



Press Release

PR190732

09.04.2019

PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Deputy Speaker participates in the EU Speakers' Conference

Deputy Speaker Claudette Buttigieg participated in the Conference of Speakers of EU Member States which took place in Vienna on 8th and 9th of April 2019. This conference marked the end of the interparliamentary dimension of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and brought together around 50 Speakers and Presiding Officers from the parliaments of 37 European countries and the European Parliament.

The conference was chaired by Mr Wolfgang Sobotka, President of the Austrian National Council, and Mr Ingo Appé, President of the Austrian Federal Council and discussed the European Union and its neighbourhood, focussing on the Western Balkans, and the EU ahead of the 2019 European elections in the context of further development of cooperation between national parliaments and European institutions.

MP Buttigieg took the floor in the session on the EU ahead of the 2019 European elections. In her intervention she spoke about the achievements of the European Union, not least the enviable peace and prosperity that it has brought to a region historically fraught by wars and conflicts. She argued that the common challenges that the EU faces can only be overcome by working together with determination, and that growing disillusionment with politics can be achieved by avoiding short-term populist arguments in favour of sustainable long-term policies. The Deputy Speaker further argued that the electorate should be encouraged to vote on European issues and not on local issues in the forthcoming EP elections.

With regard to the developing situation in Libya, MP Buttigieg remarked that as she was speaking, Malta was preparing to receive and treat the injured from the attacks in Tripoli. She argued that notwithstanding the pressure on the limited local resources, Malta remains ready to give its assistance, however this is a case in point where the EU can truly show itself for the Europe it really is.

MP Buttigieg concluded that inter-parliamentary cooperation needs to be enhanced and where necessary reviewed in order to be able to contribute concretely to safeguarding the common European future.

The Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments was held for the first time in 1963 and has been held annually since 1999 (previously every two years, alternating with the Conference of Presidents of Parliament of the Council of Europe). The country holding the European Council Presidency in the second half of the previous year hosts the conference in the first half of the following year. The 41 parliamentary chambers of the national parliaments of the EU Member States and the European Parliament are represented

at the EU Speakers Conference by their speakers. Following the Vienna conference, Finland will take over the Speakers Conference, as it will hold the European Council Presidency from 1 July 2019.