



CORTES GENERALES



**INFORME SOBRE LA 50ª COSAC CELEBRADA EN VILNIUS
DEL 27 A 29 OCTUBRE DE 2013**

I

Del 27 al 29 de octubre de 2013, en la sede del *Seimas* y en el marco de la dimensión parlamentaria de la Presidencia lituana del Consejo de la Unión Europea, tuvo lugar la Quincuagésima edición de la Conferencia de Órganos Especializados en Asuntos Europeos (COSAC). En representación de las Cortes Generales, se desplazó a Vilnius para asistir a esta reunión una delegación compuesta por los siguientes miembros de la Comisión Mixta para la Unión Europea:

- **Excmo. Sr. D. Gerardo Camps Devesa**, Diputado, Presidente de la Comisión
- **Excmo. Sr. D. Pablo Casado Blanco**, Diputado, Portavoz, GPP
- **Excmo. Sr. D. Alejandro Alonso Núñez**, Diputado, GPS
- **Excmo. Sr. D. Jordi Xuclá i Costa**, Diputado, Portavoz Adjunto, GPCiU
- **Excmo. Sr. D. Iñaki Mirena Anasagasti Olabeaga**, Senador, GPV
- **Excmo. Sr. D. Joan Sabaté i Borràs**, Senador, Portavoz, GPEPC

Asistieron a la Delegación los Letrados de las Cortes Generales, Ilmo. Sr. D. Manuel Delgado-Iribarren García Campero, Letrado de la Comisión Mixta, y la Ilma. Sra. D^a Carmen Sánchez-Abarca Gornals, Letrada representante permanente de las Cortes Generales ante la Unión Europea, autores del presente Informe.

El programa y la lista de participantes en la L COSAC se adjuntan como **anexos 1 y 2** al presente informe.

II

Domingo 27 de octubre de 2013

La L COSAC comenzó con la reunión de la troika (Presidencias lituana, griega e irlandesa, más el Parlamento Europeo), en la que, como cuestión principal, se acordó por unanimidad el nombramiento de la nueva miembro permanente del Secretariado de la COSAC, **Sra. FRYDA**, propuesta por el Parlamento chipriota.

III

Lunes 28 de octubre de 2013

El orden del día, siguiendo la tradición de la COSAC, comenzó con las reuniones de los grupos políticos (EPP, S&D, ALDE), a las que asistieron los miembros de la delegación de las Cortes Generales.

A las 9 horas comenzó la reunión plenaria de la L COSAC, en el *Hall del 11 de marzo* del *Seimas*, presidida por el **Sr. KIRKILAS, Vicepresidente del Seimas y Presidente de la Comisión de Asuntos Europeos**.

Tras la proyección de un video sobre la independencia de Lituania, la **Sra. GRAUZIENE, Presidenta del Seimas** realizó su intervención introductoria, deseando a la COSAC un debate fructífero. El **Sr. BARROSO, Presidente de la Comisión europea**, intervino a través de un mensaje grabado en vídeo que fue así mismo proyectado en la sala. Los textos completos de ambas intervenciones se adjuntan como **anexos 3 y 4**.

A continuación, el **Sr. KIRKILAS** abordó los temas procedimentales y tras presentar el orden del día de la COSAC, que fue aprobado por asentimiento, expuso brevemente el contenido del 20 informe semestral de la COSAC, al que no se presentaron objeciones. El texto completo de dicho informe se adjunta como **anexo 5**. Anunció así mismo los resultados de la reunión de la troika, en concreto la propuesta de nombramiento del nuevo miembro permanente del secretariado de la COSAC, que fue ratificada por el pleno de la COSAC. La nota relativa a este procedimiento de elección se adjunta como **anexo 6**. Por último, mencionó las seis cartas recibidas por la Presidencia lituana.

En el debate subsiguiente, la **Sra. STRIK** (Países Bajos) señaló que la próxima reunión de Presidentes de la COSAC en Atenas, 26 y 27 de enero, coincide con una reunión del Consejo de Europa, y solicitó por ello una revisión del calendario de reuniones interparlamentarias. Ya que la COSAC comparte buenas prácticas sobre la participación de los Parlamentos Nacionales en la toma de decisiones europeas, considera crucial el código de buenas prácticas mientras que mostró su preferencia por evitar que la COSAC trate temas de carácter más político.

El Sr. LEEGTE (Países Bajos), anunció el envío de un nuevo cuestionario sobre un tema de interés común.

LA PRESIDENCIA LITUANA DEL CONSEJO DE LA UNIÓN EUROPEA.

Acto seguido comenzó la presentación del **Sr. BUTKEVICIUS**, Primer Ministro lituano, sobre el desarrollo de la Presidencia lituana del Consejo de la Unión Europea. Expuso los logros obtenidos en los diferentes temas prioritarios para la Presidencia lituana, así como el trabajo que aún debían coordinar hasta fin de año. El texto completo de su intervención se adjunta como **anexo 7**.

En el debate subsiguiente se trataron, en breves intervenciones de dos minutos, entre otros temas los referidos en las Conclusiones del Consejo europeo de 24 y 25 de octubre 2013, en concreto la actitud de la UE ante los flujos migratorios, tras los sucesos de Lampedusa; los casos de espionaje de EEUU en la UE; o el progreso en la unión bancaria. Determinadas delegaciones se centraron en temas de su interés, como el acceso a la zona Schengen de Rumanía y Bulgaria; el éxito de la Cumbre del Partenariado del Este o la mayor integración de Noruega en la UE, con el nombramiento de un Ministro para el Espacio Económico Europeo (EEE). La delegación francesa destacó así mismo la importancia de la Conferencia de Gobernanza Económica, mientras que las delegaciones portuguesa y chipriota insistieron en la necesidad de un equilibrio estructural en la UE, y una mejora en las condiciones de la financiación de determinados Estados miembros.

En relación con estos temas, el **Primer Ministro lituano** respondió en cuanto al mejor acceso a la financiación de los Estados miembros, se están preparando 70 proyectos de actos legislativos sobre esta cuestión, el objetivo es que los Estados miembros tengan acceso directo a la financiación desde el año que viene, para el fomento de la innovación, el crecimiento y el empleo. La política de crédito debe ser aplicada de forma responsable, para evitar los errores que se cometieron y que llevaron a la burbuja que generó la crisis. En relación con las escuchas por parte de EEUU, tal y como se debatió en el Consejo, no se puede aceptar una violación del derecho de intimidad de las personas, pese a ello continuará la negociación del Acuerdo de Libre Comercio con EEUU, en el que esperan resultados positivos. En relación con el problema de la inmigración, señaló que no es sólo de los países receptores, sino de todos los Estados miembros, por eso se trató en el Consejo. En cuanto a los graves sucesos de Lampedusa, sin embargo, si bien son conscientes de la problemática, mostró su confianza en que Italia aplique sus reformas estructurales. El Primer Ministro lituano insistió en el activo trabajo que está desarrollando su Presidencia en el Partenariado Oriental, y en el caso de Ucrania, cuando se cumplan los criterios establecidos.

El **Primer Ministro lituano** mostró su satisfacción por la presencia de los países nórdicos en la COSAC. En relación con los países que han sufrido graves desequilibrios financieros, y cuya situación económica es aún frágil, señaló que los recursos

financieros destinados a estos países deben ser empleados de un modo eficiente, apuntalando el crecimiento económico y contribuyendo a la creación de puestos de trabajo. Debe analizarse qué programas europeos deben aplazarse hasta que mejore la situación, dando prioridad al crecimiento y el empleo. Insistió en el apoyo lituano a la unión bancaria.

Tras ausentarse el Primer Ministro lituano, justo en el momento en que correspondía intervenir al Sr. CAMPS DEVESA (Cortes Generales), el Sr KIRKILA anunció que el antiguo Primer Ministro polaco Sr. MAZOWIECKI, acababa de fallecer, por lo que el Pleno de la COSAC mantuvo un minuto de silencio en su memoria.

LA 50ª COSAC Y SU CONTRIBUCIÓN AL REFORZAMIENTO DE LA COOPERACIÓN INTERPARLAMENTARIA EN LA UE

La reunión continuó con la intervención del invitado de honor, Sr. **FABIUS, Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores francés**, quien expuso los objetivos que motivaron la fundación de la COSAC en 1989, entre los que se encontraban fomentar la imagen de la UE y, dentro de ella y en aras de su buen funcionamiento, el papel de los Parlamentos nacionales. Destacó la vigencia de estos objetivos en hoy en día en una Europa que sufre la desafección de sus ciudadanos, a quienes debe aproximarse la toma de decisiones europea para superar esta falta de legitimidad democrática. Destacó el papel que puede desempeñar en este sentido, en relación con la reforzada coordinación de las políticas económicas de los Estados miembros en el marco del Semestre Europeo, la Conferencia de la Gobernanza Económica y Presupuestaria¹. El corolario de esta evolución debe ser un mejor control parlamentario, por ello sugirió que la Comisión europea (CE) presente las recomendaciones específicas por Estado miembro ante los parlamentarios nacionales. Recomendó reequilibrar la zona euro a nivel parlamentario, creando una estructura en el seno del PE destinada a los miembros del eurogrupo. Si bien advirtió frente a una excesiva presión de los Parlamentos nacionales o un recurso sistemático a sus tribunales nacionales, que haría imposible la construcción europea, destacó al mismo tiempo el uso que los Parlamentos nacionales pueden y deben hacer de los instrumentos de control de subsidiariedad previstos en el Protocolo n. 2 del TUE, como en los casos Monti II y de la Fiscalía europea².

¹ La I Conferencia de la Gobernanza Económica y Presupuestaria tuvo lugar en Vilnius del 18 al 19 de octubre 2013

² Vid. COM (2012) 130 y COM (2013) 534.

ELECCIONES EUROPEAS 2014, PLATAFORMA DE DEBATE SOBRE EL FUTURO DE LA UE CON SUS CIUDADANOS.

El orador principal en este punto fue el Sr. COX, antiguo Presidente del Parlamento Europeo, quien comenzó señalando que estas serán las octavas elecciones europeas, en las que el debate pre electoral se centra en el examen de la calidad de la gestión de la UE y el previsible triunfo de partidos populistas. En relación con la crisis, señaló la transición en la que está inmersa la UE tras la entrada en vigor del Tratado de Lisboa, en la que, pese a su perfil bajo, el Presidente van ROMPUY, el eurogrupo y sus ministros de Hacienda, son los dos gestores principales de la crisis, junto con el PE a través de la co decisión. Concluyó mencionando los retos a los que se enfrenta la UE, uno de ellos es cómo los partidos y los candidatos van a conseguir un equilibrio entre las medidas económicas necesarias y la dimensión social. El Sr. COX defendió a los actuales Estados como bases de la actual UE, y citando a O. WILDE afirmó que *“la verdad casi nunca es simple”*; y las verdades simples no pueden ofrecer las condiciones para lograr soluciones de futuro. Finalizó su intervención citando a T. JEFFERSON, quien afirmó que para que los gobernantes puedan gobernar, deben contar con la confianza de los pueblos. El reto actual en esta campaña electoral europea será por tanto doble, lograr resultados y rendir cuentas de ellos.

El segundo orador principal en este punto del orden del día, Sr. DUFF (Parlamento Europeo), comenzó destacando la previsible baja participación en las elecciones europeas, en esta era de democracia postnacional. El gran desafío es por tanto es demostrar la representatividad del PE, y la rendición de cuentas del PE frente a los electores. Destacó que finalmente no se ha logrado reformar el procedimiento electoral europeo, en lo referido a la lista europea o la jornada única, pero sí han logrado adelantar dos semanas la fecha de la votación. Señaló que el PE no logra comunicar la vitalidad de su debate a la opinión pública, si bien consideró alentadora la evolución de los partidos políticos europeos. El vínculo entre estos y los partidos nacionales debe ser reforzado, el PE propone que los logos y los nombres aparezcan en las papeletas de voto. Abogó así mismo por un mayor equilibrio de género en las listas, con una elección transparente y democrática de los candidatos. El art. 17.7 del Tratado de la Unión Europea estipula que el Presidente de la CE será nombrado teniendo en cuenta los resultados de las elecciones al PE, por mayoría cualificada del Consejo Europeo. Mencionó la posibilidad de que el Presidente de la CE sea elegido en segunda ronda, por falta de acuerdo sobre el primer candidato.

El debate subsiguiente trató temas como el carácter neoliberal o social de la UE, con posiciones enfrentadas; la soberanía de los Parlamentos nacionales frente a la UE, defendida por la delegación británica; el peligro del triunfo del populismo en las elecciones europeas de mayo de 2014, en concreto en el caso de Francia; y la previsible baja participación en estas elecciones europeas. Con la finalidad de mejorar dicha participación en todos los Estados miembros, se propuso que los Parlamentos celebraran debates para dar mayor visibilidad a los candidatos, tanto los Parlamentos nacionales como el Parlamento Europeo, en concreto su Comisión de Libertades.

DIPLOMACIA PARLAMENTARIA: EL CASO DEL PARLAMENTO EUROPEO Y UCRANIA.

El Sr. COX expuso el trabajo realizado por el PE, en un intenso ejercicio de diplomacia parlamentaria, en Ucrania. Agradeció al Sr. SCHULZ, Presidente del PE, su apoyo en esta misión, que ha permitido que Ucrania se aproxime a los objetivos establecidos por la UE. Si bien Ucrania en este momento sigue sin cumplir con las condiciones, se espera que logren llegar a cumplir estos criterios en breve. La nota elaborada por el PE en relación con esta misión se adjunta como **anexo 8**.

En el debate sobre este ejemplo de diplomacia parlamentaria planteado por la Presidencia lituana, se mencionó uno de los principales obstáculos para el cumplimiento de los criterios por parte de Ucrania, como es la encarcelación de la Sra. TYMOSCHENKO. En concreto, Lord HANNAY (Cámara de los Lores) agradeció el trabajo del Sr. COX, si bien expresó su convicción de que no cabe un apoyo a Ucrania a expensas de nuestros propios valores.

El Sr. XUCLÀ (Cortes Generales) agradeció el trabajo del Sr. COX, que no solo superará los casos de justicia selectiva que se han producido en Ucrania, sino que servirá para concluir un acuerdo de partenariado que será una positiva sorpresa. Señaló así mismo la reciente salida de Armenia de este posible acuerdo. Consideró como muy indicativos los datos sobre la esperanza de vida mencionados por el Sr. COX, en los que se comparaba Ucrania con Polonia. Destacó las tres condiciones que deben reunirse por parte de Ucrania, relativas a su reforma electoral, la reforma del sistema judicial y del Ministerio Fiscal, en la que se está avanzando, y por último, en referencia a la Sra. Tymoshenko, coincidió en señalar que su liberación debe ser una condición innegociable para la UE.

Por último, el Sr. GALAZEWSKI (Sejm de Polonia) matizó la comparación entre Polonia y Ucrania, dadas las diferencias históricas fundamentales entre ambos países.

Sesión informal durante la pausa del almuerzo

EL PAPEL DE LOS PARLAMENTOS NACIONALES EN EL DISEÑO Y EL CONTROL DEL PROCESO DE TOMA DE DECISIONES EN LA UE.

De las 14h30 a las 15h10, en la Sala adyacente a la Galería de las Vidrieras del Scimas, se celebró a instancias del Parlamento británico una sesión informal, en la que Lord BOSWELL, Presidente de la Comisión de Control Europeo de la Cámara de los Lores, expuso el modelo empleado en su Cámara para controlar los asuntos europeos. La nota preparada por la Cámara de los Lores se adjunta como **anexo 9**.

Durante la pausa de la comida, la delegación asistió a una comida de trabajo ofrecida por el Sr. Embajador de España en Lituania, Excmo. Sr. D. Miguel ARIAS, en el Hotel *Kempinski* de Vilnius.

EJECUCIÓN DE LA ESTRATEGIA EUROPA 2020.

El Sr. SEFCOVIC, Vicepresidente de la Comisión europea y Comisario de Relaciones Institucionales y Administración, fue el orador principal sobre este punto del orden del día. El texto completo de su intervención se adjunta como **anexo 10**.

La segunda oradora principal en este tema, en representación del PE, fue la Sra. BÈRES, eurodiputada de la Comisión de Economía del PE, cuya intervención se adjunta así mismo como **anexo 11**.

REUNIÓN DE PRESIDENTES DE LA COSAC.

A continuación se celebró la sesión reservada a los Jefes de las delegaciones, con el objetivo doble de nombrar al miembro permanente del secretariado y de debatir las enmiendas presentadas a los borradores de contribución y conclusiones elaborados por la Presidencia lituana. Los textos de dichos borradores se adjuntan como **anexos 12** (contribución) y **12 bis** (conclusiones). Finalmente, se alcanzó un acuerdo sobre todas las enmiendas propuestas, posponiendo su adopción definitiva al pleno del día siguiente.

Las actividades previstas en este día finalizaron con la cena en la Filarmónica de Vilnius ofrecida por la Sra. GRAUZINIENE, Presidenta del Seimas, en la que se celebró un concierto del coro de niños de Vilnius. La delegación española celebró así mismo una reunión bilateral con la delegación turca, relativa a la próxima visita de una delegación del Parlamento turco a Madrid.

IV

Martes 29 de octubre de 2013

LA LEGITIMIDAD DEMOCRÁTICA EN LA UE Y EL PAPEL DE LOS PARLAMENTOS NACIONALES.

A las 9 horas, comenzó la sesión con las intervenciones de la Sra. KVER HANSEN (Parlamento danés) y el Sr. HANNIGAN (Parlamento irlandés) quienes se centraron en el papel de los Parlamentos nacionales ante el déficit democrático y el ejemplo que pueden suponer en el ámbito parlamentario europeo las prácticas empleadas en sus respectivos Parlamentos. Ambos se mostraron favorables a la convocatoria de reuniones reducidas a los Parlamentos nacionales interesados en ciertos temas, al margen de la COSAC³. El texto completo de la intervención de la Sra. HANSEN se adjunta como **anexo 15**.

³ Reunión celebrada el 21 de octubre de 2013 en el Parlamento danés sobre la movilidad de los ciudadanos europeos y sistemas de seguridad social.

El Sr. PÖTTERING, eurodiputado y antiguo Presidente del PE, quien intervino en este punto en sustitución del Sr. CASINI, Presidente de la Comisión de Asuntos Constitucionales del PE, se centró en exponer la complejidad de la organización internacional *sui generis* que constituye la UE, y mencionó así mismo la gestión municipal como parte esencial del Derecho europeo. Mencionó la Fundación Adenauer, presidida por él, y citó a Adenauer, quien dijo que nada es sostenible sin las instituciones necesarias, por ello las instituciones europeas y el método comunitario deben ser sólidos, ya que la cooperación intergubernamental no es suficiente. Pese a los problemas que persisten, concluyó valorando muy positivamente la situación actual en Europa, donde prima el Estado de Derecho y la paz.

El Sr. SABATÉ i BORRÀS (Cortes Generales) felicitó en nombre de la delegación española a la Presidencia lituana, y a la Comisión de Asuntos Europeos del *Seimas* por la organización de la L COSAC, y el exquisito trato ofrecido. Brevemente señaló que compartíamos la preocupación por la falta de legitimidad democrática, y su probable reflejo en las próximas elecciones europeas. En el contexto de la doble estructura institucional en la UE, Parlamento Europeo-Parlamentos nacionales, reiteró la importancia de la capacidad de intervención de los Parlamentos nacionales, ejerciendo el control de subsidiariedad en las decisiones legislativas en la UE, si bien preguntó a la Sra. HANSEN hasta qué punto un exceso en el control de los Parlamentos nacionales hacia las instituciones europeas puede abundar en esta crisis de representatividad y esta desafección, infundiendo en los ciudadanos un recelo hacia las instituciones europeas. Por ello, abogó por reforzar la confianza ciudadana, haciendo que la capacidad de decisión recaiga en mayor medida en cargos de elección directa.

El debate sobre este punto se mencionaron así mismo otros temas, como la posible reforma de los Tratados de la UE para permitir una mayor integración económica y mayor protección a las economías más débiles; la necesidad de plazos más largos para recabar la opinión de los Parlamentos nacionales y los ciudadanos sobre las iniciativas europeas (propuesta de la delegación sueca). Se insistió en repetidas ocasiones en la conveniencia de reforzar el papel de los Parlamentos nacionales, especialmente en el marco de la Unión Económica y Monetaria, para evitar que los avances que se están produciendo no sean sometidos al necesario control parlamentario, con el consiguiente aumento de la desafección ciudadana hacia estas políticas. Se recordaron, en relación con el problema del desempleo, los altos niveles de desempleo juvenil como uno de los principales problemas causados por la crisis económica en la UE.

El Sr. TEKELIOGLU (Parlamento turco) valoró positivamente el primer capítulo recientemente abierto en las negociaciones de adhesión de Turquía, tras una interrupción de 3 años, si bien lo consideró insuficiente, y señaló que deben darse pasos adicionales tras haber perdido demasiado tiempo en dichas negociaciones. Sólo maximizando la legitimidad conseguiremos mayor democracia, por ejemplo la participación de mujeres y jóvenes en el Parlamento turco es cada vez más importante. Mencionó por último un proyecto apoyado por el PE y el Parlamento turco de intercambio parlamentario, en cuya continuación confiaban.

Por último, el Sr. SCHENNACH (Consejo Federal austriaco) criticó la brevedad de las intervenciones en la COSAC, y propuso que la reunión se extendiera en un día para permitir profundizar en los debates.

AGENDA DIGITAL: RETOS Y PERSPECTIVAS.

- Ciber seguridad

El orador principal en este punto fue el Sr. ROY, Jefe de Unidad de Política de Seguridad y Sanciones del Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior (SEAE). Sobre esta materia véase la nota incluida como Anexo 16.

- Beneficios para las empresas

El Sr. LAURS, Director de GetJar, ganador del premio “Gestor europeo del 2011”, expuso su amplia experiencia en las empresas que cuentan con financiación privada, y las facilidades en la promoción de estas empresas en EEUU frente a la legislación que dificulta estas iniciativas en la UE. Señaló una serie de iniciativas prácticas, relativas entre otras cuestiones a los trámites de creación de empresas, o la legislación laboral, que facilitarían en gran medida la actividad de este tipo de empresas en Europa.


APROBACIÓN DE LA CONTRIBUCIÓN Y DE LAS CONCLUSIONES

El Sr. KIRKILAS, tras la pausa del café, procedió a someter a aprobación de la contribución y las conclusiones, que se aprobaron con las modificaciones incluidas en la versión final de ambos documentos, que se adjuntan como **anexos 16 y 16 bis**.


Una vez finalizado el debate, el Parlamento lituano cedió la Presidencia de la COSAC a la Presidencia griega, que anunció las fechas de las reuniones que tendrán lugar en el primer semestre de 2014 en Atenas (reunión de Presidentes de la COSAC, de 26 a 27 de enero, pleno de la COSAC de 8 a 10 de junio 2014).

Tras finalizar la reunión a las 13 horas y 30 minutos, se ofreció una comida buffet y una visita del Parlamento lituano.

Madrid, a 1 de noviembre de 2013.



Manuel Delgado-Iribarren García-Campero



Carmen Sánchez-Abarca Gornals

ANEXOS

(en lengua inglesa)

Anexo 1. Programa de la L COSAC

Anexo 2. Lista de participantes en la L COSAC

Anexo 3. Discurso de bienvenida de la Sra. GRAUZINIENE, Presidenta del *Seimas* lituano

Anexo 4. Discurso de bienvenida del Sr. BARROSO, Presidente de la Comisión europea

Anexo 5. Vigésimo informe semestral de la COSAC

Anexo 6. Nota sobre el procedimiento de elección del miembro permanente del secretariado de la COSAC

Anexo 7. Intervención del Sr. BUTKEVICIUS, Primer Ministro de Lituania

Anexo 8. Nota sobre la misión de diplomacia parlamentaria del PE en Ucrania

Anexo 9. Nota sobre la sesión informal relativa al papel de los Parlamentos nacionales en el diseño y el control del proceso de toma de decisiones europeo

Anexo 10. Intervención del Sr. SEFCOVIC, Vicepresidente de la Comisión europea sobre la Estrategia EU2020

Anexo 11. Intervención de la Sra. BÈRES, Eurodiputada sobre la Estrategia EU2020

Anexo 12. Borrador de la Contribución de la L COSAC con enmiendas

Anexo 12 bis. Borrador de las Conclusiones de la L COSAC con enmiendas

Anexo 13. Declaración aprobada en el Foro de Mujeres de la COSAC

Anexo 14. Nota relativa al Foro de Mujeres de la COSAC

Anexo 15. Intervención de la Sra. HANSEN sobre la legitimidad democrática de la UE y el papel de los Parlamentos nacionales

Anexo 16. Nota sobre el mercado único digital.

Anexo 17. Versión final de la Contribución de la L COSAC

Anexo 17 bis. Versión final de las Conclusiones de la L COSAC



Lietuvos Respublikos pirmininkavimas
Europos Sąjungos Tarybai
2013 m. liepos 1 d. – gruodžio 31 d.
PARLAMENTINIS MATMUO

Lithuanian Presidency of
the Council of the European Union
1 July – 31 December 2013
PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

Présidence lituanienne
du Conseil de l'Union européenne
du 1er juillet au 31 décembre 2013
DIMENSION PARLEMENTAIRE

24 October 2013

L COSAC Meeting

Vilnius, 27–29 October 2013

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Sunday, 27 October 2013

Arrival of the delegations

15.00–19.30 Registration in the hotels

Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC

16.00 Departure from the hotels for the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania by bus
Gedimino pr. 53, Vilnius

16.30 **Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC**
Venue: Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas Hall, Building I of the Seimas

18.30 Departure by bus for the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania

18.30 Departure from the hotels for the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania

19.00 Guided tour of the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania (in English and French)

20.00 Dinner hosted by Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs

Venue: Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, Katedros a. 4, Vilnius

22.30 Return to the hotels



Monday, 28 October 2013

7.40 Registration in the Seimas (for those not registered yet)

Venue: Lobby, Building II of the Seimas

Meetings of political groups

7.40 Departure from the hotels for the Seimas by bus

8.00–8.50 Meetings of the political groups:



EPP

Venue: Meeting room 218b, Building III of the Seimas



S&D

Venue: Press Conference Hall, Building II of the Seimas



ALDE

Venue: Meeting room of the Committee on European Affairs, Building I of the Seimas

8.30 Departure from the hotels for the Seimas by bus

9.00 **Opening of the L COSAC Meeting**

Venue: Hall of the Act of 11 March, Building I of the Seimas

Introductory remarks by Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and Chair of Committee on European Affairs

Welcome speech by H. E. Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

Welcome speech by Mr José Manuel BARROSO, President of the European Commission (video message)

Procedural issues:

Adoption of the Agenda of the L COSAC

Presentation of the 20th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Briefing on the decisions of the meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC

Briefing on the letters received by the Presidency Parliament

Debate

9.45 **State of Play of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union**
Keynote speaker: H. E. Algirdas BUTKEVIČIUS, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania

Debate

11.00–11.30 Coffee break

Venue: Stained Glass Gallery, Building I of the Seimas

- 11.00 Press Conference
Venue: Press Conference Room, Building II of the Seimas
- 11.30 **The jubilee L COSAC Meeting**
Contribution of COSAC to strengthening of interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union
Guest-of-Honour Mr Laurent FABIUS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France
- 11.45 **European Elections 2014: Platform for Debate on the EU Future with Its Citizens**
Keynote speaker: Mr Pat COX, Former President of the European Parliament

Keynote speaker: Mr Andrew DUFF, Member of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament, rapporteur on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014

Debate
- 13.15 **Parliamentary diplomacy – the EP-Ukraine – a case study**
Presentation by Mr Pat COX, Former President of the European Parliament

Debate
- 14.00 Family photo
Venue: Hall of the Act of 11 March, Building I of the Seimas

Lunch
Venue: Stained Glass Gallery, Building I of the Seimas

14.30–15.10 **Informal Lunchtime Session**
Venue: Meeting room adjacent to the Stained Glass Gallery, Building I of the Seimas

The role of national Parliaments in shaping and scrutinising EU decision-making
Presentation by Lord Timothy BOSWELL, Chairman of the European Union Select Committee, House of Lords of the United Kingdom

Round-table discussion

- 15.15 **Implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy**
Keynote speaker: Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration

Keynote speaker: Ms Pervenche BERÈS, Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament

Debate

- 16.45 End of the meeting
Return to the hotels by bus

For the Chairpersons of COSAC

- 16.45 **Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC**
Venue: Hall of the Act of 11 March, Building I of the Seimas
Appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat
Debate on the Draft Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC
- 18.00 Departure of the Chairpersons of COSAC for the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Lithuania by bus
- 18.30 Meeting with H. E. Dalia GRYBAUSKAITĖ, President of the Republic of Lithuania
Venue: Presidential Palace of the Republic of Lithuania, S. Daukanto a. 3, Vilnius
- 19.00 Departure of the Chairpersons of COSAC for the Lithuanian National Philharmonic Society by bus

- 19.00 Departure from the hotels for the Lithuanian National Philharmonic Society by bus
- 19.30 Concert in the Lithuanian National Philharmonic Society
- 20.15 Dinner hosted by H. E. Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania
Venue: Lithuanian National Philharmonic Society, Aušros Vartų g. 5, Vilnius
- 22.00 Return to the hotels by bus

29 October 2013, Tuesday

Meeting of the COSAC Women's Forum

- 7.30 Departure from the hotels for the Seimas by bus
- 8.00–8.55 **Meeting of the COSAC Women's Forum**
Venue: Constitution Hall, Building I of the Seimas
CHAIR: Prof. Marija Aušrinė PAVILIONIENĖ, Member of the Committee on European Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania
Welcome speech by H. E. Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

	Presentation by Ms Bariza KHIARI, Vice President of the Senate of the French Republic
	Presentation by Ms Virginija LANGBAKK, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality
8.55	Press Point

- 8.30 Departure from the hotels for the Seimas by bus
Venue: Hall of the Act of 11 March, Building I of the Seimas
- 9.00 **Democratic Legitimacy in the EU and the role of EU Parliaments**
Keynote speaker: Ms Eva Kjer HANSEN, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Folketing
- Keynote speaker: Mr Dominic HANNIGAN, Chair of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs of the Irish Houses of the Oireachtas
- Keynote speaker: Mr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING, Former President of the European Parliament, Member of the European Parliament
- Debate
- First to respond: Lord Timothy BOSWELL, Chairman of the European Union Select Committee, House of Lords of the United Kingdom
- 11.30 Coffee break
Venue: Stained Glass Gallery, Building I of the Seimas
- 12.00 **Digital Agenda: challenges and perspectives:**
– **Cyber security**
Keynote speaker: Mr Rudolf Peter ROY, Head of division for Security Policy and Sanctions of the European External Action Service
- **Benefits for business**
Keynote speaker: Mr Ilja LAURS, Chief Executive Officer of GetJar, winner of “European Manager of the Year 2011 Award”, presented by the European Business Press (EBP)
- Debate
- 13.30 **Adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC**
- 14.30 Lunch
Venue: Stained Glass Gallery, Building I of the Seimas
- 15.30 Guided tour of the Seimas (in English or French) *optional*
Return to the hotels or departure for the airport by bus
- 16.30 Return to the hotels by bus

Draft 26/10/2013

DALYVIŲ SĄRAŠAS

L COSAC posėdis

**2013 m. spalio 27–29 d.
Vilnius**

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

L COSAC Meeting

**27-29 October 2013
Vilnius**

LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

Réunion de la L^e COSAC

**27-29 octobre 2013
Vilnius**

MEMBER STATES – ETATS MEMBRES – VALSTYBĖS NARĖS

AUSTRIA - AUTRICHE - AUSTRIJA

National Council / Conseil national / Nationalrat / Nacionalratas

No representation

Federal Council / Conseil fédéral / Bundesrat / Bundesratas

Mr Stefan SCHENNACH

Mr Gerd KRUSCHE

Ms Heidelinde REITER

Mr Georg MAGERL

Vice-Chairman of the EU Affairs Committee, S&D

Member of the Federal Council, Non-Affiliated

Member of the Federal Council, Greens/EFA

Permanent Representative of the Austrian Parliament to the European Parliament

BELGIUM – BELGIQUE – BELGIJA

Chamber of Representatives / Chambre des Représentants / Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers / Atstovų Rūmai

Mr Herman DE CROO

Mr Denis DUCARME

Mr Carlos DEMEYERE

Member of the Chamber of Representatives of Belgium, Former Speaker of the Chamber of Representatives of Belgium, ALDE

Member of Parliament, ALDE

Principal Adviser for Public Relations and International Affairs, Department of European Affairs, Non-Affiliated

Senate / Sénat / Senaat / Senatas

Mr Philippe MAHOUX

Mr Bert ANCIAUX

Mr Tim DE BONDT

Ms Marie-Aline STACANOV

Chair of the Federal Advisory Committee on EU Affairs, S&D

Member of the Federal Advisory Committee on EU Affairs, S&D

Advisor

Advisor

BULGARIA – BULGARIE – BULGARIJA

National Assembly / Assemblée nationale / Narodno Sabranie / Nacionalinis Susirinkimas

Mr Mladen CHERVENIAKOV

Mr Galen MONEV

Ms Ferihan AHMEDOVA

Mr Vladimir TOSHEV

Mr Mladen LAMBEFF

Chairperson, S&D

Deputy Chairperson

Member, ALDE

Member, EPP

Staff

CROATIA – CROATIE – KROATIJA

Sabor / Sabor / Hrvatski Sabor / Susirinkimas

Mr Jozo RADOŠ	Deputy Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, ALDE
Ms Ingrid ANTIČEVIĆ MARINOVIĆ	Member of the European Affairs Committee, Chairperson of the Legislation Committee, S&D
Mr Damir MATELJAN	Member of the European Affairs Committee, S&D
Ms Jelena ŠPILJAK	Advisor to the European Affairs Committee

CYPRUS – CHYPRE – KIPRAS

House of Representatives /ambre des Représentants / Vouli ton Antiprosopon / Atstovu Taryba

Mr Averof NEOFYTOU	Chairman of the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, EPP
Ms Athina KYRIAKIDOU	Member of the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, S&D
Mr Christos MESSIS	Member of the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, GUE/NGL
Mr Fidias SARIKAS	Member of the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, S&D
Ms Vassiliki ANASTASSIADOU	Secretary General
Ms Hara PARLA	Senior International Relations Officer
Mr Andreas CHRISTODOULOU	European Affairs Officer
Ms Christiana FRYDA	Permanent Representative of the House of Representatives of Cyprus to the European Parliament

CZECH REPUBLIC – RÉPUBLIQUE TCÈQUE – ČEKIJOS RESPUBLIKA

Chamber of Deputies / Chambre des Députés / Poslanecka Sněmovna / Atstovu Rūmai

No representation

Senate / Sénat / Senat / Senatas

Mr Miroslav KREJCA	Chairman of the Committee on EU Affairs, EPP
Mr Zdeněk BESTA	Vice-Chairman of the Committee on EU Affairs, S&D
Mr Jiří KAUTSKÝ	Head of the EU Unit
Ms Jana MALÁČOVÁ	Permanent Representative to the European Parliament

DENMARK – DANEMARK – DANIJA

Folketing / Folketing / Folketinget / Folketingas

Ms Eva KJER HANSEN	Chair of the European Affairs Committee, ALDE
Mr Jeppe KOFOED	Member of Parliament, S&D
Mr Morten KNUDSEN	Official, EU Special Advisor
Ms Pernille DELEURAN	Official, Head of International Division
Mr Klaus ANDERSEN	Permanent Representative of the Folketing to the EU

ESTONIA – ESTONIE – ESTIJA

Riigikogu / Riigikogu / Riigikogu / Rygikogas

Mr Arto AAS	Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee, ALDE
Mr Tõnis KÕIV	Member of the European Union Affairs Committee, ALDE
Ms Yana TOOM	Member of the European Union Affairs Committee, ALDE
Mr Rannar VASSILJEV	Member of the European Union Affairs Committee, S&D
Ms Kristi SÕBER	Head of Secretariat of the European Union Affairs Committee
Ms Malle KUULER	Permanent Representative of the Estonian Parliament to the EP

FINLAND – FINLANDE – SUOMIJA

Eduskunta / Eduskunta / Eduskunta / Eduskunta

Ms Miapetra KUMPULA-NATRI	Committee Chair, S&D
Ms Paula LEHTOMÄKI	Committee Vice-Chair, ALDE
Ms Riitta MYLLER	Committee Member, S&D
Mr Kimmo SASI	Committee Member, ECR
Ms Anna SORTO	Official
Ms Satu TUOMIKORPI	Official

FRANCE – FRANCE – PRANCŪZIJA

National Assembly / Assemblée nationale / Nacionalinė Asamblėja

Ms Danielle AUROI	Présidente de la Commission des affaires européennes, Greens/EFA
Mr Pierre LEQUILLER	Vice-président de la Commission des affaires européennes
Ms Axelle LEMAIRE	Députée
Mr Jean-Pierre BLOCH	Directeur du service des Affaires européennes
Mr Edouard MICHEL	Fonctionnaire de liaison
Mr Pierre BOSSE	Administrateur

Senate/ Sénat / Senatas

Mr Simon SUTOUR	Président de la commission des affaires européennes, S&D
Ms Bariza KHIARI	Vice-présidente du Sénat
Mr Jean BIZET	Vice-président de la commission des affaires européennes, EPP
Mr Jean-François HUMBERT	Membre de la commission des affaires européennes, EPP
Mr François SICARD	Chef du service de la commission des affaires européennes

GERMANY – ALLEMAGNE – VOKIETIJA

Bundestag / Bundestag allemand / Bundestag / Bundestagas

Ms Bettina KUDLA	Member of Parliament, EPP
Ms Kristina HOLFELD	Official
Ms Caroline MASS	Official

