

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

Helsinki, Finland, 1 December 2019

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIR: Ms Satu HASSI, Chairperson of the Grand Committee, Finnish *Eduskunta*.

Ms Gabriela CREȚU, Chairwoman of the European Affairs Committee, Romanian *Senat*; Mr Erika BENKŐ, Member of Parliament, Romanian *Camera Deputaților*; Mr Domagoj Ivan MILOŠEVIĆ, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*; Ms Mairead McGUINNESS, First Vice-President, European Parliament.

AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda of the Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC**
- 2. Approval of the draft programme of the LXII COSAC**
- 3. Presentation of the 32nd Bi-annual Report of COSAC**
- 4. Co-financing and appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2020-2021**
- 5. Draft Contribution and Conclusions of the LXII COSAC**
- 5. Letters received by the Presidency**
- 6. Any other business**

PROCEEDINGS

1. Adoption of the agenda of the Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC

Ms Satu HASSI, Chairperson of the Grand Committee, Finnish *Eduskunta*, welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika") and referred to the agenda of the meeting of the Troika, which was adopted without amendment.

2. Approval of the draft programme of the meeting of the LXII COSAC

Ms HASSI then referred to the programme of the meeting of the LXII COSAC to be held the following day, which would consist of five sessions:

- J Session I: The Finnish Presidency of the EU Council;
- J Session II: Promoting the Rule of Law in the EU and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- J Session III: Intervention by Mr Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission;
- J Session IV: A Winning Climate Strategy for Europe;
- J Session V: Intervention by Mr Michel Barnier, Head of the Task Force for Relation with the United Kingdom.

She noted a slight change in the programme in connection with the intervention by the Prime Minister Antti RINNE, as well as Mr Jean BIZET's proposal to expand on the subject of

voluntary civil security work, to which the Troika expressed no objection. She finally noted that the presentation of the Bi-annual Report would only take place if time allowed.

The draft programme of the LXII COSAC was approved without amendment.

3. Presentation of the 32nd Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Ms HASSI noted the observations found in the draft COSAC Conclusions regarding the 32nd Bi-annual Report of COSAC, which was drafted based on Parliaments' replies to the related questionnaire circulated to delegations on 31 July 2019 with the deadline for submitting replies on 20 September 2019.

4. Co-financing and appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2020-2021

The Chair noted that all letters of intent had been received, with the exception of the UK Parliament. The Presidency had also received one nomination for the post of Permanent Member and the Chair noted that this item would be raised during the Chairpersons meeting.

5. Draft Contribution and Conclusions of the LXII COSAC

The draft text of the Contribution and the Conclusions was circulated to delegations on 11 November 2019. Four amendments had been received regarding the Conclusions, which was taken into consideration by the Troika, endorsing the resulting new draft based on the text proposed by the Presidency.

Regarding the draft Contribution, amendments received from delegations by 26 November 2019 were translated into French and, together with the initial text, included in a table, which had been distributed to all delegations. A number of compromise proposals elaborated by the Presidency were submitted to the Troika, with the latter agreeing to a modified text of the draft Contribution.

Ms HASSI asked colleagues whether they had any comments to make on the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the LXII COSAC.

Taking the floor, Mr Domagoj Ivan MILOŠEVIĆ, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, noted that a timeline with regard to the finalisation of the migration to IPEX would be announced in due course.

Ms Mairead McGUINNESS, First Vice-President, European Parliament, suggested to go through the whole document, point by point. She expressed concern with regard to the second point of the Contribution, relating to the Conference on the Future of Europe, stating that it was difficult to agree to a text until the European Parliament had come to a position on the matter. Ms McGUINNESS noted that the conference was about the future of Europe and how and what citizens thought about it, and it was therefore important to show how the latter wanted to shape it. Whereas the text was, therefore, appreciated by the European Parliament, it could not sign to it as it stood.

Ms HASSI asked for elaboration on the European Parliament's position, specifically whether this meant that it would abstain.

Ms McGUINNESS replied that whereas it could not sign to the present text, the European Parliament did not wish to vote against it either. She expressed hope that a way could be found to solve the matter.

Ms HASSI suggested the possibility of coming up with a compromise text that would be acceptable for all parties, and, in light of this, Ms McGUINNESS explained that her concern was that the current text would create the misconception that the item had been discussed in COSAC and there was agreement on it, which in reality would not be the case. She asked colleagues to strive for a text which would reflect the view that participation is welcome and appreciated, without specifying how this would be implemented.

Ms Gabriela CREȚU, Chairwoman of the European Affairs Committee, Romanian *Senat*, stressed that the support of the European Parliament on the matter would be welcome.

Ms McGUINNESS assured colleagues that the engagement of national Parliaments was welcome, and repeated that it was just the implementation that required further discussion. She also stressed that the conference would assume a new format which would not simply copy the past.

The Chair suggested that new wording for the second and third paragraphs of the Contribution be found, a suggestion welcome by all members of the Troika.

With this proviso, the draft Contribution and Conclusions were approved.

5. Letters received by the Presidency

The Chair informed the Troika that a number of letters had been received by the Presidency, and regarding which the Troika had been consulted.

The letters received by the Presidency were:

- Letter from Mr Hayke VELDMAN, Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, asking the LXII COSAC to put legislative transparency on the agenda.
- Letter from Mr Gunther KRICHBAUM, Chair of the Committee on European Union Affairs, German *Bundestag*, requesting the LXII COSAC to put an item relating to the future trade relations of the EU on the agenda. The Presidency replied that whereas a separate session on trade policy could not be accommodated, there would be time to deal with issues related to trade policy under other existing agenda topics.
- Letter from Lord KINNOULL, Chair of the European Union Committee, UK *House of Lords*, introducing himself in his new role.
- A second letter from Lord KINNOULL informing the Presidency that the Members of the European Union Committee would be unable to attend the LXII COSAC following the announcement that a General Election will take place in the United Kingdom on 12 December 2019.
- Letter from Mr Jean BIZET, French *Sénat*, proposing to update colleagues with developments concerning the subject of voluntary civil security work since the last COSAC in Bucharest.
- Letter from Mr Nikitas KAKLAMANIS, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, suggesting the issue of migration, in particular the establishment of the Common European Asylum System, to be included in the agenda of the LXIII COSAC to be held in Zagreb. The Presidency replied to this letter, with a message from the incoming Croatian Presidency.
- Letter from Mr Marc ANGEL, Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*, informing the Presidency of his resignation as a member of the Luxembourg Parliament and his upcoming role as Member of the European Parliament.
- Letter from Mr Richárd HÖRCSIK, Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs of the Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, informing the Presidency of the conclusions adopted during the meeting of the Committees on European Affairs of the Visegrád Group held in Sárospatak, Hungary on 8-10 September 2019.

- Letters from the Speaker of the Maltese *Kamra tad-deputati* and the Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Italian *Camera dei deputati* in connection with the appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2020-2021.

6. Any other business

Mr MILOŠEVIĆ announced the intention of the Croatian Presidency to reform the COSAC meetings by making it more attractive and more interesting, not least by bringing more speakers and try to involve the public, referring to the possibility of engaging the latter through a sort of “town committee”.

Ms McGUINNESS thanked the Finnish Presidency for all its work and suggested the incoming Presidency to come up with ideas to reform COSAC.