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1. Ouverture et questions de procédure

M. NEOFYTOU, président de la Commission des affaires étrangères et européennes de la Chambre des représentants, a accueilli les participants et s'est félicité de l'attribution à l'UE du prix Nobel pour la paix, qu'il a qualifié de source d'inspiration pour mettre un terme à la division de Chypre.

Au nom du président de la République, empêché, son directeur de cabinet, M. CHRISTOFIDES, a souligné le rôle crucial des parlements nationaux en raison de leur proximité avec les citoyens de l'UE et appelé au renforcement de la coopération interparlementaire. S'agissant des priorités de la présidence, il a espéré qu'un accord politique intervienne en novembre sur le cadre financier pluriannuel (MFF) et précisé que la présidence souhaitait obtenir avant la fin de l'année des résultats sur l'union bancaire. Il a par ailleurs souligné que l'austérité seule ne suffisait pas, le bien-être des citoyens devant également être pris en compte.

Au nom du président de la Chambre des représentants, empêché, M. FITTIS s'est félicité du succès rencontré lors des réunions interparlementaires organisées par la présidence. Il a par ailleurs jugé important que l'UE soutienne les efforts déployés en vue de la réunification de Chypre.

Mme KURIEN, membre permanente du secrétaire de la COSAC, a ensuite présenté le 18ème rapport semestriel, relevant en particulier que, si les parlements nationaux avaient des conceptions différentes des notions de subsidiarité et de proportionnalité, leurs positions convergeaient sur la nécessité de prendre en compte la proportionnalité lors de l'examen de la subsidiarité. S'agissant du dialogue politique, Mme KURIEN a relevé que la majorité des parlements nationaux souhaitait que la Commission apporte des réponses plus rapides et substantielles aux avis des parlements nationaux. Mme KURIEN a noté les approches divergentes des parlements nationaux sur la mise en œuvre de l'article 13 du traité sur la stabilité, la coordination et la gouvernance (TSCG).

2. État d'avancement des travaux / Priorités de la Présidence chypriote du Conseil de l'Union européenne

M. MAVROYIANNIS, Vice-ministre chargé des affaires européennes, a insisté sur l'importance d'échange de vues réguliers entre le Conseil et les parlements nationaux. Il a indiqué que le Conseil envisageait de modifier la date des prochaines élections européennes afin d'assurer le niveau de participation le plus élevé possible et salué la proposition de la Commission d'accorder une personnalité juridique aux partis politiques européens. M. MAVROYIANNIS a précisé qu'il souhaitait obtenir un accord sur le MFF lors du Conseil européen extraordinaire et considéré qu'il n'y avait pas de contradiction entre la discipline budgétaire et la croissance. S'agissant de la gouvernance de Schengen, il a indiqué que les contacts continueraient entre le Conseil et le Parlement européen dans le cadre de la procédure législative ordinaire. M. MAVROYIANNIS a ajouté que la présidence espérait obtenir un accord sur le "Two pack" et sur le mécanisme de surveillance bancaire avant la fin de l'année.

M. SIGURDSSON (ICL *Althingi*) a déploré qu'aucune explication n'ait été donnée pour le retard dans l'ouverture des négociations avec l'Islande sur le chapitre pêche et critiqué la résolution adoptée par le Parlement européen sur le sujet.

MM. BLAHA (SK *Národná Rada Slovenskej Republiky*), WITTBRODT (PL *Senat*) et ROBRA (DE *Bundesrat*), ainsi que Mme HUBENOVA (BG *Narodno Sabranie*), ont souligné le caractère prioritaire de la politique de cohésion de l'UE, et MM. CONSIGLIO (IT *Camera dei Deputati*), MILE (HU *Országgyűlés*) et SARIKAS (CY *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) ont mis en exergue le rôle du MFF pour surmonter la crise. M. MAYER (AT *Bundesrat*), Lord BOSWELL of Aynho (UK *House of Lords*) et Mme MOLITOR (DE *Bundestag*) ont considéré que le budget de l'UE devait avant tout être efficace. M. MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ (S&D, ES) a loué les efforts de la présidence en ce qui concerne le MFF et mis l'accent sur le rôle que pouvait jouer le budget de l'UE pour sortir de la crise.

M. JAKIČ (SI *Državni zbor*) a soutenu les efforts d'intégration budgétaire et bancaire, mais a émis des doutes quant au rôle prévu pour la BCE et fait part de son inquiétude au vu de la rapidité des discussions. M. PĂDURARU (RO *Camera Deputaților*) et Mme HUBENOVA (BG *Narodno Sabranie*) ont considéré que la réforme de la gouvernance économique ne devait pas remettre en cause l'intégrité de l'UE, alors que M. WITTBRODT (PL *Senat*) a indiqué craindre que la création d'un budget séparé pour la zone euro ne soit source de divisions.