Bundesrat / Bundesrat / Bundesrat / Bundesratas

Mr Andreas VEIT	Deputy Head of the Secretariat of the Committee on European Union Questions
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GREECE – GRÈCE – GRAIKIJA

Hellenic Parliament / Parlement hellénique / Vouli ton Ellinon / Parlamentas

Mr Ioannis TRAGAKIS	Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, EPP
Mr Konstantinos MOUSSOULOULIS	Vice-Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, EPP
Mr Konstantinos TRIANTAFYLLOS	Secretary of the Committee on European Affairs, S&D
Mr Marias EPAMEINONDAS	Member of the Committee on European Affairs, Non-Affiliated
Mr Athanassios ATHANASIOU	Member of Parliament, GUE/NGL
Ms Eleni KONSTANTINIDOU	Head of the Department for the European Union
Ms Argyro TRAGAKI	Administrator
Ms Smaragda TRAGAKI	Assistant

HUNGARY – HONGRIE – VENGRIJA

National Assembly / Assemblée nationale / Országgyűlés / Nacionalinė Asamblėja

Mr Richárd HÖRCSIK	Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs, EPP
Mr Mátyás FIRTL	Vice-Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs, EPP
Mr Lajos MILE	Member of the Committee on European Affairs, Greens/EFA

Ms Zsuzsánna DÓCZY
Mr Krisztián KOVÁCS
Ms Éva SZEKRÉNYES

Advisor to the Committee on European Affairs
Head of the EU Department
Permanent Representative of the Office of the
Hungarian National Assembly to the EU

IRELAND – IRLANDE – AIRIJA

Houses of the Oireachtas / Oireachtas / Houses of the Oireachtas / Irachtas

Mr Dominic HANNIGAN	Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, S&D
Ms Catherine NOONE	Member of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, EPP
Mr Timmy DOOLEY	Member of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, ALDE
Mr John HAMILTON	Clerk to the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

ITALY – ITALIE – ITALIAJA

Chamber of Deputies / Chambre des Députés / Camera dei Deputati / Deputatq Rūmai

Mr Paolo TANCREDI	Vice-Chair of the European Union Policy Committee
Ms Paola CARINELLI	Vice-Chair of the European Union Policy Committee
Mr Antonio ESPOSITO	Counsellor, EU Department

Senate / Sénat / Senato della Repubblica / Senatas

Mr Vincenzo D'ANNA	Chairperson of the European Union Policies Committee, EPP
Ms Elena FATTORI	Senator, Non-Affiliated
Mr Franco MIRABELLI	Senator, S&D
Mr Giovanni BAIOCCHI	Head of Secretariat, European Union Policies Committee
Mr Davide CAPUANO	Official, Interparliamentary Relations Office

LATVIA – LETTONIE – LATVIJA

Saeima / Saeima / Saeima / Saeima

Ms Zanda KALNIŅA-LUKAŠEVICA	Chairperson of the EU Affairs Committee, Non- Affiliated
Mr Atis LEJIŅŠ	Deputy Chairperson of the EU Affairs Committee, Non-Affiliated
Mr Igors PIMENOVŠ	Secretary of the European Affairs Committee
Mr Ģirts OSTROVSKIS	Senior Adviser to the EU Affairs Committee
Mr Valdis ZIEMELIS	Deputy Director of Saeima Chancellery
Mr Juris VĪGULIS	Head of the Saeima Press Service
Ms Dana ROZLAPA	Adviser of the European Affairs Committee

Ms Linda KALNIŅA
Mr Ainārs STINTMANIS
Ms Simona MEGNE

EU Presidency Coordinator
Senior Consultant of the Saeima Protocol Division
Representative of Latvia (Saeima) to the EP

LITHUANIA – LITUANIE – LIETUVA

Seimas / Seimas / Seimas / Seimas

Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS	Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, S&D
Mr Petras AUŠTREVICIUS	Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, ALDE
Mr Andrius KUBILIUS	Leader of the Opposition, EPP
Ms Virginija BALTRAITIENĖ	Member of Parliament, Chair of the Committee on State Administration and Local Authorities, ALDE
Ms Vilija ALEKNAITĖ ABRAMIKIENĖ	Member of Parliament, EPP
Ms Marija Aušrinė PAVILIONIENĖ	Member of Parliament, S&D
Ms Renata LYGIENĖ	Head of Office of the Committee on European Affairs
Ms Elzė LAGUNAVIČIŪTĖ	Adviser
Mr Matas MALDEIKIS	Adviser

LUXEMBOURG – LUXEMBOURG – LIUKSEMBURGAS

Chamber of Deputies / Chambre des Députés / Deputatų Rūmai

Ms Isabelle BARRA	Secrétaire générale adjointe de la Chambre des Députés
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MALTA – MALTE – MALTA

House of Representatives / Chambre des Députés / Il-Kamra Tad-Deputati / Atstovų Rūmai

Mr Christopher FEARNE	Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, S&D
Mr Francis ZAMMIT DIMECH	Member of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, EPP
Mr Kenneth CURMI	Research Analyst
Ms Eleanor SCERRI	Research Analyst

NETHERLANDS – PAYS-BAS – NYDERLANDAI

House of Representatives / Chambre des Représentants / Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal / Antrieji Rūmai

Mr René LEEGTE	Vice-Chair of the EU Affairs Committee, ALDE
Mr Harry VAN BOMMEL	Member of the EU Affairs Committee, GUE/NGL
Ms Mendeltje VAN KEULEN	Clerk to the EU Affairs Committee
Mr Jos VAN DE WIEL	Assistant, Candidate for the post of Permanent Member of COSAC Secretariat 2014-2015

Senate / Sénat / Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal / Pirmieji Rūmai

Ms Tineke STRIK	Chair of the Standing Committee for European Affairs, Greens/EFA
Mr Peter VAN DIJK	Member of the Standing Committee for European Affairs, Non-Affiliated
Ms Ilse VAN DEN DRIESSCHE	Official

POLAND – POLOGNE – LENKIJA**Sejm / Sejm / Sejm / Seimas**

Ms Agnieszka POMASKA	Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee, EPP
Mr Andrzej GAŁAŻEWSKI	Vice-Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee, EPP
Mr Witold KLEPACZ	Vice-Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee, Non-Affiliated
Mr Andrzej SZTORC	Vice-Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee, EPP
Mr Adam DUDZIC	Deputy Director of the Foreign Affairs Bureau
Ms Kaja KRAWCZYK	Head of the EU Division
Ms Anna TRĘBACZKIEWICZ	Foreign Affairs Expert
Ms Magdalena SKRZYNSKA	Representative of the Polish SEJM Chancellery to the EU

Senate / Sénat / Senat / Senatas

Mr Edmund WITTBRODT	Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee, EPP
Mr Marek ZIÓŁKOWSKI	Member of the European Union Affairs Committee, EPP
Mr Leszek KIENIEWICZ	Director of the Office for International and European Union Affairs
Ms Agnieszka NIEWCZAS	Clerk to the European Union Affairs Committee
Ms Magdalena SKULIMOWSKA	Permanent Representative of the Chancellery of the Senate of the Republic of Poland to the EU

PORTUGAL – PORTUGAL – PORTUGALIJA**Assembly of the Republic / Assemblée de la République / Assembleia da Republica / Respublikos Asamblėja**

Mr Paulo MOTA PINTO	Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, EPP
Mr António RODRIGUES	Member of the European Affairs Committee, EPP
Mr Carlos SÃO MARTINHO	Member of the European Affairs Committee, EPP
Mr Vitalino CANAS	Member of the European Affairs Committee, S&D
Ms Ana Catarina MENDES	Member of the European Affairs Committee, S&D
Mr Luis FAZENDA	Member of Parliament, GUE/NGL

Ms Maria João COSTA
Mr Bruno PINHEIRO

Adviser of the European Affairs Committee
Permanent Representative of the Portuguese Parliament
to the European Union

ROMANIA – ROUMANIE – RUMUNIJA

Chamber of Deputies / Chambre des Députés / Camera Deputatilor / Deputatų Rūmai

Mr Florian Daniel GEANTĂ
Mr Dan MATEI

Vice-Chair of the European Affairs Committee, EPP
Counsellor, Head of the European Affairs Committee
Secretariat

Senate / Sénat / Senatul / Senatas

No representation

SLOVAKIA – SLOVAQUIE – SLOVAKIJA

National Council / Conseil national / Narodna rada / Nacionalinė Rada

Mr Ľuboš BLAHA
Mr Ivan STEFANEC

Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, S&D
Vice-Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, EPP

SLOVENIA – SLOVÉNIE – SLOVĚNIJA

National Assembly / Assemblée nationale/ Državni zbor / Valstybės Susirinkimas

Mr Jožef HORVAT
Mr Jakob PRESEČNIK
Mr Zvonko BERGANT

Chair of the Committee on EU Affairs, EPP
Member of the Committee on EU Affairs, EPP
Secretary of the Committee on EU Affairs

National Council / Conseil national / Državni svet / Valstybės Taryba

Mr Janvit GOLOB
Mr Dušan ŠTRUS

President of the Commission on International Relations
and European Affairs, Non-Affiliated
Head of the Legal Department

SPAIN – ESPAGNE – ISPAIJA

Congress of Deputies / Congrès des Députés / Congreso de los Diputados / Deputatų Rūmai

Mr Gerardo CAMPS DEVESA
Mr Alejandro ALONSO NÚÑEZ
Mr Pablo CASADO BLANCO
Mr Jordi XUCLÀ I COSTA
Mr Manuel DELGADO-IRIBARREN
Ms Carmen SÁNCHEZ-ABARCA
GORNALS

Chairman, EPP
Member of Parliament, S&D
Member of Parliament, EPP
Member of Parliament, ALDE
Legal Advisor
Legal Advisor

Senate / Sénat / Senado / Senatas

Mr Iñaki ANASAGASTI OLABEAGA	Senator, ALDE
Mr Joan SABATÉ BORRÀS	Senator, S&D

SWEDEN – SUÈDE – ŠVEDIJA

Riksdag / Riksdag / Riksdagen / Riksdagas

Mr Allan WIDMAN	Chair of the Committee on European Union Affairs, ALDE
Mr Bo BERNHARDSSON	Member of Parliament, S&D
Mr Jacob JOHNSON	Member of Parliament, GUE/NGL
Ms Maria PLASS	Member of Parliament, EPP
Mr Börje VESTLUND	Member of Parliament, S&D
Mr Hans WALLMARK	Member of Parliament, EPP
Ms Abigail CHOATE	Head of Secretariat, EU Coordination
Ms Margareta LJUNGGREN HJORTH	Head of Secretariat of the Committee on European Union Affairs
Mr Anders DÖLLING	Deputy Secretary of the Committee on European Union Affairs
Ms Pia TÖRSLEFF HERTZBERG	Deputy Secretary of the Committee on European Union Affairs
Ms Tuula ZETTERMAN	Permanent Representative of the Swedish Parliament to the EU

UNITED KINGDOM – ROYAUME-UNI – DIDŽIOJI BRITANIJA

House of Commons / Chambre des Communes / Bendruomenių Rūmai

Mr William CASH	Chair of the European Scrutiny Committee, Non-Affiliated
Mr Michael CONNARTY	Member of Parliament
Ms Sarah DAVIES	Clerk of the European Scrutiny Committee
Mr Edward BEALE	National Parliament Representative

House of Lords / Chambre des Lords / Lordų Rūmai

Lord Timothy BOSWELL OF AYNHO	Chair of the EU Select Committee, Non-Affiliated
Lord David HANNAY OF CHISWICK	Chair of the EU Sub-Committee on Home Affairs, Health and Education
Lady Jean CORSTON	Member of Parliament
Mr Jake VAUGHAN	Clerk of the EU Select Committee
Ms Dominique GRACIA	National Parliament Representative to the EU

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT – PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN – EUROPOS PARLAMENTAS

Mr Miguel Angel MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ	Vice-President of the European Parliament, S&D
Mr Hans Gert PÖTTERING	Former President of the European Parliament, Member of the European Parliament, EPP
Ms Pervenche BERÈS	Chair of the EP Employment and Social Affairs Committee, S&D
Ms Laima Liucija ANDRIKIENĖ	Member of the EP International Trade Committee, EPP
Ms Vilija BLINKEVIČIŪTĖ	Member of the European Parliament, S&D
Mr Andrew DUFF	Member of the EP Committee on Constitutional Affairs, ALDE
Mr Algirdas SAUDARGAS	Member of the EP Committee on Constitutional Affairs, EPP
Ms Christine VERGER	Director, Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments
Mr Francisco GÓMEZ MARTOS	Head of the Institutional Cooperation Unit, Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments
Mr Arnoldas PRANCKEVIČIUS	Adviser to the President of the European Parliament
Ms Beatrice SCARASCIA MUGNOZZA	Head of Service for relations with National Parliaments, EPP Group
Mr Peter REICHERT	Policy Advisor (S&D)
Ms Sofia CHRYSOPOULOU	Policy Advisor (ALDE), Interinstitutional Relations and Networking Unit
Mr François NÉMOZ-HERVENS	Administrator, Secretariat of the Constitutional Affairs Committee (AFCO)
Mr Riccardo ALFIERI	Parliamentary Assistant of AFCO Chairman Mr Casini
Ms Daiva JAKAITĖ	Head of the European Parliament information office in Vilnius

COSAC SECRETARIAT – SECRÉTARIAT DE LA COSAC – COSAC SEKRETORIATAS

Ms Živilė PAVILONYTĖ	Permanent Representative of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania to the EU, Member of the COSAC Secretariat
Ms Jurgita MARCINKUTĖ	Deputy Permanent Representative of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania to the EU, Member of the COSAC Secretariat
Mr Derek DIGNAM	Permanent Representative of the Irish Parliament (Houses of the Oireachtas), Member of the COSAC Secretariat
Ms Despina FOLA	National Representative of the Hellenic Parliament, Member of the COSAC Secretariat
Mr Eschel ALPERMANN	Administrator, European Parliament, Institutional Cooperation Unit, Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments, Member of the COSAC Secretariat

CANDIDATE COUNTRIES – PAYS CANDIDATS – ŠALYS KANDIDATĖS

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA/FYROM – ANCIENNE RÉPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE MACÉDOINE/ARYM / BUVUSIOJI JUGOSLAVIJOS RESPUBLIKA MAKEDONIJA

Assembly / Assemblée / Sobranie / Susirinkimas

No representation

ICELAND – ISLANDE – ISLANDIJA

Althingi / Althingi / Althingi / Altingas

Mr Birgir ÁRMANNSSON	Chair
Ms Silja Dögg GUNNARSDÓTTIR	Member
Mr Össur SKARPHÉDINSSON	Member
Mr Þröstur Freyr GYLFASON	Delegation Secretary

MONTENEGRO – MONTÉNÉGRO – JUODKALNIJA

Skupstina / Skupstina / Skupština / Skupština

Mr Slaven RADUNOVIĆ	President of the Committee on European Integration
Mr Genci NIMANBEGU	Member of the Committee on European Integration
Ms Nada DROBNJAK	Member of the Committee on European Integration
Mr Andrej ORLANDIĆ	Acting Secretary of the Committee on European Integration

SERBIA – SERBIE – SERBIJA

National Assembly / Assemblée nationale / Narodna Skupština / Tautos Skupština

Ms Nataša VUČKOVIĆ	Chair of the EU Integration Committee, S&D
Mr Dragan ŠORMAZ	Member of the EU Integration Committee, EPP
Ms Dijana VUKOMONOVIĆ	Member of the EU Integration Committee, S&D
Mr Aleksandar DJORDJEVIĆ	Secretary of the EU Integration Committee

TURKEY – TURQUIE – TURKIJA

Grand National Assembly / Grande Assemblée nationale / Büyük Millet Meclisi / Didysis Nacionalinis Medžlisas

Mr Mehmet TEKELIOĞLU	Chair of the EU Harmonization Committee
Mr Oğuz OYAN	Vice-Chair of the EU Harmonization Committee
Ms Halide İNCEKARA	Member of the EU Harmonization Committee
Mr Abdulvehap DOĞAN	Expert on Legislation

OTHER PARTICIPANTS – AUTRES PARTICIPANTS – KITI DALYVIAI

**COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION - CONSEIL DE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE –
EUROPOS SAJUNGOS TARYBA**

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Mr Rudolf Peter ROY	Head of the Security Policy and Sanction Division
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Ms Virginija LANGBAKK	Director
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SOCIAL EUROPÉEN – EUROPOS EKONOMIKOS IR SOCIALINIŲ REIKALŲ
KOMITETAS**

Mr Mindaugas MACIULEVIČIUS	Member of the Committee
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**ARENA CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES – CENTRE D'ÉTUDES EUROPÉENNES
ARENA – EUROPOS STUDIJŲ CENTRAS „ARENA“**

Mr Ian COOPER	Senior Researcher
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SPECIAL GUESTS/ INVITÉS SPÉCIAUX / YPATINGI SVEČIAI

NORWAY - NORVÈGE – NORVEGIJA

Storting / Storting / Stortinget / Stortingas

Ms Elin Rodum AGDESTEN	Member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, EPP
Ms Sylvi GRAHAM	Member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, EPP
Mr Per NESTANDE	Senior Advisor

UKRAINE – UKRAINE – UKRAINA

Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine / Conseil suprême d'Ukraine / Verkhovna Rada Ukraïny / Ukrainos Aukščiausioji Rada

Mr Hryhoriy NEMYRIA	Chairman of the Committee on European Integration
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SPEAKERS – ORATEURS – PRANEŠĖJAI

Mr Algirdas BUTKEVIČIUS	Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania
Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ	Vice-President of the European Commission
Mr Laurent FABIUS	Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France
Ms Bariza KHIARI	Vice-President of the Senate of the Republic of France
Mr Pat COX	Former President of the European Parliament
Mr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING	Former President of the European Parliament, MEP
Ms Pervenche BERÈS	Chair of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee of the European Parliament
Mr Andrew DUFF	Member of the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament
Lord Timothy BOSWELL OF AYNHO	Chair of the EU Select Committee of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom
Mr Dominic HANNIGAN	Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs of the Irish Houses of the Oireachtas
Ms Eva KJER HANSEN	Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Folketing
Mr Rudolf Peter ROY	Head of the Security Policy and Sanction Division of the European External Action Service
Ms Virginija LANGBAKK	Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality
Mr Ilja LAURS	Chief Executive Officer of “GetJar”, winner of “European Manager of the Year 2011 Award”, presented by the European Business Press (EBP)

WELCOME SPEECH BY MRS LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, AT THE OPENING OF THE COSAC MEETING

Dear guests, fellow parliamentarians, ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased and proud to have an opportunity to welcome you all to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. It is an immense privilege for Lithuania to organise the historic 50th jubilee COSAC Meeting.

The jubilee COSAC Meeting is taking place on the eve of yet another significant anniversary. 1 November 2013 marks the 20th anniversary of the enforcement of the Maastricht Treaty. The Treaty was a very substantial step leading to a more united Europe. May I congratulate you all on this anniversary which is of utmost importance for the European Union!

Like no parliament before, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania has had the opportunity to organise three interparliamentary conferences of the European Union.

At the beginning of September, the Seimas convened the third Interparliamentary Conference for the Common and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy.

The Conference was held at a particularly sensitive period, in anticipation of a response from the international community to the chemical weapons' attack in Syria and the upcoming important Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Vilnius at the end of November.

A little more than a week ago, the Seimas hosted an inaugural meeting of the new Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union established in line with Article 13 of the Fiscal Compact.

The Conference saw vigorous debate on the aims and the role of the Conference. Although the Conference has not reached a consensus over the final decision regarding important practical and political aspects of the functioning of the Conference, we remain hopeful that it has laid a firm basis for further functioning of the Conference and its successful work in the future.

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Unlike the aforementioned conferences, COSAC has had long traditions and has established itself as the major interparliamentary conference bringing together parliamentarians from the whole Europe.

I deeply appreciate the input of COSAC in enhancing democratic legitimacy and accountability in the European Union, promoting a more active role of **national Parliaments** in the EU decision-making process, and strengthening the cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament. I am utterly convinced, **COSAC** plays a crucial role in ensuring regular and effective inter-institutional dialogue between the **national level** and the **EU level**.

I therefore expect that COSAC will further develop and strengthen its position in the EU architecture. I hope that we will succeed in employing the opportunities envisaged in

Article 10 of Protocol 1 of the Treaty of Lisbon more efficiently, and in developing more enhanced cooperation among national Parliaments, the European Parliament and other EU institutions.

Incidentally, **tomorrow, women** parliamentarians will gather to discuss the most relevant matters on the EU agenda for the first time in COSAC history. It is of particular **importance**. The plan is to establish the **COSAC Women's Forum** aimed at promoting cooperation among women parliamentarians and encouraging their engagement in making decisions important to the European Union.

The idea to establish such a women's forum was conceived during the meeting between Madam Bariza Khiari, Vice-President of the Senate of the French Republic, in Paris last July, and the Seimas delegation, when we, as the representatives of the Presidency Parliament, visited the French Senate and introduced the parliamentary dimension of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Fellow colleagues,

Allow me to welcome you to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania once again and to wish an interesting and forward-leading debate. I hope you will come up with the best solutions for the citizens of your countries and the whole Europe.

Enjoy your stay in Vilnius.

We hope you will visit Lithuania again!

Thank you for your attention.

Video Address by Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, to the
L COSAC

Chairman Gediminas Kirkilas,
Honourable Members of Parliaments,

It is with great pleasure that I am at least virtually with you today. Allow me first of all to congratulate you on your 50th meeting. Such milestones are significant in a way. I still vividly remember chairing the 2000th meeting of the European Commission in May last year. Of course, COSAC, compared to the Commission, is still relatively young, but no doubt COSAC has established itself as a valuable, I would say, indispensable player at the European Union level. And anniversaries as this make us reflect and look back. They point at the history, at the development trajectory over many years before we arrived at such landmarks. And the history of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union started in 1989. It took place in an era of new impetus for European integration and of discussions about democratic legitimacy on European affairs. Formally recognised in the Treaty of Amsterdam and included in the first protocol of the Lisbon Treaty, COSAC has developed into a substantial factor in fostering inter-parliamentary cooperation on European Union policies. The European Commission has supported this consistently. I remember very well my commitment, pledge in 2006, which started off the informal dialogue between the European Commission and national Parliaments ahead of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty protocol on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

Ladies and gentlemen, honourable Members,

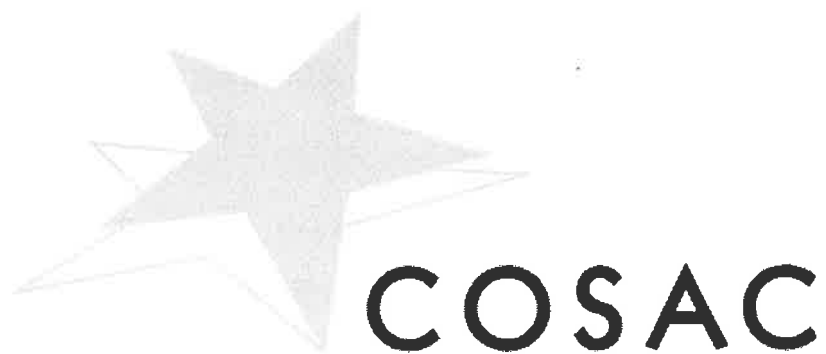
Milestones such as this jubilee meeting also invite us to look forward, because although there are some positive signs, many challenges to move Europe beyond the crisis remain. We all know that easy solutions are not an option, and that they need to be bold and comprehensive. Stabilising our economies and restoring confidence is key. That is why completing the architecture of the Economic and Monetary Union, in particular of the Banking Union, is so essential, essential to underpin a return to growth, a new kind of growth, sustainable growth. And for this we also need to steady the course of fiscal consolidation, accelerate the pace of structural reforms and boost investment to help reignite the real economy. With our *Europe 2020* Strategy, I believe we have a broad consensus on policies that are both right for us as the European Union, and right for each Member State. We are stepping up to the fight against unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, we are providing Europe's businesses with new key levers for competitiveness and growth. We have a new approach to innovation and a fresh take on industrial policy reducing red tape, tackling high energy costs, addressing the skills' mismatch and to make sure that business, in particular SMEs can finance themselves. So, *Europe 2020* is about sustainable, smart and inclusive growth. I believe it is important to keep that line. I believe it is important to be determined and not to allow illusions regarding, precisely, our commitment to this process of reforms. At the end, our competitiveness in this very challenging world, globalised world, depends on our commitment to

these reforms. And if you want to keep our social market economy, if you want to keep the most important elements of what we have called the social model, we should understand that in fact we need to reform so that we are able to compete.

Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased that Vice-President Šefčovič of the European Commission will be with you in person this afternoon to debate implementation of the *Europe 2020* Strategy. Allow me to congratulate you for putting the implementation of the *Europe 2020* so central on your agenda today. Because I really believe it is vital that parliaments contribute to National Reform Plans and their implementation, taking into account specific national and regional economic and social structures based on European-wide objectives and values that we must share. Only by acting and achieving results together, we can expect to live up to the confidence that Europe's citizens place on their political leaders at national and European level. And with that observation, I wish you a fruitful jubilee meeting. I wish you all the best for your work and I remain expecting the results of your work that I am sure will give a contribution to our common project.

I thank you for your attention.



4 October 2013

Twentieth Bi-annual Report:
Developments in European Union
Procedures and Practices
Relevant to Parliamentary Scrutiny

Prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and presented to:

**L Conference of Parliamentary Committees
for Union Affairs of Parliaments
of the European Union**

27-29 October 2013
Vilnius

**Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs
of Parliaments of the European Union**

COSAC SECRETARIAT

WIE 05 U 041, 50 rue Wiertz, B-1047 Brussels, Belgium
E-mail: secretariat@cosac.eu | Tel: +32 2 284 3776

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Background

This is the Twentieth Bi-annual Report from the COSAC Secretariat.

COSAC Bi-annual Reports

The XXX COSAC decided that the COSAC Secretariat should produce factual Bi-annual Reports, to be published ahead of each ordinary meeting of the Conference. The purpose of the Reports is to give an overview of the developments in procedures and practices in the European Union that are relevant to parliamentary scrutiny and to provide information better to facilitate plenary debates.

All the Bi-annual Reports are available on the COSAC website at: <http://www.cosac.eu/en/documents/biannual/>

The three chapters of this Bi-annual Report are based on information provided by the national Parliaments of the European Union Member States and the European Parliament. The deadline for submitting replies to the questionnaire for the 20th Bi-annual Report was 2 September 2013.

The outline of this Report was adopted by the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC, held on 8 July 2013 in Vilnius.

As a general rule, the Report does not specify all Parliaments or Chambers whose case is relevant for each point. Instead, illustrative examples are used. Please consult the Annex of the Report for more information on the content of replies.

Complete replies, received from 40 out of 41 national Parliaments/Chambers of 28 out of 28 Member States and the European Parliament, can be found in the Annex on the COSAC website. The Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna* did not answer the questionnaire due to the timing of elections.

Note on Numbers

Of the 28 Member States of the European Union, 15 have a unicameral Parliament and 13 have a bicameral Parliament. Due to this combination of unicameral and bicameral systems, there are 41 national parliamentary Chambers in the 28 Member States of the European Union.

Although they have bicameral systems, the national Parliaments of Austria, Ireland and Spain each submitted a single set of replies to the questionnaire, therefore the maximum number of respondents per question is 39. There were 38 responses to this questionnaire.

ABSTRACT

CHAPTER 1: EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014: PLATFORM FOR DEBATE ON THE EU FUTURE WITH ITS CITIZENS

The first chapter of this report focuses on the preparedness of Parliaments/Chambers for the upcoming European elections by giving an overview on related debates and scrutiny. It outlines to which extent Parliaments got involved in the preparations for the European elections 2014. It sets out how Parliaments have managed to fulfil their role in engaging EU citizens in the debate on the EU and its future and provides information about the methods used to engage in the discussion with voters, for instance outreach and educational activities. Finally, Parliaments were invited to express their views on whether the time was ripe for a new Convention on the Future of Europe. The chapter highlights positive examples and trends, however, it also shows that with less than one year to go a majority of national Parliaments/Chambers had not yet embraced their role in preparing the European elections in May 2014.

Those Parliaments which provided details expressed contradictory ideas about the practical arrangements for the elections to the European Parliament, e.g. about a common election day. A two-thirds majority of responding Parliaments were in favour of propagating the affiliation between national and European parties prior to the elections to the European Parliament. Only about one third of national Parliaments expressed views on the question about which entity should nominate a candidate for the President of the European Commission and most of these favoured a nomination by European and national parties together towards a sole role for national governments or national parties.

Less than one quarter of Parliaments/Chambers had considered any recommendations to improve the efficient conduct and the removing of obstacles to voting in the European elections. A majority of national Parliaments/Chambers had not discussed the question concerning the reasons for the falling voter turnout in the European elections or not taken a formal position on it. The others expressed a broad variety of views ranging from a lack of interest in European politics, a lack of information or the information spread by tabloid media, the dominance of national politics over European politics but as well the current financial, economic, employment and social crisis. Accordingly Parliaments' ideas how to enhance the profile of European elections, particularly to increase voter turnout, varied widely, including changes to the electoral system, more information (about candidates and programmes) and a more media-driven electoral campaign, new projects to deepen the European integration, public debate or targeting specific interest groups. The two-fold approach developed for the information and communication campaign on the 2014 European elections by the European Parliament was also presented.

A number of Parliaments/Chambers reported that they were organising or would organise numerous initiatives and activities with respect to citizens' involvement in a dialogue on the European elections. Some had organised debates in the media on the European elections, others had engaged or planned to engage citizens through public meetings and fewer had organised round-table discussions with think tanks. Some of the Parliaments/Chambers said

that they were currently exploring ways to promote the participation of the citizens in debates on the European elections. Only a few Parliaments/Chambers said that they believed that this dialogue should not be organised by national parliamentary institutions. Sixteen out of 36 Parliaments/Chambers had implemented or planned activities to engage citizens in a dialogue on the future of Europe and its role in the globalised world.

A number of Parliaments/Chambers (10) had or would be undertaking outreach and educational activities in relation to the European elections, a number of Parliaments/Chambers reported organising various competitions aiming to educate young people on the EU. Some Parliaments/Chambers provided education for teachers, local politicians and officials. Some tools were being introduced to increase awareness of the EU institutions' role in the citizens' daily lives as well as the upcoming elections.

Many Parliaments/Chambers had not formally taken a position on the issue of whether a new Convention was required. Only one fifth of Parliaments/Chambers believed that a new Convention was needed. Some of these Parliaments/Chambers proposed that a new Convention could address the issues concerning EU decision-making, the role of Parliaments, Union's economic policy and budgetary capacity.

CHAPTER 2: DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY IN THE EU AND THE ROLE OF EU PARLIAMENTS

The second chapter of the report outlines the methods national Parliaments use to pursue democratic scrutiny of and control over their governments and the EU institutions. In this regard, just over half of all Parliaments/Chambers believe that democratic accountability should not be limited only to scrutinising their respective national governments but should also include scrutiny of EU institutions. Having said that the majority of Parliaments/Chambers ranked scrutiny of their own government as most important followed by the Commission, the European Council and the Council.

The mechanisms to ensure accountability over government actions were seen by most Parliaments/Chambers as being direct and quite strong and as being exercisable either in committee or in plenary or in both. A range of mechanisms for ensuring accountability have been developed but the most important mechanism is the holding of a government to account for its actions in Council followed by the use of the subsidiarity check and political dialogue as mechanisms for holding EU institutions to account. Some additional mechanisms considered as useful for the purposes of holding all entities to account included, for example, the use of National Parliament Representatives, engaging with MEPs and rapporteurs, holding national Parliament/Chamber committee meetings in Brussels and giving national MEPs the right to sit on national committees.

Parliaments/Chambers ranked COSAC, political dialogue and IPEX as the most effective tools for interparliamentary cooperation and reserved the highest level of criticism for the subsidiarity mechanism and the CFSP/CSDP Conference.

Parliaments/Chambers are actively involved in the EU decision-making process (through exerting influence over their governments, by using the subsidiarity check mechanism and through the political dialogue) and in the pre-legislative phase of EU policy formation (through the scrutiny of consultation papers, evaluation of the Commission Work

Programme, and through receiving information from their governments for example). Many examples of how Parliaments "actively contribute to the good functioning of the Union" are also outlined in the report.

When asked to classify their scrutiny systems, Parliaments/Chambers appear to be developing more sophisticated or tailored approaches to EU scrutiny work. This would merit a more detailed examination at a future date. Parliaments/Chambers also gave more details about their chosen systems, highlighting strengths and any perceived gaps therein.

When discussing the future evolution of parliamentary democracy in the EU, many Parliaments/Chambers declined to give a view, whereas others concentrated their comments on the need to strengthen existing mechanisms and enhance interparliamentary cooperation.

CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

The third chapter of the biannual report examines parliamentary scrutiny of the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy targets as well as the state of play of ongoing reforms and examine best practices and procedures. The report shows that the majority of the Parliaments/Chambers actively debated all or most of the referred goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy, with the issue of unemployment slightly prevailing to others. The scrutiny procedures included committee meetings, often with the participation of members of the government and in many cases in the context of the National Reform Programme discussions. The scrutiny of the implementation of the reforms applying to the Europe 2020 strategy took place predominately in committee meetings, in many cases with the input of the government as well as social partners and other stakeholders. Plenary hearings were in both cases less often.

Almost one third of the Parliaments/Chambers did not comment on the means of cooperation in order to achieve the goals set by the Europe 2020 Strategy. Close to a third referred to scrutiny over government work on a national level, whereas on an EU level most of the Parliaments/Chambers referred to the exchange of information and best practices through existing mechanisms of interparliamentary cooperation. Seven Parliaments/Chambers highlighted the importance and potentials of the parliamentary week.

A small number (8) of Parliaments/Chambers answered that political commitment to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy was in fact reflected in the policy and budget formation on both the European Union and national level. Most of those that answered negatively made special references to the impact of the financial crisis on the 2014-2020 MFF. This was reflected in the relatively high percentage of Parliaments/Chambers that had debated the social impact of the austerity measures taken at both the EU and the national levels, as well as - on a smaller scale - the impact of the austerity measures on the targets set in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The report also shows an increased interest on the issue of youth unemployment since 71% of responding Parliaments/Chambers (22 out of 31) answered that they intended to discuss the Communication from the Commission on "Working together for Europe's young people – A call to action on youth unemployment".

CHAPTER 1: EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014: PLATFORM FOR DEBATE ON THE EU FUTURE WITH ITS CITIZENS

The 2014 European elections will be the first since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. They will take place under the conditions of persistent global financial crisis and while the European Union (EU) is taking important steps towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The credibility and sustainability of the EMU depend on the institutions and the political construct behind it; and as the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso stressed "the Economic and Monetary Union raises the question of a political union and the European democracy that must underpin it." The 2014 European elections offer a timely opportunity to engage Europeans in the debate about their views on the EU and its future.

This chapter of the Bi-annual Report examines how the upcoming European elections have been scrutinised or debated by Parliaments. It outlines the views of Parliaments on European elections. The report examines whether there should be affiliation between national and European political parties prior and during the elections to the European Parliament and whether each European party should nominate a candidate for President of the European Commission prior to the European elections.¹ It also examines the ideas of Parliaments on how to improve voter turnout in the European elections.

Parliaments play a crucial role in engaging EU citizens in the debate on the EU and its future. This chapter therefore sets out how Parliaments have managed to fulfil this role. It also summarises information about the methods used to engage in the discussion with voters for instance, the debates in the media, public meetings or round table discussions with think tanks. The chapter also gives details of outreach and educational activities that have been undertaken or are planned by Parliaments in this regard. In the overall context of the debate on the future of the EU, Parliaments were asked to express their views on whether the time was ripe for a new Convention on the Future of Europe.

1.1. National Parliaments' debates on the arrangements for the European Elections 2014

When asked whether the upcoming European elections had been considered or debated a majority Parliaments/Chambers replied negatively (20 out of 38). Eighteen Parliaments/Chambers had reflected on the question so far, even though three of them primarily in the framework of changes to their electoral laws for the European elections (Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, German *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat*).

Some Parliaments/Chambers held hearings with Members of the European Parliament (Italian *Camera dei Deputati* and *Senato della Repubblica*) or discussed the question in their EU Affairs Committee already (French *Assemblée nationale*, Estonian *Riigikogu*) or held a debate in the plenary (UK *House of Commons*).

Some Parliaments/Chambers (e.g. the Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, Slovenian *Državni zbor*, the Greek *Vouli ton Ellion* and the French *Sénat*) replied they

¹ As examined in COM (2013) 126

intended to hold debates in the second semester of 2013, some did not exclude this option (e.g. Belgian *Sénat*, Spanish *Cortes Generales* and Polish *Sejm*) while others straightforwardly ruled out any debate (Slovak *Národná rada* and UK *House of Lords*). The Swedish *Riksdag* had scheduled a specific debate on the issue for 7 May 2014, two weeks before the elections.

Just four (out of 37) of the national Parliaments/Chambers had so far scrutinised or debated the European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2013 on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014, while the Czech *Senát* had informed the Members of the Committee on EU Affairs about its content and the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* as well as the Dutch *Tweede Kamer* said they would discuss it in the autumn.

When asked whether they had scrutinised or debated the European Commission Communication on "Preparing for the 2014 European elections: further enhancing their democratic and efficient conduct",² 15 Parliaments/Chambers replied positively while 22 (out of 37) replied negatively.

