



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

NAMUR, BELGIUM, 14 JANUARY 2024

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIR: 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 Francisco José CONDE LÓPEZ, Chair of the Joint Committee for European Union Affairs, Spanish *Cortes Generales*, Mr Sergio GUTIÉRREZ PRIETO, Member of the Joint Committee for European Union Affairs, Spanish *Cortes Generales*;

Ms Judit VARGA, Chair of the Committee on European Union Affairs, Hungarian *Országgyűlés*;

Mr Othmar KARAS, First Vice-President, European Parliament, and Mr Charles GOERENS, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament.

AGENDA

PROCEEDINGS	1
1. Adoption of the draft agenda of the Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC	2
2. Approval of the draft programme of the Meeting of the COSAC Chairpersons	2
3. Discussion on the draft programme of the plenary meeting of the LXXI COSAC	3
4. Approval of the Outline of the 41st Bi-annual Report of COSAC	3
5. Letters received by the Presidency	3
6. Any other business	5

PROCEEDINGS

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF 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*, welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika").

Ms TILLIEUX welcomed delegations to Namur, the capital of the Belgian region of Wallonia, and explained that the Presidency chose to organise the meeting outside of Brussels in order to bring the EU and citizens closer together. Mr VAN GOIDSENHOVEN then continued by referring 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 MEETING OF THE COSAC CHAIRPERSONS

Ms TILLIEUX went on to refer to the [draft programme of the meeting of the COSAC Chairpersons](#) in Namur 14 to 15 January 2024, that had been circulated prior to the meeting. She briefly described the three sessions of the meeting of the COSAC Chairpersons, and mentioned the keynote speakers for each session, namely:

- Session I - The priorities of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU
Keynote speech by Ms Hadja LAHBIB, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade and the Federal Cultural Institutions of Belgium
Keynote speech by Mr Guy VERHOFSTADT, Member of the European Parliament
- Session II - The European Pillar of Social Rights
Keynote speech by Mr Pierre-Yves DERMAGNE, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Work
Keynote speech by Ms Bea CANTILLON, Professor emeritus in Sociology of the University of Antwerp
- Session III - Enlargement and its impact on the future of the EU
Keynote speech by Ms Ivanna KLYMPUSH-TSINTSADZE, Chair of the Committee on Ukraine's integration into the EU, Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*
Keynote speech by Ms Ramona COMAN, Professor in Political Science at the Université Libre de Bruxelles

There were no objections to the programme, which was thus approved by the troika.

3. DISCUSSION ON THE DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE LXXI COSAC

Ms TILLIEUX then referred to the proposed [draft agenda of the LXXI COSAC Plenary](#) scheduled for 24 to 26 March 2024, in Brussels, that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

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

- Review of the 2019-2024 European legislature and prospects for the Council's strategic agenda for 2024-2029;
- Gender policy and the representation of women in parliament;
- Open Strategic Autonomy: competitiveness and resilience;
- Democracy and the Rule of Law in Europe: the way ahead.

She underlined that the Presidency will strive to achieve a balance among the keynote speakers between experts in the field, representatives from the EU institutions, and national parliaments. The Presidency would also strive for a gender balance among invited keynote speakers.

Ms TILLIEUX concluded this point by noting the support of the Troika for the proposed draft agenda for the LXXI COSAC.

4. APPROVAL OF THE OUTLINE OF THE 41ST BI-ANNUAL REPORT OF COSAC

Mr VAN GOIDSENHOVEN presented the outline of the 41st Bi-annual Report of COSAC, which would be divided into three parts: the first chapter would be dedicated to a review of the 2019-2024 European legislature and prospects for the Council's strategic agenda for 2024-2029; the second chapter would be dedicated to gender policy and the representation of women in parliament; while the third chapter would be dedicated to the topic of democracy and the rule of law in Europe.

