energy efficiency has been an element of Europe's energy programme for over thirty years, but over this period we failed to make any major structural changes to the upward trend in energy demand.

We need to create a new market for energy efficiency and a new grassroots demand for energy saving equipment and services.

And we need to motivate individual energy consumers to take steps to reduce their demand and energy bills through, for example, smart meters and grids and more efficient transport.

My first priority therefore would be to put in place a new energy efficiency action plan to ensure that we can deliver our 20% energy efficiency objective for 2020. Second, I want to improve conditions for investments in low carbon energy, so we can look forward to a real energy revolution. Over the next 20 years we will need around one trillion euros worth of investments in the energy sector. As well as replacing large parts of our power generation capacity, we need to completely renew our electricity networks to cope with a much larger renewable production and more decentralised power production. We need to build new important pipelines, such as Nabucco, to diversify and strengthen our gas supply security.

I also want to push our economy towards the cleanest and most efficient energy technologies for supply and consumption. We need to develop and install a new generation of technologies from off-shore wind and smart grids to carbon capture and storage and second generation biomass to deliver the drastic reduction of greenhouse gas emission that we have promised.

Coming out of a recession is not the best time to expect investments in new technologies and new networks, but we have no choice. In fact, low carbon investments will create jobs, businesses, skills and confidence that will get us out of the recession more quickly. To help drive investments the Commission will propose a new infrastructure instrument I've mentioned before. I would like to establish a new method for European infrastructure, identifying the concrete projects necessary for the implementation of the infrastructure priorities and building on the strengths of the regional approach and predefined criteria. A new approach to authorising major infrastructure which has a European dimension is a must and financing such infrastructure requires also innovative thinking. To fully utilise our technological potential and better exploit our indigenous energy resources I intend to intensify the implementation of the strategic energy technology plan. I would also like to develop a European framework which encourages member states and regions to maximise their efforts towards a low carbon economy.

Europe has some of the world's most renowned renewable energy companies and research institutions. If there is a right political will and framework, it could even go beyond renewable targets we have set ourselves.

Thirdly, I want to bring the consumer onto our side. We need to improve the implementation of the internal energy market and make sure that consumers get a good deal. We need to reassure individuals that our energy systems are safe. Safety of oil and gas production and transport must be guaranteed. An accident like Deep Water Horizon cannot happen again. And we need a realistic picture of the future of nuclear energy, which currently generates around 1/3 of

European Union electricity and 2/3 of European Union carbon-free electricity. The decision to use nuclear energy must remain with the member states, but the European Union must continue to work for higher standards of safety, security and non-proliferation of nuclear power both in Europe and internationally. Thus, still this year I shall present a new nuclear waste management legislation.

Fourthly, it is time for the European Union to fully articulate external energy policy. Member states action in isolation – this is no longer an option when we have a single internal energy market, stretching from the Balkans to Scandinavia, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. Energy independence is a chimera when gas can move around Europe from Greece to Ireland. National protectionism is an anachronism, when French and German companies provide the British with electricity or Italian and Spanish companies compete for the same customers. The energy security of every member state will be stronger when the European Union learns to speak with a single voice internationally.

Finally, a word about a longer term. 2020 is just around the corner in energy terms. As President Barroso has said many times, we need to move towards decarbonisation of our transport and power sectors over the next forty years. I have seen several scenarios which suggest that it is not only technically feasible, but it would also make us more competitive and more secure. Our strategy for 2020 is effectively the first step towards this vision. I would like to explore the next step in an energy road map for 2050. For this, I will start a new consultation early next year.

Continuity, but innovation; stability, but stronger, bolder, better prioritisation; actions, not words – this is what we need in our new strategy. European cooperation in energy is not yet fully mature. It needs first integration into policy. Really, this is the only way forward. It has worked for the renewables policy for the internal market, emergency situations, such as the gas crisis in January last year. Now we need it to work across a whole energy spectrum, across the whole economy and for the longer term.

Distinguished Presidents, Ladies and Gentlemen, you, as national legislators, are our key ally for making the new energy strategy a reality over the coming decade and beyond. We will need your support for our common priorities of the coming months, be it the implementation of third package or discussion and rapid adoption of the upcoming energy infrastructure package and, in particular, with respect to the simplification and acceleration of permitting procedures to build power lines and gas pipelines needed to achieve our 2020 goals. I very much count on you as partners in this and every year.

Thank you and have a good conference.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Mr Commissioner, for this very important and interesting presentation. Now we would ask Deputy Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak to take the floor.

Mr Waldemar Pawlak, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy of Poland:

Good evening, Presidents of Parliaments, Mr Commissioner, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When we look at the energy policy from the perspective of Poland, we truly acknowledge European targets and the European message verbalised in the European energy policy till 2020. When we talk about energy security, we think about reliable supplies at an acceptable price. Reliable supplies in the context of the whole EU are very important indeed, because the EU as a whole can be a very important factor facilitating the maintenance of energy security. This is associated with the development of energy infrastructure, so the European energy network, the interconnections are very important indeed.

As it has been mentioned by the Commissioner, in many countries the networks are oriented along East and West access, whereas North-South connections are very important indeed for much safer energy infrastructure. On the other hand, effective cooperation with external partners of the EU: here, the EU as a whole without doubt becomes a very important player on the international energy market as well as a very important partner in international relations. Just an example, a case study: I would like to recall the cooperation with Commissioner Oettinger and the EU in the negotiations concerning additional supplies of gas to Poland from the Russian Federation. With the cooperation with the European Commission and personal involvement of Commissioner Oettinger in the negotiations with the Russian partner we managed to strengthen the energy dialogue between the European Union and Russia and at the same time we were able to more effectively implement European solutions in external relations. I think it is a very good example indeed when a common approach makes it possible to find solutions that can be applied at a wider range in other European states. And it also provides a very good and strong example of how important it is for the EU states to cooperate with the European Commission and to build the area of practical cooperation with external electrical energy suppliers. The third area, very important in the context of Energy Policy 2020, is the legislation activity, i.e. forming solutions that facilitate construction of effective energy market within the EU, but also put us in a good position in relations with external partners. We are thinking here about supplies as well as certain processes that are visible, associated with the abuse of the monopoly position. The legislation activity, by creating a common legal area, makes a good platform for the European law to be truly obeyed in the EU. And now, when we look at the energy policy of the EU till 2020, Poland has presented its position on the policy and we did it in the document adopted after a discussion in the Committee for European Affairs. And in the first place we attract attention to energy efficiency, the second most important aspect highlighted by us, and I think that we might form a Polish postulate, but also important for some countries of the region that are present in this room. One might think it would be very important indeed to slightly change the rhetoric: instead of talking about low-carbon economy we should rather talk about low-emission economy to stress emission limitation and not only to limit the presence of coal, because coal is also contained in natural gas and oil. Its content is lower, but it is still there.

Thus, the energy efficiency, the change or shift of the stress towards lower emissions. Afterwards, energy infrastructure, the orientation of North and South, very important for Poland. Another element - common European mechanisms to react in case of gas supply disturbances. Another important aspect: relation associated with cooperation with energy suppliers – a very good example that I have already mentioned was the cooperation with the European Commission. Another issue: new technologies associated with green gas emission

limitation. Another issue: continuation of energy market development. At this stage I would make a remark that might show the practical meaning of the shift of stress in the rhetoric. Namely, when we talk about low-emission economy, not just low-carbon economy, we can provide very interesting and simple examples, when we change from a traditional vehicle fuelled with oil derivatives into an electricity-powered vehicle. We can give this very simple example: a regular vehicle uses only 10% of the energy contained in petrol. However, when we think about an electricity-powered vehicle, we can increase their efficiency into 50% of coal, and we can have the efficiency of up to 80%. And the end energy efficiency of the car battery is 40%, which is to say that we use the energy contained in primary sources of energy four times more effectively. Another example: heating. When we produce electrical energy in cogeneration, we produce electricity and heat for towns. Electricity in heat pumps with this technology can be reprocessed to obtain heat at the efficiency of one to four, which means that we get twice as much heat with a heat pump, compared to burning coal or gas on a regular house-warming oven. We are showing these solutions in the context of energy policy, but also in the context of the green broad economy proposal for our city just to show that the green investment in energy efficient solutions can provide real benefits. Electricity is produced in Europe. Electrical engines, heat pumps can also be produced in Europe, thus we have the opportunity to build energy development based on our own resources.

Just a couple of remarks now. When we look at the structure of primary energy, compared to the rest of the world, we may say that the EU has significantly lower use of coal in primary energy, and oil, gas – just similar level to the rest of the world; we have more nuclear energy. In case of Poland there is a big share of coal and it is very important indeed to change our energy mix, but above all we have to do it by increasing the efficiency rather than closing the coal industry totally to buy imported gas and become dependent on external supplies. As for the structure of energy mix, one might say that there are certain similarities and differences between us. Poland is similar to the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic already uses nuclear energy, whereas Hungary, Romania, Slovakia have an energy mix very similar or more similar to the European one. Although we have to remember that not every state decides to use nuclear energy in industry and some are thinking about stepping out from the nuclear energy. It will change the structure as well, because Austria, for example, has decided not to enter into nuclear energy and to focus more on green technologies. Germany was planning to reduce its nuclear energy use, which would mean that the position of nuclear energy in the overall balance in Germany will be taken by gas, coal, that is traditional fuels and renewable energy as well. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that in the perspective of 2020, 2030 the dependence of the EU on external supplies will increase. I am not going to elaborate in details, however, it is very important indeed for the EU to cooperate vis-à-vis common suppliers. We should present a common attitude and here, once again the example of a very fruitful cooperation with the European Commission concerning gas supplies for Poland. I think it would be a very good example indeed of a real European attitude. When we look at the experiences of the last ten years...well, paradoxically, the share of coal in the European generation of electrical energy did not change too much. However, when viewed from the perspective of the last ten years, there has been an interesting change of another kind.

Paradoxically, the share of nuclear energy decreased, while the gas-based and wind-based energy increased.

In summary, I would like to say “thank you” again to the Commissioner for very good cooperation in the very practical activity in building energy security in Europe. And I need to stress that we are very much interested in energy efficiency. We would like to shift the stress from low-carbon to low-emission economy and we would also like to stress the need to build the European energy network. And just in a symbolic way, referring to a growing importance of renewable energy in our energy balance, we may say that the time is coming when we should change into the green side of the power.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Prime Minister. Now I would like to ask President of the Parliament that in January will preside over the work of the Council. I will ask President of the Hungarian National Assembly, Mr László Kövér. And some information now. Mr Commissioner will stay with us till 6:45 pm, so I would ask you to limit your speeches to ten minutes.

Mr László Kövér, President of the Hungarian National Assembly:

Thank you very much.

Mr President, Distinguished Speakers of Parliament, Distinguished Commissioner,

As the President has already mentioned in his welcoming words, Hungary is going to assume the rotating presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2011. Among the political priorities of the Hungarian presidency we have included certain reforms in important European policies, including energy policy, which will be in focus during our presidency. Energy will not just be a priority during the Hungarian presidency since we are entirely convinced that this is an issue that influences our lives and the lives of our voters on an everyday basis. In terms of energy policy, it is a shared interest in the entirety of the European Union to improve the interconnections of cross-border energy systems across the EU's different member states. It is important for us to have a diversified portfolio. We need to diversify in terms of our supply routes, but also in terms of our energy sources. And we need to include renewable energy into our energy mix. Hungary wishes to make its own contributions to the attainment of energy security. And energy security is not just a goal of one or two nations. It is a goal that is shared by every nation. An important and high-profile example of this Hungarian contribution has been the inauguration of the Romanian-Hungarian gas pipeline at the measurement station in Csanádpalota, an event attended by Commissioner Oettinger and Prime Minister of Romania, Emil Boc and Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán. Another contribution to the same goal would be a meeting of the European Council, the first summit on energy policy to be organised on 4 of February 2011 during the Hungarian presidency, involving the heads of state and government of the European Union. We believe that this will be a unique opportunity to make a major shift towards an energy policy in the European Union that is stronger, more coherent and more efficient – and which is good for every citizen of the European Union. Because we can only rise to these challenges to provide unified European responses. This summit will focus on energy security, which is an economic, social and political priority for the whole

European Union. A goal for the European Council is to give firm political guidance on how to advance the urgent infrastructural investments of European importance. We would also like the Council to give firm political guidance on how to bring down the technical barriers still persisting in various national legislations. We would also like the summit to contribute to developing a framework of cooperation for source and transit countries and it may also give a determining impetus to the inclusion of green energy into our energy mix.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me now to mention a few specific issues, on which there may be certain differences of opinion in the region as well as in various member states. I am, however, convinced that by finding common solutions we will be able to generate benefits for the entirety of our societies. For our region, one of the most sensitive and strategically the most important topic is the energy infrastructure package, especially the North-South axis and in particular the connectivity between the Polish and Croatian liquefied gas terminals. This is a high priority for Hungary as well. In this context, allow me to direct your attention to the letter sent by the Visegrad countries to Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger, a letter that he has also mentioned, in which our countries indicated that in order to develop and extend the energy networks of the Central European region as soon as possible there was a need for the Commission to support putting in place new financing instruments from 2013 to develop the energy connectivity, especially in gas pipelines in the North-South direction. Hungary welcomed the Commissioner's support in his response to the letter regarding the position assumed by the V4 countries and we also welcomed his support in terms of the regional approach to the issue of energy infrastructure.

The maintenance and further development of our infrastructure connections and energy corridors influencing our economies, our countries and the lives of our families is a shared objective that we all have.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, before the economic and financial crisis Central Europe was the EU's most dynamically growing region and we are convinced that in terms of its potentials this is the region which embeds the most intensive growth opportunities. Without tapping these reserves of growth the EU's global competitiveness may diminish. In order to strengthen and improve this competitiveness the energy policy is of key importance. And understanding that in future the energy dependency of the European Union will increase; according to certain estimations from today's 50% it will grow to 70% in terms of the energy supplied from external resources. In addition to this dependency I would like to emphasise that dependency in Central Europe is higher than the European average. Hungary's gas supply comes in 80% from Russia already today. I would also like to direct your attention to the fact that Hungary is in a position to buy energy at a much higher price than some other EU member states are able to do. With these examples I just wanted to show you that Hungary is very much interested in a common EU energy policy, also with a view to the fact that the present Hungarian government has a firm intention to design an energy strategy that in the not too distant future, in the next two decades, will be able to reduce this energy dependency or, if possible, to put an end to it. Therefore, I would like to promise you, distinguished Commissioner, and you, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the present Hungarian government will be

your partner in all efforts that are to strengthen the common energy policy of the European Union, including putting in place equal opportunities for member states and also conditions to enable more exposed and vulnerable countries to catch up with other member states. I also hope that our present deliberations will result in more proposals and will contribute to the implementation of already existing programmes. In this, the expertise and support of the European Union and the European Commission are indispensable.

