



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

MADRID, SPAIN, 26 NOVEMBER 2023

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIR: Mr José Ignacio LANDALUCE CALLEJA, Member of the Spanish *Senado*, and Susana SUMELZO JORDÁN, Member of the Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados*, Co-Chairs of the Delegation of the Spanish *Cortes Generales* before the COSAC;

Ms Eliane TILLIEUX, Co-Chair of the Federal Advisory Committee on European affairs, Belgian *Chambre des représentants/Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers*, and Mr Gaëtan VAN GOIDSENHOVEN, Co-Chair of the Federal Advisory Committee on European Affairs, Belgian *Sénat/Senaat*;

Mr Hans WALLMARK, Chair of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Swedish *Riksdag*, Ms Matilda ERNKRANS, Deputy Chair of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Swedish *Riksdag*;

Mr Othmar KARAS, First Vice-President, European Parliament.

(Mr Salvatore DE MEO, Chair of the Committee for Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, was unable to attend).

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PROCEEDINGS

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

Ms Susana SUMELZO JORDÁN, Member of the Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados*, and Mr José Ignacio LANDALUCE CALLEJA, Member of the Spanish *Senado*, welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika").

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN recalled that, in relation to the recent general parliamentary elections in Spain, held on 23 July 2023, the new Spanish Government had been sworn in the prior week. She added that the parliamentary Committees in the Spanish *Cortes Generales*, including the Joint Committee for European Union Affairs, were yet to be established, which imposed some limitations on the preparation of the Presidency.

She then referred to the [agenda of the Meeting of the Troika](#), previously circulated to all delegations, which was adopted without amendments.

2. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE LXIX COSAC

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN then referred to the revised [draft agenda of the LXX COSAC](#) Plenary scheduled for 26 to 28 November 2023, in Madrid, that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She noted that the recent formation of the Spanish Government had allowed for the confirmation of several key-note speakers and a more concrete and final draft agenda.

The draft programme circulated was composed of five thematic sessions which would be covered during the LXX COSAC:

- A review of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU;
- The Pact on Migration and Asylum of the EU;
- The energy crisis and green transition;
- The situation in Ukraine and relations with the European Union;
- The EU's Open Strategic Autonomy and relations with Latin America.

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN also alluded to the letter sent by Mr Glenn BEDINGFIELD, Chair of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee of the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, suggesting that a debate regarding the ongoing situation in the Middle-East to the agenda of the LXX COSAC. After consulting with the Troika, the Presidency had replied by proposing to widen the scope of Session I "*The Spanish Presidency of the EU*", in order to include the debate of the crisis in the Middle East, as requested by the Maltese Chair.

She concluded this point by noting the support of the Troika for the proposed draft agenda for the LXX COSAC.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE 40TH BI-ANNUAL REPORT OF COSAC

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN referred to the [40th Bi-annual report of COSAC](#) which was drafted by the COSAC Secretariat on the basis of replies to the related questionnaire circulated to national Parliaments/Chambers on 20 September 2023, with a deadline on 20 October for submitting the answers.

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN thanked the COSAC Secretariat for their work and gave the floor to its Permanent Member, Mr Bruno DIAS PINHEIRO, to present the Report.

Mr DIAS PINHEIRO emphasized the fact that all the 39 Parliaments/Chambers and the European Parliament had replied to the questionnaire, expressing the expectation that the findings of the Report might prove useful not only for the COSAC Plenary but also for the works in the months ahead.

He further recalled that the three chapters of the Report were dedicated to:

1. the role of Parliaments in relation to the European goal of open strategic autonomy;
2. the role of Parliaments in handling the energy policies: renewable sources of energy;
3. the role of the Parliaments when confronted with Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The main results from the Report were summarized in a [short video clip](#) produced by the Permanent Member and presented at the end of his intervention.

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN thanked the Secretariat for its work.

4. CANDIDATE INTERVIEW FOR PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE COSAC SECRETARIAT FOR 2024–2025 AND ADOPTION OF THE APPOINTMENT PROPOSAL FOR THE PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE COSAC SECRETARIAT FOR THE PERIOD 2024/25 BY THE CHAIRPERSONS OF COSAC

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN recalled that the term of office of the incumbent Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, Mr Bruno DIAS PINHEIRO, was set to expire on 31 December 2023 and the Presidency had been informed that he will not apply for a second term.

