

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

Dublin, Ireland, 27 January 2013

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIR: Mr Dominic HANNIGAN, Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*.

Mr Paschal DONOHOE, Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*, Mr Averof NEOFYTOU, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS, Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Mr Miguel Ángel MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ, Vice-President and Mr Carlo CASINI, Chairman of the Constitutional Affairs Committee, European Parliament.

AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda of the Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC**
- 2. Approval of the draft programme of the COSAC Chairpersons' Meeting**
- 3. Debate on the draft programme of the XLIX COSAC**
- 4. Approval of the outline of the 19th Bi-annual Report**
- 5. Letters addressed to the Presidency**
- 6. Any other business**

PROCEEDINGS

1. Adoption of the agenda of the Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC

The meeting was chaired by Mr Dominic HANNIGAN who welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika"), and in particular its new member, Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS, Chairperson of the Committee on European Affairs of the Lithuanian *Seimas*, who was attending the Troika for the first time.

The agenda of the meeting of the Troika was adopted without amendment.

2. Approval of the draft programme of the COSAC Chairpersons' Meeting

Mr HANNIGAN said that the meeting would deal with some procedural items including the approval of the outline of the 19th Bi-annual Report and he then highlighted the two debates that would be held the next day. The first one would focus on the priorities of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and would be addressed by Mr Brendan HOWLIN T.D., Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. The second debate would be on the future of Europe: a genuine Economic and Monetary Union and would be addressed by the European Commission Vice-President for Inter-institutional Affairs and Administration, Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ.

The draft programme of the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC was approved without amendment.

3. Debate on the draft programme of the XLIX COSAC

Mr HANNIGAN presented the topics on the draft programme of the XLIX COSAC to be held on 23-25 June 2013 in Dublin Castle. The topics chosen for the agenda reflected the theme of "a forward and outward looking Europe" and included: 1. Taking Stock and Looking to the Future to be presented by An Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Mr Enda KENNY T.D.; 2. The Future of European Integration to be addressed by Former President of the European Commission, Mr Jacques DELORS and European Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, Ms Viviane REDING; 3. Delivering on Development to be addressed by a panel including Mr Mo IBRAHIM, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, and two other panellists yet to be confirmed; 4. Enlargement - Maintaining Momentum to be addressed by Mr Valentin INZKO, Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina, and another speaker yet to be confirmed; and 5. A European Future for Young Citizens.

Mr HANNIGAN also made reference to the letter sent to the Presidency from Mr Roman JAKIČ, Chairperson of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Slovenian *Državni Zbor*, which requested a debate during the Plenary on how to involve national Parliaments more in the debate on increasing the democratic legitimacy of the EU, particularly in budgetary matters. Mr HANNIGAN said that he did not intend to amend the Plenary agenda because this subject would be addressed within the discussion the next day with Vice-President ŠEFČOVIČ. In addition there would be opportunity at the Plenary during the debate of the Future of European Integration and through the Bi-annual Report chapter on genuine Economic and Monetary Union and he would also expect the topic to be addressed in the Contribution of COSAC. He said he was aware that this was a topic of great interest to many national Parliaments and stated that he had been informed by Ms Eva KJER HANSEN, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Danish *Folketing*, that she would invite Members of national Parliaments to an informal meeting in the Danish Parliament in March to have an exchange of views how national Parliaments can take a stronger and more structured role vis-à-vis governments, especially in relation to the European Semester.

Mr MARTÍNEZ agreed with the proposal from the Chair not to make an addition to the Plenary agenda because the fuller the agenda was, the less time there was available for debate. He also noted the issue would be dealt with by the EU Speakers' Conference and he said that this forum should be left to decide on this topic, though COSAC would have the opportunity to discuss it under the proposed agenda. Secondly, he suggested that two European Parliament keynote speakers be invited to address the COSAC Plenary under the agenda items on development and enlargement.

Mr KIRKILAS agreed with Mr MARTÍNEZ that the EU Speakers' Conference should decide on the matter raised by the Slovenian Chairperson. He also did not see why the European Parliament should not have keynote speakers address the Plenary.

Mr HANNIGAN concluded the point stating that the Troika, therefore, agreed not to add an agenda item to the Plenary meeting because the topic of democratic accountability would no doubt be raised under existing agenda items. He asked Mr MARTÍNEZ to propose possible European Parliament keynote speakers to the Presidency who would consider the proposal and may be able to accommodate one or two of them.

4. Approval of the outline of the 19th Bi-annual Report

Mr HANNIGAN invited Ms Libby KURIEN, Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, to briefly present the outline of the 19th Bi-annual Report. She reported that the first chapter would tackle the subject of a genuine EMU and would ascertain views of Parliaments on the European Council conclusions from December 2012, the Van Rompuy Report and the Commission Blueprint on the EMU. The second chapter would deal with the European Semester 2013 and would seek information on Parliamentary involvement in the Semester. The third chapter would deal with the topic of EU enlargement and would seek views of Parliaments and collate information on the procedures and practices in Parliaments. The fourth chapter would look at subsidiarity and in particular aim to learn lessons from the “Monti II” yellow card.

Mr Carlo CASINI appealed to Presidency to extend the deadline for answering the questionnaire in order to allow for more comprehensive replies given the later than usual June date for the Plenary.

Mr HANNIGAN confirmed that the Secretariat would send the questionnaire to delegations shortly and, subject to accommodating Mr CASINI's request, a reasonable deadline would be set.

5. Letters addressed to the Presidency

The Presidency had received the letter from Mr Roman JAKIČ, Chairperson of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Slovenian *Državni Zbor*, which had already been discussed. In addition the Presidency had received a letter from Mr Ine M. ERIKSEN SØREIDE, Chair of the European Consultative Committee of the Norwegian *Storting*, regarding participation at COSAC. He noted that the Troika had already agreed by informal contacts that the Norwegian Chairman could be invited to the Chairpersons and Plenary meetings as a special guest. It had also been agreed that a representative of the Northern Ireland Assembly would be invited as a special guest in this manner. The Troika formally approved these invitations for special guests.

6. Any other business

Mr HANNIGAN informed the Troika that the Irish Presidency would send a letter to the Chairpersons of the European Affairs Committees of national Parliaments, asking whether they wished to maintain the current co-financing mechanism of the COSAC Secretariat for a two year period starting on 1 January 2014. He expected the issue to be resolved during the upcoming Lithuanian Presidency.