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Committee on Legal Affairs
The Chairman

To the Chair of the Committee concerned

Dear Colleague,

The development of a European area of justice, aiming at facilitating the daily life of EU citizens and their families in the ever-increasing number of cross-border situations, is a priority of EU action in the field of civil law. In the context of the new legal and institutional framework established by the Lisbon Treaty, ambitious initiatives in the interest of citizens and their families can be developed only through the participation of both the European Parliament and the National Parliaments in enhanced dialogue and collaboration.

For this reason, the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Policy Department on Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament are organising an interparliamentary workshop on family law with the participation of representatives from the National Parliaments, which will take place on Tuesday 30 November 2010, from 9h30 to 18h30, at the European Parliament premises in Brussels.

The aim of this interparliamentary workshop is to launch a reflection and debate on action that should be taken to respond to the needs and expectations of European citizens and families, with the view of facilitating their lives in cross-border situations. To this end, the contribution of the representatives of your Parliament will be most fruitful.

It is thus my pleasure to invite up to four Members of the relevant committees of your Parliament (two for each Chamber of National Parliaments composed by two Chambers) to participate in the workshop.

Please find enclosed a preliminary draft programme containing a list of topics, which will be discussed at the conference. The final programme and more detailed practical information for the event will soon be forwarded to your Parliament's Representatives/Services responsible for relations with the European Parliament.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to accept my invitation and look forward to welcoming you to the European Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Klaus-Heiner Lehne'.

Klaus-Heiner Lehne

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ПАРЛАМЕНТ PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EVROPSKÝ PARLAMENT EUROPA-PARLAMENTET
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Commission des affaires juridiques
Le Président

À l'attention du président
de la commission concernée

Cher collègue,

Le développement d'un espace européen de justice, visant à faciliter la vie quotidienne des citoyens et des familles européens lors de leurs déplacements transfrontaliers de plus en plus fréquents, relève des priorités de l'Union dans le domaine du droit civil. En vertu du nouveau cadre juridique et institutionnel établi par le traité de Lisbonne, toute initiative ambitieuse dans l'intérêt des citoyens et de leurs familles peut être prise en associant le Parlement européen et les parlements nationaux dans un dialogue et une coopération effectifs.

Pour cette raison, la commission des affaires juridiques et le département thématique sur les droits des citoyens et affaires constitutionnelles du Parlement européen sont en train d'organiser un atelier interparlementaire sur le droit de la famille avec la participation de représentants des Parlements nationaux, lequel se tiendra le mardi 30 novembre 2010, de 9 h 30 à 18 h 30, dans les locaux du Parlement européen à Bruxelles.

L'objectif de cette rencontre consiste à lancer un débat sur les actions à prendre pour répondre aux besoins et aux attentes des citoyens et des familles européens, dans le but de faciliter leurs vies dans les contextes transfrontaliers. Je suis certain que les représentants de votre Parlement apporteront une contribution très utile à ce débat.

J'ai donc le plaisir d'inviter à cette réunion un maximum de quatre membres des commissions compétentes de votre Parlement (deux de chaque chambre pour les Parlements nationaux bicaméraux).

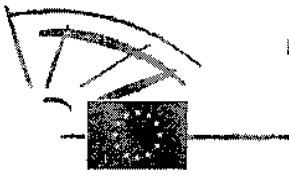
Je vous prie de trouver ci-joint un projet de programme mentionnant les sujets qui feront l'objet de la conférence. Le programme définitif ainsi que des informations pratiques plus détaillées concernant l'événement seront communiqués prochainement aux représentants de votre Parlement/ aux services chargés des relations avec le Parlement européen.

J'espère sincèrement que vous serez en mesure d'accepter mon invitation, et je me réjouis d'ores et déjà de vous accueillir au Parlement européen.

Veillez agréer, cher collègue, l'expression des mes sentiments distingués.

Klaus-Heiner Lehne

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY WORKSHOP ON CIVIL JUSTICE

*Policy Department C - Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs
Committee on Legal Affairs*

"How to facilitate life of European families and citizens?"

