

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

Vienna, Austria, 18 November 2018

## PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIRS: Mr Reinhold LOPATKA, Chair of the Standing Sub-Committee on European Affairs of the Austrian *Nationalrat*; Mr Christian BUCHMANN, Chair of the EU Committee of the Austrian *Bundesrat*.

Mr Angel TÎLV R, Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Romanian *Camera Deputa ilor*; Ms Gabriela CREȚU, Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Romanian *Senat*; Mr Kristian VIGENIN, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds, Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie*; Ms Danuta HÜBNER, Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament.

## AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda of the Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC
2. Approval of the draft programme of the LX COSAC
3. Presentation of the 30th Bi-annual Report of COSAC
4. Debate on the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the LX COSAC
5. Letters received by the Presidency
6. Any other business

## PROCEEDINGS

### **1. Adoption of the agenda of the Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC**

Mr Reinhold LOPATKA, Chair of the Standing Sub-Committee on European Affairs of the Austrian *Nationalrat*, welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika") and thanked them for their cooperation.

The agenda of the meeting of the Troika was adopted without amendment.

### **2. Approval of the draft programme of the meeting of the LX COSAC**

Mr LOPATKA then briefly outlined the programme of the meeting of the LX COSAC, which would consist of four sessions:

- Session I: State of Play of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU
- Session II: Brexit - current state
- Session III: Climate Policy and Energy Union
- Session IV: transparent European Union closer to its citizens in light of the upcoming elections to the European Parliament

The Chair further informed the participants that due to the General Affairs Council (Art. 50) to be held in Brussels on Monday, 19 November 2018, Mr Michel BARNIER, EU Chief Negotiator for Brexit, had to cancel his participation at the LX COSAC. Instead, Ms Danuta

HÜBNER, Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, had agreed to give a keynote speech on the European Union side in Session II.

The draft programme of the LX COSAC was approved without amendment.

### **3. Presentation of the 30th Bi-annual Report of COSAC**

Mr LOPATKA invited the Permanent Member of the COSAC secretariat, Mr Kenneth CURMI, to present the 30th Bi-annual Report of COSAC, which was based on Parliaments' replies to the related questionnaire circulated to delegations on 27 July 2018 with a deadline of 18 September 2018 for submitting replies.

Mr CURMI briefly referred to the three chapters of the Report: the first one concentrated on the involvement of citizens in parliamentary proceedings; the second one dealt with Climate Policy and the Energy Union; and the third one was dedicated to the state of play of Brexit as well as its implications for the future of the EU.

Before moving on to the next point on the agenda, Mr LOPATKA thanked the COSAC Secretariat for their work in compiling the well-structured report.

### **4. Debate on the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the LX COSAC**

The draft text of the Contribution and the Conclusions was circulated to delegations on 7 November 2018. No amendments had been received regarding the Conclusions until the meeting and the Troika, after accepting one amendment brought up during the meeting, endorsed the new draft based on the text proposed by the Presidency.

Regarding the draft Contribution, amendments received from delegations by 14 November 2018 were translated into French and, together with the initial text, included in a table, which had been distributed to all delegations. A number of compromise proposals elaborated by the Presidency were submitted to the Troika.

Following a detailed examination of each amendment proposed, the Troika, on the basis of the Presidency's compromise proposals, drafted a modified text of the draft Contribution.

### **5. Letters received by the Presidency**

The Chair referred to the following letters received by the Presidency:

- Letters from Mr Carles ENSENAT, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, *Consell General* of Andorra; Ms Tamar KHULORDAVA, Chair of the Committee on European Integration, Parliament of Georgia; Mr Guillaume ROSE, Chair of the Monitoring Committee on Negotiations with the European Union, and Mr Stéphane VALERI, Speaker, *Conseil National* of the Principality of Monaco; Ms Mariia IONOVA, Deputy Chair of the Committee on European Integration, *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine; and from Ms Blerta DELIU-KODRA, Chair of the Committee on European Integration, Assembly of Kosovo\*, regarding participation in COSAC. Following consultation with the Troika, letters of invitation had been sent out. Due to elections, Georgia would not be able to attend the COSAC plenary.
- Special attention was drawn to the request from Kosovo. The Chair added that in order to comply with international regulations, the Presidency had proposed to provide observing parliaments with table signs only and not with flags. In addition, the name “Kosovo<sup>\*</sup>” would

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council and to the opinion of the ICJ on the declaration of independence of Kosovo.

be accompanied by an asterisk and a footnote on the table sign, the list of participants, the screens and the badges.

- Letter from Mr Angel TÎLV R, Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Romanian *Camera Deputa ilor*, and Ms Gabriela CREȚU, Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Romanian *Senat*, on the participation of Kosovo at the LX COSAC.
- Letters from Mr André ANTOINE, President of the *Parlement de Wallonie*, on the composition of the Belgian delegation within COSAC. The Presidency had already answered in a letter on 20 July 2018, explaining that it was not the role of COSAC to enter into discussions on constitutional or representational arrangements of a Member State.
- Letter from Mr Kristian VIGENIN, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds, Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie*, submitting a proposal for the revision of the COSAC Rules of Procedure including a new paragraph 3.2a by which two members of the Parliaments of each EU potential candidate country, EFTA country and Eastern Partnership country should be invited as observers. The Presidency had also received two reactions to this proposal from Mr Yiorgos LILLIKAS, Chairman of the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*; and Mr Gunther KRICHBAUM, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, German *Bundestag* and Ms Sabine THILLAYE, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, French *Assemblée nationale*, declaring their reservations.
- Letter from Mr Toomas VITSUT, Chair of the European Union Affairs committee, Estonian *Riigikogu*, providing suggestions for the Draft Contribution.
- Letter from Mr Václav HAMPL, Chair of the Committee on EU Affairs, Czech *Senát*, informing participants about the meeting of the Visegrad countries that had taken place on 8 October 2018 and sharing the conclusions adopted there.
- Letter from Mr Foort VAN OOSTEN, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*; Mr Bastiaan VAN APELDOORN, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*; and Mr Erik CHRISTENSEN, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Danish *Folketing*, providing an update on transparency in Council.

Concerning his proposal to change the COSAC rules of procedure, Mr VIGENIN pointed out that the Bulgarian Presidency had received a letter from the parliaments of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, asking if they could be permanently invited to COSAC meetings. He had supported the request and stated that besides those three countries various others were also asking for participation on a regular basis because of their close ties with the EU. Mr VIGENIN underlined that in order to keep the flexibility of COSAC, an option to refuse invitations could also be included in the new paragraph.

He accepted however that it was not the right moment for changes in the Rules of Procedure and formally withdrew the proposal by inviting the Romanian or Finnish Presidency to open the issue again in the near future, as the concerned group of countries would then also include the United Kingdom.

Mr LOPATKA added that the Presidency could not support the proposal, as unanimity on the matter had never been reached in the Troika, but the floor would also be given to Mr VIGENIN during the Opening Session of the plenary.

With regard to the letter from Mr VITSUT, the Chair noted that Presidency had not been able to consider the suggestions at that stage.

## **6. Any other business**

There was no other business to discuss.