Thank you for your attention.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much indeed. Now I would like to hand over the floor to Barbara Prammer, the President of the National Assembly of Austria.

Ms. Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian National Council:

Mr Chairman, Mr President,

I wish to express my thanks at the outset for the invitation to the Regional Partnership here in Warsaw. The meeting is excellent. Energy security is a very important topic and I would like to present the Austrian view. Austria supports the dynamic development of the European energy policy, which has been strengthened through the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The European energy policy has the advantage of being based on three premises: competition through liberalisation, an integrated market through sustainability and security of supplies. The European energy policy provides for security through various aspects. In recent years we have been in a phase of changes in the energy systems and I can say that this will be a policy area which will occupy us for dozens of years forward. Energy security has to take account of various interests, with regard also to the use of coal and orienting the policy towards a new global energy policy, which on the one hand is sustainable socially, on the other hand economically reasonable and finally, also ecologically sustainable. That is a task, a priority for a modern energy policy on the side of the supplying countries. And when we are looking at energy security I cannot overlook the new global energy policy, which should take account of the need for sustainability and ecological viability. And in this regard nuclear solutions are neither sustainable nor environmentally friendly. A particular problem here is the disposal of nuclear waste and I am grateful to Mr Oettinger who has raised this issue in the context of the need for appropriate, adequate security. With regard to energy technology, modern nuclear energy solutions, I am following here the indications of Mr Oettinger again, nowhere in the world do we have any safe, secure facilities for disposal of energy waste. And this is really an issue that we have to reflect upon also in the Community context. The problem is that this technology is exploited by private companies and then the consequences are borne by the nation, by the society at large. So we need also a diversification of supply and supply networks, routes, and here an important role is played by interconnection solutions in the energy supply area, which is absolutely essential. And here we should remember that diversification in Austria and overall in the European Union must be based also on good relations with supplier countries. We should do what we can to assure that these relations are maintained on a good level, one which is favourable for both sides, and this is very necessary for the EU to coordinate more strongly its external dimension of energy policy to contribute to a stable

system of energy partnership. Austria is highly interested in the Nabucco project and supports this new Trans-European energy network project. I am convinced that it will provide a route for the supply of energy resources from the Caspian and the Central Asian and Middle East area. The respective Nabucco intergovernmental agreement entered into force on 1 October this year and we have high hopes that it will be successful. With regard to the Southern Gas Corridor, which is also a major aspect of our strategy, it would offer an additional southern route for gas supply bringing more gas from Russia to Europe, so the support for Nabucco is not in contradiction with the support of a possible South Stream pipeline, and it provides for diversification of distribution lines. At the same time, these gas routes will provide for this strategic position of the Central European gas hub in Baumgarten. At the same time all the pipelines linked to the Baumgarten hub will provide for the increase of the viability of these interconnected pipelines.

Finally, Austria is highly interested in renewable energy, which was also underscored by the Minister. Austria is already highly efficient in the use of water, wind energy, solar energy and we believe that this is the area in which lies our future and here the EU should position itself with regard to the rest of the world as its competitive edge. In the meantime we believe that with regard to solar energy we are well equipped and we should provide a leading example of what can be done if we join efforts together.

In order to achieve energy efficiency it is absolutely necessary to focus on sustainability and using new forms of energy and new scientific developments. I am myself not from Vienna, but from Linz, a regional capital, of which I am very proud. It has disallowed individual heating, so practically the whole city is provided with central heating and there is no heating with coal or gas, but the central heating is provided through renewable energy sources which we need for our future. In conclusion, I would like to say that, apart from supporting our strategies through our parliaments and governments, we should consider as parliamentary deputies and presidents how we should not only support our governments' policies, but also how we can involve national parliaments in the European context for the new priorities, for the new tasks. And in particular on behalf of our priorities in energy policy, which are not always coinciding with our governments' goals.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Madame. Now I would like to hand over the microphone to the President of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Mr Přemysl Sobotka.

Mr Přemysl Sobotka, President of the Czech Senate:

Dear Mr Marshal, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The topic "The European Union vis-à-vis the Challenge of Energy Security" is certainly very wide in view of its importance and topicality. That is why I would like to avoid any attempts to come up with a comprehensive list of all aspects of this issue, and instead I wish to concentrate on two or three ideas, which I consider important or interesting. We have realised the need for accelerated development and identification of transit in the EU energy policy over the past two years, mainly in connection with the occasional instability of oil and gas supplies from the Russian Federation. So far, the fear of visible vulnerability of European countries and the

dependence of the European Union on Russian raw materials have been used by the supporters of wind and photovoltaic energy only together with the funds of generously subsidised risk-free business. And apart from the devastation of European countryside this has brought along the most visible results in the risk of increased energy prices. However, this is not a way to resolve the issue. The development of adequate tools for crisis situations is not only a matter of diversification of energy sources, but also a question of construction of new production and transmission capacities. The European Union shall emphasise this dimension together with the entire complexity of this issue, because we need no individual subjects to parasite on this, even if these are subsidised lobbyists, pressure groups or even individual EU member countries.

Let me remind you of January 2009 and the Czech EU Presidency on this occasion. At that time, the Czech government organised in Ostrava a conference on energy security and single electrical energy market. Mirek Topolánek, who was then the Czech Prime Minister, clearly emphasised that without a common energy policy the single market would only remain a concept, the European solidarity would become a cliché and the European energy security would be a chimera only. Furthermore, I would like to remind you of the fact that the participants of the conference in Ostrava have agreed in their conclusions that it is not possible to leave out any technology from the energy mix, including the nuclear power, provided it meets the requirements for safety and environmental protection. There was a consensus among the participants even on the issue of transmission networks investments which historically have been designed to meet the needs of individual countries and thus do not meet the requirements for single market operations. The Czech Republic at that time proposed the introduction of a single tariff for international electrical power transmission. According to the currently valid rules, it is not the customer who pays for the transmission of electrical power between the individual member states, but the consumers in the member country through the transmission network of which the purchased electricity is being transferred. The revenues from a single tariff that would be applied by all energy network operators, according to the Czech proposal, would then be used for investments in the further development of transition networks. And why do I talk about this today? I just wanted to draw your attention to events that took place two years ago. The issue of European energy security, and the consequent need for firm foundations of the European energy policy, is very broad and we should return from general proclamations to the root causes of these issues with the aim and willingness to resolve them in a functional way. The regional groupings plus the countries represented here, such as Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, are the best foundations for making sure the North-South stream is actually ensured, and apart from the governments it is the parliaments who play a major role in pursuing this and we should be aware of this. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Mr President. Now I would ask the President of the National Assembly of Slovenia, Mr Pavel Gantar, to take the floor.

Mr Pavel Gantar, President of the Slovenian National Assembly:

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for the opportunity to share with you some thoughts on energy security in Slovenia and also in the European Union. Initially, I would like to say that there is no doubt that the energy policy issues are becoming more and more important on the political agenda in Slovenia, as far as I can see also in other EU members and in the European Union at large. Besides, these energy policy issues and questions are more and more integrated and related to other issues, national policy issues such as transport, climate change policies, agricultural policy, urban planning and design, building and construction. More and more, the energy issues are becoming some sort of a tissue that brings together all other different policies in the country at large. I can remember that some 10 or 15 years ago the national energy programmes were almost technical documents trying to meet the needs for energy with possible supplies and the ways how to meet all the needs. Now, they are of course more than that; they are about the vital choices in every society and in every country.

As regards Slovenia, we are now in the process of preparation of a new national energy programme, that is actually a policy document that is going to set up the main aims and targets and how to meet them in a future long-term period. Of course, it is strongly connected to the programme documents prepared also in the framework of the European Union. Well, although in preparation, this programme is a subject of vigorous political debate already now, although there is a broad consensus on the main goal, namely energy efficiency, and there is also a broad consensus on the role the renewable energy should play in future energy supply in Slovenia. But, nevertheless, the biggest political debate is going on about the existing facilities in Slovenia. It is known that as regards some important power plants their lifetime is running off and they will have to be shut down in 10 to 15 years. And there is also a very broad debate about the role coal should play in the future, as well as the role of nuclear energy in Slovenia after 2022, and all these decisions will have to be made. Although we will increase the use of renewable energy, we will have to plan and construct new facilities and here the dilemma must be thoroughly discussed.

As regards energy security, I see, as many speakers before, two interrelated issues that are at the forefront of energy efficiency. First, of course, is energy efficiency. Needless to say, if you increase energy efficiency, you reduce the dependence on energy imports – we are all energy importers - which means also greater security. Of course, the diversification of suppliers that actually reduces the risk of being too much dependent on one or two single suppliers is obvious for all of us and therefore we do support the Nabucco project, although we are not directly part of it. And of course there is also the diversification of routes that actually offers diverse access to different energy sources. In this respect we do support the Southern Stream as an important project for Slovenia, taking into account our geographical position and the sources of energy. As regards the short-term priorities of energy security in Slovenia, I would also mention - and in this way I am concluding my appearance here - construction of the priority infrastructural network. For Slovenia it is particularly important; realisation of the project with the framework of Southern transit pipeline corridor and also of the improvement of different networks, particularly electricity grids, in order to make all these flows much easier and less costly. We are very much in favour of the improvement of existing instruments for development of pan-European energy networks and we do support the work of the Commission in this area. We do

believe that a common external energy policy is of utmost importance for the European Union and we do support the idea of speaking with one voice. We will, of course, try to contribute to this new European energy policy, which we hear is going to be represented and demonstrated with one voice, thus strengthening the position of the European Union in this global division. I would not say a conflict, but the global division of the energy supply worldwide. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Mr President. Now I would ask Ms. Miroslava Němcová, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, to take the floor.

Ms. Miroslava Němcová, President of the Czech Chamber of Deputies:

Dear Mr President, first of all let me thank you for organising this meeting and for inviting me.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we cannot avoid repetitions in our contributions because we all speak about the same topic, which we only approach and perceive differently, but which is equally important for all of us. Energy policy always belongs to the main duties of the state, it is one of the services that must be provided by the public sector. Energy and the energy sector is one of the key sectors of our national economies. Stable and sufficient supplies of energy are a necessary condition for the good functioning of the economy and the price of energy has a major impact on the competitiveness of each economy and on the satisfaction of needs of each society. We need stable and reliable sources of energy at an acceptable price. If we have such a source, then we are competitive. We have also discussed the degree of dependency on external sources. We all understand that this dependency has a major impact on energy security. We all stress the topic of energy security, because we all understand how important it is. The Czech Republic and the EU depend very much on the import of energy. According to various statistics, the energy dependency of the EU accounts for approximately 60% and in the future that dependency will certainly increase. We do not know how, because there are different predictions, the statistical data we receive are slightly different. In 2007 the European Commission predicted that the import dependency of the EU would increase from 50% in 2007 to 67% in 2030. But today there are some speculations and rumours that the scenario will be much more pessimistic, which means that in 2030 the dependency could go up to 75%, with some different types of raw materials where the dependency could be even higher. As for oil, the import dependency of the EU in 2030 will go up to 95% and for gas - up to 84%. The Czech Republic has been relying on its internal energy sources. In the future we will still count on a major part of our domestic raw materials in the energy mix. The share of the internal and external sources is approximately fifty-fifty, so the dependency of the Czech Republic is lower than that of the EU. As for the production of electricity, the Czech Republic is almost autonomous because our internal output of electricity accounts for 96% of our needs. As for the import of primary energy sources, such as oil and gas, the Czech Republic is very much dependent on external sources, but we have been decreasing the risk of any accidents by building new capacities and new storage capacities. I have been listening very carefully to different positions presented by the previous speakers. For the Czech Republic it is very important to use the domestic sources. By that I mean uranium, but also coal; coal was mentioned by Mr Waldemar Pawlak too. For us it is also a major question which we have to

discuss and decide how much and to what extent we will use coal, because if we reduce the use of uranium and coal, then our external dependency will increase and may go up to 80% in a couple of years or in the next 20 to 30 years. We are discussing major risks here. We talk about our dependency on external sources, which are very often located in unstable regions and we have to know that not only the EU has such important interests in these regions, but also some other countries are interested in these sources. Therefore, to reduce our dependency is a must for us. We have to diversify our imports and our routes.

Let me also make one more comment. I know that my time is limited to 10 minutes, so I hope I will not take too much. One of the topics that has been mentioned are renewable sources. Of course, the renewables are part of the discussions in all the countries. We all talk about them and we all search for the best ways and methods. My colleague, the Speaker of the Senate, mentioned it too. In the Czech Republic we have had a major problem, really a great problem concerning the photovoltaics. The state subsidies for the renewable sources were so high that they put into danger the state budget and gross national product. In order to be able to adopt a good budget for 2011, we will have to find an efficient solution to the issue of state subsidies for the renewable energy sources. So, that shows that we are discussing real problems, problems that we have to deal with in our every day political life. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Madame President. Now, I would like to hand over the floor to the Speaker of Croatian Sobor, Mr Bebić.

Mr Luka Bebić, President of the Croatian Parliament:

Thank you very much.

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for the invitation and for the excellent organisation of this meeting. We all agree that energy security is certainly one of the strategic economic challenges at the global level. Depletion of energy resources, uncertainty of supply routes, terrorist threats as well as high growth in energy demand in countries like China and India inevitably raise the question of energy security and the necessity to diversify energy supply routes. There is a big difference in the definition of secure supplies of oil and all derivatives: gas, electricity and thermal energy, because these are different technologies, but all of them have in common that the safety and quality of supply should be adequately secured. From the point of view of energy consumers' interests, the safety and quality of supplies also means the possibility to purchase the contracted quantity of energy of appropriate quality within the agreed time frames at reasonable prices. It is necessary to reduce risks in the chain of responsibility of all stakeholders in the open market and to ensure sufficient capacities for safe and reliable energy supply. In planning the energy system it is necessary to identify the influential factors of safety that should be taken into account and whose impact should be compensated. Among influential factors are certainly political conflicts, wars and terrorist attacks, technology incidents, natural disasters, the price of energy, links among transport transmission network and others. The Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis has confirmed how

important it is to rapidly consolidate the energy policy in all EU member states, so as to avoid future supply disruptions and to resolve the consequences of possible crises.

