

9 February 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**



Prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and presented to:

Meeting of the COSAC Chairpersons

10 February 2009
Prague

Co-financing of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat and the costs of running the office and website of COSAC

National parliaments have committed themselves to co-financing the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat and the costs of running the office and website of COSAC for different periods of time. In most cases, the **commitments will expire at the end of 2009**. Therefore, the issue of continued co-financing from 1 January 2010 needs to be dealt with as soon as possible. This note sets out the present situation and some possible solutions.

The Conclusions of the XXXVI COSAC in Helsinki on 20-21 November 2006 state that **a majority of national parliaments had expressed a will to contribute** to the expenses incurred by the national parliament sending an official to the post of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat from January 2008.

At the COSAC Chairpersons' meeting in Berlin on 11 February 2007 national parliaments were asked to send signed **letters of intent** to the Presidency indicating their willingness to contribute towards co-financing the next permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat. The letters of intent were collected by the following four COSAC Presidencies: German, Portuguese, Slovenian and French.

The amended Rules of Procedure of COSAC, published in the Official Journal of the European Union¹ on 31 January 2008, provide that the cost of seconding the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat to Brussels and other necessary technical costs of the Secretariat are jointly borne by those Parliaments wishing to contribute. The amount and terms of payment for the co-financed expenditure are defined in **an agreement** between the participating parliaments².

As of September 2008, **all national parliaments have indicated their willingness** to take part in the co-financing of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat and the costs of running the office and website of COSAC. Out of 27 national parliaments, 19 national parliaments accepted the co-financing conditions recommended in the Report of the Working Group on co-financing of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat presented to the XXXVI COSAC meeting in Helsinki.

More specifically, **19 national parliaments** agreed to participate in the co-financing from **1 January 2008 until 31 December 2009** provided that at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment, the maximum expenditure is € 80,000 per year and the maximum contribution of one national parliament does not exceed € 5,714.29 per year³.

2 national parliaments committed themselves to co-financing **from 1 January 2009**, while **1** national parliament committed itself **from 1 January 2008 until 31 January 2009**. **5** national parliaments and **2** chambers agreed to participate in the co-financing **until 31 December 2010**, while **3** national parliaments did not specify the final term of their commitment (see Table on p. 4-8).

¹ OJ 2008/ C 27/02.

² Rule 11 bis of the Rules of Procedure of COSAC.

³ The amount of € 5,714.29 equals to the maximum expenditure of € 80,000 divided by 14, i.e. the minimum number of participating national parliaments.

Consequently, the incurred, approved and audited expenses of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat and the costs of running the office and website of COSAC in the years 2008-2009 will be divided as follows:

- in 2008, between 25 national parliaments;
- in 2009, between 26 national parliaments, except the expenses incurred in January 2009, which will be divided among 27 national parliaments.

The *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania seconded an official, Ms. Loreta Raulinaitytė, to serve as the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat for the period **from 15 April 2008 to 18 February 2010**⁴.

According to the request expressed in letters of intent from the participating parliaments, after the end of the year to which the contribution refers, i.e. **at the beginning of 2009**, the Lithuanian *Seimas* will present a report of its approved expenditure for maintaining the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat and the costs of running the office and the website of COSAC (i.e. from 15 April 2008 until 31 December 2008) to the national parliaments. It will also certify that the expenditure has been accounted and audited according to the rules of the *Seimas*. This report will be provided with the request for payment.

The commitment of the majority of national parliaments to participate in the co-financing **expires on 31 December 2009**. It is therefore important that COSAC decides on the future of the co-financing this year, preferably during the COSAC Chairpersons' meeting in Stockholm in July 2009. Since the two-year term in office of the current permanent member ends on **18 February 2010**, the XLII COSAC in Stockholm will have to appoint the next permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat. Therefore it is important that the amount and terms of payment for the co-financing of the expenditure are defined during the Swedish Presidency.

One possible solution would be to invite national parliaments to send to the COSAC Presidency a **new letter of intent**, specifying a new commitment period or leaving it open. Another solution would be to **sign an agreement** provided for in the COSAC Rules of Procedure. A third solution could involve participating parliaments **transferring** to the national parliament seconding its official to the post of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat their yearly **contributions before the start of the year** with any unused amounts being carried over to the next year (as the arrangement for co-financing the IPEX information officer). This final option would be easier for the national parliament seconding its official than the present one.