M. MARIAS (EL *Vouli ton Ellinon*) a déploré la politique suivie par la Turquie dans ses rapports avec Chypre, alors que M. HUNKO (DE *Bundestag*) a appelé l'UE à mettre davantage l'accent sur la cohésion sociale. M. LEJIŅŠ (LV *Saeima*) a demandé des éclaircissements sur le brevet européen et souligné que l'expérience des pays baltes démontrait que l'austérité pouvait fonctionner.

M. MAVROYIANNIS a indiqué, s'agissant de l'adhésion de l'Islande, que les négociations du chapitre pêches seraient difficiles. Il a souligné l'importance de la politique de cohésion, mais a relevé les divergences existant s'agissant des domaines devant être privilégiés. Concernant le MFF, M. MAVROYIANNIS a souligné que la présidence ne souhaitait pas diminuer les montants prévus, tout en relevant qu'elle ne pouvait pas ignorer la position des contributeurs net. S'agissant de la surveillance bancaire, il a appelé à garantir la transparence et la distinction entre les rôles de la BCE en matière de politique monétaire et de surveillance bancaire. M. MAVROYIANNIS a précisé qu'il n'était à ce stade pas question de créer un budget séparé pour la zone euro, mais seulement de

permettre de financer des programmes spécifiques permettant le cas échéant aux États membres de la zone euro de répondre à leurs obligations. S'agissant du brevet européen, il a qualifié de compréhensible la réaction du Parlement européen et fait part de son optimisme sur l'obtention d'un accord.

3. Des paroles à l' action: Faire de «plus d'Europe» une réalité

Vice-President ŠEFČOVIČ emphasised that the EU had taken hard decisions and that the EMU had to be completed and a banking and fiscal union created¹.

Mr CASINI (EPP, IT) said that the constant drop in turn out to European elections could in part be explained by the absence of genuine European political parties. He felt that political parties should designate candidates for the Commission presidency, that the President of the European Council could also be the Commission president, and that 50% of the Commission members could come from the European Parliament. Mr CASINI said that the subsidiarity principle imposed on the EU a duty to act and that national parliaments had a crucial pedagogical work to perform in order to ensure that hope in the EU is revived. Mr CASINI further advocated tapping into all the possibilities existing under the Lisbon treaty and Article 13 TSCG.

Mr DUFF (ALDE, UK) said that a Convention should be convened in the spring of 2015 to discuss a federal form of government, including a Treasury Secretary. He also indicated that the European Parliament would insist on stronger internal democracy in European political parties. Mr FARINONE (IT *Camera dei Deputati*) stressed that a quality leap was needed in the integration process, whilst M. CASH (UK *House of Commons*) said that federalism was unacceptable to his country and that a referendum was inevitable.

Ms DIMIC (SI *Državni zbor*) invited the Commission to indicate to national parliaments why it had concluded that the Monti II package did not breach the subsidiarity principle, whilst Ms GRANLUND (SE *Riksdagen*) stressed that the right to strike should not be regulated at EU level. Mr SCHENNACH (AT *Bundesrat*) and Lord BOSWELL of Aynho (UK *House of Lords*) invited the Commission to give more substantial answers to reasoned opinions

¹ See speech in Annex I.

Ms FOTYGA (PL *Sejm*) stressed the link between fiscal policy and statehood and defended national banking supervision. Ms KYRIAKIDOU (CY *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) welcomed the proposal to create a single banking supervisory body, whilst Mr FAYOT (LU *Chambre des députés*) said that enough powers should be left to national banking supervisory authorities.

Vice-President ŠEFČOVIČ said that the reasoned opinions on the Monti II package did not all deal with the subsidiarity principle, which meant that the Commission could not have concluded that that principle had been breached. He regretted that translation delays meant that national parliaments were informed of the Commission's decision one day later than the European Parliament and the Council. On banking supervision, Vice-President ŠEFČOVIČ felt that all remaining problems could be solved before the end of the year. He stressed that the ECB would bear the ultimate responsibility for the decisions relating to the euro area stability and would rely on the expertise of national supervisors.

4. Énergie - Sécurité de l'approvisionnement

M. KASSINIS, Directeur du Service de l'Énergie (Ministère du Commerce, de l'Industrie et du Tourisme), a indiqué que la découverte de gisements de gaz dans sa zone économique exclusive (ZEE) pourrait permettre à Chypre de jouer un rôle majeur dans la garantie de la sécurité d'approvisionnement de l'UE. Il a précisé que des forages plus profonds permettraient vraisemblablement de trouver également du pétrole.