**30 November 2010
09:30 - 12:30 and 15:00 - 18:30**

**Brussels
Building X, Room X**

Preliminary draft programme

**09:30 - 10:15
OPENING**

Welcome and opening remarks by the Chairman of the European Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee and possibly by the President or Vice-President of the European Parliament

Presentation by the Belgian Presidency of the European Union on achievements in the areas of family law, law of succession and civil status (to be confirmed)

Presentation by the Vice-President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding, on actions planned by the European Commission in the areas of family law, law of succession and civil status (to be confirmed)

**10:15 - 11:30
SESSION I
FAMILY LAW: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND THE WAY FORWARD**

Proposal for enhanced cooperation in the area of cross-border divorce (Rome III): freedom of choice and applicable law in the absence of choice, application of foreign law, legal consequences for non-participating MS

Matrimonial property regimes and patrimonial aspects of other forms of union (Proposal for Rome IV Regulation)

Mutual recognition of same-sex marriage, of civil partnerships of same-sex and opposite sex couples: current situation in the MS. Need for EU action?

Family mediation: the current state of family mediation in Europe according to national law and practice

**11:30 - 12:30
SESSION II
CROSS-BORDER SUCCESSIONS**

Proposal for a Regulation on Succession and Wills: state of play

The issue of the applicable law and the protection of family members

Content and effects of European Certificate of Succession

Interconnection of Registers of Wills (European Network of Registers of Wills Association)

**12:45 - 14:45
LUNCH: INVITATION ONLY**

**15:00 - 16:30
SESSION III
PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN**

The state of play of the application of Brussels II bis Regulation, in particular the cross-border enforcement of decisions concerning children

Illegal removal of children: Brussels II bis Regulation and The Hague Convention

The protection of children rights in the proceedings: hearing of the child

Recognition of parental responsibility: biological parenthood v. legal parenthood, i.e. mutual recognition of surrogacy agreements: What is the current situation in the MS? Any need for EU action?

Mutual recognition of international adoption: What is the current situation in the MS? Any need for EU action (Creation of a common adoption certificate)?

**16:30 - 18:00
SESSION IV
CIVIL STATUS**

Mutual recognition of civil status documents: current situation in the MS and current initiatives at EU level

The abolishment of the legalisation formalities of civil status documents

Interconnection of civil status registers

Creating an EU civil status document?

The issue of the registration of names

**18:00 - 18:30
CONCLUSIONS**



Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union
Directorate for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs
Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs

BACKGROUND, AIM AND CONTENTS OF THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY WORKSHOP ON CIVIL JUSTICE: "HOW TO FACILITATE LIFE OF EUROPEAN FAMILIES AND CITIZENS?"

Given the increasing mobility of EU citizens and their family members, it is of paramount importance to remove the legal and administrative barriers that citizens still face when they start a family life in a Member State other than their own. Free movement is a core right of EU citizens and their family members. It therefore needs to be enhanced and rigorously enforced.

With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Union now has the tools to respond to the needs of European citizens and their families in order to make their daily lives easier in cross-border situations. The Union is therefore called upon to eliminate the current legal uncertainty for international couples deciding to divorce or separate, for international successions, as well as children and their parents in cross-border situations. The Union can further help remove obstacles to the recognition of legal acts and enable the mutual recognition of the effects of civil status documents, in view of making European citizenship a tangible reality.

In the new legal and institutional framework established by the Lisbon Treaty, ambitious initiatives in the interest of citizens and their families can be developed only through the participation of both the European Parliament and the national parliaments in enhanced dialogue and collaboration.

Against this background, the aim of the interparliamentary workshop on civil justice is to gather members of the European Parliament and national parliaments around the same table in order to discuss and reflect upon action that should be taken at EU level to respond to the needs and expectations of European citizens and families.

The workshop will be composed of four thematic sessions. The first two sessions will present the "state of play" in the drafting of new legal instruments in the field of European family law and the law of succession. The third session will focus on child protection in cross-border situations. The topics of parental responsibility, including the controversial issue of the recognition of surrogacy agreements, as well as of international adoption will be addressed therein. Legal practitioners and academics will report on the current situation as it stands in several Member States. Finally, the last session will provide an overview of the current difficulties faced by citizens in proving their civil status in cross-border situations. In this regard, a number of actions ranging from the suppression of the legalisation formalities of civil status acts to the interconnection of civil status registers will be presented. The challenging idea of creating a European "civil status" document will also be discussed.