⁴ Although the COSAC Chairpersons' meeting in Ljubljana appointed Ms. Loreta Raulinaitytė to the post of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat on 18 February 2008, it was not until 15 April 2008 that Ms. Raulinaitytė performed the dual functions of the Permanent Representative of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania to the EU and the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat.

**Letters of intent
on the co-financing of the permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat and
the costs of running the office and website of COSAC**

Country	Parliament or Chamber	Date of the letter of intent	Commitment from	Commitment until	Comments
Austria	<i>Nationalrat and Bundesrat</i>	18 04 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 5.714,29 per year.
Belgium	<i>Chambre des Représentants</i>	30 04 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 2.857,15 per year.
Belgium	<i>Sénat</i>	28 03 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 2.857,15 per year.
Bulgaria	<i>Narodno Sabranie</i>	03 04 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 5.714,29 per year.
Cyprus	<i>Vouli Ton Antiprosopon</i>	18 09 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year.
Czech Republic	<i>Poslanecká Sněmovna and Senát</i>	19 09 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 5.714,29 per year.

Denmark	<i>Folketinget</i>	02 10 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 5.714,29 per year.
Estonia	<i>Riigikogu</i>	15 02 2008	01 01 2009	-	-
Finland	<i>Eduskunta</i>	18 09 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2010	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year.
France	<i>Sénat</i>	25 04 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of both Houses of the French Parliament € 5.714,29 per year.
France	<i>Assemblée nationale</i>	30 07 2007	2008	2010	Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year.
Germany	<i>Bundestag</i>	-	01 01 2008	31 12 2010	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 9 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year.
Germany	<i>Bundesrat</i>	17 07 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution € 2.857,15 per year.
Greece	<i>Vouli ton Ellinon</i>	23 08 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 5.714,29 per year.

Hungary	<i>Országgyűlés</i>	03 04 2008	01 01 2008	31 12 2010	The share is to be calculated by dividing the actual costs by the number of parliaments taking part in the co-financing.
Ireland	<i>Houses of the Oireachtas</i>	28 03 2008	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of both <i>Houses of the Oireachtas</i> of € 5.714,29 per year.
Italy	<i>Camera dei Deputati and Senato della Repubblica</i>	-	01 01 2008	31 01 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution: an equal share of the actual yearly expenditure depending on the number of parliaments committed to the co-financing.
Latvia	<i>Saeima</i>	17 09 2008	01 01 2009	31 12 2010	Max contribution € 2.963 per year.
Lithuania	<i>Seimas</i>	04 05 2007	2008	2010	-
Luxembourg	<i>Chambre des Députés</i>	13 03 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 5.714,29 per year.
Malta	<i>Kamra Tad-Deputati</i>	05 05 2007	-	-	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 5.714,29 per year.
The Netherlands	<i>The Staten-Generaal</i>	20 09 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of the <i>Staten Generaal</i> € 5.714,29 per year.

Poland	<i>Sejm and Senat</i>	26 04 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year.
Portugal	<i>Assembleia da República</i>	09 07 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 5.714,29 per year.
Romania	<i>Camera Deputatilor and Senatul</i>	09 05 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of the Parliament of Romania is € 5.714,29 per year.
Slovakia	<i>Narodna Rada</i>	11 05 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 5.714,29 per year.
Slovenia	<i>Džavni svet and Državni zbor</i>	16 07 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2010	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year.
Spain	<i>Congreso de los Diputados and Senado</i>	20 09 2007	-	-	-
Sweden	<i>Riksdag</i>	04 18 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of € 5.714,29 per year.
UK	<i>House of Commons</i>	04 07 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of

					€ 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of both Houses of Parliament is € 5.714,29 per year.
UK	<i>House of Lords</i>	06 07 2007	01 01 2008	31 12 2009	The commitment is valid only if the national parliaments of at least 13 other Member States make a similar commitment. Maximum expenditure of € 80.000 per year. Maximum contribution of both Houses of Parliament is € 5.714,29 per year.