MM. VESTLUND (SE *Riksdagen*) et MAYER (AT *Bundesrat*) ont appelé au développement des énergies renouvelables, alors que M. BIZET (FR *Sénat*) s'est félicité de la découverte par Chypre de gisements de gaz naturel et a appelé à exploiter les sources d'énergie sûres telles que le nucléaire et le gaz de schiste. Mme POMASKA (PL *Sejm*), M. TOSHEV (BG *Narodno Sabranie*) et Lord CARTER of Coles (UK *House of Lords*) ont également soutenu l'exploitation du gaz de schiste.

Mme MORIN-DESAILLY (FR *Sénat*) , M. FRANGEŽ (SI *Državni zbor*) et M. VISKUPIČ (SK *Národná rada*) ont soutenu le développement de l'interconnexion dans le marché énergétique, alors que M. MESSIS (CY *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) a souligné que les réseaux énergétiques européens devaient être étendus afin de mettre fin à l'isolation de Chypre et que M. HOPKINS (UK *House of Commons*) a appelé à la nationalisation des groupes énergétiques.

M. KASSINIS a souligné que le gaz naturel était plus écologique que le pétrole, et relevé les efforts de Chypre en matière de développement des énergies renouvelables.

5. Stratégie Europe 2020 - Reprise économique après la crise financière

Mme BÉRÈS (S&D, FR) s'est félicitée que le président de la Commission ait affirmé que le modèle social européen était un atout pour la compétitivité européenne. Elle a considéré que les objectifs de la Stratégie Europe 2020 restaient d'actualité en dépit de la crise et permettraient de moderniser le modèle social européen. Mme BÉRÈS a par ailleurs souligné que le pilier social devait être pris en compte dans les discussions sur l'avenir de l'UEM et a proposé de créer une garantie jeunesse, dans la mesure où le soutien à l'emploi des jeunes était la meilleure façon de financer les retraites et de garantir la compétitivité européenne. Elle a considéré comme positives la recapitalisation de la BEI, la réallocation des fonds structurels et l'introduction d'une taxe sur les transactions financières, qu'elle a qualifié de socle pour une nouvelle ressource propre. Mme BÉRÈS a également jugé que la Troïka devrait inclure un membre de l'Organisation internationale du travail (OIT).

Mme MOLITOR (DE *Bundestag*), Mme BAUER (PPE, SK) et M. ROBRA (DE *Bundesrat*) ont souligné l'importance de la Stratégie Europe 2020. M. HUNKO (DE *Bundestag*) a déploré que la Stratégie Europe 2020 mette trop l'accent sur la compétitivité. Mme ANDRÉ (PT *Assembleia da República*) a souligné que le budget de l'UE devait disposer de fonds suffisants pour améliorer la compétitivité de l'UE et les conditions de vie des citoyens.

Baroness O'CATHAIN (UK *House of Lords*) s'est interrogée sur l'utilité de la taxe sur les transactions financières, alors que M. BODEN (LU *Chambre des députés*) a considéré qu'une telle taxe découragerait l'investissement. M. MAYER (AT *Bundesrat*) a jugé que, en l'absence d'unanimité, il était nécessaire d'aller de l'avant en matière de taxation des transactions financières. M. NEOFYTOU (CY *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) a souligné qu'il convenait d'éviter que cette taxation n'aboutisse à des détournement de flux financiers.

MM. HOPKINS (UK *House of Commons*) et FORMICHELLA (IT *Camera dei Deputati*) ont pointé les limites des politiques d'austérité, alors que M. MARIAS et Mme KONSTANTOPOULOU (EL *Vouli ton Ellinon*) ont critiqué les conséquences sociales des mesures de la Troïka.

Mme BÉRÈS a considéré que l'augmentation du budget de l'UE permettrait de créer un effet de levier européen, et affirmé que, à la lumière des récentes critiques du FMI sur l'accent mis par l'UE sur l'austérité, le Conseil européen de décembre serait une échéance majeure. Elle a par ailleurs fait part de son ouverture sur les modalités de taxation des transactions financières.

6. Gouvernance du marché unique

M. DELSAUX, Directeur général adjoint (Direction générale du marché intérieur et des services de la Commission) a souligné que le seul outil de croissance à la disposition de l'UE était le marché intérieur. Il a regretté qu'une seule des douze mesures proposées en avril 2011 dans l'Acte pour le marché unique ait été adoptée et indiqué que la Commission venait d'adopter un Acte sur le marché unique II articulé autour de quatre priorités: les réseaux intégrés, la mobilité transfrontalière, l'économie numérique et la confiance des consommateurs. M. DELSAUX a déploré que le délai moyen de retard dans la transposition des directives soit de neuf mois et relevé que, si la directive services était correctement transposée, elle permettrait de dégager davantage de croissance. M. DELSAUX a précisé que la Commission souhaitait désormais préparer en amont la transposition en coopération avec les États membres.

