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22 April 2008

Promoting parliamentary diplomacy

Motion for a resolution¹

tabled by Mr João Bosco MOTA AMARAL and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Traditionally, diplomacy falls within the exclusive remit of governments. While members of parliament occasionally debated foreign policy issues, they lacked opportunities for personal involvement.

This is no longer the case. Parliamentarians increasingly participate in international fora, ranging from interparliamentary groups to networks of parliamentarians specialising in specific topics, from associations of parliaments such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to international assemblies such as ours. Parliamentarians also increasingly conduct fact-finding missions abroad, or take part in diplomatic missions, and are appointed to high-profile mediation roles in conflict or post-conflict situations. In addition, through international federations, they maintain contacts with politicians from sister parties in other countries.

The European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments held in Tallinn (Estonia) in May 2006 emphasised the growing importance of parliamentary diplomacy and highlighted that, despite a certain lack of continuity that parliamentarians can ensure for these activities and of co-ordination and exchange of information amongst different bodies, parliamentary diplomacy can be very effective, as parliamentarians have the freedom to make tougher demands than governments' representatives. In addition, they can bring foreign affairs issues closer to the public at large and translate their experience abroad into better-informed decisions at national level.

Taking stock of the experience gained by its members in this field, the Assembly should make recommendations on how to enhance the involvement of parliamentarians in foreign affairs and promote parliamentary diplomacy as a complement to traditional diplomacy.

Signed (see overleaf)

1. Referred to the Political Affairs Committee, for report: Reference No. 3455 (19th Sitting, 23 June 2008).



Signed²:

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2. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left