The questionnaire would be sent to delegations on 17 January 2024 at the latest, with replies expected by 8 February 2024, so that the Bi-annual Report for the scheduled COSAC plenary in March could be drawn up on time, to be presented by the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat at the LXXI COSAC.

The draft outline of COSAC's 41st Bi-annual Report was then approved by the Troika.

5. LETTERS RECEIVED BY THE PRESIDENCY

Mr VAN GOIDSENHOVEN recalled the following letters received by the Presidency requesting invitations to attend the COSAC meetings that were received before the Chairpersons meeting:

- Mr 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*;
- Ms Rrezarta KRASNIQI, Chair of the Committee on European Integration, Kosovo¹ *Kuvendi i Kosovës*.

These requests had been replied to favourably following a written consultation. They were made available on [IPEX](#).

He also mentioned that the Presidency had received a letter from Mr Ștefan MUȘOIU, Chair of the Committee for European Affairs of the Romanian *Camera Deputaților*. The letter contained a request to put the issue of addictive design of online services and consumer protection in the EU single market on the agenda of the LXXI COSAC. In light of the advanced stages of preparation for the LXXI COSAC Mr VAN GOIDSENHOVEN proposed, on behalf of the Presidency, that the question should be passed on to the upcoming Presidency. No objections were raised to this proposal.

Mr VAN GOIDSENHOVEN further reminded members of the Troika that as of December 2023, Georgia obtained the status of candidate country and should as such henceforth be invited to coming COSAC meetings.

Furthermore, Mr VAN GOIDSENHOVEN informed the Troika that the Presidency had received two letters from third parties. One letter was sent on behalf of EGMONT – Belgian Royal Institute for International Relations, jointly with the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TESPA). The two institutions would like to organise a lunch debate as a side event to the LXXI COSAC, inviting around 20 representatives from national parliaments to discuss democratic innovation and the resilience of the EU. The lunch would take place on 26 March in Brussels. The second letter referred to was a letter from the President of the Italian Council of the European Movement (*Movimento Europeo*), Mr Pier Virgilio DASTOLI. It contained a request to organise a conference on the sidelines of LXXI COSAC to discuss the future of Europe, the Multiannual Financial Framework and the process of revising the Lisbon Treaty. Mr VAN GOIDSENHOVEN explained that the proposal of the Presidency was that the co-chairs would examine these letters and inform the Troika in written form about their suggested line of action. Nobody objected to this proposal.

Lastly, Mr VAN GOIDSENHOVEN informed the Troika that the Presidency had also received a letter from Ms KLYMPUSH-TSINTSADZE, in which she asked the Presidency to

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.

consider the possibility of issuing a joint statement at the forthcoming COSAC Chairpersons meeting, condemning the recent Russian attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. Mr VAN GOIDSENHOVEN proposed to give the floor to Ms KLYMPUSH-TSINTSADZE during the agenda point on Procedural issues and miscellaneous matters of the COSAC Chairpersons meeting, in order for her to be able to elaborate on her letter. Ms TILLIEUX added that, having received the letter at a late stage, the Presidency did not consider itself in a position where it could endorse the request for a joint statement at the COSAC Chairpersons meeting. There was agreement within the Troika on this approach.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms VARGA took to the floor to thank the Presidency for the invitation to the meeting, and said that she was looking forward to working with the Troika, whose support she also counted on during the Hungarian Presidency in the autumn of 2024.

Mr CONDE LÓPEZ also thanked the Presidency for the invitation to the meeting, and expressed his wishes for a successful meeting. He extended his words of thanks to the Swedish delegation, who were now leaving the Troika, and to the COSAC Secretariat.

Mr KARAS welcomed Hungary to the Troika, and noted with satisfaction the good spirit of cooperation which had characterized the work in the Troika for the last several meetings. He expressed his hopes that cooperation in the Troika would continue to be collegial and trustful.

Mr GOERENS also took the floor to underline the importance of good cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament, and underlined the strong role national Parliaments can play within European cooperation.