Baroness O'CATHAIN (*UK House of Lords*) a apporté son soutien aux priorités de l'Acte pour le marché unique et souligné l'importance du marché numérique, point sur lequel elle a été rejointe par MM. MORENO (*ES Congreso de los Diputados*) et VISKUPIČ (*SK Národná rada*). M. SEFZIG (*CZ Senát*) a considéré que le marché intérieur fondait le prospérité de l'UE, alors que M. MARIAS (*EL Vouli ton Ellinon*) a déploré que le marché intérieur n'ait pas bénéficié aux États membres du sud de l'UE. M. NEOFYTOU (*CY Vouli ton Antiprosopon*) a considéré que Chypre devait mettre en œuvre de nombreuses réformes et s'est félicité du soutien apporté par l'UE, même accompagné de conditions sévères. M. VESTLUND (*SE Riksdagen*) a déploré que les directives soient très détaillées et abordent des questions ne relevant pas nécessairement du marché intérieur, alors que M. CASH (*UK House of Commons*) a dit son opposition à un raccourcissement des délais de transposition et appelé à réduire la bureaucratie.

M. DELSAUX a marqué son accord sur le caractère prioritaire de l'économie numérique et émis le souhait que les États membres discutent ensemble de la transposition de la directive services. Il a affirmé que les parlements nationaux devaient intervenir en amont de la discussion des textes par les institutions, citant l'exemple du retrait de la proposition de la Commission sur le détachement des travailleurs à la suite de leur intervention. M. DELSAUX a par conséquent appelé à renforcer les contacts entre les parlements nationaux et la Commission.

7. Adoption des conclusions et de la contribution de la XLVIII^{ème} COSAC

M. VAN BOMMEL s'est félicité du fait que la contribution invite la Commission à communiquer en temps utile aux parlements nationaux des réponses plus développées, et souligné que les contributions de la COSAC ne devraient pas contenir des prises de position politique. Lord BOSWELL of Aynho (*UK House of Lords*) a émis le souhait que la COSAC se penche à l'avenir sur la subsidiarité et a invité les parlements nationaux à partager leurs expériences. M. MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ (S&D, ES) s'est félicité de la qualité des relations entre les parlements nationaux et a remercié les présidences polonaise, danoise et chypriote pour leurs efforts en ce sens.

Les conclusions et la contribution de la COSAC ont été approuvées par acclamation².

² See Annex II.

M. HANNIGAN (IE *Dáil Eireann*) a annoncé que la réunion des présidents de la COSAC se tiendrait du 26 au 28 janvier et que la prochaine COSAC aurait lieu du 23 au 25 juin.

Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ
Vice-President of the European Commission
Responsible for Interinstitutional Relations and Administration
From words to action: making "More Europe" a reality¹

Ladies and gentlemen

It is a pleasure to be here today with so many distinguished parliamentarians. As I have said many times before, I am firm believer in the important role that parliaments – both national and European – must play in the future development and integration of Europe. There are many who believe that European democracy is being tested as never before by the current crisis. A 'buy-in' from parliaments gives democratic legitimacy to the policies we make and the important decisions we take.

We need to make 'more Europe' a reality. But let's be clear – 'more Europe' is not a power grab by Brussels or an attack on national sovereignty. In fact, it's entirely the opposite – it's about the 'Europeanisation' of national politics and a more 'joined-up' approach to tackling what are, after all, the same challenges faced by each and every European.

There's a great quote from the British political writer Sir Ernest Benn which I think sums up how modern European politics is often seen. He said: "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it wrongly, and applying unsuitable remedies."

I'm not sure I entirely agree with this point of view!

It's certainly true that we are facing our fair share of trouble at the moment – but it is also true to say that it is by no means everywhere. Let's not forget that Europe remains the world's biggest economic power - the latest statistics from Eurostat [from July] show that we have a healthy trade surplus of €3.1bn with the rest of the world, and Europe accounts for 17% of world trade, more than any other country or bloc [USA is 14%, China 12%, for information]. And we continue to do much better than the rising economic powers: EU 27 GDP (12tn euros) is nearly 50% higher than the combined GDP of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). And the EU remains an extremely attractive place to do business: in 2011, it attracted \$421bn in foreign direct investment, 28% of the world's total world FDI flows.

Nor do I think that we have wrongly diagnosed the source of our current troubles: it is widely accepted that what started as a financial and economic crisis has also become a social and political one. And I certainly cannot agree that the remedies we have applied are wrong: over the last four years, we have taken hard decisions to tackle the crisis and its root causes – the irresponsibility of the financial sector, unsustainable public debts, and weak competitiveness in some Member States.

