

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

Sofia, Bulgaria, 17 June 2018

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIR: Mr Kristian VIGENIN, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds, Bulgarian *Narodno Sabranie*.

Mr Reinhold LOPATKA, Chair of the Standing Sub-Committee on European Affairs of the Austrian *Nationalrat*; Mr Christian BUCHMANN, Chair of the EU Committee of the Austrian *Bundesrat*; Mr Toomas VITSUT, Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee, Estonian *Riigikogu*; Ms Danuta HÜBNER, Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, 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 LIX COSAC**
- 3. Presentation of the 29th Bi-annual Report of COSAC**
- 4. Debate on the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the LIX COSAC**
- 5. Letters received by the Presidency**
- 6. Any other business**

PROCEEDINGS

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

Mr VIGENIN welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika") and thanked them for their cooperation, especially with regard to the Task Force.

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

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

Mr VIGENIN briefly outlined the programme of the meeting of the LIX COSAC, which would consist of five sessions:

- Session I: Achievements of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU
- Session II: Integration and connectivity of the Western Balkans – a new impetus to EU Enlargement Policy
- Session III: European Pillar of Social Rights - building a more inclusive and fairer Europe
- Session IV: A strong and effective Cohesion Policy post 2020
- Session V: EU interparliamentary cooperation in the context of the debate on subsidiarity and proportionality

The Chair also informed the participants about some last-minute changes among the keynote speakers and noted that each session would have both a moderator and a chair. In addition, Mr VIGENIN referred to a side-event on transparency, hosted by the Dutch and Danish delegations, which would take place during lunch on the following day.

The draft programme of the LIX COSAC was approved without amendment.

3. Presentation of the 29th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Mr VIGENIN invited the Permanent Member of the COSAC secretariat, Mr Kenneth CURMI, to present the 29th Bi-annual Report of COSAC, which was based on Parliaments' replies to the related questionnaire circulated to delegations on 13 February 2018 with a deadline of 19 March 2018 for submitting replies.

Mr CURMI briefly referred to the three chapters of the Report: the first one was dedicated to the debate on the future of Europe; the second one dealt with the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and the third one concentrated on the European Pillar of Social Rights. Mr CURMI also presented a short animated video summarising the main findings of the Report.

Before moving on to the next item on the agenda, Ms Danuta HÜBNER thanked the COSAC secretariat for its work but noted that despite some improvements following the discussion during the LVIII COSAC in Tallinn, she still found the Report lacking with regard to political analysis. In her opinion the Report should not be a mere statistical summary of opinions but should also provide suggestions and ideas for the future.

Mr VIGENIN noted that the COSAC Secretariat did not have a mandate to provide political analysis and it was up to the Presidency to ask more political questions and analyse the answers.

4. Debate on the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the LIX COSAC

The draft text of the Contribution and the Conclusions was circulated to delegations on 4 June 2018. No amendments had been received regarding the Conclusions and the Troika endorsed the draft text proposed by the Presidency.

Regarding the draft Contribution, amendments received from delegations by 11 June 2018 were translated into French and, together with the initial text, included in a table, which had been distributed to all delegations. A number of compromise proposals elaborated by the Presidency were submitted to the Troika.

Following a detailed examination of each amendment proposed, the Troika, on the basis of the Presidency's compromise proposals, drafted a modified text of the Contributions.

5. Letters received by the Presidency

The Chair referred to the following letters received by the Presidency:

- Letters from Mr Carles ENSENAT, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Andorra *Consell General*; letter from Mr Guillaume ROSE, Chair of the Monitoring Committee on Negotiations with the European Union, and Mr Stéphane VALERI, Speaker of the *Conseil National* of the Principality of Monaco; letter from Ms Mariia IONOVA, Deputy Chair of the Committee on European Integration of the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine; letter from Mr Nikola

LOVRINOVIĆ, Chair of the Joint Committee on European Integration of the *Parlamentarna Skupština* of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and letter from Ms Blerta DELIU-KODRA, Chair of the Committee on European Integration of the Assembly of Kosovo* regarding participation in COSAC. Following consultation with the Troika, letters of invitation had been sent out.

- Letter from Mr Marek ROCKI, Chair of the Foreign and European Union Affairs Committee of the Polish *Senat* on the conclusions of the meeting of the Committees on European Affairs of the countries of the Visegrád Group.
- Letter from Mr Vanino CHITI, former Chair of the Committee of the European Union Affairs of the Italian *Senato*, who is taking a rest from the active political life. The Presidency thanked him for his hard work in COSAC.
- Letter from Mr Michael SCHNEIDER, member of the Committee of the Regions and of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and “Doing Less More Efficiently” who was invited to be a keynote speaker during Session IV dedicated on the future of the Cohesion policy. Mr SCHNEIDER however had an unexpected engagement and would be replaced by Mr Michiel RIJSBERMAN, a rapporteur on the European Regional Development Fund.
- Letter from Mr Peep JAHILO, Secretary General of the Estonian *Riigikogu* and current Chair of the IPEX Board regarding the integration of the COSAC website within the IPEX framework. The issue has been addressed in the draft Conclusions.
- Following Mr VIGENIN’s letter from 11th May to all COSAC delegations, in which they were asked to send their written contributions to the work of the Task Force, the Presidency has received several letters: In addition to the Czech *Senate*, Danish *Folketing*, and Dutch *Staaten-Generaal*, contributions were received also from the Finnish *Eduskunta*, French *Assemblée nationale*, Latvian *Sejma*, Maltese *Kamra tad-deputati*, Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, Romanian *Camera Deputaților* and Swedish *Riksdag*.
- Two letters from the Chairs of the committees on European Integration of the parliaments of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova: one in regard to the future Multiannual Financial Framework and the resources allocated for EU external actions; and another one asking if it would be possible to amend the COSAC Rules of Procedure in order to grant them the status of permanent observers to COSAC. The Presidency thanked the Chairs for expressing their interest and promised to initiate a more in-depth debate on the topic.

Ms HÜBNER noted that the question of non-EU countries participating as observers in the COSAC meetings deserved further discussion in light of the advanced stage of the Brexit negotiations.

6. Any other business

The Chair used the opportunity to thank the European Parliament, specifically Ms HÜBNER and Ms Mairead MCGUINNES, for hosting the meeting of the COSAC Working Group on 26 March 2018.

Ms HÜBNER drew attention to the upcoming elections for the European parliament in May 2019, stressing that these should be an integral part of the debates during upcoming COSAC meetings.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council and to the opinion of the ICJ on the declaration of independence of Kosovo.