

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE XLIX COSAC
Dublin, Ireland, 23-25 June 2013**

IN THE CHAIR: Mr Dominic HANNIGAN T.D., Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs (*Houses of the Oireachtas*, Ireland).

AGENDA:

1. Welcome addresses and procedural issues

- Opening address by Mr Seán Barrett T.D., Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann
- Opening of session by Mr Dominic Hannigan T.D., Chairman of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Union Affairs
- Adoption of the agenda of the XLIX COSAC.
- Presentation of the 19th Bi-annual Report of COSAC.
- Procedural issues.
- Outcome of the informal meeting of EU Committee Chairs, Copenhagen, March 2013.
- Outcome of the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments, Nicosia, April 2013.

2. 'Taking Stock and Looking to the Future'

Keynote speaker: An Taoiseach Mr Enda Kenny T.D., Prime Minister of Ireland.

3. 'The Future of European Integration'

Keynote speakers: Mr Herman De Croo, Former Speaker of the Belgian House of Representatives, and Mr Brendan Halligan, Chairperson, Institute of International and European Affairs.

4. 'Delivering on Development'

Panel: Dr Mo Ibrahim, Chairman, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Ms Michèle Striffler, Vice-president of the Development Committee of the European Parliament and Mr Barry Andrews, Chief Executive, GOAL.

5. Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC

- Debate on the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLIX COSAC.

6. 'A European Future for Young Citizens'

Keynote speaker: Mr Joe Costello, Minister of State. Interventions by three young Europeans: Ms Nevin Öztop (Turkey), Ms Rachel Creevy (Ireland) and Ms Marietta Herfort (Hungary).

7. 'Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy – Maintaining Momentum'

Keynote speakers: Dr Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Mr Erwan Fouéré, Associate Senior Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels.

8. Adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLIX COSAC

PROCEEDINGS

1. Welcome addresses and procedural issues

Mr HANNIGAN welcomed the Chairpersons participating at the COSAC meeting for the first time: Mr Jožef HORVAT, Chairman of the Committee on European Union Affairs of Slovenian *Državni zbor*, Mr Michele BORDO, President of the European Union Affairs Committee of Italian *Camera dei Deputati*, Mr Vannino CHITI, Chairman of the European Union Policies Committee of Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, Mr Ovidiu Ioan SILAGHI, Chairperson of the Committee on European Affairs of Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*, Ms Anca-Daniela BOAGIU, Chairperson of the European Union Affairs Committee of Romanian *Senatul* and Dr Christopher FEARNE,

Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs of Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*.

1.1. Opening address by Mr Seán BARRETT T.D., Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann

Mr BARRETT opened the meeting by saying that the XLIX COSAC plenary meeting is the final in a series of eight inter-parliamentary conferences under the parliamentary dimension to the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). He noted that Ireland celebrated the fortieth anniversary of its membership of the EU in 2013 and that it was the seventh Presidency Ireland had held. Mr BARRETT underlined that, although the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency had evolved considerably over time and increased in importance, the question how to increase Parliamentary control, in particular how to reinforce the role of national Parliaments, on EU affairs was still valid.

Mr BARRETT said that parliamentarians of all 27 Member States (will be 28 from 1 July) shared a common concern that public trust in politics and institutions had been eroded at both EU and national levels in the face of the economic crisis. Mr BARRETT noted that the last few years had been extremely difficult in terms of addressing some aspects of European governance, dealing with the currency crisis, debt crisis, bank crisis and unemployment, particularly among young citizens of the Member States. The EU's overall response to the crisis had been driven by increased inter-governmentalism which resounded with parliamentarians. A new framework of economic governance had been developed. The debate on the need for greater democratic accountability and legitimacy was taking place at the EU level and in the Member States.

Mr BARRETT emphasised that Parliaments, being close to citizens, clearly had a particularly important role to play in establishing links between citizens and European decision-makers. He recognised that Parliaments should have the fullest role possible in policy formation, decision making and oversight processes. Distinct roles for national Parliaments and the European Parliament were necessary.

Mr BARRETT cautioned that the existing tools at the disposal of Parliaments were not truly utilised and urged delegates to consider where improvements might be necessary. He suggested that national Parliaments should seek to have parliamentary time perhaps on a monthly basis for one or two days where EU matters would be discussed across the EU. Mr BARRETT pointed out that communication is critical for the democratic process and called for more open communication through media outlets, including, where possible, Parliamentary TV Channels, as well as through the use of the internet and social media, and for more open communication with citizens about the benefits of the EU.

Mr BARRETT concluded that economic stability could only be achieved with the understanding and support of national Parliaments and citizens.

1.2. Adoption of the agenda, procedural questions and miscellaneous matters

Mr HANNIGAN informed the participants that the agenda of the XLIX COSAC had been discussed at the Chairpersons meeting on 28 January. He presented the topics to be discussed, introduced the speakers and explained the order of the debates at the Plenary.

Mr Francesco Enrico SPERONI, Vice-Chair of the Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly of the European Parliament, expressed his concerns that a citizen of Turkey would participate in one of the debates at the Plenary as a "European" citizen. After a short discussion the

participants agreed that interventions by all three young Europeans should be approved. The agenda was approved without amendments.

Mr HANNIGAN asked Ms Libby KURIEN, Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, to briefly present the 19th Bi-annual Report. Ms KURIEN informed the meeting that the report, drafted to facilitate the exchange of information and to better inform the COSAC debate, contained four chapters. Firstly, the report examined Genuine Economic and Monetary Union. The report found that the majority of Parliaments actively debated key EMU related documents, but they felt that those documents did not adequately address the issue of democratic legitimacy. Ms KURIEN pointed out that, on the European Semester 2013, the majority of Parliaments reported that they were satisfied or partly satisfied with their degree of engagement in the economic governance of the EU and the European Semester. On EU Enlargement, the report found that monitoring reports and annual progress reports were scrutinised and debated by around 60% of responding Parliaments. Half of the respondents discussed the Commission's Enlargement Strategy 2012-2013. Many Parliaments also engaged in a dialogue with political, official and civil society representatives in enlargement states. Finally the report examined the mobilisation of interparliamentary cooperation in relation to scrutiny of subsidiarity. A large number of Parliaments did not believe that the replies from the Commission to the reasoned opinions were adequate responses.

