

Parliamentary dimension

5TH MEETING

OF THE COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND REGIONAL POLICY OF THE PARLIAMENTS OF THE VISEGRÁD GROUP COUNTRIES

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE RELEVANT COMMITTEES OF THE CROATIAN PARLIAMENT

WARSAW, 28 - 29 JANUARY 2013

JOINT STATEMENT

Representatives of the Committees on Public Administration and Regional Policy of the Parliaments of the Visegrad Group Countries, as well as the relevant Committees of the Croatian Parliament

Regarding the EU Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020 and the EU cohesion policy

- express their disappointment with the continuing lack of agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework despite the European Council's commitment to close the negotiations by the end of 2012;
- declare their believe that the EU budget must be big enough to enable the EU to face the future challenges;
- believe that the cohesion policy plays a vital role in implementing the EU agenda for growth and jobs and, consequently, it should be allocated an adequately large budget;
- point out the need to ensure appropriate conditions of implementing the cohesion policy, including in particular maintaining the eligibility of non-recoverable VAT;
- underline that it is necessary to reduce the burdens which any mechanisms relating to conditions and conditionalities impose on the beneficiary states, i.a. by introducing a ceiling for sanctions following from the introduction of a given conditionality and restricting the use of conditionality to commitments only (and not payments);
- emphasise that it is necessary to close negotiations in February in order to adopt legislative acts and, on their basis, programming documents for the funds and instruments to be implemented; the overlap of the EU financial crisis and the Eurozone debt crisis could also adversely affect EU's credibility;
- believe that the Common Strategic Framework and the Europe 2020 strategy at the EU level, as well as national, regional and local strategies should be the main documents to be used by the Member States for preparing, on a partnership basis, partnership agreements, and then operational programmes;
- additionally, support the strengthening of the strategic dimension of EU funds by adopting the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) covering, apart from the 3 cohesion policy funds (European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Cohesion

Fund), also the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund;

- support the main principles which are to constitute the basis of future programmes financed from those 5 funds, called European Structural and Investment Funds, i.e. territorial approach to development and result orientation;
- call on their governments to use, to the greatest extent possible, various instruments supporting territorial development; such instruments are going to increase the involvement and accountability of regional and local authorities as well as local communities in programming and funds management;
- believe that future cohesion policy programmes should present a strategy for achieving specific goals with respect to the development of a specific region or thematic area; the 2014-2020 programming period should see much more emphasis on the results of the financed activities, not just focus on the pace of absorption;
- wish to emphasise that they find it equally important to support on the one hand innovation, research and development, which enable their states to modernise their economic structures, and on the other hand basic transportation, energy and environmental infrastructure, which is still underdeveloped in those countries and which is a necessity in a modern, innovative state;
- appreciate the cooperation of the governments of the Visegrad Group states so far and their efficiency in securing the interests of our states; hope that such cooperation will be continued during the oncoming months of negotiations over the 2014-2020 MFF and the cohesion policy legislative package;

Regarding the challenges faced by the central and local public administration in the context of the European financial crisis

- note that the economic and financial crisis exposed the need to change the priorities of individual challenges faced by public administration and look for ways to reduce the cost of its operations, while at the same time striving to improve the quality of its services;
- underline that the financial crisis has created the need to reflect on the models of state and public administration and of providing public services, and the need to use new technologies and foster the activity of non-governmental organisations;
- believe that during the financial crisis, when the financial possibilities are limited, the local and regional public administration plays a particular role, as it forms the basis of building the citizens' trust in the state and involving them in the decision-making process concerning public matters;
- stress the importance of reforming public administration structures in order to establish a proper division of powers, consistently apply the principle of subsidiarity and improve the use of local government institutions, which should implement the majority of basic tasks;
- believe that greater cooperation between central and local government administration is necessary in order to optimise the operations of public administration;
- underline the importance of using new technologies in public administration, which means the development of e-public services and securing easier access to public administration;

- note that fostering the development of information society is one of the greatest challenges faced by public administration, as it requires taking measures aimed at unlocking public resources, building digital competence in the general public and transparency of public action;
- are in favour of strengthening cooperation between Central European states in exchanging good practices and knowledge on computerisation of public administration, in the belief that it is indispensable for the implementation of the Digital Agenda for Europe;

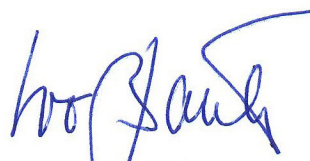
Regarding the meetings of the committees on public administration and regional policy within the framework of the parliamentary dimension of the Visegrad Group

- believe that meetings of the parliamentary committees on public administration and regional policy of Visegrad Group states should take on the form of regular V4 parliamentary meetings, such as summits of speakers of parliaments and meetings of the committees on European affairs; since May 2012, similarly to the summits of speakers of parliaments, such meetings have been included in the schedule of the Group's subsequent presidencies;
- authorise the hosts of the meeting to forward this Joint Statement to the attention of:
 - the President of the European Parliament;
 - speakers of V4+Slovenian and Croatian parliaments;
 - the Prime Minister, the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, who are currently presiding over the V4;
 - chairs of the European Affairs Committees of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Czech parliament, who are going to host the next meeting of those committees in the V4 format.

Warszawa, 29 January 2013



Deputy Václav Horáček
Chair, Committee on Public Administration
and Regional Development, Chamber of Deputies
of the Parliament of the Czech Republic



Senator Ivo Bábek
Chair, Committee on Public Administration,
Regional Development and the Environment,
Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic



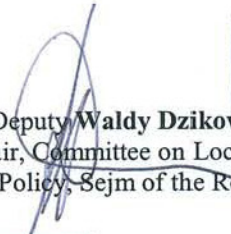
Deputy István Apáti
Deputy Chair, Committee on Local Government
and Regional Development,
National Assembly of Hungary



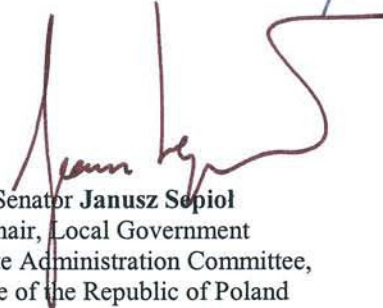
Deputy Máttyás Firtl
Deputy Chair, Committee on European Affairs,
National Assembly of Hungary



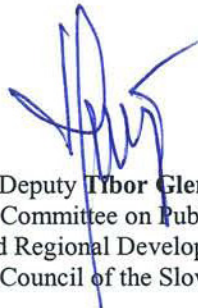
Deputy **Julia Pitera**
Chair, Committee on Administration and Digitization,
Sejm of the Republic of Poland



Deputy **Waldy Dzikowski**
Deputy Chair, Committee on Local Government
and Regional Policy, Sejm of the Republic of Poland



Senator **Janusz Sepiol**
Chair, Local Government
and State Administration Committee,
Senate of the Republic of Poland



Deputy **Tybor Glenda**
Deputy Chair, Committee on Public Administration
and Regional Development,
National Council of the Slovak Republic



Deputy **Marijan Škvarić**
Member, Local and Regional Self-government
Committee, Croatian Parliament



Deputy **Draženko Pandek**
Member, Committee on Regional Development
and European Union Funds, Croatian Parliament