MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE XLIII COSAC
Madrid, 31 May - 1 June 2010

AGENDA:

1. Opening session by Mr Miguel ARIAS CAÑETE, Chair of the *Cortes Generales* Joint Committee for the European Union:

- Adoption of the agenda of the XLIII COSAC Meeting;
- Welcome address by Mr José BONO MARTÍNEZ, Speaker of the Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados;*
- Address by Mr José Luis RODRÍGUEZ ZAPATERO, Prime Minister of Spain;
- Debate with Mr Diego LÓPEZ GARRIDO, Secretary of State for EU Affairs of Spain.

2. The future role of COSAC after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, in view of the 13th Bi-annual Report

Speakers:
Mr Jean BIZET, Senator for *la Manche* (Lower Normandy) and Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the French *Sénat;*
Mr Juan MOSCOSO DEL PRADO HERNÁNDEZ, Deputy for Navarre and Socialist Party Group Spokesperson before the Spanish *Cortes Generales'* Joint Committee for the European Union.

3. Conclusions of the Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the European Union
Speaker: Mr Per WESTERBERG, Speaker of the Swedish *Riksdag*

4. The political priorities of the new European Commission
Speaker: Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President of the European Commission

5. The new model for relations between the national Parliaments and the European Parliament after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon
Speakers:
Mr Elmar BROK, Member of the European Parliament,
Mr José María GIL-ROBLES Y GIL-DELGADO, former Member of the European Parliament and former President of the European Parliament,
Mr Vitalino CANAS, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Portuguese *Assembleia da República*,
Ms Ankie BROEKERS-KNOL, Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee for European Co-operation Organisations of the Dutch *Eerste Kamer*

6. Adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLIII COSAC

PROCEEDINGS:

1. Opening session of the XLIII COSAC

Mr Miguel ARIAS CAÑETE, Chair of the *Cortes Generales´* Joint Committee for the European Union, welcomed all the participants in the meeting and expressed his condolences on the death of the Polish President and his delegation in the air accident at Smolensk in April 2010.

The Chairman then proposed the modification of the draft agenda of the XLIII COSAC, due to the absence of Mr GONZÁLEZ MÁRQUEZ. With the announced changes included, the agenda was approved.

Mr José BONO MARTÍNEZ, Speaker of the Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados*, welcomed the Members of COSAC and stressed the need to simplify decision-making procedures in the EU and to increase the efficiency of its bureaucracy. In this context, COSAC may serve as a useful link between the EU and the European citizens.

Mr José Luis RODRÍGUEZ ZAPATERO, Prime Minister of Spain, defined the role of the Spanish Presidency of the EU, in line with the pro-European spirit which had defined the Spanish position towards the EU since 1986. The main objectives of this Spanish Presidency had been the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon and the strengthening of the joint actions towards European economic governance, in the current context of economic crisis. The Prime Minister concluded his presentation by underlining the role of national Parliaments in defining a single European path with a national perspective.

Mr ARIAS CAÑETE congratulated the new Chairs of the Committees on European Affairs: Mr BIZET (the French *Sénat*); Mr HÖRCSIK (the Hungarian *Országgyűlés*); Mr DIMECH (the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati)*. He also thanked the departing colleagues: Mr HAENEL (the French *Sénat*), Mr FRENDO (the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*) and Mr WAALKENS (the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*).

In the ensuing debate different topics were raised, such as the economic crisis and the measures being taken by the Council, especially in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy; the institutional scheme of the EU; the European citizens' initiative; the energy policies in the EU and the problems which FRONTEX entails.

Debate with Mr Diego LÓPEZ GARRIDO, Secretary of State for EU Affairs

Mr LÓPEZ GARRIDO addressed the measures being taken within the EU to tackle the economic crisis, which are intended to solve the present situation and at the same time to reinforce European economic policies in the future. The EU is indeed a Monetary Union, but the EMU (Economic and Monetary Union) agreed upon in Maastricht has not developed into an Economic Union, whose achievement has been the main objective of the Spanish Presidency. Mr LÓPEZ GARRIDO considered the need to foster European debates on relevant issues, in order to increase citizens' interest in EU affairs. As to the topic of energy policies, the Secretary of State underlined the lack of physical infrastructure, needed to implement a common energy policy in the EU. The Spanish Presidency had also focused on immigration issues, where FRONTEX and the maritime security in European areas had been reinforced.

