

## Folketingets Europaudvalg

Christiansborg, den 23. januar 2003

Europaudvalgets sekretariat

Til

udvalgets medlemmer og stedfortrædere

## Dansk udkast til vedtagelse på det ekstraordinære COSAC-møde den 27. januar 2003

Efter aftale med udvalgsformanden omdeles herved et dansk udkast til vedtagelse med henblik på drøftelse på det ekstraordinære COSAC-møde i Bruxelles 27. januar 2003.

Med venlig hilsen

Irlí Plambech

### Draft

#### Contribution from COSAC

#### XXVIII COSAC, Brussels

(addressed to the Convention of the Future of Europe, the EU's institutions, the national parliaments and the Presidency).

### ***I. Strengthening the role of the national parliaments in collaboration with the European Parliament***

COSAC wishes to once again call the attention to the need for a strengthening of democracy and parliamentarism in the EU. The national parliaments and the European Parliament play an essential role in this respect.

In order for the European project to succeed it is necessary that the national parliaments be involved to a greater extent in national EU decisions. A reform of COSAC that enables national parliaments to be better informed, exchange best practices and express its views on EU-politics in a more efficient manner is therefore necessary.

COSAC reiterates its resistance to the creation of new institutions. The reform of COSAC is not and shall not be a step toward the creation of a new institution in the European architecture. The purpose of a reformed COSAC is to enable the national parliaments to play an active and informed role in EU-politics within the existing treaty-provisions as also proposed by the Convention's Working Group on the role of national parliaments. The protocol on the role of the national parliaments in the Amsterdam treaty gives COSAC and the national parliaments possibilities that has not been fully utilised.

COSAC expects the Convention on the Future of Europe to include the role of the national parliaments and the reform of COSAC in its work on a new constitutional treaty for EU.

COSAC considers, that The European Parliament and the national parliaments each have an important role to play in the area of EU-cooperation and that they have a common interest in a strengthening of democracy in EU. A strengthening of the role of the national parliaments is therefore in full accordance with a strengthening of the European Parliament.

## ***II. The reform of COSAC***

At the COSAC meeting in **Madrid** 12-14 May 2002, a decision was made to strengthen COSAC co-operation. The chairmanship troika was asked to prepare a reform-proposal in this respect. At the COSAC meeting in **Copenhagen** 16-18 October 2002, it was decided to set up a Working Group consisting of the chairmen of the European affairs committees of the national parliaments and of a representative of the European Parliament with the aim of continuing the reform process and to draw up proposals for a reform of COSAC. The mandate and the tasks of the working group is described in ***annexe 1***.

On the 10th of January 2003 the Danish presidency sent out its conclusions concerning the recommendations from the COSAC Working Group as well as the final documents. A proposal for new rules of procedures was sent out on the 19th of December 2002.

After examination of the presidency's recommendations and the final documents from the COSAC working Group, COSAC has reached the following conclusions:

1. COSAC adopts the "**Copenhagen parliamentary Guidelines**" for relations between governments and Parliaments on Community issues. COSAC invites the Greek presidency to publish the guidelines in the Official Journal of the European Communities, Serie C.
2. COSAC decides to change the **voting rules** in the rules of procedure with respect to the adoption of contributions. Contributions shall henceforward be adopted with a majority of 2/3 of the votes cast; the majority must at the same time constitute at least 50 pct. of the votes. When voting on contributions each delegation shall have two votes in order to allow differentiated voting from bicameral parliaments. When voting on revisions of the rules of procedure, unanimity will still be required and each delegation will still have one vote.

COSAC recommends that contributions adopted by COSAC henceforward shall be published in The Official Journal of the European Communities, Serie C.

3. Reaffirming the decision taken at the COSAC meeting 17-18 October 2002 in Copenhagen, all members of COSAC agree that there is a need for **improved continuity** in the activities of COSAC and therefore a need for **better secretarial support**, especially with 25 parliaments participating in COSAC meetings. All members of COSAC agree, that a better secretarial support for COSAC

- will not create a new institution,
- will not be a new bureaucracy,
- will be paid by the national parliaments, and
- will have a small secretariat, that
- is linked to the Troika and the country holding the Presidency
- co-operates with the representatives in Brussels of the national parliaments
- provides technical support

[Should one or more parliaments wish not to participate in the financing of the secretariat the annual cost per parliament should be adjusted accordingly. The secretariat should be placed in Brussels.]

