

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

11 September 2006

PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

Mr Jari Vilén (Finland, Eduskunta), in the Chair; Mr Werner Fasslabend (Austria, Nationalrat); Mr Matthias Wissmann (Germany, Bundestag) and Mr Willi Stächele (Germany, Bundesrat)

Apologies: Mr Jo Leinen (European Parliament).

AGENDA:

- 1) Agenda of the XXXVI COSAC (Helsinki, 19–21 November 2006)
 - including special quests for the XXXVI COSAC
- 2) State of play of the ongoing subsidiarity and proportionality check
- 3) Cofinancing of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat
- 4) Adoption of the outline of the 6th biannual report
- 5) Any other business

1. Agenda of the XXXVI COSAC

The Chairman, Mr Vilén, opened the meeting of the Presidential Troika by welcoming the delegations to Helsinki.

The Chairman introduced the proposed agenda for the plenary meeting of the XXXVI COSAC, to be held in Helsinki on 19–21 November, copies of which had been circulated to delegates in advance of the Troika meeting.

The Chairman informed the Troika that Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen had confirmed that he would participate at the XXXVI COSAC for the third item on the agenda. Commission Vice President Franco Frattini would also be available for the discussion on the theme of Justice and Home Affairs.

The Chairman reported that, in respect of the agenda item on Russia and the Northern Dimension, Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja would participate, and the Presidency proposed to invite a representative of the Russian Duma to speak and to invite representatives of the foreign affairs committees of the Icelandic, Norwegian and Ukrainian parliaments' foreign affairs committees to attend the session as special guests.

Mr Fasslabend proposed that the Russian representative should also be invited to attend on the first day of the meeting as a special guest. Mr Vilén promised to transmit the request.

The Chairman noted that letters concerning the agenda had been received from the delegations of the Dutch Senate¹ and Estonian Parliament². Mr Bernacki, speaking on behalf of Mr Leinen, tabled a

¹ <http://www.cosac.eu/upload/application/pdf/a570b139/cosacpresidencybriefsept.pdf>

proposal from the European Parliament to include an agenda item on "the role of the EU in the Middle East".

The Chairman proposed that the Middle East item should be raised during the question hour with Prime Minister Vanhanen, who would be informed about it in advance. The Estonian delegation had raised the question of postponement of the extension of the Schengen area, which was rumoured to have been deferred to the beginning of 2009: the Chairman proposed that members could discuss the issue with Commissioner Frattini following his intervention on JHA issues.

Reacting to the proposal from the Dutch Senate to include the question of the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights, the Chairman considered that, since the proposed accession would require a change to the existing treaties and would anticipate elements of the Constitutional Treaty, the issue was too sensitive to be treated in detail and at such short notice at the XXXVI COSAC in November. It could however be mentioned in the conclusions of the conference.

The Chairman further considered that the second request made by the Dutch Senate, namely the parliamentary scrutiny of European regulatory agencies, would need proper preparation and sufficient time. He proposed to postpone a substantive discussion to the forthcoming German and Portuguese Presidencies.

The Chairman's proposals for how to proceed were supported by Mr Wissmann and Mr Fasslabend.

There being no further proposals from the delegations, the Presidential Troika agreed to propose to the COSAC Chairpersons the draft agenda for the XXXVI COSAC in November in Helsinki as attached to these minutes.

2. State of play of the on going subsidiarity and proportionality check

The Chairman pointed out that this point on the agenda of the COSAC Chairpersons was meant as a reminder to delegations, and he foresaw no discussion arising. For the time being, only one report had been submitted (from the Polish Senate). The Chairman undertook to note this during the Chairpersons meeting.

3. Cofinancing of the COSAC Secretariat

The Presidency had tabled a note making a proposal for the future cofinancing of the permanent member of the COSAC secretariat. The Chairman introduced the note, stressing that it was based on the principle of the coalition of the willing, though the question remained as to how many chambers would be willing to participate in a cofinanced solution. The solution proposed would expand the number of the chambers who could put forward a suitable candidate.

Mr Wissmann responded to the Presidency's note with a letter³ proposing an idea of a small reflection group which would, if possible, prepare a final proposal to be submitted to the November COSAC meeting. Mr Wissmann thanked the Presidency for its initiative and expressed the view that it would be rather difficult to find a unanimous decision.

The Troika agreed to propose the establishment of a reflection group at official level in which all Troika parliaments would participate. Other COSAC parliaments would also be invited to participate. The group would prepare a proposal to be submitted to the COSAC meeting in November. The Chairman noted that the Eduskunta's Extranet service could be used to facilitate the online work of the reflection group.

² <http://www.cosac.eu/upload/application/pdf/a570b139/schengenincosacagenda.pdf>

³ <http://www.cosac.eu/upload/application/pdf/a570b139/briefwissmannanvilen.pdf>

4. Adoption of the outline of the 6th bi-annual report

The Chairman noted that an outline of the bi-annual report had been sent out by the secretariat in advance. Once the Troika had approved the outline, the questionnaire would be sent to delegations immediately after the Chairpersons meeting. The topics had been selected to correspond to the Presidency's priorities and to take into account requests made either by individual national parliaments or the Conference of EU Speakers.

The outline on the 6th bi-annual report was approved without discussion.

5. Any other business

There being no other business, Mr Vilén closed the meeting.