In the following set of questions, the Israeli military operation against the flotilla that morning was mentioned and a full and impartial inquiry was demanded into those events. Other issues raised were the need to update the Growth and Stability Pact and the oversight of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Euro-Asian relationship and the EU's tax capacity.

Mr LÓPEZ GARRIDO asserted that, while the Lisbon Strategy contained mere recommendations, the Europe 2020 Strategy refers to five specific objectives, which will be looked into by the "task force" presided by Mr VAN ROMPUY, the President of the

European Council. The key to European economic governance lies in the ambition of these objectives.

In the last set of questions addressed to the Secretary of State, the following topics were mentioned: the situation in Greece and the measures taken by the ECOFIN; the debate on the seat of the European Parliament; the need for an EU solution to the economic crisis, given the insufficiency of national approaches; the need for a policy of incentives, rather than one of sanctions; the possibility of submitting draft national budgets to the European Commission; common goals in climate change; the discrimination of Roma people in the EU; the situation in Ukraine and the EU-Eastern Partnership.

The Secretary of State condemned the Israeli military operation against the flotilla and, at the same time, demanded an inquiry into those events. As to the economic crisis, the main aim of the Spanish Presidency had been the stability of the Eurozone and the need to sustain the social model in the EU. All economic measures should, however, respect the budgetary sovereignty of Member States. Regarding the discrimination of the Roma people, he recalled the importance of the Directive against discrimination and the Summit held in Córdoba, Spain, in April 2010 on this specific issue.

2. The future role of COSAC after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, in view of the Thirteenth Bi-annual Report

Speakers:
Mr Jean BIZET, Senator for *la Manche* (Lower Normandy) and Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the French *Sénat*;
Mr Juan MOSCOSO DEL PRADO HERNÁNDEZ, Deputy for Navarre and Socialist Party Group Spokesperson before the *Cortes Generales'* Joint Committee for the European Union

1. Introductions

Firstly, reflecting on the impact of the Treaty of Lisbon on COSAC, Mr BIZET identified two substantial changes. On the one hand, COSAC's scope of activities has been widened as Article 10 of Protocol 1 on the role of national Parliaments in the European Union does not specify the tasks of COSAC, thus giving formal recognition to its generalist approach. On the other hand, COSAC is considered by the abovementioned article as a catalyst which is to enhance coordination amongst national Parliaments by means of e.g. organising "inter-parliamentary conferences on specific topics" such as, *inter alia*, the common foreign and security policy (henceforth "CFSP") and the common security and defence policy (henceforth "CSDP").

Secondly, the speaker ran through the outlines of the Thirteenth Bi-annual Report. In doing so, he was particularly struck by the overall satisfaction regarding the Conference's work, which allows its Members to exchange their best practices on a regular basis. Moreover, he shared the respondents' wish to avoid debates that are too general to allow for constructive discussions. However, he also learnt that the replies on the utility of a debate on the European Commission's Annual Policy Strategy were not conclusive due to incompatibilities between the publishing date of this document and the date at which the conference is organised.

As far as inter-parliamentary cooperation after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon is concerned, Mr BIZET was of the opinion that Protocol 1 on the role of national Parliaments in the European Union put the promotion of interparliamentary cooperation into COSAC's

hands. The speaker stressed that it should not be COSAC's but rather the national Parliaments' job to evaluate Eurojust and to monitor Europol, but COSAC must ensure that any texts are adopted as soon as possible, and after consultation with national Parliaments. Similarly, according to Mr BIZET, it is not part of COSAC' role to carry out any interparliamentary monitoring of the CSDP, but COSAC has to ensure that appropriate monitoring takes place. Indeed, after the Treaty of Lisbon COSAC must preserve and strengthen its traditional role of (1) holding a political dialogue with the executive institutions of the European Union, (2) adopting Contributions as results of its debates and (3) sharing information and best practices amongst the national Parliaments. Of course, this will not be possible if the adequate instruments are not provided for.

