

COPY OF LETTER AWAITING SIGNATURE

**Letter from Lord Grenfell and Jimmy Hood to
Vydas Gedvilas Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs
Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania**

Thank you very much for your letter of 27 September concerning the decision adopted by the representatives of Committees on European Affairs of the parliaments of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Sejm of Poland at their second meeting held on 13 September 2005 in Birštonas (Lithuania).

The representatives of the Committees asked the Presidency to invite the delegation of the Committee on European Integration of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the XXXIV COSAC meeting to be held on 9-11 October 2005 in London, so it could present information about the political situation in Ukraine and the European integration aspirations of Ukraine.

The Presidency is very grateful to the Committees of the parliaments of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Sejm of Poland for their assiduous and considered efforts to ensure that COSAC plays its part in encouraging the continued democratisation of Ukraine, a matter where we are all agreed. We are sorry to say, however, that the Presidency is not presently in a position to accede to your request for the reasons set out below.

You will recall that the question of the issue of invitations to “Special Guests” was discussed by the meeting of COSAC Chairpersons in July. The Chairpersons agreed to recommend that representatives from states not Member States of the EU and not candidate or accession states could be invited to attend COSAC on a case-by-case basis, if there is was an item on the agenda of definite clear interest to them.

The Minutes of the meeting record:

Lord Grenfell concluded that there was agreement among the chairpersons that under COSAC’s current Rules of Procedure COSAC presidencies could, after consulting the Presidential Troika, issue invitations to the national parliament of Ukraine, COSAP, CALRE or other outside institutions to participate in COSAC meetings as special guests if there was an item on the

agenda of definite clear interest to them. It would be important to consider invitations on a case-by-case basis. Lord Grenfell further concluded that there was agreement among the chairpersons that COSAC should avoid a permanent list of special guests, which would be inflexible. It was therefore important for Presidential Troikas to give particular attention in the future to the issue of special guests. The chairpersons agreed to recommend to COSAC that Article 4 of COSAC's Rules of Procedure should not be amended, because it already gave presidencies the necessary flexibility regarding special guests.

It therefore falls to the Presidency to consult the troika if the Presidency wishes to issue an invitation such as you request.

On this occasion the Presidency is not able to recommend to the troika that such an invitation be issued. The principal reason for this is that the new agreement on inviting special guests, as proposed by the Chairpersons, is itself on the agenda for the October COSAC, and must be ratified by the COSAC meeting itself, as the minutes of the July meeting make clear. To issue an invitation such as you request would prejudge the outcome of that discussion, and this the Presidency is unable to do.

We are sorry that this answer will come as a disappointment to you but the Presidency hopes that you will understand the reasons given.

On a more positive note, you are no doubt aware that the European Parliament is expecting to host a parliamentary meeting in early 2006 to include the countries in the EU's neighbourhood policy and Ukraine. You will of course be able to follow up on this matter with our colleagues from the European Parliament during the COSAC meeting.

We look forward to seeing you at COSAC next week.

Lord Grenfell, Chairman European Union Committee, House of Lords

Jimmy Hood MP, Chairman, House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee

3 October 2005