

**MINUTES OF THE
COSAC CHAIRPERSONS MEETING
THE HAGUE,
13 SEPTEMBER 2004**

Agenda:

- 1) Opening of proceedings and adoption of Agenda
- 2) Internal COSAC affairs
 - language regime
 - regional legislative assemblies
 - bi-annual report of COSAC secretariat
- 3) The Constitutional Treaty
 - the subsidiarity test/ early warning mechanism
 - Declaration to “raise national European awareness”.
 - Ratification process.
- 4) The Lisbon Strategy
- 5) Any Other business

Proceedings of the sitting

13 September 2004:

JOINTLY IN THE CHAIR: Mrs. Sharon Dijksma (*chairman of the EU-Committee of the House of Representatives*) and Mr. René van der Linden (*chairman of the EU-committee of the Senate*).

1. **Opening of proceedings and adoption of Agenda:**

The chairman, Mr. René van der Linden, welcomed the delegates and presented the draft agenda. The agenda was adopted by the chairpersons as shown above.

2. **Internal COSAC affairs**

a) Language Regime

An exchange of views took place between the chairpersons.

It was agreed that the language regime of COSAC should be put on the agenda of the XXXII COSAC in November. The Presidency should prepare several options for the amendment of the COSAC rules of procedure with the purpose of introducing a simplified and financially less burdensome regime. The equality of languages should remain a founding principle.

Lord Grenfell (UK) suggested that COSAC ought to consider how those who benefit from a new language-regime could help sharing the financial burdens of those delegations that needed to bring their own interpreters.

b) Regional Legislative Assemblies:

An exchange of views took place. The chairpersons agreed that there was - for the time being - no consensus on the subject. It was therefore decided not to put it on the agenda of the XXXII COSAC in November.

c) Biannual report of COSAC

The outline for the 2nd biannual report of COSAC as annexed was endorsed by the chairpersons.

3. The Constitutional Treaty:

a) The subsidiarity test/ early warning mechanism.

An extensive exchange of views on different aspects of the early warning mechanism took place. Some delegates found that the 6 week period was too short and asked for guidance with regard to when the 6 week period started.

It was agreed to put the issue on the agenda of the XXXII COSAC focusing on three main questions:

- Possible criteria for the subsidiarity test itself in the different national parliaments,
- Exchange of information between the national parliaments – e.g. COSAC, IPEX?
- A pilot project to examine the compliance of an upcoming legislative proposal of the EU with the principle of subsidiarity.

b) The chairman, Mr. van der Linden, gave a short presentation of the “Declaration to raise national European awareness”, which was addressed to the European Convention by 52 of its members in July 2003. The declaration proposed that national parliaments each should organise an annual debate on the Commission’s “Annual Legislative and Work Programme” in the same week as this debate is scheduled in the European Parliament.

The presidency will present a letter with proposals for the implementation of the declaration at the XXXII COSAC with the purpose of having it formally adopted by COSAC in order to implement its provisions. Subsequently the Speakers of the parliaments will be informed about the decision in a letter and requested to implement it.

c) It was agreed that the question of choice and timing of the ratification procedures in EU-25 would be included in the 2nd biannual report and not be placed on the agenda of the XXXII COSAC as a separate point.

4. The Lisbon Strategy:

An exchange of views took place on some of the questions raised by the Lisbon Agenda. Mr. Jari Vilén (Finland) suggested that a progress report on the Lisbon strategy should be prepared for the XXXIV COSAC taking place in autumn 2005 during UK Presidency. A report would otherwise be made available for the COSAC meeting during Finnish presidency in second half of 2006.

It was agreed to put the Lisbon strategy on the agenda of the XXXII COSAC in November. Mrs. Dijksma informed delegates that the Minister of Economic Affairs Mr. Brinkhorst, would introduce the review of the Lisbon strategy. The occasion would provide the opportunity for National Parliaments to share their experience in implementing the Lisbon Agenda.

5. Any Other Business:

With reference to a letter which Mr. Larsen-Jensen (DK) had sent to the presidency prior to the meeting (DK), Mr. Jimmy Hood (UK) asked the presidency to consider putting “first reading agreements” under the co-decision procedure on the agenda of the November COSAC meeting. Otherwise he would raise the issue when the UK entered the COSAC Troika.

The chairman, Mrs Dijksma, promised to consider Mr. Hoods remarks at the Troika meeting when drawing up the agenda for the November COSAC.