In this context, the Republic of Croatia supports the Europe 2020 EU strategy aimed at promoting renewable energy sources and the EU's financial and infrastructure compliance in the energy sector. Croatia has successfully closed chapter 15 dealing with energy and in align with the Energy Act the Croatian government has passed the energy development strategy of Croatia. This is the basic document that sets out Croatia's energy policy and energy development plans. The strategic objectives of the European energy policy have also become Croatia's main objectives and have been included into Croatia's energy development strategy: security of energy supply, competitiveness of the energy system and sustainability of energy development. We also support all efforts to diversify energy sources. Croatia is about to complete the process of aligning its legislation with the European *acquis*. We have passed over 250 laws in the current legislative period. There are only a few laws to be harmonised and this will be completed very soon, by the end of this year. Accordingly, the process of energy market liberalisation is also being conducted quite successfully. Croatia will continue to align and connect its energy system with the energy system and market of the European Union as well as to increase the number of supply routes. It will also, by a series of measures, continuously promote environmentally friendly fuels and sustainable biofuel production in order to preserve the environment and to promote the use of renewable energy sources. Owing to its geostrategic position, as a key transit and transport hub for energy circulation and supply, Croatia has the possibility to play a prominent role in the development of the European energy policy. In this context, Croatia's energy policy strives to be flexible and to effectively diversify oil and gas supply routes in line with the strategic interests of the European Union. Therefore, Croatia's participation in the South Stream project does not preclude its participation in the Nabucco project, because these are two complimentary projects that strengthen Europe's energy security. In order to ensure access to distant sources of natural gas, irrespective of the existing pipeline networks, Croatia participates in the construction of the LNG terminal on the Croatian island of Krk, which will also provide an alternative route of natural gas supply to the European market. Croatia is a signatory to the Energy Charter Treaty, Energy Community Treaty. We also participate in EU programmes under the Memorandum of Understanding between the EC and the Croatian government concerning the Intelligent Energy Europe programme for 2003-2006 and 2007-2013. Within the framework of Croatia's chairmanship over the so called South-Eastern Europe cooperation process, the ministerial declaration on the Pan-European oil pipeline, the so-called PEOP, was signed at a forum on energy security and cooperation on April 3, 2007. I also wish to emphasise that except for supply security and competitiveness, environmental sustainability also has a significant role to play in the complex issue of energy supply. By adopting the energy and climate package at the European Council meeting in December 2008 the EU became the first major global economy to adopt a very precise and mandatory work programme, the aim of which is to combat climate change, to reduce green house gas emissions by 2020 and to achieve the transition of the EU's economy and industry to the application of low carbon technology. In all these efforts of the EU, irrespective of the fact that we are not a fully-fledged member - and we hope to become a fully-

fledged member soon - we support all those measures so that we could overcome a crisis when it comes to the supply of energy. Thank you very much.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Sir. Now, I would like to announce a break till 7:15 pm. At 7:15 pm we are going to reconvene our session. During the break let us assemble on the left-hand side of the door, upon leaving the room. We would like to take a family photo together with all of you. I would like the heads of the chambers to be in the front row, and the same holds true for the Commissioner and the Prime Minister. After the family photo I would like to invite you to a cup of coffee or tea that is going to be served on this very floor. So we have a break till 7:15 pm and then we shall resume the session at 7:15 sharp. Thank you.

THE COFFEE BREAK AND THE GROUP PHOTO

THE GROUP PHOTO



Group photo, 4 November 2010 (from the left to the right): Mr **Teodor Meleșcanu**, Vice President of the Romanian Senate, Mr **Blaž Kavčič**, President of the Slovenian National Council, Ms. **Barbara Prammer**, President of the Austrian National Council, Mr **Günther Oettinger**, Member of the European Commission responsible for Energy, Ms. **Tsetska Tsacheva**, President of the Bulgarian National Assembly, Mr **László Kövér**, President of the Hungarian National Assembly, Mr **Luka Bebić**, President of the Croatian Parliament, Ms **Miroslava Němcová**, President of the Czech Chamber of Deputies, Mr **Bogdan Borusewicz**, Marshal of the Polish Senate, Mr **Pavel Gantar**, President of the Slovenian National Assembly, Mr **Přemysl Sobotka**, President of the Czech Senate and Mr **Waldemar Pawlak**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy of Poland

RESUMPTION OF THE DEBATE

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Now I would ask the President of the National Assembly of Slovenia, Mr Blaž Kavčič, to take the floor.

Mr Blaž Kavčič, President of the Slovenian National Council:

Esteemed Marshal of the Polish Senate, dear Presidents, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by offering you a warm greetings on behalf of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, the second chamber of the Slovenian Parliament, representative body of social, economic, professional and local interests.

Energy policy oriented towards a safe, reliable, sustainable and competitive energy supply is ranked very high among the priorities of the European Union. In order to ensure competitive, sustainable and safe energy and successfully address climate change the European Union must, however, take its numerous commitments very seriously now and try to reduce the gap between declared commitments and actions. The main dilemmas or challenges faced by the European Union at present are the following:

- How comprehensive and how holistic is the EU energy policy - to what extent is it interlinked with environmental policy?
- To what extent do the principles of an objective, democratic decision-making process and free market competition apply when adopting basic technological and investment policies? To what extent are these decisions driven by influential lobbies?
- How green is nuclear power? Are further investments in nuclear facilities good news for the environment and long-run positive investment effects, or does the cost-efficiency of these facilities perhaps result from an incomplete calculation of cost and risks?
- Is the development of some environmental-friendly energy technologies, for instance geothermal, hindered in the EU by the intention of corporations to preserve profits from current investments in nuclear and thermal energy facilities?
- An analysis of the causes behind the global crisis has pointed to the role played by the untamed financial industry and to the fact that externalities prevent the invisible hand of market competition from optimally regulating the markets. The EU has developed very sophisticated guidelines for the development of the energy sector, a separation of specialized business roles, ranging from production and transmission to distribution and the establishment of power exchange and privatisation mechanisms. Good. But does all the above-mentioned reduce the price per kilowatt-hour for industrial and residential users or does this sophisticated mechanism only, and possibly to a large extent, embody only apparently advantageous solutions? It is most probably to the advantage of monopolies and oligopolies and not beneficial for improving the quality of life of European Union citizens.
- The European Union must consider energy and environmental issues as interrelated. The recent aluminium sludge environmental disaster has shown that the European Union is really

not functioning at all in these areas, The system either does not work or has been abused. It may be that European Union citizens still do not know how to articulate their dissatisfaction, but it is essential for the existence and strengthening of the EU that we work together to demonstrate convincingly the positive effect of the European Union for its citizens.

- Parliamentary diplomacy and closer cooperation between national parliaments provide a new opportunity to improve and strengthen the functioning of the European Union.

A high degree of synergy between the European Union and other countries and energy consumers and producers is of particular importance. In terms of energy security Slovenia believes that it is crucial for the European Union to take a single approach and to speak with one voice in the management of a common foreign energy policy. While continuing dialogue with potential new providers, especially from the area of the Caspian Sea, an honest and long-term relationship with the largest energy suppliers, in particular with the Russian Federation, is needed.

Recent disruptions in energy supply have not only shown a lack of energy resources and transit routes, but also the great vulnerability of the European Union, caused by a dependence of external energy resources. At the same time, we have received a clear message: the European Union needs new transnational and interregional infrastructure connections allowing for a diversity of transit routes and energy sources, which will be important for both the functioning of the internal energy market and the security of EU energy supply. The National Council of Slovenia is aware of the important role that local and regional authorities play in implementing European energy policy. Their competencies cover many areas in which it is possible to save energy and reduce CO₂ emissions: consider only transport, residential and public buildings, infrastructure, public lighting and green public procurement.

Ladies and Gentlemen, combating climate change, reducing EU exposure to oil and natural gas imports, which will remain a significant part of the energy system, limiting exposure to the rising price of hydrocarbons and establishing a more competitive energy market are key challenges of the European energy policy. It is important that the European Union provides an integrated and well functioning internal market and ensures reliable and environmentally friendly access to energy, which will also be affordable. However, it depends on all of us whether we follow the path we have set.

I wish the work at this important meeting also contributes to the achievement of the ambitious goals. Thank you very much.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Sir. Now we would like to hand over the floor to the President of the National Bulgarian Assembly, Ms. Tsetska Tsacheva.

Ms. Tsetska Tsacheva, President of the Bulgarian National Assembly:

Mr President, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me on behalf of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria to express my sincere gratitude for the invitation to attend the meeting of the Presidents of Parliaments of the Regional Partnership Member States. I am grateful for the opportunity to express our views on

this major topic, which is important to both the parliaments and governments and to the member states of the Regional Partnership.

It is also very important to the modern day policy of the Republic of Bulgaria. And there are a couple of reasons for that. The first one is as follows: the reason for having this topic high on our agenda is related to winter of 2009, when there was a very serious crisis in the gas supply. During that crisis Bulgaria, perhaps along with Romania, suffered the most. I do not remember how many enterprises actually ceased functioning, many schools and hospitals were closed, that was an extremely unpleasant situation. I say that this is a Bulgarian topic, because on January 6, 2010, during the first visit of Mr Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, to Bulgaria, the issue of a joint EU energy strategy was discussed and, in particular, the energy policy of Bulgaria, which constitutes an external border of the European Union. And in view of our geographical location, we are extremely important to those projects that would create additional streams, additional pipelines that are alternative to the existing systems for transfer of gas. Therefore, I am extremely satisfied by what I have heard so far and I am listening with enormous interest. What I have ascertained is that the topics which are discussed in Bulgaria are also high on the priority list of the European Union, including the forthcoming Hungarian and Polish EU Presidencies. I would like to inform you that in Bulgaria we have elaborated at national level a draft Energy Strategy until 2020, which sets a long-term framework for sustainable development of the energy sector and for achieving the strategic goals within the European Union. Why is it so important for us to have that Energy Strategy? Following the Second World War, historically, geographically and economically - in particular as regards energy supplies - Bulgaria has always been very much dependent on the former Soviet Union and at present - on the supplies from Russia. In Bulgaria we do not have in place energy infrastructure that would allow the natural gas to flow from a different direction than the one coming from Russia.

Due to all these reasons I attach enormous importance to the construction, to the implementation of the Nabucco project as well as the South Stream project. I would like to reassure you that during all my meetings with ambassadors of various countries that are part of the Nabucco project, as well as during my meetings with representatives of EU member states, they share with me their willingness and expect the gas from the Caspian Sea to reach Central Europe. We pay enormous attention to all these issues, because the plans are perfect, however, the implementation is lagging behind and we are far from the final implementation of the project. On the other hand, in Bulgaria we are faced with a number of problems and issues. I believe that among our partners we should be open and share our problems. We are under the pressure by various NGOs that are concerned about the environment, the ecosystem, the sea, etc. and they pose a lot of problems for us. The third aspect related to the electric energy production and the efficient usage of that energy – this is related to the issue whether we could afford a new nuclear power plant on the border with Romania. Our government has inherited from the previous government a couple of agreements with Russia already signed for the construction of a second nuclear power plant. As you know, we have already one nuclear power plant. However, two of the reactors have already been decommissioned and, according to the instructions and agreements, by 2020 another two reactors have to be decommissioned. At the same time, we are faced with a shortage of electric energy and there are periods,

especially during summer tourist season along the Black Sea coast, when many hotels actually are left without electricity. The permanent Committee on EU Affairs and Oversight of EU funds in the Bulgarian parliament is going to review the strategy for 2020, defining the following strategic directions: the first one is energy supply security through diversification of the infrastructure of energy routes; the second one is achieving the goals of renewable energy production. A lot has been done with regard to projects related to renewable energy sources, we have very good communication with the business; again, we are faced here with problems deriving from NGOs. Increasing the energy efficiency is something we do need a lot, because in Bulgaria the energy production is extremely intensive and this poses an enormous challenge for both the politicians and business. Last but not least, enhancing the social protection of vulnerable consumers is among our priorities. The construction of an appropriate energy infrastructure, giving the opportunity for a single energy market to efficiently function is also very important to us. The European Union has defined as a priority higher integration of the energy grids in the EU, and the policy of the European Union for energy efficiency so far gives very good results in mitigating the impact on the environment, in particular with regard to climate change. We anticipate some amendments and recommendations from the European Commission for updating the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for the period 2012-2014 in order to achieve 20% energy saving potential by 2020. The adoption of a National Energy Efficiency Strategy with an action horizon until 2020 is imminent at national level, the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan to comply with the EU energy end-use efficiency directive is currently at a preparatory stage. It is highly targeted at the behavioural change and introducing measures for achieving more tangible energy savings, which is very important in the ongoing economic crisis. To wind up, I would like to say that - from what I have heard so far from all the colleagues - I believe that the direction taken by the parliament and the government of the Republic of Bulgaria corresponds to the requirements of coping with the problems of the energy supply security and energy efficiency enhancing issues that underlie the new European Energy Efficiency Strategy. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much. Now I would ask the Vice-President of the Senate of Romania, Mr Teodor Meleşcanu, to take the floor.

Mr Teodor Meleşcanu, Vice President of the Romanian Senate:

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am in a very comfortable position, being the last to speak. Everything that was worth saying was already said. That is why I will possibly say that I really agree with all the ideas that were expressed here. Even if sometimes there were different ideas, they are all reflecting the same goal: the importance we are attaching to the European security policy at the European level. Before saying a few words, let me thank the Chairman and our Polish colleagues for inviting us to this Regional Partnership conference on a very important issue.