Mr HANNIGAN stated that the Presidential Troika of COSAC had discussed the financing of the COSAC Secretariat and the position of Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat. Twenty-two letters of intent had already been received from Parliaments confirming their intentions to maintain the current co-financing mechanism for the COSAC Secretariat for two years starting from 1 January 2014. The Parliaments which had not confirmed their intention were asked to renew their commitment. Mr HANNIGAN stated that the term in office of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat would expire at the end of the year and the appointment of a new member would take place during the L COSAC during the Lithuanian Presidency. Mr HANNIGAN thanked Ms KURIEN, who would not be seeking the appointment for the second term, for her work as Permanent Member of the Secretariat.

Mr HANNIGAN briefed the Plenary on the outcome of the informal meeting of the EU Committee Chairs in Copenhagen in March 2013. The participants in Copenhagen considered that national Parliaments play a special role in linking citizens and EU decision-making and noted that there was a lack of proposals on how their role could be strengthened in the evolving economic governance of the EU. The participants discussed the tools available to strengthen the role of national Parliaments including through greater involvement in the European Semester, and shared views on how the conference under Article 13 might operate. The participants also discussed how the political dialogue with the Commission could be strengthened, how cluster of Parliaments for information cooperation on specific topics might be organised, and how cooperation through COSAC could be improved.

Mr Averof NEOFYTOS, Chairperson of the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs of Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, spoke on the outcome of the Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments in Nicosia on April 2013. With reference to article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance, the Speakers emphasised the importance of the democratic accountability within the context of the European Semester, as well as the need to strengthen the legitimacy and accountability with regard to economic governance and decided to set up an interparliamentary conference. The conference would be held twice a year and would be coordinated with the European Semester. They also agreed that the democratic accountability and

legitimacy in the decision making process should be strengthened at the EU level with more participation by citizens. The best use of audiovisual tools should be ensured. The final session of the discussion dealt with the role of Parliaments with regard to social cohesion at times of austerity. It was agreed to develop the framework for economic and social reforms recognising the process of the European Semester and this could contribute to improving policy coordination at EU level.

A short exchange of views followed on the new interparliamentary Article 13 conference. The delegates agreed that such an initiative is highly valued and could lead to finding a common approach of national Parliaments to very important issues. Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS, Chairperson of the Committee on European Affairs of the Lithuanian *Seimas*, stated that the *Seimas* intended to organise the inaugural session of the newly established conference in Vilnius on 16-18 October 2013 entitled the Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance in the EU and the debate could focus on the future of the Economic and Monetary Union and the role of Parliaments in ensuring the democratic accountability and legitimacy of the process.

2. 'Taking Stock and Looking to the Future'

Keynote speaker: An Taoiseach Mr Enda Kenny T.D., Prime Minister of Ireland.

The Taoiseach welcomed COSAC back to Ireland for the fourth time since its foundation and at a time when Ireland is celebrating 40 years of EU membership and its seventh EU Presidency. He noted that the issues of the perceived democratic deficit and of subsidiarity were as relevant today as they were when COSAC met in Ireland almost 25 years ago. He praised the input of COSAC to previous Treaties noting that each of these key institutional steps brought progress in terms of democratic legitimacy and accountability, including enhanced roles for national Parliaments and that each of those steps brought the European Project to a new stage in its development. The Irish Presidency was also working hard in support of President Van Rompuy and the European Council in developing the next steps for EMU.

He shared the progress made by the Presidency so far including the banking union decisions with better supervision and stronger capital requirements and with limits on bankers bonuses. He further noted that greater stability is being secured through better co-ordination of national budgets so that they too are sustainable and targeted at growth and jobs (i.e. the Two pack). In terms of jobs and growth, the 2014-2020 Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF), the EU's biggest investment tool, was agreed by EU Heads of State and Government. The Presidency was working with the European Parliament to ensure that €960 billion could be released to fund investment and growth across areas relating to cohesion, research, education and food production. A special fund of €6 billion had been agreed to combat youth unemployment and a range of measures have been advanced to support small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and to boost Europe's digital sector. There have been historic steps forward in a number of bilateral trade negotiations which could boost growth and create jobs in Europe: the EU-Japan negotiations have been launched; the EU-Canada negotiations continue and a negotiating mandate for the EU-US Trade and Investment partnership has been secured. He noted that an EU-US agreement alone could mean annual benefits of up to €150 billion for the EU and US economies. The Common Agricultural Policy and "Erasmus for All" were also agreed. Beyond the Union's borders, he stated that work continued in terms of enlargement and great progress was recorded on a post-2015 global development framework, while direct action has been taken on a number of fronts, including a resumption of aid to Mali.

The Taoiseach concluded by stating that COSAC had an important contribution to make on the fundamental question of democratic legitimacy and accountability. He referred to the European Council's recognition that stronger economic governance arrangements need to be supported by stronger democratic legitimacy and clearer public accountability. He reminded members that early in the Irish Presidency, Ministers for European Affairs discussed this issue in Dublin and that they strongly supported greater efforts to strengthen the link between citizens and decisions taken at European level and they clearly recognised the need to respect the role of national Parliaments but that concrete steps were now needed to deliver this outcome.

In the follow up questions, 17 members took the floor. Mr Jožef HORVAT (Slovenian *Državni Zbor*) asked if the banking union was going in the right direction, as it appeared that private capital was funding bank restructuring costs and Mr Richárd HÖRCSIK (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*) argued for the inclusion of non-eurozone Member States in the decisions on the creation of the banking union. Mr Ľuboš BLAHA, (Slovakian *Narodna rada*) and Mr Epameinondas MARIAS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*) raised issues concerning the value of the continued use of austerity policies and dealing with the troika.

The Taoiseach noted that with the agreement on banking union Member States would have the tools to avoid what had happened in Ireland where the state had taken on €64 billion in private debt and that he agreed with the involvement of non-eurozone Member States with these decisions. He did not believe that a Member State could tax its way to prosperity and that there must be balance in the use of austerity with fiscal discipline, matched by investment. On dealing with the Troika, he noted that based on trust and a good relationship which had developed changes to certain elements of the Memorandum of Understanding had been allowed. He gave the example of Ireland where funds from the sale of state assets were used for state investment and not exclusively for debt reduction.

