



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF COSAC

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, 28 - 29 JULY 2024

Note: The text of keynote interventions which have been shared with the Presidency will be published on IPEX. A video recording of the full meeting is available via the [webpage of the Parliamentary Dimension of the Hungarian Presidency](#).

PROCEEDINGS

IN THE CHAIR: Mr Zoltán TESSELY, Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs, Hungarian *Országgyűlés*.

OPENING SESSION

Opening remarks

Mr István JAKAB, Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian *Országgyűlés* held an opening keynote intervention welcoming delegations to Budapest. The English translation of the speech is accessible on IPEX.

PROCEDURAL ISSUES AND MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Mr TESSELY briefly presented the draft agenda for the meeting, which then was adopted without any remarks. He went on to present the results of the meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC. He noted that the Troika had approved the agenda for the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC, the Outline of the 42nd Bi-annual Report, as well as discussed the draft programme for the LXXII COSAC Plenary Meeting. The letters received by the Presidency had been presented to the Troika. He then went on to present the draft programme for the LXXII COSAC Plenary Meeting to the delegations.

Mr TESSELY welcomed the delegates attending the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC for the first time: Mr Telmo FARIA, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, Ms Mirela FURTUNĂ, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs of the Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*, Mr Peter De ROOVER, Speaker of the House and Chair of the Advisory Committee on European Affairs of the Belgian *Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers/Chambre des représentants* and Mr Younous OMARJEE, Vice President of the European Parliament.

He furthermore informed delegations about letters received by the Presidency, noting that requests to attend the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC had been sent from the *Kuvendi*

i Kosovës of Kosovo¹, the *Storting* of Norway, the Swiss *Assemblée fédérale*, and the *House of Lords* of the United Kingdom. After consultation with the Troika, these requests had been replied to favourably. He also brought the delegations' attention to a letter from Mr Edmunds CEPURĪTIS, Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee of the Latvian *Saeima*, in which Mr CEPURĪTIS explained his reasons for not attending the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC. Lastly, the Outline of the 42nd Bi-annual Report was adopted without comments and the delegations were informed that the questionnaire would be sent immediately after the meeting.

SESSION I - PRESENTATION OF THE PRIORITIES OF THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

The session was chaired by Mr TESSELY.

The session began with a keynote intervention by Mr János BÓKA, Hungarian Minister for European Union Affairs. The speech of Mr BÓKA is published on IPEX.

During the ensuing debate, 29 speakers took the floor.

Members highlighted various aspects of the priorities of the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the EU as important, and also indicated that there were many elements in common with their parliamentary priorities. Many members mentioned the Migration and Asylum Pact as an essential aspect, with a focus on better protection of external borders and cooperation with the countries of origin. The emphasis on policies in the technology and industry sector was welcomed by some speakers, while others referred to the new common defence policy as an important aspect in the current context. Some members underlined the relationship with Hungary, whilst others commented on the recent actions taken by the Prime Minister Viktor ORBÁN. In the context of Russia's war against Ukraine, the continuous support was widely advocated. All candidate countries, as well as some Member States discussed the merit-based EU enlargement process. Furthermore, in light of the European election and the change of leadership in the European institutions, the representation of political groups in the European Parliament was referred to. Among other topics the importance of the subsidiarity principle, balanced EU legislation and necessity of the dialogue amongst and with parliaments, the support for SMEs and demographic challenges were mentioned. Some other issues raised concerned enlargement of the Schengen Area, the conflict in the Middle East and the sustainability of social welfare states.

The following speakers took the floor during this debate:

Mr Younous OMARJEE (European Parliament), Mr Peter DE ROOVER (Belgian *Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers/Chambre des représentants*), Mr Patryk GABRIEL (Polish *Sejm*), Ms Hajnalka JUHÁSZ (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*), Mr Dimitrios KOUVELAS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*), Mr Martin ENGELBERG (Austrian *Nationalrat*), Mr Anton HOFREITER

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

(German *Bundestag*), Mr Alain CADEC (French *Sénat*), Mr Ján FERENČÁK (Slovak *Národná rada*), Mr Johan DESSING (Dutch *Eerste Kamer*), Ms Christiana EROKROITOU (Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*), Mr Pere Joan PONS SAMPIETRO (Spanish *Senado*), Ms Mirela FURTUNĂ (Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*), Mr Alessandro GIGLIO VIGNA (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*), Mr Heikki AUTTO (Finnish *Eduskunta*), Mr Giulio TERZI DI SANT'AGATA (Italian *Senato della Repubblica*), Mr Francisco José CONDE LÓPEZ (Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados*), Mr Rainer ROBRA (German *Bundesrat*), Mr Edward ZAMMIT LEWIS (Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*), Mr Brendan HOWLIN (Irish *Dáil Eireann*), Ms Ivanna KLYMPUSH-TSINTSADZE (Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*), Ms Elvira KOVÁCS (Serbian *Narodna skupština*), Mr Jovan SUBOTIĆ (Montenegrin *Skupština Crne Gore*), Mr Kreshnik COLLAKU (Albanian *Kuvendi i Shqipërisë*), Mr Burhan KAYATÜRK (Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*), Mr Mile LEFKOV (North Macedonian *Sobranie*), Mr Radu MARIAN (Moldovan *Parlamentul Republicii*), Mr Christian TYBRING-GJEDDE (Norwegian *Storting*), Mr Ismail Emrah KARAYEL (Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*).