What could I say? I will start by saying that from my point of view I fully agree with what Mr Pawlak said. I think we should concentrate more on emissions and efficiency and let on the second plan the idea of coal, eliminating or reducing the coal emissions, because for some of

our countries - not only for Poland, but also for Romania - using the indigenous, local resources of coal is one of the important elements of reducing our import dependence and also of ensuring the necessary energy mix for the secure functioning of our economy. We are also interested in developing, maybe with the assistance of the European Union, some sort of scheme of subsidising the production of this type of energy, of course on condition that it is produced in a very efficient way and has a very low environmental impact. The second issue I would like to touch upon is the problem of the nuclear power stations. From the point of view of my country, the energy produced by the nuclear power stations should be part of, let us call it, "the green energy", which is produced at the European level. I am sure that with all the ideas we have and with all the good will the nuclear energy remains for the time being the only main source of energy for industrial use. Of course, you can very well envisage a beautiful city, like the one in Austria, being heated by green energy, but it is much more difficult to imagine an aluminium production company using only green energy. That is why I think we cannot for the time being forget this possibility of the nuclear energy and its contribution to the internal functioning of our economy.

Now, everybody has spoken here about the importance of developing energetic infrastructure as one of the key elements showing, let us say, solidarity and the European vision on energy security. Everybody has spoken about integrating grids and how to develop it in the future. I would like to say that for us, for Romania at least, we have here two different chapters.

The first one is interconnection between our countries. In this field, I think, a good example is the one quoted by Mr Köver about the opening of a gas pipeline between Romania and Hungary. But I think we should also be more preoccupied with the infrastructure for importing energy from abroad. Our countries are dependent on the import of energy, sometimes from just one source, when we speak about crude oil and gas, which is Russia. Also developing the infrastructure for importing energy for us is extremely important. From our point of view, there are three priorities here. The first priority is an agreement which was signed by Romania with Azerbaijan and Georgia, providing for the import of liquefied gas from Azerbaijan through Georgia to the harbour of Constanța in Romania. We already have all the necessary pipelines to send it from the harbour of Constanța to Europe, because we inaugurated the pipeline with Hungary. Making this agreement function as quickly as possible is the first priority for us in the near future.

The second priority is, of course, the Nabucco project. A lot of our colleagues made references to it. And I was very glad to hear that the majority of you do not consider that Nabucco and South Stream pipelines are competing with each other. That is very encouraging, because there are also some discussions with Gazprom about involving us in the South Stream system, but for the time being our priority is the Nabucco project. Provided that other offers do not exercise any constraint on participation in the Nabucco system, we will continue to be very open to join other projects.

The third priority for us is building one of the biggest gas deposits in Europe, also together with Gazprom. It is the most important project, it is in my constituency in Prahova, where I was elected. If this project is realised, hopefully very soon, it will ensure that during winter time, when the consumption highly increases and so do the prices or during the time of

political disputes or quarrels, there will be no real problems as it used to be in Hungary and in other countries, Slovenia, Slovakia and Croatia. I do not know if you were really strongly affected, but this project will offer us a safety valve in such situations.

Now, I think that reducing the carbon and using natural gas is a very good idea, but we have to take into account that it will not last for ever. Of course, our 2020 strategy is still based or will be concentrated on the possibilities of reducing environmental harm by using less coal and more natural gas, but I repeat: there are reliable estimates that gas will not last; at least the Russian Federation, as the main provider, will have problems in a couple of years. According to the most pessimistic calculations for Romania's gas production, the reserves will have been exhausted within 15 years from now. Those who are very optimistic predict 25-30 years. More or less the same time is considered to be the possibility for the Russian Federation to offer gas. That is why, I think, in our strategy, even if we are working on the assumptions, which do exist, gas is still coming. As you know, Russia itself has become an importer of gas. They consume more natural gas than they produce. That is only the gas imported from the Caucasus, from other republics. But if we want to look seriously at this problem of energy security in the future, we cannot stop at 2020. Until 2020 we can work on some assumptions, but we should look forward, because energy consumption is increasing, the sources are becoming scarce and we have to address this question. And just the last question: from our point of view, it is very important not only to have a European internal strategy, for ourselves, but we consider that it is extremely important to have a common European position and strategy in our discussions on energy imports from third countries. This is one of the key issues on which we are insisting. Some of our colleagues have been complaining that they are paying a higher price for the Russian gas than others. We are members of the club and that is why we are also very interested in having a common position of the European Union countries in our relations with other countries. What can I say? Thank you very much once again. I tried to be short, it is very unpopular to speak before dinner, so I will leave it to the President. Thank you.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Mr President. And now, let me offer the floor to myself. I have not taken the floor yet and I would like to contribute to the discussion.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Lisbon Treaty, as we all perfectly know, introduced new regulations concerning the energy area. Article 194 says that the objective of the EU policy concerning energy should be to ensure the functioning of the energy market, ensure the security of energy supply, promotion of energy efficiency and energy saving and development of new and renewable forms of energy and promotion of interconnections of energy networks. And, basically, in the framework of these objectives we do manipulate and we have manipulated in this area also during our discussion.

Well, as regards energy in the EU, we all face different situations. There are countries in which the nuclear energy is very, very important indeed, for example in France. There are also countries like Poland, where more than 90% of electrical energy is generated from coal. This problem, which Poland faces today, is in fact much more complex. Poland, with its coal-based

energy sector, has to invest much more in the 2020 perspective, just like Romania, just like Germany. Well, we do see different interests, however, we all agree that the reduction of emissions is very important for us all. Similarly, there are certain conflicting interests between the old and the new member states. I do not like these terms, but we still use them. Well, to diversify energy supplies, and this is mostly about gas, but also crude oil. Gas, because the gas market is very sensitive to fluctuations and political changes, so the diversity of energy supplies for the old EU – this obviously means more gas from the East for the new member states. The old member states have access to supplies from the Northern Sea, Arabic countries. And this is understandable – supplies from the East make it possible to diversify the supplies from their point of view. However, for the new member states, for example for Poland, additional supplies from the East mean just the reverse situation because they increase our dependence on a single supplier. I am referring to it because I want to demonstrate the approach to the slogan “energy diversity”. I just want to show the background or the actual values associated with this slogan. The slogan is not necessarily always interpreted in the same way in all the member states. What is more, energy security cannot be assured without including some countries that do not belong to the EU. I am thinking about Croatia, Serbia, about Ukraine as well. Croatia, I hope, will join the EU soon. Ukraine will be outside the EU obviously for the years to come; there is no perspective for joining EU. And at the same time, it is a very important element of our energy security. Thus, a discussion which we will have tomorrow on the Eastern Partnership and cooperation with Ukraine and Belarus is closely connected with today’s discussion. A very important role is obviously played and has to be played by the European Union, because the whole EU, especially our part of the EU, is the consumer of gas and crude oil, to a lesser degree is also a producer. Everybody talks about it and the situation is going to become more difficult. We are the consumer, so we are also transit countries, we do have common interests then. And it is good indeed that the European Union and Commissioner Oettinger get involved and talk. And not only talk but also take specific actions which transcend the interest of each particular state. I need to say that Poland started to pave a new route and it happened because recently we made a new agreement with Russia, the agreement that was questioned by the European Commission. Certain points of the agreement were questioned in fact. With the support of the European Commission we managed to negotiate something that had seemed unattainable. First of all, we can implement the clause concerning the access to transfer infrastructure, the access is provided for third parties to transfer infrastructure. Earlier the Yamal pipeline and agreements concerning gas transfer from Russia did not envisage such an opportunity – this is the first thing. On the other hand, in those agreements there was no opportunity to sell gas received by Poland, according to the rule “take it and pay for it”. This situation was obviously difficult for the user, quite good for the supplier. Today, and this is something that I have learnt about during our meeting, the Russian partner, due to the Commission’s influence and support during the negotiations, decided to resign from what one might think to be their iron principles they would never want to give up. I think this is a very good signal indeed, a very good signal that I would like to inform you about. However, it was possible with the support and common approach to negotiations together with the European Commission. I think that is the route we have to continue. Obviously, the European Commission, I think, will not create in the nearest future a real single market of energy, I mean common purchases. However, definitely, every one of us, every state can

generate benefits. We may have a better situation concerning the relations between the supplier and the receiver, the user. Well, you can very often hear in discussions that the supplier, the producer is equally dependent on the user, just like the user is dependent on the supplier. From the point of view of logic it seems to be true. However, I have never heard about such a situation, when the receiver, trying to influence the producer, did not take the energy offered. I have never heard about anything like this while I have heard of reverse scenarios. So Poland is anxious when we see what is happening between Russia and Belarus, but this is the result of political developments and I just would not like to talk about it. All I want to say is that at least words in the EU have been followed with actions as regards interconnections. There is a whole range of facilities built and planned, facilities concerning interconnections. If we are able to transfer gas from Świnoujście, a town in the north of Poland, this will be a very good scenario for us. In Świnoujście Poland is building now its LNG terminal and it is going to be completed in 2014. Obviously, this terminal will not change the situation dramatically, it will not stop us from buying gas from the East. Obviously, we will continue buying gas from the East; we've signed an agreement that is binding until 2019. I just mentioned it a moment ago. However, we have decided to use the opportunity of independent supplies, which ensures our security. Well, obviously, it has its impact on the price as well. Thus, independently of the difference of interests between us today, at least we may find a common platform, so we may agree that we will try to interconnect our systems for gas transfer. Two years ago it was just a theory while today this is something that is being implemented. If we do implement it, then our situation, the situation of users, will improve significantly. Of course, that needs investment. We are definitely supporting the Nabucco project, although in that supply chain we are going to be the last link. However, we believe that using resources from other regions that would supplement or be complementary to what we have already got, is really worthwhile supporting. I need to say also that the European Commission's commitment to the Nabucco project has given the project the power and I also believe that our involvement, our support will also additionally contribute to prompt the completion of the project. It is not the case that the gas resources from that particular region, the Caspian Sea basin and Central Asia, will not be depleted and that you may carry out different projects with a view to exploiting those resources. We need to realize that. It may not be possible to have three or two major projects developed with the view of exploiting those resources. So if the European Commission has made up its mind about the selection of the source, we are supporting that decision.

And before I finish, I would like to say, Ladies and Gentlemen, that I am glad that over the past few years the awareness of the importance of energy security has grown and reached everybody: the public opinion and politicians. It would be really difficult if history got repeated and what I mean is the shortages of gas supplies. It would be very difficult to explain to our electorate that after having had such experience in the past, we have done nothing ever since. We are aware of differences of interests, we are aware of different positions of individual countries. I am really happy to see that our positions, although not fully convergent, are at least similar. Thank you very much for your attention.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have just completed the presentations by keynote speakers but that does not necessary mean that we have no time for discussion or Q&A session. If you feel like taking the floor again to contribute to the discussion, you are more than welcome to do so.

Since I cannot see anybody willing to speak now, what I suggest to do is to consider my presentation as a wrap-up for today's session and, therefore, we shall be seeing each other tomorrow at 8:30 am. Now we would like to invite you to a well deserved dinner.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for today.

END OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE MEETING

SECOND DAY OF THE MEETING, 5TH NOVEMBER 2010 [2ND SESSION ON *EASTERN DIMENSION OF THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY (ENP) - ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE, FURTHER PLANS AND PERSPECTIVES*]

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

I welcome you warmly on the second day of our debate.

As I announced earlier today we will be discussing about the Eastern Dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

As a first I would ask to take the floor the Speaker of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland Mr Grzegorz Schetyna.

Mr Grzegorz Schetyna, Marshal of the Polish Sejm:

Presidents of Parliaments, Mr Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you cordially on the second day of the 12th meeting of presidents of parliaments of the Regional Partnership countries. Only yesterday we had a discussion concerning energy security in the EU. The matter was analyzed deeply. This is a problem with multiple meanings: political, economic, social and it is always good to talk about it., Today, however, we shall change the subject to focus on the Eastern Dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy. It concerns the area of the EU policy that has existed since 1993, when countries of Central and Eastern Europe were invited to talk about EU accession. Finalization of the process in 2004, with Romania and Bulgaria joining later the EU, resulted in leaving certain countries of Eastern and Southern Europe outside the EU borders. Except for several countries that are now negotiating EU accession there are those that should have been presented in the past and to whom we should present the offer of continuous cooperation, approximation of legislation and support of democracy building, above all.

Thinking about these countries, Poland, together with Sweden, started building the Eastern Partnership which contributes new values to the Eastern Dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy. For years Poland has run an effective policy towards countries of Eastern Europe, its main target being to ensure security and stability in the region by binding eastern states with the EU structures. For the EU it seemed to be a very good proposal to adopt the Polish-Swedish initiative concerning the establishment of the Eastern Partnership, which, as we can remember very well, was officially launched at the Prague's summit in 2009.

This initiative accelerates the approximation of Eastern Europe to European standards and values. It also facilitates political and economic integration of these countries with the EU. At

the same time, I would like to point out what, in my opinion, makes the Eastern Partnership an open and broad structure. It has been made explicit in the joint declaration that the partnership is open to the participation of various bodies. Besides government bodies, it stresses the potential for the involvement of parliaments, which is especially important for us, of international organizations, local authorities, financial institutions, NGOs and the private sector. Third countries will be able to get involved, on a case by case basis, in specific projects, thematic platforms, if their contribution supports the realization of the objectives of the partnership. The Eastern Partnership, as the first initiative of this kind in the EU external relations directed at six countries of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, has brought a new quality in their relations with the EU. It covers Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Special attention is paid to the observation by these countries of democracy and the rule of law, respect of human rights and the role of good governance as the necessary grounds for their future integration with the EU.

The Eastern Partnership is a new initiative currently developing with our involvement. This is an idea but also a programme of real, specific actions that are allotted to a number of authorities. Already today we should make the initial balance after the first year of the Partnership and assess the achievements of multilateral cooperation. A very important factor for the success of the initiative, we believe, is the involvement of non-EU countries and European financial institutions, especially the European Investment Bank, European Bank of Restructuring and Development and, obviously, the World Bank. Let me quote just some of these initiatives that make us assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Partnership that high. There was a real progress in the negotiations concerning Ukraine-EU association agreement, similar agreements are being negotiated with Moldova and in July with another three countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. With the last one a Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnership was signed in November 2009. This year with this country the EU also signed an agreement for visa facilitation, while with Moldova a visa dialogue has been started, the objective of which is to provide conditions for a visa-free movement. A very important and future-oriented achievement is Partnership multilateral cooperation based on the four thematic platforms: democracy, good governance and stability, economic and convergence with EU policies, energy security and the fourth one concerning contacts between people.