The EU Committee of the UK *House of Lords* generally welcomed "measures which would address the issues of low voter turnout in the European elections and direct voters to the role of the European Parliament" but did not favour the idea of a common election day because it was "based on the false premise that voters in one state might be influenced by the voters in another" and it "would run counter to national political cultures". On the contrary the Polish *Sejm*, while acknowledging the existence of different political traditions, nevertheless expressed the view "that establishing a single date of the European Parliament election and the same voting hours across the Member States was an idea based on a right assumption" and the Lithuanian *Seimas* asked Member States to "reach an agreement on a common day for holding the European Parliament elections with polling stations closing at the same time". It also expressed the view that the "European Parliament must become a genuine European legislature with the right of legislative initiative and the right to appoint the European Commission *in corpore*". In contrast to that the European Scrutiny Committee of the UK *House of Commons* "objected to the Commission's over-emphasis of the European Parliament's role in the selection process for the Commission President" it highlighted, however, "that the prominence given to the proposals in the national press underlined the considerable public interest in them". The Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor* welcomed the intention of the European Commission to further enhance transparency and the European dimension of the European elections but warned that "imposing uniformity *per se* should be avoided". The European Parliament expressed its full support for the practical conclusions expressed in the Commission document.

Some of the responsible committees of those Parliaments/Chambers that replied negatively reported that they intended to examine the Communication in autumn or might do so after the imminent elections (e.g. German *Bundestag*, Committee on Internal Affairs).

² COM (2013) 126 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/document/files/com_2013_126_en.pdf

1.2. Display of European Party affiliations

A majority of the 19 Parliaments/Chambers which replied to that question (13 against six) were in favour of propagating the affiliation between national and European parties prior to the elections to the European Parliament. Most (18 out of 32) Parliaments/Chambers had not yet discussed the question/adopted a position on whether political parties should be able to display their European party affiliation on the ballot papers in the European elections 2014 or were just about to do so (Italian *Senato della Repubblica* and Portuguese *Assembleia da República*). The German *Bundestag* replied that the German electoral rules for the European elections provided for that possibility and the Estonian *Riigikogu* agreed that national parties should have the freedom to decide while the Romanian *Senatul* considered this a necessity. The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* (governing majority) and the Czech *Senát* pointed out that the electoral laws would have to be changed, while the Polish *Senat* and the Belgian *Chambre des représentants* believed that the question should not be dealt with by Parliament but at party level. According to the latter this additional information could overburden the ballot sheets whereas the Latvian *Saeima* believed it could be useful for voters. The Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie* replied that the major political parties in the National Assembly support the idea as did the Belgian *Sénat*.

1.3. Nomination of the President of the European Commission

Fourteen Parliaments/Chambers replied to the question about which entity should nominate a candidate for the President of the European Commission. While nine Parliaments/Chambers proposed a nomination by European and national parties together, four were in favour of a nomination by governments and two in favour of a combination of both.³ No one suggested a nomination by national parties alone and just three Parliaments/Chambers a nomination by the European parties on their own (French *Assemblée nationale*, Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*, European Parliament).

1.4. Improving the conduct of European Elections

Questions to Parliaments/Chambers about whether they had considered any recommendations to improve the efficient conduct and the removing of obstacles to voting in the European elections triggered only very few positive replies: for example encouraging voting by EU citizens residing in Member States other than their own (10 Parliaments/Chambers), agreeing a common day for the elections of the European Parliament, with polling stations closing at the same time (11 Parliaments/Chambers) or ensuring that political broadcasts of national parties in view of the European elections inform citizens about the candidate they support for President of the European Commission and the candidate's programme (eight Parliaments/Chambers). The Romanian *Senatul* also reported about a political pact between political parties for the European elections to campaign only on European topics. In addition, the European Parliament, in its above mentioned Resolution of 4 July, also urged national political parties to inform the public before and during the electoral campaign about their affiliation to a European political party and their support for the candidate to the post of President of the European Commission and requested that no official results be published in any Member State before the close of the voting in the

³ The Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, which was affirmative on of both replies, pointed to article 17, paragraph 7 TEU, which is setting out the procedure to propose a candidate after the elections to the European Parliament, whereas the question aimed at a nomination before the elections.

Member State where voters will be the last to vote on Sunday, May 25, 2014. Some Parliaments/Chambers, however, explained that there was not yet an official decision taken on these issues.

1.5. Voter turnout and participation

Most (21 out of 36) Parliaments/Chambers replied that they had not discussed or not taken a formal position on the question concerning the reasons for the falling voter turnout in the European elections. A few Parliaments/Chambers believed it was because of the effects of the current financial, economic, employment and social crisis and the lack of belief that the EU could provide solutions as contributing to the low voter turnout.

While a couple of Parliaments/Chambers stated a lack of interest in European politics or blamed the information spread by tabloid media (Polish *Sejm*, German *Bundesrat*), others saw reasons for the low turnout mainly in poor media coverage and a lack of information for voters on the importance of the EU and the European Parliament, the role of Members of the European Parliament and the voting system.

The German *Bundesrat* added that voters were "convinced that voting in the EP elections does not afford them an opportunity to influence European Union policy" and that therefore "elections to the European Parliament have frequently been used as means to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with national policies". This reflected the concern raised by the European Parliament that the "vote has not become the way to exercise popular sovereignty in Europe, but a kind of simple national opinion poll." While the European Parliament stated that the European elections had been used by national parties "as a test of the weight of national political parties within each Member State" the Romanian *Senatul* considered that discussion on national issues during the electoral campaign negatively affected the turnout of the European elections.

Some Parliaments/Chambers mentioned the following ideas: e.g. the Croatian *Hrvatski sabor* criticised a lack of concentrated and programme oriented European campaigns. The Green Party in the Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* also found that the lower personalisation of EU politics (compared to the national level) was one of the reasons and the governing majority added that the population needed to be more involved into the European decision making process. The report of the President of the European Affairs Committee of the French *Assemblée nationale* singled out the failure to establish a real European public space which would allow citizens to understand European challenges and to exercise influence on them as the biggest obstacle; voters should have a clear choice between different party policies for the new legislature and should be able to identify those responsible for the decisions taken and that parties should nominate their candidates for the post of President of the European Commission. The Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie* stated that EP debates were not close enough to the topical issues which of concern for the Bulgarian society while the Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* highlighted the "inability of the European Parliament to communicate its work to the European citizens and engage them in the political dialogue" in addition to "crucial domestic issues". The Estonian *Riigikogu* stated that the public did not see how Members of the European Parliament would serve their country's interest in the European Parliament and called for more visibility for it. The French *Sénat* blamed the electoral system (proportionate vote) while in Belgium the issue was no matter of discussion due to compulsory voting.

When asked about their ideas how to enhance the profile of European elections, particularly to increase voter turnout, most (16 out of 35) Parliaments/Chambers said they had no official position. Some Parliaments/Chambers put forward ideas such as:

- In line with its previous answer the French *Sénat* mentioned a return to individual candidatures instead of an election of candidates on lists in a proportional representation electoral system.
- The Italian *Camera dei Deputati* suggested organising a so called "European Assizes" before the next European elections that should debate on how to strengthen the EU integration, notably by achieving a banking, a budgetary, an economic and a political union and by adopting an actual strategy for re-launching economic growth.
- The Hungarian *Országgyűlés* was in favour of holding national and European elections at the same day, which would not only save costs but also increase voter turnout, while the Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés* which is normally elected on the same day as the European Parliament advocated a split of national and European elections.
- The Lithuanian *Seimas* called for a wide coverage on candidates, party programmes and other aspects of the elections on national radio and television programmes, to inform the public and to organise debates. The Polish *Senat* supported the latter and added that also the competences of the European Parliament should be underlined.
- The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* added that campaigns targeted at specific interest groups could be organised to help these groups address specific issues.
- The Romanian *Senatul* suggested Parliaments and parliamentarians be engaged in discussion with voters, debates in media, public meetings, round table discussions with think tanks, on European themes since Parliaments, as institutions, played a crucial role in engaging EU citizens in the political debate.
- A rather holistic approach using mainly parliamentary means was suggested by the Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*. Following the low turnout at the first elections of 12 Croatian Members of the European Parliament in April 2013, the Croatian *Hrvatski sabor* has used the creation of the Croatian parliamentary scrutiny method for promotion of the roles European institutions also via broad public consultation and debates as well as web based counselling held prior to the enactment of the relevant law.

The European Parliament had developed a two-fold approach: In the short term, for the information and communication campaign on the 2014 European elections it conceived an awareness-raising phase until March 2014 (taking stock of the decisions taken in the present term, informing citizens about the institution and its relevance to their daily lives) and an activation phase starting end of March where the main focus will be increasing awareness of the date of the elections, how to vote, etc. A final phase after the elections will also inform citizens about the outcome of their choices. In the long term the European Parliament believes that a "re-foundation" of Europe would be necessary, reanimating the deeper reasons that justify and require a Union, recalling the reasons that pushed for its origin after the Second World War, for which the recent conferral of the Nobel Prize for Peace can be the starting point for reflection to be offered to citizens.

1.6. Engagement of citizens in a dialogue on the European elections

A number of Parliaments/Chambers reported that they were organising or would organise numerous initiatives and activities with respect to citizens' involvement in a dialogue on the

European elections. Some of the Parliaments/Chambers said that they were currently exploring ways to promote the participation of the citizens in debates on the European elections. A few Parliaments/Chambers said that they believed that this dialogue should not be organised by national parliamentary institutions.

Fourteen out of 25 Parliaments/Chambers responded that they had organised debates in the media on the European elections. For instance, the Lithuanian *Seimas* and the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* stated that debates were planned on the European elections on the national television. The European Parliament said that it engaged daily with citizens through social media (over 800,000 fans on Facebook) and also had developed the "Newshub" to aggregate all the social media activity of the Members of the European Parliament into one page to give more visibility to their positions, thus highlighting the political nature of the institution.

Fourteen out of 25 Parliaments/Chambers replied that they had engaged or planned to engage citizens through public meetings. The European elections were debated in the framework of European Affairs Committee meetings (in the Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, French *Assemblée nationale*, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*) and the meetings of the European information offices of the Parliaments/Chambers (Lithuanian *Seimas*, Swedish *Riksdag*, the European Parliament) or other parliamentary bodies.

Ten out of 24 Parliaments/Chambers responded that they had organised round table discussions with think tanks. The European Parliament engaged citizens through organising "Regional Discussion Fora" or round table debates/discussions.

Thirteen out of 31 Parliaments/Chambers stated that the subject of organising specific activities with respect to citizens' involvement in a dialogue on the European elections had not been discussed yet or there was no official position so far. The Italian *Camera dei Deputati* responded that it was currently exploring ways and strategies to promote a more effective participation of citizens in debates on European affairs, also with the use of new technologies and social media.

Thirteen out of 31 responding Parliaments/Chambers indicated that they had engaged or would engage citizens in a dialogue on the European elections. Some Parliaments/Chambers replied that specialised public debates would be held. The Swedish *Riksdag* responded that in October 2013, a seminar for compulsory and upper secondary school teachers on the national and European elections would be organised. The European Parliament reported that it organises seminars for journalists and is planning a series of "large and innovative" conferences. Visitors to the European Parliament and other Parliaments/Chambers would also be given the opportunity to contribute views on the topic of the upcoming European elections by exchanging opinions during meetings with Members of Parliament and civil servants. On 20 January 2014 Danish *Folketing* planned to host a debate among students regarding the main themes of the European elections. The students will also exchange views with the main candidates of the political parties standing for the European elections.

Five out of 31 Parliaments/Chambers emphasised that it was not up to them to engage citizens in a dialogue on the European elections. The Czech *Senát* said that such events should be conducted by the political parties as a part of their electoral campaigns. The Dutch

Eerste Kamer and *Tweede Kamer* also agreed that individual politicians might actively contribute to the electoral campaigns for individual political parties. The Finnish *Eduskunta* noted that it was a routine duty of the information centre of the Parliament to provide information on EU-related issues to the public.

1.7. Outreach and educational activities in relation to the European elections

In response to the question of what outreach and educational activities had been or would be undertaken in relation to the European elections, a number of Parliaments/Chambers reported organising various competitions aiming to educate young people on the EU. Some Parliaments/Chambers provided education for teachers, local politicians and officials. Some tools were being introduced to increase awareness of the EU institutions' role in the citizens' daily lives as well as the upcoming elections. Eleven out of 34 Parliaments/Chambers responded that no decisions on outreach and educational activities had yet been made.

Ten out of 34 Parliaments/Chambers stated that various outreach and educational activities were being organised or planned. Some examples of good practice were mentioned, including the following:

- The Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, the Hungarian *Országgyűlés* and the German *Bundesrat* and the Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor* said that they had planned activities specifically targeted at young people.
- The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, within the framework of the project of the *Democracy Workshop* (an educational programme about parliamentary structures in Austria), will organise the Europe-workshop in the forthcoming school-year, which will focus on the European elections.
- The Swedish *Riksdag* reported that it would provide information regarding the European elections on its website and through its regular inquiry service. Throughout 2012, the administration had provided education for local politicians and officials on EU affairs and on the EU institutions. Around 100 municipalities had been included in the project.
- The European Parliament reported that it would develop several communication tools to increase awareness of the European Parliament's role in the citizens' daily lives and about the upcoming elections. These would include background articles, leaflets, info graphics, educational videos, etc. There will also be a big component of social media including chats with Members of the European Parliament, polls, etc.⁴
- The Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* would examine the possibility of "Youth Parliament" sessions related to European citizenship in order to highlight both the Greek Presidency and the European elections.
- The Danish *Folketing* would launch a web based European Parliament candidate test, which can be used by teachers in upper secondary school and vocational schools and which aim is to allow students to inform themselves of the main political themes of the European elections and the views of the different EP candidates.

Seven of 34 Parliaments/Chambers responded that currently they were not planning to undertake any outreach or educational activities in this field. Six out of 34

⁴ All the tools developed will be available for download in a brand new Download Centre which will be placed on the www.europarl.eu website

Parliaments/Chambers answered that no specific outreach and educational activities had been planned, but public discussions, debates, seminars and other initiatives with respect to citizens' involvement in a dialogue on the European elections would be implemented.

1.8. Engaging citizens in a dialogue on the future of Europe and its role in the globalised world

Less than half of Parliaments/Chambers had implemented or planned activities to engage citizens in a dialogue on the future of Europe and its role in the globalised world. Other Parliaments/Chambers, at the moment, were exploring possibilities of developing initiatives or have no intentions to do this.

Sixteen out of 36 Parliaments/Chambers replied that they had engaged or would engage citizens in such a dialogue. Five Parliaments/Chambers replied generally that they intended to engage their citizens by organising public meetings and hearings, public debates, round table discussions, public consultations on their websites and by implementing other general instruments.

Ten Parliaments/Chambers had arranged or would be arranging special initiatives to engage their citizens, social partners and non-governmental organisations in a dialogue on the future of Europe and its role in the globalised world. For example:

- The Swedish *Riksdag* Administration organised a seminar in April 2013, where high-level officials, researchers and politicians from the Parliament, as well as Members of the European Parliament, met with around 200 Swedish teachers to discuss the EU and Sweden in a global world.
- A debate between Members of Parliament and civil society on this issue would be held in the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati* later this year.
- The Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie* said that it engages citizens through its newly established Interaction with Civic Organizations and Movements Committee and the Councils for public consultations to the specialised committees.
- The UK *House of Commons* said that several outreach events had been held on the UK Parliament and Europe in 2013, which had included talks by the Chairs of the *House of Commons* and *House of Lords* Committees and reported that these would be re-run in 2014.
- The European Parliament organised events around this topic in its EP Information Offices with Members of the European Parliament from respective countries. The European Parliament also organised press seminars with the leaders of the political groups and representatives of the media on the topic of the future of Europe.

Fourteen out of 36 Parliaments/Chambers answered that at this stage no decisions concerning engagement of citizens in a dialogue on the future of Europe and its role in the globalised world had been made or been planned.

Six out of 36 Parliaments/Chambers responded that for the moment, no activities to engage citizens in a dialogue on the future of Europe and its role in the globalised world had taken place or been planned.

1.9. Convention on the Future of Europe and possible mandate

Many Parliaments/Chambers had not formally taken a position on the issue of whether a new Convention was required. Only one fifth of Parliaments/Chambers believed that a new Convention was needed. Some of these Parliaments/Chambers proposed that a new Convention could address the issues concerning EU decision-making, the role of Parliaments, Union's economic policy and budgetary capacity. A few Parliaments/Chambers believed that there was no need for a new Convention.

Twenty five out of 37 Parliaments/Chambers responded that at the moment they had not debated or formally taken a position on the issue of whether a new Convention on the future of Europe was required. Although having no defined position, some of these Parliaments/Chambers proposed some ideas on what the mandate of a new Convention could be. For example, the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* emphasised that the balance of powers among the different European institutions, responses to the European crisis outside the context of the Treaties, the distancing of citizens from the European project, the role of national Parliaments and the financing of the European Union were some of the concerns to be addressed. The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* suggested that a new Convention should address such issues as tackling the economic crisis, (youth) unemployment and promoting the prosperity of the people and such a Convention should also lead to more transparency, accountability and democratic legitimacy in EU decision making. The Slovak *Národná rada* reported having a national convention on the EU, to define a society-wide, political and expert vision of "What Europe do we want?" and to bring European topics closer to the general public.

Eight out of 37 Parliaments/Chambers responded that a new Convention was needed. The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* considered a new Convention to be necessary to overcome the current economic and financial crises of the EU and to tackle ecological and social challenges. The Hungarian *Országgyűlés* emphasised that an appropriate stock-taking was needed on the new institutional and operational set-up of the EU and it was inevitable to consolidate the several changes that had happened recently in EU decision-making. The Chairperson of the Committee on European Affairs of the French *Assemblée nationale* considered that a new Convention should revise the Treaties. The European Parliament also expressed a view in favour of making amendments to the Treaties, which first needed to be examined by a new Convention in order to complete the framing of a genuine EMU by enhancing the EU competencies, in particular in the field of economic policy, and by strengthening the Union's own resources and budgetary capacity, the role and democratic accountability of the Commission and the European Parliament's prerogatives. Latvian *Saeima* said that the time had come for a Convention to address in more detail the issue of the future of Europe and the role of Parliaments. The Romanian *Senatul* considered that the future mandate of the next Convention should support European policies leading to a strengthened Europe towards a "United States of Europe".

Some possible dates for a new Convention were mentioned. The European Parliament said that a new Convention should take place after the election of the European Parliament, whereas preparations for such a Convention should start before these elections. The Chairperson of the Committee on European Affairs of the French *Assemblée nationale* said that a possible date for a new Convention could be autumn 2014 and that the text adopted

by the Convention should be subject to a referendum on the same day throughout the members of the EU. The Hungarian *Országgyűlés* suggested the first possible date for a new Convention could be 2015 (following the European elections and the inauguration of the new Commission).

Four out of 37 Parliaments/Chambers considered that there was no need for a new Convention on the Future of Europe, because first the measures already in force (Lisbon Treaty, Blueprint for a Deep and Genuine EMU) should be successfully implemented.

CHAPTER 2: DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY IN THE EU AND THE ROLE OF EU PARLIAMENTS

Parliaments play a distinct role in establishing links between European citizens and the European policy making process. The constantly developing context of European integration, the challenges posed by the economic and financial crisis, the initiatives launched in the field of economic governance as well as foreign, security and defence policy – all require proactive involvement of Parliaments.

The Treaty of Lisbon, often called the Treaty of Parliaments, has reinforced the role of the European Parliament and national Parliaments in the EU. Since the Treaty, the European Parliament has developed into a key player in the EU legislative process, however, there is still much to be done by Parliaments in order to build a truly comprehensive system of parliamentary accountability in the EU. Despite the intense discourse about the role of national Parliaments in the EU decision making process, there is still no clear understanding of how an effective role of national Parliaments can be defined and achieved.

Due to the different political and institutional traditions, a wide array of mechanisms exist in different Parliaments to exercise parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs. These have further evolved since the Treaty of Lisbon. Scrutiny has also taken place at the European level with the development of the subsidiarity mechanism and the continued evolution of the political dialogue between national Parliaments and the European Commission. At the level of interparliamentary cooperation numerous instruments to ensure democratic legitimacy and accountability have been established, including the Interparliamentary Conference for the CFSP and the CSDP, as well as the Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union.

This chapter of the report outlines the methods national Parliaments use to pursue democratic scrutiny of and control over their governments and the EU institutions. It examines the mechanisms of parliamentary scrutiny used and gathers views on the effectiveness of existing tools and formats of interparliamentary cooperation, including the monitoring of the principle of subsidiarity.

This chapter collects the views of Parliaments on how democratic legitimacy and accountability can continue to evolve in the future. It seeks further insights on how Parliaments see the future of interparliamentary cooperation in order to foster proactive participation of national Parliaments in the EU policy-making process. It also outlines the expectations of Parliaments with regard to their role and place in the EU's institutional architecture in the case of any future treaty revisions.

2.1. The reach of democratic accountability

A large number of Parliaments/Chambers, 20 of the 37 which responded, said that they believe that democratic accountability in the context of the EU affairs should not be limited only to their own governments but must also include EU institutions. Reasons advanced for this position included "the EU institutions play an increasingly important role in the

governance and integration of the EU" (Lithuanian *Seimas*); and that "democratic responsibility is a principle which should apply to all political institutions"⁵ (French *Sénat*). While in the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati* "the Standing Orders of the House already recognise the importance of extending democratic accountability to the EU institution". Of the remaining Parliaments/Chambers only two expressed the belief that accountability should be limited to national governments (Belgian *Sénat* and the Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*).

In the specific context of the Commission's proposals to reinforce the EMU and the EU economic governance framework, the UK *House of Commons* noted that any parliamentary oversight of the strengthened EMU, including that envisaged in Article 13 of the SCG Treaty, should be at the level of 28 national Parliaments and the European Parliament; and any new arrangements must respect the different competences of national Parliaments and the European Parliament and operate consistently with national democratic scrutiny processes, including our own Standing Orders". The European Parliament, on the other hand, replied that "democratic accountability must be ensured at the level where decisions are taken. This means that at the level of the EU it must be ensured by the European Parliament, while, at the level of Member States, by the national Parliaments". The Dutch Tweede Kamer stated that the additional sharing of competences in the EU should go hand in hand with more democratic legitimacy and accountability. It therefore said that the democratic legitimacy and accountability in the context of the EU-affairs should be increased. The report of Madame Auroi, Chairperson of the Committee on European Affairs of the French *Assemblée nationale*, advanced the idea of a second chamber of the Union based in Strasbourg comprising representatives of national Parliaments and which would consider issues of monetary union and progressively other matters of national importance.

Relative importance of institutions subject to parliamentary scrutiny

Parliaments/Chambers were asked to rank the relative importance to them of the institutions they scrutinised. Based on the 29 responses to this question, the order of importance was as follows: scrutiny of their own national Government which received 93% of first preferences; the European Commission which received 48% of second preferences (and 33% of fourth preference); the European Council which received 48% of third preferences (and 26% of fourth preference) and lastly the Council of the European Union which received 41% of fourth preferences (as well as 32% of 3rd and 27% of 2nd).

Mechanisms of scrutiny

Most of the Parliaments/Chambers employed a wide range of mechanisms to scrutinise all four of the entities mentioned. The following table draws together the primary mechanisms which may be of value to all Parliaments/Chambers.

Entity scrutinised	Mechanisms employed
Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal legal Acts outlining the limits of the government's mandate • Oral and written parliamentary questions

⁵ "La responsabilité démocratique est un principe qui doit s'appliquer à toutes les institutions politiques"

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motions -legislative and non-legislative • No confidence motions • Power of national budget approval • The evaluation of reports on the positions taken by governments
Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministers appearing before committee or plenary before and/or after Council usually within a set time period • Oral or written reports by Ministers before and/or after Council • Scrutiny reserve resolutions or formal mandates or resolutions (binding or non-binding depending on the tradition or legal position) • Written reports on developments occurring during the outgoing Presidency • Special committee or plenary debates • Reports on the status of negotiations or about the impact of an EU measure
Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full use of political dialogue and subsidiarity mechanisms • Appearances before committees to give evidence or meetings with Commissioners or EU Representation staff in capitals • Special committee or plenary debates (e.g. on the Commission Work Programme) • Dialogue at interparliamentary conferences
European Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appearances of Prime Ministers in plenary before and/or after each European Council usually within a set time period

The mechanisms to ensure accountability over government actions were seen by most Parliaments/Chambers as being direct and quite strong and as being exercisable either in committee or in plenary or in both. Those mechanisms for ensuring accountability over EU institutions were mentioned by many Parliaments/Chambers as being indirect or based on "mutual good will". The European Council was, in general, not seen as accountable to either Parliaments/Chambers or to other EU institutions.

2.2. Relative importance of accountability mechanisms

The overwhelming majority of Parliaments/Chambers ranked holding governments to account in Council (through the various mechanisms outlined above) as being of most importance with some 92% of first preferences (24 out of 26 who expressed a preference). The use of the subsidiarity check (50%, 12 out of 24) and political dialogue (42%, 10 out of

24) were ranked a close second with the use of subsidiarity checking as marginally better preferred with and "engaging in interparliamentary conferences" considered to be the fourth preference. This was followed by direct accountability of key EU figures. In this regard two further comments may be of interest. The Lithuanian *Seimas* would welcome constructive cooperation with the EU institutions and the possibility of hearing the key EU figures, however, it had found that national Parliaments were not a priority for key EU figures, i.e. national Parliaments often experience difficulties trying to engage members of the European Commission into parliamentary dimension activities and events. Secondly, the Dutch *Tweede Kamer* argued that most of the existing tools and formats of interparliamentary cooperation were foremost intended to improve the exchange of information between (Members of) Parliaments. While nonetheless these instruments ensured that Members of Parliament are better equipped when exercising their task of holding representatives of Government and European institutions democratically accountable, these tools, in the view of the *Tweede Kamer*, were created for another purpose and, therefore, contribute only indirectly to ensuring democratic legitimacy and accountability.

When asked to specify further, the following additional mechanisms were referred to as being useful:

- a) the use of national Parliament representatives (Lithuanian *Seimas*);
- b) engaging in political dialogue with the European Parliament (Polish *Senat*);
- c) engaging in legislative dialogue with the EU institutions (Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*);
- d) engaging with Members of the European Parliament and European Parliament Rapporteurs (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*, Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, Lithuanian *Seimas* and Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*);
- e) scrutinising the Commission's Annual Growth Survey and the Commission Work Programme and the Council Trio Presidency working programme; scrutinising the ESM bodies' decisions/activities (Italian *Senato della Repubblica*).
- f) engaging in interparliamentary cooperation with the European Parliament (German *Bundesrat*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* and Austrian *Nationalrat* Green Party);
- g) holding committee meetings in Brussels at which members of the European Commission attend (German *Bundestag*);
- h) giving national MEPs the right to sit on national committees (German *Bundestag*);
- i) developing further the instrument of "clusters of interest" (as proposed by the Danish Parliament) (Dutch *Tweede Kamer*);
- j) Plenary vote on the European Commission preceded by the hearings at parliamentary committees level; regular reports by the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission open to all Members of the European Parliament; the report of the President of the European Central Bank in the framework of the Monetary Dialogue to the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs level; and the supervision of delegated legislation of the EU, through the possibility to withdraw such a delegation by the parliamentary committees (European Parliament).

2.3. Effectiveness of existing tools and formats of interparliamentary cooperation

Thirty five Parliaments/Chambers took a view on the effectiveness of existing tools and formats of interparliamentary cooperation in ensuring democratic legitimacy and

accountability. Parliaments/Chambers were asked to rank various tools as being not effective, partially effective, effective, very effective or extremely effective.

Starting at the positive end of the scale and grouping the results of effective to extremely effective we can see that 20 Parliaments/Chambers considered COSAC to be in this category followed by 18 for the political dialogue and 17 for IPEX. This is followed in turn by 16 Parliaments/Chambers who ranked the tools of the Subsidiarity mechanism, ECPRD and Joint Committee Meetings (JCM) and 15 who considered the CFSP/CSDP Conference to be in that category.

This is off-set by the somewhat more critical views of other Parliaments/Chambers in relation to the same tools. Eighteen Parliaments/Chambers scored the subsidiarity mechanism as only partially effective, followed by 17 for the CFSP/CSDP Conference, 16 for JCMs, 15 for IPEX and 14 each for ECPRD and the political dialogue. Thirteen Parliaments/Chambers placed COSAC in this category. A small number of Parliaments/Chambers took the view that these tools were not effective i.e. two for the ECPRD, and one each for the subsidiarity mechanism, COSAC, JCMs and political dialogue.

On balance therefore and taking both the positive and negative ends of the ranking scale it can be inferred overall that Parliaments/Chambers were slightly more positive than negative about the effectiveness of COSAC, the use of political dialogue and on IPEX and slightly more negative than positive about the effectiveness of the subsidiarity mechanism, the ECPRD, the CFSP/CSDP Conference and JCMs. This obviously points to areas of dissatisfaction in the tool box of Parliaments/Chambers which may warrant further examination in the future.

2.4. Proactive involvement in EU policy making

Many of the Parliaments/Chambers mentioned the use of political dialogue when asked how they proactively got involved in EU policy making. However, some others mentioned specific means which may be of general interest as follows:

- a) issuing Reasoned Opinions (Polish *Senat*);
- b) proactive dialogue with government (German *Bundestag*);
- c) through the National Parliament Representatives in Brussels (Czech *Senát*, Latvian *Saeima*);
- d) through written statements on all Green and White papers submitted to the Parliament (Swedish *Riksdag*);
- e) by asking rapporteurs to engage with the Commission at the preparatory stage of a proposal (French *Assemblée nationale*);
- f) by engaging regularly with national MEPs on the principle EU issues of the moment (French *Assemblée nationale*); and
- g) by engaging in workshops and other events with the European Parliament and other national Parliaments in order to discuss the way forward on key legislative dossiers (UK *House of Lords*).

2.5. Staffing levels for the EU function

There was a diverse range of replies to the question of staffing levels working on EU affairs functions within Parliaments/Chambers and it can be seen that responses were determined by how the function is organised within each Parliament/Camber. In some

Parliaments/Chambers one central committee deals with all EU matters while in others it has been either mainstreamed to all committees or arranged in a hybrid model of scrutiny of both. The following table attempts to give some idea of the staff numbers involved in the function.⁶

Table 1: Staff numbers or administrative capacities indicated by Parliaments/Chambers⁷

Number of Parliaments/Chambers	16		Slovak <i>Národná rada</i> 9				
	15		Danish <i>Folketing</i> 7				
	14		Czech <i>Senát</i> 7				
	13		Cyprus <i>Vouli ton Antiprosopon</i> 7				
	12		Slovenian <i>Državni zbor</i> 7				
	11		Hungarian <i>Országgyűlés</i> 7				
	10		Spanish <i>Cortes Generales</i> 6				
	9		Luxembourg <i>Chambre des Députés</i> 6				
	8		Latvian <i>Saeima</i> 6				
	7		German <i>Bundesrat</i> 6	Dutch <i>Eerste Kamer</i> 14			
	6		Estonian <i>Riigikogu</i> 6	Polish <i>Sejm</i> 11			
	5		Belgian <i>Chambre des représentants</i> 6	Dutch <i>Tweede Kamer</i> 11	Romanian <i>Camera Deputaţilor</i> 18		
	4		Portuguese <i>Assembleia da República</i> 5	Irish <i>Oireachtas</i> 11	Italian <i>Senato della Repubblica</i> 18		
	3		Croatian <i>Hrvatski sabor</i> 5	Polish <i>Senat</i> 10	Italian <i>Camera dei Deputati</i> 16		
	2	Maltese <i>Kamra tad-Deputati</i> 4	Belgian <i>Sénat</i> 5	Bulgarian <i>Narodno sabranie</i> 10	UK <i>House of Commons</i> 15	UK <i>House of Lords</i> 24	French <i>Assemblée Nationale</i> 28
	1	Slovenian <i>Državni svet</i> 1	Austrian <i>Nationalrat and Bundesrat</i> 5	Greek <i>Vouli ton Ellinon</i> 10	French <i>Sénat</i> 15	Lithuanian <i>Seimas</i> 23	Romanian <i>Senatul</i> 28
							German <i>Bundestag</i> 59
		0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29
							55-59
		Number of the staff members					

2.6. Legislative phase of EU decision-making process

When asked how their Parliament/Chamber exerted influence over both the EU decision-making process (legislative procedure) many Parliaments/Chambers (26 out of 37) referred to the parliamentary systems of accountability or "control" of their government as tools used to influence the EU decision-making process (or aspects thereof). For example the Lithuanian

⁶ In certain cases the replies were not fully comparable so there may be some understatement and/or overstatement in certain of the replies.

⁷ In certain cases the replies were not fully comparable so there may be some understatement and/or overstatement in certain of the replies.

Seimas detailed its combined parliamentary scrutiny model, consisting of mandating the government and scrutinising documents, which involved hearings of ministers and evaluation of their reports after Council meetings, and debates on legislative proposals and EU documents for this purpose. The Estonian *Riigikogu* gave details of its system of specialised standing committees delivering opinions to the EU Affairs Committee. Others answered that they used the more generalised tool of discussions with their government to exert influence. For example Slovenian *Državni zbor* said this was especially important for treaty matters or when enlargement of the EU was being considered. The Belgian *Sénat* and Dutch *Tweede Kamer* also highlighted their dialogue with government as important. Eight Parliaments/Chambers logically said that they used the subsidiarity check powers in Protocol 2 of the Lisbon Treaty to exert influence over the EU decision making.

Seventeen Parliaments/Chambers also said that they engaged in the political dialogue with the European Commission, within which Parliaments/Chambers can send any comments about legislative proposals or policies directly to the Commission and can expect a response, in order to influence the decision making process.

2.7. Pre-legislative phase of EU policy formation

When explaining how they exert influence at an earlier stage over EU policy formation (pre-legislative phase), 10 of 37 Parliaments/Chambers highlighted scrutiny of consultation papers (also known as Green and White papers) as a key way to influence the pre-legislative phase of EU decision-making process. For example, scrutiny of these documents is obligatory in the Swedish *Riksdag* and it replied that this practice produces "deeper public debate at a pre-legislative stage".

Other Parliaments/Chambers such as the German *Bundestag*, the Italian *Camera dei Deputati* and the Swedish *Riksdag* said that their rights to receive information from the government greatly aided their ability to influence EU policy formation.

A small number of Parliaments/Chambers including the Lithuanian *Seimas*, the Slovak *Národná rada* and the Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, highlighted their evaluation of the European Commission Work Programme (in which the Commission annually outline their legislative plans for the forthcoming year) as a tool used to exert influence in the pre-legislative phase. The German *Bundestag* also pointed to its Brussels Liaison Office as a source of information as it is able to give advanced monitoring of possible legislative initiatives. The Portuguese *Assembleia da República* noted the importance of the growing interaction with other national Parliaments to work at all stages of the legislative process. The French *Sénat*, the Romanian *Senatul*, the Polish *Sejm* and the Spanish *Cortes* also stated that they exert influence through interparliamentary meetings.

In reality many Parliaments/Chambers employ all or a combination of the abovementioned techniques and tools to exert influence throughout the EU decision-making process. For example, the Italian *Camera dei Deputati* gave the following long list of mechanisms that it employed: "a) the Government's obligation to transmit EU acts and provide the parliamentary bodies regular information on current EU affairs, meeting and proposals; b) the direct transmission of documents by the EU institutions; c) the consideration of EU draft legislative acts and the subsidiarity control; d) the parliamentary scrutiny reserve; e) fact

finding, policy settings and oversight activities of the parliamentary bodies; f) the consideration of the EU consultation and legislative planning documents".

In a similar vein, Parliaments/Chambers were asked how they "contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union", including by other means than those listed in article 12 TEU and many answered as they had to the above question regarding the exertion of influence over the EU decision-making process. Some notable examples of best practice that were also highlighted included the following:

- the Polish *Sejm* organised meetings on topical issues to gain insight into particular EU matters by inviting stakeholder to express their views;
- the German *Bundestag* had increased the number of plenary debates on EU affairs and noted this had increased public awareness of the issues; the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* also held a higher number of debates in plenary since a change in the law in May 2012;
- the Dutch *Eerste Kamer* had developed a specialised website that aimed to create greater awareness and improve effectiveness in the scrutiny of European dossiers;⁸
- the Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* placed emphasis on its efforts in "relationship building with other Parliaments and parliamentarians from across the EU";
- the Croatian *Hrvatski sabor* highlighted its cooperation with the Croatian Government in the procedure of nominating the candidates of the Republic of Croatia for the European Commission, the Court of Justice and General Court, the Court of Auditors and the Management Committee of the EIB.

The French *Assemblée nationale* and *Senát* both highlighted the need for the arrangements for the democratic accountability of EUROPOL and EUROJUST to be put in place. The Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie* and the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati* both saw a role for Parliaments/Chambers to bring citizens closer to the European Union.

2.8. Models of parliamentary scrutiny and their strengths

Parliaments/Chambers were asked to give information about their scrutiny systems and, although the responses were not complete, the figures in the table below show a general shift away from the traditional system of classification. Parliaments/Chambers appear to be developing more sophisticated or tailored approaches to EU scrutiny work. For example, we can see a lower than expected number of Parliaments/Chambers claiming themselves to have either mandating or document based systems and a growth in categories of mixed or other systems of scrutiny. This apparent change in approach would, in our view, merit a more detailed examination at a future date. Parliaments/Chambers have below expanded these replies by giving more details about their chosen systems, highlighting strengths and any perceived gaps therein.

⁸ www.europapoort.nl

Scrutiny system used	Number	%
Document-based	8	21%
Mandating	3	8%
Mixed	12	32%
Focused on sectoral committees	3	8%
Other, please specify	12	32%
Total respondents	38	

When asked which elements of scrutiny systems of EU affairs in each Parliament/Chamber were most effective, the scrutiny or control of their own governments was the element most often highlighted by Parliaments/Chambers (19 of 37). The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* and the Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* stated that the subsidiarity check was most effective because it was the only legally binding power available to their Parliaments for the scrutiny of EU affairs.