SESSION II - STATE OF PLAY OF THE WESTERN BALKAN AND EASTERN ENLARGEMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The session was chaired by Mr TESSELY.

The session began with the keynote interventions by Mr Olivér VÁRHELYI, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement and Mr Péter SZTÁRAY, Hungarian State Secretary for Security Policy and Energy Security in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The speech of Mr VÁRHELYI is published on IPEX.

Mr SZTÁRAY emphasised in his intervention that the issue of enlargement is a strategic goal for the European Union from a geopolitical, economic and security point of view, which together with competitiveness, European protection, demography and migration shapes the future of the European Union. Mr SZTÁRAY also referred to the internal reforms of the European Union, highlighting that they cannot be a precondition or obstacle for enlargement. He furthermore mentioned the progress made by each candidate country, highlighting that it is the European Union's obligation to welcome new members and therefore extend the zone of stability. Mr SZTÁRAY confirmed Hungary's ongoing openness to political dialogue with candidate countries, as well as support in the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria. He also added that national parliaments have extensive expertise, which they can share with candidate countries and so help them in their accession process.

During the debate, 33 speakers took the floor.

In general, all members expressed their collective support for the enlargement of the European Union, recognizing the significant positive impact that membership can have on candidate countries. In the context of eastern enlargement, particular emphasis was placed on the integration of Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, with the assertion that this process would

contribute to enhanced peace and stability in the region. With respect to the Western Balkans, the European Commission's new Growth Plan was met with a warm reception. This plan seeks to foster closer ties between the Western Balkan nations and the EU by providing preliminary benefits associated with EU membership prior to official accession. Such initiatives are designed to stimulate economic growth and accelerate socio-economic convergence within the region. Furthermore, several members reiterated the importance of respecting the unique characteristics and needs of smaller member states, both in the run-up to and in the aftermath of enlargement. They highlighted the advantages of adopting a merit-based approach to the enlargement process and underscored the vital role of the Copenhagen criteria for all candidate countries, with particular attention to the necessity of reforming the rule of law. Lastly, a prominent theme shared among members was the need for reform within EU institutions. Just as candidate countries must demonstrate their readiness for accession, it is imperative that the EU itself is equally prepared for enlargement. Nonetheless, this preparedness should not hinder the progress of candidate countries toward membership. Rather, the EU should remain committed to its core principles and actively promote peace, stability, and prosperity across the continent.

The following speakers took the floor during the debate:

Mr Younous OMARJEE (European Parliament), Mr Peter DE ROOVER (Belgian *Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers / Chambre des représentants*), Mr Jacek WŁOSOWICZ (Polish *Sejm*), Mr Richárd HÖRCSIK (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*), Mr Pere Joan PONS SAMPIETRO (Spanish *Cortes Generales*), Mr Anton HOFREITER (German *Bundestag*), Mr Ján FERENČÁK (Slovak *Národná rada*), Mr Dimitrios KOUVELAS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*), Mr Ivan RAČAN (Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*), Mr Alessandro GIGLIO VIGNA (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*), Mr Péter BALASSA (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*), Mr Gusty GRAAS (Luxembourgish *Chambre des Députés*), Mr Giulio TERZI DI SANT'AGATA (Italian *Senato della Repubblica*), Mr Cristian GHICA (Romanian *Senat*), Mr Francisco José CONDE LÓPEZ (Spanish *Cortes Generales*), Mr Edward ZAMMIT LEWIS (Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*), Mr Heikki AUTTO (Finish *Eduskunta*), Ms Mirela FURTUNĂ (Romanian *Camera Deputaților*), Mr Alain CADEC (French *Sénat*), Mr Christian BUCHMANN (Austrian *Bundesrat*), Mr Telmo FARIA (Portuguese *Assembleia da República*), Ms Elvira KOVÁCS (Serbian *Narodna skupština*), Mr Burhan KAYATÜRK (Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*), Ms Ina COSERU (Moldovan *Parlamentul Republicii*), Ms Ivanna KLYMPUSH-TSINTSADZE (Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*), Ms Maka BOTCHORISHVILI (Georgian *Sakartvelos p'arlament'i*), Mr Igor ZDRAVKOVSKI (North Macedonian *Sobranie*), Ms Rrezarta KRASNIQI (Kosovan *Kuvendi i Kosovës*), Mr Milan RADIN (Serbian *Narodna skupština*), Mr Jovan SUBOTIĆ (Montenegrin *Skupština Crne Gore*), Mr Ismail Emrah KARAYEL (Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*), Mr Zdenko ČOSIĆ (Bosnian and Herzegovinian *Parlamentarna skupština*), Mr Hans-Peter PORTMANN (Swiss *Assemblée fédérale*).

CLOSING SESSION

Mr TESSELY ended by briefly summarising the topics raised during the day, and thanked delegations for having participated personally in the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC. He invited delegations to the LXXII COSAC, which will be held between 27 and 29 October 2024 in Budapest. Mr TESSELY concluded the meeting by also thanking parliamentary staff and interpreters for their work.