A very important element of the initiatives is facilitation of direct contacts between the citizens of the EU and Partnership countries. A great stress is put on the cooperation in the area of civic society. Last year in Brussels there was a meeting of over 200 NGOs representing all EU and Partnership states and they developed a Civil Society Forum. The Forum makes it possible to involve representatives of the civic society, especially from the Eastern states of the Partnership in the actions of the initiative. The second meeting of the Forum shall take place this month in Berlin, and we are going to host the next one during the Polish Presidency of the EU.

The Eastern Partnership will be one of the priorities of the Polish presidency, which shall take place in the second half of 2011. In this area we will cooperate with the Hungarian presidency so that the second meeting of Eastern Partnership in Budapest could make a real progress in the cooperation between the EU and Partnership states. During our presidency we will try to

ensure a real progress in making association agreements with Partnership countries to deepen and extend the area of free trade and visa liberalization.. We will also support multilateral projects.

Today we may say that the programme of Eastern Partnership is a real action programme that shortens the distance of the Eastern European countries to the EU. In this project problems have been defined and clear long-term solutions have been proposed. We think that the real asset is the multilateral and multi-unit approach, and especially involvement of various financial bodies which I mentioned before. It provides a real infrastructure for integration and makes progress possible on all platforms: economic, social, civic and political.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. President,

my contribution is only an introduction to the discussion. For the presentation of an in-depth analysis of the operation of the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy and plans for the future we've asked Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski.. I would like to remind you that he is one of the co-initiators of the Eastern Partnership. Please, Mr Minister, the floor is yours.

Mr Radosław Sikorski, Polish Foreign Minister:

Presidents of Parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Three days ago, together with German Minister of Foreign Affairs Guido Westerwelle, we visited Belarus. A day before the oncoming presidential elections we will have made a clear European message to the rulers of Belarus. The road to the cooperation with the EU is open, provided the state respects democratic values. In our mission we wanted to give a testimony of our responsibility for the development of safe and prosperous neighbourhood. It shows a part of the new dynamic cooperation with our new partners: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Azerbaijan, for which a very strong impulse was the establishment of the Eastern Partnership at the Prague summit in May last year. When Poland entered the EU, some forecast that it would initiate our turning back to the East. However, it did not happen. Poland persistently asked for closer relationships between the EU and Eastern European states and the South Caucasus. Well, these states are outside the EU, however, they all the time belong to the common European family. Our persistency has been crowned with success, when the Polish-Swedish project of Eastern Partnership was accepted by the Council. Other partners of the EU could understand that we cannot tolerate the development gap between the EU and the Partnership states. The real measure of international credibility is the ability to develop and shape your neighbourhood and to disseminate the values and standards that make grounds for the European integration. The effectiveness of each project is measured by the ability of correlating targets with specific activities and resources. The objective of the Partnership is to support reforms and modernization of the partner states and their approximation to the EU. The programme is also about the joined ownership. We have to stop the wishful thinking and idle talking about the *finalité* of our cooperation. The Partnership states have to decide what they want to do and at what speed they want to achieve it with the assistance of the EU. Every partner is at a different stage of development and, what is more, some partners have pro-EU

aspirations and others don't. So it is necessary to diversify the targets and choose appropriate action methods.

I would like to highlight a couple of important Partnership objectives, important for Poland. First of all, we expect effective negotiations of association agreements and quick initiation of negotiations concerning free-trade agreements with partners that meet the indispensable conditions. As it has been mentioned by President Schetyna, this year we started negotiations on association agreements with four other partner states: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. We hope that they will be completed soon. On the other hand, and I know that this is the objective of wider discussion, we expect progress in the visa liberalization area after signing agreements on the visa facilitation programmes with Ukraine. In June this year a similar agreement was made between the EU and Georgia. Discussion has to be run about the preparation of the special programmes for Ukraine and Moldova. We cannot allow for our Partnership societies to be divided by an anachronistic curtain of visa regime. The third thing, we'll expect the initiation of very effective implementation of institutional development programmes. Poland, with its rich experience of the system transformation and adjustment to the requirements of the European Union in the pre-accession stage, would like to be involved in the implementation of these programmes.

We should mention signing of the Memoranda of Understanding regarding CIB with Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, organization of various seminars and expert training which are so important for the good governance in areas like fighting against corruption, for example, decisions to implement projects that would encourage the acceleration of flagship initiatives, associated mainly with the projects of integrated border control or support for small and medium sized companies. There is a need to shorten lengthy procedures of the Commission to turn initiatives into specific implementation programmes. We have to agree with what was said by Commissioner Janusz Lewandowski, who a couple of days ago attracted our attention to the fact that a policy without money is nothing more than a slogan. Thus, it is necessary to ensure in the new EU budget increased resources for the European Neighbourhood Policy, especially for the Eastern Partnership. At the same time, we are against maintaining artificial division of resources of the European Neighbourhood Partnership instrument in the proportion of 1:3, which benefits the Southern partners. And it isn't really about competition, we believe that the allocation of resources should be based on objective criteria, including such things as resources, absorption level or the progress in reform implementation. In our opinion, a mechanism should be established to support the countries that struggle to harmonize and build free-trade areas. It is beneficial for the Partnership states but also for the EU itself. We will support the development of close cooperation with international financial institutions. It has already been mentioned by President Schetyna. We have already noticed promising examples of cooperation with the European Investment Bank and the European Development Bank. We'll offer 400 million euros for the development of small and medium sized enterprises. The Bank will also get involved in infrastructural projects, including those associated with energy transfer. A new financial instrument will be provided with the budget of 1.5 billion euros to stimulate investments in the Partnership states.

Ladies and Gentlemen, next year will be crucial for the implementation of the Eastern Partnership. This is so for three reasons. First of all, the European External Action Service will become operational. We hope that, together with the European Commission, it will make it possible to implement Partnership projects in a more effective way. It will also increase the EU impact on changes in Partnership states. We are happy to see that at the headquarters of the new service there will be a department devoted to the Eastern Partnership. On the other hand, during the Hungarian presidency in May next year the second Eastern Partnership Summit will be held. It will be an occasion to verify the intentions and effects of the EU partnership vis-à-vis partner states. Poland intends to closely cooperate in the organization of the summit together with Hungary. We also rely on the involvement of other membership states. The second summit should focus on determining next steps to be taken to deepen the cooperation. We hope that before the meeting takes place we will be able to draw conclusions from the discussion concerning the future of the overall European Neighbourhood Policy to provide inspiration for the summit. We believe that in order to make the Eastern policy more transparent for partners we have to treat the Eastern Partnership as a complex Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy that covers all areas of EU relation with its partners. The development of Partnership is going to be one of the priorities of the second half of next year, when Poland has its presidency. For this reason, the decisions of the second summit will be of paramount importance for us because we will start their implementation in practice. In 2011 we would like to see all flagship initiatives implemented in practical action. We also plan to involve our partners in some training programmes that make a part of common security and defence policy. Great hopes are associated with the cooperation with countries outside the EU in the form of an informal group of friends of the Eastern Partnership for the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights; our partners such as Canada, US, Japan, Norway will acknowledge the added value associated with the coordination of support programmes. A very important role in strengthening the civil society and dissemination of European norms is played by human contacts. Poland would like to develop the social component of the Partnership. We will host another meeting of the Civic Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership to be attended by several hundred of representatives of NGOs from both sides of the EU border.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Eastern Partnership has a potential to accelerate Europeanization processes not only in the Partnership states but also in the wider area. I'm thinking here about Russia as well. Nobody in Moscow should see this initiative as a step against Russia. Nobody who thinks seriously should accept the axioms that were expressed a hundred years ago by the British imperialist, Halford Mackinder, namely that the one who rules Eastern Europe rules the heart of Eurasia, the one who rules Eurasia – rules the world and the one who rules the world – rules the globe. This is not the time, not the mentality – it is a wrong strategy context. The European Union is not a geopolitical project. It is a normative project. The resistance to economic crisis, strengthening of the governments, modernization and promotion of the European development is associated with the development in the future. This is why I think the reference to archaic thinking is groundless. The achievements mentioned hitherto and perspectives for the development of partnership prove the opposite. It's good to remember that to maintain the impetus of the implementation of the project it is important not only to involve

our Eastern partners. What's equally important is the support of the EU members, which can also be supported by yourselves as heads of parliaments. I hope that together we will be able to equip the Partnership with better instruments that would facilitate the development of relations between the EU and the Partnership states; less barriers, more solidarity which, for obvious reasons, is so important in our country. What is at stake is our common future. Thank you for your attention and I wish you a fruitful debate.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you, Mr Minister. Now I would like to give the floor to the President of the Hungarian National Assembly, Mr László Kövér.

Mr László Kövér, President of the Hungarian National Assembly:

Mr Marshal, thank you very much.

Madam Speakers, Honourable Speakers,

The problem of the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy for some of us, if I may say so, has become a personal issue. It was our Polish friends who together with Sweden launched this initiative, and the Czech Republic hosted the first summit. Hungary was given the honour, as we all know, to be able to hold, within the next rotating EU presidency, the second summit of the Eastern Partnership. No secret: this is going to be one of the most important events of our presidency, and this will be accompanied and highlighted by various preparatory and other events. Next to the meeting of the heads of government of the EU Member States and the Partnership countries we will also organize expert and political conferences analyzing different aspects of the EU Partnership. Just some examples: a business conference on SMEs, or a discussion round on the role of the media and the civil society .

Dear Colleagues, since the establishment of the Eastern Partnership major progress has been made among the six partner countries. The different fora and platforms of the Partnership started their activities, flagship initiatives were made. However, the cooperation, unfortunately, has not always been smooth. This may have different reasons. Some of our partners, like Ukraine or Moldova, have made greater progress than the others and are faster in the negotiations on the association agreements and visa waiver, as an objective has become in tangible vicinity as well. Other countries, however, will have to make more in order to make the contacts and cooperation with the EU much closer. I do agree with His Excellency, the Foreign Minister, it is indeed the partner countries that have to decide what they want to do and within what timeframes. Next to our partners, we ourselves have to do a lot for the fulfilment of the Eastern Partnership and make the contacts according to its objectives much closer between the EU and the six partner countries. In the summer of 2010 the EU started to think about giving new foundations to the EU Neighbourhood Policy. The consultations are going on with the Member States, the partners and NGOs. According to the plans a conference of ministers is to be held on the 1st of February 2011 on the future of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Upon that, the European Commission will publish a communication in the spring of 2011.

Dear Friends, it is us, Central-Eastern European Member States within the EU, who will have to make our Western European fellow countries understand how important the Eastern Partnership is. One would say that the Mediterranean Union and the Eastern Partnership are two dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy and are competing for the attention and the funding of the EU. Indeed, this relation can be considered as a kind of competition, but, in my view, it is much more expedient to understand it as the two halves of the unity called the Neighbourhood Policy. The two halves that supplement each other and can only become together strong. Can the Southern countries replace the Eastern countries or the other way round? May I ask a playful question: Can the Mediterranean fruits replace the wonderful fruit brandies from the Eastern Europe? I don't think so, they would rather supplement each other. If this is the way we look at the two branches of the European Neighbourhood Policy, we will be able to act for the benefit of all stakeholders.

I would like to ask you, dear Colleagues, to cooperate and do everything together with me so that in the coming period the Eastern Partnership will receive its well deserved praise within the European Neighbourhood Policy. Let me also say some words about those who are already in appropriate stage of association negotiations and should also be given a perspective of the EU membership. This policy should fall together with the other branch under the same umbrella. But as regards funding, it would be more expedient to be able to be more flexible in responding to the needs, demands, preparations and ambitions of different partner countries. Let me also ask you, dear colleagues, for the following: in the coming period, which is going to be a review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, please do cooperate with us. I'm convinced that it is not only in the interest of Hungary, as the country holding the EU presidency next year, but also in the interest of all stakeholders that the summit of the European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership becomes a success. To be able to achieve this, we indeed will have to make all efforts that the summit will not only evaluate the achievements and the results of the Eastern Partnership, but also will be able to show progress in all areas of cooperation without becoming an arena of contradictions of interests of the countries involved. It is also important to ensure that the countries do not have unfounded expectations of the summit. A kind of a measure, a benchmark of the summit results can be that the partner and participating countries express their views on the importance of the Eastern Partnership.

The year 2011 is going to be a very special year for both the Central Eastern European member states and the Eastern Partnership countries because Hungary and Poland, the two Central European countries, will pass the torch of the EU presidency to each other. Hungary will also symbolically highlight the importance of this with various other events. The National Assembly and the National Museum will hold jointly an exhibition on the themes of Poland and Hungary, but besides that we would also like to underline the importance of the handing on the torch at the Eastern Partnership summit as well. Poland, as the initiator of the Eastern Partnership, will have a special role at the summit according to our intentions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish that the coming time indeed serves a real fulfilment of the Eastern Partnership. Therefore I would like to wish good work and great success to all of us. Thank you very much.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much. Now I would like to give the floor to the President of the Council of Slovenia, Mr Blaž Kavčič.

In that case, I would like to give the floor to the President of the Council of Austria, Ms Barbara Prammer.

Ms. Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian National Council:

Mr Chairman, Mr President, I am a little confused that it is my turn now.

Today's topic has been extremely important for our states. This has already been underscored here that the Neighbourhood Policy is important for the whole of Europe and we have had important steps with major work done by the European Commission, including the evaluation of the Neighbourhood Policy. Since its establishment in 2004, the track record of this policy is absolutely positive. The objective is to reinforce it as the EU should continue showing its political will to support the development of security and welfare in its neighbourhood, placing it among its political priorities, including the offer to provide an even more attractive development of the Neighbourhood Policy. The content of this policy with regard to economic, energy policy and civil society aspects should be further strengthened. We should work to improve access to the EU internal market as well as the development of common educational measures.

In spring 2010 the European Commission published a report on the European Neighbourhood Policy which shows that the conditions for developments in the policy key areas have deteriorated due to the financial and economic crisis. Yet we do have progress, but we should especially focus on issues of human rights and democratic reforms, and this is a role for our parliaments too. Unfortunately, in this area we witness slowing of progress and this is where we should become more involved.

