



**ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

COSAC Presidency

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National Assembly
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Of. nº 162/4^a-CAE – Ref^a 17.1
N.U. 397444

19 May 2011

Subject: Amendments to COSAC's rules of procedure

Dear Colleague,

First of all I would like to thank you for your work, as current Presidency, regarding the proposal to amend the rules of procedure of COSAC according to the Treaty of Lisbon.

I would specifically like to express my general support to your proposal, though I would also draw your attention to the following aspects:

- As far as the acronym "COSAC" is concerned, it should be updated to "COSAU" as the term "Community" was replaced by "Union" in the Treaty of Lisbon, both as a legal and a political concept;
- On the new proposed point 3.2. (Observers from the Parliaments of candidate countries), I would like to congratulate the Presidency proposal by including two observers to the Chairpersons meetings which prepare the COSAC's agenda (in order to give the opportunity of the delegations to be constituted both by a Member of the ruling party and the opposition party);
- Concerning the new 5.1. (Agenda), the updated formulation should be completed as follows "The Presidential Troika, paying due account to the provisions of Article 10 of Title II – interparliamentary cooperation - of the Protocol on the Role of National Parliaments...";
- I do support the changes regarding point 6 (Languages), in line with the COSAC tradition and with the importance of the diversity of the EU official languages.



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In what concerns the Danish Folketinget proposals, I would point out the following remarks:

- Regarding the “troika” and “trio” concept (2.5.), although I agree with the changes proposed, I would like to underline the fact that every time a Trio is replaced by another Trio, there is no national Parliament which may ensure the memory and the coherence of the COSAC’s activities. Therefore, and considering the Danish Folketinget proposal, it would be rather useful to choose a *Quartetplus* solution (Quartet + the last Parliament from the former EU trio Presidency, ex. regarding the next Trio: Poland, Denmark, Cyprus + EP + Hungary) to guarantee the coordination and the continuity of the work which is now being developed;
- I would like to express my general agreement with the proposal on point 4.1. (composition of the national Parliament’s delegations to COSAC), which tends to evolve in the sense of giving the possibility – not the obligation – to internalise EU Affairs within each national Parliament. In fact, by giving the possibility to adjust the composition of the COSAC delegation with the content of the programme (ex. for a debate on economic recovery, the delegation of some national Parliaments could be constituted with a Member from the Economic Committee), it could contribute to a rather widespread debate, before and after the COSAC meetings, in other parliamentary committees. In the same line goes the point 1.2. of the Presidency proposal, which includes “their special committees” in the text. This should be, I believe, the trend of our parliamentary approach towards EU Affairs;
- As far as point 5.1./ 2.9 (Convocation) is concerned, both proposals (Presidency and Danish Folketinget) should be connected (no. 1 and no. 2 of the same article) and including the reference to Article 10 of the Protocol on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union to the Treaty of Lisbon. In my view, it should be clear that every type of COSAC meeting should be convened by the Presidency Parliament.

Finally, Lord Roper’s letter expresses a good starting point for our debate, either to approve just an updated version of the COSAC’s rules of procedures or a slightly further proposal in line both with our experience in COSAC debates and with the spirit of the Treaty of Lisbon regarding the role of national Parliaments in the EU.

Following the above mentioned, and as stated in a letter sent to the Belgian Presidency, on 30 June 2010, I would like to share my views on some aspects which could contribute to improve the functioning of COSAC plenary meetings. For instance, precise rules should be established to the debate on the Contribution and Conclusions of COSAC in order to focus the discussions on issues of no political relevance. For that reason, a possible suggestion regarding the procedures could be as follows:

- The draft contribution and conclusions should be distributed beforehand, within a reasonable delay;
- The deadline for amendments should be clearly defined, ending before the troika meeting held previously to the COSAC meeting itself;
- New topics proposed by delegations can only be accepted when the Presidency accepts to submit them;
- Amendments proposed during the meeting must be supported by, at least, ¼ of the delegations;



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- These amendments are proposed and immediately subject to a vote, without prolonging the period for debate.

As President in office of COSAC, I would like to draw your attention to these issues, hoping that we can improve even further the works of COSAC, focusing our work on specific topics which bring added value to our EU affairs monitoring and scrutiny activities.

I would be grateful if you could bring this letter to the attention of the participating committee delegations and their advisers.

Wishing you a very successful Presidency and COSAC meeting,

Yours sincerely,

(Vitalino Canas)
Chairman on the European Affairs Committee