MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

Bratislava, Slovakia, 13 November 2016

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIR: Mr Ľuboš BLAHA, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Slovak *Národná rada*.

Mr Luciano BUSUTTIL, Chair of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, Mr Francis ZAMMIT DIMECH, Member of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee, *Kamra tad-Deputati*, Mr Bastiaan VAN APELDOORN, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Mr Malik AZMANI, Chair of the Committee for European Affairs, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*; 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 meeting of the LVI COSAC meeting
3. Presentation of the key findings of the 26th Bi-annual Report of COSAC
4. Debate on the draft Contribution of the LVI COSAC meeting
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 Ľuboš BLAHA welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika") and especially Mr Bastiaan VAN APELDOORN participating for the first time in a Troika meeting.

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 LVI COSAC

Mr BLAHA gave a brief outline of the programme of the LVI COSAC meeting, and informed the Troika members that the next day he would suggest opening the meeting observing one minute's silence in honour of the victims of the terrorist attacks that had taken place in Paris the year before.

The LVI COSAC would focus on five topics four of which would be debated under the guidance of a moderator:

- Session 1: State of Play of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union;
- Session 2: Strengthening the role of national parliaments in the EU;
- Session 3: The Translantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP): a trade agreement between the European Union and the United States (and its challenges, opportunities and risks);

- Session 4: 2016: Energy Union's "year of delivery";
- Session 5: Securing the external borders of the EU in the context of irregular migration.

While briefly mentioning the speakers under each session, he informed the Troika that Mr Fabrice LEGGERI, Executive Director of FRONTEX, and Mr Dimitris AVRAMOPOULOS, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, who had been invited as keynote speakers, were unable to participate due to urgent obligations. He added that the Slovak Presidency, following the example of the Dutch Presidency, introduced moderators under the sessions on the programme.

Expressing the Dutch delegation's satisfaction with the draft programme, Mr AZMANI welcomed the two discussion notes prepared by the Presidency in advance of the meeting. He also suggested that COSAC should try to monitor the negotiations on Brexit closely, considering its implications for the EU. Addressing the Maltese Presidency, he expressed the hope that future Presidency Parliaments would continue to incorporate the topic of Brexit on the meeting's programme with the aim of sharing information. He also encouraged the continuation of increased interaction during interparliamentary conferences, especially by maintaining a link between the Bi-annual Report and the programme of COSAC. Finally, he supported working on improving the practical cooperation in the context of the "yellow card" and sharing of national Parliaments' political priorities from the Commission work programme.

Mr BUSUTTIL confirmed that Brexit would be one of the main topics on the programme of the LVII COSAC under the Maltese Presidency in May 2017.

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

3. Presentation of the key findings of the 26th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Mr BLAHA invited the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, Ms Christiana FRYDA, to give an outline of the presentation of the 26th Bi-annual Report of COSAC, which was based on Parliaments' replies to the related questionnaire circulated to delegations on 29 July 2016 with a deadline of 9 September 2016 for submitting replies.

Ms FRYDA briefly referred to the three chapters of the 26th Bi-annual Report of COSAC. The first one dealt with the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the European Union and the United States and the parliamentary scrutiny of the negotiation process; the second one focused on 2016 the Energy Union's "year of delivery"; and the third one concentrated on improving the role of national Parliaments.

4. Debate on the draft Contribution of the LVI COSAC meeting

The draft text of the contributions was, as Mr BLAHA explained, circulated to delegations on 31 October 2016 in English and on 4 November in French. Amendments received from delegations were, together with the initial text of the draft Contribution and a number of compromise proposals elaborated by the Presidency, included in a table that was submitted to the Troika.

Following a detailed examination of each amendment proposed paragraph by paragraph, the Troika, on the basis of the Presidency's compromise proposals, drafted a modified text of the Contribution to be presented to the Chairpersons of COSAC the following day.

5. Letters received by the Presidency

The Chair referred to the following letters:

- Letter from Mr Jean-Charles ALLA VENA, Head of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Mr Christophe STEINER, Speaker of the National Council of the Principality of Monaco, regarding participation at COSAC. After consultation with the Troika, a letter of invitation had been sent out.
- Letter from Mr Pedro AGRAMUNT, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), regarding participation at COSAC. After consultation with the Troika, a letter of invitation had been sent out.
- Letter from Mr Kalle PALLING, Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee of the Estonian *Riigikogu*, regarding the informal consultations of the European Union Affairs Committees of the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish Parliaments held in Tallinn on 8-9 September 2016.
- Letter from Mr Ondřej BENEŠIK, Chair of the Committee for European Affairs of the Czech *Polanecká sněmovna* on the conclusions of the Meeting of the European Affairs Committees of the Visegrad Group countries held in Velehrad on 3 October 2016.
- Letter from Mr Vannino CHITI, Chair of the Committee on EU policies of the Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, on the feasibility of a visit of COSAC members in Italy to raise awareness on the challenge of migration.

With regard to the latter, the Chair stated that it was difficult for any national Parliament to organise such a visit outside the territory of its own country and that he would propose that the Italian Parliament organise it; this could be administratively supported by the COSAC Secretariat.

6. Any other business

No other business.