Yes, there are still major challenges ahead – deeper reforms at the national level, deeper economic and monetary union at the European level – and achieving them will be no small task. The crisis has stretched European unity almost to breaking point at times, and the solidarity on which the EU is built has often been sorely tested.

¹ Check against delivery.

Indeed, there are many areas where the European Union is appears far from unified, and tackling this must be our top priority. We need to complete economic and monetary union; in parallel, we need to create a banking union and a fiscal union, and we need to put in place the necessary institutional and political mechanisms.

I believe that 'more Europe' is the only approach which will bring the unity we need. Let me give you a few examples of where I think it is most necessary.

I'll start with the issue where there is perhaps right now the least amount of visible unity: the multiannual financial framework (MFF)! The Commission's proposal for the next MFF is targeted to boost growth and jobs across the EU and to give value for money to European citizens, companies and governments. On the need for this, at least, there is perfect unity!

But this is not the case when it comes to agreeing the figures. Many Member States have issues with the budget proposals, given the current climate of austerity and budgetary consolidation many of them are facing. But this is all the more reason to ensure that the EU budget is focused on support for those activities that demonstrate EU added-value and which national budgets cannot or will not support alone.

I think a dose of reality is needed here. The EU budget represents around 1% of GNI and only 2% of Member States' national budgets. Almost every cent of it is invested in the delivery of the EU's policy objectives and the Europe 2020 growth strategy.

The European budget is the instrument for investment in Europe and growth in Europe. Every single Member State has endorsed the Europe 2020 strategy as the best way to achieve these goals; now we must all assume our responsibilities towards the people of Europe and put our money where our mouth is! To paraphrase Alain Lamassoure, chair of the European Parliament's budget committee, the EU budget in 2020 cannot be the same as it was in 1990!

The proposed MFF should in fact cost Member States less, if the Commission's proposed new own resources system (the new VAT system and the financial transaction tax) is accepted. And it will without a doubt give a great boost to Member States' economies, their regions, their researchers, their students, their young people looking for work, or their SMEs.

But more than that, let's not forget that without EU [cohesion] funds, we would be a lot worse off. As President Barroso said at the Friends of Cohesion forum in Slovakia recently, "without support coming from cohesion funds, Slovakia and other countries would not be able to meet the targets of the Stability and Growth Pact, will not be able to give their contribution to stability in the Euro area and in the European Union in general".

It needs to be underlined again and again: the proposed budget is a budget for growth, for economic, social and territorial cohesion between Member States and within Member States. It is NOT a budget for Brussels, to line the pockets of 'Eurocrats'; 94% of the money is reinvested back in the Member States, in the people of Europe.

Europe cannot survive if we give with one hand and take away with the other. It will be interesting to see if those Member States who are most vociferous in calling for investment and growth will also be prepared to give Europe the very means to do it. Member States that complain that the budget is too expensive need to look more closely at the reality: for example, Britain's net contribution to the EU is £8-9 billion a year – less than £15 per citizen and five times less than the cost of paying the interest on the country's debt each year! At the same time, the UK has received €10.6bn back in cohesion funding (over the 2007-13 period) for investment in jobs and growth.

This is why it is vital for national parliaments to be a central part of this debate. Even if national leaders can finally agree on an EU budget that is fit-for-purpose, it will all be in vain if they cannot get the support of their parliaments back home. The Commission welcomes the opportunity to continue our exchange of views on this issue with national parliaments, through COSAC and other fora, and to have your full engagement in this particular debate.

Making sure that Europe has the necessary means to invest in its political priorities is vital, of course. But the crisis has also shown that unless we change the way we do things we will simply be throwing good money after bad. We've already taken decisive action to comprehensively overhaul the economic governance of the EU, to ensure that excessive deficits, imbalances and irresponsible budgetary decisions in one Member State can never again poison all the others. But we still need to go further.

As with the MFF question, we are in fact starting from the point where there is total agreement between the Member States. To quote from the Treaty (Art. 121, for those of you who don't know your Treaties off by heart), the Member States agree that "their economic policies [are] a matter of common concern and shall coordinate them..."

There is a clear understanding that the economic wellbeing of the entire EU – not just the euro area – is interconnected, and that is why we need a stronger and more binding economic governance framework for economic and monetary union.

Banking union is one of the key pillars on which we can build deeper EMU, and the Commission on the 12 of September adopted legislative proposal for a single supervisory mechanism (SSM) based on the conferral of specific supervisory tasks to the ECB.

We are convinced that moving supervision of banks to the European level, as well as the envisaged further steps towards establishing a fully-fledged banking union, are indispensable measures to ensure the stability of the integrated European economy, to break the negative feedback loop between governments and banks and to help preserve the internal market.

That's why we believe that while the SSM should apply to all euro-area Member States, for which it is essential, it should also be open to the participation of any other Member States that wish to embark on a path of deeper integration.

