

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

Tallinn, Estonia, 26 November 2017

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIR: Mr Toomas VITSUT, Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee, Estonian *Riigikogu*.

Mr Kristian VIGENIN, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds, Bulgarian *Narodno Sabranie*; Mr Edward ZAMMIT LEWIS, Chair of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*; Ms Danuta HÜBNER, Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament.

AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda of the Presidential Troika meeting of COSAC**
- 2. Approval of the draft programme of the meeting of the LVIII COSAC meeting**
- 3. Presentation of the 28th Bi-annual Report of COSAC**
- 4. Interview with the candidate for the position of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2018-2019 and the proposal of the elected candidate to the Chairpersons of COSAC for appointment**
- 5. Debate on the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the LVIII COSAC**
- 6. Letters received by the Presidency**
- 7. Any other business**

PROCEEDINGS

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

Mr Toomas VITSUT welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika"). In the absence of any objection, the agenda of the meeting of the Troika was adopted without amendment.

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

Mr VITSUT gave a brief outline of the programme of the meeting of the LVIII COSAC, and informed the Troika members about the use, during the meeting, of online tools. The LVIII COSAC would focus on five topics each of which would be debated under the guidance of a member of the Estonian delegation as moderator:

- Session I: The future of the European Union;
- Session II: Bringing the European Union closer to its citizens - what are the best practices of national Parliaments?
- Session III: Digital Single Market - current developments of e-services;
- Session IV: State of play - building an effective and sustainable Security Union;
- Session V: The external dimension of migration - preventing and combating irregular migration.

The Chair also referred to a side event on “E-democracy: digital instruments in service of democratic process” that would take place during lunch time the next day.

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

3. Presentation of the 28th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Mr VITSUT invited the Permanent Member of the COSAC secretariat, Ms Christiana FRYDA, to give an outline of the presentation of the 28th Bi-annual Report of COSAC, which was based on Parliaments' replies to the related questionnaire circulated to delegations on 27 July 2017 with a deadline of 18 September 2017 for submitting replies.

Ms FRYDA briefly referred to the three chapters of the Report. The first one dealt with the future of the European Union; the second one focused on bringing the EU closer to its citizens; and the third one concentrated on the Digital Single Market.

Before moving on to the interview phase, Ms Danuta HÜBNER, European Parliament, welcomed the 28th Bi-annual Report and thanked the COSAC Secretariat for its work. She supported that, as the Report addressed a number of highly politicised issues, it would be desirable to hold a political debate on its results. She then suggested that the future Presidency Parliaments could add a political touch and not treat it simply as a technical issue.

Mr VITSUT agreed that Ms HÜBNER's suggestion was a very good initiative. He recognised the political nature of the issues addressed in the Report and invited the next Presidency to take the suggestion on board.

4. Interview with the candidate for the position of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2018-2019 and the proposal of the elected candidate to the Chairpersons of COSAC for appointment

Mr VITSUT noted that the term of the current Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, Ms Christiana FRYDA, was coming to the end on 31 December 2017. He thanked Ms FRYDA for her excellent work and the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* for delegating Ms FRYDA to this post.

Mr VITSUT stated that Letters of Intent concerning the co-financing of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and related office costs for 2018-2019 had been received from all Chambers of all 28 national Parliaments.

Mr VITSUT recalled the letter dated 14 July 2017, which was sent on 17 July 2017, inviting all national Parliaments to submit candidates for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2018–2019 before 29 September 2017. The Presidency received one candidacy from the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*.

The Chair presented the background note on the Appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and mentioned that, in order to ensure fairness and transparency the Chair from the Parliament which submitted a candidate was invited to observe the interview. The candidate would be proposed to the Chairpersons of COSAC for appointment the following day.

In the absence of objections, the proposed procedure was unanimously accepted.

Mr VITSUT announced the decision taken unanimously by the Troika to propose Mr Kenneth CURMI from the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati* to the Chairpersons of COSAC for appointment the following day as the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for the period 2018-2019.

5. Debate on the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the meeting of the LVIII COSAC

The draft text of the Contribution and the Conclusions was, as Mr VITSUT explained, circulated to delegations on 13 November 2017. Amendments received from delegations by the deadline of 20 November 2017 were, together with the initial text of the draft contributions and a number of compromise proposals elaborated by the Presidency, included in a table. In addition, the Presidency's compromise proposals were integrated in a draft text. Both the table and the draft text were submitted to the Troika.

Following a detailed examination of each amendment proposed, the Troika, on the basis of the Presidency's compromise proposals, drafted a modified text of the Contributions.

Regarding the draft text of the Conclusions, the Chair referred to the new part 4 proposed by the Presidency and the national Parliaments of the Troika on the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently" following a letter sent to the Estonian Presidency by Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER, President of the European Commission, by which he invited COSAC to appoint 3 members of national Parliaments to be part of a Task Force established by Mr JUNCKER. Referring to the amendments on this part submitted by certain delegations after the 23 November 2017, the Chair mentioned the guidance on the adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions circulated by the Presidency and informed the Troika members that the Presidency planned to open a debate on these during the meeting of the Chairpersons and to include them in a table together with all other amendments received by noon the next day. The table was going to be distributed to delegations some time before the meeting of the Chairpersons.

Mr VITSUT supported the proposed compromise proposal underlining that, as the Rules of Procedure of COSAC did not foresee any procedure for appointing members of national Parliaments to represent them in external fora, the most reasonable option would be for the Troika to represent these in the Task Force.

All Troika members supported the proposal both on the Troika representing national Parliaments in the Task Force and on the establishment of a working group, which would facilitate regular and comprehensive discussions related to the work of the Task Force.

In this light, following the Troika's unanimous decision, the Presidency would present this option to the Chairpersons the next day, while exploring another option in case no majority was established.

6. Letters received by the Presidency

The Chair referred to the following letters:

- Letters from Mr Carles ENSENAT, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Andorra *Consell General*, Mr Jean-Charles Letter from Mr Jean-Charles ALLA VENA, Head of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Mr Christophe STEINER, Speaker of the National Council of the Principality of Monaco and from Ms Mariia IONOVA, Deputy Chair of the Committee on European Integration of the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine, regarding participation in COSAC. After consultation with the Troika, letters of invitation had been sent out.

- Letter from Mr Jean BIZET, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the French *Sénat*, suggesting a discussion on competitiveness during the meeting of the LVIII COSAC. The Chair mentioned the Presidency's letter of reply to Mr BIZET.
- Letter from Mr Richárd HÖRCSIK, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs of the Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, on the conclusions of the meeting of the Committees on European Affairs of the countries of the Visegrád Group.
- An exchange of letters between the Estonian Presidency and the Chair of the IPEX Board on creating a synergy between the IPEX platform and the COSAC website.
- Letter from the Clerk of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs of the Irish *Oireachtas* on the Committee noting the expiration of the second term of office of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat.
- Letter from Ms Regina BASTOS, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs of the Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, about her inability to participate in the meeting of the LVIII COSAC.
- Letter from Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER, President of the European Commission, inviting COSAC to nominate members of national Parliaments to be part in the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently". The issue had already been addressed under the point on the debate on the Conclusions of the meeting.
- Letter from Mr BIZET offering his candidacy to the abovementioned Task Force. The issue had already been addressed under the point on the debate on the Conclusions of the meeting.

7. Any other business

No other business.