As you know, in Eastern Europe as well as in the Mediterranean area we have engagements which are very much effects-oriented, and we should further develop and refine these measures. We have the basic principle of relating these measures to reform processes in the neighbourhood. On the other hand, I find a very positive aspect with regard to the possible development of relations with our Eastern neighbours in the context of refining the transformation process in our neighbourhood. It has already been mentioned that the role of the financing instruments should be also regarded as a priority.

Today we also observe the specific political initiatives targeted at particular political groups in our neighbour countries, which are part of the Eastern Partnership policy, especially with regard to the initiative of the Black Sea. Austria is committed to be strongly involved in the mentioned processes covering civil society organisations which should be engaged in discussions on likely future developments of this policy. For this purpose there is a conference of ministers planned in January 2011 in the context of the European Commission expected communication. On the basis of this review we will see how the key issues subject to this discussion will be treated, whether we will maintain this overall approach covering both the

Eastern and the Mediterranean policy or whether it will be a more integrated approach. At this stage we cannot answer this question since the decision has not been made yet.

Finally, we look at the relation between the European Neighbourhood Policy and the process of enlargement. In line with the review process, we should consider whether or not we should separate the Neighbourhood Policy from the enlargement process. It is still premature to determine how this will be further dealt with. As regards foreign policy, our parliaments - and I mentioned that already yesterday - should contribute especially in those areas where we can offer our expertise at all levels, for example at the level of parliamentary committees, including specialized committees, through interparliamentary cooperation and exchange of know-how and experience. In the context of what I have said already, I believe it is our task to provide support to our neighbours in developing democracy in particular states. It is also in the interest of stability of these states and, therefore, in the interest of all of us as their neighbours. I can also imagine a more enhanced exchange and cooperation at the level of parliamentary officials and staff and through such exchange of our parliamentary civil service we could also greatly support the development of the Eastern Partnership. For Austria, both the strategy for the Black Sea and for the Danube area are a high priority; there is a proposal of an action plan in this regard and I believe it is highly ambitious and greatly worthy of support. So there is a very ambitious target to double our involvement there. Within 10 years' perspective in different states there should be major improvements, including the quality of water. The action plan in the Danube area should lead to making it possible to swim anywhere in the Danube waters, which has not been possible so far, as well as supporting the development of cultural landscape. I believe we already have major achievements here to which national parliaments, with their modest means, can also contribute.

I would like to also mention that I have had a visit from the President of the Parliament of Ukraine, Mr Litvin. We have had a very good and wide-ranging discussion on this strategy which has given rise to an idea that I am ready to support. President Litvin has suggested that he would come forward with an initiative of a next year's meeting of the Presidents of Parliaments of the Danube area. I believe this is a proposal worth supporting, because it could provide a platform for closer networking across parliaments in the region, sharing our know-how, expertise and knowledge, which in a targeted way could be offered across the European Union to improve and strengthen our relations.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much. Now I would like to give the floor to the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, Ms. Miroslava Němcová.

Ms Miroslava Němcová, President of the Czech Chamber of Deputies:

Mr President, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope that today will be again a successful day for us all. A discussion we are opening today links up with the topic we talked about yesterday, because yesterday we also talked about our efforts to have a very close cooperation. We can call it the Neighbourhood Policy Eastern Dimension or the Danube initiative, or the Mediterranean initiative – all that is very closely

connected with the topic discussed yesterday, that is security. Yesterday we talked about one part of the security, namely energy security; today we talk about reinforcing or enlarging cooperation in the region. So far, we have been talking about enlargement or cooperation in rather vague terms.

The European Union is moving and changing. We have our member states, we have our neighbours and we know very well that we need to keep very good relations both inside and outside the European Union, because only in this way we will be able to fulfil our ambitious goals. I believe that it is therefore very important to set realistic goals. If I go back to the Eastern Partnership, it has been mentioned already that the initiative was launched in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and the impetus came from Sweden and Poland as a reaction to the Mediterranean Union, the French initiative. Let me stress here the position of the Czech Republic that was recently reiterated by Premier Nečas. Premier Nečas considers the Eastern dimension as one of the priorities of the European Union and it was also thanks to the Czech initiative that this dimension was indicated as a priority of the European Union. We stress values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect and protection of minorities, sustainable development, market economy and so on. We think about both bilateral and multilateral dimension of the cooperation, stressing at the same time that in order to achieve anything each project should have a financial framework. It has been already mentioned by Radek Sikorski, the Polish Foreign Minister, who also mentioned the financing of the Eastern dimension project. The European Commission planned for 2010-2013 a budget amounting to 600 million euros. It is then divided or it should be divided into 5 programmes. We have mentioned some of them already; it includes programmes such as the protection of borders, prevention of illegal crossings, support for the SMEs; we have talked about the energy sector yesterday. There is however one question that I do not understand very well, namely the prevention of disasters. I think that this is a very difficult area but it would be nice if we could discuss it later and explain more what it means.

I am personally convinced that if we stick to what was said by Minister Sikorski, we will have no wishful thinking but that we will adopt realistic steps; if we do so, then I am convinced that the Eastern Partnership will be successful. I think that there is a major involvement also on the part of the Polish colleagues who are really determined to cooperate with our partner countries such as Belarus or Ukraine. Talking about Belarus, let me take this opportunity to say that it is a country that is also a member of the Council of Europe, it is a country where there is a special sub-committee of one of the major committees of the Council of Europe and it is important to talk about this country, because we have to think and analyse the political situation in this country. This is very important because it will have an impact on what we do in the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

Let me get back again to the budget. I mentioned that we are talking about the figure of 600 million euros for the period going up to 2013. Now, the question is whether it is sufficient or whether we should call for an increase of this budget. Of course, if we have well-defined programmes and objectives, it would be very good to convince the European Commission to get engaged in the discussion on the budget, because it is important for the Commission to devote its attention to this part of the world. However, let me also communicate to you

opinions that we hear very often in the Czech Republic concerning topics such as the Union, the European Parliament and the initiatives launched by the Union. It is important to know how the citizens react to these policies and initiatives now that we have the financial and economic crisis. It is important to know public opinion in a country like the Czech Republic. We have to adopt a reasonable budget and at the same time we have to adapt to the demands of the European Union not to exceed the Pact of Stability, so we have to reduce our costs and it is negatively accepted by the general public. If we increase the EU budget, then it could be considered negatively by the general public. At the same time, we have learned that the European Parliament wants to increase its budget by 6%, which may really cause negative responses in a country like the Czech Republic. I am mentioning that in this context, when we talk about the Eastern Partnership, because I am convinced that if the programme is well-defined, if we have well-defined objectives, then it is reasonable to ask the Commission to adopt a different decision-making process towards this initiative. And at the same time, I would like to raise one more question, namely the one concerning the institutional framework of the cooperation. I know that we should talk about the parliamentary dimension of this initiative today. In 2009 the constitutive meeting of the Euronest took place, but since then there has been no major progress achieved. Of course, I am not going to present any position or any opinion on what we should do in 2 or 3 years, but it is a very good topic for our discussion. We should consider whether or not it was really a realistic decision to create such a framework.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, these are just a couple of remarks that I wanted to make. Let me reiterate the Czech Republic's position, mentioned at the beginning of my presentation, namely, that we consider the Eastern Partnership as a very important initiative and we repeat that at each conference and forum. Thank you very much.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Madame President. Now I would like to ask the President of the Croatian *Sabor*, Mr Luka Bebić, to take the floor.

Mr Luka Bebić, President of the Croatian Parliament:

Thank you very much, Mr President. Dear Colleagues, Speakers of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me first express my great pleasure to be here today and to have the opportunity to speak on the topic that we are discussing.

At the outset, I would like to say that Croatia highly appreciates and understands the need to avoid new dividing lines between the EU and its neighbours. Because of our hard experiences in the last century, we are aware of the need of building good neighbourly relations between countries, rather than building new walls of division. In this regard, we support the European Neighbourhood Policy, an instrument aspiring to that. At the same time, I want to emphasize that one should take into account the heterogeneity and diversity of each country. It is with this aim that Croatia is active and involved in numerous organizations and initiatives that cover the countries involved in the European Neighbourhood Policy. I myself, a few days ago participated in the Conference of Presidents of Parliaments of the Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly in Rabat, where the discussion was about the forms of cooperation in the

Mediterranean. Three continents met there, different cultures, different religions, a lot of diversity, which actually can serve as links and bonds of cooperation.

At the Paris conference of 2008, Croatia became a participant in the Union for the Mediterranean accepting the *acquis* of the Barcelona process. An important determinant of our foreign policy is a clear commitment to regional cooperation and responsibility to the countries of South-Eastern Europe. Promoting democracy and human rights, the rule of law and democratic governance, market economy principles and sustainable development objectives are targets that we are aspiring to in the region, while at the same time they are complimentary to the EU Neighbourhood Policy. Very soon to become a member of the prestigious organization of European countries, the European Union, Croatia is already a leader in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration in the region. Beside sharing our knowledge and experience, thus encouraging all countries to persevere in their efforts taking them to the ultimate goal, Croatia is making great efforts to strengthen bilateral relations as well as regional cooperation. That is why Croatia has given its translations of the *acquis communautaire* to all the countries in the region, not to mention numerous other initiatives and concrete forms of cooperation in the field of transport, fight against crime, energy, etc. For Croatia cross-border cooperation is extremely important since we have 18 countries out of 20 with interstate borders, due to its shape. Croatia is currently involved in cross-border cooperation with Slovenia, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation. When it comes to the open issues arising from the break-up of the former state, a proof of Croatia's constructive approach, which has always been based on the European values and respect for international law, is our agreement with Slovenia. For the first time in this part of the world, a very complex and difficult political issue has been resolved through agreement and compromise.

Questions of energy and energy efficiency are vital and the South-East European Energy Community has already fit into the wider European framework. Croatia has established the National Energy Information Centre, and regarding the achieved level of awareness of energy efficiency we anticipate possible savings in energy consumption in the public sector of 96 million euros, which is very important. The Regional Cooperation Council has an important promising role in the economic and political development of the region. And Croatia supports the maximum use of its resources. Since it was founded by the very countries of South-East Europe, the Regional Cooperation Council embodies the principles of regional ownership of cooperation processes, which is closely associated with the South-East European cooperation process. The Council has proved to be a key interlocutor of the EU and the wider international community for issues of regional cooperation with South-East Europe.

In short, Croatia has been and will remain a strong advocate of the European future of all the countries in the region. Croatia has so far many times proved its willingness to encourage positive developments in the region and its intention to be a support and partner to each country on their integration path. We see our role in South East Europe in the efforts to maintain its European perspective, in promoting the spirit of further cooperation and mutual understanding, as well as establishing principles and values of the European Union. Croatia

will never tire in fulfilling these goals, which are aligned with the goals of the European Union. Thank you very much.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much. Now I would like to announce a break till 10:20. After the coffee break, Mr Přemysl Sobotka will open the debate.

THE COFFEE BREAK AND THE GROUP PHOTO

THE GROUP PHOTO



Group photo, 5 November 2010 (from the left to the right): Mr **Teodor Meleșcanu**, Vice President of the Romanian Senate, Mr **Andrzej Halicki**, Chairman of the Polish Sejm Foreign Affairs Committee, Ms. **Tsetska Tsacheva**, President of the Bulgarian National Assembly, Mr **Luka Bebić**, President of the Croatian Parliament, Mr **Pavel Gantar**, President of the Slovenian National Assembly, Ms **Miroslava Němcová**, President of the Czech Chamber of Deputies, Mr **Grzegorz Schetyna**, Marshal of the Polish Sejm, Ms. **Barbara Prammer**, President of the Austrian National Council, Mr **László Kövér**, President of the Hungarian National Assembly, Mr **Bogdan Borusewicz**, Marshal of the Polish Senate and Mr **Přemysl Sobotka**, President of the Czech Senate

RESUMPTION OF THE DEBATE

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

In our debate I would like to ask the President of the Senate of the Czech Republic to take the floor - Mr Přemysl Sobotka.

Mr Přemysl Sobotka, President of the Czech Senate:

Dear Mr. Marshal, dear Colleagues.

I am sure we will all agree with the fact that the only correct objective of the European Union is a good neighbourhood policy, the basic principle of which is to encourage all countries along the EU borders that strive for political and economic stability, with the main predisposition being the development of their own democracy.

Having been asked to talk about the so-called Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, its achievements to date, further plans and perspectives, I wish to say that it is, in my view, a railway track which requires two quality rails to be functional. One rail is represented by the development of the Eastern Partnership project, while the other rail is represented by the relationship of the European Union with the Russian Federation. As far as the first case is concerned, I would like to remind you that the Eastern Partnership was born as a Swedish-Polish initiative and, once started in 2009, it became one of the foreign policy priorities of the Czech EU presidency. Four basic platforms for the six post-Soviet republics: Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, new treaties and new cooperation, more substantial financial aid, etc. These platforms are as follows: first - democracy, good governance and stability, second - economic integration and convergence with EU policies, third - energy security and fourth - interpersonal contacts.

I have personally visited all these countries in the capacity of the President of the Czech Senate, with the exception of Belarus. What I witnessed was a major and genuine interest in close cooperation with the European Union and, one could say, an overall effort aiming at integration into the Euro-Atlantic area. Hence, I am a supporter of further promotion and development of this project and I hope that the European Union will not give up because, or only because the level of democratic development in the aforementioned countries is different. However, the main problem of successful Eastern Partnership development is the way the Russian Federation is approaching it and the current relationships between the European Union and Russia that are of importance to both parties on the economic and political level. At the same time, we are well aware of the fact that these relationships are burdened by numerous issues and questions which include: the energy security in the form of a steady flow of oil and gas supplies from Russia or the Caspian region, questions related to European security, for example the possibility of building new missile interception bases with the support of the USA, and last but not least, the geopolitical ideas of the Russian Federation with respect to its traditional spheres of influence. Therefore, Russia considers the Eastern Partnership to be more or less anti-Russian and we should patiently and sensitively try to persuade Russia, through a dialogue, that the European Union and the Russian Federation have more common interests than those where we are in disagreement. This is, for example, applicable to the issue of energy security because both parties are mutually dependent on each other. The European Union needs safe and continuous supplies of oil and natural gas from Russia, and the Russian Federation needs European finances and investments. Often times it is stressed that the European Union should facilitate a dialogue with Russia as a unified block, because when the European Union speaks with one voice and acts as one, Russia carefully listens. But it is no secret that there is no such thing as a European unity and that some member countries are seeking advantages from bilateral cooperation with Russia, frequently to the detriment of the other EU member states. I'm afraid, we cannot even blame the political representation of the Russian Federation

in this situation, because their negotiation position against Europe comes at a real bargain. In my opinion, this is the problem - and it does not concern Russia only - which will be a crucible of real functionality and viability of the European Union in the future. This is certainly a more significant problem than the issue of whether or not we will blindly obey and meet some completely marginal directives published by the Brussels bureaucrats.