Establishing a single supervisory mechanism within the single market is an important first step, but we will also need to progress quickly on the remaining building blocks for a genuine EMU. This will include not only the remaining pillars of the banking union but also a fiscal union, economic union and a strengthened democratic dimension of the EMU. The Commission will set out its views on how to progress later this year.

The second element of a deeper economic union is the move towards a fiscal union. We need a stronger and more binding framework for national decision-making for key economic policies, as the only way to manage interdependence and prevent imbalances.

Let me remind you that these long-term goals are also accompanied by more immediate actions: the Commission has put forward proposals to tackle the outstanding obstacles in the internal market; we have also presented proposals for a modern industrial policy strategy, which will be followed by an Action plan to contribute to a more entrepreneurial Europe; and before the end of the year, we will launch a Youth package that will establish a youth guarantee scheme and equality framework to facilitate vocational training.

We've also been working hard to fully mobilise the EU structural funds and find other ways to keep up growth-enhancing investments in Europe, such as exploring with the European Investment Bank how to better provide finance to SMEs, as well as developing a new European Venture Capital regime.

But banking, fiscal and economic union is again only part of the picture: for Europe to truly emerge stronger than ever from this crisis we must bite the bullet of further institutional and political integration. As President Barroso put it in his State of the Union speech in Strasbourg last month, we need to move towards a federation of nation states.

What exactly does that mean? Well, one definition might, indeed, be 'more Europe' – a deeper integration, cooperation and coordination that recognises and respects the national sovereignties and identities of the Member States.

Of course, this unprecedented level of integration will not happen overnight. Fully-functioning European economic governance will only be possible if there is more democratic accountability and transparency. Only the European Parliament and national parliaments – directly elected by the citizens of Europe – can truly bring this level of democratic oversight, which means their role in economic governance will have to be enhanced.

Let me underline that we do not see any need for new institutions as we move towards deeper integration. Indeed, as with the budget, it's more a question of doing more with what we already have by working more effectively – getting greater democratic value-for-money, if you will. This means extending the community method, improving democratic scrutiny over existing instruments and institutions, and promoting genuine cooperation between the European and national parliaments.

Talk of 'federation' has also raised the spectre of Treaty change – not a pleasant prospect for many people with the protracted negotiations over the Lisbon Treaty still so fresh in the memory. But we can and must make this process more transparent and easy to understand: we need a thorough Europe-wide debate on what is necessary, why and how to achieve it. The European elections in 2014 should provide the ideal occasion for such a debate. My recent proposals to help develop European political parties and foundations, giving them a legal status (and a much louder voice) in every Member State, will surely make this debate far easier than it has been in the past.

But we are convinced that there are things that can be done to make sure that the European elections have a more European focus, and the presentation by European political parties of their candidate for the post of Commission President is clearly one of them. We hope that this will be the case already for the 2014 elections – and it can be done without Treaty change!

These will be challenging times for Europe. Now, more than ever, we need to talk to each other. The Commission is firmly committed to stepping up political dialogue with national parliaments – as mentioned by President Barroso at the last COSAC meeting in Copenhagen.

I have read your 18th biannual report as well as the draft Contribution with great attention. It addresses the right issues. Further improving dialogue can be achieved in many ways. Firstly, I agree that we must reply more speedily to your opinions, and providing, where justified and possible, more substantial replies. We must visit more national parliaments more often. I think significant progress has already been made, but there is always scope to do better.

At the same time, I believe that we can deepen and enhance the quality of our political dialogue only by clearly focusing on some key priority issues. Economic governance is obviously one of these, and I am pleased to say that we have already seen intensified dialogue between Members or senior officials in the Commission and national Parliaments in particular in relation to the Annual Growth Survey and the Country Specific Recommendations.

When talking about the deepening of the political dialogue, I also need to reiterate the importance of the Commission Work Programme for national Parliaments. Next week the Commission will adopt its Work Programme for 2013. I would like to encourage all of you to use it as a strategic programming tool. The CWP gives you an overview of what we are planning in terms of initiatives and legislative proposals during the coming year, the possibility to prioritise to prepare and to exchange views with the Commission as early as possible in the process.

The challenges we face are daunting, and our responses must be equally tough. Reinvigorating the European economy and building a deeper economic and monetary and ultimately political union must be a collective responsibility. It will fundamentally change the way we work in Europe, and impact the lives of all 500m Europeans.

It's clear, then, that we need strong democratic accountability if we are to go down the route towards ever closer union. National parliaments play vital role in bridging the perceived democratic gap between national and European politics. If you, as national parliamentarians, are involved from the earliest stages in the discussions surrounding the European decision-making process, I firmly believe we have a far greater chance of creating the best policies and strategies to bring Europe out of crisis stronger and closer than ever before. I encourage you to take every opportunity to get involved in the debate!

