

Presidency Conclusions of Working Group

Athens 19-20 March 2003

Presidency Conclusions

The Working Group of COSAC on the follow up of the European Convention and the Intergovernmental Conference,

- Considering

- 1) The protocol attached to the Treaty of Amsterdam, on the role of National Parliaments,
- 2) The Declaration on the Future of the European Union, which was annexed to the Nice Treaty ,
- 3) The Declaration of the European Council of Laeken on the Future of the European Union,
- 4) The Copenhagen Parliamentary Guidelines for relations between governments and parliaments on Community issues which were agreed at the XXVIII COSAC meeting in Brussels, on 27-1-2003,
- 5) The conclusions of the XXVIII COSAC meeting in Brussels, on 27-1-2003,
- 6) The reports of Working Groups I and IV of the European Convention on the role of National Parliaments and the Principle of Subsidiarity,

- Taking into account

The important role reserved to National Parliaments in the work of the European Convention and in elaboration of the Constitutional Treaty,

- Resolves the following:

- 1) The proposals by the Presidium of the European Convention on the role of National Parliaments are leading to the right direction, especially as regards the National Parliaments' ability to control the application of the Principle of Subsidiarity, the strengthening of their being informed by the Commission, the Council and the Court of Auditors, as well as the institutionalization of cooperation between the National Parliaments and the European Parliament towards a more effective inter-parliamentary cooperation.
- 2) The role of National Parliaments in the European Union should be awarded constitutional recognition. This will be achieved by the insertion in the text of the Constitutional Treaty of one article on the definition of the principle of subsidiarity and one other article on the role of National Parliaments in the European Union. This should be followed by a detailed protocol -or protocols- on the role of National Parliaments and Subsidiarity.
- 3) The recommendations made by working groups I and IV should be fully respected in the protocol or protocols to be annexed to the constitutional treaty, in particular as regards the submission of an opinion in the early warning system and the possibility of demanding a judicial review by the European Court of Justice. In both cases it must be possible for National Parliaments -or, in bicameral systems, for each chamber of the Parliament- to act directly.
- 4) The Convention should take into account the need for better information to National Parliaments.

- 5) The role of COSAC (in paragraph 9 of the Convention draft Protocol on the Role of National Parliaments), should be clarified in a better way following the model of the Amsterdam Treaty Protocol.
 - 6) The role of COSAC may be strengthened by providing the possibility for request to the EU legislative institutions to take into account and to respond to COSAC Contributions, when in position to do so.
 - 7) COSAC may promote the exchange of information and best practices between National Parliaments and may convene ad-hoc inter-parliamentary Conferences.
 - 8) COSAC encourages National Parliaments and the European Parliament to closer and more constructive cooperation.
 - 9) COSAC supports the best possible use of IT technology for providing information to and from National Parliaments, the European Parliament and the EU institutions.
 - 10) The new constitutional Treaty shall be ratified by National Parliaments following referendums in some member States and therefore the role of National Parliaments should not be underestimated.
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Hellenic Parliament
Committee for European Affairs
The Chairman

Athens, 26 March 2003

Mr Valery Giscard D'Estaing
President of the European Convention

Mr President,

The Working Group of COSAC , consisting of Chairpersons of European Affairs Committees of National Parliaments and the representative of the European Parliament, which gathered the 19 and 20 march in Athens, requests by the Presidium of the Convention for the Future of Europe to ensure that :

1. The provisions of the Constitutional Treaty regarding the National Parliaments, respect the equilibrium reached by the conclusions of the Working Group I, on Subsidiarity, and those of the Working Group IV, on the role of National Parliaments, and that they maintain in particular the possibility of National Parliaments to appeal directly before the Court of Justice against non compliance with the principle of Subsidiarity,
2. The provisions of the Constitutional Treaty regarding COSAC would maintain at least the provisions included in the Protocol annexed to the Amsterdam Treaty.

In precise, the Working Group of COSAC whose main task is to follow the works of the European Convention and the Intergovernmental Conference, unanimously adopted the Conclusions herewith attached.

Please accept Mr President the expression of my high esteem,

Dinos Vrettos
Vice President of the Hellenic Parliament