



COSAC Chairpersons



Stockholm 5–6 July 2009

Note on the co-financing of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat and the costs of running the office and website of COSAC and on the appointment of the permanent member (as of 22 June 2009)

English

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Prepared by the Swedish Presidency and presented to:
Meeting of COSAC Chairpersons 6 July 2009 in Stockholm

Introduction and proposal

In a note from the COSAC Secretariat to the Chairpersons' Meeting in Prague on 9-10 February 2009, it was pointed out that the **present agreement on co-financing would expire at the end of 2009¹**, and that the issue of co-financing from 1 January 2010 needed to be dealt with as soon as possible.

The COSAC Chairpersons concluded that it was necessary to start a discussion on the continuation or revision of the co-financing scheme. This was confirmed in the conclusions of the XLI COSAC in May 2009, in which COSAC asked the incoming Swedish Presidency to continue the process with a view to finding an agreement during the second half of 2009.

Since the issue of co-financing is closely linked to that of appointing the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat for the period starting in mid-February 2010, this note addresses these issues in an integrated manner.

¹ For details, please see the Note on Co-financing, at:
<http://cosac.eu/en/meetings/Prague2009/presidents.pdf/>

The Swedish Presidency proposes the following decision:

- The present co-financing scheme should be continued until 31 December 2011.
- National parliaments should be invited to send the COSAC Presidency in office a letter of intent, indicating their willingness to participate in the co-financing scheme until 31 December 2011.
- The aim should be to appoint the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat for the next term of office at the XLII COSAC in Stockholm.
- The term of office should be coordinated with the co-financing scheme.

Under the present co-financing scheme, Parliaments/Chambers willing to contribute to certain costs for the permanent member of the Secretariat, and for the running of the COSAC office and the website, should indicate this by sending a letter of intent to the Presidency in office². The commitment will be valid only if national parliaments of at least thirteen other Member States make a similar commitment. The maximum expenditure is € 80,000 per year and the maximum contribution of a national parliament is € 5,714.29 per year.³

² The scheme follows the recommendations given by a Working Group in its report to the XXXVI COSAC in Helsinki, November 2007. Please see Report of the COSAC Working Group at: <http://cosac.eu/en/meetings/helsinki2006/ordinary/>

³ 1/14th of € 80,000

Appointment of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat

The permanent member provides continuity and stability to the COSAC Secretariat, which otherwise consists of rotating staff from the Troika member parliaments, who normally devote most of their time to other tasks. The present permanent member (Ms. Loreta Raulinaityte) was appointed “for two years from 18 February 2008”, and **the term of office thus expires in mid-February 2010.**

In order to avoid a vacancy and allow sufficient advance notice, COSAC should aim at deciding on the (re-) appointment⁴ of the permanent member for the next two-year period at the XLII COSAC in Stockholm. (The next opportunity will be the Chairpersons’ Meeting of the Spanish Presidency, which is scheduled for early February 2010, about two weeks before the expiry of the present term.)

The co-financing scheme

In any case, it is essential to secure continued co-financing from January 2010 onwards. The incoming Swedish Presidency has considered alternative options and concluded that it is unlikely that a substantially different scheme could be elaborated, agreed and signed by a sufficient number of national parliaments/chambers before the end of this year. The Presidency therefore **proposes that the present scheme be continued.**

That means that the **commitments made for 2010** by a number of parliaments (8 Parliaments and 2 Chambers) **remain in force**, and that a

⁴ According to art. 11 bis of the Rules of Procedure, the permanent member shall remain in office for two years with the possibility of one renewal.

minimum of 6 renewed/prolonged commitments are necessary to secure co-financing for 2010. As of September 2008 all national parliaments had indicated their willingness to participate in the scheme, although for different periods of time. It seems probable that a large majority would be prepared to prolong their commitments for at least one or two more years.

Coordinating co-financing and term of office for the permanent member

Parliaments should know the financial implications (i.e. will there be co-financing or not?) **for the whole term of office** when they consider nominating the permanent member of the Secretariat. Changing the permanent member at the turn of the year fits the meeting pattern of COSAC better than it would a few months into a new Presidency, and it is easier to administer a co-financing system in which contributions as well as expenditure are based on calendar years.

It is therefore proposed that the new/prolonged co-financing scheme and the next term of office of the permanent member of the Secretariat should continue until 31 December 2011.

In late 2010 or early 2011 it may be appropriate, in the light of the development of COSAC and of interparliamentary cooperation generally, to review the functions of the COSAC Secretariat and the co-financing scheme, which would then have been in place for about three years. A decision to carry out such a review can be taken at a later stage.

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