

Courtesy Translation

31 October 2018

Dear Colleagues,

Our colleague Kristian Vigenin has presented a proposal for the next COSAC meeting, suggesting amendment of the Rules of Procedure through the addition of a new paragraph 3.2a. In line with this amendment, two members of the Parliaments of each potential candidate country, EFTA country and Eastern Partnership partner country would in principle be invited as observers to the meetings. The amendment allows the invitation to be withdrawn on a case by case basis.

We welcome the intensification of cooperation with third states. However, in view of current practice, we do not believe that an amendment to the Rules of Procedure is necessary. Paragraph 3.3 of the COSAC Rules of Procedure allows members from other Parliaments to be invited as observers. Over the past years, COSAC has regularly taken advantage of this option, increasingly often using it independently of the topics under deliberation, and has frequently also allowed observers to participate actively in debates.

The proposal which has been presented here would, however, move from the exception-to-the-rule principle currently enshrined in the Rules of Procedure to the principle of such invitations being the rule. Additionally, the use of the wording “potential candidate country” and the fact that invitations would not be issued on a case by case basis raise questions. Furthermore, in view of the practice of such observers being allowed to participate actively in meetings, there are concerns that the time available to the participants in the meetings for deliberation, which is already barely sufficient, would be further reduced. This would then raise the question as to whether COSAC would be able to adequately exercise the powers conferred on it by the Treaty of Lisbon.

We therefore oppose amending the Rules of Procedure. In addition, efforts to increase the efficiency of deliberations could be boosted by requests to speak from observers being taken into account depending on the topic on the agenda and in proportion to the speaking time allocated for remarks from the members of COSAC.

Yours sincerely,

Sgd.

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Chairwoman of the
Committee on European Affairs
of the French National Assembly

Gunther KRICHBAUM,
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Committee on European Affairs
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