



**European Association of former members of parliament of the member
states of the Council of Europe**

The President

Speech of Mr Hadjirosos on the occasion of the Bureau meeting in Bern,

27-28 May 2011

Mrs President,

It is with great pleasure that our Association's Bureau is meeting in Bern, federal capital of a country, small by its size, but great by its reputation.

I want to thank wholeheartedly the Swiss Association of Former Parliamentarians for having organised such an excellent programme. We should not be surprised about that as we all know that the Swiss are always well organised and methodical and their contribution to our Association is always well received.

Our meeting in Bern is particularly important, in many respects.

First of all, we are in Switzerland, a country which has, with the lapse of time, and especially since 1848, established a federal political system with exceptional democratic innovations, whereby its citizens can, directly take part in the decision-making process by voting on most issues. The Swiss model was referred to during our meeting in Athens, in October 2008 at the Colloquy on representative and participatory democracy.

We should not also forget that Switzerland is often the first country that comes to mind as a venue for official or unofficial meetings in order to discuss important issues political or other in order to reach an agreement or reconciliation.

Another reason to be pleased about this meeting in Bern is that our Bureau, after long deliberations, has today agreed to a final draft of a European charter of former parliamentarians, the rapporteur of which is Jacques Chaumont, joined by our former President Camille Dimmer for the part regarding the status of the former parliamentarians. The adoption of this Charter is scheduled at the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg, on 7 October 2011. The meeting in Bern is therefore the last stage before the final adoption of this draft, supported by our Swiss friends.

Why such a document?

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