



Outline of the COSAC 17th Bi-Annual Report

Chapter 1 – Information flow to and from Parliaments

Whilst access to information and documentation from EU institutions has traditionally been important for parliamentary scrutiny, the exchange of information between Parliaments is becoming increasingly common, and indeed essential, as a result of the strengthened role of Parliaments in the Treaty of Lisbon. An analysis of the various mechanisms and tools employed by Parliaments to gather and disseminate information should therefore focus on information received and/or shared by each Parliament/Chamber.

The first chapter of the 17th Bi-Annual Report of COSAC will be divided into two sections. The first section will examine the various documents and databases available to Parliaments/Chambers – either from governments, directly from EU institutions or via European interparliamentary information networks. A questionnaire will be distributed which will gather specific empirical information concerning the different types of documents and databases that are available to each Parliament/Chamber.

The second section will analyse how information published on IPEX¹ is accessed and used by Parliamentary users. Specific focus will be given to the exchange of information on subsidiarity issues and on the political dialogue² in order to determine whether IPEX offers value-added information compared to other means of exchanging information.

Chapter 2 - Re-launch of the Single Market and Parliaments

In 2012 it is 20 years since the members of the European Union agreed on establishing a Single Market with the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital. Since 1992 the Single Market has not only strengthened

¹ IPEX is a webpage designed in 2000 for the exchange of information between the national Parliaments and the European Parliament on EU-issues – <http://www.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/home/home.do>

² These two areas are governed by common procedures which will allow for cross chamber comparisons.

the cooperation between the EU Member States, but has also increased growth and provided jobs across European borders. The Single Market is however not complete. There is a lot of untapped potential because the Single Market has not been a political priority during the last ten years³. In October 2010 the Commission announced a re-launch of the Single Market not only to stimulate much needed economic growth, but also to reinforce citizens' and companies' confidence in the functioning of the Single Market. For this purpose the Commission presented 50 different ideas ranging from increasing European competitiveness in a global market to creating a more business-friendly environment⁴. Following a public consultation on these 50 projects, the Commission presented in April 2011 twelve concrete actions for strengthening the Single Market⁵. The Commission hopes to gain final approval of the proposals under the 12 key actions from the European Parliament and the Council before the end of 2012 thereby marking the twentieth anniversary of the Single Market.

The second chapter of the Bi-Annual Report will primarily analyse the involvement of Parliaments/Chambers in the process of re-launching the Single Market from two different angles. On one hand there will be a practical focus, as it will be interesting to learn about the different ways the Commission's key actions have been discussed in Parliaments/Chambers and whether conferences, hearings, etc. have been conducted in order to prioritise the Single Market actions. On the other hand the questionnaire will also ask about the political aspects of the Parliaments'/Chambers' prioritising of the 12 key actions from the Commission on the re-launch of the Single Market and which issues Parliaments/Chambers have especially focused on during political debates. Lastly the questionnaire will ask questions related specifically to the agenda of the XLVII COSAC meeting on 23-24 April 2012 for the purpose of facilitating a good debate.

³ "A new strategy for the Single Market - At the service of Europe's economy and society" by Mario Monti, May 2010 - http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/pdf/monti_report_final_10_05_2010_en.pdf

⁴ "Towards a Single Market Act - For a highly competitive social market economy - 50 proposals for improving our work, business and exchanges with one another" COM (2010) 608 - <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0608:REV1:EN:PDF#page=2>

⁵ "Single Market Act - Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence" COM (2011) 206 - <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0206:FIN:EN:PDF>