Ms Athina KYRIAKIDOU (Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) asked the Taoiseach about his vision of solidarity in the EU; Mr Carlo CASINI (European Parliament) stated that the next European elections in 2014 would have significant impact on the future of Europe and that in the MFF negotiations, the EP would be seeking a review clause, greater flexibility and more autonomous own resources funding for the budget. Ms Christiane VIENNE (Belgian *Chambre des représentants*) asked how the role of European and national Parliament members could be strengthened in budget negotiations; Mr Diego LÓPEZ (Spanish *Cortes Generales*) asked if the ERASMUS programme should be extended and if €6 billion was enough funding for youth employment; Mr Peter FRIEDRICH (German *Bundesrat*) suggested that common rules for the revenue side of national budgets should be put into place and asked about tax harmonisation; Mr Rubén MORENO (Spanish *Cortes Generales*) said that the restoration of normal lending to the business sector was of great importance as companies in the same Union had different levels of access to funding currently; Mr Gunther KRICHBAUM (German *Bundestag*) asked what an EU-US trade agreement would mean for Ireland and asked how he viewed the current situation in Turkey and finally, Mr Mehmet Sayim TEKELIOĞLU (Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*) welcomed the opening of certain Chapters in their accession talks.

The Taoiseach replied in general terms that the funding in the MFF was never enough but it was a good start and that the more important aspect was to move quickly to implementing it. Ireland had always supported the review/revision clause in the negotiations; that the history of Irish progress since joining the EU was a measure of solidarity in itself as Ireland had been transformed by its membership; as for the €6 billion funding, he suggested that it is insufficient but better than nothing and the key message was to have programmes ready and in place to spend the funding

effectively; he confirmed that at the G8 talks while tax fraud and evasion were on the agenda harmonisation was not and that the European Council was moving to agree on the new tax code for sharing information; on funding Ireland has worked hard on the enhanced cooperation procedure for Financial Transaction Tax and finally that accession for Turkey would be a long process but that membership would be a force for stabilisation itself.

3. 'The Future of European Integration'

Keynote speakers: Mrs Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the Commission, Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship (via a recorded speech), Mr Herman De Croo, Former Speaker of the Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, and Mr Brendan Halligan, Chairperson, Institute of International and European Affairs.

The Vice-President of the Commission, Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, Mrs Viviane REDING, addressed the plenary in a recorded speech. She emphasised that Europe is at a defining moment where further decisions must be taken in the context of a European debate about democracy, legitimacy and the future of Europe. In this regard, she underlined the reinforced role of national Parliaments and the European Parliament, as provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon.

The Vice-President supported the view that the term 'United States of Europe' reflected better the aim towards a federal entity in the context of European history, values and unique diversity of the European continent. She continued by referring to the European Year of Citizens 2013, which, according to her, is a unique opportunity to have a debate with citizens on different visions for the future of Europe. In this context, she encouraged the Chairs of the European Affairs Committees of national Parliaments to hold debates on European matters with the citizens in their countries.

Mr Herman DE CROO, former Speaker of the Belgian *Chambre des représentants*. Mr DE CROO congratulated the Irish Presidency for the way the COSAC meeting was organised, expressing his satisfaction for the refreshed format of the meeting. He started his speech by giving three essential figures. For 8% of global population, he said, Europe represented 25% of global wealth and had managed to spend 50% of global social expenditure. He reminded the plenary that, having these in mind, Europe had the best established health care system and had succeeded in convincing its citizens about democracy, which has led to prosperity. Europe constituted the most significant commercial block. Despite this, Europe was suffering from a complex and was looking for a scapegoat to exonerate all responsibility for what was happening in Europe. However, he was a Euro-optimist. Europe, according to him, had gone through two major phases following two wars after which it re-established peace and prosperity. What is more, it had to compete with countries like China, India, Brazil, and deal with its difficult relations with Russia, while it had, for ideological reasons, effected two enlargements. The first one of these was to avoid the European civil war and the second one to reintegrate those who have had their freedom taken away for decades under the Soviet regime.

In this light, politicians had to undertake new responsibilities taking into account the need for an energy policy, research, intelligence, education and the power to negotiate. At the same time, politicians needed to tackle unemployment, poverty and misery which was the price of our civilisation, which includes the humanism, freedoms and social protection. Although struck by the detailed and administrative nature of the work on which the EU is over-focusing, Mr DE CROO remained optimistic about the future of the EU.

Mr Brendan HALLIGAN, Chairman of the Institute of International and European Affairs. Mr HALLIGAN started his speech by explaining the origins of the Institute. The Institute was established in the light of the necessity to hold referenda in Ireland on European Treaties. Its aim, as he explained, was to facilitate informed debate in Ireland on membership of the EU by providing analysis of European developments and by assessing the implications of proposed changes to the Treaties.

The Institute sees Europe as a process and regards the rapprochement between France and Germany as the rationale and basis for the EU. The evolution of the future of European integration, according to Mr HALLIGAN, could be predicted in accordance with three vectors: an enlarging membership, an expanding agenda and a deepening interdependence. Deepening the integration process, he added, required changes in the institutional architecture of the EU, which had become more complicated by the emergence of the eurozone. For the future he identified it as a problem where a Member State had the economic capacity to act if it wishes but the political will to do so was absent. In this case, the Member States were divided into two, or more, camps for an unknown period of time ahead. The euro, would be the most recent example of not only differences in economic capacity but also in political will. In describing the future of European integration, Mr HALLIGAN referred to two possible scenarios. One scenario would be that the eurozone would become the *de facto* core of the EU endowed with its own institutions and decision-making procedures from which Britain, Sweden and Denmark would be excluded. Another scenario would be based on the role of Europe in the world, where the integration process would have to take into consideration new responsibilities, including global governance centered around climate change, international finance and trade.

In addressing the democratic deficit in the European integration process, the speaker proposed closer involvement of national Parliaments and the creation of a European Senate composed solely of members of national Parliaments.

Mr William CASH, Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee of the UK *House of Commons* was invited to respond first to the three presentations above. Mr CASH explained that he would focus on the root of the problem as seen in the UK. In this context, he spoke of what he regarded as 'inherent contradiction' at the core of the political union of the EU. On the one hand, he said, we heard much about citizenship, and yet there was a crisis of trust, as seen from the results of the Eurobarometer. The Treaties were advocating more and more integration and yet there was no genuine democracy. In this regard, he made reference to the impending crisis reflected in the UK advocating for a referendum. He explained that the UK was asking for a referendum because of a disconnection between the people and the EU and a lack of consistency with that expressed in general elections. He identified a transfer of sovereignty at the expense of national Parliaments which were supposed to be at the heart of the discussion. Identifying a complete contradiction within the framework of the economic and political process, he believed that the UK, increasingly dissatisfied, would never join the Euro and would inevitably be in a second tier. He referred to a black hole where riots, unemployment, lack of money and no consideration on small and medium enterprises were evidenced. According to him, unless the internal contradiction was solved, the political, democratic and economic problems would persist and the UK would have a say in a referendum.