A number of Parliaments/Chambers highlighted the form of their scrutiny system as a strength in particular, the Polish *Sejm* emphasised the effectiveness of having one European Affairs Committee dealing with EU affairs, likewise the Hungarian *Országgyűlés* praised the existence of a centralised Committee on European Affairs to deal with scrutiny tasks, whereas the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* enjoyed the benefits of each relevant sectoral committee working on EU affairs, as did the Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*, and the Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* highlighted the "mainstreaming model" as it allowed the sectoral committees to "apply their expertise to related EU matters, and ensures that the vast majority of parliamentarians are involved in EU scrutiny work". The Czech *Senát* highlighted as effective the system it had employed of having a "division of labour" within the European Affairs Committee, i.e. Members have certain policy areas to cover and tried to enhance involvement of sectoral committees. The Romanian *Senatul* also saw virtue in involving both the European Affairs Committee and the sectoral committees in the subsidiarity check in particular.

Other strengths that were highlighted by individual Parliaments/Chambers included:

- access to information and regular notifications about the course of deliberations (German *Bundestag*);
- access to documents and the process for the selection of documents for scrutiny (Czech *Senát*);
- conducting detailed scrutiny of "important" proposals (UK *House of Lords*);
- early involvement in the legislative process (Dutch *Tweede Kamer*); and
- report by the Prime Minister to Parliament after European Council meetings (Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*).

In a similar vein, Parliaments/Chambers were asked if they could recommend to others the use of certain elements of their own procedures. Mirroring answers to the above question, many held the view that ensuring the government position was properly scrutinised was the most important element of scrutiny. For example, this led the Lithuanian *Seimas* to recommend its mixed model of scrutiny and the Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* to recommend that everyone should adopt a form of mainstreaming. The Dutch *Tweede Kamer*

emphasised that it proactively set EU priorities using the legislative programme of the European Commission. The European Parliament commented that would recommend regularly holding debates in advance of the European Council and having reports from the President of the European Council after meetings.

2.9. Gaps in parliamentary scrutiny

Parliaments/Chambers were not only asked to identify the strengths of current systems but also to point out the gaps or weaknesses that currently existed and/or changes that were needed to bring about improvements in parliamentary scrutiny. Parliaments/Chambers answered on three levels: national level, EU level and in relation to interparliamentary cooperation.

National level

A number of Parliaments/Chambers commented that at national level, there was currently no procedure to ensure parliamentary control of the European Semester. The Dutch *Tweede Kamer* called for greater transparency in national spending of the EU budget by national Parliaments. The Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* was very open and listed the gaps in its system as "the lack of a scrutiny reserve (or mandate) system; the need for greater input into the pre-legislative phase; the need for greater parliamentary scrutiny of the transposition and implementation of EU legislation; and the limited resources available for EU scrutiny work". The Polish *Senat* stated that it had experienced problems due to the timeframe of receiving information from the government. The European Parliament commented that at national level, the direct scope of national Parliaments "is relatively limited, especially when compared to the new powers given to the European Parliament [under the Lisbon Treaty]."

EU level

At EU level, arrangements related to Protocol 2 were often mentioned. The Czech *Senát* appealed for an extension of the subsidiarity check period to 12 weeks as the "eight week period for submitting reasoned opinions is not sufficient" and the Swedish Parliament said it was a relatively short timeframe and questioned the high thresholds for yellow and orange cards. The Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* said that the workload was excessive for smaller Parliaments taking into consideration the eight week time limit. The Spanish *Cortes Generales*, the Polish *Sejm and Senat* also complained about the quality and timeliness of the European Commission responses.

The Portuguese *Assembleia da República* was concerned that it had "not been possible to demonstrate/identify the impact of opinions and participation of national Parliaments in the European legislative procedure, particularly given the content and slowness of replies that have been given by the European Commission", sentiments echoed by the Czech *Senát* which was at the same time critical of the quality of European Commission responses to national Parliament opinions. However, it acknowledged that "the quality and understandability of reasoning in the NP's opinions is a necessary prerequisite" to good quality replies. The Swedish *Riksdag* said that it was not clear "the extent to which the Swedish Parliament's objections to the application of the principle of subsidiarity are taken into account in legislation that is adopted". The European Parliament answered that at the EU level a gap exists because the "EP does not have the power to provide democratic legitimacy to the decisions of the European Council".

Interparliamentary cooperation

On the level of interparliamentary cooperation, the Lithuanian *Seimas* identified the absence of leadership as a significant weakness, where the Dutch *Tweede Kamer* wanted to see greater coalition building in regard to yellow card procedure amongst national Parliaments and the Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie* commented that interparliamentary meetings did not take decisions "which had significant influence on the legislative process". The Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor* said that a real "subsidiarity culture" has not been achieved as differences in approach, interpretation and application remained. More specifically in relation to COSAC, the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* wanted to see the forum debate more individual proposals with the presence of the Commissioner and the Council Presidency. It also called for no duplication in the agendas of COSAC, sectoral meetings and Joint Parliamentary Meetings and Joint Committee Meetings. The Czech *Senát* said that COSAC should put more focus on subsidiarity as this would enhance effectiveness of scrutiny in this area at the interparliamentary level.

2.10. Future evolution of parliamentary democracy in the EU

Many Parliaments/Chambers (17 of 36) had not formally addressed the issue of how they saw the evolution of parliamentary scrutiny in the future.

A few Parliaments/Chambers answered that they were considering or had recently made changes to their internal rules in order to evolve. This included the German *Bundestag* that had made changes in July 2013 in light of developments regarding the stability mechanism, the Slovenian *Državni zbor* that wished to introduce changes to be able to better scrutinise key documents related to the European Semester and the Italian *Camera dei Deputati*. The Croatian *Hrvatski sabor* stated that it planned to oblige sectoral committees to participate in European affairs in the future.

The Finnish *Eduskunta* wanted to see national Parliaments "guaranteed a code of conduct obliging each Member State to give an assurance that its national Parliament had been involved, in accordance with national constitutional requirements, in forming the positions that the member state represents in Council".⁹

A number of Parliaments/Chambers concentrated on strengthening the existing mechanisms and interparliamentary cooperation. For example, the Polish *Sejm* hoped to that the political dialogue would be intensified and should be developed to go "beyond the formal framework of the Lisbon Treaty". The Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* had not debated or formally taken a position on this issue, but said that it hoped to see "the further development of the political dialogue, the economic dialogue, and the role of Parliaments in the European Semester". The Italian *Senato della Repubblica* emphasised that COSAC should ensure coordination with regard to "institutional themes and in relations with the European Parliament". Whereas the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* stated that the "European Council deserved systematic scrutiny" and said that it would be important to increase scrutiny of Green papers. The Belgian *Sénat* said that there should be more structured and direct parliamentary control and suggested COSAC could play a key role in this regard.

⁹ Statement of the Grand Committee of the Finnish Eduskunta 4/2012

The European Parliament commented that "closer European integration should provide for greater parliamentary involvement at both national and at Union level" and that democratic accountability "must be ensured at the level where decisions are taken.

When asked how the role of Parliaments/Chambers could be strengthened in advance of the revision of existing treaties only a small number of Parliaments/Chambers substantively replied (12). The Italian *Camera dei Deputati* repeated the comment that had already been made by many that the Commission should reply to reasoned opinions in a more timely and focused manner. They also called on the European Parliament to take account of national Parliament positions in its committee reports and plenary resolutions. The European Parliament commented that strengthening could take place through the "harmonisation of the steering and control mechanisms of national governments in the field of European Affairs".

Many Parliaments/Chambers (23 of 35) were also unable to answer the question about what the next European treaty revision should include to strengthen the role of national Parliaments. Those few that did answer suggested the following ideas:

- the political dialogue should be institutionalised to enable national Parliaments to constructively intervene in the European legislative procedure "namely through the presentation of proposals that may improve certain aspects of European initiatives" (Portuguese *Assembleia da República*);
- national Parliaments' role in shaping and controlling EU decisions in matters that relate to interparliamentary cooperation should be recognised. An enhanced role should also be given in matters not of exclusive competence of the EU (Italian *Senato della Repubblica* and Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*);
- the European Commission should reply to reasoned opinions within a specific time limit and the threshold to trigger a subsidiarity check should be lowered (Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*);
- the role of national Parliaments as regards CFSP and CSDP should be strengthened (Romanian *Senatul*);
- the role of national Parliaments in relation to Economic Governance should be enhanced (Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*);
- national governments should be urged to include the opinion of Parliaments/Chambers in the country's mandate for the Council, in Member State legislative initiatives and in requests to start or end participation in enhanced cooperation (Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*); and
- national Parliaments should be given the right to comment on the substance of legislative initiatives in the EU (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*).

The European Parliament commented that "future reform of the Treaties should enhance the democratic assets that national Parliaments have" for by example institutionalising the obligation for Member States to establish the scrutiny by national Parliaments on their executives.

CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

In the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy the EU Member States committed themselves to aim to provide employment for 75% of the population aged 20-64, to ensure that the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the 30-34 year olds should have a tertiary degree, and to reduce the number of people in or at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020.

Chapter three examines parliamentary scrutiny of the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy targets as well as the state of play of ongoing reforms and examine best practices and procedures. Parliaments have been invited to share their views on whether the political commitment to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy was properly reflected in European and national policies and budgets. The chapter also takes a closer look at how national Parliaments and the European Parliament can further develop their cooperation in order to contribute to achieving the set targets. This chapter examines the extent of parliamentary debate on the impact, especially social impact, of the austerity measures on the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy targets at both the EU and the national levels.

3.1. Scrutiny of Europe 2020 Strategy goals

More than two-thirds of the responding Parliaments/Chambers have debated all or most of the referred goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Providing employment for 75% of the population aged 20-64 and reducing the number of people in or at risk of poverty or social exclusion were scrutinised by the vast majority - 85% and 82% respectively (29 and 28 out of 34) of the Parliaments/Chambers. A slightly lower percentage of 76% (25 out of 33) had scrutinised the target of ensuring that the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and ensuring that at least 40% of the 30-34 year olds should have a tertiary degree. Twelve Parliaments/Chambers had debated other goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The scrutiny procedure took place predominantly in meetings of the European Affairs Committee and/or other competent committees. In some cases members of the government took part in the debate or written correspondence with competent ministers was taken into consideration and often in the context of National Reform Programme and Stabilisation Programme (11). In fewer cases the debate took place during plenary hearings (five).

Some examples include:

- The UK *House of Lords* planned to launch an inquiry on two of the 2020 Europe Strategy goals, whereas the Croatian *Hrvatski sabor* and the Lithuanian *Seimas* had involved academics and social partners in the discussions.
- The Spanish *Cortes Generales* adopted a non-legislative motion related to providing employment and the Italian *Camera dei Deputati* adopted a resolution on the Economy and Finance Documents, which included targets and related measures to achieve employment goals set out by the Europe 2020 strategy.
- The Portuguese *Assembleia da Republica* addressed the goals of ensuring that the share of early school leavers should be under 10% and ensuring that at least 40% of

the 30-34 year olds should have a tertiary degree in the context of debates on the indicators referred to in PISA reports.

- The European Parliament had discussed the issues with the participation of the competent Commissioner. As far as the goal of providing employment was concerned, the European Parliament's resolution of 14 June 2012 on "Towards a job-rich recovery" highlighted the 17.6 million new jobs that had to be created in order to meet the employment target set out in the EU 2020 Strategy. It also called for the necessary investment in job and growth potentials in the green economy, the health and social services sector and ICT, including investment in skills, training and higher wages. It also welcomed the launch of the public consultation on employment in the health and social care sectors. The European Parliament debate on the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) was directly linked to the EU2020 target to reduce the number of people in or at-risk-of poverty or social exclusion by 20 million before 2020.
- The Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés* answered that a draft of the National Reform Programme (NRP) was the subject of a public debate in the Chamber of Deputies before it was presented and reviewed by a parliamentary committee. The first draft NRP has been submitted for review to all parliamentary committees that examined the objectives for this project. The related contributions were submitted to the Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade Department which has been playing a coordinating role on an executive level. Before the public debate the final version of the NRP was presented at a joint meeting involving the commission of Economy, External Trade and Economy Solidarity, Finance and Budget Control.

Eight of the responding Parliaments/Chambers answered that equal attention was given to all goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy, but most of the responding Parliaments/Chambers (18 out of 32) answered negatively. In most cases this was because certain goals such as the issue of youth unemployment, predominated.¹⁰

The implementation of the ongoing reforms or actions was often scrutinised through the usual parliamentary procedures, in most cases during committee meetings in the presence of competent government members and less often in plenary. Several Parliaments/Chambers mentioned annual scrutiny of the NRP (11) as well as consideration of relevant bills. The Swedish *Riksdag* monitored the effectiveness of agencies that had undertaken the implementation of relevant programmes, whereas the UK *House of Lords* EU Committee used "enhanced scrutiny" on the Governments' actions, which included seminars with stakeholders, written correspondence with competent ministers or launching of inquiries. Hearings on the implementation of the ongoing reforms or actions with the participation of social partners and external expertise were organised also by the German *Bundestag*, the Portuguese *Assembleia da Republica* and the Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*. The Slovenian *Državni zbor*, and the Polish *Sejm* addressed the question when on the agenda of an upcoming Council whereas the Belgian *Chambre de représentants* met before or/and after a European Council meeting in the context of the Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs. The European Parliament assessed the Commission's overview on the ongoing

¹⁰ See answers to question 41 available in the Annex to the Bi-annual Report

reforms and called for a greater role in the European Semester process to ensure legitimacy and democratic accountability.

3.2. Cooperation on Europe 2020 Strategy goals

When asked about the tools that Parliaments/Chambers could use to cooperate in order to achieve the goals set by the Europe 2020 Strategy, close to a third (10 out of 32 respondents) answered that the issue had not been discussed. Particular reference to tools on a national level was made by 11 Parliaments/Chambers, mostly mentioning scrutiny over government work. On an EU level, most of the Parliaments/Chambers referred to the exchange of information and best practices through existing mechanisms of interparliamentary cooperation such as the COSAC, meetings of relevant committee Chairpersons and other interparliamentary meetings. Special reference was made to the parliamentary week on the European Semester by several Parliaments/Chambers (seven). The UK *House of the Lords* proposed ad hoc video conferences between relevant committees as a fruitful tool of interparliamentary cooperation.

3.3. Political commitment to achieving goals

Only nine of the 18 responding Parliaments/Chambers said they believed that the political commitment to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy was properly reflected in the policy and budget formation at both the European Union and national level. Nine answered negatively, whereas the Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés* noted that on a national level no critiques on this issue were raised. On the issue of how this political commitment was properly reflected in the policy and budget formation at both the European Union and national level, nine out of the 22 responding Parliaments/Chambers answered that the issue hadn't been discussed. The Polish *Sejm*, the Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* and the Czech *Senat* responded that national objectives were specified in the National Reform Programme. On a European level, the German *Bundestag* and the Hungarian *Országgyűlés* referred to provisions included in the Multiannual Financial Framework as an opportunity to align with the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The UK *House of Lords* identified achieving the Europe 2020 Strategy as an objective of the MFF but also balancing, at the same time, the need to fund other EU priorities such as protecting biodiversity and the area of freedom, security and justice. The Lithuanian *Seimas*, said that there is a potential to strengthen the commitment in the future in parallel with the recovery of the European economy, providing more possibilities to effective implementation of these goals. The Polish *Senat*, the Italian *Camera dei Deputati* and the Czech *Senat* answered that new challenges that had arisen led to considerable budgetary and funding constraints. The Latvian *Saeima* noted that regardless of the commitment, there were objective reasons why some countries would not be able to achieve some quantitative goals, such as birth rate, the age structure of society, immigration and emigration.

In terms of the deficiencies that Parliaments/Chambers saw in reflecting the political commitment to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy in the policy and budget formation, more than half (eight out of 14) of the responding Parliaments/Chambers answered that the financial perspectives for the 2014-2020 MFF did not correspond to the needs for the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy. Thus the budget cuts on a European and national level would have a negative impact on its ambitious goals. Five out of

14 of the responding Parliaments/Chambers did not have an official position on the referred issue.

3.4. Impact of austerity measures on targets

63% of the responding Parliaments/Chambers (19 out of 30) had debated the impact of the austerity measures on the targets set in the Europe 2020 Strategy, whereas 73% (22 out of 30) had debated the social impact of the austerity measures taken at both the EU and the national levels. The UK *House of Lords* had held a seminar on the impact of austerity in the EU and the Italian *Camera dei Deputati* had stressed in several resolution/documents the negative impact of the austerity measures on the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Similar comments were made by the Belgian *Chambre de représentants* and the Italian *Senato della Repubblica*. The Committee on Budgets of the European Parliament regularly discussed the issue, primarily with regard to the ability of Member States to co-finance EU projects, in particular within cohesion policy and called on the Commission to work with the Member States to ensure that austerity programmes did not hinder employment creation measures and growth-promoting policies, and did not compromise social protection.

3.5. Youth unemployment

72% of responding Parliaments/Chambers (23 out of 32) answered that they intended to discuss the Communication from the Commission on "Working together for Europe's young people – A call to action on youth unemployment" dated 19 June 2013. Some Parliaments/Chambers further commented on issues related to the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Croatian *Hrvatski sabor* organised in cooperation with EUFORES, a workshop regarding the Energy 2020 strategy, as a part of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* did not scrutinise the Europe 2020 targets as such, but in the context of a successful implementation of the austerity measures, during ordinary parliamentary control or legislative work steps had been taken to address the major challenge of unemployment (youth unemployment reached historic levels). Thus, the social impact of the austerity measures taken at both the EU and the national levels had been on regular basis a subject of discussion in the committees and the plenary of the Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*.



Lietuvos Respublikos pirmininkavimas
Europos Sąjungos Tarybai
2013 m. liepos 1 d. – gruodžio 31 d.
PARLAMENTINIS MATMUO

Lithuanian Presidency of
the Council of the European Union
1 July – 31 December 2013
PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

Présidence lituanienne
du Conseil de l'Union européenne
du 1er juillet au 31 décembre 2013
DIMENSION PARLEMENTAIRE

27 August 2013

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE L COSAC MEETING

27-29 October 2013, Vilnius, Lithuania

Prepared by the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat

APPOINTMENT OF THE PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE COSAC SECRETARIAT

Background

The COSAC Secretariat is composed of officials from the Parliaments of the Presidential Troika (former, current and next Presidency Parliaments and the European Parliament) and a Permanent Member who supports the Secretariat in its activities. On 31 December 2013, the term of office of the incumbent Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, Ms Libby KURIEN, will expire. Ms KURIEN will not apply for the second term.

The Lithuanian Presidency called for applications for the post on 9 July 2013 inviting national Parliaments to propose candidates for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and submit their CVs, letters of motivation and letters of support from the Chairs of the relevant committees of national Parliaments. **The deadline for the applications is 10 September 2013.**

Applications have been received from 4 Parliaments.

The L COSAC to be held in Vilnius on 27-29 October 2013 should therefore aim to appoint the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for the next term (from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015).

Rules of Procedure

According to the Rule 9.3 of the Rules of Procedure of COSAC the Permanent Member "shall be an official of a National Parliament". The rule also provides for the appointment of the Permanent Member by the COSAC Chairpersons "on the proposal of the Presidential Troika".



Appointment of the Permanent Member for 2014–2015

On the 9 of July 2013 the Lithuanian Presidency has invited nominations for the post and has set out the principles underlying the selection and the nomination procedure.

The process will be conducted:

- in the spirit of impartiality, transparency and fairness;
- for the purpose of transparency the national Parliaments that have put forward candidates will be invited to observe proceedings;
- if any candidates are proposed by national Parliaments of the Presidential Troika, their representatives in the Troika will be asked to abstain from the decision-making process;
- the information provided on candidates will be made available to all COSAC delegations and will be posted on the COSAC website (www.cosac.eu) and the website of the Seimas (www.eu2013.lrs.lt).

History of the COSAC Secretariat

In Athens, Greece, in May 2003, COSAC agreed the formula for setting up a secretariat to facilitate its work. COSAC endorsed a set of guidelines proposing a secretariat composed of one Permanent Member and four members seconded from the three national Parliaments of the Presidential Troika (the previous, the current and the future Presidencies) and the European Parliament. The COSAC Secretariat was set up in January 2004, after the final decision had been taken by the XXX COSAC meeting in Rome, Italy, in November 2003.

The co-financing agreement on the Permanent Member was proposed by the Finnish Presidency at the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC held in September 2006. The COSAC Chairpersons meeting agreed to establish a reflection group on the issue of co-financing of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat in the future and to work on this question via electronic exchange of information.

At the XXXVI COSAC, held in Helsinki on 21-22 November 2006, the results of the working group on co-financing of the Permanent member of the COSAC Secretariat were debated. The German and the Portuguese delegations as representatives of the two incoming Presidencies supported the idea of co-financing as well as of stipulating the COSAC Secretariat in the Rules of Procedure. At this meeting, the required threshold (minimum of 14 national Parliaments) to move ahead with the co-financing had been achieved.

At the XXXVIII COSAC meeting in Estoril, Portugal, in October 2007 the revised Rules of Procedure were adopted and the Secretariat and its role were defined.

Previous terms

The post of the Permanent Member has been held by the following officials from national Parliaments:

- Mr Morten KNUDSEN, Danish *Folketing* (2004–2006);
- Ms Sarita KAUKAOJA, Finnish *Eduskunta* (2006–2008);
- Ms Loreta RAULINAITYTĖ, Lithuanian *Seimas* (2008–2009), (2010–2011);
- Ms Libby KURIEN, UK *House of Commons* (2012–2013).

History of the funding and recruitment of the Permanent Member

Mr KNUDSEN and Ms KAUKAOJA were seconded to the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, which was fully funded by their national Parliaments. Ms RAULINAITYTĖ was the first Permanent Member the post of whom was partly funded under the co-financing agreement.

Towards the end of the two year term of Ms KAUKAOJA, no candidate was put forward for the post of the Permanent Member within the deadline set. It was therefore agreed by the Presidential Troika meeting in Lisbon on 14 October 2007 to postpone the decision on the appointment of the next Permanent Member for the period 2008-2010 until the COSAC Chairpersons meeting held in Ljubljana on 18 February 2008.

At the meeting, the Presidential Troika proposed the candidacy of Ms Loreta RAULINAITYTĖ, who was appointed by the COSAC Chairpersons.

In the case of Ms Libby KURIEN, the Presidential Troika could not make a proposal to the COSAC Chairpersons on the appointment of the Permanent Member. It was therefore decided that the Chairpersons hear short presentations from the two candidates and then vote on the two candidates, resulting in the appointment of Ms KURIEN.

Status of the co-financing agreement and letters of intent

According to Rule 9.5 of the Rules of Procedure of COSAC, the cost of seconding the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat to Brussels and other necessary technical costs of the COSAC Secretariat are jointly borne by Parliaments wishing to contribute. The amount and terms of payment under the co-financing procedure are defined in an agreement amongst the participating Parliaments. The Secretariat is hosted by the European Parliament in its offices in Brussels.

In order to ensure continued co-financing for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, the Irish Presidency, in the first half of 2013, undertook to renew the current co-financing agreement for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015. At the time of writing 31 Chambers from 23 national Parliaments have signed and sent their letters of intent indicating that they were willing to participate in the co-financing for the above stated period (which will cover the coming two-year term of the Permanent Member). This number is above the minimum threshold and, therefore, there is agreement that the post will continue to be funded. Those who have yet to respond have been invited to do so at their earliest convenience.

**SPEECH BY H. E. ALGIRDAS BUTKEVIČIUS, PRIME
MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA, AT THE
L COSAC MEETING
28 October 2013, 10:00**

**Hall of the Act of 11 March, Building I of the Seimas
Language of the meeting: Lithuanian (with interpretation)**

**STATE OF PLAY OF THE LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Dear Mr Chairman,

Members of Parliaments,

Ladies and gentlemen,

- The Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union welcomes the role played by the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union in addressing pan-European issues and is proud that **the jubilee L COSAC Meeting** is taking place here, in Vilnius.
- Speakers of national Parliaments of the European Union agreed 24 years ago in Madrid that national Parliaments should be more actively involved in tackling European Union issues. The Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union was established to achieve this objective. For nearly a quarter of a century COSAC has been making successful efforts to ensure that the Community is more democratic and more accountable to its citizens.
- The Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union is also seeking solutions that would serve the Member States and their citizens. I would like to stress that **this year is the European Year of Citizens** and I believe that the Lithuanian Presidency has been focused on responding to the concerns of all European citizens.
- I have the honour today to present to you the achievements and further work of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU. **Europe needs economic growth, reliability and openness more than ever.** It is these goals that the Lithuanian Presidency cares about most.
- We have a vital interest in seeing Europe demonstrating the economic and social policy results to its residents, neighbours, partners, investors

and the rest of the world. It is very important to ensure this year that the Community stands on a firm footing, the European finances become the symbol of reliability and that the old continent continues to be an example of openness in the world.

- A number of works in this direction have already been done: in the face of the crisis, European leaders and politicians made very important decisions. I am pleased that the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU contributes to translating these commitments into effective legislation the implementation of which, I believe, will improve the welfare of us all.
- Recent years have showed that weak banks pose threat to the whole European financial system and that rapid EU response is necessary to avoid adverse effects. Therefore, we must work to create the **banking union** which will ensure that in the future EU banks will operate under common rules and that the interests of depositors will be better protected.
- The first steps have already been taken. The Commission submitted a proposal for a **Single Resolution Mechanism** and Lithuania held the first discussion on this matter during the Informal Meeting of Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs in Vilnius. Only by consensus on the rapid development of the banking union we could ensure the financial stability and economic growth across the European Union.
- The economic situation remains fragile or it is even complicated in some Member States. We have to encourage Member States to seek a balance between the economic measures that would contribute to economic growth and job creation, on the one part, and social challenges, on the other.
- We have to pool our efforts – those of the EU institutions, politicians, diplomats, Parliaments and national governments – to overcome frequent challenges on our way. One of the tasks of the Lithuanian Presidency is **to ensure that next year funds from the 2014–2020 Financial Perspective reach business and Europeans in time.**
- **Lithuania managed to achieve an agreement of the Member States on the European Union budget for next year in a very short period of time.** Holding the Presidency, we make every effort to ensure that the political agreement on the conditions imposed by the European Parliament is implemented. Only together can we achieve that the new

financial framework takes effect and enables us all to build a better future.

- Unemployment is one of the most challenging consequences of the crisis. It is especially painful that this problem affected a quarter of the young people in the European Union. This number is a serious warning that the younger generation of Europeans needs every help as soon as possible. The Lithuanian Presidency focuses on the problem of unemployed young people who are not in education or training. **Nearly eight million young Europeans neither work nor study.**
- The year 2014 marks the launch of the Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative. For the Initiative to be effective, the economic growth is essential in the Member States. How to promote and ensure it?
- The European Union has a lot of untapped potential: just three days ago the **European Council** in Brussels discussed economic growth, competitiveness and innovation that are important to the whole Europe.
- **The common digital market** may have the same hugely positive effect as the single market launched in 1992. EU legislation changes the life of each of us. Our lives would be more convenient if traveling to a foreign country we had to deal with a simpler administrative system, if we had an **integrated European payments market or our scientists, researchers and inventors had more opportunities for employment and careers.**
- The digital world is our future with enormous potential. Research shows that the digital economy is one of the largest sources for growth and innovation, **which can increase GDP to 10% within a decade.**
- Yet another basis for a viable and competitive Europe is **a single energy market, the completion of which by 2014 has been declared as one of the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency.** We need a stable and transparent global energy market. The EU speaking in one voice with energy suppliers would not only help to achieve more competitive prices, but also further increase the importance of the European Union on the international arena.
- The Lithuanian Presidency believes that **openness** is one of the ways to encourage the economic growth in the European Union, to provide more opportunities for our citizens, and to strengthen our position globally.

- Over the past months of the Presidency, Lithuania has made considerable efforts to move forward with negotiations on free trade and association agreements with the Eastern Partnership countries.
- We all have a common interest to establish closer ties with our neighbours. The third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius is to take place in less than a month. We hope for good results but both sides have to make efforts. It is our interest to have safe and economically strong states oriented towards European values in our Eastern neighbourhood.
- The Eastern Partnership is currently the most effective and almost the only instrument for the European Union to achieve this. The success of the Vilnius meeting will depend on the Eastern partners' determination and capacity for reform and on the common position of the EU member states and institutions and their support to the Eastern partners.
- Openness for our partners must be made explicit also by maintaining closer commercial ties with them. An important step in this direction is **the historic negotiations with the United States of America on a free trade agreement, launched during the Lithuanian Presidency.**
- There are yet two months of intense work ahead of us – after all, the Lithuanian Presidency agenda includes more than two hundred events, with 20 summits among them, in Vilnius and other cities of the country.
- However, even after the formal events of the Presidency are over, we will not be able to forget the work related to the Presidency – **Lithuania will have to actively participate in the implementation of the programme of the Presidency Trio and draft the national report on the Presidency,** identifying the work done and goals achieved.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- In conclusion, I would like to say that we have a lot of tools at hand that can promote economic growth in Europe, ensure the confidence in the financial system and become more open to the world. EU institutions and national governments realise that these objectives cannot be achieved without the support of the national Parliaments and the European Parliament. Only acting together can we overcome all the challenges and achieve all the goals set.

EP MONITORING MISSION TO UKRAINE
Key observations to the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament

15 October 2013, Brussels

by

Mr Pat COX, former President of the European Parliament

Mr Aleksander KWAŚNIEWSKI, former President of Poland

Pending the final report of our mission, which we will submit to the European Parliament at the conclusion of our mandate, we would like to make several key observations regarding the current state of affairs and the way forward.

Since the last report to the Conference of Presidents on 18 April 2013, we have undertaken eight additional official missions to Ukraine (see Annex for details), bringing the total number of visits since the beginning of the monitoring mission to 22.

Since the beginning of the mission, we have spent the equivalent of twelve full working weeks in Ukraine, meeting President Yanukovich fourteen times, Prime Minister Azarov twenty-one times, Yulia Tymoshenko in hospital thirteen times for about thirty-two hours of dialogue and meeting members of her family and defence lawyers on a regular basis.

We also met on many occasions other senior current and former office holders both within the Government and the opposition, the representatives of the civil society and diplomatic corps. We are grateful for the continued high level of cooperation with all our counterparts in Ukraine, both with the authorities and with the opposition.

This cooperation has enabled the mission develop a high level of trust resulting in Mrs Tymoshenko remaining in hospital care, without video monitoring and attended only by female guards. She has not been forced to attend Court hearings and has not been transferred back to the colony. All trials and criminal investigations against her have been suspended at least since June 2013. Former Minister of the Interior Mr Lutsenko was pardoned on 7 April 2013 and released immediately. Former Acting Minister of Defence Mr Ivashchenko was released on 14 August 2012 and his travel ban lifted. Since December 2012, the mission has also paid close attention to a number of related cases brought against Mr Nemyria MP (Batkivshchina party & Chair of the Rada Committee on European Integration) and Mrs Tymoshenko's lawyer Mr Vlasenko, whose travel ban was lifted on 3 April 2013.

Moreover, we have systematically encouraged the authorities and the opposition to work together in order to meet with key expectations by the EU especially in terms of standards of democracy and Rule of Law. Electoral legislation is being improved following the last parliamentary elections and a date for new elections in the five disputed constituencies has been set on 15 December 2013. The new Criminal Procedural Code is being implemented, significantly reducing the number of pre-trial detainees. Moreover, the Venice Commission has recently adopted mostly positive recommendations as regards further proposed reforms to the Judiciary and the Public Prosecutor's Office. These reforms, if conducted and implemented fully and in line with European standards, could significantly change the political and legal landscape in Ukraine, an improvement which is also much needed to attract the available foreign direct investment.

As regards Mrs Tymoshenko's situation, the Former Prime Minister is being hospitalised since April 2012 in the Ukrzaliznytsia Central Clinical in Kharkiv where a team of doctors of the Charité clinic (Berlin, Germany) is overseeing her treatment. In June 2013, the assessment of Tymoshenko's medical situation concluded that she urgently requires appropriate surgical treatment. Due to her distrust in the Ukrainian authorities rather than the Ukrainian Doctors themselves, Yulia Tymoshenko has refused such treatment in Ukraine. She would however be willing to undergo surgery abroad as publically stated on 4 October 2013.

In the "gas case", the Kyiv Pecherskyi District Court's verdict was upheld by the Court of Appeal and by the Cassation Court in August 2012. The judgment of the European Court of Human Rights on her pre-trial arrest and detention came into force on 30 July 2013, establishing that she was detained illegally before the conviction. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has already criticized Ukraine for not re-opening the criminal proceedings that led to her conviction in order to execute that judgment. There is currently also the second case pending before the Strasbourg Court as regards the alleged violations to her right to a fair trial. In the "tax case", the trials at the Kharkiv District Court have been constantly postponed due to the ill health of the defendant. In the "Shcherban murder case" (merged with the "UESU debt case"), the pre-trial investigation has been also suspended.

Given this medical and legal context, the mission delivered an appeal to the President of Ukraine on 4 October 2013 (see annex) to release Yulia Tymoshenko for medical treatment on health and humanitarian grounds by way of pardon. As publically stated, Germany would be ready to host Mrs Tymoshenko for such a treatment, not least due to the Doctors from the Charité clinic being based in Berlin.

Our appeal comes at a time of strategic importance for EU-Ukraine relations. Addressing the issues of selective Justice is one of the key requirements identified by the European Union's Foreign Affairs Council in December 2012 in order to sign the Association Agreement with Ukraine. Many efforts have been made as regards the other requirements, notably in terms of legislative reforms as outlined above.

We were mandated by the European Parliament to deal with the question of selective justice in Ukraine. The conditions for signature were set by the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU, not by our mission. In our opinion, these conditions, especially as regards Yulia Tymoshenko, still remain to be fulfilled. After 16 months and 22 missions, we conclude at this point in time that further work is required to ensure compliance.

In this context, we believe this mission should continue its efforts in order to facilitate the implementation of a mutually acceptable solution before the decision by the Council of the European Union on a potential signature of the Association Agreement. Given the pressing nature of the remaining timeframe we urge all parties in Ukraine, the EU institutions and its Member States to lend their focussed and fullest support to the mission in order to secure the necessary conditions that would ensure success at the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius.

ANNEXES

1 - Composition of the mission:

Special envoys

Mr Pat COX, former President of the European Parliament

Mr Aleksander KWAŚNIEWSKI, former President of Poland

Core team

Mr Arnoldas PRANCKEVIČIUS, External Relations Adviser to the EP President

Mr Mihkel ALLIK, Member of the European Parliament Legal Service

Mr Julien CRAMPES, Policy Advisor, European Parliament DG External Policies

Prof. Hans-Jörg ALBRECHT, Director, Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law

Brussels-based team

Mr Alexandre STUTZMANN, Diplomatic Adviser to the EP President

Mr Joseph DUNNE, Head of the European Added Value Unit, DG Internal Policies, former Diplomatic Adviser to Pat COX

Ms Myriam GOINARD, Policy Advisor, European Parliament DG External Policies

Ms Lorena MÜLLER CAMARENA, Assistant

Ms Erica SCREEN, Assistant

2 - Key statistics

- 22 visits to Ukraine
- 13 Court hearings attended
- 61 days of meetings in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Mena penal colony, Yalta

- 14 meetings with President Yanukovych
- 21 meetings with Prime Minister Azarov
- 3 meetings with the Prosecutor General of Ukraine

- 13 meetings with Yulia Tymoshenko in the Kharkiv hospital
- 6 meetings with Yuriy Lutsenko (2 in Court, 2 in prison, 2 in EU Delegation)
- 5 meetings with Valeriy Ivashchenko
- 23 meetings with Yulia Tymoshenko's representatives (lawyer & family)
- 15 meetings with opposition leaders (Batkivshchina & UDAR)

- 15 meetings with EU-27 Heads of Mission
- 9 meetings with US Ambassador
- 4 meetings with Ukraine's former Presidents (Presidents Kravchuk, Kuchma & Yushchenko).
- 6 meetings with NGOs (18 in total)

- 17 days of meetings in Brussels and Strasbourg

- 8 meetings with the European Commission (President Barroso, Mr Füle 6 times & Mr De Gucht)
- 5 meetings with the External Action Service (Chief Operating Officer Mr O'Sullivan, Deputy Secretary General Mr Popowski, Managing Director Mr De La Peña, Director Mr Wiegand)
- 2 meetings with representatives of the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission
- 12 debriefing meetings at the European Parliament

- 48 telephone talks with Ukrainian authorities and opposition leaders

3 - Our visits to Ukraine in detail

Since the last report to the Conference of Presidents on 18 April 2013, we have conducted 8 official visits to Ukraine, bringing the total number of visits since the beginning of the monitoring mission to 22. Here are the details of the Court hearings that we attended as well as the meetings that we held with the authorities, the opposition and the civil society.

