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CONTRIBUTION OF THE XLVI
Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs
of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC)
Warsaw, 2-4 October 2011

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1. Multiannual Financial Framework

1.1. Having regard to the ongoing economic and financial crisis, the problems of excessive budget deficits forcing many Member States to implement far-reaching austerity programmes, and social unrest feeding euroscepticism on the one hand, and the growing needs and challenges related to sustainable economic development of the European Union, the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy and keeping up with global competition on the other hand, COSAC supports the efforts of the EU institutions resulting in the proposed the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020, which will provide a development impetus to the European Union.

1.2. COSAC considers it necessary to simplify and increase the transparency of the rules and procedures related to the accumulation, allocation and utilisation of the European Union's own resources and encourages the EU institutions to take appropriate measures in this area.

1.3. COSAC has been carefully analysing proposals for the establishment of different types of European taxes which would provide a new source of revenue for the EU budget. COSAC takes the view that in the period of recovery from the crisis new instruments should not impose an increased financial burden on the private sector or on individuals. In certain cases, such measures could also distort the level playing field between EU entities and their global competitors.

1.4. In the light of the complexity of the current circumstances and the number of problems relating to the need to improve the planning, approval and performance of the future EU budgets, COSAC encourages the competent institutions to accelerate the legislative work in this area and, where possible, to undertake more frequent and extensive social consultations.

1.5. COSAC encourages the EU institutions to develop and adopt the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020 that will enable the medium and long-term EU policies to be fully implemented in compliance with the European principle of solidarity.

2. **Two years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon – parliamentary experience**

2.1 COSAC notes with satisfaction its first debate on the evaluation of parliamentary experience and best practice two years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

2.2 COSAC welcomes active involvement of national Parliaments in subsidiarity checks under Protocol 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality of the Treaty of Lisbon. National Parliaments have taken different points of view on the practical implementation of the principle of subsidiarity. COSAC believes that national Parliaments and the EU institutions should actively exchange information and their existing practices on the application of Protocol 2, and that its application should become more specific as part of a continuous dialogue between all parties concerned.

2.3 In accordance with Article 5 of Protocol 2, COSAC underlines that for national Parliaments to exercise the powers vested in them it is necessary to enable the financial effects of EU draft legislative acts to be evaluated. Moreover, COSAC recalls that EU draft legislative acts should be justified on the basis of qualitative and quantitative indicators.

2.4 COSAC notes the concerns of national Parliaments with the quality and independent nature of impact assessments of EU draft legislative acts which at times are considered to be schematic and not satisfactory in substance. COSAC draws attention to the suggestion by a number of national Parliaments to have the full text of impact assessments translated into all official languages of the EU.

2.5 COSAC welcomes the debate it held on the cooperation of national Parliaments with the European Commission. COSAC requests the European Commission to take the results of the debate into account in the

Commission's own evaluation of the state of the Union and in preparing the Commission's Work Programmes.

2.6 In principle COSAC is satisfied with national Parliaments' close and open cooperation with the European Commission, established under the Treaty of Lisbon. The informal political dialogue between the European Commission and national Parliaments will contribute to strengthening the parliamentary dimension in the EU decision process.

2.7 COSAC calls upon the European Commission to provide more precise and substantive replies to reasoned opinions on EU draft legislative acts. Many national Parliaments consider that the European Commission's replies should focus to a greater extent on specific doubts expressed in reasoned opinions submitted by national Parliaments.

2.8 COSAC notes the concerns voiced by numerous national Parliaments, some of them in reasoned opinions, that the powers granted to the European Commission to regulate by means of delegated acts are too extensive. COSAC notes that this may lead to a situation where essential elements of an area, reserved for the EU draft legislative acts, will be outside the scope of control of national Parliaments.

2.9 Having regard to further interparliamentary cooperation, COSAC stresses the importance of intensified communication as part of the dialogue and exchange of information and best practice between the European Affairs Committees of national Parliaments of the EU Member States.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE XLVI
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1. Appointment and Co-financing of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat

1.1 COSAC thanks Ms Loreta Raulinaitytė for four years of intensive and fruitful work as the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat. During her two terms of office, Ms Loreta Raulinaitytė has performed her duties in reliable, diligent and committed manner, contributing to the tightening and development of interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union.

1.2 COSAC welcomes the decision taken by the Chairpersons at its plenary meeting held in Warsaw on 3 October 2011 to appoint Ms/Mr ……., …….. as a new Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for the term of office of two years from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2013 in accordance with Rule 9.3 of the COSAC Rules of Procedure.

1.3 COSAC welcomes letters of intent from 38 Parliaments/Chambers expressing their commitment to co-finance the position of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and the running of the COSAC office and website.

1.4 Moreover, COSAC is grateful to the European Parliament for providing the COSAC Secretariat with appropriate office facilities on its premises in Brussels.

2. Bi-annual Report

2.1 COSAC welcomes the 16th Bi-annual Report prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and thanks the Secretariat for its excellent work. The Report provides comprehensive information on the present and future role of national Parliaments in cooperation with governments and their scrutiny within the process of establishing the new Multiannual Financial Framework of the EU attuned to the objectives of the Europe 2020

Strategy, and the evaluation of parliamentary experience and best practices in the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon.

2.2 COSAC is convinced that the 16th Bi-annual Report will provide a valuable source of information on interparliamentary cooperation and set new directions for national Parliaments' further cooperation with the EU institutions.

3. IPEX website

3.1 COSAC thanks the IPEX Board for launching the upgraded IPEX website on 28 June 2011 and welcomes the new technological facilities offered by the new platform.

3.2 COSAC encourages national Parliaments to timely publish and regularly update the information posted on the IPEX website. The provision of comprehensive and reliable information will contribute to better and more effective interparliamentary cooperation.

3.3 COSAC believes that efficient interparliamentary exchange of information via IPEX makes citizens familiar with the functioning of the European Union and enhances their awareness of EU matters.