In the debate which followed, 26 speakers took the floor. A number of speakers focused on the crisis in Europe underlining the need for more Europe. Mr Michele BORDO (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*) stressed this need referring to a lack of proper instruments to tackle the problems and to the need for action in different policy areas like energy, climate, cross border crime, migration and

a common foreign and security policy to respond to the crisis. He went on to say that the EU needed to go beyond national egoism and hegemony. Mr Petras AUŠTREVČIUS (Lithuanian *Seimas*) referred to the need to come up with new ideas, projects and vision. Referring to closer EU-NATO relations and new security strategy, he called for Europe to take more responsibility and proposed the introduction of an action plan, a new Marshall plan.

A number of speakers made specific reference to the importance of not only an economic monetary union, but also a social union. In this regard, Ms Emer COSTELLO (European Parliament) underlined the need of a social dimension to the economic monetary union towards tackling youth unemployment, mentioning the need to have equally binding targets on the issue. Ms Anna FOTYGA (Polish *Sejm*) refused the idea of a two-speed Europe and spoke in favour of solidarity and inclusiveness. Mr Stefan SCHENNACH (Austrian *Bundesrat*) supported the view of a social union and harmonisation on tax dumping and the financial transaction tax. He spoke of counter-productive austerity measures and the need to combat youth unemployment. Mr Epameinondas MARIAS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*) said that the EU, focused on neo-liberalism and austerity, was plagued by unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. He accused the Troika for imposing memoranda and for taking the place of governments and national Parliaments, undermining democracy, in countries like Greece, Ireland and Cyprus. Mr Rubén MORENO (Spanish *Cortes Generales*) said that, if more legitimacy was desired, integration would be crucial as the only response to globalisation. The best way to reconcile citizens with Europe was to create wealth and employment for the citizens. Mr Edgar MAYER (Austrian *Bundesrat*), stressing the need to make visible progress on tackling unemployment, warned against the risk of renationalisation, as the euro was seen as the cause of the problem rather than the solution.

Lord Timothy BOSWELL (UK *House of Lords*) informed the participants of the launch by the Select Committee on the European Union of the House of Lords of an inquiry into the role of national Parliaments in the EU. He invited other Parliaments to submit their views in writing, adding that the Committee would be delighted to collaborate with other Parliaments considering similar action. He further focused on two points. Firstly, he expressed the view that there was no future in a self-defeating dispute between the European Parliament and national Parliaments, as both were needed in this project. Secondly, he pointed out that a change of culture was needed for a real dialogue between the Council, the Commission, national governments, the European Council, the European Parliament and national Parliaments. On the role of national Parliaments, Mr Fidas SARIKAS (Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) underlined their role in contributing to the dialogue, exchanging views and bridging gaps.

A number of speakers explicitly mentioned the existing lack of confidence and trust towards the EU amongst citizens (e.g. Mr Alberto COSTA, Portuguese *Assembleia da Republica* and Mr Diego LOPEZ, Spanish *Cortes Generales*). According to Mr SARIKAS and Ms Elena FATTORI (Italian *Senato della Repubblica*) citizens should be put at the heart of the discussion on European integration. Mr MARTINEZ MARTÍNEZ (European Parliament) said that, in a globalised society, returning to nationalisation would render Europe totally irrelevant and asked Mr HALLIGAN whether the Senate, which he had proposed, would replace the European Council.

Ms Ana BIRCHALL (Romanian *Camera Deputatilor*) expressed the view that non-eurozone EU member states should be associated in the integration process.

In response, Mr DE CROO agreed with the interventions on employment and underlined that confidence was the most important element in the integration process and that we had to create it. Politicians had to try to form public opinion rather than only be led by it. Mr HALLIGAN

identified energy and climate change as one of the next great projects binding Europe's nations together and said that the social agenda needed to be put centre stage. He stressed that the real missing piece in the current architecture was that of national Parliaments. He believed that national Parliament cooperation needed to be brought institutionally into the system, rather than remaining out of it. He suggested the idea of a (European) Senate which would institutionalise the relationship between national Parliaments in the place of current formulas, rather than being left to an analogous intergovernmental procedure.

4. 'Delivering on Development'

Panel: Dr Mo Ibrahim, Chairman, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Ms Michèle Striffler, Vice-president of the Development Committee of the European Parliament and Mr Barry Andrews, Chief Executive, GOAL.

Dr Mo IBRAHIM discussed some of the challenges which Africa faced and presented four priority areas: regional and economic integration, agriculture, youth and education. He supported the EU model on promoting regional and economic integration in Africa, with freedom of goods, capital and people - an area which Africa places great importance on. He further emphasised the need for African leaders to focus on promoting good governance, the rule of law and good management of public finances. To this effect, he explained how African leaders were motivated to promote the above policies. Finally, on the issue of post 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), he noted that there was lack of statistical data and urged the EU to allocate more aid to building statistical offices in developing countries.

Ms Michèle STRIFFLER referred to the United Nations (UN) adoption of the Millennium Declaration in September 2000 for the achievement of specific goals by 2015 and noted that, although significant progress has been made, much remained to be done. She said that on 30th May 2013 the High-Level Panel, studying the post-2015 program presented a report, which was the starting point of the UN consultation process on Post-MDGs. She noted that national budgets should be used responsibly in order to encourage economic development and private investment. Regarding development aid, she underlined that the fight against poverty could be achieved by combined efforts of support development strategies and economic growth, twinned with the fair distribution of wealth. She added that €1,000 billion investment is expected in developing countries between 2015 and 2030. On the issue of the Monterrey Consensus on development financing, whereby the EU committed to collectively dedicate 0.7% of their gross national income to development aid by 2015, she expressed her disappointment that, in the light of the economic recession, most EU Member States were a long way off the track for meeting the above commitment. She further advocated that Member States and the EU must "speak with a single voice" in order to ensure an effective aid expenditure. The 2014-2020 financial prospects and the European Council decision of the 8th February 2013 to cut the budget by 10% (€58.7 billion) included a 16.1% decrease on development and humanitarian aid, compared to the European Commission's initial proposal, which went along with an additional €3.32 billion cut of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), compared to the Commission's suggestion. She mentioned that the European Parliament and the Irish Presidency were currently negotiating a revised proposal so that the development and humanitarian budgets fulfilled the EU commitments. Referring to the Agenda for Change that introduces the concept of differentiation, Ms STRIFFLER noted that the EU would target its development aid to the poorest countries. Although this differentiated approach for aid is not favoured by Members States, she supported a joint effort by both the EU and Member States that would help reduce aid fragmentation and maximise aid impact and efficiency.

