



**European Association of former Parliamentarians
of the member states of the Council of Europe**

European charter of former parliamentarians^{*}

Preamble

The European Association of former Parliamentarians of the member states of the Council of Europe (FP-AP) is bringing together independent associations of former parliamentarians of the national parliaments and of the European Parliament. The European Association is committed to the Council of Europe's objective to achieve a greater unity among the peoples of Europe; it aims to develop friendly contacts and to share information with other associations.

The members of the European Association have agreed to adopt the text below entitled 'European charter of former parliamentarians'. This Charter aims at laying down all the principles and aims guiding and inspiring the work by the FP-AP and recalls the methods recommended to assure its influence and impact.

TITLE I: PRINCIPLES

1. The joint values, defined in the FP-AP Rome Declaration of 30 November 2002, bring together the former parliamentarians: dignity of the human person, gender equality, freedom and responsibility, democracy and the rule of law, solidarity and social justice, the protection of nature and its resources, tolerance, respect for minorities and cultural diversities, and peace and co-operation among peoples.
2. Beyond these fundamental values, new challenges facing Europe and the world are added: Effective regulation of international financial and capital markets, free and fair trade, an international social and market economy. Other priorities are : Combating climate warming, poverty and rising income gaps, pandemics, clandestine and mass immigration, the fight against human trafficking, as well as state accountability and transparency, all essential issues requiring new behaviors and appropriate policies. This is the case with the fight against irresponsible speculation endangering the economic and social balance worldwide and increasing the risk of political instability, the fight against terrorism, the fight against the ongoing process of concentration of wealth through "tax havens", thus distorting fair competition to the detriment of the poorest. This is also the aim of the protection of human rights and of the freedom of Press and Media, including the right of expression and that of intellectual, artistic, scientific and economic creations.

^{*} Unanimously adopted on 7th October 2011 at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, on the basis of the report of Mr Jacques Chaumont (France)

3. The political system underpinning European civilization is that of pluralistic and participatory parliamentary democracy. It is based on a legislature elected by universal suffrage, an executive accountable to parliament and on an independent judiciary. It is also based on the freedom of the media ensuring pluralism of information and the respect of the fundamental rights of individuals. It is committed to respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights and fundamental freedoms. Compliance with these criteria is a prerequisite to join the FP-AP.

TITLE II: AIMS

4. Former parliamentarians elected by popular vote, participating in a European Association, have set themselves the aims of making their experience available for European construction as well as the operation of all Institutions contributing to it. They also aim at a better understanding by public opinion.
5. The strengthening of the European construction is the priority goal of former European parliamentarians. Following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union must make the most of this Treaty with a view to more stable and effective institutions while complying with the subsidiarity principle which is designed to oppose centralism and leaves a lot of ground for State and regional entities responsibilities. The strengthening of the powers of the European Parliament must be compensated by a balanced development of the new competencies given to national parliaments by the Lisbon Treaty in the community decision-making process. For certain European countries, among the major issues is the protection of the European Union's frontiers in order to guarantee the security of European citizens.
6. Civil society is one of the essential components of European construction. Citizens must be brought to a greater extent into the drafting of collective projects at the local, regional, national and European levels. All initiatives which reduce the too often existing gap between European officials and European citizens should be supported. It is in these initiatives that the FP-AP intends to participate as they are expected to contribute in improving participation rates in European elections. The former parliamentarians call the attention to the extremely fast development of social networks on the internet, facilitating the creation of new civil forces. They stress that such an evolution is likely to modify the conditions of exercising representative democracy and suggest to follow-up and evaluate this development.
7. In all the member states of the Council of Europe and the European Union, there is a profound need for experience in European politics. It cannot be met solely by national policies and communication services. Former parliamentarians have a significant role to play in this field, as well as in accompanying the new provisions of the Lisbon Treaty on the popular initiative. The former parliamentarians urge the officials to explain very clearly the consequences and the issue of the decisions that have been taken. With the same in mind, former parliamentarians can provide their experience, especially within the framework of election observation missions in Europe.

Title III: METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

8. The FP-AP has a website to promote its activities, where each member association can upload information and comments on its projects and on current European events.
9. Former parliamentarians are paying great attention to the development of a partnership with the major European institutions. With this in mind, a memorandum of understanding and cooperation has been signed with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 7 September 2009. Under this agreement, FP-AP colloquy final declarations are distributed at the Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg. The principle of an exchange of information is moreover now established within the framework of websites. A cooperation agreement has been signed in 2005 with the European Parliament Former Members' Association.
10. To carry out their work, former parliamentarians have independent associations with their respective agenda. Many of them are tasked with organising events, often in liaison with NGOs, and other associations and institutions, such as Universities etc.
11. The FP-AP organises every two years a colloquy on a political and societal topic.
12. The former European parliamentarians wish to broaden their activities by welcoming new members, especially from countries of central and eastern Europe.
13. Any proposal for co-operation coming from former parliamentary members associations of other continents will also be considered by the FP-AP, also taking into account possible financial repercussions.

Title IV REFERENCE TEXTS

14. The FP-AP bases its action on the following reference texts:
 - FP-AP texts
 - a) Strasbourg Appeal of 10 November 2000, concluding the colloquy on the strengthening of the parliamentary dimension of the European institutions
 - b) Rome Declaration of 30 November 2002 on European Union values
 - c) Berlin Declaration of 16 October 2004 on European integration in the face of global challenges
 - d) Limassol Declaration of 10 November 2006 on Europe, the Mediterranean and the fight against international terrorism
 - e) Athens Declaration of 18 October 2008 on representative and participatory democracy

- Council of Europe and European Union texts
 - European convention for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms - Council of Europe
 - Revised social charter of the Council of Europe
 - Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union
 - Community charter of the social rights of workers

Final provisions

The present charter, of an evolving nature, can be amended by the general assembly of the association on proposal by each member association and the Bureau.