



# Stortinget

## Norwegian Parliament

Mr. Averof Neofytou  
Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign and  
European Affairs

House of Representatives  
1402 Nicosia  
CYPRUS

Date: 14 June 2012

Our ref.:

Your ref.:

Dear Mr. Neofytou,

I am addressing you in your capacity as the incoming Chair of the EU Conference of Community and European Affairs of the Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC).

As you may be aware, the Chair of the European Consultative Committee of the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget) has for a number of years, and at the discretion of the COSAC chair, regularly been invited as a “special guest” to the meetings of COSAC. This practice was introduced during the Finnish EU Presidency in 1999 and has later been adopted by most COSAC chairs. This has proven to be an arrangement of common value.

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 co-operation and is through bilateral agreements taking part in a wide range of other EU activities including crime prevention, migration and asylum.

The Lisbon Treaty has strengthened the parliamentary dimension in the co-operation 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 in April by the speakers of the European Union Parliaments on the format of the new Inter-Parliamentary conference which will undertake parliamentary control of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU. We welcome the opportunity for European non-EU NATO members to be represented as observers at the conference, and I look forward to participating at the first of these conferences in Cyprus in September. I am of course very much welcoming the opportunity this gives Norwegian parliamentarians to participate at this important new conference.

It is my understanding that the next COSAC meeting will be taking place at Cyprus 14 – 16 October 2012. I would highly appreciate if you could consider extending an invitation as a special guest to me in my capacity as Chair of the European Consultative Committee of the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget).

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success with the EU presidency of Cyprus this autumn.

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

Yours sincerely



Ine M. Eriksen Søreide  
Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence  
Chair of the European Consultative Committee