Thank you for your attention

CONTRIBUTION OF THE XLVIII COSAC

Nicosia, 14-16 October 2012

1. Nobel Peace Prize

COSAC welcomes the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union as recognition of its substantial contribution to the advancement of peace, reconciliation, democracy, human rights and solidarity. COSAC believes that this award constitutes both an immense honour for the European family but at the same time a challenge for the European Union to maintain and to further advance the values of democracy, peace and human rights worldwide.

2. From words to action: Making More Europe a reality.

2.1. COSAC acknowledges the need to complement and strengthen the existing economic and monetary union and supports the reinforcement of the EMU architecture that will secure the prevention, management and resolution of crises.

2.2. In view of the current developments within the European Union, COSAC appreciates that the deepening of the EMU will mark a new stage in the process of the European integration.

2.3. COSAC believes that the reinforcement of the EMU architecture, through a fiscal and banking union should be in line with the principles of democratic legitimacy and accountability. COSAC underlines the crucial role that the European Parliament as well as the national parliaments should play in this respect. COSAC recommends that the European Parliament and the national Parliaments be fully consulted on and involved in the future architecture of the EMU in order to strengthen democratic legitimacy and accountability.

3. Energy

3.1. COSAC recognises the efforts of the European Union to ensure a continuous supply of energy at competitive prices for the optimal functioning of the European economy as well as the welfare of its citizens, pursued in a manner that supports the attainment of the Union's long term sustainability objectives.

3.2. The completion of the Union's internal energy market through the extension and modernization of its energy infrastructure will enable the speedy and effective transport of electricity, gas and other forms of energy across Europe, thereby securing a continuous and competitive energy supply for Europe's citizens and allowing all EU Member States to reap the benefits of the internal energy market. COSAC therefore welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a regulation on the Trans-European Energy Infrastructures, aimed at laying the

foundations for the attainment of the goals set out in Europe 2020 and the Union's long term sustainability objectives.

3.3. COSAC notes that all national Parliaments that scrutinised the above mentioned proposal were in favour (17) or partly in favour (8) of its objectives. However, a number of national Parliaments have expressed selective concerns over various aspects of the above proposal, as documented in the 18th Biannual Report of COSAC. The overview of the parliamentary scrutiny of the above mentioned proposal, as documented in the said report, indicates that in the early stage of the legislative process at the European level, particular concerns as expressed by national Parliaments may vary widely.

3.4 COSAC, therefore, calls upon the Council and the European Parliament to take the considerations expressed by national Parliaments into account and to bring the said proposal to a successful conclusion as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the timely modernisation of Europe's energy infrastructures.

4. Single Market Governance

4.1 COSAC acknowledges the importance of the Single Market as a vehicle for the promotion of European integration as well as the driving force behind sustainable economic growth and the creation of more positions of employment for the citizens of Europe. COSAC, however, believes that the full potential of the Single Market has not yet been realised, largely owing to problems in the implementation and enforcement of the Single Market rules.

4.2 COSAC welcomes the European Commission's Communication on Better Governance for the Single Market, aiming, on the one hand, at identifying key areas with potential for growth and taking action to rapidly promote such growth, and on the other, at proposing measures to improve the way in which Single Market rules are designed, implemented, applied and enforced.

4.3 COSAC calls on the European Commission to work closely with the European Parliament and national Parliaments in order to attain the objectives set out in the said Communication, and to engage in a fruitful debate as to how the Single Market can be further improved for the benefit of Europe's citizens and businesses.

4.4 COSAC welcomes the European Commission's commitment to draft a first report on the integration of the single market and the implementation of the objectives of the Communication on Better Governance for the Single Market as part of its Annual Growth Survey in 2013, as a useful tool in recording the progress made. COSAC calls for further measures to verify the implementation of the Single Market rules on a regular basis comparable to the European Semester exercise and acknowledges the importance of a Single Market test in order to assess the impact of existing legislation on the Single Market.

5. Europe 2020 Strategy – Recovery from the Economic Crisis

5.1 COSAC reaffirms the need for collective effort in order to effectively tackle the economic and social crisis and lead the Union to economic recovery and sustainable and inclusive growth. COSAC therefore underlines the crucial role of the Europe 2020 Strategy in achieving these objectives.

5.2 COSAC acknowledges the efforts of the European Commission to promote appropriate measures and means in support of growth, employment and better economic governance in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and in full respect of the solidarity principle. Furthermore, COSAC underlines the need that these objectives are met by Member States.

5.3 The ongoing economic crisis makes it clear that national targets must be set in areas where progress needs to be made, in order to better track performance in each sector and take rectifying action where appropriate. In this respect, COSAC encourages national Parliaments to increase efforts to monitor progress in meeting the Europe 2020 strategy goals and in particular through the scrutiny of implementation of Country-Specific Recommendations addressed to the Member States in the framework of the European Semester and their national reform programmes.