Mr Juan MOSCOSO DEL PRADO HERNÁNDEZ, Deputy for Navarre and Socialist Party Group Spokesperson before the *Cortes Generales'* Joint Committee for the European Union

Mr Juan MOSCOSO DEL PRADO HERNÁNDEZ was of the opinion that COSAC is at a crossroads. Indeed, on the one hand, the expertise the conference has acquired in the field of the subsidiarity checks has been successfully transferred to the national Parliaments. On the other hand, however, COSAC must be prevented from becoming a merely technical forum. In this context, the current format is adequate. Hence, Mr MOSCOSO put forward the following specific suggestions: (1) the President of the European Commission should be invited to COSAC on a regular basis in order to comment on his institution's initiatives, (2) in the COSAC Rules of Procedure, not only should the references to the presidential troika be substituted by the notion "presidential trio", but it should also be made clear that COSAC is an inter-parliamentary conference, (3) in the future, COSAC reports should only be written at the Presidency's request, (4) speaking time in COSAC meetings should be limited to three minutes although the Presidency should remain responsible for the practical organisation of debates and (5) the European institutions should be invited to respond to COSAC's Contribution. Finally, debates should only be organised on genuinely pan-European topics.

2. Debate

During the debate some Members expressed their support for Mr Bizet's main proposals (holding a political dialogue with the executive institutions of the European Union, adopting Contributions as results of its debates and sharing information and best practices amongst the national Parliaments).

Several Members considered that COSAC should no longer undertake subsidiarity checks on a regular basis, following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. The task of COSAC concerning subsidiarity checks had been transferred to national Parliaments as part of their daily work, according to some statements, even if checks could be done on a case-by-case basis within COSAC. A few Members expressed the view, however, that subsidiarity checks should continue, stating that the checks are important for their parliaments, and that the COSAC Secretariat should compile reports on them. Others stressed the importance of using the national representatives in Brussels in order to find a (formal) way of exchanging information. The important role of IPEX was also mentioned in this regard.

Some Members pointed out that COSAC is not only a platform for political discussions amongst EU Parliaments, but also a platform for discussions between national Parliaments and the EU Institutions. A few Members expressed support for a political dialogue between EU institutions and national Parliaments on a limited number of priority issues, as mentioned

by Mr BIZET. At the same time, some underlined the importance of avoiding duplication of work, especially with national Parliaments. In this context, the importance that COSAC should concentrate on specific EU draft acts was mentioned. A small number of Members warned, however, that debates and contributions on specific EU draft acts might lead towards creating a new institution, some sort of a "third chamber".

A number of Members considered it important for COSAC to discuss EU initiatives at a much earlier stage than it currently does, expressing views that COSAC could debate any EU initiative such as the Europe 2020 Strategy or EU monitoring of national budgets. Several participants thought that a debate concerning the annual Work Programme of the European Commission is indispensable.

With regard to national Parliaments' specialised committees, many were of the opinion that they should debate EU matters more often, or in a better way. Concerning cooperation between specialised committees, a few Members supported the idea that they could be represented at COSAC meetings, while others would rather support increased cooperation between the specialised committees by organising interparliamentary meetings. Concerning the area of freedom, security and justice, in general, as well as Europol and Eurojust in particular, a few Members thought that the specialised committees of national Parliaments should be involved in the function of COSAC, without overlapping with existing institutions. Some Members expressed their support for Mr BIZET's opinion. Some Members underlined that the political monitoring of Europol, the evaluation of Eurojust's activities and the control of the CFSP and CSDP were obligations for national Parliaments and their respective specialised committees rather than COSAC.

Mr Povilas Vytenis ANDRIUKAITIS (the Lithuanian *Seimas*), stated that after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, national Parliaments should pay more attention to EU matters and therefore he suggested that a European week should be organised in each Chamber/Parliament. This proposal was supported by other Members during the debate.

3. Conclusions of the Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the European Union
Speaker: Mr Per WESTERBERG, Speaker of the Swedish *Riksdag*

Mr Per WESTERBERG, Speaker of the Swedish *Riksdag* and the then President of the Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the European Union, presented the conclusions of the annual Speakers' Conference which was held in the *Riksdag* on 14 - 15 May 2010.

Mr WESTERBERG informed COSAC that the main focus of this Speakers' Conference was the consequences of the Treaty of Lisbon for the EU Parliaments. In addition, the Conference revised its Guidelines, adopted their new version (the Stockholm Guidelines) and debated the issue of "new technologies and communication - challenges for parliamentary work".

The Speaker of the Swedish *Riksdag* focused his attention on the topic of the Speakers' Conference related to the Treaty of Lisbon and interparliamentary cooperation. He underlined the responsibility of the Speakers' Conference to oversee the coordination of EU interparliamentary activities. He noted that the Speakers considered it essential that national Parliaments were in a position to make full use of the possibilities granted by the Treaty of Lisbon, whilst respecting their constitutional rules and parliamentary traditions. Mr WESTERBERG informed COSAC that the debate on the consequences for parliamentary cooperation was held mainly on the basis of the following three topics:

- the European Commission and national Parliaments;
- fora for interparliamentary cooperation; and
- challenges and expectations for future interparliamentary cooperation.