On 27 October, the Spanish Presidency invited delegations to submit nominations for the position of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, accompanied by the candidate's curriculum vitae, motivation letter and recommendation letter of supporting Chairperson, with a deadline set to 10 November 2023, at the latest. The Chair informed

that within the deadline, there was one candidacy submitted, namely that of Mr Jakob SJÖVALL from the Swedish *Riksdag*.

She presented the [background note](#) on the appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and mentioned that, following previous appointments of the Permanent Member, the selection and nomination procedure would be conducted in the spirit of impartiality, transparency and fairness.

Moreover, and for the purpose of transparency, the Chair of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Swedish *Riksdag*, Mr Hans WALLMARK, had been invited to observe the proceedings, as the national Parliament that had put forward the candidate, and was given the floor to present the candidacy of Mr Jakob SJÖVALL.

The candidate was then invited to attend a brief interview with the members of the presidential Troika of COSAC. After that, the remaining members of the Presidential troika deliberated unanimously on the adequacy of the candidate. Therefore, and in line with the COSAC Rules of procedure (Article 9.3), Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN announced that the Troika would propose to the Chairpersons during the LXX COSAC the appointment of Mr Jakob SJÖVALL from the Swedish *Riksdag* as the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for the period 2024-2025.

Towards the end of this agenda point, the Chair thanked the current Permanent Member, Mr Bruno DIAS PINHEIRO, for professionalism, the constant support and assistance provided to all national Parliaments and the Presidencies over the past two years. Mr KARAS also thanked Mr DIAS PINHEIRO for the excellent cooperation in this period.

5. DRAFT CONTRIBUTION AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE LXX COSAC

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN introduced the procedure regarding the adoption of Contribution and Conclusions by the LXX COSAC, recalling that the Presidency had consulted the Troika for comments and reactions about the initial drafts of the Contribution and Conclusions on two occasions, firstly on 6 November 2023 and on 22 November, the latter to include five paragraphs on the situation in the Middle East. A revised version of the Contribution was made available to the Troika on 25 November, as a basis for the discussion at the meeting of the Presidential Troika.

She noted that several amendments to the draft Contribution had been put forward by delegations within the set deadline of 20 November and that the Presidency had distributed a table with those amendments. Moreover, she informed the Troika that the Presidency had tried to accommodate the majority of these amendments in the compromise text distributed ahead of the meeting, provided they were not contradictory with the original draft or addressed matters which were beyond the agenda of the LXX COSAC.

Ms Eliane TILLIEUX, Co-Chair of the Federal Advisory Committee on European affairs, Belgian *Chambre des représentants/Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers*, took the floor to address the situation in the Middle East, and the evolving nature of this conflict. She then reiterated an amendment put forward by the Belgian *Chambre des représentants/Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers*, advocating for what she considered to be a stronger position, namely calling for a “complete ceasefire” in this dispute, and that issues like the two-State solution and the recognition of Palestine should also be addressed.

Mr Hans WALLMARK, Chair of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Swedish *Riksdag*, considered that the text put forward by the Presidency was overall balanced and that reopening could bring new diverging amendments being drafted. He agreed with the relevance of the points raised by Ms Eliane TILLIEUX, but recalled that the truce being enforced at the time was conditional and that the situation amounted to a “very complicated puzzle”, reiterating the text present reflects the possible balance amongst all Member-States.

Mr Othmar KARAS expressed his understanding for the issues raised by Ms TILLIEUX, as a desirable outcome, but concurred in considering that the compromise text presented by the Presidency was balanced and reflected a clear majority, and therefore was advisable not to reopen it.

Mr José Ignacio LANDALUCE CALLEJA took the floor to reiterate that the text presented by the Presidency was the most appropriate to reflect the common position on this complex issue.

