

*Task b) : "To draft a proposal for how to change COSAC's rules of procedure concerning majority decisions"*

*Amended note<sup>1</sup>*

## **Note on new rules for voting in COSAC**

### **1. COSAC's existing rules for voting**

The existing rule for voting in COSAC is based on *unanimity* among the delegations *present*, but with the *opportunity for what is known as constructive abstention*. Each delegation casts one vote.

In accordance with article 10.5 and article 14.3 of the rules of procedure, the existing rule on unanimity applies to the *adoption of COSAC contributions* and to *amendments of COSAC's rules of procedure*.

The rules on unanimity are worded as follows:

Article 10.5 (on the adoption of contributions)

"The adoption of a contribution requires unanimity among the delegations that are present at the meeting. Abstention from voting on the part of delegations cannot prevent the adoption of a contribution".

Article 14.3 (on amendments to the rules of procedure)

"The adoption of a proposal requires unanimity among the delegations that are present at the meeting. Abstention from voting on the part of delegations cannot prevent the adoption of a proposal".

### **2. Proposal for new rules for voting:**

#### **2.1 Adoption of contributions**

The proposal for new COSAC voting rules is to continue to base them on the principle that all countries or Parliaments have the same number of votes. However, in view of the bicameral system of some Parliaments, each country and the European Parliament are allocated **two votes in connection with the adoption of contributions**. This means that, as a general rule, each delegation has two votes.

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<sup>1</sup> Changes to the note are marked in the margin with a line

As regards the adoption of contributions the proposal is to introduce a rule on qualified majority consisting of two thirds of the votes cast. To the extent it is deemed necessary, minority views may be included in the final contribution.

For the vote to be valid, at least half the delegations entitled to vote must be present during voting.

The purpose of introducing qualified majority voting for the adoption of COSAC contributions is to enhance decision-making in COSAC.

## **2.2 Publication of *contributions* in the Official Journal of the European Communities.**

The Official Journal of the European Communities, C Series, contains communications and information of a non-binding nature about the European Union, including protocols from parliament meetings and parliamentary questions and replies from the Council and the European Commission, opinions from the Economic and Social Committee, opinions from the Committee of the Regions etc.

In order to focus attention on COSAC's contributions it is proposed that, in the future, adopted contributions from COSAC be published in The Official Journal of the European Communities, C Series

## **2.3 Amending the rules of procedure**

In amending the rules of procedure the principle of unanimity among the delegations present at the meeting is maintained. Constructive abstention by abstaining from voting remains an option.

In votes on amendments to the rules of procedure each delegation has only **one vote**.

For the vote to be valid, at least half the delegations entitled to vote must be present during voting.

## **3. Consequences for COSAC's rules of procedure**

In consequence of the proposed changes the rules of procedure need amending in various places.

The concrete proposals for amendments are contained in the draft proposal for new rules of procedure.