

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

Luxembourg, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, 12 July 2015

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIR: Mr Marc ANGEL, Chair of the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Defence, Cooperation and Immigration, Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*.

Ms Lolita ČIGĀNE, Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Latvian *Saeima*, Mr Tuur ELZINGA, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Mr Malik AZMANI, Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*; and Mr Ramón Luis VALCARCEL SISO, Vice-President, 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 meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC**
- 3. Debate on the draft programme of the LIV COSAC**
- 4. Approval of the outline of the 24th Bi-annual Report of COSAC**
- 5. Co-financing and appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2016 and 2017**
- 6. Establishing a working group**
- 7. Letters received by the Presidency**
- 8. Any other business**

PROCEEDINGS

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

The meeting was chaired by Mr Marc ANGEL who welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika"), especially the Dutch delegation participating for the first time in a Troika meeting and Mr Tuur ELZINGA, the recently elected Chair of the Committee on European Affairs of the Dutch *Eerste Kamer*.

In the absence of any objection, the agenda of the meeting of the Troika was adopted without amendment.

2. Approval of the draft programme of the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC

Mr ANGEL referred to the two sessions that would take place the next day. The first one would include the priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union and would be addressed by Mr Nicolas SCHMIT, Minister of Labour, Employment and the Social and Solidarity Economy, also responsible for relations with the European Parliament during the Luxembourg Presidency. The Chair informed of a change on the programme and explained that, due to Mr SCHMIT's busy agenda, the discussion on procedural issues and miscellaneous matters would take place after the debate on the priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency. The second session would focus on Strengthening of the political dialogue by introducing a "green card" and

improvement of the reasoned opinion procedure ("yellow card"). Three speakers would address the topic: Mr Paulo MOTA PINTO, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs of the Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, Lord Timothy BOSWELL, Chair of the European Union Committee, UK *House of Lords*, and Mr Frans TIMMERMANS, First Vice-President of the European Commission for Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

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

3. Debate on the draft programme of the LIV COSAC

Mr ANGEL presented the draft programme of the LIV COSAC and especially the different sessions on the draft programme, which included the following: 1. European Agenda on Migration, which would include a part on common asylum policy and legal migration policy and a part on fight against irregular migration and securing Europe's external borders; 2. A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe; 3. Enlargement policy.

Regarding the topic on the fight against irregular migration and securing Europe's external borders, Mr ANGEL said that the Presidency had not yet confirmed any keynote speakers, but was seeking Mr Dimitris AVRAMOPOULOS, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Mr Fabrice LEGGERI, Executive Director of FRONTEX, as well as a representative from the Italian or Greek delegation as keynote speakers.

Regarding session II on a Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe, the Chair expressed his hope that Mr Andrus ANSIP, Vice-President of the European Commission for Digital Single Market, would be confirmed as keynote speaker.

Session III would focus on enlargement policy; the Presidency envisaged Mr Johannes HAHN, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, as keynote speaker.

Ms ČIGĀNE took the floor and welcomed the topics chosen by the Luxembourg Presidency, referring to the importance of the underlying issues of migration and of enlargement policy especially for Western Balkans which needed to get the right signals from the EU.

Mr VALCARCEL SISO also welcomed the topics to be discussed and emphasised specifically the European Parliament's proposals on the digital single market and immigration which were of the utmost importance to the European Parliament both because of the social consequences and the economic impact they had on Europe.

Mr ELZINGA informed that the Dutch Parliament, in the context of the parliamentary dimension of the upcoming Dutch Presidency of the Council of the EU, would be contributing and would be taking up, among others, the rule of law and parliamentary diplomacy on its agenda; both issues, he said, could be discussed in relation to enlargement and neighbourhood policy.

4. Approval of the outline of the 24th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Mr ANGEL briefly presented the outline of the 24th Bi-annual Report. He reported that the first chapter would tackle the future of parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs and that the replies to the

COSAC questionnaire regarding the two sections on the "green card" and the "yellow card" would serve as input to the discussions in the working group of COSAC that the Luxembourg Presidency intended to establish. The second chapter would deal with the subject of a European Agenda on Migration. The third chapter would tackle the topic of enlargement policy. The Chair said that the questionnaire for the 24th Bi-annual Report would be circulated on 29 July 2015 emphasising the intended deadline of 14 September 2015 for receiving the replies.

The outline of the 24th Bi-annual Report of COSAC was approved without amendment.