As to the first topic, which was introduced by Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice President of the European Commission, the Speakers stressed the Commission's efforts to engage national Parliaments in political dialogue as well as recently increased contacts between the Commission and national Parliaments. Both were considered vital for the general parliamentary scrutiny of EU matters.

As to the topic on fora for interparliamentary cooperation, Mr WESTERBERG reported that the Speakers underlined the need for efficiency and for identifying the most appropriate fora for debating a particular issue or task, avoiding duplication of efforts and waste of time. In this context, the Speakers stressed the importance of developing established structures.

As regards national Parliaments' new evaluation and monitoring tasks in the area of freedom, security and justice, the Speakers supported COSAC's request that the EU institutions should enter into dialogue with national Parliaments when drafting and negotiating regulations dealing with parliamentary oversight of Eurojust and Europol. The Speakers also stressed the need to give national Parliaments' specialised committees a possibility to express their views, as effective scrutiny often requires expert competence.

As to the role of COSAC, the Speakers noted that Protocol 1 annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon opens up the possibility for a discussion concerning the future role and membership of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs. The Speakers agreed that the new provisions imply a more general approach to interparliamentary cooperation than before.

According to Mr WESTERBERG, a valuable contribution and role for COSAC could involve focusing on EU and government scrutiny and general trends in parliamentary work regarding EU matters, as well as the exchange of information and best practices. However, he was of the opinion that political debates on specific issues were best held at meetings or other contacts involving relevant specialised committees.

In a short debate following the presentation, Mr Miguel Ángel MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ, Vice-President of the European Parliament, welcomed the results of the Speakers' Conference as very useful to COSAC, especially in shaping its future role. Ms Anna KINBERG BATRA, Chairperson of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Swedish *Riksdag*, noted that EU affairs should be a domestic policy, thus also involving specialised committees. She called for real debates at COSAC, including on its future role which had not been clearly outlined as yet. Therefore, Ms KINBERG BATRA called on the incoming Belgian Presidency, *inter alia,* to hold a debate on extending cooperation between parliamentary specialised committees.

4. The political priorities of the new European Commission
Speaker: Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President of the European Commission

Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of the inter-institutional relations and administration, started his speech by mentioning the economic crisis and the fiscal problems, which had forced the European Union to take measures in order to avoid a repetition of the Great Depression. According to the Vice-President, the previous week the Eurozone had faced a new threat which could have severe consequences.

The Vice-President continued by explaining that one of the main challenges now was to use the full potential of the Treaty of Lisbon. The Commission's political priorities had been drafted accordingly with this challenge in mind. These included a number of innovations with, amongst others, 34 strategic initiatives that would be published by December 2010.

Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ continued by presenting the following priorities:
1) development of a sustainable vision for 2020, amongst others in the fields of energy and transport;
2) reform of the internal market, in view of the report by Professor MONTI;
3) creation of a platform on poverty, emphasising inclusion through employment;
4) an action plan for the implementation of the Stockholm Programme;
5) a debate on the sustainability of the pensions;
6) creation of the European External Action Service;
7) EU budget review.

In the longer term:
8) the optimisation of the European industry and the reduction of emissions;
9) the development of the citizens' initiative;
10) the introduction of new reinforced co-operation.

Concerning this last point the Vice-President stated that presently the Commission is confronted with three obstacles, namely the problems associated with not always reliable figures from the Eurostat, the lack of anti-speculation instruments and of respect for the Stability and Growth Pact.

Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ concluded his presentation with some remarks concerning the framework agreement between the European Commission and the European Parliament, which will be concluded in full conformity with the Treaties.

During the debate a number of statements focused on the economic and financial crisis. The need for a sense of responsibility on the part of Member States concerning compliance with the Stability and Growth Pact was emphasised, but also possibilities for control and sanctions were mentioned. The Members stressed the need to develop early-warning mechanisms for the future. In addition, the role of the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and rating agencies in the current economic and financial crisis was discussed.

Many Members mentioned the Europe 2020 Strategy as a potentially very useful instrument, but which would need a more direct link to the citizens. The role of national Parliaments and their increased involvement, through national plans, were also emphasised by some Members. The very strict timetable established for this strategy could also create a problem in this regard. Another element that was emphasised was the need for quantifiable objectives, in order to have a thorough evaluation.