Mr Barry ANDREWS presented the work of the GOAL that was currently active in 13 countries globally and worked with very vulnerable populations and he said that Ireland had been at the forefront of the aid debate by leading innovations in education and health care in the developing world. He further mentioned that Ireland also hosted very active and innovative branches of major world NGOs, such as Oxfam, World Vision, Plan and UNICEF. Concerning the relationship between GOAL and the EU, he presented some of the key programmes the EU:

- The programme in Sierra Leone that supported GOAL's disadvantaged children and youth initiative that addressed the needs of street children, by providing them with a safe haven, food and alternative choices in life.
- The "Reflect" programme in South Sudan, designed to empower women in vulnerable communities through raising literacy levels, reducing child mortality and ensuring sustainable development.

With reference to the humanitarian catastrophe in Syria in recent years, Mr Andrews underlined the total failure of the international system. He noted the efforts made by the UN in government-held areas and refugee camps in neighbouring countries, at the same time noting that pressure on the Turkish border line was escalating. Mr Andrews further said that the UN, in its attempt to reconcile the sovereignty of Member States and the protection of populations when a Member State failed, had started the "Responsibility to Protect" initiative.

Regarding the role of NGOs, Mr ANDREWS, stated that it was urgent to reconsider their role with regards to the transferability of European, Chinese or American standards to many settings in Africa, as well as the self-serving nature of some NGOs. In his concluding remarks, he mentioned that India, among many other countries, had moved from being a low-income to a middle-income country and that it was for this reason that GOAL was in the process of reconfiguring their operation so that it was locally incorporated and run by Indian nationals. Finally, he stated that the post-2015 agenda should be shaped through dialogue with those affected, otherwise the policies in process would be impaired.

In the debate that followed, 18 speakers took the floor. Many spoke about the importance of good governance and some expressed their concern that funding from Member States would reach the target of 0.7% of their GDP by 2015, as set in the MDGs. Others commented on the corruption in developing countries. Mr Honório NOVO (Portuguese *Assembleia da Republica*) expressed concern that some aid did not reach its destination and pointed out that the public funds that should be used to reach the goal of 0.7% GDP were currently being used for the bailing out of banks and financial institutions. Ms Jana JENKO (Slovenian *Državni Zbor*) suggested that the EU should formulate a uniform approach so that poverty was effectively eradicated. She further added that developing countries should also be responsible for their own development. Ms Elena FATTORI (Italian *Senato della Repubblica*) suggested that if the deadline of 2015 was to be met, new strategies need to be developed, adding that the post-2015 policy could be a turning point to put an end to hunger in the world. Mr Miguel Ángel MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ (European Parliament) noted that the European Development Fund covered expenditure for an agreement between developed and developing countries and from which 78 countries benefit. Ms Jean BIZET (French *Sénat*) pointed out that sustainability could be reached by the alignment of all policies, suggesting at the same time that illegal migration should be addressed. Ms Olga ZRIHEN (Belgium *Sénat*) pointed out that consistency of policies was necessary and condemned the European banks for being allowed to engage in food speculation, while Mr Epameinondas MARIAS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*) rejected the idea of money being spent on bankrupt banks and suggested that instead

money should be invested in development aid which could be used to help and encourage Africans to remain in Africa.

In response to the comments made by the speakers, Ms STRIFFLER answered that though corruption can not be completely eliminated, developing countries needed to focus on building good governance and said that there was a need to work with people in developing countries as well as invest in these countries. She further said that Europe had made good use of the resources in developing countries but that there was a need to put in place a scheme involving aid from the EU and Member States. On the same issue, Dr IBRAHIM pointed out that despite huge growth in profits, Africa incurs losses in illicit funds that amount to USD 70 billion per year. He went on to say that many multinationals in Africa did not pay taxes and suggested that if the EU tackles the problem of illegal transfers, this would be more useful than the aid of 0.7% GDP sent. In reply to questions from Ms Nia GRIFFITH (*UK House of Commons*), Dr IBRAHIM answered that in order to enable the EU to finance its promises, the tax race to the bottom should be stopped by introducing a reasonable corporate tax rate and that during the upcoming negotiations on a EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) subsidies should be addressed (US cotton subsidies, EU agricultural policy) which prevented fair trade conditions for Africa. On the issue of post-2015 MDGs, he noted that there was a lack of statistical data and urged the EU to allocate more aid to building statistical offices in developing countries. In the line of corruption and accountability, he stressed the need for businesses and governments to improve their practices and advocated that, by working together, corruption would be effectively dealt with. Answering Mr Demetris SYLLOURIS (Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*), within the context of promoting good governance and how Africa can be supported to this end, Dr IBRAHIM emphasised the importance of building capacity as being a key factor for development, adding that the element of "know how" was also of great importance.

In response to questions from Mr Nico SCHRIJVER (Dutch *Eerste Kamer*) and Baroness Margaret Lola YOUNG (*UK House of Lords*), Mr ANDREWS advocated stronger coherence in EU development aid by using economic partnership agreements and coordinating EU aid with UN initiatives (e.g. on fighting climate change and in the Rio+20 process). A global UN compact for companies could be set up, following the example of the recent signature of a zero deforestation agreement by 400 blue-chip companies under the auspices of US President Obama.

5. Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC

Mr HANNIGAN informed the Chairpersons that the Irish Presidency had submitted the first draft of the Contribution and Conclusions on 10 June 2013 and the second draft on 19 June 2013. Since then the Presidency had received amendments from national Parliaments and the European Parliament on both documents. Following a debate, an amended text of the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLIX COSAC was voted and agreed.

6. 'A European Future for Young Citizens'

Keynote speaker: Mr Joe COSTELLO, Minister of State. Interventions by three young Europeans: Ms Nevin Öztop (Turkey), Ms Rachel Creevy (Ireland) and Ms Marietta Herfort (Hungary).

