



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 2 July 2020
(OR. en)

9325/20

INST 129

COVER NOTE

From:	Members of the COSAC
To:	Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
Subject:	Letter

Delegations will find attached a letter co-signed by 32 Chairs (out of the total of 39) of committees of the national Parliaments of the European Union Member States dealing with the European Union affairs (COSAC).

Zagreb, 16 June 2020

President of the European Parliament
Mr David Maria Sassoli

President of the European Council
Mr Charles Michel

President-in-Office of the Council of the European Union
Mr Andrej Plenković

President of the European Commission
Ms Ursula von der Leyen

Honourable presidents,

Regretfully, for the first time since its establishment in 1989, extraordinary circumstances have prompted the cancellation of a plenary meeting of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union, specifically of the LXIII COSAC, which was scheduled to take place in Zagreb from 24 to 26 May 2020. With the aim of ensuring continuity of the work of COSAC, the Croatian COSAC Chair, with the support of the Presidential Troika of COSAC, convened an Extraordinary Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC via video conference on 16 June 2020.

At the Extraordinary Chairpersons' Meeting of 16 June 2020, members of COSAC discussed a common European response to the coronavirus outbreak and its impact on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Members of COSAC welcome a common European response to the coronavirus outbreak and call for solidarity among Member States in overcoming the difficulties caused by this unprecedented crisis. The European Commission's legislative packages aimed at containing the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the Joint European Roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures were adequately timed and contributed to the crisis management at European Union level.

Members of COSAC recognise the challenges arising from the crisis caused by the coronavirus outbreak affecting the finalisation of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, but nevertheless emphasise the importance of its timely adoption, as it represents not only a financial, but also a political framework for the EU in the coming years and is expected to play a key role in the European economic and social recovery.

The European Commission's Recovery Plan, with an adjusted proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, together with a dedicated Recovery Instrument, presented on 27 and 28 May 2020, is the focus of the national Parliaments'/Chambers' scrutiny. In that regard, members of COSAC recall the difficulties that national Parliaments/Chambers encounter when delivering decisions in situations in which gatherings are highly restricted and special protocols need to be followed. The letter from Vice-President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič of 8 April 2020 is therefore welcomed, and members of COSAC maintain that the Commission should be as flexible as possible to ensure that national Parliaments/Chambers can duly exercise the powers vested in them by the Treaties.

In the context of the coronavirus outbreak, members of COSAC note the postponement of the launch of the Conference on the Future of Europe, as well as the shift of its focus to healthcare and the European Union's response to the pandemic.

Members of COSAC also recall the letter to the President of the European Parliament, the President-in-Office of the General Affairs Council and the Vice-President of the European Commission of 21 January 2020, co-signed by 34 chairpersons of committees for Union affairs of national Parliaments/Chambers representing 24 EU Member States and stress the importance of ensuring adequate representation of national Parliaments/Chambers in the Conference on the Future of Europe. In this context, Members of COSAC emphasize their request that, in addition to active participation in the Conference itself, National Parliaments/Chambers must be involved in the steering bodies and be represented on an equal basis with Members of the European Parliament. Members of COSAC continue to expect a reply from the addressees of the initial letter.

As a part of the overall discussion on the future of Europe, with regret, but also with respect for the will expressed by the British people in the 2016 referendum, members of COSAC take note of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from membership in the European Union on 31 January 2020 and call for a comprehensive deal on future relations between the EU and the UK, taking into consideration current circumstances that are beyond control of both sides. Members of COSAC also take note of the new enlargement methodology and welcome the fact that its adoption facilitated the opening of the accession negotiations with the Republic of Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia. In line with the Zagreb Declaration of 6 May 2020, members of COSAC recall that a continued credible and effective enlargement policy, based on a confirmed European perspective of candidates and potential candidates from South East Europe, conditioned by the fulfilment of all set criteria, should remain a common European priority.

Members of COSAC remain devoted to cooperation with the institutions of the European Union, and in that regard we thank you for taking our considerations into account.

With assurances of highest regards,

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Domagoj Ivan Milošević

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the Croatian Hrvatski sabor

Gunther Krichbaum

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the German Bundestag

Guido Wolf

Chair of the Committee on European Union Questions
of the German Bundesrat

Satu Hassi

Chair of the Grand Committee
of the Finnish Eduskunta

Richard Hörcsik

Chair of the Committee on European Affairs
of the Hungarian Országgyűlés

Vita Anda Terauda

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the Latvian Saeima

Dragomir Stoynev

Chair of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds
of the Bulgarian Narodno sabranie

Václav Hámpl

Chair of the Committee on EU Affairs
of the Czech Senát

Gabriela Crețu

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the Romanian Senat

Angel Tîlvăr

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the Romanian Camera Deputatilor

Jean Bizet

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the French Sénat

Sabine Thillaye

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the French Assemblée nationale

Marko Pogačnik

Chair of the Committee on European Union Affairs
of the Slovenian Državni zbor

Bojan Kekec

Chair of the Commission for International Relations and European Affairs
of the Slovenian Državni svet

Gediminas Kirkilas

Chair of the Committee on European Affairs
of the Lithuanian Seimas

Ondřej Benešík

Chair of the EU Affairs Committee
of the Czech Poslanecká sněmovna

Ria Oomen - Ruijten

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the Dutch Eerste Kamer

Hayke Veldman

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the Dutch Tweede Kamer

Susana Sumelzo Jordán

Chair of the Joint Committee for the European Union
of the Spanish Cortes Generales

Yiorgos Lillikas

Chair of the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs
of the Cypriot Vouli ton Antiprosopon

Karin Brouwers

Chair of the Federal Advisory Committee on European Affairs
of the Belgian Senaat / Sénat

Patrick Dewael

President of the House and Chair of the Federal Advisory Committee on European Affairs
of the Belgian Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers / Chambre des représentants

Ettore Antonio Licheri

Chair of the European Union Policies Committee
of the Italian Senato della Repubblica

Sergio Battelli

Chair of the European Union Policies Committee
of the Italian Camera dei deputati

Hon. Emanuel Mallia

Chair of the Foreign and European Affairs Committee
of the Maltese Kamra tad-Deputati

Stanisław Tyszka

Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee
of the Polish Sejm

Bogdan Klich

Chair of the Foreign and European Union Affairs Committee
of the Polish Senat

Anneli Ott

Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee
of the Estonian Riigikogu

Nikitas Kakkamanis

Vice-President of the Parliament and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs
of the Greek Vouli ton Ellinon

Luís Capoulas Santos

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the Portuguese Assembleia da República

Eva Kjer Hansen

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the Danish Folketinget

Yves Cruchten

Chair of the European Affairs Committee
of the Luxembourg Chambre des députés / Die Abgeordnetenversammlung