



April 27, 2006

**How to engage the public in European policy issues:**

## **The Danish Parliament to meet the Danish voters in Public Hearing on Europe this weekend**

**When the Public Hearing on Europe - the Danish Parliament's most important contribution to the Period of Reflection in the EU – will be held from April 29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> 2006, leading Danish politicians and Ministers will attend the hearing.**

"In previous debates about the EU, it has almost invariably been a question of a 'yes' or 'no' to the EU. However, supporters and opponents alike agree that this time, it is different: the Public Hearing on Europe will be open to all mindsets, but the focus will be on visions, solutions and future guidelines. It is a question of general views, rather than of technicalities and legislature, and exactly at this point the elector - and the politician elected too, for that matter – needs to be engaged in the debate", says Christian Mejdahl, Speaker of the Danish Parliament.

During the Public Hearing on Europe 400 Danish citizens, selected statistically in order to represent the Danish electorate, will discuss the future of Europe and the EU. The participants will not only discuss with each other but also with Danish politicians such as Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Prime Minister, leaders of the Opposition parties and politicians from the Danish movements represented in the European Parliament. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, will also participate in the hearing by answering questions from the Danish participants via a video link from Brussels.

The Public Hearing on Europe is the most important Danish contribution to the so-called Period of Reflection following the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty at the referendums held in France and in the Netherlands. The Hearing has been organised by the Danish Parliament, the Folketing, in co-operation with the national public service broadcasting station TV2 in order to ensure that the debate on the future of Europe will engage the Danish electorate.

"I am delighted that the political establishment will attend the Public Hearing on Europe, so there will be plenty of ears to talk to. The outcome of the Public Hearing will be included in a report which the Prime Minister has promised to submit at the EU summit to be held in Brussels in June 2006", Christian Mejdahl, the Speaker of the Danish Parliament, states.

Earlier this week, also Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Prime Minister, stated in a press release that he was looking forward to participating in the Public Hearing on Europe.

In your capacity as a journalist, you are kindly invited to attend the hearing, which will be held at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense from April 29<sup>th</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> 2006.

For further information on the Public Hearing on Europe and to see the programme, please visit <http://www.borgernesdagsorden.dk/hoering/english/>. Do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat of the hearing at [presse@dakom.dk](mailto:presse@dakom.dk) or phone +45 40 58 28 45 or +45 20 94 64 06, if you have any further questions.

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