

27 August 2013

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE L COSAC MEETING

27-29 October 2013, Vilnius, Lithuania

Prepared by the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat

APPOINTMENT OF THE PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE COSAC SECRETARIAT

Background

The COSAC Secretariat is composed of officials from the Parliaments of the Presidential Troika (former, current and next Presidency Parliaments and the European Parliament) and a Permanent Member who supports the Secretariat in its activities. On 31 December 2013, the term of office of the incumbent Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, Ms Libby KURIEN, will expire. Ms KURIEN will not apply for the second term.

The Lithuanian Presidency called for applications for the post on 9 July 2013 inviting national Parliaments to propose candidates for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and submit their CVs, letters of motivation and letters of support from the Chairs of the relevant committees of national Parliaments. **The deadline for the applications is 10 September 2013.**

Applications have been received from 4 Parliaments.

The L COSAC to be held in Vilnius on 27-29 October 2013 should therefore aim to appoint the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for the next term (from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015).

Rules of Procedure

According to the Rule 9.3 of the Rules of Procedure of COSAC the Permanent Member "shall be an official of a National Parliament". The rule also provides for the appointment of the Permanent Member by the COSAC Chairpersons "on the proposal of the Presidential Troika".

Appointment of the Permanent Member for 2014–2015

On the 9 of July 2013 the Lithuanian Presidency has invited nominations for the post and has set out the principles underlying the selection and the nomination procedure.

The process will be conducted:

- in the spirit of impartiality, transparency and fairness;
- for the purpose of transparency the national Parliaments that have put forward candidates will be invited to observe proceedings;
- if any candidates are proposed by national Parliaments of the Presidential Troika, their representatives in the Troika will be asked to abstain from the decision-making process;
- the information provided on candidates will be made available to all COSAC delegations and will be posted on the COSAC website (www.cosac.eu) and the website of the Seimas (www.eu2013.lrs.lt).

History of the COSAC Secretariat

In Athens, Greece, in May 2003, COSAC agreed the formula for setting up a secretariat to facilitate its work. COSAC endorsed a set of guidelines proposing a secretariat composed of one Permanent Member and four members seconded from the three national Parliaments of the Presidential Troika (the previous, the current and the future Presidencies) and the European Parliament. The COSAC Secretariat was set up in January 2004, after the final decision had been taken by the XXX COSAC meeting in Rome, Italy, in November 2003.

The co-financing agreement on the Permanent Member was proposed by the Finnish Presidency at the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC held in September 2006. The COSAC Chairpersons meeting agreed to establish a reflection group on the issue of co-financing of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat in the future and to work on this question via electronic exchange of information.

At the XXXVI COSAC, held in Helsinki on 21-22 November 2006, the results of the working group on co-financing of the Permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat were debated. The German and the Portuguese delegations as representatives of the two incoming Presidencies supported the idea of co-financing as well as of stipulating the COSAC Secretariat in the Rules of Procedure. At this meeting, the required threshold (minimum of 14 national Parliaments) to move ahead with the co-financing had been achieved.

At the XXXVIII COSAC meeting in Estoril, Portugal, in October 2007 the revised Rules of Procedure were adopted and the Secretariat and its role were defined.

Previous terms

The post of the Permanent Member has been held by the following officials from national Parliaments:

- Mr Morten KNUDSEN, Danish *Folketing* (2004–2006);
- Ms Sarita KAUKAOJA, Finnish *Eduskunta* (2006–2008);
- Ms Loreta RAULINAITYTĖ, Lithuanian *Seimas* (2008–2009), (2010–2011);
- Ms Libby KURIEN, UK *House of Commons* (2012–2013).

History of the funding and recruitment of the Permanent Member

Mr KNUDSEN and Ms KAUKAOJA were seconded to the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, which was fully funded by their national Parliaments. Ms RAULINAITYTĖ was the first Permanent Member the post of whom was partly funded under the co-financing agreement.

Towards the end of the two year term of Ms KAUKAOJA, no candidate was put forward for the post of the Permanent Member within the deadline set. It was therefore agreed by the Presidential Troika meeting in Lisbon on 14 October 2007 to postpone the decision on the appointment of the next Permanent Member for the period 2008-2010 until the COSAC Chairpersons meeting held in Ljubljana on 18 February 2008.

At the meeting, the Presidential Troika proposed the candidacy of Ms Loreta RAULINAITYTĖ, who was appointed by the COSAC Chairpersons.

In the case of Ms Libby KURIEN, the Presidential Troika could not make a proposal to the COSAC Chairpersons on the appointment of the Permanent Member. It was therefore decided that the Chairpersons hear short presentations from the two candidates and then vote on the two candidates, resulting in the appointment of Ms KURIEN.

Status of the co-financing agreement and letters of intent

According to Rule 9.5 of the Rules of Procedure of COSAC, the cost of seconding the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat to Brussels and other necessary technical costs of the COSAC Secretariat are jointly borne by Parliaments wishing to contribute. The amount and terms of payment under the co-financing procedure are defined in an agreement amongst the participating Parliaments. The Secretariat is hosted by the European Parliament in its offices in Brussels.

In order to ensure continued co-financing for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, the Irish Presidency, in the first half of 2013, undertook to renew the current co-financing agreement for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015. At the time of writing 31 Chambers from 23 national Parliaments have signed and sent their letters of intent indicating that they were willing to participate in the co-financing for the above stated period (which will cover the coming two-year term of the Permanent Member). This number is above the minimum threshold and, therefore, there is agreement that the post will continue to be funded. Those who have yet to respond have been invited to do so at their earliest convenience.