

Toast by His Excellency the President of the House of Representatives
Mr Yiannakis L. Omirou, at the dinner in honour of participants at the 48th COSAC
“Chateau Status” restaurant, Nicosia 14 October 2012, at 20.00

Honourable Representatives of EU National Parliaments and the European Parliament,
Dear Friends,

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to welcome you once again to Cyprus. I wish you all a productive conference, a pleasant stay in Cyprus, and I hope that, in the very short time of your stay here, you will have the opportunity to enjoy at least some aspects of Cypriot culture and civilisation.

This evening's dinner is being held at a very special place, which, owing to its location, is for us Cypriots a constant reminder of the continuing occupation of part of the territory of our country. This spot is just a step away from the ceasefire line which divides our homeland by force and is under the responsibility of the United Nations.

Across the street, is the historic Ledra Palace Hotel, whose life is interwoven with the history of Cyprus and constitutes a point of reference, a 'place of division' of the two communities, but also a 'place of unification', a place where countless mediation meetings have taken place in an effort to find a settlement to the Cyprus problem, as well as a venue for bi-communal events. Since 1974, the hotel is being used as accommodation and offices for members of the UN Peace Keeping Force.

Dear Friends,

I have stated on numerous occasions that undertaking the Presidency of the Council of the European Union is a historic challenge for our small island. I have no doubt that we will be able to successfully fulfil the obligations which stem from our capacity as presiding country and to effectively promote the policies and objectives of the EU, always to the benefit of European citizens.

This COSAC meeting is the fourth conference that has been held in the framework of the parliamentary dimension of the Cyprus Presidency. These meetings included the first Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy, which took place about a month ago in Paphos with great success and set into motion an important mechanism of European inter-parliamentary cooperation in these vital fields, as recorded in the relevant Conclusions adopted.

I am aware of the important work you perform in the framework of COSAC meetings and I am certain that the results of this Conference will be as significant as those of previous events. You will have an opportunity to be informed and exchange views on the priorities of the Cyprus Presidency, on developments in the EU and other issues, such as Energy and Security of Energy Supply, the Single Market and Governance, as well as the highly important matter of the Europe 2020 Strategy-Recovery from the Economic Crisis.

Particularly on this last matter:

In this very turbulent period of recession that we meet, directly representing the will of our citizens, we have a highly important role to fulfil: a role that relates to the creation of anthropocentric policies, which will secure social justice and cohesion, as well as solidarity through partnership, mutual respect and understanding.

Allow me, dear friends, to express once again my pleasure at your presence here and to raise a toast to the further strengthening of our cooperation, for the good of all citizens of our great European family.