First Visit: 11-12 June 2012, Kyiv

Mr Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine (3 hours)

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Justice Minister Lavrynovych, Health Deputy Minister Moisenko and other officials

Family and lawyers of Yulia Tymoshenko

Second Visit: 24-26 June 2012, Kharkiv and Kyiv

Attendance of the 3rd Court hearing (Tax case) in Kharkiv (postponed)

Attendance of the 2nd Cassation hearing in Kiev (Gas case) (postponed)

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital (3 hours)

The doctors of Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital

Kharkiv hospital, local prosecution and penitentiary administration

Mr Sergey Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Mr Viktor Pshonka, Prosecutor General and Mr Renat Kuzmin, his Deputy (5 hours)

EU Heads of Missions, US Ambassador Tefft and Mr Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada Bob Dechert

Political foundations Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Friedrich Naumann Stiftung

Third Visit: 9-13 July 2012, Kharkiv and Kyiv

Attendance of the Court hearing (Tax case) in Kharkiv (postponed)

Attendance of the Cassation hearing in Kiev (Gas case) (postponed)

Attendance of the Yuriy Lutsenko investigation case (hearing)

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital (2 hours)

The doctors of Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital

Kharkiv hospital, local prosecution and penitentiary administration

Mr Sergiy Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko

Mr Yuriy Lutsenko and Mr Valeriy Ivashchenko in Kyiv Prison (5 hours)
Lawyers and wives of Lutsenko and Ivashchenko

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Mr Borys Tarasyuk, EU-Ukraine PCC Co-Chair, Co-President of the Euronest PA
Mr Ievgen Zakharov, Head of the Kharkiv Human Rights Union

EU Heads of Missions

Civil Society organisations: December 11 Initiative, Chesno / Civic Consortium for Election Initiatives, Opora, Committee of Voters, Amnesty International, Renaissance Foundation, Helsinki Human Rights Union

Fourth Visit. 22-24 July 2012, Kharkiv and Kyiv

Attendance of the Court hearing (Tax case) in Kharkiv (postponed)

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital (2.5 hours)
The doctors of Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital
Kharkiv hospital, local prosecution and penitentiary administration
Mr Sergey Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Ombudswoman of Ukraine Valeria Lutkovska

EU Head of Delegation Pinto Teixeira
TVi Director General Mykola Knyazhytsky and the Gorshenin Institute

Fifth Visit: 13-17 August 2012, Kharkiv, Kyiv and Yalta

Attendance of the Court hearing (Tax case) in Kharkiv (postponed)

Attendance of the Cassation hearing of Yulia Tymoshenko (Gas case) (opened)

Attendance of the appeal trial of Valeriy Ivashchenko in Kyiv (verdict)

Attendance of the Yuriy Lutsenko investigation case (verdict)

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital (2.5 hours)
The doctors of Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital
Kharkiv hospital, local prosecution and penitentiary administration

Mr Valeriy Ivashchenko in the EU Delegation after his release

Mr Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine (4 hours)
Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Mr Volodymyr Lytvyn, Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada
Mr Andriy Portnov, Presidential Adviser for Judicial System Affairs

Mr Viktor Yushchenko, Former President of Ukraine
Mr Oleksandr Moroz, former Speaker of Verkhovna Rada

Opposition leaders Mr Oleg Turchynov and Mr Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna)

NGOs on elections: Chestno, Committee of Voters, Opora
EU Heads of Missions

Sixth Visit: 20-21 August 2012, Kyiv

Attendance of the Cassation hearing in Kiev (Gas case) (completion)

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Seventh Visit: 28-30 August 2012, Kyiv

Attendance of the Cassation hearing of Yulia Tymoshenko (Gas case) (verdict)

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

Eighth Visit: 5 October 2012, Kyiv

Mr Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Opposition leader Mr Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna)

Mr Sergey Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko

Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

EU Heads of Missions

Ninth Visit: 6-7 November 2012, Kyiv

Mr Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Opposition leaders Mr Oleg Turchynov and Mr Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna), Vitali Klitschko and Vitaly Kovalchuk (UDAR)

Mr Sergey Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko

Mr Valeriy Ivashchenko (freed ex-Defence Minister)

Head of OSCE-ODIHR electoral mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Audrey Glover

EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski

EU Heads of Missions

Tenth Visit: 19-20 November 2012, Kharkiv & Kyiv

Attendance of the Yuriy Lutsenko investigation case (hearing in appeal then verdict)

Mr Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital

Mr Yuriy Lutsenko in Kyiv Appeal Court

Mr Valeriy Ivashchenko

Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski

EU Heads of Missions

Eleventh Visit: 17-19 December 2012, Kyiv

Mr Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine
Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine
Mr Volodymyr Rybak, Speaker of the Rada
Mr Andriy Portnov, Chief Legal Advisor to the President

Opposition leaders Mr Arseniy Yatsenyuk & Mr Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna) and Vitali Klitschko (UDAR)

Mr Sergey Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko
Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

US Ambassador Tefft & Deputy Head of Mission Eric Schultz

EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski
EU Heads of Missions

Twelfth Visit: 3-6 February 2013, Kharkiv, Kyiv & Mena

Mr Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine
Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine
Mr Leonid Kozhara, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital
Mr Yuriy Lutsenko in Mena penitentiary colony
Opposition leaders Mr Arseniy Yatsenyuk & Mr Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna) and Vitaly Kovalchyuk (UDAR)
Mr Sergey Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko
Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

Former President Leonid Kuchma

EEAS Director Gunnar Wiegand
EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski
EU Heads of Missions
US Ambassador Tefft & Deputy Head of Mission Eric Schultz

Thirteenth Visit: 7-8 March 2013, Kyiv

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine
Mr Andriy Portnov, Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration

Opposition leaders Mr Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Mr Oleg Turchynov & Mr Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna) and Vitali Klitschko (UDAR)
Mr Sergey Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko
Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski
EU Heads of Missions

Fourteenth Visit: 27-29 March 2013, Kharkiv& Kyiv

Mr Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine
Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine
Mr Viktor Pshonka, Prosecutor General and other PGO officials
Mr Andriy Kluyev, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital
Mr Sergiy Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko

Former President Leonid Kravchuk
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Volodymyr Ohryzko

Opposition leaders Mr Arseniy Yatsenyuk & Mr Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna) and Vitaly Kovalchuk (UDAR)

EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski
EU Heads of Missions
US Ambassador Tefft & Deputy Head of Mission Eric Schultz

Fifteenth Visit: 21-24 April 2013, Kyiv & Brussels

Mr Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine
Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine
Mr Andriy Kluyev, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine (in Brussels on 23rd)
Mr Volodymyr Rybak, Speaker of the Rada

Leaders of the political factions in the Rada: Oleh Tihipko (Party of Regions), Serhii Tianybok (Batkivshchina), Rostyslav Pavlenko (UDAR), Petro Symonenko (Communists).

Mr Sergiy Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko
Opposition MP Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna)
Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

Mr Yuriy Lutsenko in EU Delegation

Former President Kuchma

EU Heads of Missions including EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski and Mr Yuriy Lutsenko
US Ambassador Tefft & Deputy Head of Mission Eric Schultz
Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius (in Brussels on 23rd)

MEPs Elmar Brok, Pawel Kowal and participants in the debriefing to the EP delegation to the EU-UA PCC (all in Brussels on 23rd)

Sixteenth Visit: 26-27 May 2013, Kyiv & Kharkiv

Mr Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine
Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine

Mr Andriy Kluyev, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine
Mr Andriy Portnov, Chief Legal Advisor to the President

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital
Mr Sergiy Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko
Opposition MP Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna)
Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

Civil society organisations (International Renaissance Foundation, Institute for Civic Research and Policy Consulting, Razumkov Centre, Agency for Legislative Initiatives, Centre for Political and Legal Reform, Anti-corruption network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, Open Policy Analytical Centre).

EU Heads of Missions including EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski
US Ambassador Tefft & Deputy Head of Mission Eric Schultz

Seventeenth Visit: 13-15 June 2013, Kyiv & Kharkiv

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine
Mr Andriy Kluyev, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine
Mr Viktor Pshonka, Prosecutor General and other PGO officials

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital

Canadian Ambassador Troy Lulashnyk

Annual Business Conference (President Cox speech on business and investment environment on Ukraine)

Eighteenth Visit: 26-28 June 2013, Kyiv & Kharkiv

Mr Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine
Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine
Mr Andriy Kluyev, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital
Mr Sergiy Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko
Opposition MP Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna)
Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

Opposition deputy leaders Mr Oleg Turchynov (Batkivshchina) & Vitaly Kovalchuk (UDAR)

EU Heads of Missions including EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski
US Ambassador Tefft & Deputy Head of Mission Eric Schultz

Nineteenth Visit: 30-31 July 2013, Yalta, Kyiv & Kharkiv

Mr Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine
Andriy Portnov, UA President's advisor for Judicial affairs

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital
Mr Sergiy Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko
Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

Twentieth Visit: 2-4 September 2013, Kyiv & Kharkiv

Mr Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine
Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine
Mrs Olena Lukash, Minister of Justice
Mr Andriy Kluyev, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine
Mr Andriy Portnov, Chief Legal Advisor to the President

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital
Mr Sergiy Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko
Opposition MP Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna)
Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

Opposition leaders Mr Arseniy Yatsenyuk (Batkivshchyna) and Vitali Klitschko (UDAR)

Attendance of the opening of the Rada including side meeting with Mr Volodymyr Rybak,
Speaker of the Rada

EU Heads of Missions
US Ambassador Pyatt

Twenty-first Visit: 19-22 September 2013, Yalta
(on the margins of the Yalta European Strategy annual meeting)

Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine
Mr Andriy Kluyev, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine

EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski
US Ambassador Pyatt

Twenty-second Visit: 3-5 October 2013, Kyiv & Kharkiv

Mr Viktor Yanukovich, President of Ukraine
Mr Mykola Azarov, Prime Minister of Ukraine
Mr Andriy Kluyev, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine
Mr Andriy Portnov, Chief Legal Advisor to the President

Mrs Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital
Mr Sergiy Vlasenko, defence lawyer of Mrs Tymoshenko
Opposition MP Hryhory Nemyrya (Batkivshchyna)
Ms Eugenia Tymoshenko, daughter of Yulia Tymoshenko

EU Heads of Missions including EU Head of Delegation Jan Tombinski
US Ambassador Pyatt

4 - Copy of the mission's appeal to pardon Yulia Tymoshenko

Kyiv, 4 October 2013

Recalling the joint decision by the President of European Parliament Martin Schulz and the Prime Minister Mykola Azarov of Ukraine in May 2012, to establish a European Parliament Monitoring Mission to Ukraine to address high profile criminal cases resulting in the imprisonment of former politicians;

Noting that the former President of the European Parliament Pat Cox and the former President of the Republic of Poland Aleksander Kwasniewski have undertaken 22 mission visits to Ukraine in the fulfilment of the mandate;

Acknowledging the high level of cooperation and commitment of the Ukrainian authorities in respect of the mission;

Recognising the progress achieved as regards the cases addressed by the mission including the ongoing dialogue in the case of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko;

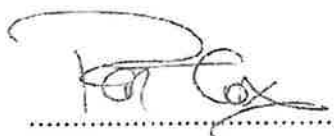
Accepting the conditions established by the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union in December 2012 which include electoral and judicial reform and also the addressing of issues of selective Justice as essential prerequisites to the signing of the Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, between the European Union and Ukraine at the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius in November 2013;

Noting the medical advice received from the Doctors of Yulia Tymoshenko, expressing the urgent necessity for her to receive appropriate surgical treatment;

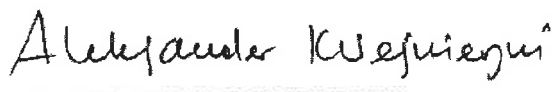
Express our belief that the signing of the Association Agreement would be an act of strategic and historical importance for all of the parties involved;

Request, with a view to fulfilling the above-mentioned conditions, that Yulia Tymoshenko be released for medical treatment on health and humanitarian grounds by way of pardon.

Signed,



.....
Pat Cox



.....
Aleksander Kwasniewski



Lietuvos Respublikos pirmininkavimas
Europos Sąjungos Tarybai
2013 m. liepos 1 d. – gruodžio 31 d.
PARLAMENTINIS MATMUO

Lithuanian Presidency of
the Council of the European Union
1 July – 31 December 2013
PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

Présidence lituanienne
du Conseil de l'Union européenne
du 1er juillet au 31 décembre 2013
DIMENSION PARLEMENTAIRE

L COSAC

INFORMAL LUNCHTIME SESSION: THE ROLE OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN SHAPING AND SCRUTINISING EU DECISION-MAKING

Monday, 28 October 2013
14.30-15.10

Venue: Meeting Room adjacent to the Stained Glass Gallery, Building I of the Seimas

This informal, optional session will provide a forum for sharing views and experiences about the work of national Parliaments in shaping and scrutinising EU decision-making. As the time available for discussion is short, some suggested topics are given below in the form of questions.

Suggested topics for discussion:

1. What impact has the 'yellow card' mechanism had on the influence of national Parliaments over EU decision-making?
2. Particularly in the context of the economic and financial crisis, how has the role of national Parliaments in shaping and scrutinising EU decision-making changed?
3. Is interparliamentary cooperation an effective tool for shaping and scrutinising EU decision-making? Is this how interparliamentary cooperation should be used?
4. What is your Parliament's experience of the level and quality of engagement between the EU institutions and national Parliaments?

Keynote Speaker: Lord Timothy BOSWELL OF AYNHO, Chair of the EU Select Committee of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom.



Speech by Maroš Šefčovič
European Commission Vice-President responsible for inter-institutional relations and
administration
at the 50th COSAC Plenary meeting 27-29 October 2014, Vilnius

Ladies and Gentlemen, Honourable Members

It's a pleasure to be with you once again for this COSAC meeting. During my time as the Commissioner responsible for relations with the national parliaments, I've come to appreciate these twice-yearly get-togethers. They offer us the opportunity to talk about key European issues from the national perspective, and are an effective way of bridging the perceived gap between Brussels and the Member States.

As President Barroso said in his video presentation, that was one of the main reasons behind the creation of COSAC back in 1989. It's hard to believe that we are already celebrating the 50th plenary meeting – which I hope we can all agree is undoubtedly a significant achievement in inter-parliamentary cooperation.

In the 25 years since the first COSAC meeting, the EU has seen many changes, not least in the number of Member States and also therefore in the number of national parliaments represented in your meetings. But it has also, sadly, seen a steady decline in trust and understanding, a widening of that gap between what is agreed in Brussels and what matters back at home.

COSAC has played its part in helping to reduce that gap – which was of course one of the prime motivations for the "founding father" of COSAC, Laurent Fabius, who has so kindly been with us here today to see how his vision of a permanent framework and forum for cooperation between national Parliaments within the EU has so successfully increased parliamentary control of EU affairs.

It's that word 'permanent' that is so important: both the Treaties of Amsterdam and Lisbon have helped to weave COSAC and its work into the very fabric of the EU and highlight the continued importance of the work that you do.

The simple fact remains that the EU would simply not function effectively without the work national parliaments do – from holding your national governments to account over EU promises to adopting implementing measures for EU directives, from checking proposals in relation to subsidiarity to commenting on them under the political dialogue. And of course the European Parliament plays its unique role as both co-legislator and scrutiniser of legislation at the EU level, a core element of the EU decision-making process.

The privileged contact between national and European parliaments that COSAC provides gives further strength to the weave.

In short, the role of national Parliaments in the European project is hugely important, and it has become even more so in the context of the deepened Economic and Monetary Union. This is a subject we have discussed many times before, notably at the Chairpersons' meetings in Dublin and Vilnius, but the discussion is of course far from over.

As you know, the Commission warmly welcomes the strong commitment of national Parliaments and the European Parliament to ensure democratic legitimacy and accountability by engaging in EU matters. I have read with great interest the interesting comments made by your chambers on democratic legitimacy in the 20th bi-annual COSAC report, and I am happy that you will continue

the discussion on this essential subject tomorrow. I will certainly be looking forward to seeing the conclusions of your debate.

Europe 2020

But let me now turn to today's topic for discussion, and of course another area where the role of both national parliaments and the European Parliament is extremely important: the **implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy**.

Over the last few years of crisis, the question has often been asked: what can the EU do to get us back on track, to get us out of this mess. Europe 2020 is the answer.

As you know, this strategy was launched by the Commission in 2010 as the EU's integrated strategy to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for Europe.

The economic crisis has shown us how interdependent the European economies are, in particular in the Euro area. It's clear that the impact of economic policies does not stop at national borders. If we want to stop spill-over effects from bad decision-making in one country, we obviously have to coordinate more effectively that decision-making process.

That's what the **European Semester** is there for, to detect inconsistencies and emerging imbalances and to support the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

I won't go into details here about how the European Semester works, not least because you have had the chance to discuss this issue in some detail with my colleague Olli Rehn just two weeks ago here in Vilnius during the first inter-parliamentary conference under Article 13 of the Fiscal Treaty.

But what I will say is that there are of course plenty of opportunities within the European Semester process for discussions with national parliaments and the European Parliament, and that these discussions provide an opportunity for you to feed in your views and ensure that national reforms carried out under Europe 2020 are most effective.

We are now three years into the European Semester cycle, and we've seen some clear trends emerging in that time.

In fact there are five areas that have become a reform priority across the EU:

- differentiated growth-friendly fiscal consolidation;
- restoring lending to the real economy;
- promoting growth and competitiveness for today and tomorrow;
- tackling unemployment and reform labour markets;
- modernising public administrations.

These reform priorities are important for laying down the macroeconomic and structural foundations for Europe's improved competitiveness.

The last three years have also of course seen the launch of ambitious reform programmes in several Member States, and these are now **starting to bring positive results**.

There are signs that the worst of the crisis is behind us, that we are en route for a modest recovery, driven by the gradual rebound of domestic demand and a positive export growth. GDP growth in the second quarter of 2013 was a modest but welcome 0.3% and we expect to see a similar

improvement when the third quarter figures are released next month. And we hope that this recovery will continue to gather pace throughout 2014.

But we are by no means out of the woods altogether, and that's why we have to continue to focus on our reform priorities in the years to come, to build on what we have already achieved, as well as rapidly implementing the decisions we've already agreed to boost employment and to get people working.

Tackling this issue in particular has become the most urgent priority. **Unemployment was 11% across the EU in July 2013, while youth unemployment was an unacceptable 23%.** While reforms have been carried out that should improve the resilience and flexibility of the labour market in several parts of Europe, they will take time to deliver results. That's why there will also be additional funding from the next seven-year EU budget, the MFF, to help the most affected Member States deal with youth unemployment.

High unemployment levels also underline the significant **social cost** of the crisis, and the subsequent need for clear and effective action to rectify the situation.

In its Communication on Strengthening of the Social Dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union, approved earlier this month, the Commission stressed the importance of making sure that the new rules we have put in place to deepen coordination and cooperation on economic governance also take into account the social impact.

This is not, in fact, a new issue but one that has been at the heart of the Europe 2020 strategy since its inception. Indeed, it has clearly stated headline targets and policy actions, for example reducing early school leaving to less than 10% of 18-24-year-olds (currently at 12.8%), or increasing tertiary education levels to at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds (currently at 35.8%).

Among the most recent initiatives that the Commission has presented to support national reform efforts are the Employment Package, which sets out the way forward for a job-rich recovery, the White Paper on Pensions, presenting a strategy for adequate, sustainable and safe pensions and the Youth Employment Package.

Of course, creating jobs counts for little if there is no corresponding work force to fill them which is why **education** also figures very prominently in the European Semester.

As I mentioned before, we are not that far from reaching the education targets set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. But we have little room for complacency. One key issue that still needs to be addressed is the performance of the education and training systems and their labour market relevance in many Member States. That's why there has been a clear focus on reforming vocational education and training in many countries, to make them more job-focused and relevant.

It is estimated that there could be as many as 700,000 unfilled posts in ICT alone by 2015 because of a lack of necessary skills in the EU [figure presented by IE presidency to EPSCO in Feb]. And this is all the more concerning given the high job creation rates expected in the ICT sector – around 7.6% over the next decade, twice the overall job creation forecast for the EU.

Europe has high hopes from the ICT sector as a means of stimulating economic growth, as the lengthy discussions at last week's European Council on the development of a digital single market clearly show.

But this must be seen in the wider context of the Europe 2020 focus on **innovation, research and development**.

This is an area where we can and must do better. The goal is for 3% of EU GDP to be invested in R&D by the end of the decade, but current figures put it at around 2%, barely changed since the start of the Europe 2020 strategy. In fact, in 2011, total public R&D investments in the EU decreased for the first time since the beginning of the crisis. Faced with the need to get their finances under control, many Member States took the drastic approach of slashing their R&D budgets.

And yet, as the European Council stated quite clearly last week, investment in innovation fuels productivity and growth. Member States that have continued to invest in research and innovation have fared better in the current crisis than those that have not.

We have made some progress, for example on agreeing measures that should make the business environment in Europe more innovation-friendly such as the unitary patent, or the European passport for venture capital funds. The new European research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, which starts from 2014, will place greater emphasis on innovation.

The crisis has certainly hampered our efforts to reach other key goals in the Europe 2020 strategy - the so-called 20-20-20 targets. By 2020 Europe has pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20% compared to 1990, to ensure that 20% of its energy consumption from renewables and to increase energy efficiency by 20%. While we are broadly on track to meet the first two targets across the EU as a whole, there is still some work to be done.

The Commission estimates that implementation of individual energy efficiency measures could lead to 2 million jobs being created or retained by 2020, while the potential from renewable energy sector development is estimated at 3 million jobs by 2020.

But we have to get the balance right. These measures cannot be achieved to the detriment of Europe's overall competitiveness. If we want to reindustrialise Europe, to create new jobs and new sources of economic growth, then competitive energy prices will play an important role. Finding the right way to meet our ambitious targets on cutting emissions without making ourselves uncompetitive compared to the US or China remains a key challenge for us all.

So, we've made slow but steady progress in the first three years of the Europe 2020 programme. But what more do we need to do to make sure that we remain on track to achieve all that we have set out to do?

The unprecedented levels of coordination of budgetary and structural policies under the European Semester should certainly help us in achieving these goals – but we can still do more.

As you know, this autumn marks a major step forward in the process of strengthening fiscal monitoring in the euro area with the entry into force of the so-called two-pack. This will mean much closer budgetary coordination: Member States have already presented their Draft Budgetary plans to the Commission (all of them, and on time, which is no mean achievement). The Commission will in mid-November present its opinions on these draft budgets to national governments and of course to both national and European parliaments as well. On the basis of the individual plans, the Commission will also make an overall assessment of the budgetary situation and prospects in the euro area.

But let me be clear on one thing: this does NOT mean that the Commission will now have the right to set national budgets! Quite the opposite, in fact: national Parliaments retain their full rights in the national budgetary process, and the Commission's role is to assess each budget in the European

context. The Commission does not have a veto. We simply want to bring a more European perspective to the national budget debates – to raise awareness among national politicians that their decisions have consequences beyond their national borders. But ultimately it is national parliaments that will continue to take the final decisions on fiscal policy.

November will also be an important month for the European Semester process as the Commission will present its 2014 Annual Growth Survey. It will set out the broad economic and social priorities for the EU for the year to come and will launch the 2014 European Semester of economic policy coordination.

We expect to see improvements, the results in no small part of the reforms carried out so far under the Europe 2020 strategy, that should allow us to develop more pro-growth policies, rather than focusing primarily on fiscal consolidation.

The AGS will also launch the consultation process with national and European parliamentarians so that the Spring European Council can adopt the right priorities for the EU next March, and continue to build on the good work we have done in the past three years. I know that you are keen to develop a more intensive dialogue with the Commission on the European Semester, and I would like to reiterate our commitment to hold such a dialogue with each National Parliament. All you have to do is ask us to come and talk about the European Semester and we will! I also repeat the excellent suggestion to organise 'Europe Days' within your respective parliaments, to discuss the most pressing EU issues with national parliamentarians and MEPs. Of course we in the Commission would also be happy to provide input for such events.

Ladies and Gentlemen

There is a reason why the Europe 2020 strategy is a 10-year plan for growth: structural reforms take time to take effect. And starting off in the middle of the worst economic crisis the EU has ever known did not help either!

It is difficult sometimes to see the big picture, to see beyond the immediate need for action, or indeed beyond the next election. But the Europe 2020 strategy does just that; it sets the framework for action on a timescale that transcends political short-termism and that commits all 28 Member States to act regardless of who is in power.

That's why the involvement of national parliaments and the European Parliament in this process is so important, as President Barroso underlined in his video message. Parliaments reflect the views of all political parties, they remain even as governments and leaders come and go. And perhaps more importantly, they represent the people of Europe and provide that unique link between policy makers and public. It is parliaments, both national and European, that must ensure that the decisions taken at EU level have a real and positive impact on citizens.

I am sure that you are ready to play your parts – to hold national governments and the Commission to account, to keep us focused on the goal and to make sure that what we do really does have the very best interests of European citizens at heart.

Thank you

**Réunion de la L° COSAC
Vilnius, 27 au 29 octobre 2013**

Lundi 28 octobre 2013, session 15h45 - 17h15

La mise en œuvre de la stratégie UE 2020

**Intervention de Pervenche Berès, présidente de la Commission de l'emploi et des affaires sociales du
Parlement européen**

Messieurs les vice-Présidents du Seimas,

Monsieur le Président de la Commission des affaires européennes,

Monsieur le vice-Président de la Commission européenne,

Mesdames et Messieurs les Parlementaires nationaux, chers collègues,

Mesdames et Messieurs les Parlementaires européens, chers collègues,

Mesdames, Messieurs,

avant de traiter du thème qui m'est imparti, permettez-moi de vous dire mon émotion d'être parmi vous en ce cinquantième anniversaire, ici à Vilnius, alors qu'en novembre 1989 à Paris, moins d'une semaine après la chute du mur de Berlin, j'étais l'une des chevilles ouvrières de la création de la COSAC en ma qualité de conseillère pour les affaires européennes de Laurent Fabius. Que de chemin parcouru pour l'Union européenne, pour les parlements qui sont le cœur battant de cette démocratie à laquelle aspiraient ceux qui avaient alors déplacé les montagnes.

Venons-en à la mise en œuvre de la stratégie de l'Union européenne 2020. Je voudrais remercier la présidence lituanienne d'avoir inscrit ce thème à l'ordre du jour de nos travaux et de m'avoir invitée pour l'évoquer avec vous, dans le prolongement de mon intervention lors de la COSAC de Nicosie ou de celle de la 1^{re} conférence interparlementaire sur la gouvernance économique et budgétaire, ici, il y a quinze jours.

Je souhaiterais aller à l'essentiel en posant précisément les termes du débat : Quels outils devons-nous collectivement inventer pour que la stratégie UE 2020 ne connaisse pas le sort de celle de Lisbonne ?

L'échec de la stratégie de Lisbonne.

Je commencerai par un détour sur cette dernière, car je crois qu'il est essentiel de revenir sur les objectifs que poursuivait cette stratégie et également de redire les raisons sous-jacentes à son échec. La stratégie de Lisbonne adoptée lors du Conseil européen de mars 2000 visait à faire, souvenons-nous, de l'Union en 2010 "l'économie de la connaissance la plus compétitive et la plus dynamique du monde". On y avait opportunément ajouté peu de temps après, lors du Conseil de Göteborg, la question du développement durable. L'objectif ne manquait pas d'ambition mais a souffert précisément de sa mise en œuvre. De plus, après sa révision en 2005 par le groupe piloté par Wim Kok, le déséquilibre du triangle croissance/emploi/développement durable, la focalisation excessive sur la compétitivité et la croissance comme seul juge de paix de la réussite ou encore l'employabilité des femmes, des jeunes ou des seniors, sans s'intéresser à la qualité des emplois créés conduit à un bilan pour le moins mitigé. Reconnaissons le : la stratégie de Lisbonne n'a pas rempli ses objectifs. Par exemple, celui d'affecter 3% du PIB aux dépenses de Recherche et Développement pour rattraper les États-Unis en matière technologique n'a jamais été atteint, ce taux ne s'élevant qu'à 1,9%. Surtout, la stratégie n'a pas permis de réduire les écarts entre les efforts consacrés au développement technologique : si la Suède consacrait près de 4% de son PIB à la recherche, ce

taux ne dépassait en Italie que péniblement 1%. Un constat similaire, avec là encore d'importantes divergences, peut être dressé en matière d'employabilité. Alors que la stratégie de Lisbonne reposait sur l'économie de la connaissance, au cours de la période de 2000 à 2007, donc avant même la crise, la moitié des Etats membres de l'Union enregistraient une diminution de la part de leur budget consacré à l'éducation selon les chiffres fournis par l'OCDE. Au-delà des interrogations portant sur l'opportunité d'inclure certains objectifs ou critères pour évaluer les résultats des politiques publiques, la stratégie de Lisbonne a souffert de la « méthode ouverte de coordination ». Dans le même temps, aucun outil d'observation d'une synergie potentielle entre le budget européen et les budgets nationaux pour la mise en œuvre de cette stratégie n'était créé.

L'élaboration de la stratégie UE 2020.

C'est à partir de ce constat d'échec que la Commission a proposé la stratégie UE 2020, dans un contexte de crise financière, économique et sociale, avec la définition de 3 axes prioritaires - l'innovation, la durabilité de la croissance et l'employabilité avec une plus grande préoccupation portée aux thématiques sociales et environnementales - et de 5 objectifs chiffrés dont un taux d'emploi global de 75%, un budget de recherche de 3% du PIB, une réduction de 25% de la pauvreté ou encore la diminution de l'échec scolaire. L'enjeu d'une telle stratégie qui doit permettre à l'Union européenne de relever les défis qu'elle doit affronter n'a de chance de réussir que si elle devient la colonne vertébrale, le point de référence, de toutes les politiques de l'Union.

Quels outils innovants depuis la validation de la stratégie UE 2020 ?

Depuis l'adoption de la stratégie UE 2020, la crise, en particulier au sein de la zone euro, a conduit à la montée en puissance du semestre européen qui tend à se substituer pour l'essentiel à la méthode ouverte de coordination. Cet instrument peut indéniablement s'avérer utile pour favoriser la coordination des politiques économiques s'il vise à identifier et réduire les déséquilibres macroéconomiques minant la cohésion de l'Union et de la zone euro en particulier. Ce cycle que vous connaissez tous parfaitement débute par la publication en novembre par la Commission d'un "examen annuel de croissance" déterminant le cadre général d'orientation des budgets des Etats membres. Ceux-ci doivent ensuite transmettre en avril à la Commission leurs programmes de stabilité ou de convergence pour le volet relatif au Pacte de stabilité et de croissance et leurs plans nationaux de réforme pour celui relatif à la stratégie UE 2020. Après avoir analysé ces documents, la Commission élabore des recommandations spécifiques par pays, validées par le Conseil européen à la fin du premier semestre et qui ont vocation à être traduites par les Etats membres dans leurs budgets annuels alors soumis à la procédure du « two pack » que vous expérimentez à l'heure actuelle.

Faire réussir une stratégie de croissance durable et solidaire conduit à renforcer la légitimité démocratique de l'édifice et à réorienter l'approche macroéconomique.

Lors de la présentation de la stratégie UE 2020, les attentes étaient élevées mais depuis les acteurs concernés ont eu beaucoup de mal à tenir leurs promesses. Les initiatives phares n'ont pas eu les effets attendus, ni la stratégie pour des compétences nouvelles et des emplois nouveaux, ni l'initiative pour la jeunesse alors qu'il s'agissait de deux propositions prometteuses qui avaient reçu un accueil favorable.

Certains ont voulu penser que la crise ne concernerait que quelques Etats membres de la zone euro et non l'ensemble de l'espace monétaire et qu'il convenait d'abord à chacun de remettre de l'ordre dans ses finances publiques pour sortir de l'ornière économique et sociale. Je ne suis pas de cet avis.

Incontestablement certains Etats, à l'abri de l'euro, ont laissé prospérer des pratiques qui ont lentement mais sûrement abouti à une détérioration de leurs finances publiques. Mais pour reprendre l'expression utilisée par

Jacques Delors, nous sommes dans une Union Économique et Monétaire qui boîte car elle repose sur un pied monétaire puissant et en voie de parachèvement avec les progrès de l'Union bancaire tandis que son pied économique et budgétaire repose sur le Pacte de stabilité, aujourd'hui complété par les six et two pack et le Traité sur la convergence, la stabilité et la gouvernance avec une dimension sociale encore contestée. La stratégie UE 2020 n'a pas empêché une importance excessive accordée à la convergence nominale à travers le suivi de trois chiffres : les fameux 3% de déficit, les 60% de dette auquel s'ajoute désormais l'objectif budgétaire de moyen terme de 0,5% de déficit structurel. Dans le même temps, la crise a exacerbé les failles de l'architecture de l'UEM, illustrées par l'aggravation des divergences de performances économiques observées dès 2005, bien avant ladite crise.

La Commission européenne, dans son rapport sur l'état d'avancement de la stratégie, admet ainsi que les engagements pris par les Etats membres sont insuffisants. En dépit de ce constat aucun d'entre eux n'a pourtant été invité, dans le cadre des recommandations spécifiques par pays, à faire preuve de plus d'ambition en matière d'emploi ou de lutte contre la pauvreté.

Les politiques européennes fondées sur l'austérité et les programmes mis en œuvre par la Troïka peuvent par ailleurs être considérées comme une entrave à la réalisation des objectifs sociaux de la stratégie UE 2020 alors que le chômage continue à croître (entre 2008 et fin 2012, le taux de chômage de l'UE a enregistré une progression de 7% à 10,7%, soit environ 26 millions de chômeurs ; plus d'un jeune sur cinq est sans emploi (22%) et le taux de chômage des jeunes est supérieur à 50% dans certains Etats membres). Et que la flexibilité et la pauvreté croissent au détriment de la sécurité et que se creusent les inégalités.

L'investissement dans "le capital humain" fait défaut, une réalité d'autant plus critique que les politiques sociales sont soumises à des coupes budgétaires, notamment dans les pays de la périphérie où les taux de chômage sont les plus élevés et les besoins les plus grands.

Les mesures de dévaluation des salaires préconisées par la Troïka, dénoncées par l'OIT comme par le Conseil de l'Europe en Grèce, ont tendance à précariser les citoyens alors que plus de 120 millions de personnes sont en danger d'exclusion sociale dans l'UE.

En réalité, le nouveau cadre de gouvernance institutionnalise une distorsion structurelle caractérisée par la prépondérance des indicateurs économiques par rapport à la dimension sociale, la stratégie UE 2020 n'étant qu'un élément du Semestre européen.

Dans le meilleur des cas, les objectifs sociaux de la stratégie UE 2020 sont conçus comme visant à équilibrer ou à amortir les conséquences sociales des politiques d'austérité : ils sont pris en considération dans le cadre des recommandations par pays, mais sans que l'on en tire tous les enseignements.

C'est pourquoi il est nécessaire :

- de traiter les objectifs sociaux de la stratégie UE 2020 sur un pied d'égalité avec les objectifs économiques ;
- que tous les objectifs de la stratégie Europe 2020 soient inclus dans le cadre d'une structure de gouvernance plus équilibrée, dans laquelle les partenaires sociaux nationaux et européens, dans le cadre d'un dialogue social renouvelé, jouent un rôle plus important ;
- d'avoir un budget de l'Union qui soutienne cette stratégie et donc le lancement et l'aboutissement des travaux que le Parlement européen revendique sur la création d'une ressource propre ;
- de reconnaître au Parlement européen un rôle de co-législateur dans l'examen annuel de croissance. Sans association - et pression - parlementaire au cours du processus, les recommandations de la Commission et les

plans nationaux de réforme ne constituent qu'une version plus technicienne de la méthode ouverte de coordination ;

- d'associer pleinement chaque Parlement national à l'adoption des programmes nationaux de réforme. Cela doit être pour chacun, dans le respect de la subsidiarité, une grande affaire.

Enfin, si la discipline budgétaire est indispensable pour chacune des parties de l'UEM, il est tout aussi fondamental que les politiques économiques et sociales convergent et que l'effort soit réparti entre pays en déficit et ceux en surplus. C'est la raison pour laquelle il faut avancer sur le chemin de l'approfondissement de l'UEM en renforçant la coordination des politiques nationales tout en conférant à la zone euro une capacité budgétaire afin d'absorber en son sein les chocs asymétriques.

À cet égard, plusieurs propositions doivent être explorées : au sein de l'eurozone, l'harmonisation de la définition d'une assiette commune consolidée pour l'impôt sur les sociétés est essentiel car le dumping fiscal mine la capacité de financer les réformes structurelles voulues par la stratégie UE 2020. Le produit de la taxe sur les transactions financières pourrait servir de ressource propre à la capacité budgétaire tandis que le développement d'un mécanisme de solidarité entre pays membres relatif au financement d'une indemnité chômage minimum renforcerait l'intégration nécessaire de la zone.

Avec l'UE 2020, nous avons fixé un taux d'emploi de 75% en 2020, il était de 69% en 2009 mais de 68,5% en 2010, même chiffre en 2012. Le taux de pauvreté était de 23,4% en 2010, 24,2% en 2011 et l'Union continue à ne pas disposer de données chiffrées en temps réel dans ce domaine alors que l'objectif est de réduire ce taux de 25% d'ici 2020. Ces chiffres parlent d'eux-mêmes. Trois ans après l'adoption de la stratégie UE 2020, il n'est pas certain que nous atteignons les objectifs fixés, or personne ne pourra incriminer la crise pour expliquer ce fait. En 2010, la crise était malheureusement déjà bien là. Les objectifs définis n'ont pas pris une ride mais la question de la méthode reste posée. De même, j'ai la conviction que la stratégie UE 2020 ne pourra pas être couronnée de succès si le défi de la divergence au sein de l'Union, de la zone de l'euro, reste en l'état. Or manifestement la procédure des déséquilibres macro-économiques ne suffit pas. Comme souvent, avec la crise, l'Union a du bander ses forces et a su franchir des étapes inimaginables il y a quelques temps, pourtant la question des déséquilibres entre le centre et la périphérie, des interdépendances au delà de ce que chacun doit faire reste devant nous. Ce sera un des enjeux de l'élection du Parlement européen le 25 mai prochain. Celui de la réorientation, du soutien à la croissance durable, de la réduction des divergences.

Pour relever ces défis, l'UE, et singulièrement la zone euro, doit comprendre la zone euro comme un espace d'interactions économiques et sociales et non comme un lieu de concurrence exacerbée. La légitimité démocratique doit être renforcée en parallèle. C'est une condition, même si elle ne sera pas seule suffisante, pour asseoir l'acceptabilité par les citoyens des mesures liées à l'accomplissement de la stratégie. Cela nécessite aussi que le Parlement européen adapte sa structure à la configuration de la zone euro. Si ces défis sont relevés, alors l'Union européenne sortira renforcée de la crise actuelle et nos concitoyens se détourneront des discours extrémistes et populistes.