6. Political dialogue

6.1 COSAC recognises the importance of the political dialogue as a tool that reinforces the cooperation between the European institutions and national Parliaments. Although COSAC acknowledges that significant progress has been made to date regarding the political dialogue, it believes that this dialogue can be further enhanced.

6.2 In this respect, COSAC welcomes the Commission's firm commitment to further strengthening the political dialogue with national Parliaments in its reply to the Contribution of the XLVII COSAC.

6.3 COSAC calls on the European Commission to further enhance its cooperation with national Parliaments by sending more substantive responses and in a more timely manner, as requested by a number of Parliaments. COSAC welcomes the suggestion that the annual reports of the European Commission on the relations with national Parliaments could reflect with more clarity the influence that the opinions or other input by national Parliaments have had on the final text of the proposal concerned. Furthermore it calls for intensified cooperation on proposals on which a significant number of Reasoned Opinions have been issued.

6.4 COSAC notes that for the first time since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, a sufficient number of national Parliaments or chambers submitted a Reasoned Opinion in order to trigger the "yellow card" mechanism on the proposal for a Regulation on the exercise of the right to take collective action within the context of the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services. COSAC acknowledges that the European Commission has now withdrawn the

proposal. COSAC calls upon the European Commission to provide individual responses to the Reasoned Opinions submitted and reasoning for why it considers that the principle of subsidiarity has not been breached.

6.5 COSAC recognises the value of frequent contact between national Parliaments and the Commission on specific proposals and thanks the Commission for its efforts in this regard. It calls on the Commission to further enhance the political dialogue by paying more visits to national Parliaments and taking a tailored approach to the needs of each Parliament/Chamber.

6.6 COSAC appreciates the value of interparliamentary dialogue and of discussions with Commissioners within its meetings and calls on the Commission to continue its efforts to prioritise attending meetings of COSAC to build on the fruitful discussions to date.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE XLVIII COSAC

Nicosia, 14 – 16 October 2012

1. Bi-annual Report

COSAC welcomes the 18th Bi-annual Report prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and warmly thanks the Secretariat for its excellent work. The Report provides comprehensive and useful information on the relations between the European institutions and national Parliaments, on the role of parliaments regarding the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance, and on the parliaments' involvement in examining the proposed EU legislation on Trans-European Energy Infrastructure and the EU Communication on the Single Market Governance.

2. Subsidiarity and proportionality

2.1 COSAC notes that almost all national Parliaments take the principle of proportionality into consideration when examining draft legislative acts, even though in many cases it is not considered as a principle of an equal status to the subsidiarity principle under the Lisbon Treaty. Even though national parliaments are divided over the issue whether proportionality is an inextricable component of the subsidiarity principle, the majority of national Parliaments are of the opinion that a subsidiarity control is not effective enough if a proportionality check of the proposal at hand is not conducted.

2.2 COSAC takes particular interest in a number of proposals submitted by national Parliaments stressing the need for a more uniform interpretation of what constitutes a breach of the subsidiarity principle and the further clarification of the methodology used to perform subsidiarity checks. Given the different approaches among Parliaments regarding the way subsidiarity criteria are applied in practice, COSAC encourages Parliaments to exchange information regarding their relevant practices, in order to make subsidiarity control more effective, through the better understanding of the processes utilised by each national Parliament. Furthermore, a slight majority of national Parliaments (20-17) are in favour of formally laying down or establishing specific guidelines regarding the scope and content of reasoned opinions.

3. Political dialogue

3.1 COSAC recognises the importance of the political dialogue as a confidence building tool among the citizens and the Union and it welcomes the suggestion expressed by national Parliaments with regard to its further enhancement. COSAC, therefore, encourages national Parliaments to make further efforts towards the strengthening of cooperation in the framework of the political dialogue as documented in the 18th Bi-annual Report.

3.2 COSAC supports closer cooperation between national Parliaments to discuss proposals that are of particular concern and for which a large number of reasoned opinions were issued, even though the threshold set out under the Lisbon Treaty for reconsideration on the part of the Commission was not met.

4. The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union and the role of Parliaments

4.1 COSAC takes note of the provisions of Article 13 of the Treaty on the Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic Monetary Union, reiterating the importance of reinforcing interparliamentary cooperation between the European Parliament and national Parliaments in the field of economic governance and stresses that it applies to all parliaments of the EU.

4.2. COSAC has initiated a dialogue and exchanged views on the way that this cooperation could be optimized, examining the form that this reinforced cooperation should take. It, therefore, expressed the view that this dialogue should be continued in the future.