And the last remark. While talking about the Eastern Partnership, we are talking about the mood among the politicians in those countries, about the mood of the people living in the region, and from my own personal experience I can tell you that these people are putting a lot into the Eastern Partnership. They really want to be in the Euro-Atlantic area, or at least affiliated with this area. But I pose the same question with respect to the Balkans, because it is not possible to leave our expectations when it comes to the Balkans due to some marginal problems. I think that the Eastern Partnership is very important, but the South-East Partnership is equally important. I refuse to have a divided Europe. Thank you.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much Mr President. Now I'd like to give the floor to the President of the National Assembly from Bulgaria, Madam Tsetska Tsacheva.

Ms. Tsetska Tsacheva, President of the Bulgarian National Assembly:

Honourable Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bulgaria regards the Eastern Partnership as one of the most important dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy. We welcome the initiative of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Baroness Ashton, to conduct the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy and exchange of opinions on its future development. We have all acknowledged with satisfaction the progress made by the Eastern Partnership during its first year in operation. We positively assess the fact that in the course of discussions held in Sopot last May the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Eastern Partnership member states specified the initiative's practical aspects. We believe that more tangible, short-term measures are needed in parallel to the European Union's political commitment in order to ensure the success of the initiative without having it bureaucratized. Most of its highly attractive aspects, such as visa liberalization, access to the EU markets constitute, we have to openly admit, a remote outlook. Extended access to EU markets is the Union's most promising, yet least feasible, tender. On the other hand, while being the most attractive matter to the population of the partner countries, visa liberalization is a very sensitive issue for the member states. Along with that, the European Union in its capacity of an impartial player should spread out its security policy to the Eastern Partnership region as security issues, especially in the Southern Caucasus, remain a key challenge to the development and stability of the partner countries. On this basis, instead of the prevailing inefficient formats dealing with regional security, we have to elaborate specific, tailor-made economic initiatives supported by a clear political commitment of the European Union on the ground, including the regional security domain. The success of the Eastern Partnership will strongly depend on the success in the area of energy security, which we discussed yesterday, border management and institutional building.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy I would like to express our understanding and position that the Eastern Partnership should be interconnected with the insofar existing regional cooperation initiatives and, in particular, with the Black Sea Synergy. We have already called the attention of our EU partners to the eventual overlapping between the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Synergy and have highlighted the need of working out a compatibility mechanism of the two. During the Bulgarian chairmanship in office of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization in the first half of this year we called for taking concrete practical steps and measures for the implementation of the Black Sea Synergy, because its potential is substantial and considerable. But its three-sector partnerships in transport, energy and environment with their respective lead countries, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania, have not started performing yet. As a Black Sea literal state, Bulgaria shares the view that both the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Synergy are useful instruments in the arsenal of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The idea for the Danube Cooperation is also of high interest. In this context, during my official visit to Ukraine I have had the opportunity to get acquainted with the Ukrainian parliament's idea of the Danube and Black Sea cooperation, which is also shared by the parliament of Serbia.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that it is of utmost importance to have all these initiatives developed in depth, at the same time keeping them interlocked and this could be made possible only through close coordination at the level of the European Commission. Thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much. Now I would like to give the floor to the Vice President of the Senate of Romania, Mr Teodor Meleşcanu.

Mr Teodor Meleşcanu, Vice President of the Romanian Senate:

Presidents, distinguished Colleagues,

I would like really to congratulate our Polish colleagues for organizing this meeting. I think that the European Neighbourhood Policy, and especially the Eastern Partnership, enjoys excellent conditions to register an important breakthrough next year. The main argument for saying that is that both Hungary and Poland will assume the chairmanship of the European Union and I'm sure this will be a top priority on the European agenda.

If you will permit me, I would like to say just a word about the speech by Minister Sikorski. After mentioning this important element, namely the Hungarian and Polish presidencies of the European Union, he referred also to the expectations about the new Service of External Action, which is chaired by Madam Ashton. Our colleague, Madam Tsacheva, also made a reference to this. I am less inclined to believe that the functioning of this service will offer a better chance to the region and to the Eastern Partnership. The fact that the number of Heads of Missions appointed from the countries represented here is almost symbolic, if you will permit me to say so, is raising very serious doubts about the capacity of this service to really tackle, from a substantive point of view, the problems of the Eastern Partnership. I am extremely

disappointed. I know this is not our task, it is the task for our governments to make this thing known. But if they are not doing that, I think I am obliged to say it and to say it in a loud voice.

Now, I will pass to two things which were said by all our colleagues. First, the Eastern Partnership is a top priority for Romania, and we are fully engaged in promoting the main objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy in its both, Eastern and Southern, dimensions.. Secondly, we also do consider it is our interest to promote the dialogue with the neighbouring countries on the basis of common values and the principle of, let's call it, positive conditionality. In fact, we have to conceive it as a two way street, in which the EU demarches should be reciprocated by progress in reforms on behalf of our partners. And all our colleagues who took the floor referred to this.

Now, dear Colleagues, I would like to propose a very interesting exercise. Let's try for a moment to put ourselves in the shoes of the countries to which we address the Eastern Partnership. Because my pledge will be that we should be more receptive to what they are feeling, what they are considering as their specific needs and aspirations in their relations with us. It's good that we are telling them how we look at the Eastern Partnership, but let's try a little bit to learn about their views and expectations from the Eastern Partnership. In my opinion and in our opinion – I am not speaking in a personal name only, I think - the first preoccupation of the countries from this region is connected with their security. Let's not forget – among those, who are participating in the Eastern Partnership you have almost a full list of frozen conflicts, starting from Ossetia, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, over the Dniester, and so on and so forth. It's obvious there are no frozen conflicts. There are conflicts, and what happened in August 2008 with Georgia is proving that there are no such things as frozen conflicts. They could be of high intensity or low intensity, but conflicts do exist. For these countries on the Eastern side of the European Union, the problems of their security are extremely important not only from the security point of view, but also because the existence of these conflicts is making them use or misuse important resources, which could be devoted to their development and modernization. That is why, with all due respect, I think that one of our main preoccupations should be to focus also on the security issues, with a view to identify, at our level, lasting solutions of these conflicts. Because as I said, unfortunately, they are consuming very important resources, which could be used in a better way. It is our firm view that the European Union has the necessary means and should aim at defining a much more important role in all the existing international negotiations and formats. We are participating in some of the international structures. When I say “we”, I mean the European Union. Unfortunately, our visibility is very low and we are not among the most important players, while in reality it's the European Union who has the best instruments to contribute to the adoption of solutions to these frozen conflicts. This is one top priority for these countries, and if you will permit me, I will also refer to the fact that I would like to see this preoccupation reflected in our final statement, if you will accept this.

Now, the second preoccupation of these countries - and I'm speaking very honestly and you know it as well as I do - is the problem of the visas, the free movement of people. It's obvious that it came as a shock, when citizens of countries like Serbia or Moldova found themselves in the position to apply for visas for entering Romania. They were not accustomed to that, they

couldn't imagine this at all. It's perfectly understandable at the high political and administration levels that while joining the Schengen arrangement Romania had to introduce very important measures to strengthen security of the EU external borders, but the ordinary citizens from these countries don't know about the Schengen agreements, about our obligations. What they feel is that their position, their status has been degraded. That's why I most honestly support the idea of mentioning very clearly in our final communiqué or statement the idea that we are strongly supporting the improvement of travel conditions for those citizens, and from my point of view I would make a very clear reference to the visa waiver for these countries, provided, of course, they fulfil the necessary conditions.

The third preoccupation, which is also very well known to all of you, is the problem of access of their goods and services to the European market. It's not a secret for anyone that for a country like Ukraine this is the top priority which they always mention and underline in your discussions when you talk to them. Now, I think we have some words in the final statement about creating arrangements of a free trade area system. I think we can do it, but I think we should also try to concentrate a little bit on other possible measures to improve access of their goods and services to our markets.

Last but not least, I understand the difficulties some countries are confronted with. Don't think Romania is outside this trend. Budget constraints are very important, I understand very well the Czech delegation. I listened carefully to Madam Nĕmcová and I understand very well that when you have to cut your budget increasing contributions to other projects could appear as a kind of extravagance to your citizens, to our citizens as well. But all of us have to agree that if we really want a European Neighbourhood Policy which works, if we want an Eastern Partnership, it's not enough to have political statements, even if they are brilliant like mine, if you will permit me, it's not enough to have even good will saying "we want this, we want that". We have to support these policies also with financial means to transform them into practice. I know this is not the best time to talk about money, and we have already made a decision until 2013. But I think that by adopting a position of principle at our level we should recommend for the next multi-annual exercise a closer look and a better possibility of supporting the Eastern Partnership with financial means.. I think it will be a good thing if we could do this also in our final statement.

And really the last word – I would like to say that I like the idea which was expressed by Madam Tsacheva. If we really look at the development of the Eastern Partnership, maybe we should also think of the possibility of closer structuring of different institutions: the Black Sea Synergy, the Eastern Partnership, the Regional Partnership, the Danube Cooperation and all the others. Because finally, in a few of cases they are covering more or less the same countries. That's why I am confident, I hope you will reflect on my very modest proposals for the final declaration. Thank you very much.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much. That was the last speaker in the session, and now I'd like us to move to a discussion. So the question is, ladies and gentlemen, whether there are any questions or any comments that you would like to share with us.

Well, I cannot see anyone, but anyway, I'd like to take the floor and initiate the discussion.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to start with the intervention of Mr Meleşcanu. Actually, I do agree with you. The Eastern Partnership is supported with a certain amount of money. Well, I think that we should not mislead ourselves. This is not really what we want to communicate about democracy to certain countries included in the Eastern Partnership initiative; parliamentary democracy is of the highest importance. But they look at things, some of those countries at least, they look at specific things and what is very specific is included in the budget of 600 million euros, which is not a substantial amount of money. But let me just remind you that originally the budget had not been planned, then another amount was allocated, 300 million, and at the end of the day we have 600 million. It is not a small budget and I think that one should have a closer look at the allocation of the budget, what share of this budget has already been utilized. I believe that afterwards it will also be possible to discuss the intensity of the Eastern Partnership. So in the next financial perspective, in spite of the fact that the situation was rather different, the resources for the Eastern Partnership should be allocated. I know that all the presidents of the parliaments are aware that when we offer certain support externally, to which we are obliged, then well, in our respective countries we hear the voices: "but there are certain areas of poverty, why do we spend money there, instead of spending those resources internally?" However, our decision is that what we have, we have to share with others but it has to be done in a wise manner. Those resources should be spent in a clever, wise way.

I'd also like to say that an important dimension of the Partnership, namely the cooperation between the parliaments has not worked out effectively. However, my view is that we should not discontinue this cooperation. And I will explain my position. It is of high importance for us to develop a new, additional platform for the governments to operate. I believe that we are aware of the fact that it is easier to meet and talk with a larger group of participants, let's say x + 6, rather than to carry out bilateral relations and to visit those six countries separately. As Mr. Sobotka, I have also visited those countries myself and I know the effort it takes to be able to complete those visits and how much they cost. So I think that we should not discontinue this platform for the Eastern Partnership. However, what is the origin of the problem? Well, the problem emerged since we had made a proposal, and that was also the proposal made by the Polish party, that the representatives of the opposition should be included in the Belarusian parliamentary delegation. I know why. And Belarus said no, the delegation would include just the MPs. I also understand the resistance not only on the Belarusian part but also of all the other countries who are supposed to cooperate in the Eastern Partnership framework and who supported the position expressed by Belarus. With regard to the level of democracy in those six countries - Belarus, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova - you can say that there are actually three levels of democracy. So, when we suggest parliamentary cooperation, we have to be aware of the level of democracy in those countries and now we also propose to act to support democracy. We also propose to support those countries not because we are happy with the level of democracy there – it is just for the opposite reasons. So I think that if we are to succeed and unlock this conflict with Belarus - and I think that it is very likely that we might achieve that after the visit of Ministers Westerwelle and Sikorski to Belarus - I

believe that this parliamentary platform might work quite well. And I think that we should hope for that based on my own experience and I believe that you share that experience. Those contacts, those interparliamentary relations are vital, and it is not that they supplement the contacts at the governments' level. You might say that the relations at the governments' level are supplementary to the interparliamentary relations. We are MPs, so we can say more and we can discuss things more openly than the representatives of governments. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker Prammer, the floor is yours.

Ms. Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian National Council:

Mr Chairman, I have been listening with great interest to your statement about the financing of the future of the European Neighbourhood Policy and I support this approach. Although, without it, it can hardly operate. Naturally, we are always somehow in a difficult situation with regard to financing when we have financial problems in our domestic policy. We would, however, have been in a completely different position if there were no financial and economic crisis. And now, when we are in the process of budgetary negotiations, it is difficult to consider also those issues so as to improve the situation, to ensure the sanation of the European finances. So I believe that we can and should discuss this also in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Austria also has been supporting the introduction of the European tax on financial transactions, which unfortunately is not supported by all member states. We believe that this tax would be targeting the right group to contribute financially and the money raised from the tax could also be used both for our populations and for our neighbours. So maybe there is a need to make some effort to ensure that the necessary financing streams are available for this policy. Thank you.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I cannot see more speakers willing to take the floor, so now I will ask the President of the Polish Sejm, Grzegorz Schetyna, to take the floor and make the summary of the debate.