Je vous remercie.



Lietuvos Respublikos pirmininkavimas
Europos Sąjungos Tarybai
2013 m. liepos 1 d. – gruodžio 31 d.
PARLAMENTINIS MATMUO

Lithuanian Presidency of
the Council of the European Union
1 July – 31 December 2013
PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

Présidence lituanienne
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du 1er juillet au 31 décembre 2013
DIMENSION PARLEMENTAIRE

Draft 23 October 2013

CONTRIBUTION OF THE L COSAC

27–29 October 2013, Vilnius

1. COSAC's Contribution to the Strengthening of Interparliamentary Cooperation in the European Union

1.1. On the occasion of its jubilee 50th plenary meeting in Vilnius, COSAC welcomes its founder Mr Laurent FABIUS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France, former Speaker of the French *Assemblée nationale*, and wishes to express its profound gratitude to Mr FABIUS for his 1989 initiative and subsequent efforts in bringing about the establishment of the Interparliamentary Conference of Bodies Specialised in European Affairs, known as COSAC.

1.2. As the oldest interparliamentary conference in the EU, COSAC remains committed to strengthening of democratic legitimacy and accountability in the EU, promoting the pro-active role of national Parliaments in the EU decision-making process and cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament.

1.3. COSAC calls on the EU institutions to start a discussion with Parliaments on how to exploit to full extent the possibilities provided in Article 10 of Protocol 1 of the Treaty of Lisbon.

2. State of Play of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union

2.1. COSAC welcomes the political agreement **reached on 27 June 2013 at the highest political level between the European Parliament, the Presidency of the Council and the Commission** on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 and looks forward to the swift conclusion of the complementary legal acts **that will be decisive for making the new financial framework operational, consistent, transparent and better adapted to the needs of the citizens of the Union**. COSAC is of the opinion that the EU budget should play a significant role in stimulating growth, providing the needed investments in research and innovation, as well as helping to address the problem of intra-EU macroeconomic imbalances. COSAC stresses that the prime goal now is to ensure that the financial funds for the period 2014-2020 would reach the European citizens and businesses in time.

2.2. COSAC welcomes the agreement reached by the European Council in June 2013 on a €8–6 billion youth jobless fund, known as the “youth guarantee”, to implement the youth employment



package, yet stresses that further concrete steps are urgently needed. COSAC emphasises that efforts to combat youth unemployment must rely on a comprehensive strategy, including measures to support small and medium enterprises, foster entrepreneurship among young people and reduce failure at school.

2.3. COSAC is of the opinion that the completion of a fully functional internal energy market is ~~one of~~ **as well as the completion of the work on the Directive concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, which besides the energy market and digital technology would complete the creation of the Single Market, are among** the major EU objectives which in turn would stimulate the development of a more stable and competitive European economy, thus leading to a greater role for the EU internationally. Therefore it urges the EU institutions to do everything possible to achieve tangible progress in this field.

2.4. COSAC recognizes the EU's interest to have safe, **stable**, economically strong and pro-European Eastern Neighbours and emphasises that the success of the Eastern Partnership could only be achieved upon joint efforts of the EU institutions, EU Member States and the Eastern Partners themselves.

2.5. COSAC welcomes the start of historic negotiations between the EU and the United States on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment partnership and considers that, if concluded, the TTIP could provide the much needed boost to EU economy, possibly adding, according to the Commission's estimates, up to 400,000 new jobs and 0.5% of additional GDP growth per year.

3. Ensuring the Success of the Eastern Partnership

3.1. COSAC emphasises the strategic importance of the Eastern Partnership to the long-term security, democratic development and economic prosperity of its Eastern neighbours. COSAC expects that the 3rd Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius will deliver concrete results and open the door to closer political association and deeper economic integration for those Eastern Partnership countries that meet the necessary commitments and requirements. COSAC welcomes the progress that has been achieved in the negotiations on the bilateral Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements with the Eastern partners and expects that agreements with Georgia and Moldova will be successfully initialled during the Vilnius Summit.

3.2. **Bearing in mind that the economic and political situation in the countries of the Eastern Partnership varies**, COSAC stresses the particular importance of Ukraine for the success of the Eastern Partnership. COSAC commends the results of the European Parliament Monitoring mission to Ukraine and wishes to thank Mr Pat COX, former President of the European Parliament and Mr Alexander KWASNIEWSKI, former President of the Republic of Poland, for their relentless commitment and dedication for resolving selective justice problems and facilitating the necessary judiciary reforms in Ukraine. COSAC expects that Ukraine will fulfil the required conditions, as formally defined by the 10 December 2012 Foreign Affairs Council and supported by the European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2012, and that the Association Agreement with Ukraine will be signed during the Vilnius Summit. COSAC supports the provisional application of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement upon signature and expresses its intent to proceed swiftly with the full ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in respective national parliaments, once all the necessary requirements

are met. **COSAC would like to stress the importance of solidarity in all ways with the Ukraine both during and after the process of Association.**

4. Democratic Legitimacy in the EU and the Role of EU Parliaments

4.1. COSAC notes that ~~the democratic deficit is one of the fundamental problems of~~ **persists within** the political and institutional architecture of the EU decision-making process. COSAC recalls that 2013 is the European Year of Citizens and therefore believes that it is necessary to take measures ensuring that the EU governance, **in particular economic governance**, and the functioning of its institutions are as democratic and transparent as possible, with the aim of reducing the ~~democratic deficit gap~~ between the European citizens and the EU institutions.

4.2. COSAC notes that the institutional architecture of the EU is based on a dual legitimacy resting on both national and European levels, and that the right balance has to be found between parliamentary control exercised **at the national level** by national Parliaments and **at the European level** by the European Parliament. COSAC, **aiming at reinforcing the parliamentary dimension of the Union**, urges national Parliaments to exercise full parliamentary scrutiny of decisions taken at the Union level and to engage in a thorough discussion on how to use the powers provided by the Treaty of Lisbon to their full extent in their efforts to build a more accountable and legitimate system of governance in the EU.

4.3. COSAC ~~calls for the continued evolution of~~ **reaffirms its commitment to enhancing the** democratic legitimacy in the EU and **therefore** suggests the following ~~concrete proposals~~:

- COSAC calls on the EU institutions to demonstrate the impact of reasoned opinions and political dialogue contributions made by national Parliaments
- COSAC calls on the European Commission, again, to ensure better quality and more timely responses to reasoned opinions and political dialogue contributions made by national Parliaments
- COSAC calls on the Council to agree on a code of conduct stating that each Member State should give an assurance that its national Parliament has been involved, in accordance with national constitutional or legal requirements, in forming the positions that the Member State represents in the Council.

5. Political Dialogue

5.1. COSAC invites the EU institutions, in particular the European Commission, to engage with national Parliaments in a closer, more effective and more constructive political dialogue aimed at tangible results on topical EU matters, especially on its flagship initiatives and other. COSAC recalls the Contributions of the last three Presidencies, which contain proposals on how to improve political dialogue between the European Commission and national Parliaments.

5.2. COSAC invites the European Commission to take into consideration the comments by national Parliaments expressed in the 20th Bi-annual Report of COSAC on the effectiveness of the political dialogue focusing on the quality rather than the quantity of interactions.

6. European Elections 2014: a Platform for Debate on the EU Future with its Citizens

6.1. COSAC expresses its conviction that the success of the European project is impossible without the active engagement of ~~the European~~ citizens **of the Union**. Realising that the powers of the European Parliament are greater than ever before, COSAC underlines the importance of active participation of ~~European~~ **the citizens of the Union** in the 2014 European elections and invites national Parliaments **consider and make operational the measures on enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament, and** to engage in political debates on the key issues prior to the elections. **The approval of the statute of European political parties could also represent a tool of great importance for raising the interest of the European citizens on the main European topics.**

6.2. COSAC emphasises that the 2014 European elections will be the first held elections after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which stipulates that the European Council must take into account the elections to the European Parliament and having held the appropriate consultations shall propose a candidate for President of the European Commission to be *elected* by the newly assembled European Parliament. COSAC believes that the establishment of such a link between the elections to the European Parliament, as an institution directly elected by the citizens, and the selection of the President of the European Commission will be a significant step in reducing the democratic deficit in the EU.

6.3. COSAC regrets that until now European election campaigns have been focused primarily on issues of national significance, leaving the debate on specific EU matters outside the remit of the campaigns. COSAC therefore calls on national **and European** political parties to seek that the 2014 European elections should become a platform for a constructive, informative and inclusive debate on the future of Europe with its citizens. COSAC hopes that the outcome of the **elections debate** will ~~spark a debate on convening a new~~ **pave the way to the formulation of the mandate for a new** Convention on the Future of Europe.

6.4. COSAC welcomes the commitment expressed by Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, in his 2013 State of the Union address to present ideas on the future of the Union and on measures to consolidate and deepen the community method.

7. Implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy

7.1. COSAC supports the ambitious goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy; however, it considers that in order to achieve these goals, it is crucial to strengthen the structure of management of the Strategy and to improve the mechanisms of funding of the priorities of the Strategy, in particular by more effective absorption of cohesion funds, by involving such institutions as the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as well as by attracting more private capital.

7.2. COSAC notes that progress towards smarter, more sustainable and inclusive, resource-efficient and job-creating growth in the EU should be more actively addressed at the national level and that national Parliaments should exercise on-going parliamentary scrutiny of the progress achieved with regard to the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy. COSAC also considers that the implementation of the seven Europe 2020 flagship initiatives should be evaluated with a

clear indication of what has been achieved and of the ways to remove the existing remaining obstacles.

7.3. COSAC considers that the current level of engagement of national Parliaments in the process and procedures of the European Semester could be developed further **based on the experience of the recent interparliamentary meetings on this subject**. COSAC calls on the European Commission to follow up on its commitment to develop a regular political dialogue with national Parliaments within the framework of the European Semester, which would take place twice a year, as outlined in the official reply of the Commission to the Contribution of the XLVII COSAC and the XLIX COSAC. COSAC encourages national Parliaments to actively scrutinise the national reform programmes and stability and convergence programmes of their respective governments before they are submitted to the Commission. COSAC stresses the need for national Parliaments to actively engage in accelerating the necessary structural reforms in their respective countries.

7.4. COSAC expresses its deep concern about the negative long-term social consequences caused by the recent economic and financial crisis, particularly in terms of increased unemployment, especially among young people, and deepened social exclusion throughout Europe. COSAC, therefore, welcomes the communication of the European Commission on strengthening the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), adopted on 2 October 2013ⁱ, and encourages the EU Parliaments to actively engage in the debate on the development of the social dimension of the EMU.

8. Digital Agenda: Benefits for Business

8.1. In the context of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the single market in Europe COSAC expresses its concern that the EU Digital Single Market has not been fully implemented yet. COSAC invites competent EU institutions and national Parliaments to actively contribute to the creation of an effective Digital Single Market in Europe, which would have a significant positive impact on Europe's competitiveness and job creation and would serve as an impetus for the development of digital industry in Europe, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, such as start-ups.

8.2 COSAC underlines that e-commerce is becoming an essential part of trade and an important impulse for consumer choice, competitiveness and technological innovation. It therefore considers that further development of e-commerce and other online services would positively contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy. COSAC takes note of the Commission's communication on e-commerce and other online servicesⁱⁱ and encourages the Commission to continue identifying means to ensure the protection of consumer rights in the digital market.

8.3. COSAC welcomes the conclusions of the European Council of 24-25 October 2013 on the guidance towards the completion of the Digital Single Market by 2015.

NB! This paragraph will be amended depending on the conclusions of the European Council.

9. Digital Agenda: Cyber Security

9.1. COSAC welcomes the Cyber Security Strategy of the EU put forward by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policyⁱⁱⁱ. It also welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a Directive concerning measures to ensure a high common level of network and information security across the Union^{iv}. COSAC is convinced that cyber security is a vital component of the business and security policies of the EU and should be one of the strategic pillars of the security and defence policy in every Member State.

9.2. COSAC expresses its concern over fundamental differences that exist in Member States in their preparedness, security, strategic culture and ability to draft and implement national strategies on cyber-security. A number of Member States having not adopted their national strategies on cyber-security also remains a source of concern.

ⁱ COM(2013) 690 final

ⁱⁱ COM(2013) 627 final

ⁱⁱⁱ JOIN(2013) 1 final

^{iv} COM(2013) 48 final



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Draft 23 October 2013

CONCLUSIONS OF THE L COSAC

Vilnius, 27–29 October 2013

1. 20th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

1.1 COSAC welcomes the 20th Bi-annual Report prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and sincerely thanks the Secretariat for the excellent work. The Report provides useful information on the means that could be used to ensure more active citizens' engagement in debating the EU future and participation in the 2014 European elections. It also discusses the effectiveness of ensuring and enhancing democratic legitimacy and accountability, and fruitful interparliamentary cooperation.

1.2 COSAC notes the challenge facing the COSAC Secretariat of many delayed replies to the questionnaire. It calls on Parliaments to try to ensure more timely responses are provided to aid the work of the Secretariat in preparing Bi-annual Reports and the work of the Presidency Parliament in preparing for COSAC plenary meetings.

1.3. COSAC appreciates the practice introduced by the Irish Presidency to organise informal sessions during the plenary meetings of COSAC. It recognises such sessions as a useful means of exchanging views on procedures and practices relevant to parliamentary scrutiny and on topical EU matters. COSAC thanks those involved in the sessions held in Vilnius and calls on future Presidencies to continue working to that end by putting forward topics for focused informal discussions.

2. Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat

2.1. COSAC recalls that the co-financing of the current Permanent Member and the office of the COSAC Secretariat and website maintenance costs ends on 31 December 2013. The Irish Presidency, in the first half of 2013, invited Parliaments to renew their commitment to the co-financing agreement for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015. So far 40 Chambers of 27 national Parliaments have signed and sent their letters of intent indicating that they are willing to participate in the co-financing for the above stated period. COSAC welcomes the fact that this number is above the minimum threshold, therefore the co-financing of the Permanent Member and the office of the COSAC Secretariat and the costs of website maintenance will continue. COSAC invites the remaining few Parliaments/**Chambers** to submit letters of intent as soon as possible.

2.2. COSAC thanks the European Parliament for hosting the COSAC Secretariat in Brussels.

2.3. COSAC expresses its gratitude to the UK *House of Commons* for seconding Mrs Libby KURIEN for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat. COSAC warmly thanks



Mrs Libby KURIEN, whose term of office expires on 31 December 2013, for her devoted and productive work.

2.4. COSAC welcomes the decision of the Chairpersons of COSAC of 28 October 2013 to elect ... seconded by ... as Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2014-2015. COSAC is convinced that the newly elected Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat will smoothly continue to manage the work of COSAC Secretariat and contribute to the successful development of the COSAC activities, in accordance with Rule 9.3 of the COSAC Rules of Procedure.

3. Democratic Legitimacy and the Role of Parliaments

3.1. COSAC supports closer and more constructive interparliamentary cooperation and active participation **of Parliaments** in EU policy shaping. COSAC encourages Parliaments to actively share best practices and information and to engage in a coordinated discussion on EU's political matters of importance to the majority of Parliaments, **including the call for organising extraordinary meetings of COSAC, under article 2.2 of the Rules of Procedure.**

3.2. COSAC notes the responses of Parliaments to the Bi-annual Report that call for the ongoing evolution of parliamentary democracy in the EU, **as closer European integration should foresee greater parliamentary involvement.** COSAC welcomes the call for strengthening of existing mechanisms including the interparliamentary dialogue and better use of the political dialogue by national Parliaments.

3.3. COSAC calls on Parliaments to initiate more parliamentary clusters of interest to examine specific issues of EU policy making and sincerely thanks the Danish Folketing for starting this initiative.

3.4. COSAC expresses its hope that there will soon be a full debate on the convening of a **new** Convention on the Future of Europe, which ~~will~~ **would** deal, **among other important topics**, with ~~the role of national Parliaments~~ **the strengthening of democratic legitimacy of the Union and would among other important topics acknowledge the contribution of national Parliaments to the good functioning of the Union as well as generate ideas on how to further enhance their role;** COSAC and calls on future Presidencies to consider this topic to be put on the agenda of the forthcoming meetings of COSAC.

4. COSAC Women's Forum

4.1. COSAC welcomes the initiative of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania to convene the COSAC Women's Forum to encourage greater involvement of women parliamentarians in COSAC activities and underlines the need for urging the political parties of the EU Member States to give more focus to gender equality, equal opportunities policy, creation of gender balance in society, and wider inclusion of women in politics. COSAC calls on Parliaments to take gender balance into consideration when forming parliamentary delegations **and on national political parties to promote better representation of women on the lists of candidates to the 2014 European elections.**

4.2. COSAC welcomes the good participation in the COSAC Women's Forum in Vilnius and encourages women politicians both to exploit existing formats of interparliamentary co-operation and to become more involved in COSAC activities by participating in the COSAC Women's Forum and debating topical issues on the EU's political agenda.

4.3. Considering the fact that democratic policy-making in the EU may rest on both formal and informal structures, COSAC encourages future Presidency parliaments, to take over and further develop the initiative of promoting women parliamentarians' involvement in COSAC activities.



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17 September 2013

L COSAC

Meeting of the COSAC Women's Forum

Vilnius, 29 October 2013

DRAFT AGENDA

Venue: Constitution Hall, Building I of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Gedimino pr. 53, Vilnius

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 8.00-8.05 | Adoption of the agenda

CHAIR: Ms Marija Aušrinė PAVILIONIENĖ, Member of the Committee on European Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania |
| 8.05-8.10 | Welcome speech by Ms Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania |
| 8.10-8.20 | Welcome speech and presentation by Ms Bariza KHIARI, Vice President of the Senate of the French Republic |
| 8.20-8.30 | Presentation by Ms Virginija LANGBAKK, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality, Vilnius |
| 8.30-8.50 | Debate |
| 8.50-8.55 | Conclusions of the meeting |





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ANNEX

DECLARATION ON THE FOUNDING OF THE COSAC WOMEN'S FORUM

29 October 2013, Vilnius

We, women parliamentarians,

having been elected to national Parliaments of the European Union Member States and candidate countries and the European Parliament;

taking part in the inaugural Meeting of the COSAC Women's Forum held during the L COSAC Meeting on 27–29 October 2013 in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania in Vilnius and

seeking more effective use of the existing forms of interparliamentary cooperation and more active engagement in the activities of COSAC;

recognising that sometimes women, at the beginning of their political careers and aspiring to implement their ideas and fulfil their expectations, lack self-confidence and support from experienced politicians;

support the initiative of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, as the Presidency Parliament, **to set up the COSAC Women's Forum aimed at promoting more active involvement** of women parliamentarians in the activities of COSAC; **and**

emphasise the necessity to highlight to the European political parties the issues of gender equality, equal opportunities policy, gender balance within society and more active participation of women in politics, thereby urging them to focus more on those matters; **and**

call on:

1) politicians to be actively engaged in meetings of the COSAC Women's Forum and to discuss the most relevant matters on the political agenda of the European Union;

2) leading women parliamentarians to widely communicate the achievements of women politicians, aiming to encourage women to be more ambitiously and actively engaged in politics and decision-making in the European Union;



3) women parliamentarians to contribute more actively to parliamentary scrutiny, which ensures democratic legitimacy and accountability, by focusing more on those areas which lack attention from governments; and

4) the upcoming Presidency Parliaments to take over and continue developing the initiative of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of promoting engagement of women parliamentarians in the activities of COSAC.



DÉCLARATION SUR LA CRÉATION DU FORUM DES FEMMES DE LA COSAC

Le 29 octobre 2013, Vilnius

Nous, femmes parlementaires,
élues aux parlements nationaux des États membres de l'Union Européenne et des pays candidats et au Parlement européen ;

prenant part à la réunion du Forum des femmes de la COSAC, qui s'est tenue dans le cadre de la L COSAC du 27 au 29 octobre 2013 au Seimas de la République de Lituanie à Vilnius ;

cherchant à mieux utiliser les formes de coopération interparlementaire existantes et à s'impliquer davantage dans les activités de la COSAC ;

reconnaissant que les femmes qui commencent leur carrière politique et qui aspirent à mettre en œuvre leurs idées et satisfaire leurs attentes manquent de confiance et de soutien de la part des politiques expérimentés,

soutenons l'initiative du Seimas de la République de Lituanie, en tant que parlement de la Présidence du Conseil de l'Union européenne, de créer le Forum des femmes de la COSAC visant à promouvoir une participation plus active des femmes parlementaires dans les activités de la COSAC,

soulignons la nécessité d'attirer l'attention des partis politiques européens et de les inciter à accorder davantage d'importance à l'égalité des sexes, à la politique d'égalité des chances, à l'équilibre entre les sexes au sein de la société ainsi qu'à une participation plus active des femmes à la vie politique et

appelons :

1) les politiques à participer activement aux réunions du Forum des femmes de la COSAC et à discuter des questions d'actualité portant sur l'agenda politique de l'Union européenne ;

2) les dirigeantes parlementaires à mettre en avant les exploits réalisés par les femmes politiques afin d'encourager les femmes à être plus déterminées et plus actives dans la vie politique et dans la prise de décision de l'Union européenne ;

3) les femmes parlementaires à contribuer davantage à l'exercice du contrôle parlementaire garantissant la légitimité démocratique et la responsabilité en accordant une plus grande attention aux domaines négligés par les autorités ;

4) les parlements des Présidences suivantes du Conseil de l'UE à prendre le relais et à poursuivre le développement de l'initiative du Seimas de la République de Lituanie visant à promouvoir l'implication des femmes parlementaires dans les activités de la COSAC.

L COSAC

COSAC Women's Forum

29 October 2013, Vilnius

ADDRESS

Taking into account Resolution (C153/21) of the European Parliament of May 2012 deploring the sentencing of the former Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, and urging the Ukrainian authorities to provide for a fair, transparent and impartial appeal process for Yulia Tymoshenko and to review and amend, without delay, the criminal code applied against Yulia Tymoshenko, which dates back to the Soviet time and makes provision for criminal prosecution for political decisions, and as such does not comply with international standards:

1. Emphasises the necessity to ensure due respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine as one of the partners in the European Eastern Neighbourhood Policy;
2. Welcomes Ukraine's substantial progress in implementing the principles of the Association Agreement with the European Union;
3. Urges Ukrainian authorities to ensure, without delay, a legal and actual opportunity for the former Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, to receive treatment abroad without bringing the charges of selective justice against her.

Speech for the 50th COSAC taking place in Vilnius on 29 October 2013 – by the Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament - Mrs. Eva Kjer Hansen

Mr. President,
Honorable colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we're gathered for the 50th COSAC meeting.

An anniversary is always an opportunity to look back and to look ahead. What have we accomplished and where are we heading? The European Parliament and national parliaments have gradually gained more influence in the European Union. This has happened in the recognition of the crucial role directly elected representatives play for the legitimacy and accountability of our Union. For 25 years parliamentarians have met in COSAC exchanging views and best practises. Surely useful, but let's be honest with ourselves and ask if we can enhance the impact in the future?

Sometimes I see COSAC as this IKEA fellow.

If only we could put the pieces together in the right way, the result would be most useful.

But COSAC is not some IKEA fellow unable to fix things. It is US in all our diversity

I believe that we as national parliamentarians (together with the European Parliament) have a special obligation to contribute to the debate about the future economic governance of the EU and not least on how we maintain a Union that is truly accountable and democratic.

Let me reflect on some current challenges for the parliaments of Europe.

The question of democratic legitimacy and accountability is becoming still more relevant as Europe is struggling to recover from an unprecedented economic and financial crisis. This has also turned into a social crisis with dramatic consequences for many citizens. Some EU Governments and Parliaments have adopted harsh austerity measures and implemented unpopular reforms in return for the much-needed rescue loans.

The crisis has led to a worrying disillusion among citizens.

According to a recent Eurobarometer 72 percent of Spanish citizens do not trust the EU. 75 percent of the Italians think European economic integration has been bad for their country, as do 77 percent of the French and 78 percent of the Greeks, according to the Pew Research Centre. In my own country, Denmark where employment rates are not as alarming as in Southern Europe, support for the EU is at a history low, with 39 percent wanting Denmark to leave the European Union.

Honorable colleagues

In seven months time, voters across Europe will judge what we have achieved over the past five years.

Resolving the crisis and bringing Europe back on track towards economic recovery will be the main topic of the European Parliamentary elections in May next year.

Looking back I think it is fair to say that the European Union has delivered a determined response to the crisis.

We have mobilised more than 700 billion euro to save crisis-struck countries. We have decided to move towards a deep and genuine Economic and Monetary Union that will imply a more integrated financial, budgetary and economic cooperation in Europe.

But we have not decided how this new policy framework should be anchored democratically.

I think Europe needs a democratic framework that matches the European Union's increased role and powers regarding economic governance.

I believe that national parliaments must play a leading role here as the Union gets still more complex and more involved in national affairs.

The European Semester already enables the Council and the Commission to examine national draft budgets even before they are passed in national parliaments. Decisions regarding national budgets are at the very heart of national parliamentary democracy.

This is a democratic deficit that needs to be addressed.

Honorable colleagues

How do we move forward?

Some would ask if democratic legitimacy is not already sufficiently secured by the European Parliament.

The European Parliament is an important representative of European citizens that plays its role extremely well. But presently it does not fill the gap in the field of Economic and financial matters. National parliaments still hold the prerogatives when it comes to adopting national budgets and economic policies. Furthermore national parliaments have a special role in bringing the concerns of citizens to Europe – as well as bringing the decisions of Europe to its citizens. This includes taking responsibility for what is decided by Europe.

Therefore now is the time to bring a truly European perspective to the involvement of national parliaments in European decision-making. Just being able to block legislative acts we deem in breach of the principle of subsidiarity is not sufficient. We must become proactive players involved more directly in building Europe.

To this end we don't need new European institutions.

But I believe national parliaments need new tools in the toolbox if we should fulfill our role as democratic institutions in the still more integrated financial, budgetary and economic policy framework of Europe.

That is why we in the Danish Parliament recently introduced a so-called "National Semester". The National Semester provides the Folketing with the possibility to cross examine Government Ministers before they submit Denmark's input to the European Semester at three important points in time: 1) Before the European Commission launches its Annual Growth Survey, 2) Before the Government submits the National Reform Program and Convergence Program to the Commission, 3) Before the Council's deliberations on the Country Specific Recommendations.

However holding our governments to account is only one side of the coin.

To reinforce the political dialogue with the European Commission is the other.

I believe it was a breakthrough for our relations with the Commission when President Barroso in 2006 encouraged national parliaments to express our views on all new Commission proposals. This dialogue was further improved with the Commission's commitment to respond to inquiries

from national parliaments and to let Commissioners appear before national parliamentary committees as requested by COSAC in Copenhagen in April 2012.

However I believe we can still strengthen the political dialogue with the Commission further.

Try to imagine if national parliaments had a right of initiative. Every national MP could go to his or her local constituency and invite every European citizen in any little township to bring forward good proposals which could eventually turn into European legislation.

And why not let national parliaments contribute positively to the European legislative process by issuing political opinions that the EU institutions should take into account. Like they are obliged to today, when they receive reasoned opinions from national parliaments.

Now, critics would say that giving national parliaments a right of initiative would threaten the European Commission's prerogatives. But I don't think the Commission's monopoly to propose legislation was ever intended to prevent others from coming up with good ideas, which they would like the Commission to take up. The Council and the European Parliament can already do this. Why not national parliaments? I am not calling for treaty changes. A political commitment from the Commission like in 2006 would be a step in the right direction.

Honorable colleagues

But let me stress that all these instruments will remain "pies in the sky", if we don't take advantage of them.

So far only a very few of us have actually used the possibility to submit written inquiries to the Commission. But we must get started using these instruments if we want to build a closer relationship with the European Commission. So don't hesitate to invite Commissioners to give briefings in your parliaments or submit inquiries to the Commission or table proposals for European Union legislation.

Finally let me comment on some recent developments in EU interparliamentary cooperation. In my view the main purpose of organizing interparliamentary meetings is to promote exchange of information and best practices between our parliaments with the aim of strengthening the scrutiny of our governments in the national context.

It is not to create new European decision-making bodies.

We therefore don't need new interparliamentary bodies with powers to adopt joint resolutions. We already have COSAC.

The CFSP-Conference and the article 13 conference are both currently striving to become bodies with similar powers and functions within their respective policy areas. A lot of talk is and will be produced at these large scale conferences, but without real policy impact.

Let's stop creating new large scale interparliamentary meetings with too many participants, too many pre-prepared speeches and too little useful political debate.

Instead I think, we must become operational, innovative and solution-oriented. For instance, national parliaments could organize themselves in small informal clusters around shared interest and common themes in order to have a true exchange of information with European colleagues. This will be beneficial to the scrutiny of our governments and eventually feed positively into the European decision making process.

Just a week ago 14 parliaments met in Copenhagen to discuss the question of "free movement of workers and National Welfare Systems" at such an informal cluster meeting. I believe the debate proved to be very useful for the participating parliaments.

Honorable colleagues

In conclusion I think democratic legitimacy will become an issue as Europe is struggling to integrate in the economic, financial and budgetary field.

The European elections in May provide an ideal occasion for having a genuine European debate about this question. The European Commission has already announced its intentions to present some ideas on the future of Europe and how best to consolidate and deepen Europe in the longer term.

I therefore call on the European Commission to include both national parliaments and the European Parliament in these considerations. And let us not turn it into a beauty contest between national parliaments and the European Parliament about who is the true democratic representative of European citizens.

National parliaments and the European Parliament have a common interest in anchoring the evolving Economic governance of the EU democratically.

I believe both the European Parliament and national parliaments must play a leading role in this process in order to restore trust and confidence in Europe among our citizens.

We cannot leave such an important task to governments only.

Thank you for your attention



Lietuvos Respublikos pirmininkavimas
Europos Sąjungos Tarybai
2013 m. liepos 1 d. – gruodžio 31 d.
PARLAMENTINIS MATMUO

Lithuanian Presidency of
the Council of the European Union
1 July – 31 December 2013
PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

Présidence lituanienne
du Conseil de l'Union européenne
du 1er juillet au 31 décembre 2013
DIMENSION PARLEMENTAIRE

4 October 2013

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE L COSAC MEETING

27-29 October 2013, Vilnius, Lithuania

Prepared by the Permanent Member of COSAC Secretariat

DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET – CYBER SECURITY AND BENEFITS FOR BUSINESS

It is important that the digital single market is completed as it would mean that information can be exchanged easily and swiftly across borders, helping citizens and businesses to fully benefit from the freedoms of the single market.¹ The Digital Agenda aims to update EU Single Market rules to be in line with the requirements of the digital era. Examples of benefits of these bringing about these updates are to boost music download, establish a single area for online payments, and further protect EU consumers in cyberspace. It is estimated that the economic benefits of the completion of a Digital Single Market in the EU could lead to a minimum 4% increase in EU GDP.²

The European Commission's Digital Agenda for Europe

In May 2010 the European Commission published its Digital Agenda for Europe,³ as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy.⁴ The European Commission described the objective of the Agenda "to chart a course to maximise the social and economic potential of ICT, most notably the internet, a vital medium of economic and societal activity: for doing business, working, playing, communicating and expressing ourselves freely". The European Commission identifies the following list as the seven most significant obstacles to the digital single market: fragmented digital markets; lack of interoperability; rising cybercrime and risk of low trust in networks; lack of investment in networks; insufficient research and innovation efforts; lack of digital literacy and skills; and missed opportunities in addressing societal challenges. The European Commission has set its key actions to systematically tackle these seven problem areas.

The European Commission has grouped the Digital Agenda actions under seven thematic pillars,⁵ against which the Digital Agenda Scoreboard 2013⁶ reported that the European Commission had so

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/isa/policy/index_en.htm

² European Policy Centre: Establishing the Digital Single Market: policy recommendations http://www.epc.eu/dsm/6/Policy_recommendations.pdf

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=com:2010:0245:fin:en:pdf>

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁵ 1 - a vibrant digital single market, 2 - interoperability and standards, 3 - trust and security, 4 - fast and ultra-fast Internet access, 5 - research and innovation, 6 - enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion, 7 - enabled benefits for EU society.



far completed 61 actions under the Digital Agenda, that 8 had been delayed or were at risk of being delayed. The remaining 32 actions, under the responsibility of either the European Commission or the Member States, were on schedule for completion by their respective deadlines.

As this note is intended to reflect the content of the L COSAC plenary agenda on "cyber security and benefits for business" will focus on documenting the progress reported by the European Commission against pillar 1 "A vibrant digital single market" and pillar 3 "Trust and security". Pillar 1 is described by the European Commission as aiming to overcome the barriers that still block the free flow of online services and entertainment across national borders and updating EU Single Market rules for the digital era. The aims are to boost the music download business, establish a single area for online payments, and further protect EU consumers in cyberspace. According to the pillar 1 overview of progress,⁷ 12 actions had already been completed,⁸ 8 actions were on course for completion on deadline⁹ and one key action was reported to be delayed.¹⁰ Pillar 3 objectives are described as aiming at tackling the problem of only 12% of European web users feel completely safe making online transactions due to threats such as malicious software and online fraud and aims to provide practical solutions, including a coordinated European response to cyber-attacks and reinforced rules on personal data protection. According to the pillar 3 overview of progress,¹¹ 3 actions had already been completed,¹² 10 actions were on course for completion on deadline¹³ and one key action was reported to be delayed.¹⁴

The Digital Agenda Review of 18 December 2012, "The Digital Agenda for Europe - Driving European growth digitally"¹⁵ described the Digital Agenda as having delivered broadly on targets pointing to steady increases in regular internet usage, continued increase in online buying and signs of high-speed broadband "taking off", but also acknowledged significant differences between Member States.

The Communication also stated that the Digital Single Market "is still far from being a reality" and therefore defined 31 new actions (of which nine have already been executed) to bring about more harmonisation of single market rules, more innovation and more flexible approaches to mainstream ICT-enabled solutions through private-public partnerships and support for local initiatives and outlined the following key areas (under which it proposed new key actions):

- "Advancing the European borderless digital economy, creating the world's largest and richest digital single market for content and services, while fully guaranteeing consumer and creator's rights;
- Speeding up public sector innovation enabled through the deployment of interoperable ICT and a better exchange and use of information;

⁶ Commission Staff Working Document (2013) 217 of 12.06.2013 <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/DAE%20SCOREBOARD%202013%20-%20SWD%202013%20217%20FINAL.pdf>

⁷ Published on the European Commission website, date June 2012 https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/pillar1_101_dae_actions.pdf

⁸ 2 key action 1b, 3 key action 1c, 5, 7 key action 2, 8 key action 3, 9, key action 4, 13, 14, 18 19 and 20.

⁹ 4, 6, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 101

¹⁰ 1 key action 1a - Framework Directive on collective rights management

¹¹ Published on the European Commission website, date June 2012 https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/pillar3_101_dae_actions.pdf

¹² 29 key action 7, 31 and 35

¹³ 28 key action 6, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, and 41.

¹⁴ 39

¹⁵ COM (2012) 784

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0784:FIN:EN:PDF>

- Regaining world leadership for network services, by stimulating private investment in high-speed fixed and mobile broadband networks, enabled by legal predictability, improved planning and targeted private and public EU and national funding;
- Fostering a secure and trustworthy internet environment for users and operators, based on strengthened European and international collaboration in responding to global risks;
- Establishing a coherent framework and conditions for cloud computing services in Europe creating the world's largest cloud enabled ICT market;
- Creating a favourable environment for transforming traditional business, and spurring innovative web-based ventures. Increase digital literacy and the proliferation of digital skills, to fill the gap between demand and supply of ICT professionals;
- Implementing an ambitious strategic research and innovation policy for industrial competitiveness based on funding key enabling technologies."¹⁶

Recent activity in European Institutions

In the recent State of the Union address given by the President of the **European Commission** on 11 September 2013, emphasis was given to the need for a the extension of the single market into other areas including "mobility, communications, energy, finance and e-commerce to name but a few". Barroso spoke that "the strength of Europe's future industrial base depends on how well people and businesses are interconnected. And by properly combining the digital agenda with data protection and the defence of privacy, our European model strengthens the trust of the citizens". He announced the adoption of a proposal on the European single market for electronic communications,¹⁷ which aimed to strengthen guarantees and lower prices for consumers, and present new opportunities for companies in a digital single market.

On 10 September 2013, Vice-President of the European Commission, Nellie Kroes, responsible for the Digital Single Market, answering a question in the European Parliament, highlighted the continued need to support digital business, citing the cyberspace strategy "An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace",¹⁸ launched in February 2013, as an "important step towards ensuring resilient, secure networks for a competitive economy". The strategy outlines the EU's vision on how best to prevent and respond to cyber disruptions and attacks. This was published along with a European Commission proposal for a Directive on network and information security across the Union.¹⁹

The **European Parliament** has recently issued a number of resolutions on the Digital Single Market including most recently on 4 July 2013²⁰ and before that on 11 December 2012,²¹ both entitled "completing the digital single market". These resolutions called on the Member States and the European Commission to commit to the development of the digital single market as an overarching political priority, a high level of network and information security, and the creation of a favourable overall digital business environment and stressed it was necessary to adapt the existing data protection legislation to new challenges and innovations in the area of present and future technological developments.