Mr Joe COSTELLO, Minister of State, replacing Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn, reiterated that in view of the unprecedented levels of unemployment and youth unemployment, the Irish Council Presidency shifted its priority to growth and job creation. He stated that every policy ought to be measured against whether it provided employment to people and that €6 billion for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) was not enough. He highlighted the necessity to address marginalisation and social fragmentation. The Irish Presidency of the Council of Ministers had

therefore focussed on the social inclusion of young people. The Presidency had organised conferences with the aim of involving young people as an attempt to find mechanisms to allow young people to participate in policy making and shaping their future. Finally, Mr COSTELLO reminded participants that the vision of the founding fathers was a vision of inclusion. The EU should build on that, especially in times of crisis.

Following the Minister's presentation had invited three young Europeans, invited by the Irish Presidency presented their ideas about a future for young citizens in Europe in an interview conducted by COSAC Chair Mr Dominic HANNIGAN. Ms Nevin ÖZTOP, speaking from the perspective of a member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community (LGBT), pointed out that discrimination of LGBT people started at home when families kicked out their children, at school with homophobic bullying and then continued on the labour market. It was difficult for LGBT people to find a job and keep it. She pointed out that it was not about obtaining special rights but about being treated in a non-discriminatory way. Nobody should be treated differently because of who they love. Ms Rachel CREEVY, a young disabled citizen, emphasised the differences in attitudes between the United States and in Europe. While in the US attitudes were quite refreshing and she was not patronised, in Europe she felt like being defined by people through her disability. Barriers should be tackled by involving disabled persons in the necessary changes as they were experts in their life. Ms Marietta HERFORT, an ethnic Roma, reported that despite the European Roma strategy, members of her ethnic group still did not enjoy the same rights in 2013. Instead anti-Roma, xenophobia, radicalism and populist parties were growing. Roma were used as a scapegoat in Europe. If only one out of three young Roma had a job how could their trust in society be gained, she asked. Segregation at schools had to stop.

In the ensuing debate, 24 speakers took the floor. Ms Ana BIRCHALL (Romanian *Camera Deputatilor*) said that young people should become the priority for the EU. Each euro spent on this should be seen as an investment in the future. She also asked what the five priority measures for young people were to unlock the potential to keep Europe competitive.

Several contributors to the debate mentioned concrete examples for the insertion into the labour market: Mr Fritz NEUGEBAUER (Austrian *Nationalrat*) recommended the Austrian model combining school and work during apprenticeships as an example to bridge the transition into the labour market, while Ms Nia GRIFFITH (UK *House of Commons*) referred to a placement scheme with 80 per cent success. Ms Agnieszka POMASKA (Polish *Sejm*) suggested a higher professional mobility to tackle unemployment. Closing borders or limiting access were at odds with this. Mr Gordan JANDROKOVIĆ (Croatian *Sabor*) commented that according to Croatia's experience education and exchange of students via the EU's ERASMUS programme were useful tools where the EU should use its clout to make a difference. Ms Mihaela POPA (Romanian *Senatul*) called for the establishment of a Commissioner for Youth.

Mr Rafał TRZASKOWSKI (European Parliament) called for a well-funded MFF, benchmarks and the exploitation of development potential was crucial. Phenomena like digital exclusion should be overcome and used to open up society. These kinds of niches should be looked at holistically. Ms Zanda KALNIŅA-LUKAŠEVICA (Latvian *Saeima*) requested that the next MFF treat youth unemployment as stimulus, but not create unsustainable subsidies. There would be merit in an exchange of experiences.

Ms Janja NAPAST (Slovenian *Državni Zbor*) was critical that Slovenia was not eligible to benefit from the youth employment initiative even though youth unemployment had increased by 40 per cent in just one year and she asked for that to change. Mr Georgios VAREMENOS (Greek *Vouli*

ton Ellinon) complained that a lost generation would be created and that in order to allow youngsters to stay in their country, investments in growth were needed. Mr Epameinondas MARIAS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*) complained that Greece - in terms of money - received a whole Marshall plan but that it was simply used to save banks and not invested in the real economy, quoting the IMF who confessed that mistakes were made in the Greek programme.

Ms Paola CARINELLI (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*) requested an earlier disbursement of the youth guarantee. Europe should act as guarantor that the monies were well spent. Ms Olga ZRIHEN (Belgian *Senát*) said that it was very hard to avoid despair among young people and that it therefore was necessary to provide them with a concrete job perspective within four months. It was fundamental not to separate the future of the EU from the future for young people. Mr Peter SZALAY (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*) also described youth unemployment as more than an economic problem and young people should have prospects in life, otherwise they were prone to radicalism.

Mr Carlos SÃO MARTINHO (Portuguese *Assembleia da Republica*) observed that youth unemployment spread quickly and that people need to be given their rights: freedom and solidarity. There was a need to renew Europe and to take strong measures. According to Mr Arto AAS (Estonian *Riigikogu*) the sources of discrimination should be tackled as well as the causes for unemployment. Estonia had discovered that it suffered a demographic problem so that it had to adapt the education system and make the labour markets more flexible to allow young people to enter the labour market. Things had to be done at home; it was not for Brussels to deliver on this.

Ms Martha Margretha DE BOER (Dutch *Eerste Kamer*) pointed out that the recent Commission communication on employment did not say anything about marginalised youth and asked whether it was necessary to take specific steps. Mr Konstantinos TRIANTAFYLLOS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*) commented that, whenever the most vulnerable groups in society had problems in finding a job, Europe moved away further from its vision and democracy had a problem surviving.

Mr Fidas SARIKAS (Cypriot *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) admitted that Europe still had a long way to go before it abolished discrimination completely and asked whether this was a question of the right laws or more a question of awareness-raising. Mr Paschal DONOHOE (Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*) asked whether the introduction of a disability card as suggested by Ms Cheevy would be a good idea. Mr Miguel Ángel MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ (European Parliament) reminded that young citizens were not only the future, but they were the citizens of today too. He pointed out that discrimination was a problem, regardless of age.

