

**Statement**  
**by H.E. Sergey Mironov, Chairman of the Council of the Federation**  
**of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,**  
**at the 11th Meeting of the Association of European Senates**  
**on "The Role of Senates in the European Continent"**

**Dear Colleagues,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, I would like to **thank our Dutch colleagues** for their hospitality and perfect organization of our forum. I should say that the proposed topic is very urgent, especially considering the complex controversial processes underway in modern Europe. I would like to touch upon two problems, namely the financial and economic crisis, as well as security.

**I. "The role of Senates in the European continent in the context of global financial crisis"**

1. I am sure that in the current difficult times, when the world is facing new challenges capable of undermining stability and well-being of many nations, the need to **consolidate efforts** is growing drastically at all levels of inter-state relations.

Last year's events have proved most definitely that in a globalized world, one-side dependence is fraught with dangerous consequences for the world community. We have all witnessed the process of rapid transformation of local financial failures into a world crisis fraught with grave economic and political consequences. Searching ways to overcome it has become a global imperative rather than just a private matter of individual states.

National governments and international organizations suggest a variety of anticrisis policies, including on a global scale. **G20 Summit** in London is the most recent example of such actions. The Final Document of the Summit contains a set of specific decisions in this regard. They concern financial

support and market stabilization, protectionism and responsibility of states for their macroeconomic policies, as well as financial institutions' development prospects.

**2.** The current difficult period **vests parliamentarians with special responsibility.**

Fortunately, there is a growing recognition of a special role that **Senates** could play in that area. There are quite a few reasons for it.

Firstly, today they are the least politically engaged institutions. Secondly, in an overwhelming majority of European countries they, to this or that extent, represent the territorial diversity of lands, provinces, cantons, states or, as in Russia, constituent entities. In my view, this provides a unique opportunity to objectively assess economic problems in their regional aspect, which means to find more efficient ways to solve them, taking into account specific features and development needs of territories.

**3.** For **Russia**, territorial differences and regional specificities are of paramount importance. Therefore, any anti-crisis programme, as the Council of Federation believes, can only be realistic if it takes into account the **regional dimension**. In this regard, I would like to say a few words about **specific roles of the Council of Federation in the field of anti-crisis regulation.**

In recent months, our first and foremost task has been to provide legislative support for the Government's anti-crisis measures. The Council of Federation pays special attention to regional situations. Through continued monitoring, we have tried to identify the most painful and complex problems confronting our regions. Our principal objective, as we see it, is to secure that anti-crisis policies and the resultant timely measures are developed with due regard, to the maximum extent possible, for the proposals and expertise of local authorities.

In this context, our **Council of Legislators**, comprising the heads of regional Legislative Assemblies, has proved its efficiency. Last month, the

Council held a meeting in the Kremlin, in which the President of Russia participated. This provided an opportunity for the representatives of constituent entities to express their views and proposals concerning the Governmental anti-crisis programme.

Active and constructive interaction **with executive authorities** is one of the fundamental principles that the Council of Federation applies in its work. We regularly hold meetings with the President and the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation.

We constantly work with ministries and agencies, experts and research institutes. This makes it possible to achieve agreed decisions, both operational and strategic.

Finally, I would like to note that we consider **a direct and open dialogue with people** during our visits to regions as a very important area of work. It enables us to better understand the real situation and to identify the advantages and gaps of the current policies.

**4.** On the whole, it is my strong belief that **an anti-crisis program should be aimed at providing opportunities for further development.** Crisis in itself is a signal to the economy and society that renovation is needed. This is more important than ever not only for Russia or other countries of the European continent. In the present system of coordinates it is not likely that even the most "powerful" countries will be able to overcome the crisis acting only within the framework of national economies. Thus, it is of utmost importance not to miss the opportunity for modernization and to prevent the backsliding to a protracted stagnation and chaos.

**5.** I would like also to emphasize my firm conviction **that all anti-crisis measures should be aimed primarily at solving social problems,** i.e. support for people. Transformation of an economic crisis into a social one is the most serious potential risk.

After all, economy and financial system exist not for their own sake, but are to provide a favorable social environment for people to live a decent life and feel confident about their future.

## **II. "Senates' role in shaping a new European security architecture"**

**Dear colleagues,**

1. The current financial and economic crisis which is unprecedented in its nature and is the first crisis in the era of globalization offers new formidable challenges to the international community. Those challenges are not restricted to financial and economic spheres; rather, they also affect **the area of security**. This is due to the fact that the crisis may lead to escalation of a number of long-standing conflicts and give rise to new threats and challenges in the political and military field.

2. The current developments confirm the relevance of **the initiative** advanced by President Medvedev in June, 2008, **to conclude a legally-binding European Security Treaty** and to launch relevant negotiation process at a pan-European summit.

I would like to stress in particular that this initiative of Russia does not imply the destruction of any existing institution or renunciation of existing agreements or achievements in this area. However, we think that in the face of new geopolitical factors, challenges and threats to international security, the existing security arrangements within the Euro-Atlantic space did not prove to be adequate.

This was **illustrated** by actions of Saakashvili's regime against South Ossetia last August. One can also refer to unreasoned NATO expansion and the problem of implementation and ratification of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. There is much concern about the recognition of the Kosovo regime by the majority of European States contrary to the relative

resolution of the UN Security Council. We are also aware of recent problems in the fight against terrorism, piracy and drug trafficking.

Russia believes that a **new treaty should provide for** respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States; inadmissibility of the use of force; safeguards of equal security, as well as precise mechanisms for control of armaments and reasonable military sufficiency.

This document should reflect **basic principles of collective European security**. This concerns inadmissibility of ensuring one's own security at the expense of any other State or of the use of rigid bloc schemes. We should also consider the development of common approaches to the prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts.

**3.** In my opinion, the outcomes of the meeting between Russian and US Presidents in London, including the agreement to start developing of a new **Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START III)** and to resume cooperation within the **Russia-NATO Council format, have provided a solid basis for specific action.**

**4.** I am convinced that **parliamentarians** also can and should take part in renovating the European security system and try to eliminate gaps in its legal framework.

The fact is that **many treaties in the field of security have not been ratified yet.**

We, parliamentarians, need to use all available tools **to promote the establishment of international legal framework in the field of security** in close cooperation with executive authorities.

It is for good reason that today the whole world makes active use of **parliamentary diplomacy**. Sometimes informal discussions make it possible to consider fresh ideas and new approaches in a more liberal, straightforward and efficient way.

**Dear colleagues,**

5. Russian senators regard promotion of the idea to adopt a treaty on European security as a **national project in international sphere**. We would like it to become out **joint** project.

Therefore, I suggest that we should consider possible holding of a **Parliamentary Summit on a future European security architecture**.

Thank you.

Special thanks to the interpreters.