

## **Proposal by the Italian Delegation**

### **Draft contribution by the Italian Delegation on the institution of a COSAC Secretariat**

COSAC,

having regard to the contribution approved by the XXVII COSAC in Copenhagen (16-18 October 2002) in which it was agreed that the national Parliaments should be more closely involved in the European decision-making process without creating any new institutions, and that it is therefore advisable to strengthen COSAC cooperation;

considering that a working group was given the remit of submitting recommendations for the reform of COSAC, including proposals on how to establish a Secretariat to ensure the necessary continuity of the work of COSAC;

having regard to the document on the Secretariat submitted to the December meeting of the working group by the representative of the Netherlands Parliament, which was also signed by the representatives of the Austrian, Bulgarian, Czech, Estonian, Greek, Latvian, Italian, German and European Parliaments;

having regard to the document on the Secretariat submitted by the previous Danish Presidency based on the discussions in the last two meetings of the working group;

considering that:

" as clearly indicated in its rules of procedure, "COSAC enables a regular exchange of views, without prejudicing the competencies of the parliamentary bodies of the European Union";

" the six-monthly character of the meetings of COSAC - which does not have any permanent policy management organs, and it is undesirable that it should - links the functioning of the Conference to the rotating Presidencies of the European Union, such that the scheduling of its work is left to the Presidential Troika, as defined in the COSAC regulation;

" consequently, the organisation and the preparation of the work of the Conference cannot be equated with that of a parliamentary assembly of any institution, even though it must be based on criteria that guarantee continuity ;

" the present legal configuration of COSAC does not make it possible, furthermore, to envisage a Secretariat other than one made up of the members of the administrations of the Parliaments taking part in the Conference; since COSAC is not an institution - and everyone agrees that it should not become one - any other solution would create insurmountable difficulties, including financial and contractual problems, that would entail the constitution of a bureaucratic structure, however light weight it might be;

" in order to guarantee greater continuity to the work of COSAC it might be useful to relieve the Conference Secretariat of having to rely exclusively, as is the case at present, on the parliamentary administration of the current Presidency;

considers that the most effective solution, consistent with the nature and the requirements of COSAC, would be to assign the tasks of the Secretariat to the administrations of the Presidential Troika's Parliaments, coordinated by the current Presidency; this would also meet

the need to ensure full participation by all the member States, to which the highest consideration must be given, also in view of the accession of ten new member states of the European Union;

resolves that the COSAC Secretariat should be structured according to the following criteria:

" officials of the parliamentary administrations of the Troika shall perform the work of the COSAC Secretariat, coordinated by the administration of the Parliament holding the rotating Presidency;

" the members of the Secretariat shall cooperate both by computer and by holding meetings, depending upon the organisational requirements:

" cooperation via computer link requires a restructuring of the COSAC Internet site, which could be studied by a Troika working group, deliberating in contact with the working group set up by the General Secretaries to study ways of improving the circulation of information between the parliamentary administrations of the EU (IPEX);

" the officials of the Secretariat shall meet in Brussels on premises specifically placed at the disposal of the COSAC Secretariat, if possible by the European Parliament;

" the COSAC Secretariat shall remain in contact with all the parliamentary administrations, particularly with the representatives of the national Parliaments in Brussels, in order to ensure the most complete and continuous circulation of information.