

**Outline of the COSAC's 8th biannual report
on procedures and practices relevant to parliamentary scrutiny
(to be presented to the XXXVIII COSAC in Estoril in October 2007)**

**Chapter 1: Overview of the EU scrutiny systems of the National Parliaments of EU
27**

This chapter will aim to provide a short presentation of the different scrutiny systems of European Union Affairs in the National Parliaments of the 27 member states. There will be a particular focus on how the National Parliaments see their influence vis-à-vis their governments. This chapter will also focus on other aspects of EU scrutiny. An attempt will be made to categorise different scrutiny systems by looking at what the National Parliaments are scrutinising (documents and/or procedures), who the subjects of the scrutiny are (their respective governments and/or EU institutions) and at what point during the EU decision making process the National Parliaments come into the process and when the scrutiny is considered to be completed.

Chapter 2: National parliament's expectations from the IGC

The expected Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) in the second half of 2007 will discuss among other things the role of National Parliaments in any future institutional settlement. In its contribution to the EU Institutions, the XXXVII COSAC in Berlin insisted that "the National Parliaments and the European Parliament will be kept fully involved and that their views will be duly taken into account" and formulated a number of concrete expectations with regard to the role of National Parliaments in the European Union. The purpose of this chapter is to gather information on which role National Parliaments wish to assume in the future institutional system of the EU. Concrete statements and suggestions which are formulated with a view to the negotiations could be compiled and possibly prepared as COSAC's input into the IGC.

Chapter 3: Parliamentary monitoring of the Lisbon Strategy

Chapter 3 seeks to analyse the role and involvement of National Parliaments in the Lisbon Process. The most important areas of policy and practice for the revitalisation of the European economy fall almost exclusively within the competence of the Member States, whereas the EU has a more coordinating role to play. Nevertheless the Lisbon Strategy has very often been discussed at EU rather than at national level.

The focus of the chapter would be on whether and how parliaments can influence the definition of policies and the setting of priorities and to which extent they are involved in the so-called "open method of coordination" through which the Member States can steer their policies towards certain common objectives. A further point of interest would be to consider in how far National Parliaments monitor the implementation of the Lisbon strategy and to which extent they claim ownership of it by putting the issue on their parliamentary agendas. Finally, it will also be analysed whether and in how far the

revision of the Lisbon Strategy in 2005 had any influence on the role and participation of National Parliaments in the process.

Chapter 4: Mediterranean Dimension of the European Union

The aim of this chapter is to provide background information on the Mediterranean Dimension of the EU, in order to inform the discussion that will take place at the XXXVIII COSAC. The chapter intends to look into the concept of the Mediterranean Dimension, its development and the challenges it faces.

Chapter 5: National Parliaments' monitoring of EU Financial programmes: priority setting and allocation of funds

The Inter-institutional Agreement between the Commission, Council and the European Parliament on the new financial perspective 2007 - 2013 is a financial framework for the Commission when it formulates the legislative package that sets out details of the funding of EU programmes. The legislative package then enters into either the co-decision or assent procedure between the Council and the European Parliament.

The aim of this chapter is to establish, whether and how National Parliaments are involved in this decision making process. Have they been informed by their respective governments on the developments in the inter-institutional decision-making procedure? Do they monitor the EU financial programmes? How are they involved in the priority setting for the respective funds? Do they monitor the allocation of funds at the national level? The discussion at the chairpersons meeting will further help to orientate the direction of this chapter to provide information on the best practises of the National Parliaments in this field.

The Portuguese Presidency has also asked the COSAC secretariat to present a separate short document to the XXXVIII COSAC on **Future Topics for COSAC**.

This document will present proposals made by the delegations (in accordance with Articles 7 and 7.1 of the Rules of Procedure) for topics that COSAC should deal with in 2008.

***NB.** This document will be based on a single question in the questionnaire for the biannual report and will be discussed at the end of the XXXVIII COSAC in Estoril in October 2007.*