

Luxembourg, 29 June 2015

Dear colleagues,

LIII COSAC invited the Luxembourg Presidency to set up a working group on strengthening the political dialogue by introducing a "green card" and improving the reasoned opinion procedure ("yellow card").

Having regard to the "green card", the idea is to continue the work on identifying its scope and procedural framework while ensuring its compliance with the existing Treaty provisions and with the inter-institutional balance of powers and taking into account the green card proposal on Food Waste as described in a letter dating 12 June 2015 from Lord Timothy Boswell, Chairman of the House of Lords' European Union Committee.

Concerning the "yellow card", COSAC decided to further explore ways in which national Parliaments could make better use of the mechanisms available to them, taking into account proposals discussed by the working group which took place in Warsaw on 13 May 2015.

Delegates furthermore favoured better cooperation and coordination between national Parliaments in the conduct of subsidiarity checks. The idea of issuing an informal, voluntary and non-binding set of best practices and guidelines on how to draft reasoned opinions and contributions in the context of political dialogue was also addressed.

These guidelines should be elaborated within the framework of COSAC, taking into account the views expressed by Parliaments / Chambers not to standardise the format in which reasoned opinions and political dialogue contributions are drafted and submitted to the European Commission as well as the intention to leave these formal matters within the competence of respective Parliaments and their established internal procedural practices.

In order to set up the above-mentioned working group, COSAC Chairpersons should address the following aspects :

1) Composition of the working group

The Presidency suggests that each Parliament / Chamber of the Member States as well as the European Parliament should be represented at political level by one member, accompanied by one member of staff.

2) Scope

The working group should address the “green card” and the reasoned opinion procedure as decided during LIII COSAC in Riga. The Presidency suggests to also include in the discussions the idea of establishing non-binding guidelines on the drafting of reasoned opinions. The same could be done concerning contributions in the context of political dialogue.

3) Frequency of meetings

In order to limit costs, the Luxembourg Presidency suggests that meetings of the working group should be organized before or after COSAC meetings, by the Parliament of the Member State holding the Presidency.

4) Language regime

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English and in French, documents being circulated in the same languages.

5) Secretariat

The secretariat of the Presidency Parliament shall provide the secretariat for the working group assisted by the COSAC Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Marc Angel
Chairman of the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs,
Defence, Cooperation and Immigration