Another aspect that was mentioned several times by the Members was the importance of the recognition and further development of the EU regional strategies, namely the Baltic Sea Strategy, the Danube Strategy and the Strategy for the Mediterranean.

Several statements concerned the implementation of the Stockholm Programme, expressing concerns that the Programme's security aspects would overshadow its freedom aspects.

Hence, the need for close collaboration between the two Commissioners in charge was emphasised.

5. The new model for relations between the national Parliaments and the European Parliament after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon

Speakers:

Mr Elmar BROK, Member of the European Parliament;

Mr José María GIL-ROBLES Y GIL-DELGADO, former Member of the European Parliament and former President of the European Parliament;

Mr Vitalino CANAS, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Portuguese *Assembleia da República*;

Ms Ankie BROEKERS-KNOL, Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee for European Co-operation Organisations of the Dutch *Eerste Kamer*.

1. Introductions

Mr José María GIL-ROBLES Y GIL-DELGADO, former Member of the European Parliament and former President of the European Parliament, after recalling the three main roles of COSAC established in Article 10 of Protocol 1, stated, *inter alia*, that COSAC should promote the exchange of best practise between national Parliaments. Moreover, COSAC should promote the exchange of information, including in the pre-legislative stage (e.g. on consultation documents). Finally Mr GIL-ROBLES Y GIL-DELGADO underlined that COSAC should play the main role in the exchange of information between national Parliaments and the European Parliament for scrutinising the Council's intergovernmental cooperation activities, especially in the areas which had not yet been subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

Mr Vitalino CANAS, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Portuguese *Assembleia da República,* stated that COSAC meetings should be made a central forum of European interparliamentary cooperation and supported the reinforcement of coordination mechanisms under COSAC regarding the subsidiarity control. This would allow Parliaments a certain degree of planning and anticipation, internalising these tests in their scrutiny methodologies, and gauging in practice what added value is to be obtained from the exchange of information and good practice, with the Treaty of Lisbon in force.

Mr CANAS was of the opinion that the relationships between national Parliaments and the European Parliament must be streamlined, seeking a balance between these two dimensions: qualitative and quantitative. Moreover, future interparliamentary meetings should focus on specific draft legislative acts of mutual interest rather than on generic topics, whose usefulness and relevance to the scrutiny activities are difficult to envisage. Additionally, permanent networks of national counterpart committees could be developed, so as to establish communication channels enabling information on certain government bills that are deemed relevant to be exchanged between national Parliaments and the European Parliament at the earliest possible stage of the European decision-making process. A political dialogue could be thus established between national Parliaments and the European Parliament, particularly with regard to subsidiarity.

Ms Ankie BROEKERS-KNOL, Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee for European Co-operation Organisations of the Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, stressed that regarding the inter-parliamentary cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament in

COSAC, the discussions on legislation with a focus on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality should start at an early stage in a pre-legislative debate on selected proposals from the annual Work Programme of the Commission and be finalized in a post-legislative debate. Ms BROEKERS-KNOL was of the opinion that scrutiny of Europol and evaluation of Eurojust should take place in COSAC on a regular basis, preferably in the presence of Members of specialised committees of all Parliaments. However, COSAC should not hold discussions or organize extra conferences on CFSP, including CSDP, as there are specialized conferences for these policy areas, namely COFACC and CODAC. Starting up new conferences and consultations should be avoided as this would in all probability not contribute to the essential process of strengthening relations between national Parliaments and the European Parliament. IPEX and other forms of electronic communication are the answer. Ms BROEKERS-KNOL stated that we must never forget the reason for inter-parliamentary cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament, namely to reconnect the citizens of Europe with the European project.

Mr Elmar BROK, Member of the European Parliament, stated that the Treaty of Lisbon is the Treaty of Parliaments as it brings more democracy, more efficiency and much less bureaucracy. The division of competencies between national Parliaments and the European Parliament is now clear. While the European Parliament is an EU co-legislator, the national Parliaments have the right to intervene into the EU legislative process, to participate in the revision process of the Treaties and to bring actions before the EU Court of Justice on the grounds of infringement of the principle of subsidiarity by a legislative act.

