

## Stortinget

Mr. Vannino Chiti,  
Chairperson of the Standing Committee on European Union  
Policy of the Senate of the Republic

Mr. Michele Bordo,  
Chairperson of the Standing Committee on European Union  
Policy of the Chamber of Deputies

Norwegian Parliament

Date: 5 June 2014  
Our ref.: 2013/1674

Your ref.:

Dear Mr. Chiti and Mr. Bordo,

I am addressing you in your capacities as the incoming chairs of the EU Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC).

The president of the Senate of the Republic and the president of the Chamber of Deputies have kindly sent me the calendar of the inter-parliamentary meetings to be held during the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union this fall. By sending me the calendar, I assume they are aware that the chair and other representatives of the European Consultative Committee of the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget) for a number of years, and at the discretion of the COSAC chair, regularly have been invited as a "special guest" to the meetings of COSAC. Introduced during the Finnish EU Presidency in 1999, it has the last years been the practice of all COSAC chairs. This has proved fruitful, and I believe participation in these meetings has proven to be an arrangement of common value for all of us.

Though not a member of the European Union, Norway is closely associated with the EU through the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement. The agreement extends the Single Market of the EU to the three EEA EFTA Countries of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. The EEA Agreement also ensures our participation in EU's programmes. Moreover, Norway is a fully-fledged member of the Schengen cooperation and is through bilateral agreements taking part in a wide range of other EU activities including on crime prevention, migration and asylum. With the EU and Norway so deeply integrated we all share a common interest in increased cooperation and knowledge sharing. Participation in meetings like the COSAC meetings provides an opportunity to this end.

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The Lisbon Treaty has strengthened the parliamentary dimension in the cooperation within the European Union, including the co-operation between the European Parliament and National Parliaments. This development adds to the importance of maintaining close contacts also with National Parliaments of countries closely associated with the EU. The possibility to be present in a meeting like COSAC would obviously facilitate this as well as contribute to the broader European agenda.

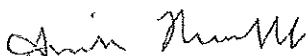
In this context, I would also refer to the agreement reached on the format of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Parliamentary Control of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy. As you know, European NATO members can be represented as observers at this conference.

I am aware that during the Italian presidency a COSAC chairperson meeting is taking place 17 – 18 July 2014 and a COSAC plenary meeting is taking place in 30 November – 2 December 2014. I would highly appreciate if you could consider extending an invitation to the Norwegian Parliament to these meetings. At the meeting in July, Norway would be represented by Mr. Øyvind Halleraker who is the vice chair of the European Consultative Committee and of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Norwegian Parliament.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success with the EU presidency of Italy during the next 6 months.

Looking forward to hearing from you on this matter, I remain,

Yours sincerely



Anniken Huitfeldt

Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence  
Chair of the European Consultative Committee