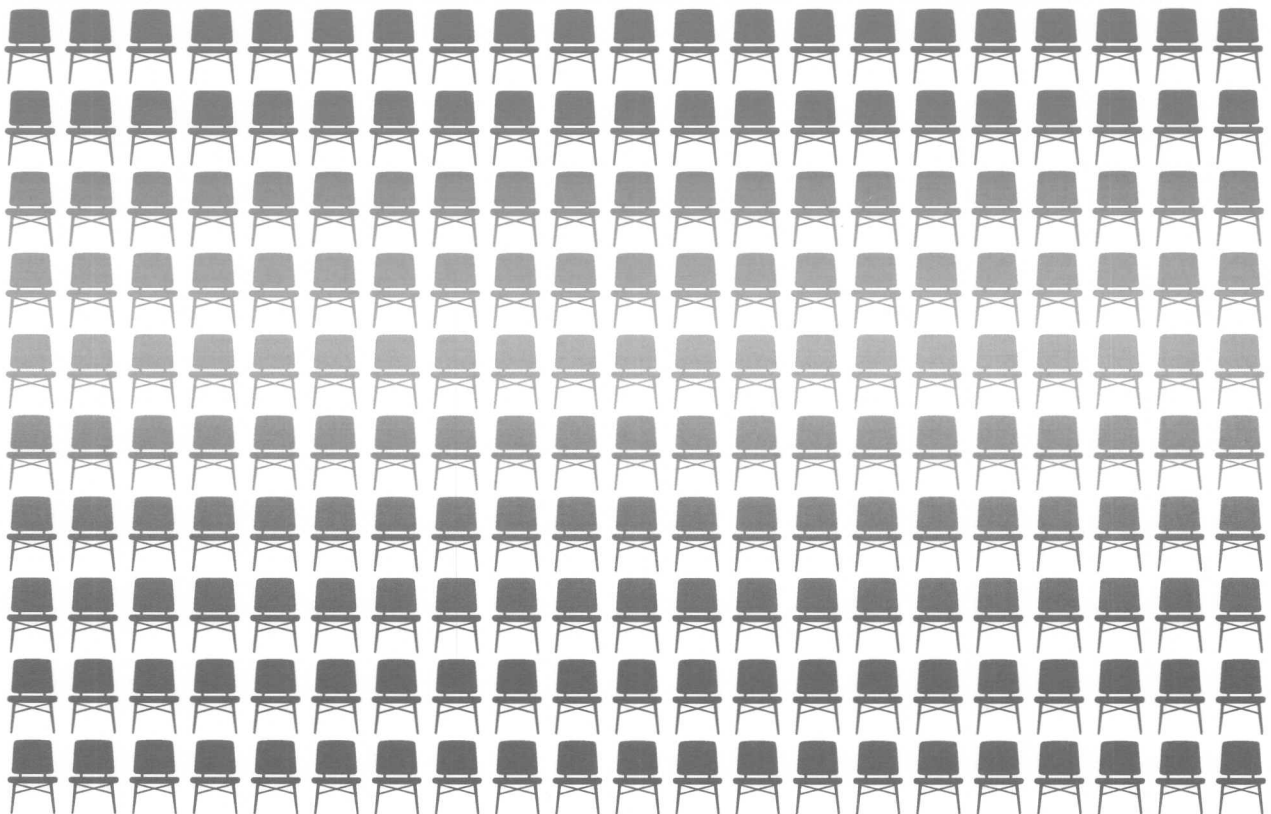




# Parliamentary dimension of the Dutch EU Presidency

*inter-parliamentary conferences*



From January to June 2016 the Netherlands is to hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Not only the government but also the States-General play a major role during this Presidency. As part of the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency the Senate and the House of Representatives will jointly organize a number of inter-parliamentary conferences. The aim of these is to work in concert with the other national parliaments in the EU and the European Parliament to improve parliamentary scrutiny and to increase parliamentary involvement in European decision-making.

## Inter-parliamentary conferences

In 2016 the Senate and the House of Representatives of the States-General will organize five inter-parliamentary conferences in The Hague and one in Brussels as part of the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency. Four of these conferences are recurrent “standard” meetings that take place every six months. The other two conferences are dedicated to topics that the States-General deem of great importance: one on human-trafficking, and one on energy issues, including aspects of innovation, with special attention to the circular economy.



### **Presidents' Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC)**

*7 and 8 February*

The conference of the Presidents of the COSAC will take place on 7 and 8 February 2016. COSAC is a partnership between different European Affairs committees of the national parliaments of the EU member states and members of the European Parliament. The participants in the Presidents' COSAC are therefore the presidents of the European Affairs committees of the national EU parliaments.