Ms HERFORT replied that although young people were not politicians, they could get involved in the monitoring of the situation. They could collect information first hand on the ground. She also requested that the inclusion of Roma, LGBT and disabled people should be sped up by launching numerous campaigns and Ms CREEVY said that tackling discrimination should start in schools. She added that in her life education raised the barriers. A disability card could help overcome practical difficulties and could be introduced as part of the European Year of Citizens. Ms ÖZTOP replied to Mr Andrius MAZURONIS (Lithuanian *Seimas*) who had asked how politicians should start to talk to their citizens about discrimination when societies were not ready to discuss the issue, that a lot of countries have their own issues; a first step in Lithuania could be to abolish the recent law about inter-homosexuality in the name of protecting under-age people. Other countries should stop the use of terms like "psycho-sexual disorder" with regards to LGBT people. Her priority was to abolish discrimination in the working place in order to guarantee self-sustainability of LGBT people. Ms HERFORT agreed on this point. However, when Ms ÖZTOP listened to

other LGBT people in Europe she found that implementing the non-discrimination laws was tricky. Mr Michele BORDO (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*) confirmed that rules that ban discrimination existed but that there still were various forms of discrimination in real life.

Mr COSTELLO supported the creation of closer links between school and the labour market, formation and enterprises. He also advocated front-loading the €6 billion YEI. He pointed out the need to involve young people and to ask them for answers on how to keep young people out of long-term unemployment. He also mentioned that Ireland gave a good example with its LGBT conference earlier this year and underlined that in his opinion a mix of education and laws were necessary to overcome discrimination. If young people did not find a meaningful position in life there was the danger that they would feel purposeless. The minister picked up on the idea of an EU disability card to guarantee equal access in terms of transport etc. the realisation of which would certainly be a major achievement.

7. ‘Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy – Maintaining Momentum’

Keynote speakers: Dr Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Mr Erwan Fouéré, Associate Senior Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels.

Dr INZKO said that the Office of the High Representative (OHR), operating under the Peace Agreement and a series of UN Security Council Resolutions, has stepped back in recent years taking note of the reinforced EU Delegation, headed by Ambassador Peter Sørensen. This was to encourage integration with the EU being put at the heart of domestic policy. He said that the EU policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) must be targeted and tailored to get around the country's recent history, it must fight against the alternative objective of some of division and secession, and must remember that successful integration of BiH would yield benefits to all the peoples of Europe. The process in BiH had hit a roadblock; attempts to re-open fundamentals of the Peace Agreement, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Negative developments have been the result of unwillingness on the part of the political establishment, however, Dr INZKO argued that an alternative was possible, especially in the light of the historic agreement recently reached between Kosovo and Serbia and the EU knocking at the door with the Croatian accession. He said that the people wanted to join the EU, but the leaders were much more ambivalent.

The High Representative argued that engagement with BiH had to be rethought, though the international community must remain committed. He said that the international community's approach to BiH should be to broaden the dialogue out from political leaders to also include their constituents. Obstructionists should not be able to maintain the perception that they are part of the solution. The international community should return to its core values and make the most of the instruments available by linking financial assistance more closely with political progress, confronting parties that block progress and by reaffirming the role of the OHR and EUFOR.

Mr FOUÉRE said that much progress had been made in the 10 years since the Western Balkans Summit in Thessaloniki that made clear the possibility of an EU future for Western Balkan countries. He believed that visa free travel for citizens to the Schengen area had been the greatest achievement and had shown that these countries had the capacity to deliver if given clear guidelines and incentives. The soft power of the EU had been shown to work. However, there was no denying that support for continued enlargement was decreasing and he argued a pause in enlargement would mean that the EU lost much of its credibility in the region. He hoped that Heads of State and Government would emphasise the importance of enlargement at their meeting in Brussels held that week. He wanted to see improvements in the situation in Albania, BiH and

FYROM, in particular as regards the culture of political dialogue and media freedom, and he was concerned about Turkey; these countries were lagging behind and he wanted the EU to encourage them to continue reforms. He said that there was no substitute for political dialogue and consensus building and that parties had to work together to reach the set goal. The EU should strengthen and reconfirm its commitment to enlargement in response to those in civil society and in the general population who supported EU membership.

As first respondent to the debate, Mr MARTINÉZ MARTINÉZ, European Parliament, said that he has personally witnessed enormous interest in candidate and pre-candidate countries in EU membership. In its expansion from six to 28 Member States, the EU had obviously been a story of success, the waiting list of potential member countries and the Nobel Peace Prize were testament to this. He said that the Copenhagen criteria should be adhered to and perhaps should include the principle of solidarity. MEPs, of which the majority were still pro-European, considered the ability to join the EU as a right and not a grace; there should be no gaps in the European map as new countries benefit all, not just those acceding. Enlargement must be carried out against objective criteria and not as per a political agenda. The EP had a role in ratifying the accession agreements and this was an important role to ensure new criteria were met, and to ensure the EU was careful not to exercise double standards where more was expected of the candidates than EU countries. He said he would be happy to be welcoming Croatia on 1 July 2013 and he expressed concern about the situation in Turkey, though he was happy that the surreal situation about Iceland had come to an end as regards EU membership, as the people had been opposed to it.

In the debate that followed, 26 speakers took the floor. Mr Petras AUŠTREVICĪUS (Lithuanian *Seimas*) said that it was strategically important to keep the European Union as an open process as part of the Europeanisation process. However, he also emphasised the importance of the Copenhagen criteria and that their implementation must be a high priority to ensure the quality of enlargement as an important part of the process. Ms Anna FOTYGA (Polish *Sejm*) said that the vision and determination shown through the Thessaloniki process must also be shown by the EU towards the Eastern Partnership countries and despite very big concerns asked for a positive signal to be sent to Turkey in recognition of the great transformative steps reached. Mr Simon SUTOUR (French *Senát*) called for greater emphasis on the Mediterranean Union and welcomed President Schulz's emphasis on this and further noted that Turkey needed to respect the rule of law, commenting that it occupies a Member State. Mr Damir MATELJAN (Croatian *Hrvatski Sabor*) commented that Croatia was the first country to accede to the EU alone but he did not want it to be the last. He said that Croatia would be persistent in its support for the accession of Western Balkan countries as well as Eastern Partners.

