

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC
Bratislava, Slovakia, 10 July 2016

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIR: Mr Ľuboš BLAHA, Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Slovak *Národná rada*.

Mr Martin KLUS, Vice-Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Slovak *Národná rada*, Mr Tuur ELZINGA, Chair of the Committee for European Affairs, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Mr Malik AZMANI, Chair of Committee for European Affairs, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, Mr Luciano BUSUTTIL, Chair of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*; and Mr Ramón Luis VALCÁRCEL SISO, Vice-President, European Parliament.

AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda of the meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC**
- 2. Approval of the draft programme of the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC**
- 3. Debate on the draft programme of the LVI COSAC**
- 4. Approval of the outline of the 26th Bi-annual Report of COSAC**
- 5. Letters received by the Presidency**
- 6. Any other business**

PROCEEDINGS

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

Mr Ľuboš BLAHA welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika"), especially the Maltese delegation participating for the first time in a Troika meeting.

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 Chairpersons of COSAC

Mr BLAHA outlined the three points on the programme of the meeting that would take place the following day. He referred first to the procedural and miscellaneous; then to the session on the priorities of the Slovak EU Council Presidency of the EU, which would be complemented by the remarks of the Sir William CASH, UK *House of Commons*, and Lord Timothy BOSWELL, UK *House of Lords*, on the outcome of the UK referendum; and finally to the session on the social dimension of the EU and Cohesion Policy - Triple A on social issues. Mr BLAHA explained the motivation when choosing the social dimension as the main topic for the meeting of the COSAC in the current outset and briefly presented three speakers invited for the session: Mr Mars DI BARTOLOMEO, President of the Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*, Mr Jan KELLER, Professor in Sociology and Member of the Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament and Ms Marianne THYSSEN, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility.

Mr VALCÁRCEL SISO appreciated the choice of topics and speakers, pointing out, however, that, as Mr KELLER was not a member of the European Parliament's delegation, his views would not be officially representing the views of the European Parliament.

The draft programme of the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC was approved without amendment.

3. Debate on the draft programme of the LVI COSAC

Mr BLAHA informed the Troika members that the LVI COSAC would take place on 13-15 November 2016 in the Bratislava castle. He then outlined the sessions of the draft programme and the keynote speakers. He stated that, drawing inspiration from the Dutch Presidency, the Slovak Presidency would make use of the panel format allowing for interaction between participants and experts. The first session of the programme would be devoted to the state of play of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union and introduced by Mr Robert FICO, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic. Strengthening the role of the national Parliaments in the context of the referendum on UK membership of the EU would be the second session with Mr TIMMERMANS, Vice-President of the European Commission, as keynote speaker and Ms Maria HÜBNER, Chair of the Constitutional Affairs Committee, European Parliament, as panellist who would introduce the topic of reforming the electoral act. Additionally, two other members of national Parliaments would be invited to the panel. The third session of the programme would be dedicated to challenges, opportunities and risks around the TTIP. Mr BLAHA reiterated that he would like to see the debate representing a variety of views. Invited speakers would include Mr Ignacio García BERCERO, EU chief negotiator on TTIP and Ms Susan GEORGE, political and social scientist who had already accepted the invitation, as keynote speakers. Mr Pieter OMTZIGT, Member of the Committee on European Affairs of the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, would form part of the panel together with another member of national Parliament and a representative of European Parliament. The fourth session on Energy Union's year of delivery would be introduced by Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President of the European Commission as a key note speaker. Mr Jerzy BUZEK, Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, European Parliament, and two member of national Parliaments yet to be confirmed would form the panel for discussion. Finally, the fifth session would focus on securing of the external borders of the EU in the context of irregular migration and would be introduced by Mr Robert KALIŇÁK, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic and Mr Fabrice LEGGERI, Executive Director of FRONTEX, as well as by two more panellists from national Parliaments to be confirmed.

Mr BLAHA added that he would like to see the debates in the plenary focused on politics rather than on technicalities. However, he saw no need in elaborating extensive contributions and expressed the Presidency's intention to present a brief and more general text facilitating adoption by consensus.

Mr ELZINGA welcomed the draft programme as presented and supported the format chosen allowing for more interactivity.

Mr VALCÁRCEL SISO, though he appreciated the choice of speakers, who included speakers from the European Parliament, warned that, due to the administrative rules of the European Parliament and the use of the D'Hondt system, certain invited speakers might not be part of the European Parliament delegation; the choice of the members constituting the European Parliament's delegation had not been decided yet. However, he observed that the speakers not forming part of the European Parliament delegation could always be invited at the margins of the delegation. He clarified that there would be no problem about Ms HÜBNER's participation as she was a permanent member of the delegation.

4. Approval of the outline of the 26th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Mr BLAHA reported that the first chapter would tackle the topic of TTIP with focus on transparency and role of national Parliaments in this regard, use of reading rooms; the second would deal with the Energy union; finally, the third would deal with the role of national Parliaments with the aim to

measure the improvements of the relations between the EC and national Parliaments in practice and it would focus on how the Parliaments communicate the European affairs. The questionnaire would be distributed by the end of July and the replies would be expected by 9 September 2016.

Mr ELZINGA asked whether there would be a link between the third chapter and session II of the LVI COSAC on strengthening the role of Parliaments. He also expressed his concern about the deadline for submitting replies to the questionnaire due to Parliaments' summer recess. On the first remark, Mr BLAHA responded that there would be an effort to link topics in the report with the debates, and, on the second, he underlined that the deadline was set according to previous practice and that practically there could be no alternative deadline.

The outline of the 26th Bi-annual Report of COSAC was approved without amendment.

5. Letters received by the Presidency

The Chair referred to the following letters received:

- Letters from Mr Olemic THOMMESSEN, President of the Norwegian *Storting*, Mr Thomas AESCHI, Member of the National Council, President of the EFTA/EU Delegation, Swiss *Assemblée fédérale* and Mr Levan BERDZENISHVILI, Chair of the Committee on European Integration, *Parliament of Georgia*, requesting participation in COSAC meetings. After consultation with the Troika, these Parliaments had been invited as special guests.
- A letter from Mr Carles ENSEÑAT, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, *Consell General* of Andorra, requesting to participate in the LVI COSAC. The Chair asked the members of Troika if there were any objections to inviting them. In the absence of objections, he informed that an invitation would be extended.

6. Any other business

No other business.