The agenda of the Presidents' COSAC contains fixed items, such as the establishment of the agenda of the plenary COSAC (on 12–14 June 2016) and the outline of the Bi-Annual Report. The latter is a summary of an inventory of working methods for EU matters among all national parliaments. There are also two sessions on specific topics.

The first session, 'Working together to ensure parliamentary control', will focus on the role and position of the Committees for European Affairs in the chambers/parliaments. This session concerns an exchange on the organisation of the European Affairs committees.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the current president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker will be invited for the second session – 'Parliamentary control over the current Council agendas and the new Commission work programme'.



### **Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance (Article 13)**

*17 February*

The Article 13 conference will take place on 17 February 2016. The full title of this conference is the 'Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Coordination and Administration in the Economic and Monetary Union' (also referred to as: the Fiscal Compact). Article 13 of the Fiscal Compact focuses on this inter-parliamentary conference, which is held biannually: in Brussels in the spring, and in the country holding the presidency of the Council of the European Union in the autumn.

The Article 13 conference is prepared and presided over by the host country's national parliament in cooperation with the European Parliament. The agenda of the meeting held on 17 February 2016 in Brussels will be established in consultation with the European Parliament. The goal of the conference is to exchange best practices on the following themes: the budget policy, investments and competitiveness.



### **Inter-parliamentary conference on Human Trafficking**

*13 and 14 March*

On 13 and 14 March, the States General will organise a thematic conference on human trafficking. The central theme of the conference is Human Trafficking and the Internet. The parliamentary preparation group (PPG), consisting of members of the Senate and House of Representatives, will prepare a programme that examines this subject from different perspectives. During the preparation of the conference, the PPG will regularly seek the advice of the National Rapporteur on Human Trafficking and Sexual Violence against Children.

The opening session will focus on the European policy agenda in the area of human trafficking and the internet. The PPG subsequently seeks to discuss three aspects of the main theme in greater detail in plenary panels.

- Panel I: Human Trafficking and the Internet: How the internet is changing the methods of human traffickers.  
How is the increasing use of the internet changing human trafficking? This panel explores how human traffickers use the internet, technology, social media and mobile messaging to meet and recruit victims, place advertisements and contact clients. And what happens in difficult-to-reach areas of the internet, such as the deep web? The links to other types of crime, such as grooming and child pornography, are discussed.

- Panel II: Cyberspace for protection and for the prevention of human trafficking. This panel focuses on the powerful role of the internet in the prevention of human trafficking and the protection of victims. Internet and social media are part of our daily lives. We therefore need an approach that embraces these technologies and utilises their strengths. The main focus is on prevention, protection and cooperation.
- Panel III: Tracking of digital footprints: The internet as an instrument of investigation Recruiting victims and offering their services online requires an online approach. The government's approach to dealing with human trafficking is reactive by definition. How do we ensure that this approach is in line with technological developments and changing *modi operandi*? The following is clear: the government cannot do it alone; inter-governmental partnerships are essential. In this panel, members will discuss online tracking, digital forensics, digital footsteps and digital cash flows. Which innovative methods already exist? Which legal, ethical and practical dilemmas will arise?



#### **Inter-parliamentary Conference on Energy**

*3 and 4 April*

On 3 and 4 April, the States General will organise a thematic conference on energy entitled "Energy, including some aspects of innovation, paying special attention to the circular economy". The main question of this conference is: How do we accelerate a cost-efficient transition to a clean, competitive and safe energy future? The Minister of Economic Affairs, the Vice-President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič, and European Commissioner Karmenu Vella will speak in turn in the plenary morning programme.

This will be followed by a panel discussion with several international guest speakers. In the afternoon, the group will split up into four sub-sessions:

- Energy infrastructure and security of supply
- Energy savings: Energy-saving cities
- Sustainable energy sources
- Circular economy



#### **CFSP/CSDP Inter-parliamentary Conference**

*6 to 8 April*

The inter-parliamentary conference on the common foreign and security policy and the common security and defence policy (CFSP/CSDP) is held every six months in the country holding the presidency of the Council of the European Union. The draft agenda for the

conference in The Hague has two main priorities: a scenario discussion on the deployment of EU military forces and the revision of the strategic concept; in other words, the European Union's new international security strategy. These priorities will build on the activities of earlier inter-parliamentary meetings and on the efforts of the Dutch delegation at these conferences. The European Parliament will also be consulted in setting the agenda.

A scenario discussion is being prepared on political decision-making regarding the deployment of rapid-response forces within the framework of the common security and defence policy, and parliamentary involvement in particular. Using a scenario exercise based on a fictitious crisis management scenario in the European Union, the participating parliamentarians will exchange best practices.