Mr Grzegorz Schetyna, Marshal of the Polish Sejm:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The final part of our meeting, our discussion, has been devoted to the financing of the whole project. The money is always very important. However, I believe that at that point the subject is not of the highest importance. We have to discuss it, we have to conceive certain ideas how to finance the whole project. And we have to jointly take care of this project and the way it is going to be financed. But I believe that this is the subject for our further discussion and common work. However, if I have the opportunity to take the floor and summarize our debates, I'd like to say that it was a very interesting conversation. I believe that all of us have underlined the importance of good and effective cooperation with our Eastern neighbours and the benefits stemming from that cooperation for those countries and for the whole of Europe, once they're involved in the Eastern Partnership.

The Eastern Partnership is the first comprehensive initiative in the framework of the external relations of the European Union and this is our joint success. We have discussed extensively

other projects, which are supplementary. However, today we have been focusing on the Eastern Partnership and I believe that we can see it as a comprehensive proposal. The fundamental political objectives underpinning the Eastern Partnership are as follows: liberalization of the visa scheme, which is a long-term task as mentioned by one of the speakers. This is the matter of fundamental importance and we will continue to wait for the long-term solution; the creation of complex, free-trade areas and closer political relations, mobility and transfer of people. Well, the programme has been operating for 18 months and we have already seen a progress in the negotiations of association agreements. We have made some subsequent steps approximating individual countries to a visa-free scheme. We have drafted the first agreements with Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine and we have also initiated comprehensive programmes for the institutional development within the Partnership. We have underlined in our discussions the progress in multilateral projects and commencing different programmes, e.g. for integrated border management, for the support of small and medium sized enterprises as well as for the prevention of natural disasters and those caused by human activity. We have already pointed out that the national parliaments and MPs can play their own pivotal role in the implementation of the Partnership. An interesting proposal is to offer expertise services to Partnership countries both by the members of our chambers as well as by the programmes of cooperation amongst the civil servants. In spite of the recognition of our current accomplishments, we have underlined that activities in the multilateral dimension of the Partnership should become even more effective and focus more on the integration of the Partnership countries with the European Union. And this subject has been referred to in every single intervention. We have also articulated a view that what would be desirable is greater commitment of civil society in multilateral projects. However, this is the issue that still remains an open matter.

You have pointed to the need to focus on bilateral dimension of the Partnership, explaining that bilateral cooperation builds confidence and trust in the European Union and indicates specificity and peculiar character of the needs of every single Partnership country. This is this individual dimension of the cooperation that we should preserve. And this sort of Partnership appeal should be of comprehensive character, but should be capable to process and to cater to individual expectations articulated by individual countries. Both in the intervention of Mr. Sikorski and in our debate it has been emphasized that the EU policy in the East will become clearer and more comprehensible once the Partnership is perceived as a comprehensive Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and that was underlined in all the papers and interventions that we have heard. So the Partnership should cover all the relations of the European Union with the Eastern partners, which means that the scope of Partnership should include all the areas of bilateral cooperation between the EU and Partnership countries.

And now about the future. Let me start with the financing, because without the financing we will not be able to achieve a lot. However, there were some voices articulated that this dialogue should become more intense and the integration should be strengthened and more in-depth and closely related to the financial capabilities that we will be able to avail to Partnership. And there were also some other voices and comments referring to the difficult financial situation, financial requirements and financial needs shared by all the member states of the European

Union. We are fully aware of that. However, that must not exclude certain projects, it must not lead to discontinuation of certain projects. The second summit of the Eastern Partnership is planned for May 26 in Budapest during the Hungarian presidency. This is going to be our new objective, it will complete a certain stage. In the course of the summit we should outline the prospects for the Partnership and we should be more specific in drafting our plans and political objectives that were defined in Prague. There must be a follow-up, a continuation. We have to develop plans for next years It is going to be continued, this is a stable initiative and we are determined to pursue those plans. So one should endeavour to effectively negotiate association agreements and to start negotiations on free-trade zones with those partners who meet all the necessary requirements, and to make further progress in the liberalization of visa policy. We also count on starting and fast effects of the action plans on visa liberalization for Ukraine and Moldova, as referred to in the interventions. You support shortening of the EU lengthy procedures that transform the Partnership decisions into specific implementation programmes. We have supported acceleration of the implementation of the flagship projects of the Partnership. An opinion was expressed that in the next years ambitions and efforts of the Partnership countries should be rewarded with gradual opening of new areas of integration, like cooperation of the police and law enforcement agencies, certain aspects of Common Security and Defence Policy, migration and asylum policy. A view was expressed that financial support for neighbouring countries should not be limited exclusively and only to the budget of the European Union. It was emphasized in the first round of the presentations and, I believe, it should also be reflected in our final document, in our final statement since this is what we should continue to refer to and to work on. Parallel additional funds should be allocated by bilateral partners as well as international financial institutions, European Investment Bank in particular, as well as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to make sure that in our Partnership programme we are not limited to the EU budget. Since it will always be tight and it will be made more stringent, it will be very difficult to overcome that problem, so we have to search for new sources of financing our programmes, as I have already said.

Summarizing the debate on the accomplishments and future prospects of the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, let me also refer to the comments relating to the Polish presidency since the Eastern Partnership is one of the top priorities for our presidency. The Polish presidency in the second half of 2011 will commence the implementation of decisions of the Eastern Partnership second summit to be held in Budapest. Minister Sikorski ensured that under the Polish presidency many Partnership programmes would reach the stage of implementation. We will have the association agreement with Ukraine ready to sign and we will intensify the cooperation with the non-European countries in the informal group of the friends of Eastern Partnership. We will implement all the current flagship initiatives.

Just on the concluding note I'd like to remind all of us that, as a result of the enlargement of the European Union with the Central and Eastern European countries, almost 76 million people became the EU's new neighbours and we share the same history and the same culture; and as of today they are not involved to the extent that they would like to in the large project of common Europe. Yet this is their dream, this is their objective and they will desire to achieve

this objective and you have to bear it in mind. What is a challenge is to ensure a stable and safe neighbourhood while avoiding the emergence of new divisions between member and non-member countries, who might feel expelled, pushed away, isolated or, as a result of that, excluded. And this is a fundamental matter for all of us, in particular for those countries, which joined the European Union in the last few years. Well, the EU offered a certain model for the cooperation and Moldova and Ukraine were particularly disappointed, because they had made the major progress in the European Neighbourhood Policy. You have to refer to that and you have to express your recognition and appreciation of that fact. Those two countries have the highest ambitions related to the integration with the European Union. They are most interested to be committed, to be involved in this programme and to draw benefits. We needed an instrument that would prevent such pushing away and excluding those countries. So the main assumption, the main idea underpinning the development of Eastern Partnership was that this project must be of comprehensive character, it must be a new opening, and a new challenge for the united Europe. Thank you very much.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much for your most interesting summary.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like now to discuss a draft of the final statement, joint statement. I would like to say that we have made one technical correction at the very beginning. The President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovakia could not join us because of very important parliamentary proceedings, so this is why we have to delete his name from the statement. So this is a technical issue, indeed. And three amendments have been proposed, two of them have been proposed by Mr Kövér, the President of the Hungarian Parliament and one by Madam Prammer, the President from Austria.

So I shall start by discussing the amendments and let's focus on the amendments in these parts of the text that should be changed; the parts that are not controversial should not attract our attention. You have received the text with the proposed amendments. However, I would like to focus now on the amendments themselves. So the second page, counting from the top, there is a suggestion of the President of the Hungarian Parliament to add: "Apart from the development of the energy infrastructure, including direct South-North interconnections". All of us discussed this issue. Everybody stressed the need to cover this direction. I think this is a right amendment. Would anybody want to express their opinion? No. Anybody against it? No. Thank you. So the amendment is therefore adopted.

And now the part concerning the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The head of the Austrian delegation proposes to substitute the sentence concerning visa regime "visa regime needs to be liberalized in order to abolish visa requirements applicable to citizens of partner countries". In the proposal there is the following sentence: "the EU, in line with the global approach to migration, should also take gradual steps towards full visa liberalization as a long-term goal for individual partner countries and on a case by case basis, provided the necessary conditions are met for well-managed and secure mobility".

Yes? President Meleşcanu, please, the floor is yours. Yes please.

Mr Teodor Meleşcanu, Vice President of the Romanian Senate:

Sorry, I hope it will not come to you as a surprise if I say that I would prefer the first formula. But I understand the Austrian delegation and Madam Prammer herself is under certain constraints, if I could put it this way, and you came with an amendment. Now, my preferences to renounce the amendment and to stick to the text. But, of course, taking into account the amendment I have a question: don't you think it's too much if you leave here the words "as a long-term goal"? From my point of view, the amendment is pretty secure, because you say "should also take gradual steps". "Gradual steps" means one step after the other towards - and you indicate "a long-term goal" - full visa liberalization. But if you say "a long-term goal", I think it's giving a wrong message to those who are expecting. It's not affecting in any way the substance of your amendment, you have the reference to the global approach to migration, which is very clear. You have the idea of gradual steps and you have also the idea that it's a case by case and if the conditions are provided for well-managed security and mobility. I think it's a little bit too much. If you could reflect maybe and renounce this. Thank you.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

I would propose then to speak from your place, I think it would be more convenient now. Yes please. Madam Prammer.

Ms. Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian National Council:

Thank you very much. It's rather simple to explain. My amendment is practically word for word identical with the decision of the European Council. So we have followed the decisions of the European Council and I would be afraid to go further than it was possible at the level of the European Council. We may have various motives why we have had to arrive at this particular decision. Austria had its particular stipulations with this regard and with regard to the Partnership policy there is the matter of freedom of movement, visa liberalization and also facilitation of the readmission agreements in this context. Therefore it requires individual arrangements with member states at the next stage. So I think we shouldn't be more precise or going further than the European Council and this is why I have suggested that we adopt and take over here the text agreed by the European Council.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Madam Speaker, I would have the following proposal. Perhaps we might maintain this sentence which you proposed to be deleted. So let's keep it and let's just add the part proposed by you. So we will have a single sentence, which is a kind of expression of an expectation that liberalization of visa regime is necessary in order to abolish visa requirements applicable to citizens of partner countries in line with the global approach to migration, full stop. The EU should take gradual steps towards full visa liberalization as a long-term goal for individual partner countries and on a case by case basis, provided the necessary conditions are met for well-managed and secure mobility. So in this sentence we would repeat the words of the Council. This is the quote from the conclusions of the Council for Foreign Affairs.

So we will keep the sentence that you, Madam, suggested to delete and we will add the quote from the conclusions of the Council for Foreign Affairs.

Yes, please?

Ms. Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian National Council:

I believe that this is a very sensitive subject matter for member states and therefore, let me once again put forward the European Council document as the basis, and here I have it in English: “mobility of citizens and visa liberalization in a secure environment is another important aspect for the Eastern Partnership”. So in this way we could elaborate this and it comes from the document of the European Council of 7th May 2009, adopted in Prague. I will repeat: “Mobility of citizens and visa liberalization in a secure environment is another important aspect of the Eastern Partnership”. Okay? Thank you very much.

Mr Teodor Meleșcanu, Vice President of the Romanian Senate:

Do you accept it?

So we have to write it down. And it is going to be written down in this way. Yes? Okay.

And now we shall pass by to the third amendment that was proposed by Mr President Kővér. Second page at the end, there is a proposal to add a point: “Presidents of parliaments expect further developments associated with the second summit of the Eastern Partnership in Budapest in May 2011 and express their satisfaction that the Eastern Partnership would be one of the priorities of Polish presidency next year”. I understand it’s a commitment for us. Is this amendment accepted? Yes. Thank you very much.

Now I would like to give the floor to the charge d’affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Slovakia in Poland, Mr Peter Kormuth.

Mr Peter Kormuth, Charge d’affaires of the Slovakian Embassy in Warsaw:

Mr Marshal, distinguished Presidents of Parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen,

on behalf of Mr Richard Sulík, Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, allow me to convey his personal greetings and best wishes to all the participants of this important meeting. The Slovak delegation was unfortunately prevented from taking part in it due to the ongoing parliamentary deliberations and voting on urgent political issues, which were prolonged until today. At the same time, I have been authorized to express the readiness of the Slovak side to host the next meeting of the Presidents of Parliaments of Regional Partnership. We envisage that this meeting could take place in April 2011, most probably on 14th to 15th of April next year. The exact date and place of this meeting will be communicated in the invitation letters, which will be sent out in due time. Thank you for your understanding.

Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate:

Thank you very much.

I have the following suggestion: I believe that we should supplement our joint statement with the invitation to come to Slovakia in April 2011 to attend the 13th meeting of the Presidents of Parliaments of the Regional Partnership countries. And now I’d like to read out this amendment. Perhaps we shall have a 5 minute break and then we are going to resume to read the amendments to you. Since we are going to have a short break, I’d like to invite you to have

an additional group picture with the Speaker of the Sejm, Mr Schetyna. So, please, go to the left and then we are going to have the family picture taken.

I'd like to read out this part of the final statement after we have introduced the amendment. So, we have deleted the sentence number two in this part, so it is necessary to liberalize visa regime aimed at abolishing visa obligations for Partnership countries and we shall replace it with the following phrase: "Another important aspect of the Eastern Partnership is the support of mobility of the citizens and liberalization of visa regime in the safe environment. Following the global approach to migration, the European Union should undertake gradual steps towards full liberalization of visa regime as a long-term objective in the relations with individual Partnership countries and in an individually adopted way, provided the necessary conditions are fulfilled for well-managed and safe mobility". Do we agree with this text, this amendment?

Ladies and Gentlemen, do you have any comments on this text? I can see none. So I understand that we shall adopt this statement in the wording that has just been presented, together with the comments that were discussed and incorporated in the content of that document.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for having arrived to the Senate and thank you very much for partaking in this meeting. I would also like to thank our interpreters.

We are going to conclude this meeting. I would also like to thank all of you for being time-conscious and adhering to time discipline and that will allow you to return to your countries duly and on time. I am hereby closing the 12th meeting of Presidents of Parliaments of the Regional Partnership countries.

Now I would like to invite you for lunch which will be served in another part of this building. You are going to be guided to the restaurant, so please follow the guides.

I would also like to wish you a very enjoyable lunch and return trip back home. Thank you very much.

END OF THE MEETING