Mr Gaëtan VAN GOIDSENHOVEN, Co-Chair of the Federal Advisory Committee on European Affairs, Belgian *Sénat/Senaat*, also emphasised the evolving nature and complexity of this situation, noting the COSAC usually chose to adopt Contributions based on the lowest common denominator to express its common position.

Ms Eliane TILLIEUX acknowledged that the proposals made could not be endorsed at the Troika meeting, and then informed that the Belgian delegation would resubmit the amendments to the Plenary on the next day.

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN took note of the discussion and of the complexities surrounding the conflict in the Middle-East. She then mentioned that the draft Contribution and Conclusions were therefore noted by the Troika and would be circulated to all delegations.

6. LETTERS RECEIVED BY THE PRESIDENCY

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN recalled the following letters received by the Presidency requesting invitations to attend the COSAC meetings that were received before the Chairpersons meeting:

- Ms Benedikt WÜRTH, President of the Swiss delegation for relations with the European Parliament, Swiss *Assemblée fédérale*;
- Mr Masud GHARAHKHANI, President of the Norwegian *Stortinget*;
- Lord Peter RICKETTS, Chair of the European Union Committee, United Kingdom (UK) *House of Lords*;
- Bjarni JÓNSSON, Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Icelandic *Althingi*;
- Ms Maka BOTCHORISHVILI, Chair of the Committee on European Integration of the Georgian *Sakartvelos p'arlament'I*;
- Ms Rrezarta KRASNIQI, Chair of the Committee on European Integration, Kosovo¹ *Kuvendi i Kosovës*;
- Mrs Brigitte BOCCONE-PAGES, President of the Monaco *Conseil national*, and Mr Régis BERGONZI, National Councillor, President of the Commission for monitoring the negotiations with the European Union.

She also mentioned that ahead of the LXX COSAC meeting, letters requesting an invitation to attend the Plenary were also received from Sir William CASH, United Kingdom *House of Commons*, from Mr Arman YEGHOYAN, Chair of the Standing Committee on European Integration of the national Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, and from Ms Bernadeta COMA, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the *Consell General* of Andorra.

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN said that, following consultation with the Presidential Troika of COSAC, invitations had been extended to all the above-mentioned Parliaments to take part in the LXX COSAC.

She also alluded to the letter sent by Mr Glenn BEDINGFIELD, Chair of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee of the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, which was discussed in the framework of the previous point on the agenda.

All the letters mentioned were made available on [IPEX](#).

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244(1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN noted that this would be the last Troika meeting chaired by the Spanish *Cortes Generales* and gave the floor to Ms Eliane TILLIEUX and to Mr Gaëtan VAN GOIDSENHOVEN, as incoming Presidency of COSAC.

Ms TILLIEUX thanked the Spanish Presidency for all the work and achievements during the past semester, especially under the complex circumstances related to the general elections held in Spain in July 2023. She then referred to the challenges ahead for the Belgian Presidency, in the context of the elections for the European elections and for the Belgian elections, both scheduled for June 2024. For that reason, she informed the Troika that the parliamentary work in the Belgian Parliament will cease in May and therefore all the interparliamentary activities would take place between January and the beginning of April 2024.

Ms TILLIEUX then informed that the meeting of the COSAC Chairpersons would take place on 14 and 15 January 2024, in Namur, and that the LXXI COSAC would be held from 24 to 26 March, in Brussels. She noted that the incoming Presidency would be the last one of the current institutional cycle and that it would aim at building upon the achievements obtained during a very challenging legislature.

Mr VAN GOIDSENHOVEN pointed out that, for the first in its history, the COSAC Plenary would be at the premises of the European Parliament from 24 to 26 March 2024. He also identified some of the issues to be addressed, namely the new strategic agenda to be adopted by the European Council, gender balance and equality, Open Strategic Autonomy and the rule of Law.

Mr WALLMARK noted that this was the last Troika meeting attended by the Swedish *Riksdag*, thanking all the Troika members for all the cooperation in the past 18 months and wishing the incoming Presidency much success.

Mr KARAS also expressed his gratitude for the good and friendly working atmosphere amongst the Troika.

Ms SUMELZO JORDÁN and Mr LANDALUCE CALLEJA thanked all the Troika members for the good cooperation and concluded the meeting.