

CONTRIBUTION OF THE XLV COSAC

Budapest, 29-31 May 2011

1. The way to recovery: Economic governance, Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Semester

1.1. COSAC supports the efforts of the European Union institutions to strengthen economic coordination within the European Union for the sake of faster recovery of the European economy and sustainable growth.

1.2. COSAC affirms that the package of six legislative proposals on economic governance is essential to ensure fiscal discipline and to avoid excessive macroeconomic imbalances as stated in the conclusions of the European Council of 24-25 March 2011. Therefore COSAC invites all EU institutions concerned to take each necessary measure in order to adopt the above mentioned proposals by June 2011. In this respect, COSAC highly appreciates the efforts of the Presidency-in-office to find a compromise between the EU institutions.

1.3. COSAC invites the Governments of EU Members States to facilitate the involvement of Parliaments in the European Semester, in order to ~~guarantee-respect~~ the budgetary powers of Parliaments. COSAC reaffirms that Parliaments intend to actively participate in this new initiative using their traditional means of parliamentary involvement.

1.4. ~~COSAC welcomes the initiative of a possible annual interparliamentary conference on budget and calls on the EU institutions to actively contribute to the substantial discussion to be held in this framework.~~

1.5. COSAC ~~acknowledges notes~~ the recent efforts of ~~the eurozone, joined by several non-eurozone Member States, that resulted in the Euro Plus Pact~~ aiming for closer cooperation in the economic and fiscal and monetary policy fields, and ~~urges-invites~~ all Member States to ~~exploit~~ examine the possibilities for closer cooperation provided by the Treaties with special respect to the internal market.

Kommentar [A.M.1]: Budgetary prerogatives are guaranteed by constitutional arrangements. The European Semester represents just a form of closer economic cooperation. Involvement of Parliaments in this framework does not guarantee budgetary powers. It is the other way round. Budgetary powers must be respected by the European Semester.

Kommentar [J.K.2]: We do not think that COSAC should welcome an initiative that is not even on the drawing board. The idea of a budget conference is very unclear, with agenda and aim undefined.

Kommentar [J.K.3]: There has been no recent change in monetary policymaking in the EU. Therefore, we suggest deleting the word "monetary".

Kommentar [J.K.4]: We think that this paragraph needs to be more specific. It is unclear what it refers to. Is it the Euro Plus Pact? If so, it should be mentioned.

2. Parliamentary scrutiny of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and the common security and defence policy (CSDP)

2.1. COSAC welcomes the ongoing discussion in the framework of the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments concerning the future of parliamentary scrutiny of CFSP and CSDP and notes with satisfaction the progress achieved during the Brussels Speakers' Conference.

COSAC considers that the conclusions adopted at this meeting constitute a good starting point for future debates and final decisions concerning the parliamentary scrutiny of CFSP and CSDP.

2.2. COSAC notes that following the termination of the WEU Parliamentary Assembly a framework for the parliamentary scrutiny of CFSP and CSDP should be found in conformity with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty.

2.3. Hence COSAC requests all concerned institutions, with special regard to the European External Action Service, to cooperate closely with Parliaments and properly inform them on developments in the policy fields of CFSP and CSDP in order to fulfil the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon.

3. The State of the Union

3.1. In accordance with the Preamble of the Treaty on the European Union COSAC underlines that the Treaty of Lisbon marks a new stage in the process of European integration undertaken with the establishment of the European Communities.

3.2. COSAC welcomes its first debate on the State of the Union in its framework. It invites the European Commission to take the findings into consideration when elaborating its own evaluation of the State of the Union and also when preparing the Commission Work Programme

3.3. With respect to the further developments within the European Union, COSAC underlines the importance of better communication with the citizens of the EU, not exclusively, but also by means of communicating the European Union through the Parliaments.

4. Cooperation with the institutions of the European Union

4.1. COSAC welcomes the openness and close cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Commission as well as the European Parliament respectively established in the framework of the Treaty of Lisbon.

4.2. COSAC welcomes the active work of national Parliaments in scrutinizing the subsidiarity principle according to Protocol 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon. National Parliaments have adopted different points of views concerning the practical implementation of the subsidiarity checks. COSAC considers that the existing practices and the experiences on the application of the Protocol 2 should be shared by Parliaments and EU institutions and the application of Protocol 2 should be clarified further on by means of continuous dialogue between all concerned stakeholders.

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CONCLUSIONS OF THE XLV COSAC

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1. *(to be confirmed upon adoption)* COSAC welcomes the adoption of its amended Rules of Procedure, with the changes bringing the Rules of Procedure in line with the Treaty of Lisbon. COSAC appreciates the constructive efforts made by all delegations to reach this important agreement. The amendment to the Rules of Procedure of COSAC, as it was agreed during the XLV COSAC in Budapest, is attached to these Conclusions. The COSAC Secretariat is asked to prepare its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.
2. COSAC calls upon the upcoming Presidencies to continue the debate on the tabled substantial amendments of the Rules of Procedure of COSAC in view of reaching agreement on them in the near future.
3. COSAC thanks the Belgian Presidency of the Conference of Speakers of the EU Parliaments for presenting a report on the last Conference held on 4-5 April 2011 in Brussels and expresses its support for the work done in the framework of the Conference of Speakers seeking a consensual solution to the establishment of the mechanism for parliamentary scrutiny of common foreign and security policy, including common security and defence policy.
4. COSAC agrees to hold an annual general policy debate during its ordinary meeting in the first semester of the year, thus allowing the Contribution of COSAC to be presented in time to feed into the preparations for the State of the Union speech and the Commission Work Programme for the following year. The President or a Vice-President of the Commission should be invited to take part in the debate.
5. COSAC also agrees that the presentation of the Commission's Work Programme for the following year by the President or a Vice-President of the Commission should take place during the ordinary meeting of COSAC in the second semester of the year, after the publication of the Programme. Therefore, when fixing the date of the meeting, COSAC Presidencies are invited to take into account the time of the publication of the Commission's Work Programme. The agenda of the ordinary meeting of COSAC in the second semester of the year may also include an assessment of the Commission's activities in the course of the year.
6. The decision on the Commission's initiatives to be debated in the framework of COSAC should preferably be made at the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC in the first semester of the year. As a result,

Parliaments would have the opportunity to inform each other about their intention to scrutinize EU draft legislative acts, in particular those which may raise subsidiarity concerns.

7. COSAC recalls that the term in office of the current Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat expires on 31 December 2011. COSAC underlines that the appointment of the new Permanent Member should take place during the XLVI COSAC, therefore, the financial framework for the following two years, i.e. 2012-2013 should be agreed among the participating Parliaments as soon as possible.
8. COSAC also recalls that the present co-financing of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and the costs of running the office and website of COSAC will end on 31 December 2011. COSAC welcomes the (...) letters of intent of national Parliaments and parliamentary Chambers expressing their commitment for the co-financing for the following two years, i.e. 2012-2013. Furthermore, COSAC welcomes the fact that the threshold of a minimum of the national Parliaments of 14 Member States has been reached. COSAC calls upon the remaining Parliaments and parliamentary Chambers to renew their commitment for the co-financing.
9. COSAC welcomes the 15th Bi-annual Report prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and warmly thanks the Secretariat for its excellent work. The Report provides comprehensive information on the parliamentary developments with regard to the Europe 2020 Strategy, economic governance, the European Semester and the Commission Work Programme 2012.