Mr Fritz NEUGEBAUER (Austrian *Nationalrat*) praised the work of Dr INZKO and appreciated the comments he had made about the state of play in BiH and asked if the situation was hopeless. Mr William CASH (UK *House of Commons*) encouraged caution on BiH not to bring about a backlash and said that enlargement in the South East could lead to an over ambitious and over extended EU. A number of members expressed concern about the civil unrest in Turkey and its management by the authorities. Mr Igors PIMENOVŠ (Latvian *Saeima*) said that he thought that the economic components of enlargement were more important than the political components, if countries were not adequately prepared economically there would be problems for their people and the EU. Baroness SCOTT (UK *House of Lords*) said that it must be recognised that the transition process itself was positive, not just the final destination of accession, she said that the EU and governments needed to communicate clearly all the benefits of the enlargement process and highlighted the report recently adopted by the EU Committee of the House of Lords on enlargement. Mr Richárd HÖRCSIK (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*) highlighted the activities of the

Hungarian Parliament that was very active in organising twinning projects with Parliaments in the Balkan region.

Mr Christos MESSIS (Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) said that unfortunate incidents had been observed in Turkey recently and he said that he hoped that Turkey would make improvements in the respect of human rights and freedom of expression and would bring about normalisation of relations with Cyprus by ending their occupation of a part of Cyprus. Mr Epameinondas MARIAS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*) expressed concern about events in the FYROM Parliament on 24 December 2012 and said that double standards should not be applied as he believed FYROM did not receive the same treatment as BiH.

Ms Gordana ČOMIĆ (Serbian *Narodna skupština*) highlighted the recent agreement between Serbia and Kosovo and the success of the dialogue and the incentive of enlargement prospects in this process to bring about this and improvements in the region. She appealed to members to send the message that a date for accession of Serbia was no longer impossible to set. Mr FOUÉRE said that the agreement had been remarkable and he hoped others would emulate the agreement. Mr Birgir ÁRMANNSSON (Icelandic *Althingi*) said that the new government in Iceland has a positive outlook on Europe, EEA and Schengen membership but it does not believe that EU membership is in the best interests of Iceland. Ms Ayşe Eser DANIŞOĞLU (Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*) instead pleaded for the continuation of negotiations with Turkey and opening of chapters 23 and 24 on justice, home affairs and fundamental rights, since the protest of more than 100.000 people in 76 cities had proven that they had democratic values. Mr Jovan MARTINOVIĆ (Montenegrin *Skupština*) underlined the strong impetus of the preliminary closure of two negotiation chapters on his country and requested the crucial chapters 23 and 24 to be opened soon. Several participants, among whom Mr Andrzej GALAŻEWSKI (Polish *Sejm*) advocated the signing of an SAA with Ukraine as this would contribute to shaping the Union's relations with all eastern neighbours in the future. Mr Herman DE CROO (Belgian *Sénat*) asked for more COSAC debating time to be allocated to enlargement in future meetings since every national Parliament had to approve any EU accession.

In reply Dr INZKO said that there was still hope for the Western Balkans region, he said he was in favour of early candidate status being granted to BiH and others in the region as this was the best way to ensure that the reform process continued at a good pace. He called it a mistake to assume that the concept of competition which worked for the enlargement to the east would work on the Western Balkans too. The year 2014 with the 100th anniversary of the assassination of Austrian heir to the throne Franz Ferdinand offered the opportunity to address messages of peace to the population. It may take more time before countries were ready to accede but it was better to lock them into the reform process. Next year should be a breakthrough year for every Western Balkans country. By then all of them should have contractual relations with the EU. He said that courage and leadership were missing and a recalibrated approach was therefore needed from the international community.

Mr FOUÉRE argued that better and more consistent use of instruments (i.e. progress reports and conditionality) was needed to stimulate progress in BiH. He welcomed the European Commission's recent focus on the rule of law and called for emphasis to be given to EU values in the engagement with civil society. He also encouraged those who had been through reconciliation to share their experiences with those not there yet. Reconciliation could not be imposed but had to come from the region itself. He was also concerned by events in FYROM. He appealed to Greece and FYROM to sit down and enter a dialogue to finally resolve the name issue. He agreed that the Mediterranean Union needed more attention and a more proactive approach. He welcomed the

House of Lords report and agreed with the need better to communicate the benefits of the whole enlargement process within the EU as well as in candidate countries. Regarding Ukraine he argued that bringing the country into an SAA would be the best way of bringing about reforms.

8. Adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLIX COSAC

Mr HANNIGAN presented the final draft of the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLIX COSAC to the meeting. He reported that the documents had been amended during a lively debate and voting in the Chairpersons meeting held the previous evening and he expressed his hope that they could now be agreed by consensus.

Mr MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ informed those present that the delegation of the European Parliament would vote in favour of Contribution and Conclusions of the XLIX COSAC if the following statement was included in the minutes: “The European Parliament would reject any interpretation of proposals contained in the Contribution of the XLIX COSAC which would go beyond the letter or the spirit of the Treaties, with specific reference to the role of COSAC and the current balance between national and European parliamentary institutions.”

Mr Konstantinos TRIANTAFYLLOS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*) informed the meeting that the Greek delegation would vote against the Contribution because of the evaluation within the Contribution of the situation of FYROM, where there seems to be an interruption of European process and necessary reforms. There had been serious incidents within the Parliament, the situation was getting worse from the point of human rights and individual freedoms. The name issue is still not resolved either. He had wanted all these points to be reflected in the text.

Ms Margreet DE BOER (Dutch *Eerste Kamer*) informed that the Dutch *Eerste Kamer* could agree with the draft Contribution, but Dutch *Tweede Kamer* would abstain from supporting the draft Contribution, because of the rejection of the Dutch amendment.

Ms Zanda KALNIŅA-LUKAŠEVICA (Latvian *Saeima*) thanked the Presidency for including Paragraph 8 in the draft Contribution with the reference to Latvia's accession to the eurozone.

Mr William CASH (UK *House of Commons*) said that in relation to development reference should be made to the role of women in relation to improving global development. Regarding Paragraph 34 of the draft Contribution and arising from the informal lunch time session on parliamentary practices in selective EU scrutiny, it was agreed that Parliaments would provide information on their scrutiny systems for mutual exchange which would help everybody in the EU to learn about each others systems.

Hereafter, the conference adopted the text of the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLIX COSAC as amended by the meeting of the Chairpersons. Once translated into all official languages of the EU, the Contribution of the XLIX COSAC will be published in the Official Journal of the EU.

Finally, Mr KIRKILAS congratulated Ireland on a very successful Presidency. He confirmed Lithuania's readiness to take over its first Presidency of the EU Council and announced that the next meeting of the COSAC Chairpersons would take place on 7-8 July 2013 and the L COSAC plenary meeting would be on 27-29 October 2013. Both meetings would take place in Vilnius.