Mr BROK stressed that checking subsidiarity is a technical issue and not a political one. The Member also pointed out that there was a grey zone in the Treaty of Lisbon concerning the EU's external policy, where 85 per cent of the external policy is outside the control of the European Parliament. Mr BROK stressed that at this point national Parliaments could play an important role by scrutinizing their governments' actions in this area. The question regarding the parliamentary scrutiny of CFSP, including CSDP would be defined jointly in the coming autumn. He suggested organising two interparliamentary meetings a year to oversee the actions and decisions of the Council in these areas.

Furthermore, Mr BROK confirmed that such exchange of information on political scrutiny is essential for national Parliaments. COSAC could examine how it works, including how EU legislation is implemented at the national level. The speaker underlined that as regards the "Early Warning Mechanism", national Parliaments were in need of a new pre-legislative and a new post-legislative method of cooperation that would take place at the parliamentary committee level. The key point for this was the creation of an automatic mechanism.

This mechanism should work on three levels:
- the committee level;
- the political group level;
- the interparliamentary level (including the Members of the European Parliament in the activities of national Parliaments, e.g. following the practice of the German *Bundestag* and the Dutch *Staten-Generaal*).

In this context, Mr BROK suggested that COSAC take into account good practice and reminded that the inter-institutional agreement cannot modify the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon, since the Treaties are the primary EU law.

2. Debate

During the debate many Members expressed the view that European and national Parliaments and the activities of Members of the European Parliament and Members of national Parliaments needed to be more and more complementary for a better scrutiny at European and national levels and for the best implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon with a view to creating an Interparliamentary Europe. An increasing role of the EU Political Family and Group meetings was also requested. For this COSAC should also play a complementary role for the national Parliaments in addition to IPEX as a tool for the exchange of information.

In particular, joint work of parliamentary committees on budgets at both national and EU levels was mentioned. It was suggested, *inter alia*, that the next Belgian Presidency of COSAC include the mid-term review of the EU budget as a point on the next COSAC agenda. In the same context, Mr Harm Evert WAALKENS, Chairperson of the Committee on European Affairs of the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, requested COSAC hold a debate on national accountability of EU funds.

COSAC welcomed the proposal by Mr Paulo RANGEL, Member of the European Parliament, on the so called "Agenda 27" aimed at creating an "annual parliamentary week", when simultaneously in all national Parliaments, Members of national Parliaments and Members of the European Parliament would debate the State of the European Union as well as some specific political issues, crucial for the EU citizens, such as the creation of a space of freedom, security and justice. In this context it was also underlined that, considering the present financial and economic situation, no more interparliamentary meetings were needed, but the existing ones had to be well prepared in advance and as efficient and productive as possible. Some Members suggested using video conferences if possible.

Other issues included the need to create a specialised parliamentary committees' network and the role of COSAC in national Parliaments' efforts to evaluate the compliance of EU draft legislative acts with the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality.

Furthermore, as regards the CFSP and CSDP, a large majority was in favour of further discussing the right venue for such parliamentary debates, including the role of COSAC. Thus, the discussion which had started based on the findings of the Thirteenth Bi-annual Report would be continued at the next ordinary meeting of COSAC during the incoming Belgian Presidency.

The four key speakers replied at the end of the debate. Mr BROK supported the idea of the annual parliamentary debate on the State of the EU, without creating big conferences. For Mr CANAS it was evident that the role of COSAC needed to be strengthened and the reflexion process on its future role needed to be continued during the Belgian Presidency. Ms BROEKERS-KNOL highlighted the need for more cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament to avoid growing euro-scepticism and citizens' disconnection from Europe. Finally, Mr GIL ROBLES Y GIL DELGADO called for mobilization of all Members of Parliament, considering that their cooperation within COSAC would not be enough.

Incoming COSAC Belgian Presidency and Proposals for subjects to be dealt with in 2010

Mr Herman DE CROO, Chairperson of the Belgian *Chambre des représentants,* presented the incoming Belgian Presidency of COSAC.

The meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC will take place on 4-5 July 2010 and the XLIV COSAC meeting will take place on 24-26 October 2010 in Brussels, with the participation of the President of the European Council Mr Herman VAN ROMPUY and the President of the European Commission Mr José Manuel BARROSO.

Mr DE CROO informed COSAC that parliamentary scrutiny of the CFSP and CSDP as well as the debate on the future role of COSAC would be on the agenda of the XLIV COSAC.

6. Adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLIII COSAC

After a debate on additional proposals for amendments from national Parliaments and the European Parliament, the Conference adopted the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLIII COSAC.