Meanwhile COSAC invites the working group

consisting of the chairmen of the European affairs committees of the national parliaments and of a representative of the European Parliament to continue the examination of the practical, legal and functional aspects related to the establishment of a COSAC secretariat with a view to enable the ordinary COSAC meeting on the 5th–6th of May 2003 to present its position on the question to the **Conference of Speakers of the European Parliaments** on its meeting the 23th-24th of May 2003.

It was the Conference of Speakers of the European Parliaments who in 1989 created COSAC. Furthermore it is the Speakers, who in many EU-countries have overall responsibility for the co-ordination of work both within their own parliaments, and for co-operation between national parliaments.

COSAC therefore invites the Conference of Speakers of the European Parliaments on its meeting the 23th-24th of May 2003 to consider the question of the establishment of a secretariat and the financing of it.

COSAC furthermore invites the Conference of Speakers of the European Parliaments to consider whether they wish to accept the role as **Presidium for the COSAC**, with the task to decide on and approve COSAC's budget.

On the basis of the position of the Conference of Speakers of the European Parliaments the final decision on the establishment of a COSAC secretariat could be taken at the COSAC meeting in the second half of 2003 under Italian presidency.

1. COSAC recognises the need for a **better long term planning** of meetings adapted to the Council's one-year planning schedule of its activities. The planning shall include regular biannual meetings of the chairpersons and the possibility for the meeting of chairpersons to be given a **mandate in concrete cases** by the COSAC assembly to adopt contributions if necessary between COSAC-meetings. The rules of procedure have been adjusted accordingly.
2. COSAC also wishes to support the increased co-operation between the **sectoral standing committees** by making itself available as a supporting structure.

3. COSAC shall henceforward once a year invite the **European Commission** to a general discussion on the contents of its working and legislative programme. In relation to the "**early warning mechanism**", proposed by the Convention's Working Group on subsidiarity, COSAC wish to offer secretarial support as a "clearing house", by collecting information (electronically) from parliaments on any objection and by distributing information on these to other parliaments.
4. The question of finding a better **name** for COSAC shall be referred to the Working Group's follow-up to the work of the Convention on the Future of Europe.
5. COSAC adopts the new **IT strategy** for COSAC with better co-operation between the secretariats of the European Affairs Committees in the national parliaments and the appropriate body in the European Parliament as proposed by the working group. This implies the set up of a technical administrative Working Group.
6. COSAC invites the meeting of chairmen to continue the work with respect to the elaboration of operational agreements between the national parliaments and the EU's institutions. The working group has raised a number of criteria, which should be seen as a platform for further discussion on the content of such agreements.
7. In accordance with the recommendations from the Working Group, COSAC invites the presidency to inform the Convention of the reform of COSAC.
8. In order to influence the agenda of the Convention and the Intergovernmental Conference COSAC must furthermore in the early month of 2003 adopt a position on the future role on the national parliaments in the European Union.

### ***III. Adoption of the new rules of procedures***

As a first step in the reform of COSAC and in accordance with the decisions taken on this XXVIII COSAC in Brussels, COSAC has adopted new rules of procedures. **The new rules of procedures will enter into force on the 1st of February 2003.**

## **Annexe 1**

Extract from the Contributions from XXVIIth COSAC in Copenhagen, October 17-18 October 2002.

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"On the basis of this debate and within the present treaty provisions, COSAC decides to set up a working group with the aim of continuing the Danish Presidency's reform initiative while paying attention to other proposals. The working group shall have the following tasks:

- To continue the work of drafting a code of conduct setting out minimum standards for effective national parliamentary scrutiny of governments.
- To draft proposals for how to change COSAC's rules of procedure concerning majority decisions.

- To draft proposals on how to establish a secretariat for COSAC that ensures the necessary continuity of the work of COSAC, including possible changes in COSAC's rules of procedure.

- To consider the organisation of future meetings of COSAC including the question on how to involve the sectoral standing committees as well as the composition of the delegations.

- To consider the possibility of letting COSAC assess the Commission's annual legislative programme in order to ensure its compliance with the principle of subsidiarity.

- To consider the possibility of giving COSAC a new and more understandable name.

- To consider a new strategy for IT and administrative co-operation between EU administrative bodies in the national parliaments including the representations of national parliaments in Brussels.

- To consider whether there is a need to establish co-operation agreements with the EU's institutions.

- To follow the work of the European Convention and the Intergovernmental Conference."

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