MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC 18 JULY 2005

PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

Lord Grenfell (UK, House of Lords), joint Chairman; Mr Jimmy Hood (UK, House of Commons), joint Chairman; Mr Ben Fayot (Luxembourg Parliament); Mr Albrecht Konecny (Federal Council of Austrian Parliament); Mr Werner Fasslabend (National Council of the Austrian Parliament); and Mr Edward MacMillan-Scott (European Parliament).

AGENDA:

1) Agenda of the XXXIV COSAC in London on 9-11 October 2005;
2) Any other business.

1) Agenda of the XXXIV COSAC in London

Lord Grenfell started the meeting of the Presidential Troika by welcoming the delegations to Westminster.

Lord Grenfell then introduced the agenda that the UK was proposing for the plenary meeting of the XXXIV COSAC to be held in October in London, which had been circulated to delegates in advance of the Troika meeting. Lord Grenfell noted that there were two additional proposals for agenda points that had been considered by the UK Presidency.

First, the UK had received a letter from Mr van der Linden, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Dutch Senate, requesting that the XXXIV COSAC should discuss the Commission's proposal for an EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. The European Affairs Committee of the Dutch Senate was concerned that the proposed EU Agency should not unnecessarily duplicate the work that was already being done by other international organisations, especially, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The Presidential Troika discussed the proposal from the Dutch Senate and agreed that the item should not be placed on the proposed agenda for the XXXIV COSAC. In choosing items for the agenda, it was important to select those issues where a discussion in COSAC could add value to the subject. On the proposal from the Dutch Senate, Lord Grenfell suggested that it would be unlikely that COSAC could agree on the way forward, and so it was difficult to see what COSAC could usefully contribute to the issue. Any possible overlap between the proposed EU Agency and other international organisations should be resolved by the institutions themselves and could not be settled by COSAC.

The second additional proposal for the October agenda arose from the Contribution from the XXXIII COSAC in May in Luxembourg, where COSAC agreed to return to the issue of the management and control of the EU Budget and agreed to invite the President of the Court of Auditors for further discussion.

The Presidential Troika discussed the proposal for COSAC to further discuss the management and control of the EU Budget and agreed that the subject should not be placed on the agenda of the XXXIV COSAC as a separate item. Lord Grenfell noted that the issue

could be raised at the October meeting under the debate on future topics for discussion in COSAC (in accordance with Article 7 of COSAC's Rules of Procedure).

There being no further proposals from the delegations, the Presidential Troika agreed to propose to the COSAC Chairpersons the draft agenda for the XXXIV COSAC in October in London as attached to these minutes.

2) Any other business

Special Guests

Lord Grenfell informed the Presidential Troika that the UK had received requests from the Presidents of the Regional Partnership Parliaments and from the President of COSAP for COSAP to be invited as a special guest to COSAC meetings. The UK had also received a letter from the President of CALRE asking for CALRE to be invited as a special guest to COSAC meetings and proposing a written agreement between COSAC and CALRE.

The Presidential Troika agreed that the requests for COSAP and CALRE to be invited to COSAC meetings should be considered by the COSAC Chairpersons as part of their debate on the interpretation of Article 4.3 of COSAC's Rules of Procedure. Following this debate, the UK Presidency should write to the President of the Regional Partnership Parliaments, the President of COSAP and the President of CALRE to inform them of the outcome of the debate.

The Presidential Troika agreed to recommend to the COSAC chairpersons that under COSAC's current Rules of Procedure future 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. The Presidential Troika further agreed to recommend to the COSAC chairpersons that it would be important to consider invitations on a case-by-case basis and to avoid a permanent list of special guests, which would be inflexible. The Presidential Troika considered it would be important for Presidential Troikas to give particular attention in the future to the issue of special guests, and the Presidential Troika accordingly agreed to give consideration to the issue of who should be invited as special guests to the XXXIV COSAC in October in London. Lord Grenfell invited the other delegations to send any proposals to the UK Presidency as soon as possible.

Contribution

Lord Grenfell informed the Presidential Troika that the UK Presidency had received a draft contribution for the XXXIV COSAC from Mr Herman De Croo, Chairman of the Federal Advisory Committee of the Belgian Parliament. An exchange of views took place. The Presidential Troika agreed that the draft should be put on the table for consideration by the Chairpersons. The issues in Mr De Croo's draft text could then be raised in a relevant debate by any delegate wishing to do so rather than having a separate item on the agenda for the meeting of the Chairpersons.

Lord Grenfell informed the Presidential Troika that, in accordance with Article 10.3 of the Rules of Procedure, the UK Presidency would issue a draft contribution to COSAC delegations in good time before the XXXIV COSAC to give them a reasonable period for scrutiny and remarks. The final draft would be prepared by the COSAC Chairpersons at their meeting on the afternoon of 10 October 2005 for adoption by COSAC the following day.