¹⁶ See page 4 & 5

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0784:FIN:EN:PDF>

¹⁷ COM(2013) 627, 11/09/13

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0627:FIN:EN:PDF>

¹⁸ JOIN(2013) 1 See: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/eu-cybersecurity-plan-protect-open-internet-and-online-freedom-and-opportunity>

¹⁹ COM(2013) 48 See: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/eu-cybersecurity-plan-protect-open-internet-and-online-freedom-and-opportunity>

²⁰ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bTA%2bP7-TA-2013-0327%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>

²¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bTA%2bP7-TA-2012-0468%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>

The Telecommunications **Council** last December broadly endorsed seven transformative actions launched by the European Commission in the digital agenda review: completing the digital single market for content and services; speeding up public sector innovation; establishing high-speed broadband connections; cloud computing; trust and security linked to the proposal for e-identification and to the cybersecurity strategy; digital jobs and skills; and the industrial agenda for key enabling technologies.

The **European Council** meeting on 24-25 October 2013 will discuss the topic of the digital single market after considering a European Commission report on progress in completing the digital single market. The conclusions of the European Council will be available prior to the meeting of COSAC on 27-29 October 2013.



LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS
SEIMAS

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Draft 2013-10-29

CONTRIBUTION OF THE L COSAC

27–29 October 2013, Vilnius

1. COSAC's Contribution to the Strengthening of Interparliamentary Cooperation in the European Union

1.1. On the occasion of its jubilee 50th plenary meeting in Vilnius, COSAC welcomes its founder Mr Laurent FABIUS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France, former Speaker of the French *Assemblée nationale*, and wishes to express its profound gratitude to Mr FABIUS for his 1989 initiative and subsequent efforts in bringing about the establishment of the Interparliamentary Conference of Bodies Specialised in European Affairs, known as COSAC.

1.2. As the oldest interparliamentary conference in the EU, COSAC remains committed to strengthening of democratic legitimacy and accountability in the EU, promoting the pro-active role of national Parliaments in the EU decision-making process and cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament.

1.3. COSAC calls on the EU institutions to start a discussion with Parliaments on how to exploit to full extent the possibilities provided in Article 10 of Protocol 1 of the Treaty of Lisbon.

2. State of Play of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union

2.1. COSAC takes note of the political agreement reached on 27 June 2013 at the highest political level between the European Parliament, the Presidency of the Council and the Commission on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 and looks forward to the swift conclusion of the complementary legal acts that will be decisive for making the new financial framework operational, consistent, transparent and better adapted to the needs of the citizens of the Union. COSAC is of the opinion that the EU budget should play a significant role in stimulating growth, providing the needed investments in research and innovation, as well as helping to address the problem of intra-EU macroeconomic imbalances. COSAC stresses that the prime goal now is to ensure that the financial funds for the period 2014-2020 would reach the European citizens and businesses in time.

2.2. COSAC welcomes the agreement reached by the European Council in June 2013 on a €6 billion youth jobless fund, known as the “youth guarantee”, to implement the youth employment



package, yet stresses that further concrete steps are urgently needed. COSAC emphasises that efforts to combat youth unemployment must rely on a comprehensive strategy, including measures to support small and medium enterprises, foster entrepreneurship among young people and reduce failure at school.

2.3. COSAC is of the opinion that the completion of a fully functional internal energy market as well as the completion of the work on the Directive concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, which besides the energy market and digital technology and in accordance with the national laws relating to wages and social protection, would complete the creation of the Single Market, are among the major EU objectives which in turn would stimulate the development of a more stable and competitive European economy, thus leading to a greater role for the EU internationally. Therefore it urges the EU institutions to do everything possible to achieve tangible progress in these fields, including providing policy certainty that will incentivise medium and long-term investments.

2.4. COSAC recognizes the EU's interest to have safe, stable, economically strong and pro-European Eastern Neighbours and emphasises that the success of the Eastern Partnership could only be achieved upon joint efforts of the EU institutions, EU Member States and the Eastern Partners themselves.

2.5. COSAC welcomes Croatia as the 28th Member State of the EU. COSAC emphasises the importance of the implementation of the "fundamentals first" principle reflected by the recent European Commission progress reports, and recognises the accession process as the right tool to continue the reunification of Europe also with the Western Balkans region. 2.6. COSAC welcomes the start of historic negotiations between the EU and the United States on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment partnership and considers that, if concluded in a way that fully respects the legitimate interests of the European enterprises, the TTIP could provide the much needed boost to EU economy, possibly adding, according to the Commission's estimates, up to 400,000 new jobs and 0.5% of additional GDP growth per year. However, COSAC denounces unauthorised cyber interceptions directed at institutions and individuals.

2.7. COSAC expresses its deep sadness and regret at the tragic loss of life in the Mediterranean and calls on the EU and the Member States to take determined action in order to avoid that such human tragedies happen again. COSAC notes the measures discussed in this regard by the European Council on 24-25 October, in particular the newly established Task Force on the Mediterranean, and calls for a coordinated approach to migration flows guided by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility as laid down in Article 80 of the TFEU.

3. Ensuring the Success of the Eastern Partnership

3.1. COSAC emphasises the strategic importance of the Eastern Partnership to the long-term security, democratic development and economic prosperity of its Eastern neighbours. COSAC expects that the 3rd Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius will deliver concrete results and open the door to closer political association and deeper economic integration for those Eastern Partnership countries that meet the necessary commitments and requirements. COSAC welcomes the progress that has been achieved in the negotiations on the bilateral Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements with the Eastern partners and expects that agreements with Georgia and Moldova will be successfully initialled during the Vilnius Summit.

3.2. Bearing in mind that the economic and political situation in the countries of the Eastern Partnership varies, COSAC stresses the particular importance of Ukraine for the success of the Eastern Partnership. COSAC commends the results of the European Parliament Monitoring mission to Ukraine and wishes to thank Mr Pat COX, former President of the European Parliament and Mr Alexander KWASNIEWSKI, former President of the Republic of Poland, for their relentless commitment and dedication for resolving selective justice problems and facilitating the necessary judiciary reforms in Ukraine. COSAC hopes that Ukraine will continue with reforms in order to fulfil the required conditions, as formally defined by the 10 December 2012 Foreign Affairs Council and supported by the European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2012, and that the Association Agreement with Ukraine will be signed during the Vilnius Summit. COSAC supports the provisional application of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement upon signature and expresses its intent to proceed swiftly with the full ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in respective national parliaments, once all the necessary requirements are met. COSAC would like to stress the importance of solidarity in all ways with the Ukraine both during and after the process of Association.

4. Democratic Legitimacy in the EU and the Role of EU Parliaments

4.1. COSAC notes that the democratic deficit persists within the political and institutional architecture of the EU decision-making process. COSAC recalls that 2013 is the European Year of Citizens and therefore believes that it is necessary to take measures ensuring that the EU governance, in particular economic governance, and the functioning of its institutions are democratic and transparent, with the aim of reducing the gap between the European citizens and the EU institutions.

4.2. COSAC notes that the institutional architecture of the EU is based on a dual legitimacy resting on both national and European levels, and that the right balance has to be found between parliamentary control exercised by national Parliaments and by the European Parliament. COSAC, aiming at reinforcing the parliamentary dimension of the Union, urges national Parliaments to exercise full parliamentary scrutiny of decisions taken at the Union level and to engage in a thorough discussion on how to use the powers provided by the Treaty of Lisbon to their full extent in their efforts to build a more accountable and legitimate system of governance in the EU.

4.3. COSAC notes that a sufficient number of national Parliaments or Chambers have submitted a Reasoned Opinion triggering the "yellow card" mechanism, this time on the proposal for a Council Regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office¹.

4.4. COSAC calls upon the European Commission to learn lessons from the experience of the first "yellow card" in response to the "Monti II" proposal, as highlighted in the Contribution of the XLIX COSAC. COSAC welcomes the Commission's undertaking to pay particular attention to subsidiarity issues and for reaffirming the procedures as laid out in the Annex to President BARROSO'S letter of 1 December 2009 and its firm commitment to communicating directly with national Parliaments.

4.5. COSAC reaffirms its commitment to enhancing the democratic legitimacy in the EU and therefore suggests the following:

- COSAC calls on the EU institutions to demonstrate the impact of reasoned opinions and political dialogue contributions made by national Parliaments
- COSAC calls on the European Commission, again, to ensure better quality and more timely responses to reasoned opinions and political dialogue contributions made by national Parliaments
- COSAC underlines the important role played by national Parliaments in the national decision-making process on EU affairs. EU affairs need to be integrated into the daily life and work of national Parliaments. Respecting each Member State's national procedural legislation and established practices, COSAC calls on Ministers, gathered in the Council of Ministers, to safeguard the involvement of national Parliaments in forming the positions represented by Member States in the Council.

5. Political Dialogue

5.1. COSAC invites the EU institutions, in particular the European Commission, to engage with national Parliaments in a closer, more effective and more constructive political dialogue aimed at tangible results on topical EU matters, especially on its flagship initiatives and other. COSAC recalls the Contributions of the last three Presidencies, which contain proposals on how to improve political dialogue between the European Commission and national Parliaments.

5.2. COSAC invites the European Commission to take into consideration the comments by national Parliaments expressed in the 20th Bi-annual Report of COSAC on the effectiveness of the political dialogue focusing on the quality rather than the quantity of interactions.

6. European Elections 2014: a Platform for Debate on the EU Future with its Citizens

6.1. COSAC expresses its conviction that the success of the European project is impossible without the active engagement of the citizens of the Union. Realising that the powers of the European Parliament are greater than ever before, COSAC underlines the importance of active participation of the citizens of the Union in the 2014 European elections and invites national Parliaments consider and make operational the measures on enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament, and to engage in political debates on the key issues prior to the elections. The approval of the statute of European political parties could also represent a tool of great importance for raising the interest of the European citizens on the main European topics.

6.2. COSAC emphasises that the 2014 European elections will be the first held elections after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which stipulates that the European Council must take into account the elections to the European Parliament and having held the appropriate consultations shall propose a candidate for President of the European Commission to be *elected* by the newly assembled European Parliament. COSAC believes that the establishment of such a link between the European Council, constituted by the heads of state and government, mandated by national Parliaments or through direct elections, and the elections to the European Parliament, as an institution directly elected by the citizens on the one hand, and the selection of the President of the European Commission on the other hand will be a significant step in reducing the democratic deficit in the EU.

6.3. COSAC regrets that until now European election campaigns have been focused primarily on issues of national significance, leaving the debate on specific EU matters outside the remit of the campaigns. COSAC therefore calls on national and European political parties to seek that the 2014 European elections should become a platform for a constructive, informative and inclusive debate on the future of Europe with its citizens. 6.4. COSAC welcomes the commitment expressed by Mr José Manuel BARROSO, President of the European Commission, in his 2013 State of the Union address to present ideas on the future of the Union and on measures to consolidate and deepen the community method.

7. Implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy

7.1. COSAC supports the ambitious goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy; however, it considers that in order to achieve these goals, it is crucial to strengthen the structure of management of the Strategy and to improve the mechanisms of funding of the priorities of the Strategy, in particular by more effective absorption of cohesion funds, by involving such institutions as the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as well as by attracting more private capital.

7.2. COSAC notes that progress towards smarter, more sustainable and inclusive, resource-efficient and job-creating growth and the promotion of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the EU should be more actively addressed at the national level and that national Parliaments should exercise on-going parliamentary scrutiny of the progress achieved with regard to the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy. COSAC also considers that the implementation of the seven Europe 2020 flagship initiatives should be evaluated with a clear indication of what has been achieved and of the ways to remove the existing remaining obstacles.

7.3. COSAC considers that the current level of engagement of national Parliaments in the process and procedures of the European Semester could be developed further based on the experience of the recent interparliamentary meetings on this subject. **COSAC calls on the European Commission to follow through on its commitment within the framework of the European Semester, as outlined in the official replies of the Commission to the Contributions of the XLVII COSAC and the XLIX COSAC.** COSAC encourages national Parliaments to actively scrutinise the national reform programmes and stability and convergence programmes of their respective governments before they are submitted to the Commission. COSAC stresses the need for national Parliaments to actively engage in accelerating the necessary structural reforms in their respective countries.

7.4. COSAC expresses its deep concern about the negative long-term social consequences caused by the recent economic and financial crisis, particularly in terms of increased unemployment, especially among young people, and deepened social exclusion throughout Europe. COSAC, therefore, welcomes the communication of the European Commission on strengthening the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), adopted on 2 October 2013ⁱⁱ, and encourages the EU Parliaments to actively engage in the debate on the development of the social dimension of the EMU.

8. Digital Agenda: Benefits for Business

8.1. In the context of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the single market in Europe COSAC expresses its concern that the EU Digital Single Market has not been fully implemented yet. COSAC invites competent EU institutions and national Parliaments to actively contribute to the creation of an effective Digital Single Market in Europe, which would have a significant positive impact on Europe's competitiveness and job creation and would serve as an impetus for the development of digital industry in Europe, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, such as start-ups.

8.2 COSAC underlines that e-commerce is becoming an essential part of trade and an important impulse for consumer choice, competitiveness and technological innovation. It therefore considers that further development of e-commerce and other online services would positively contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy. COSAC takes note of the Commission's communication on e-commerce and other online servicesⁱⁱⁱ and encourages the Commission to continue identifying means to ensure the protection of consumer rights in the digital market. In this context, COSAC wishes to point out that many European citizens are still unable to access the digital market. It is important to counteract the creation of a digital exclusion as a consequence of the increased availability of the Internet.

8.2. COSAC considers that in international competition Europe, thanks to its internal market and its tradition geared towards knowledge and learning, is in a perfect position to think of an ambitious digital strategy. A regulatory system that is favourable to digital development should therefore be promoted as a driver for growth and European integration balancing the demands of investment, jobs, business competitiveness, innovation, respect for personal data, consumer protection, spatial planning, and development of use and security of networks.

8.3. COSAC welcomes the conclusions of the European Council of 24-25 October 2013 on the guidance towards the completion of the Digital Single Market by 2015. COSAC supports the focus of the European Council on the need to boost investment and encourage innovation in the digital sector. It therefore considers essential that the regulatory framework in the digital sector is streamlined across the EU, that a single copyright regime is established, licensing procedures are facilitated, while a high level of protection of intellectual property rights is ensured taking into account the cultural diversity. COSAC trusts that the funding instruments to encourage innovation in the digital sector, such as COSME, Horizon 2020 and the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility, will be fully made use of and that the European Research Area will be completed by the end of 2014. COSAC supports the insistence of the European Council that pending legislative proposals should be finalised as soon as possible, especially in areas such as e-identification and trust services and e-invoicing and payment services. COSAC shares the concern expressed by the European Council about the mismatch of skills that exists in the labour market in the EU's digital sector and the concrete steps that the European Council is proposing to redress the situation.

9. Digital Agenda: Cyber Security

9.1. COSAC welcomes the Cyber Security Strategy of the EU put forward by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy^{iv}. It also welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a Directive concerning measures to

ensure a high common level of network and information security across the Union^v. COSAC is convinced that cyber security is a vital component of the business and security policies of the EU and should be one of the strategic pillars of the security and defence policy in every Member State.

9.2. COSAC expresses its concern over fundamental differences that exist in Member States in their preparedness, security, strategic culture and ability to draft and implement national strategies on cyber-security. A number of Member States having not adopted their national strategies on cyber-security also remains a source of concern.

ⁱ COM/2013/0534 final

ⁱⁱ COM(2013) 690 final

ⁱⁱⁱ COM(2013) 627 final

^{iv} JOIN(2013) 1 final

^v COM(2013) 48 final



Lietuvos Respublikos pirmininkavimas
Europos Sąjungos Tarybai
2013 m. liepos 1 d. – gruodžio 31 d.
PARLAMENTINIS MATMUO

Lithuanian Presidency of
the Council of the European Union
1 July – 31 December 2013
PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION

Présidence lituanienne
du Conseil de l'Union européenne
du 1er juillet au 31 décembre 2013
DIMENSION PARLEMENTAIRE

Draft 2013-10-29

CONCLUSIONS OF THE L COSAC

Vilnius, 27–29 October 2013

1. 20th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

1.1 COSAC welcomes the 20th Bi-annual Report prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and sincerely thanks the Secretariat for the excellent work. The Report provides useful information on the means that could be used to ensure more active citizens' engagement in debating the EU future and participation in the 2014 European elections. It also discusses the effectiveness of ensuring and enhancing democratic legitimacy and accountability, and fruitful interparliamentary cooperation.

1.2 COSAC notes the challenge facing the COSAC Secretariat of many delayed replies to the questionnaire. It calls on Parliaments to try to ensure more timely responses are provided to aid the work of the Secretariat in preparing Bi-annual Reports and the work of the Presidency Parliament in preparing for COSAC plenary meetings.

1.3. COSAC appreciates the practice introduced by the Irish Presidency to organise informal sessions during the plenary meetings of COSAC. It recognises such sessions as a useful means of exchanging views on procedures and practices relevant to parliamentary scrutiny and on topical EU matters. COSAC thanks those involved in the sessions held in Vilnius and calls on future Presidencies to continue working to that end by putting forward topics for focused informal discussions.

2. Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat

2.1. COSAC recalls that the co-financing of the current Permanent Member and the office of the COSAC Secretariat and website maintenance costs ends on 31 December 2013. The Irish Presidency, in the first half of 2013, invited Parliaments to renew their commitment to the co-financing agreement for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015. So far 40 Chambers of 27 national Parliaments have signed and sent their letters of intent indicating that they are willing to participate in the co-financing for the above stated period. COSAC welcomes the fact that this number is above the minimum threshold, therefore the co-financing of the Permanent Member and the office of the COSAC Secretariat and the costs of



website maintenance will continue. COSAC invites the remaining few Parliaments/Chambers to submit letters of intent as soon as possible.

2.2. COSAC thanks the European Parliament for hosting the COSAC Secretariat in Brussels.

2.3. COSAC expresses its gratitude to the UK *House of Commons* for seconding Mrs Libby KURIEN for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat. COSAC warmly thanks Mrs Libby KURIEN, whose term of office expires on 31 December 2013, for her devoted and productive work.

2.4. COSAC welcomes the decision of the Chairpersons of COSAC of 28 October 2013 to elect Ms Christiana FRYDA seconded by the *House of Representatives* of Cyprus as Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2014-2015. COSAC is convinced that the newly elected Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat will smoothly continue to manage the work of COSAC Secretariat and contribute to the successful development of the COSAC activities, in accordance with Rule 9.3 of the COSAC Rules of Procedure.

3. Democratic Legitimacy and the Role of Parliaments

3.1. COSAC supports closer and more constructive interparliamentary cooperation and active participation of Parliaments in EU policy shaping. COSAC encourages Parliaments to actively share best practices and information and to discuss EU's political matters of common interest.

3.2. COSAC notes the responses of Parliaments to the Bi-annual Report that call for the ongoing evolution of parliamentary democracy in the EU, as closer European integration should foresee greater parliamentary involvement. COSAC welcomes the call for strengthening of existing mechanisms including the interparliamentary dialogue and better use of the political dialogue by national Parliaments.

3.3. COSAC calls on Parliaments to initiate more parliamentary clusters of interest to examine specific issues of EU policy making and sincerely thanks the Danish Folketing for starting this initiative.

3.4. COSAC expresses its hope that there will soon be a full debate on the strengthening of democratic legitimacy of the Union and the fundamental role of national Parliaments for the good functioning of the Union as well as on how this role could be further enhanced. COSAC calls on future Presidencies to consider this topic to be put on the agenda of the forthcoming meetings of COSAC.

4. Macro-regional Cooperation

4.1. COSAC welcomes the initiative of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, as the Presidency Parliament, to convene parliamentarians of the EU Member States from the Baltic Sea region for an informal discussion about the prospects of the macro-regional EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

4.2. COSAC welcomes the European Commission's report on the added value of macro-regional strategiesⁱ and the idea that macro-regional strategies provide regional building

blocks for EU-wide policy, marshalling national approaches towards a more coherent implementation at the EU level. COSAC supports the strengthening of the parliamentary dimension in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and other macro-regional strategies of the EU, which contributes to and promotes comprehensive regional cooperation.

5. COSAC Women's Forum

5.1. COSAC welcomes the initiative of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania to convene the COSAC Women's Forum to encourage greater involvement of women parliamentarians in COSAC activities and underlines the need for urging the political parties of the EU Member States to give more focus to gender equality, equal opportunities policy, creation of gender balance in society, and wider inclusion of women in politics. COSAC calls on Parliaments to take gender balance into consideration when forming parliamentary delegations and on national political parties to promote better representation of women on the lists of candidates to the 2014 European elections.

5.2. COSAC welcomes the good participation in the COSAC Women's Forum in Vilnius and encourages women politicians both to exploit existing formats of interparliamentary co-operation and to become more involved in COSAC activities by participating in the COSAC Women's Forum and debating topical issues on the EU's political agenda.

5.3. Considering the fact that democratic policy-making in the EU may rest on both formal and informal structures, COSAC encourages future Presidency parliaments, to take over and further develop the initiative of promoting women parliamentarians' involvement in COSAC activities.

ⁱ COM/2013/468 final



CORTES GENERALES

ANEXOS FINALES AL INFORME SOBRE LA 50ª COSAC
CELEBRADA EN VILNIUS DEL 27 AL 29 DE OCTUBRE DE 2013

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC

Vilnius, Lithuania, 27 October 2013

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIR: Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS, Deputy Speaker of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs.

Mr Petras AUŠTREVICIUS, Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania, Mr Dominic HANNIGAN, Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*; Mr Ioannis TRAGAKIS, Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*; Mr Konstantinos MOUSSOUROULIS, Vice Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*; Mr Miguel Ángel MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ, Vice-President, 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 L COSAC**
- 3. Presentation of the 20th Bi-annual Report of COSAC**
- 4. Interview with the candidates for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2014–2015 and proposal of the candidate to the Chairpersons of COSAC**
- 5. Debate on the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC**
- 6. Letters received by the Presidency**
- 7. Any other business**

PROCEEDINGS

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

The meeting was chaired by Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS who welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika"). He reminded the Troika that the draft agenda of the Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC was distributed on 28 August 2013 and proposed it to be adopted. The agenda of the meeting of the Troika was adopted as proposed by the Lithuanian Presidency.

2. Approval of the draft programme of the L COSAC

Mr KIRKILAS presented the updated draft programme of the L COSAC, which was distributed to the delegations on 24 October 2013, and proposed it to be approved. The draft programme of the L COSAC was approved without amendment as proposed by the Lithuanian Presidency.

3. Presentation of the 20th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Mr KIRKILAS presented the 20th Bi-annual Report of COSAC. Forty one Chambers provided information and their views and positions for drafting the 20th Bi-annual Report, which consisted of three parts.

Mr Miguel Ángel MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ expressed his satisfaction with the 20th Bi-annual Report. The answers of the Parliaments depended on questions and that is why, he said, the Presidency should be congratulated for drafting the questionnaire. Mr MARTÍNEZ asked that ways of disseminating the 20th Bi-annual Report on a larger scale be considered as it contained a lot of valuable information.

Mr KIRKILAS thanked the current Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, Ms Libby KURIEN, and the other members of the COSAC Secretariat for their work on the 20th Bi-annual Report.

Mr Ioannis TRAGAKIS also thanked the Presidency for the Report. He said that the expectations of citizens should be considered. He stressed also the lack of awareness-raising and the domination of national politics over European issues, especially in the context of the economic crisis. Mr TRAGAKIS suggested discussing issues related to the European elections, in particular changing voting systems and ways of attracting wider citizens' interest in European issues. Another important matter, according to Mr TRAGAKIS, was the rise of Euroscepticism and of radical parties.

Mr KIRKILAS thanked colleagues for their very valuable remarks and noted that many of these issues would be addressed during the L COSAC.

4. Interview with the candidates for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2014–2015 and proposal of the candidate to the Chairpersons of COSAC

Mr KIRKILAS noted that the term of the current Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, Ms Libby KURIEN, was coming to the end on 31 December 2013. He thanked Ms KURIEN for her excellent work and the UK *House of Commons* for delegating Ms KURIEN to this post.

Mr KIRKILAS stated that Letters of Intent concerning the co-financing of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and related office costs for 2014-2015 had been received from 40 Chambers of 27 national Parliaments.

Mr KIRKILAS recalled the letters that were sent on 9 July 2013 inviting all national Parliaments to submit their candidates for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2014–2015 before 10 September 2013. The Presidency received four recommendation letters with proposed candidates from the Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, the Maltese *Kamra Tad-Deputati*, the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* and the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*.

Mr KIRKILAS drew attention to the fact that the Dutch *Tweede Kamer* presented their candidate only on 16 October 2013. He suggested that the Troika would interview this

candidate taking into consideration the important political reasons for the delay presented by the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*.

Mr MARTÍNEZ did not object however he stressed he was surprised that the Dutch *Tweede Kamer* has decided not to follow the rules presented by the Presidency. Failure to follow the rules could create a precedent for the future and later it would have some consequences.

Mr Dominic HANNIGAN did not object either and stressed that if the Dutch candidate would be accepted, he should be treated on the same basis as all other candidates.

Mr KIRKILAS concluded that there were no objections to the Dutch candidate.

Mr KIRKILAS presented the background note on the Appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, the Guidelines for the recommendation of the candidate for the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and the criteria for selection. To ensure fairness and transparency the four Chairpersons from the Chambers that submitted candidates were invited to observe the interviews. Each candidate was given 20 minutes for a presentation and interview. The selected candidate would be proposed to the Chairpersons of COSAC for appointment the following day.

As there were no objections the proposed procedure was unanimously accepted.

The candidates were interviewed following the order in which they submitted their applications: the Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, the Maltese *Kamra Tad-Deputati*, the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* and the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*. After the interviews deliberations took place between the members of the Troika delegations only *in camera*.

Following the interviews and deliberations all participants were invited back into the meeting room. Mr KIRKILAS then announced the decision taken unanimously by the Troika to propose the candidate from the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* – Ms Christiana FRYDA - to the Chairpersons of COSAC for appointment the following day as the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for the period 2014-2015.

5. Debate on the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC

Mr KIRKILAS said that the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC were distributed on 14 October 2013 and revised draft Contribution and Conclusions were distributed on 24 October 2013. Additional amendments to these two documents could still be presented until 12.00 p.m. the following day.

Mr KIRKILAS proposed submitting two additional amendments to the draft Contribution on behalf of the Troika: two new articles on the recent “yellow card” and one amendment on the digital agenda.

Mr MARTÍNEZ stressed that the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC were exceptionally clear and uncontroversial. He welcomed the very serious effort of the Presidency in drafting them. There were only a few minor amendments to them

from Parliaments and he thought that draft Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC would find general support.

Mr TRAGAKIS expressed his full support for the amendments.

Mr HANNIGAN also supported the amendments and proposed to add a technical footnote with a reference to the document to which the “yellow card” was raised.

6. Letters received by the Presidency

Mr KIRKILAS presented six letters the Lithuanian Presidency had received from:

- The Polish *Senat* regarding the meeting of the parliamentary EU Affairs Committees of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary.
- The Latvian *Saeima* regarding the traditional informal consultations of the European Union Affairs Committees of the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish Parliaments.
- The Chairman of the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament Mr Carlo CASINI regarding his unavailability to attend the L COSAC meeting.
- The Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Parliament of Ukraine Mr Vitaliy KALYUZHNYIY regarding his unavailability to attend the L COSAC meeting.
- The Former President of the Republic of Poland Mr Aleksander KWAŚNIEWSKI regarding his unavailability to attend the L COSAC meeting.
- The Vice President of the European Commission Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ regarding the official reply to the Contribution of the XLIX COSAC.

7. Any other business

No any other business.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE L COSAC
Vilnius, Lithuania, 27-29 October 2013

AGENDA:

1. Opening of the L COSAC Meeting

- Introductory remarks by Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS, Deputy Speaker of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania and Chair of Committee on European Affairs
- Welcome speech by H. E. Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ, Speaker of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania
- Welcome speech by Mr José Manuel BARROSO, President of the European Commission (video message)

Procedural issues:

- Adoption of the Agenda of the L COSAC
- Presentation of the 20th Bi-annual Report of COSAC
- Briefing on the decisions of the meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC
- Briefing on the letters received by the Presidency Parliament

2. 'State of Play of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union'

Keynote speaker: H. E. Algirdas BUTKEVIČIUS, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania

3. 'Contribution of COSAC to strengthening of interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union'

Guest-of-Honour: Mr Laurent FABIUS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France, former Speaker of the French *Assemblée nationale*

4. 'European Elections 2014: Platform for Debate on the EU Future with Its Citizens'

Keynote speaker: Mr Pat COX, former President of the European Parliament

Keynote speaker: Mr Andrew DUFF, Member of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament, rapporteur on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014

5. 'Parliamentary diplomacy – the EP-Ukraine – a case study'

Presentation by Mr Pat COX, former President of the European Parliament

6. 'Implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy'

Keynote speaker: Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration

Keynote speaker: Ms Pervenche BERÈS, Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament

7. Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC

- Briefing on the first meeting of the COSAC Women's Forum -

8. 'Democratic Legitimacy in the EU and the role of EU Parliaments'

Keynote speaker: Ms Eva Kjer HANSEN, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Danish *Folketing*

Keynote speaker: Mr Dominic HANNIGAN, Chair of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs of the Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*

Keynote speaker: Mr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING, former President of the European Parliament, Member of the European Parliament

9. 'Digital Agenda: challenges and perspectives'

9.1. Cyber security

Keynote speaker: Mr Rudolf Peter ROY, Head of division for Security Policy and Sanctions of the European External Action Service

9.2. 'Benefits for business'

Keynote speaker: Mr Ilja LAURS, Chief Executive Officer of GetJar, winner of "European Manager of the Year 2011 Award", presented by the European Business Press (EBP)

10. Adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC

PROCEEDINGS

IN THE CHAIR: Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS, Deputy Speaker of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs.

1. Introductory remarks by Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS, Deputy Speaker of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs; welcome speech by H. E. Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ, Speaker of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania

Mr KIRKILAS welcomed participants to the meeting of the L COSAC and recalled the first meeting of COSAC held on 16-17 November 1989 in the French *Assemblée nationale*. He welcomed the new Chair of the Bulgarian delegation, Mr Mladen CHERVENIAKOV. A video about the restoration of Lithuania's statehood and the historic Hall of the Act of 11 March was shown. Mr KIRKILAS announced that he would co-chair the meeting with Mr Petras AUŠTREVICIUS, Deputy Speaker of the *Seimas* of the Republic of Lithuania and Deputy Chair of the Committee on European Affairs.

H. E. Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ, Speaker of the Lithuanian *Seimas*, welcomed the delegates to the L COSAC meeting and noted that almost twenty years had passed since the entry into force of the Treaty of Maastricht on 1 November 1993. She reviewed the two interparliamentary conferences held in the framework of the parliamentary dimension of the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council: the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for CFSP and CSDP which discussed, in a timely manner, the response to the use of chemical weapons in Syria; and the first Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union, based on Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (TSCG), which had laid the grounds for the future functioning of this Conference. She noted that the L COSAC meeting would seek to promote a more active role for national Parliaments and to enhance the cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament in order to maintain a constant and efficient interinstitutional dialogue at national and the European levels. She also pointed out that for the first time within the COSAC framework there would be a COSAC Women's Forum where women parliamentarians could discuss issues of common concern and which the Presidency was planning to convene on the basis of the suggestion from the Vice-President of the French *Sénat*, Ms Bariza KHIARI.

The video message of the President of the European Commission, Mr José Manuel BARROSO, was screened. He congratulated COSAC on its 50th jubilee meeting and its development into a substantial factor in interparliamentary cooperation on European Union policies. He recalled that at the time of the first COSAC meeting in 1989 an era of new impetus for European integration and of discussions about democratic legitimacy on European affairs had commenced. Looking ahead he expressed his wish that comprehensive solutions for the future could be achieved by completing the architecture of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), by returning to a new kind of sustainable growth, by keeping on course for fiscal consolidation, by accelerating the pace of structural reforms and by boosting investment in the real economy as well as by fighting unemployment. He therefore welcomed the central place for the *Europe 2020* Strategy on the agenda of the jubilee COSAC meeting.

1.2. Adoption of the agenda, procedural questions and miscellaneous matters

The Chair presented the draft agenda of the L COSAC which was adopted without amendments. Mr KIRKILAS then moved on to the presentation of the 20th Bi-annual Report of COSAC, containing three chapters on 1. European Elections 2014: Platform for Debate on the EU Future with its Citizens. 2. Democratic Legitimacy in the EU and the Role of EU Parliaments. 3. Implementation of the *Europe 2020* Strategy. The first chapter showed support for establishing stronger links between European and national parties as well as for the nomination of party candidates for the post of the President of the European Commission. The second chapter showed the overriding

importance that national Parliaments accorded to the democratic control of their own governments in EU affairs as well as the value of COSAC, political dialogue and IPEX as tools of interparliamentary cooperation. The third chapter demonstrated the increasing focus of Parliaments on the fight against unemployment and described parliamentary procedures and best practices related to the implementation of the *Europe 2020* Strategy.

Mr KIRKILAS informed the participants of the results of the meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC held the previous afternoon, and especially the nomination of Ms Christiana FRYDA, official of the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, as a new Permanent Member of the COSAC secretariat following the interviews with four candidates. Mr KIRKILAS announced that amendments to the draft Contribution and Conclusions as amended by the Presidential Troika of COSAC the previous day would be accepted until noon.

Mr KIRKILAS communicated that the Lithuanian Presidency had received six letters from:

- The Polish *Senat* regarding the meeting of the parliamentary EU Affairs Committees of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary.
- The Latvian *Saeima* regarding the traditional informal consultations of the European Union Affairs Committees of the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish Parliaments.
- The Chairman of the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament Mr Carlo CASINI regarding his unavailability to attend the L COSAC meeting.
- The Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Parliament of Ukraine Mr Vitaliy KALYUZHNYIY regarding his unavailability to attend the L COSAC meeting.
- The Former President of the Republic of Poland Mr Aleksander KWAŚNIEWSKI regarding his unavailability to attend the L COSAC meeting.
- The Vice-President of the European Commission Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ regarding the official reply to the Contribution of the XLIX COSAC.

Ms Tineke STRIK (Greens/EFA), Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, expressed her concern that the next COSAC Chairpersons' meeting would overlap with a session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and asked that such conflict of dates be avoided in the future.

Mr René LEEGTE (ALDE), Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, mentioned that a position paper of his Chamber on democratic legitimacy was distributed outside the meeting room and said he was looking forward to replies.

2. 'State of Play of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union'

Keynote speaker: H. E. Algirdas BUTKEVIČIUS, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania

In his speech, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, Mr Algirdas BUTKEVIČIUS welcomed the role played by COSAC in addressing European issues and ensuring that the EU was more democratic and accountable to its citizens. The jubilee L COSAC Meeting and the Lithuanian Presidency coincided with the European Year of Citizens, so particular efforts were being made to respond to the concerns of all European citizens.

As for the major goals of the Lithuanian Presidency, the Prime Minister referred to a growing, reliable and open Europe. He stressed the importance of demonstrating the economic and social policy results to European citizens and the rest of the world and of ensuring that the EU stood on a firm footing regarding its financial situation and continued to be an example of openness. The Lithuanian Presidency had contributed to launching legislation in that regard.

The threat posed by weak banks to the whole European financial system had proven the need for a rapid EU response to avoid adverse effects. The creation of the banking union would ensure that all EU banks would operate under common rules and that the interests of depositors would be better

protected. The proposal for a Single Resolution Mechanism which was discussed during the Informal Meeting of Ministers for Economics and Financial Affairs in Vilnius represented a first step.

Mr BUTKEVIČIUS called on Member States under economic pressure to seek balance between economic measures and social challenges. He emphasised that one of the main tasks of the Lithuanian Presidency was to ensure that funds from the 2014-2020 Financial Programme reached businesses and Europeans in time. The agreement, in a short time, by the Member States on the EU budget for 2014 was an achievement of the Lithuanian Presidency. In the coming months, efforts would continue to ensure that political agreement on the EU budget for 2014 could be reached with the European Parliament. The Prime Minister referred to unemployment as one of the most challenging consequences of the crisis, affecting one quarter of young people in the EU. In response to that problem, the Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative would be launched in 2014. In order to ensure its effectiveness, economic growth as well as competitiveness and innovation should be enhanced.

In that regard he highlighted the enormous potential of the digital world, referring to research according to which the digital economy could significantly increase GDP over the next decade. Moreover, the common digital market could simplify lives, make travel abroad easier, integrate European payments systems and create employment opportunities for all. In addition, the single energy market, which was envisaged to be completed by 2014, would help to achieve more competitive prices and would increase the importance of the EU in the international arena.

Building on an open Europe, the Lithuanian Presidency had put forward negotiations on free trade and association agreements with the Eastern Partnership countries and would further promote ties through the organization of the third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius on 28-29 November 2013. The Prime Minister stated that the Eastern partners' determination and capacity to undertake reforms as well as the common position and support of the EU Member States and institutions would determine the success of the Summit. Moreover, during the Lithuanian Presidency, negotiations with the USA on the free trade agreement had been launched.

In conclusion, Mr BUTKEVIČIUS highlighted the role of Parliaments in using the available tools to promote economic growth, ensure confidence in the financial system and to allow the EU to become more open to the world.

In the debate which followed, 17 speakers took the floor. Mr Richárd HÖRCSIK (EPP), Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, highlighted the importance of making funds accessible to European citizens in time and creating synergy between cohesion funds and economic governance. Mr Ľuboš BLAHA (S&D), Slovakian *Narodna rada*, and Mr Össur SKARPHÉDINSSON (S&D), Icelandic *Althingi*, raised the issue of NSA eavesdropping and the extent to which it could threaten the free trade negotiations with the USA, while Mr Vitalino CANAS (S&D), Portuguese *Assembleia da Republica*, asked for a correction of the structural imbalances in the allocation of EU funds and the completion of the banking union, an issue also raised by Ms Athina KYRIAKIDOU (S&D), Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*. Mr BUTKEVIČIUS answered that the goal was to better programme and direct funds so as to reduce differences in the level of development between EU regions and to make these funds accessible to EU Member States at the beginning of 2014. Enhancing the banking union had been a major priority of the Lithuanian Presidency. As far as the free trade negotiations with the USA were concerned, he announced that there would be a third stage in the negotiations in December 2013, but at the same time he condemned the NSA eavesdropping.

