

Ms. Eliane Tillieux
Speaker of the House of Representatives and Co-Chair of
the Federal Advisory Committee on European Affairs

Mr. Gaëtan Van Goidsenhoven
Senator and Co-Chair of
the Federal Advisory Committee on European Affairs

Dear Speaker Tillieux and Senator Van Goidsenhoven,

4 March 2024

As you may have understood, the Council Secretariat is currently considering revoking the access of national parliaments to the Delegates Portal system.

On 9 February, we have sent out a letter to the Council Secretariat on behalf of 23 chambers of national parliaments of member states of the European Union. The Belgian Presidency (Ms. Hadja Lahbib), the Executive Vice President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight in the European Commission (Mr. Maroš Šefčovič) and the Committee on Constitutional Affairs in the European Parliament have received a copy of the letter.

In that letter (attached), we point out that such a revocation of our access would undermine our possibilities to carry out effective parliamentary scrutiny of decision-making in the Council. At a time where increasing transparency of the work carried out in the European institutions is of evident relevance, we believe that the proposal to remove our access to the Delegates Portal is the wrong signal to send.

As such, we have asked the Council Secretariat to reconsider revoking access to Delegates Portal and to discuss the issue further with representatives of the national parliaments, rather than exclusively with representatives of national governments.

We would appreciate it if you could include a reference to this request, which is of utmost importance to many chambers, in your (draft) contributions of the LXXI COSAC Plenary meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Niels Flemming HANSEN
Chair of the European Affairs
Committee of the Folketing

Ms. Laura BROMET

Acting chair of the European
Affairs committee of the Tweede
Kamer

Mr. Bastiaan VAN APELDOORN

Chair of the Committee on
European Affairs of the Eerste
Kamer

President Hadja Lahbib
Council of the EU
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175
B-1048 Bruxelles/Brussel

Secretary-General Thérèse Blanchet
The General Secretariat of the Council
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175
B-1048 Bruxelles/Brussel

9 February 2024

Dear President of the General Affairs Council, dear Secretary General,

We have understood that the Council Secretariat is currently considering revoking the access of national parliaments to the Delegates Portal system. We would like to take this opportunity to stress that such a revocation of our access would undermine our possibilities to carry out effective parliamentary scrutiny of decision-making in the Council.

We are aware that the Council Secretariat has suggested using the Council Information Exchange Platform (CIXP) as the main system for our access to Council documents. However, the CIXP does not offer the same functionality as the Delegates Portal. The experience with CIXP is that it is not a stable system and that certain functionalities, such as searching for information, is hardly possible. Furthermore, moving from one centrally managed system to a system where the Member States each have to establish their own portals in order to provide access to the CIXP is contrary to the very idea of EU cooperation. It would limit our access to documents while at the same time increasing the administrative burdens at Member State level.

At a time where increasing transparency of the work carried out in the European institutions is of evident relevance, we believe that the proposal to remove our access to the Delegates Portal would be the wrong signal to send. We need to work together to increase transparency and the democratic legitimacy of the work of the Council. Removing National Parliaments' access to Delegates Portal would therefore be a big step in the wrong direction and run counter to what is foreseen in Articles 4 and 12 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Protocol (No 1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

We would furthermore like to encourage you to take all possible steps to increase the accessibility of information to all national parliaments.

We hope to discuss the issue further and look forward to your response.

On behalf of:

- *Mr. Harris GEORGIADES*, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs of **the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus**,
- *Mr. Vladislav VILÍMEC*, Chair of the EAC of **the Czech Senate** and *Mr. Ondřej BENEŠÍK*, Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs of **the Czech Chamber of Deputies**.
- *Mr. Anton HOFREITER*, Chairperson of the Committee on European Union Affairs, **the German Bundestag**
- *Ms. Liisa-Ly PAKOSTA*, The Chair of the Riigikogu's EU Affairs Committee, **the Riigikogu, the Parliament of Estonia**
- *Mr. Ioannis PLAKIOTAKIS*, 1st Vice President and Chair of the European Affairs Committee of **the Hellenic Parliament**
- *Mr. Jean-François RAPIN*, Chairman of the Committee on EU Affairs of **the French Senate**
- *Mr. Giulio TERZI DI SANT'AGATA*, Chair of the EU Affairs Committee of **the Italian Senato della Repubblica** and *Mr. Alessandro GIGLIO VIGNA*, Chair of the EU Policies Committee of **the Italian Camera dei deputati**
- *Mr. Edmunds CEPURITIS*, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of **the Parliament of Latvia**
- *Ms. Radvilė MORKŪNAITĖ-MIKULĖNIENĖ*, Deputy Speaker and Chairperson of the EU Affairs Committee of **the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania**
- *Mr. Gusty GRAAS*, the Chair of the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Cooperation, Foreign Trade and the Greater Region of **the Chamber of Deputies (Luxembourg)**
- *Ms. Judit VARGA*, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs of **the Hungarian National Assembly**
- *Mr. Reinhold LOPATKA*, Chairman of the Standing Subcommittee on EU-Affairs of **the Austrian National Council** and *Mr. Christian BUCHMANN*, Chairman of the EU-Affairs Committee of **the Austrian Federal Council**
- *Mr. Michał KOBOSKO*, Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee of **the Sejm of the Republic of Poland** and *Mr. Bogdan KLICH*, Chair of the EU affairs Committee of **the Senate of the Republic of Poland**
- *Mr. Luís CAPOULAS SANTOS*, Chair of the EU Affairs Committee of **the Assembleia da República Portuguesa**

- *Mr. Ján FERENČÁK*, Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs of **the Slovak Republic**
- *Mr. Heikki AUTTO*, Chair of the Grand Committee, **the Eduskunta, the Parliament of Finland**

Yours sincerely

Mr. Niels Flemming HANSEN

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