

Outline of the 15th Bi-Annual Report of COSAC on Procedures and Practices Relevant to Parliamentary Scrutiny

(adopted by the Chairpersons of COSAC on 11 February 2011 in Budapest)

Input of national Parliaments and the European Parliament to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU economic governance and to the elaboration of the Commission Work Programme 2012

National Parliaments acquired further competences to influence EU decision-making following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. However, what is just as significant, an exchange of views with the EU institutions is getting to be more and more frequent and the number of communication channels is growing as well. In addition, both national Parliaments and the European Parliament are working together to develop an effective and regular inter-parliamentary cooperation.

Based on the Contribution and Conclusions of both the XLIII and XLIV COSAC meetings, it is increasingly important for Parliaments to discuss politically significant issues in the framework of COSAC, which gives them a possibility to seize the above mentioned opportunity.

Analysing the parliamentary views on the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy is not only important for the European Commission (as expressed by Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission in his speech at the XLIV COSAC meeting), but also for COSAC itself. It gives an opportunity to all participants of COSAC to share their views which can have an ex-ante influence on the economic issues listed below.

The Europe 2020 Strategy, economic governance in the EU and the European Semester are core initiatives to be formulated and implemented properly in order to overcome the present difficult situation in Europe and turn it into a prosperous and sustainable continent of cooperation. The requisite measures were prepared or decided upon throughout the year 2010. The Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first semester of 2011 placed the implementation of those decisions high on its agenda.

The European Commission published its first Annual Growth Survey on 12 January 2011. Decision-making bodies of the EU at all levels – including Parliaments – now have the first opportunity to assess whether the measures taken are pointing in the right direction and whether those measures have the right emphasis. As a matter of fact, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity European level policy making and actions – like those of Member States – can and must have real influence in helping citizens anticipate and react to rapidly changing social and economic circumstances.

The aim of this Bi-annual Report is to collect and analyse the first opinions of national Parliaments and the European Parliament on the objectives of these measures and their implementation in order to provide input by the Parliaments into their further development. The objective is also to verify whether the proposals for the European Semester and the economic governance package provide sufficient room for national level democratic scrutiny and for a strong parliamentary involvement.

Focus should also be put on the Commission Work Programme 2012 in order to provide parliamentary input into its preparation as early as possible. This would enable the European Commission to form its further initiatives in accordance with the early opinions of the Parliaments. This cooperation would contribute to a more coherent and executable decision-making in the EU.

The conclusions of the 15th Bi-annual Report could serve as a basis for the European Commission and other EU institutions to assess whether their actions are supported at the parliamentary level. By involving Parliaments, the voice of citizens will be better heard in the EU decision-making process.