



VILNIUS DECLARATION BY THE SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENTS OF IRELAND, LITHUANIA AND GREECE

The Presidency Trio,

Having regard to the Declaration of Cooperation among the Houses of Parliaments of Ireland, Lithuania and Greece in support of the preparation and effective implementation of the parliamentary dimension of the Presidencies of the Council of the European Union of these three Member States for the period 1 January 2013 – 30 June 2014, signed on 20 April 2012,

Congratulates Ireland for having successfully presided over the EU Council in the first half of 2013;

Welcomes the agreement reached between the EU Council and the European Parliament on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020;

Emphasises the urgent need to encourage the debate on the future of the EU with active participation of European citizens, social and economic partners and all other relevant stakeholders;

Welcomes the recommendation put forward by the European Commission as part of its Communication "Preparing for the 2014 European elections: further enhancing their democratic and efficient conduct" for European political parties to nominate their candidates for President of the European Commission in the 2014 European elections and for national parties to clearly display their European political party affiliations; *is of the opinion* that such a move would strengthen democratic legitimacy of EU institutions;

Encourages the Member States to pursue the needed structural reforms, improve efficiency of public expenditures and to continue fiscal discipline in order to achieve economic growth and long-term sustainability of public finances; *stresses* the urgent need to give priority to measures aimed at increasing employment, especially youth employment, including through YEI and the Youth Guarantee; *supports* the Employment package proposed by the Commission in 2012; calls for rapid mobilisation of European resources including that of the EIB and the new "Investment Plan" to support SME's and boost the financing of the economy and *recognises* that more needs to be done in terms of reforming the labour market, investing in the human capital, and expanding free trade and investment agreements;

Welcomes the start of negotiations between the EU and the United States on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership;

Welcomes the decision taken at the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments in Nicosia in April 2013 to establish an interparliamentary conference as envisaged in Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union; *looks forward* to the inaugural meeting of the conference which will take place in Vilnius on 16–18 October 2013;

Emphasises the need for a more competitive and less bureaucratic EU;

Notes that enlargement is the key EU policy area which serves the strategic interests of the EU and continues to strengthen peace, democracy and stability in Europe;

Recognises the importance of the European Neighbourhood Policy and its further development, by praising its results and calling for the Eastern and Southern Partners' continuous engagement and commitment;

Welcomes the strengthening of political association and economic integration between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries; *encourages* closer cooperation with relevant international organisations, as well as non-governmental organisations and other fora in their efforts to promote human rights and democracy in the region;

Welcomes the strengthening of cooperation between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean countries within the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, especially in terms of cooperation aimed at supporting economic, social and political development of these countries; in this respect, stresses the importance of the role of the Union for the Mediterranean as a catalyst for democratic transition and socio-economic development in the wider area of the Mediterranean, through consistent implementation of concrete projects, which bring tangible benefits for the peoples of the region.

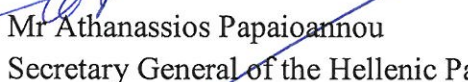
Signs this Declaration at the solemn plenary sitting at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania dedicated to the start of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 4 July 2013.

Done in Vilnius, signed in three identical copies



Mr Seán Barrett
Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann

Mr Vydas Gedvilas
Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania



Mr Athanassios Papaioannou
Secretary General of the Hellenic Parliament