Concluding minutes

Concluding minutes of the COSAC chairmen's meeting,

16 September 2002 in Copenhagen

Participants:

Reference should be made to the enclosed list of meetings.

1 - Declarations in relation to the draft forwarded for a reform of COSAC

- There was broad agreement that COSAC should be used for benchmarking and the exchange of experience.
- It was agreed to amend the rules for voting with the aim of achieving a COSAC more competent to transact business. The rules for voting could be based on a statutory majority, an ordinary majority, or on an extension of the existing opportunity for constructive abstention. During the discussions on the subject there were declarations from several sources to the effect that as COSAC is simply a body designed to hold hearings, the rules for voting were not, in the final analysis, of decisive importance.
- There was broad agreement that a secretariat should be established.
- There was broad agreement that information technology should be better utilised with the help, among other things, of discussion fora, the electronic transmission of material, etc. The collaboration between the administrative departments of the national parliaments should also be strengthened.
- Some countries were against a change of names – this could be viewed as a change in the role of COSAC. However the meeting reached agreement that a change of names could be considered in the long term with the aim of finding a designation that was more idiomatic and better described COSAC's tasks.

2 – Concrete tasks decided at the chairmen's meeting

It was decided in connection with the review of the draft forwarded regarding a reform of COSAC that the following notes/documents should be drawn up by the Danish chairmanship:

1. A proposal for "good governance", guidelines, minimum requirements on the national parliaments' control of the respective governments in the EU area.
2. A note on the existing framework and possibilities. What is COSAC capable of today, which powers were used, which were not used and, in the given case, why not?
3. A description of a reformed COSAC within the existing framework as a co-ordinated body in connection with such areas as the national parliaments' statements on issues submitted for consultation in connection with the Commission's green and white papers and reports.
4. A note/proposal on rules for voting.
5. A note/proposal on a secretariat containing a description of tasks, financing, composition, management, etc.
6. A note/proposal on a strengthening of the use of IT. What possibilities are there, how can they be carried out, how can IT be used for information interchange internally between parliaments, and externally in relation to the public?
7. A note on the scheme to send representatives of the individual parliaments to Brussels.

Yours faithfully,

Christian Dubois