

**Outline of COSAC's 9th biannual report
on procedures and practices relevant to parliamentary scrutiny
(to be presented to the XXXIX COSAC in Bled in May 2008)**

Chapter 1: Involvement of national parliaments in the ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty

This chapter will give the state of play of the on-going procedures in the Member States as they seek to ratify the Lisbon Treaty by the end of 2008. A table will set out the timetable and the legal and institutional requirements in each State. This table will be made available on the COSAC website and will be updated as the ratification process progresses.

Most Member States will seek to ratify the Treaty through a parliamentary vote; currently only Ireland expects to hold a referendum. This reinforces the notion that national Parliaments are at the centre of the ratification process. Given this background, this chapter will also give a description of parliamentary initiatives which have been taken with a view to providing citizens with information on the Lisbon Treaty. It will set out the means by which parliaments have decided to provide information (for example through public debates, publication and distribution of summaries, event organisation, and partnerships with other European or national institutions) and will examine the content of their communication strategy.

Chapter 2: The Lisbon Treaty - implementation and its consequences for the national Parliaments of the EU

This chapter will examine the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty which concern the role of national Parliaments in the EU. It will focus not only on the mechanism envisaged in both the Protocol on the role of national Parliaments in the EU and in the Protocol on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, but also on the other features contained in the Lisbon Treaty which concern the influence of national Parliaments in the EU.

An overview of the enhanced role of the European Parliament will also be presented.

Particular attention will be given to the way parliaments are preparing themselves at this stage for the challenges posed by the Lisbon Treaty. Particular attention will be paid to the cooperation and exchange of information and best practice amongst all concerned. The chapter will also take a strategic look at the ways how, in practice, parliaments can exert the influence that the Treaty grants them.

Chapter 3: The Lisbon Strategy

This chapter will follow up and build on the 8th Bi-annual report (October 2007) which analysed the role of national Parliaments and the European Parliament in the Lisbon Strategy.

Its objective is to (a) provide factual information on the progress of the Strategy in view of the commencement of the new cycle (2008-2010), (b) present the relevant results of the upcoming Spring European Council, and (c) highlight the broad trends in parliamentary positions as they

become apparent in annual inter-parliamentary dialogue between national Parliaments and the European Parliament in the run-up to the Spring Council.

Chapter 4: - Enlargement of the Schengen area

This chapter will examine the degree to which parliaments of the European Union are involved in the Schengen process. It will define the ways national parliaments seek to exercise control.

The establishment of a single area with free movement of persons, to be successful, requires a definition of security rules inside the new external borders. Therefore this chapter will emphasise not only the understanding that national parliaments have of the criteria for enlargement, but also the role they intend to play in defining the security rules which aim to maintain public order inside the Schengen area (data exchange, measures dealing with migration topics or fight against terrorism).

However, such security rules may also undermine individual freedoms (for instance the respect for private life). This chapter will gather the views of national parliaments on this question as a way to give an overview of the national debates on these issues.

Chapter 5: Involvement of the parliaments of the European Union in negotiations on accessions to the EU

Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union states that any European State which respects the principles set out in Article 6(1) of it may apply to become a member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members.

It furthermore stipulates that the conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the Union is founded, which such admission entails, shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the Applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.

When involvement of the parliaments of the EU is in question, the accession process could be seen as a threefold structure, comprised of an opening phase, a phase of monitoring the progress of the negotiations chapter by chapter, and a phase of concluding the accession with ratification of an accession treaty.

The aim of this chapter is to establish whether and how the parliaments of the EU are involved in the accession negotiations with applicant states in each of these phases. The chapter will also seek to identify possible special or unusual features of national constitutions which would be required for the ratification of an accession treaty.