5. Co-financing and appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2016 and 2017

In relation to the co-financing of the cost for seconding the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and other technical costs, Mr ANGEL, referring to Rule 9.5 of the Rules of Procedure of COSAC, reminded the Troika members that the current co-financing agreement was valid until the end of 2015 and that it needed to be renewed. In this context, he said that the Presidency intended to send a letter of intent to the Chairs of the Committees on European Affairs of national Parliaments regarding the continuation of the voluntary scheme of co-financing, noting the deadline of 15 October 2015 for receiving the replies. He added that all Parliaments had agreed to continue with the co-financing regarding the previous term.

On the appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, the Chair referred to Rule 9.3 of the Rules of Procedure of COSAC and said that the term of the current Permanent Member, Ms Christiana FRYDA, was expiring at the end of 2015. Referring to a letter addressed to the Presidency by the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* recommending a renewal of the current Permanent Member's term on the basis of the Rules of Procedure, he proposed to agree on a renewal of the term. Taking into account the Troika members' agreement with his proposal, the Chair suggested there was no need to invite Parliaments to nominate candidates for the post. The appointment by the COSAC Chairpersons for 2016 and 2017 would follow at the LIV COSAC meeting.

6. Establishing a working group

The Chair referred to the letter sent on 29 June 2015 to delegations by the Presidency regarding the establishment of a working group on strengthening the political dialogue by introducing a "green card" and improving the reasoned opinion procedure ("yellow card") and submitted the Presidency's proposals on the working group's composition, its scope, the frequency of its meetings and its language regime to the members of the Troika. The idea of the Luxembourg Presidency was to be very concise and to discuss at political level in an efficient working group. He mentioned the Presidency's proposals on the composition foreseeing representation at political level of each Parliament/Chamber and the European Parliament by one member accompanied by one member of staff at meetings organised before or after COSAC meetings for cost saving reasons, the language regime introducing English and French as working languages and the scope including discussion on establishing non-binding guidelines on drafting reasoned opinions and contributions in the context of political dialogue. The Troika agreed with the Presidency's proposals.

On the proposal regarding the frequency of the meetings, Ms ČIGĀNE noted that it would be desirable to hold meetings at the side of COSAC; however, given COSAC's busy agenda which would not allow sufficient discussion and some Parliaments' desire to start work earlier, she proposed to encourage other Parliaments to host a meeting before the LIV meeting in Luxembourg.

Mr AZMANI agreed and suggested it would be useful to hold a meeting in between, perhaps on Saturday before the COSAC meeting, on an administrative level, to prepare the working group at political level. He also suggested holding separate discussions on the "green card" and "yellow card".

Mr ANGEL confirmed that separate discussions would be held on the "green card" and "yellow card". Regarding Ms ČIGĀNE's proposal, he underlined that, as the decision had been taken to establish a formal COSAC working group, the mandate could not be delegated to other Parliaments; it was up to the Luxembourg Parliament to host and chair such meetings. He expressed his intention to consult with his staff and explore the possibility for an earlier meeting taking into account the Presidency's busy schedule.

7. Letters received by the Presidency

The Chair referred to the following letters:

- Letters from Ms Anniken HUITFELD, Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Norwegian *Storting*, from Dr Kathy RIKLIN, National Councillor/President of the EFTA/EU Delegation of the Swiss *Assemblée fédérale*, as well as from Mr Levan BERDZENISHVILI, Chair of the Committee on European Integration of the Parliament of Georgia, regarding participation at COSAC. After consultation with the Troika, letters of invitation had been sent to these Parliaments.
- A letter from Ms Agnieszka POMASKA, Chair of the EU Affairs Committee, Polish *Sejm*, regarding the report of the working group on the possibility of improving the "yellow card" procedure held in Warsaw in May 2015.
- A letter from Mr Daniel MONDEKAR, Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, regarding his Parliament's inability to participate in the meeting of the Chairpersons meeting of COSAC in Luxembourg.
- A letter from Mr MITROPOULOS, Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, regarding his inability to participate at the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC.

In relation to the letter from Mr MITROPOULOS received earlier that day, Mr ANGEL added that the Greek issue would be discussed the following day under the priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency.

8. Any other business

Mr AZMANI noted a farewell letter from Ms Eva Kjer HANSEN, former Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Danish *Folketing*, and recently appointed Minister of Environment and Agriculture in Denmark, addressed to the Chairs of the Committees on EU affairs of national Parliaments.

Mr ANGEL said he would refer to the letter the following day. Furthermore, he mentioned a joint declaration adopted by the Committees of European Affairs of the French *Sénat* and the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* which had reached the Presidency via a channel other than that of COSAC.