

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC  
13 May, 2007**

**PRESENT AT THE MEETING**

Mr Matthias Wissmann (Germany, Bundestag), Mr Willi Stächele (Germany, Bundesrat) and Mr Vitalino Canas (Parliament of Portugal)

Apologies: Mr Erkki Tuomioja (Finnish Parliament), Mr Jo Leinen (European Parliament), Mr Edward McMillan-Scott (European Parliament),

**AGENDA**

1. Adoption of agenda
2. Debate and adoption of the agenda of the XXXVII COSAC
  - a) Special guests
  - b) Subsidiarity and proportionality checks
  - c) Commission's initiative of direct transmission of documents to the national parliaments
  - d) Discussion on the Annual Policy Strategy 2008 of the European Commission
3. 7th Biannual report
4. Cofinancing of the COSAC Secretariat and progress of talks on the political level towards a draft amendment to the COSAC's rules of Procedure
5. Contribution and conclusions of the XXXVII COSAC Berlin
6. Any other business

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE SITTING**

**1. Opening and meeting agenda**

The meeting was chaired jointly by Mr Wissmann, chairman of the EU Affairs Committee of the Bundestag, and Mr Stächele, chairman of the EU Affairs Committee of the Bundesrat. Mr Wissmann welcomed the delegations to the Troika meeting and introduced the agenda.

**2. Debate on the agenda of the XXXVII COSAC**

The Chair presented the draft agenda of the XXXVII COSAC.

a) Special guests

The Chair re-introduced a proposal from 9 delegation chairmen to include an agenda item "Eastern dimension of the EU neighbourhood policy" for the debate. The proposal was approved.

The Chairpersons' meeting in London in 2005 and the subsequent XXXIV COSAC had clarified the Rules of Procedure on the invitation of special guests (Rule 4.3): COSAC Presidencies could invite special guests only if there was an item on the agenda of clear interest to them. The Presidency had reconsidered its position to an earlier request to invite delegations from the Ukrainian and Moldovan parliaments to the XXXVII COSAC. The delegations from the Ukrainian and Moldovan parliaments were to be invited to attend as special guests and would be invited to take the floor during the discussion on this topic.

b) Subsidiarity and proportionality checks

The Chair reported that the results of the questionnaire related to the subsidiarity and proportionality checks conducted in the framework of the 7th biannual report illustrated that almost all national parliaments were of the opinion that the subsidiarity and proportionality checks initiated by COSAC brought added value to the way they treat EU affairs. The overwhelming majority of national parliaments would welcome continuation of two checks per year.

The selection mechanism for the new checks should be similar to the one chosen for the first two subsidiarity and proportionality checks. Accordingly, the selection should be based on the European Commission's Legislative and Work Programme. Since the LWP for 2008 would only be published after the XXXVIII COSAC in Estoril, any decision on whether and how to proceed should be

combined with clear procedural arrangements. The chair announced that the presidency would make a proposal for a procedure to follow for future checks.

c) The next steps with regard to the direct transmission of EU documents to national parliaments

The Chair recalled the Conclusions of the XXXVI COSAC (Helsinki: para. 6) to draw up an evaluation of the experience gained from the European Commission's initiative of direct transmission of documents to national parliaments, which came into force on 1 September 2006. The evaluation was contained in a chapter in the 7th biannual report of the COSAC Secretariat.

The Chair stated that the commitment by the Commission to merely “take into account” the statements of national parliaments and respond in writing was not satisfactory. This would not provide a sufficient incentive for parliaments to enter into a dialogue with the Commission. He hoped that the Commission would commit to rethinking its proposals once a “critical mass” of national parliaments had raised concerns. COSAC could provide a platform for further debate on this issue.

d) Discussion on the Annual Policy Strategy of the European Commission

The Chair informed the troika that Vice President Margot Wallström had agreed to come and present the Annual Policy Strategy of the European Commission for 2008 to COSAC.

4. 7th Biannual report

The Chair introduced the 7th biannual report and thanked the secretariat for their contribution.

**4. Cofinancing of the COSAC Secretariat and progress of talks on the political level towards a draft amendment to the COSAC's rules of Procedure**

The Troika had discussed the issue in February and had resolved that, during the German presidency, signed letters of intent for the co-financing of the permanent member of the COSAC secretariat would be collected, in order to ensure the smooth running of the Secretariat in case there was no agreement on an amendment to the Rules of Procedure before the end of 2007. The presidency had received so far 13<sup>1</sup> letters of intent where a parliament or a parliamentary chamber had stated their willingness to contribute towards the co-financing of the permanent member of the COSAC secretariat and the cost of running COSAC's office and website.

The Chair informed the Troika of progress of talks at the political level and introduced the text of a proposed compromise draft amendment to the Rules of Procedure. The chair believed that all COSAC delegations could agree with that text. He suggested to handle the draft as a troika proposal and asked for support to introduce it as a common troika amendment under Portuguese presidency. Mr Vitalino Canas (Portugal) approved to proceed accordingly, as long as the necessary consensus was assured. The representatives of the delegations of Finland and the European Parliament agreed in principle at the working level with the reserve of confirmation by the political level.

**5. Contribution and conclusions of the XXXVI COSAC Berlin**

The Chair introduced the draft contribution and conclusions as drafted by the presidency. He also explained the procedure which the presidency planned to follow: namely not to introduce a fresh version of the draft on the first day of the conference, but to gather all amendments during the first day and include them in the draft that would be circulated in the morning of the second day following discussion by Chairpersons at the drafting session on the afternoon of the first day.

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<sup>1</sup> These were from the Luxembourg House of Representatives, the Belgian Senate and House of Representatives, the Irish Oireachtas, the Malta House of Representatives, the Polish Sejm and Senate, the French Senate, the Parliament of Romania, the National Council of the Slovak Republic, the Swedish Riksdag, the Lithuanian Seimas and the Austrian Parliament.