Background information will be sent to participating parliamentarians in advance. The ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs have already agreed to participate in this scenario discussion. The Minister of Defence is closely involved in the substantive preparations. The provisional scenario discussion is currently scheduled for the afternoon of Thursday 7 April.

The PPG is also preparing for a discussion on the revision of the EU's strategic concept, which is being readied by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. Ms Mogherini has been invited to participate in this discussion. Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General of NATO, will also be invited to attend. The PPG strives to draw the focus to the cooperation between the EU and NATO on matters relating to security by inviting the representatives of both organisations to participate in a joint discussion.



### **Plenary COSAC**

12 to 14 June

The Plenary COSAC will commence on the morning of Monday 13 June, with a keynote speech delivered by Prime Minister Rutte, in which he will look back on the Dutch EU presidency.

Three sessions concerning specific topics will also be on the agenda for Monday 13 June. The first session will focus on the exchange of national parliaments' best practices in EU deliberations. Depending on the progress made in this area by the Luxembourgian presidency, efforts will be made to bring the discussion on the yellow and green cards to a close. European Commissioner and First Vice-President Frans Timmermans has been invited to attend this session. The second session of this plenary meeting will concern "the rule of law".

The working title of the third session is “Parliamentary diplomacy regarding the rule of law in neighbouring countries of the EU”. These two sessions will examine the internal EU rule of law and parliamentary diplomacy in the neighbourhood policy respectively. In addition to Mr Timmermans, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has also been invited to attend these two sessions.

On Tuesday 14 June, Mr Brenninkmeijer will speak on behalf of the European Court of Auditors about the manner in which parliaments in the European Union examine reports from the Court of Auditors. Later in the morning, there will be room on the agenda for discussion of a topical issue (yet to be determined). The Presidents’ COSAC will end with the acceptance of contributions and conclusions, as is customary.

## Steering Committee and Political Preparatory Groups

The parliamentary dimension of the EU Presidency is organized under the responsibility of a steering committee, comprising the Presidents of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the chairpersons of the committees for European Affairs of both chambers and the Secretaries-General of both chambers. For each of the six inter-parliamentary conferences a Political Preparatory Group (PPG) is established, consisting of an equal number of members from the Senate and from the House. The PPG will prepare in the coming period the programme of “their” conference and discuss it with other national parliaments and the European Parliament. The aim is to prepare the programs for the various conferences.

## Composition of the Political Preparatory Groups

The political preparatory groups are made up of the following persons (chamber, committee, political party):

### Energy

Chair Van Veen, vice-chair Verheijen

#### Senate

Atsma (Senate, CDA)  
Jorritsma (Senate, VVD)  
Vos (Senate, GroenLinks)  
Verheijen (Senate, PvdA)

#### House

Cegerek (House, PvdA)  
Van Veldhoven (House, D66)  
Mulder (House, Economic Affairs, CDA),  
Van Veen (House, VVD)

## Human-trafficking

Rotating Chair: Volp, Gerkens

Senate	House
Duthler (Senate, VVD)	Volp (House, PvdA)
Gerkens (Senate, SP)	Segers (House, ChristenUnie)
Strik (Senate, GroenLinks)	Taverne (House, VVD)

## CFSP/CSDP

Chair Eijsink, vice-chair unknown

Senate	House
De Grave (Senate, VVD)	Eijsink (House, PvdA)
Schrijver (Senate, PvdA)	Van Bommel (House, SP)
Lintmeijer (Senate, GroenLinks)	Ten Broeke (House, VVD)
Knapen (Senate, CDA)	Hachchi (House, D66)

## Article 13

Chair Harbers, vice-chair Postema

Senate	House
Elzinga (Senate, SP)	Harbers (House, VVD)
Postema (Senate, PvdA)	Koolmees (House, D66)

## COSAC (plenary and chairpersons)

Rotating chairmanship: Azmani and Elzinga.

Senate	House
Elzinga (Senate, SP)	Azmani (House, VVD)
Schrijver (Senate, PvdA)	Van 't Wout (House, VVD)
Backer (Senate, D66)	Maij (House, PvdA)
Strik (Senate, GroenLinks)	Rog (House, CDA)

### Contact information

Stephan de Vos (organization & logistics)  
E: [stephan.devos@eerstekamer.nl](mailto:stephan.devos@eerstekamer.nl)  
T: +31 (0)6 – 1587 4313

Arjen Westerhoff (content)  
E: [a.westerhoff@tweedekamer.nl](mailto:a.westerhoff@tweedekamer.nl)  
T: +31 (0)6 – 1830 5798

Email: [info@parleu2016.nl](mailto:info@parleu2016.nl)  
Twitter: [@ParLEU2016NL](https://twitter.com/ParLEU2016NL)

Internet: [www.parleu2016.nl](http://www.parleu2016.nl)

