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14-03-2001

FOLKETINGET
J.nr. 254-7-1

Dear Colleagues,

We have the honour to enclose an invitation for you to the Europol Conference, which is being organised by the Senate and House of Representatives of the States General (the Dutch Parliament). This Europol Conference will be held in The Hague on 7 and 8 June 2001.

As Europol is primarily an intergovernmental organisation, it is in practice very difficult for the national parliaments to discharge their democratic task of controlling and scrutinising the policies and practices of Europol. Indeed, the Treaty mechanisms for the national parliaments to control Europol are so limited that it will be necessary to search for alternative forms of democratic control of Europol, since the European Parliament has no competence under the Treaties in matters relating to Europol. It is therefore of great importance that the national parliaments and the European Parliament join forces in order to examine ways of strengthening the existing parliamentary control of Europol and to effectuate this in practice.

The States General have therefore taken the initiative of organising a conference on Europol at which the objectives described above can be achieved. We would like to emphasise how much importance we attach to your attendance since your contribution to the gathering and exchange of information about Europol is of essential significance in promoting coordination of the control of Europol by national parliaments and the European Parliament.

In order to make Europol as transparent as possible, the conference organisers have arranged for the programme to include a visit to Europol itself. During this visit the interparliamentary delegation will not only receive substantive information about the organisation but will also be given a tour of Europol's offices. During the conference itself, the delegates will be able to acquire an in-depth knowledge of the activities of Europol by means of a discussion of cases dealing specifically with drug trafficking, smuggling of human beings and child pornography. These cases will be explained by leading academic experts in the fields concerned. The organisers have also invited Mr António Vitorino, European Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs, to address the conference as guest speaker.

In order to be able to prepare the interparliamentary meeting as well as possible, the organisers have drawn up a questionnaire designed to obtain information both about the existing Europol control mechanisms in national parliaments and about the views of the members of parliament about Europol. This questionnaire will be sent to the conference delegates as soon as they are known by name. We would point out only a short time will be needed to complete the questionnaire. The analysis of the replies to the questionnaire will be communicated to the conference participants before the start of the conference. In addition, the participants will be sent a reader dealing specifically with the parliamentary systems for the control and scrutiny of Europol.

The Swedish Minister of Justice has indicated that he warmly welcomes the initiative and considers that such a conference should be the rule rather than the exception. The conference therefore enjoys the support of the country currently presiding over the European Union.

Owing to the limited number of places available at the conference, the organisers would kindly request you to indicate by 23 March at the latest whether you are able to accept this invitation. Three places are available for the parliament of each Member State of the European Union. The three representatives may be accompanied by one civil servant. If your parliament consists of two chambers, the same letter has been sent to your counterpart in the other chamber.

You yourself should arrange for the reservation in a hotel. Please find enclosed a list of the available hotels classified by price per night. We would advise you to make a reservation as quickly as possible since the conference will be held in a busy period. The organisers will be glad to help if you need advice on any practical matters.

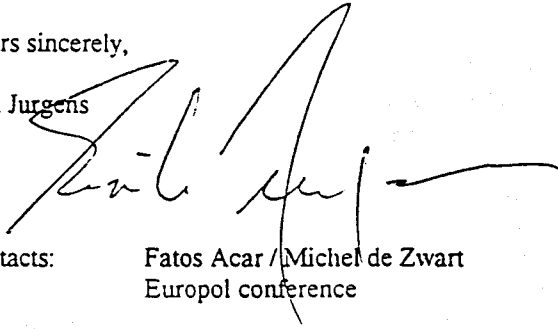
Finally, we would request you to specify a contact within your parliament to whom the pre-conference documentation (conference programme, questionnaire, reader, city plan and so forth) can be sent.

The conference is being organised by Mr Gerritjan van Oven, Mr Otto Vos, Professor Erik Jurgens and Mr Rob van de Beeten (all of whom are members of the States General) and by Mr Chris Baljé and Mr Leo Bellekom (who are the clerks to the States General). They have the wholehearted support of the presidents of both the Senate and the House of Representatives of the States General, namely Mr Frits Korthals Altes and Mrs Jeltje van Nieuwenhoven.

We trust that we have provided you with sufficient information and would be grateful to learn from you at your earliest convenience whether you are able to accept this invitation.

Yours sincerely,

Erik Jurgens



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Europol conference

Europol Conference

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