Highlighting the Lampedusa incident, several parliamentarians (Mr Christopher FEARNE (S&D), Maltese *Il-Kamra Tad-Deputati*, Mr Paolo TANCREDI (EPP), Italian *Camera dei Deputati*, Mr Epameinondas MARIAS (Non-affiliated), Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Ms Athina KYRIAKIDOU (S&D), Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, Ms Danielle AUROI (Greens/EFA), *Assemblée nationale*)

raised the issue of migration flows from North Africa and the need for a genuine integrated migration policy and solidarity among Member States. Mr BUTKEVIČIUS stated that the migration issue should be dealt with jointly at EU level and highlighted other aspects of the problem such as youth migration due to unemployment.

Ms Laima Liucija ANDRIKIENĖ (EPP), *European Parliament*, Mr Mladen CHERVENIAKOV (S&D), Bulgarian *Narodno Sabranie*, Mr Edmund WITTBRODT (EPP), Polish *Senat*, and Ms Zanda KALNIŅA-LUKAŠEVICA (Non-affiliated), Latvian *Saeima*, underlined the importance of delivering results at the Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Vilnius, especially with regard to the EU-Ukraine negotiations. Mr BUTKEVIČIUS stressed that Ukraine needed to work hard to meet its obligations by the end of November 2013 and referred to the work on Moldova and Georgia done by the Lithuanian Presidency as well as to the special EU-Russia and EU-Turkey relations. A number of parliamentarians underlined the importance of continued efforts in promoting the enlargement policy in the Western Balkans following the accession of Croatia (Mr Mátyás FIRTŁ (EPP), Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, Mr Stefan SCHENNACH (S&D), Austrian *Bundesrat*, Mr Mladen CHERVENIAKOV, Bulgarian *Narodno Sabranie*). Ms Sylvi GRAHAM (EPP), Norwegian *Stortinget*, stated that a Minister for European Affairs was appointed under the new government for the first time in Norway. Finally, Ms Danielle AUROI, French *Assemblée nationale*, called for strong democratic impetus and enhanced democratic legitimacy and asked about the prospects of the Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union. Mr BUTKEVIČIUS commented on the need for broader communication of EU policies to its citizens.

3. 'Contribution of COSAC to strengthening of interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union'

Guest-of-Honour: Mr Laurent FABIUS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France

The Guest-of-Honour of the L COSAC, Mr Laurent FABIUS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France, the former Speaker of the French *Assemblée nationale* and the 'founding father' of COSAC back in 1989, in his address noted the crucial need for interparliamentary cooperation to allow national Parliaments to take part in EU politics and to promote cooperation among national Parliaments and the European Parliament. National Parliaments had an important role to play since interparliamentary cooperation conferred greater legitimacy to decisions taken at European level. He recalled that the first meeting of COSAC, held in November 1989 in Paris, took place at a time when the Berlin Wall just had come down. The reasons which justified the creation of COSAC back then were still valid even though the European Union looked different today. There was a need for European decision making to be brought closer to the citizens as these policies had to meet citizens' expectations. Since the founding of COSAC huge headway had been made but things would have to be taken further.

The deepening of the European Union and of the EMU via the Six-Pack and the Two-Pack would have a direct impact on national budgets and greater coordination of economic policies at European level would necessitate enhanced cooperation between national Parliaments. The principal rule should be that at each stage of the process democratic debate would take place. Parliaments had to be able to fully play their role in order to establish the parliamentary counterpart to governmental decisions. This was the purpose of Article 13 of TSCG. The question had to be asked how Parliaments could do more and do better on that front.

Generally speaking, all institutions, each on its own level, had to commit to serving a greater democratic logic. There were several solutions to this end: first, while many mechanisms introduced in reaction to the financial and economic crisis, like the European Semester, had strengthened the role of the Commission, Parliaments should set up the conditions for a debate on EU matters. The Commission should visit the Member States to explain its policies to national parliamentarians and take their questions and requests into consideration. Second, a richer and more

objective debate in Member States would be needed e.g. when a government supported a decision at European level it should have the courage to endorse that decision at home. Quoting the French example, where since 2005 ministers could go to Parliament to discuss points on the agenda of the Council of Ministers, he pleaded for all executive bodies to strive to get national Parliaments more involved in EU policies at national level. He warned about the threat of governments using their national Parliaments to block EU decisions via the backdoor: Parliaments should express their own views on EU affairs but should not systematically block making headway in Europe. Thirdly, Members of the European Parliament were responsible for working together with members of national Parliaments. The first meeting of the Interparliamentary Conference on the Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union pointed in the right direction. Although the Six-Pack and Two-Pack procedures were necessary to address the asymmetry of the EMU they had to be legitimised by citizens and in addition the positions of national Parliaments needed to be given careful consideration to strike the right institutional balance. Moreover, if Members of the European Parliament elected in 28 Member States were to discuss the economic policies of the members of the Eurozone, another imbalance would be created. After the next European elections the European Parliament could establish a structure especially designed to consider Eurozone matters in order to ensure democratic control of the legitimacy of the decision making on the Eurozone. Fourthly, national Parliaments had a range of instruments at hand. For example, they could send reasoned opinions to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council. For national Parliaments this was a way to emphasise their willingness to go further down the path of European integration and to push forward their desires like in the case of the 'yellow card' on the 'Monti II' proposal for the right to strike or now with the second 'yellow card' on the European Public Prosecutor Office. This could be interesting to investigate further but not to be abused.

In view of the elections of a new European Parliament and a new Commission under new arrangements in a few months Mr FABIUS was concerned about the rate of abstentions or anti-European votes which, in his point of view, could signal that a major overhaul of the European construction was needed to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the EU at all levels. It was imperative to improve cooperation at all levels of decision making as this would mobilise European citizens for the elections next year.

Mr FABIUS emphasised that COSAC had a role to play in this regard as it could enable taking the initiative for monitoring and for debate at parliamentary level. When people said that Brussels "had decided" an issue it was technically incorrect and politically dangerous as these were the representatives of Member States and their citizens who had actually taken decisions in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. Mr FABIUS concluded by saying that Parliaments were the beating heart of European democracy and the European Union was a common construction serving citizens and COSAC continued to be a crucial forum.

4.'European Elections 2014: Platform for Debate on the EU Future with Its Citizens'

Keynote speakers: Mr Pat COX, former President of the European Parliament, and Mr Andrew DUFF, Member of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament, rapporteur on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014

Mr Pat COX, former President of the European Parliament pointed out that the eighth direct elections to the European Parliament would take place against the backdrop of an unprecedented crisis which had already shown its impact in opinion polls and elections. When asked who would be best suited to help overcome the crisis, the acceptance of EU institutions had fallen to 50 %, while the acceptance of Member States' institutions had crept up to 41 %. Secondly, with the exception of three states which returned incumbent governments, in all other national elections the incumbents were wiped out and, thirdly, extremist parties were on the rise everywhere. Great interstate tensions arose around the fear of endless financial transfers on the one side and the fear of endless austerity measures on the other. Historic levels of unemployment were mirrored by a

growing level of poverty. Bearing in mind the effects of financial consolidation, the resulting social crisis had to be addressed too, in order to make this 'election bird' fly with two wings.

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Council became an institution and during the economic crisis the Council and the Eurozone acted as the new centres of decision making despite the fact that the European Parliament had become co-legislator in most areas. Partly in reaction to this, political parties would name their candidates for the post of President of the European Commission and would try to build a political platform for election next year. This new President, it was hoped, would not be the old bipolar Commission/Council representative but would act within the new institutional set-up including the European Parliament. This development would be complemented by the on-going institutional retrofitting with the Six-Pack and the Two-Pack, the banking union and the drive for a genuine EMU in order to create common solutions to our interdependencies and to strike a balance between necessary economic and social policy decisions. In the current debate on these reforms there were two schools of thought: one old national 19th century school about the uniqueness of the nation state which he would call 'sovereign nostalgia' and another school which he would call an old-style federalist school according to which Member States should 'go the way of the dinosaurs'. Mr COX said he believed that Member States were still key mobilisers of identity and that Europe could not be built in opposition to a Member State. Neither old-style sovereignty nor old-style federalism could present a solution but differentiated integration would be the future which would not be unique for the United Kingdom. This new set of banking union countries would develop into the 'new normal' as asymmetries could no longer be ignored. He closed with a reference to Thomas JEFFERSON, whereby any government had to have the consent of the people to work properly and this had to be fought for. Output legitimacy could not be left out. The EU and its Member States had to deliver benefits to its citizens.

As second keynote speaker, Mr Andrew DUFF, Member of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament and rapporteur on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014, qualified himself as a 'new-style federalist' in Mr COX's parlance. He said that a point could come where falling turnout would jeopardise the legitimacy of Parliaments and their representative capability and accountability. Based on this assumption the European Parliament had tried to change the electoral procedures for the European elections to make them more attractive but in the last five years all attempts to do so had failed. Therefore, there would not be any transnational lists, it would not be assured that candidates could stand for election in more than one Member State and elections would not take place on one single day. At least the European Parliament had succeeded in bringing forward the timing of the elections by a fortnight to the end of May, so that the European Parliament could play its role in the nomination process of the new Commission President, and in simplifying the organisation of the European elections for citizens living in another Member State than their own to participate and stand for the European elections 2014. He also pointed out that in order to permit European parties to campaign, a political agreement on the reform of the statute of European parties should be reached.

Currently, European parties remained weak in trying to drive the policy process of EU politics and fell short of what was required, Mr DUFF continued. According to him, with some exceptions national parties largely failed to embrace European politics and the links between national and European parties needed to be strengthened. Emblems and names of European parties should appear on the ballot paper and TV broadcasts from European parties on public channels should be made possible. Other ways to bring the elections to life for the citizens would be putting in place clear and transparent selection procedures, to conclude them in good time before the elections and to nominate 'champions' or leaders of the campaigns, not only for the President of the Commission but for the much broader range of appointments taking place next year.

In this regard the Lisbon Treaty was quite helpful since article 17 (7) TEU clarified the procedure on the nomination of the candidate for the Presidency of the Commission by the European Council in that it should take into account the European elections and have appropriate consultations with

the European Parliament and parties. The current President of the European Council, Herman VAN ROMPUY, would become the *informateur*, looking for a majority leader in the European Parliament. If the European Parliament rejected the candidate, a new candidate had to be presented within one month. Mr DUFF said that if that experiment worked it would strengthen the arm of the President-elect of the Commission when appointing the other members of the European Commission which would be submitted to hearings in the European Parliament in September or October next year and, after a final vote of approval in the European Parliament, could take office as the new Commission on 1 November next year.

In the following debate 13 speakers took the floor. Mr Damir MATELJAN (S&D), Croatian *Hrvatski Sabor*, drew on the experience of the first election of Members of the European Parliament in his country last year by saying that citizens still failed to understand the role of the European Parliament and that therefore more information on this had to be made available. Ms Agnieszka POMASKA (EPP), Polish *Sejm*, added that Polish people were pro-European but paradoxically failed to turn up for the European elections.

Several parliamentarians like Mr António RODRIGUES (EPP), Portuguese *Assembleia da Republica*, claimed that citizens were less interested in the EU but wanted to see solidarity and positive results for their lives. Mr Paolo TANCREDI (EPP), Italian *Camera dei Deputati*, said that citizens' trust was suffering because of the inability of the institutions to tackle the crisis. Mr Epameinondas MARIAS (Non-affiliated), Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, blamed the Troika for going against the people's interests and Mr Ľuboš BLAHA (S&D), Slovak *Narodna rada*, specified that those who were disadvantaged in society had the impression that they had to pay for the consolidation of banks, the economy and sovereign debts and that therefore they did not regard Europe as their home. Ms Ana Catarina MENDES (S&D), Portuguese *Assembleia da Republica*, believed that the dwindling trust in European politics resulted from growing nationalism, hard austerity measures and fears about immigration. According to her, the appearance of anti-European parties heralded a Eurosceptic wave.

Other speakers, like Mr Philippe MAHOUX (S&D), Belgian *Chambre des Représentants*, and Ms Axelle LEMAIRE (S&D), French *Assemblée nationale*, said that very important political decisions were at stake in the next European elections and that the message had to put across to the voters that the elections were politically significant and that they should vote along political lines. Ms LEMAIRE pointed out that parties had a crucial responsibility for setting up their own programmes for the European elections and for nominating their candidates for the post of President of the European Commission. Under these conditions the Heads of State and Government assembled in the European Council could not do anything other than to accept the voters' choice. Ms Tineke STRIK (Greens/EFA), Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, asked for more concrete proposals concerning national Parliaments' activities on raising voter turnout.

Mr William CASH (ECR), UK *House of Commons*, deplored the democratic crisis which in his view existed because European elections challenged the fundamental point that national Parliaments were granted the inherent powers from voters.

Mr Stefan SCHENNACH (S&D), Austrian *Bundesrat*, claimed that the Lisbon Treaty had rendered the European Union more democratic but that the financial and economic crisis and the Troika imposed austerity measures and their undesired social consequences had undermined the role of Parliaments; consequently neo-liberal ideas should be abandoned by Parliaments and the fight against youth unemployment should be put at centre stage.

In his replies Mr COX agreed with speakers that a politicisation of the European elections was needed as the contest of political ideas sharpened the political debate and that the nomination process of the next President of the European Commission could be one element to make different political concepts more visible. National Parliaments could help by not abandoning the campaign to

those who would spread misinformation. The clash of ideas and room for dissenting opinions had to be legitimised in European elections as a valid part of any electoral contest. He also noted that even when a country was able to exit the Troika programme, the situation would have permanently changed from before since with the new Six-Pack and Two-Pack rules, fiscal consolidation was the only way back to more sovereign exercise of governmental and parliamentary powers.

In his answers Mr DUFF highlighted the importance of European elections by saying that if he was a citizen of a Troika programme country he would line up at dawn at the polling station to cast his vote for the European Parliament elections because such a lot was at stake: the budget, fiscal consolidation, immigration, enlargement as well as sharing solidarity across national borders. In his view the crisis showed not so much a democratic deficit but more a deficit of a clearly accountable government. He described the role of the European Parliament in this crisis as being agile, being frequently ahead of the curve and as seeking to serve the common interest of states and citizens. Replying to the question of Ms STRIK, Mr DUFF proposed to turn national European affairs committees into a platform for European discussions by questioning national political leaders on their EU policies in televised debates. National Parliaments could also invite Members of the European Parliament to speak at the tribune, such as in the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, and to explain their political decisions which could enhance the accountability of Members of the European Parliament. Looking further ahead, Mr DUFF remarked that the Commission also had a role to play and that the promised publication of the ideas of the President of the Commission, Mr BARROSO, on the future of Europe would enliven the election campaign and the debate on the future of Europe.

5. 'Parliamentary diplomacy – the EP-Ukraine – a case study'

Presentation by Mr Pat COX, former President of the European Parliament

Mr Pat COX, former President of the European Parliament, gave a detailed account of the monitoring mission to Ukraine conferred upon him and Mr Aleksander KWAŚNIEWSKI, former President of the Republic of Poland, by the European Parliament in May 2012. He reported that since then, they had undertaken 23 mission visits to Ukraine, spending an equivalent of 12 full working weeks in the country during which the Ukrainian authorities opened all doors and archives to them.

In the run up to the Eastern Partnership summit Ukraine was at a crossroads in its history. The country had to decide whether to turn towards Russia or towards Europe. Mr COX recalled that three sets of conditions linked to electoral reforms, justice reforms and collective justice had been set by the European Union for the signing of any partnership agreement. The old-system mentality of the '*homo sovieticus*' still prevailed but noted the new code for criminal procedures adopted in 2012 as significant progress since a reduction of 35,000 people in pre-trial detention had been achieved. On the other hand, the Russian presence in Ukraine remained important culturally, historically and linguistically. The high economic interdependence with Russia was illustrated by the fact that 40 % of Ukrainian businesses exported to Russia while the recent closure of the borders by Russia, meant as a warning for Ukraine not to turn towards Europe, had had an adverse effect: Ukrainians now felt more Ukrainian.

Mr COX reported that at the beginning of their mission four former ministers were in prison, however, three have since been pardoned. As to the situation of the former Ukrainian Prime Minister, Ms Yulia TYMOSHENKO, Mr COX pointed out that she was still hospitalised and under medical treatment by German doctors; that three surveillance cameras, previously monitoring her room day and night, had been removed; that male guards had been replaced by women; and that a tax case brought against her had been postponed 22 times due to her state of health. Mr COX recalled that the European Court for Human Rights had ruled her pre-trial detention as illegal before the conviction but that the "gas" case against her was still upheld. Due to her ill health the mission had delivered an appeal to the President of Ukraine at the beginning of October to release or pardon

her so she could travel to Berlin for medical treatment. Positive signals in principle had been received. However, Ukraine's President had preferred to submit to the Ukrainian parliament a general discharge law to allow medical treatment abroad than give a presidential pardon. This would have been the shortest and clearest way. The difficulty in this was that it was designed not as a law for one person of course but potentially for all prisoners and so contained all sorts of clauses about detention and extraterritorial effect. He stated that it was very clear that any of the European Union states would underwrite the selective justice of which it had complained by agreeing to send Ms TYMOSHENKO when she was cured directly back to prison in respect of a contested juridical procedure. Despite positive developments, overall Ukraine was still not in compliance with the conditions set by the European Union.

In a brief but lively debate 10 speakers took the floor. Responding first, Mr Hryhoriy NEMYRIA, Chairman of the Committee on European Integration of the Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*, agreed with Mr COX that Ukraine had to make its choice between an agreement with the EU or the imprisonment of politicians; Ukraine still had to prove whether there was a permanent cessation in politically motivated legal actions.

Lord David HANNAY OF CHISWICK (Non-affiliated), UK *House of Lords*, welcomed the monitoring mission and its work and stated that in principle the European Union could not proceed to a signature with Ukraine to the detriment of its own values. All of the conditions had to be met beforehand, he insisted, while Mr Andrzej GAŁAŻEWSKI (EPP), Polish *Sejm*, explained that in order to support Ukraine's independence from Russia the accession agreement should be signed now. Mr Averof NEOFYTOU (EPP), Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, also gave his support for the likely signing of the agreement with Ukraine. Ms Vilija ALEKNAITĖ ABRAMIKIENĖ (EPP), Lithuanian *Seimas*, underlined the importance of the signing of the association agreement with Ukraine as it would open the European Union's view to Russia as well. Mr Herman DE CROO (ALDE), Belgian *Chambre des Représentants*, suggested that COSAC should discuss how the European Union positioned itself towards Russia. Other contributions addressed the question of electoral reform (Mr Jordi XUCLÀ I COSTA (ALDE), Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados*) and the provision of adequate funding for the Eastern Neighbourhood Policy in the multi-annual financial framework (Mr Ivan STEFANEC (EPP), Slovak *Narodna rada*).

In his reply Mr COX highlighted that the European Union needed a coherent strategy for all European Neighbourhood countries. He reiterated that the monitoring mission wanted the deal concerning Ms TYMOSHENKO's release and the preservation of Europe's values at the same time. Whether Ukraine signed up to the deal and the agreement or not, the country would go through hard times, Mr COX explained: Ukraine needed the IMF facility to balance its payments which was in principle agreed - and then the EU might follow - but the administration in Kiev would still be aiming at changing the IMF terms and conditions. He welcomed Mr DE CROO's idea to discuss EU-Russia relations in more depth. Concerning the electoral reforms Mr COX answered that Mr KWAŚNIEWSKI and himself were informed about the ongoing dialogue with the Venice Commission and that they respected its integrity.

6. 'Implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy'

Keynote speakers: Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration, and Ms Pervenche BERÈS, Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament

On the occasion of the L COSAC plenary meeting, Vice-President of the European Commission Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ first referred to the significance of the COSAC as a permanent framework for interparliamentary cooperation and parliamentary control in EU affairs and welcomed the commitment of the Parliaments to ensure democratic legitimacy and accountability.

Turning to the *Europe 2020* Strategy Mr ŠEFČOVIČ noted that it had been launched by the Commission as the EU's integrated strategy to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The economic crisis had shown the interdependence of European economies, especially in the euro area, and proved the need for effective coordination in order to avoid spill-over effects from bad decision making in one country to other countries. In that regard, the European Semester was designed to work as a tool to detect inconsistencies and emerging imbalances and to support the implementation of the *Europe 2020* Strategy. It would also provide opportunities for discussions with national Parliaments and the European Parliament and ensure that national reforms carried out under *Europe 2020* were more effective. Mr ŠEFČOVIČ referred to the five areas that had become a reform priority across the EU: a) a differentiated growth friendly fiscal consolidation, b) the restoration of lending to the real economy, c) the promotion of growth and competitiveness, d) tackling unemployment and reforming labour markets, and e) the modernisation of public administrations.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ underlined the fact that ambitious reform programmes in several Member States had started to bring positive results. Indicators showed signs of a modest recovery. But overcoming the crisis would require a continuous focus on reform priorities, as well as rapid implementation of decisions concerning the boosting of employment. In order to tackle unemployment, reforms had been carried out to improve the resilience and flexibility of labour markets, but it would take time to deliver results. For that reason, he stated that there would be additional funding from the multi-annual financial framework to help the most affected Member States deal with youth unemployment.

Concerning the significant social cost of high unemployment levels, he referred to the Communication on the Strengthening of the Social Dimension of the EMU through which the Commission stressed the importance of making sure that the rules put in place to deepen coordination and cooperation on economic governance took into account the social impact. The Employment Package, the White Paper on Pensions and the Youth Employment Package were among the most recent initiatives presented by the Commission to support national reform efforts. Moreover, the performance of education and training systems and their labour market relevance had been highlighted as one of the key issues that needed to be addressed.

Mr ŠEFČOVIČ stressed that the ICT sector was expected to be a means of stimulating economic growth and job creation. He regretted that many Member States had taken the drastic approach of slashing their R&D budgets in order to get their finances under control. In fact the European Council clearly stated that investment in innovation fuelled productivity and growth and Member States that had continued to invest in it had fared better in the crisis. Progress had been made by the launching of measures such as the unitary patent, the European passport for venture capital funds and Horizon 2020. On the other hand the crisis had hampered efforts to reach the so called 20-20-20 targets. Additionally, the Commission estimated that implementation of individual energy efficiency measures, as well as the potential from renewable energy sector development would lead to significant job creation, bearing in mind always that Europe's overall competitiveness had to be guaranteed.

He further analysed the steps that should be taken so as to achieve the goals of the *Europe 2020* Strategy, starting with the coordination of budgetary and structural policies under the European Semester. He also noted the significance of strengthening fiscal monitoring in the Eurozone with the Two-Pack process, underlining the fact that national Parliaments retained their full rights in the national budgetary process while the Commission's role would be to bring a more European perspective to the national debates. Moreover, the 2014 Annual Growth Survey (AGS), to be presented this November, would set out the broad economic and social priorities of the EU for the following year and would launch the 2014 European Semester of economic policy coordination. The AGS would also launch the consultation process with national and European parliamentarians which would be a valuable input to the Spring 2014 European Council. Mr ŠEFČOVIČ urged the parliamentarians to intensify the dialogue with the Commission on the European Semester and to

organise 'Europe Days' within their respective Parliaments as had been suggested by the Irish Speaker.

In concluding, he noted that the *Europe 2020* Strategy was a long term process that committed all 28 Member States to act regardless of who is in power. In that regard, the involvement of Parliaments would be crucial, provide a unique link between policy makers and public and ensure that the decisions taken at EU level had a real and positive impact on citizens.

In her intervention, Ms Pervenche BERÈS, *European Parliament*, expressed her delight at participating in the L COSAC Plenary, since she was one of the people involved in its creation back in 1989. She identified the open method of coordination as the reason for failure of the Lisbon strategy. Moreover, no realisation of the potential synergy between the EU budget and national budgets for the implementation of this strategy tool had been made. It was from this failure that the Commission proposed the EU 2020 strategy. According to Ms BERÈS, the only way for this strategy to succeed was by becoming the point of reference in all EU policies. The open method of coordination was substituted by the European Semester, an instrument that could lead to the coordination of economic policies and the reduction of macroeconomic imbalances.

Ms BERÈS noted that since the presentation of the *Europe 2020* strategy the flagship initiatives had not had the desired effect. At the same time the economic crisis led to practices that averted a deterioration in the public finances. The introduction of the Six-Pack, Two-Pack and the TSCG had in a way completed the economic and budgetary dimension of the EMU, but the social dimension was still unanswered. The EU 2020 strategy had not changed the excessive emphasis on nominal convergence. At the same time, the crisis had exacerbated the flaws in the EMU architecture, illustrated by the widening of divergences in economic performance observed already in 2005. The European Commission, in its report on the progress of the strategy, admitted that the commitments made by Member States were insufficient, but none had been called upon as part of the country-specific recommendations (CSR) to show more ambition in terms of employment creation and the fight against poverty. Austerity policies, introduced by the Troika, could also be regarded as an obstacle to the achievement of *Europe 2020* goals. In peripheral countries, where unemployment and poverty rates had reached a high level, social policies were subjected to budget cuts. The new governance framework institutionalized structural distortion characterized by the preponderance of economic indicators and overlooking the social dimension. In the best case, the social objectives of the *Europe 2020* strategy were perceived as a way to compensate or to make the social consequences of austerity policies less painful.

Ms BERÈS proposed that the EU should a) look at social and economic objectives as being of equal importance, b) consider all objectives of the strategy to be part of a more balanced structure that would allow the social dialogue on a national and European level to play a more important role, c) have the EU budget that underpinned such a strategy and create own resources to finance that budget, d) recognise the European Parliament had a role as co-legislator on the AGS, and e) involve national Parliaments in the adoption of the NRP.

Ms BERÈS firmly supported the need to deepen the EMU by strengthening the coordination of national policies while giving the Eurozone the budgetary capacity to absorb within itself any asymmetric shocks. In that regard the EU should explore possibilities, such as the harmonization of the definition of a common corporate tax, possible revenues from a transaction tax and the development of a mechanism of solidarity between Member States on the financing of a minimum unemployment compensation.

In conclusion Ms BERÈS noted that unless the *Europe 2020* objectives became an absolute priority the Strategy would fail. The crisis would not be to blame for such a failure as it had already started by 2010. Meeting the challenges of diversity and balancing the interdependence between the periphery and central European countries should be regarded as a priority. She suggested that the

EU and the Eurozone should perceive the Eurozone as a space of economic and social interaction. The democratic legitimacy should be reinforced so that necessary measures for the accomplishment of the *Europe 2020* Strategy were accepted by citizens. It would also require the European Parliament to adapt its structure to the configuration of the euro area. If these challenges were met, then the European Union would emerge stronger from the current crisis and citizens would turn their back on extremist and populist rhetoric.

In the debate that followed 10 speakers took the floor. Mr René LEEGTE (ALDE), Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, argued that COSAC should focus on best practices and noted the importance of the second yellow card raised on the EPPO proposal. Both speakers agreed on the importance of best practices. Mr ŠEFČOVIČ cited ways of active cooperation between parliaments and EU institutions such as European Days and informal break up session, while Ms BERÈS commented that best practices were not enough, especially due to the interdependence of internal policies. Baroness Jean CORSTON (S&D), UK *House of Lords*, asked the speakers to comment on food waste and youth unemployment, whereas Mr Slaven RADUNOVIĆ (Non-affiliated), Montenegro *Skupština*, referred to the goals of the *Europe 2020* Strategy relevant to education. Ms BERÈS noted that the European Parliament was looking to ensure that the food waste issue was taken into account in legislation and Mr ŠEFČOVIČ committed to share the views of the relevant working group with the Parliaments. On youth unemployment and education Ms BERÈS considered the Youth Guarantee as a positive development and described education as a long term investment that should not be submitted to restrictions. On the other hand Mr ŠEFČOVIČ urged national Parliaments to scrutinise their governments on their schemes for the introduction of Youth Guarantee and called on the candidate countries to take advantage of policies such as the *Europe 2020* Strategy before joining the EU. He also regrettably noted the immense divergence in spending level in R&D among Member States. On the comment of Mr Jozo RADOŠ (ALDE), Croatian *Hrvatski Sabor*, on the involvement of national Parliaments in the debate on *Europe 2020* Strategy and the harmonisation of NRP to the goals set by the strategy, Ms BERÈS underlined that EU and national budgets must be complementary to produce results. Mr Konstantinos MOUSOUROULIS (EPP), Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, referring to the response to the crisis asked whether there should be an amendment on certain points of the *Europe 2020* Strategy such as ensuring equal opportunities in investment, since great divergence between North and South were observed (2% interest rate in the North in comparison to 10% in the South). Mr Michael CONNARTY (S&D), UK *House of Commons*, questioned why a Member State should give up its individual economic programme and opt for a “soviet planned economy”. Mr Herman DE CROO (ALDE), Belgian *Chambre des Représentants*, raised several questions concerning labour costs, competitiveness, energy prices, education and lack of language skills. Ms BERÈS answered that reducing labour costs would be a false approach as compared to low wage countries, labour cost would always be higher in Europe, so the social model would be more appropriate for the EU. Concerning education, Ms BERÈS noted that recognising qualifications was an issue that EU was trying to address. Mr ŠEFČOVIČ in commenting on the overall response to the crisis, noted, taking into account the fact that the EU was not aware of the level of interdependence of Member State economies and did not have adequate instruments in place, that the EU's reaction was sufficient and democratically approved and demonstrated significant solidarity amongst Member States. Finally, Ms Vilija BLINKEVIČIŪTĖ (S&D), *European Parliament*, raised the issue of a balanced economic and social dimension and the importance of financing social investments and ensuring sustainable growth. She also requested the setting up of a study on the impact of immigration on social systems. Mr Edmund WITTBRODT, Polish *Senat*, requested the earlier submission of staff working documents on the European Semester to national Parliaments.

7. Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC

Mr AUŠTREVICIUS, Lithuanian *Seimas*, informed the conference that the Presidential Troika of COSAC had followed the agreed process for the filling of the post of the Permanent Member of COSAC Secretariat during which four highly qualified candidates had been interviewed. He

thanked the Parliaments who had submitted their candidates and announced that the candidacy of Ms Christiana FRYDA had been chosen unanimously by the Presidential Troika of COSAC for the period 2014-2015. He also thanked Ms Libby KURIEN, the outgoing Permanent Member, for her work over the last two years.

Mr AUŠTREVČIUS, Lithuanian *Seimas*, stated that the Lithuanian Presidency had submitted the first draft of the Contribution and Conclusions in early October 2013 and the second draft on 23 October 2013. Since then the Presidency had received and taken on board amendments from national Parliaments and the European Parliament on both documents. Following a debate, a further amended text of the Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC was agreed by consensus, with the abstention of the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*.

- Briefing on the first meeting of the COSAC Women's Forum -

Mr KIRKILAS informed the plenary that that morning the COSAC Women's Forum had been established. H. E. Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ, Speaker of the Lithuanian *Seimas*, had welcomed the forum. Ms Bariza KHIARI, Vice-President of the French *Sénat*, and Ms Virginija LANGBAKK, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality, had given key note speeches. The meeting had been chaired by Prof Marija Aušrinė PAVILIONIENĖ (S&D), Lithuanian *Seimas*, who had been appointed the coordinator of the COSAC Women's Forum. The forum had adopted a Declaration on the Founding of the COSAC Women's Forum.

Prof PAVILIONIENĖ briefed the plenary on the outcome of the meeting.

8. 'Democratic Legitimacy in the EU and the role of EU Parliaments'

Keynote speakers: Ms Eva Kjer HANSEN, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Danish *Folketing*, Mr Dominic HANNIGAN, Chair of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs of the Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*, and Mr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING, former President of the European Parliament, Member of the European Parliament

Ms Eva Kjer HANSEN, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Danish *Folketing* led off the debate. She said that after 50 meetings of COSAC it was time to look back but also to see if its impact could be enhanced in the future. She noted that harsh austerity measures in some countries had led to a disillusionment of their citizens and support for the EU was declining at a time when the Union's powers were expanding. Europe needed a democratic framework which matched the Union's increased role and powers in relation to economic governance. Draft national budgets were examined in the Union before they were passed by the respective national Parliaments while decisions about national budgets remained at the heart of national parliamentary democracy. The European Parliament while important and effective did not fill the gap in economic and financial matters. However, while she believed that there was no need for any new institutions there was a need for new tools for national Parliaments. The Danish *Folketing* had introduced a "National Semester" which allowed the Danish *Folketing* to scrutinise the Danish Government before the Danish position was fixed and before the Commission launched the Annual Growth Survey, before they submitted their National Reform Plan and before the Council debate on the Country Specific Recommendations. There was also a need to reinforce political dialogue by allowing national Parliaments the right to contribute to legislation by giving them a right of initiative through political contributions. This could be done through a political commitment from the Commission rather than by amending the Treaty. She called on colleagues to use written enquiries as an instrument more frequently and spoke against the organisation of new large scale interparliamentary conferences and offered instead the idea on parliamentary clusters similar to the one held in the Danish *Folketing* in October about free movement of workers and social welfare issues.

Mr Dominic HANNIGAN, Chair of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs of the Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*, spoke about the decline in voter turnout for the EP elections; the fact that

some candidates were unknown due to the list system and the fact that unknown substitutes could replace an elected members of the European Parliament as factors in this regard. This decline was happening at a time when the European Parliament was gaining power. He noted a disconnection caused by increased intergovernmentalism in economic policy. He said some trust had been regained with the Commission proposals in relation to the election of the Commission President and the increased recognition of European political parties. He believed that Treaty change would not be required, for example, to ban national party logos from the EP elections, to require a certain percentage of political literature to refer to EU matters or to replace members of the European Parliament with a by-election rather than with substitutes. The role of national Parliaments needed to be made more effective, for example, Mr HANNIGAN would be organising a debate with his committee and stakeholders on the Commission's proposal on the Social Dimension which he hoped would provide material for a political contribution on this important policy issue. The content and timing of the Commission's responses to 'yellow cards' needed to be reviewed and he hoped that the Commission would appear more frequently before committees of national Parliaments. He agreed with the right of initiative mentioned in the COSAC XLIX report but also saw the need to optimise the parliamentary architecture of oversight. From his personal experience he thought that the first Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union had been overtly conflictual in the way it had operated. A strong functioning central secretariat was needed to support national Parliaments in their work but there was no need for another chamber or new institution

Member of the European Parliament Mr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING, Former President of the European Parliament, said that what was important was that the EU as a complex community should be able to act and also have a democratic anchor. He believed that the national Parliaments and the European Parliament all served democracy but at different levels. The role of national Parliaments was to scrutinise their own governments. He also believed that intergovernmentalism should not become the trend and that the German Constitutional Court was unduly critical of the EU which was, in effect, *sui generis*. He thought that the right of initiative for national Parliaments should be debated. The EP itself had gained the right of initiative in 1999 when it had negotiated it with the incoming Prodi Commission. He therefore believed that existing powers and provisions should be used more fully and that no new institutions were required.

Lord BOSWELL (Non-affiliated), Chairman of the European Union Select Committee, House of Lords of the United Kingdom was first to respond. He noted the complementary roles of the national Parliaments and the EP. He thanked the Presidency for organising the first Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union and he said that his committee had identified Troika imposed austerity measures as a gap in democratic legitimacy given that no Parliaments were involved in devising them. He said that the "fine" words of conferences should not be disconnected from the everyday concerns of citizens.

There were 27 contributions in the debate which followed. Mr Richárd HÖRCSIK (EPP), Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, warned of the need to maintain the institutional balance and that a Eurozone committee in the EP could negatively affect that balance. He noted with satisfaction the first Hungarian reasoned opinion that had recently been issued. Mr Bo BERNHARDSSON (S&D), Swedish *Riksdag*, noted that proposals with a far reaching impact could not be rushed and needed discussion. The Commission had been short on explaining its motivation for certain proposals. Ms Riitta MYLLER (S&D), Finnish *Eduskunta*, agreed with the general tone of the debate that no new institutions were needed. Mr Jakob PRESEČNIK (EPP), Slovenian *Državni zbor*, noted that in contrast to the intentions of the Lisbon Treaty the powers of national Parliaments would decrease if the EMU developed as foreseen but that citizen dissatisfaction was always felt in national Parliaments. He questioned if the mushrooming of conferences was necessary given that COSAC had a broad agenda which could deal with such issues and he supported the idea that there should be no new institutions. Mr Ioannis TRAGAKIS (EPP), Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, urged national Parliaments and the European Parliament to find ways to intensify and structure their cooperation in

a constructive way, such as in the case of the co-organization of the Interparliamentary Conference on the Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union which had yet to prove that it was indeed cooperation in essence.

Ms Ingrid ANTIČEVIĆ MARINOVIĆ (S&D), Croatian *Hrvatski Sabor*, said citizens did not believe that the EU was working in their favour and wanted to know what their national members would do to help them. Mr Luis FAZENDA (GUE/NGL), Portuguese *Assembleia da Republica*, noted that while the current crisis required the TSCG taking budget power from national Parliaments, this was not a good idea while Ms Paola CARINELLI (Non-affiliated), *Camera dei Deputati*, observed that up to one third of the next EP could be euro-sceptic in nature.

Mr Simon SUTOUR (S&D), French *Sénat*, said that the Commission needed to wake up to the use of 'yellow cards' and involve national Parliaments at an earlier stage in the legislative process. He fully agreed with the concept of a 'green card' and the right of initiative. Mr Bill CASH (Non-affiliated), UK *House of Commons*, was worried that the EU was sleep walking into chaos. Citizens believed in their national governments and the EU was becoming dysfunctional - it needed to relocate powers to national Parliaments and not the EP. Mr Andrew DUFF (ALDE), *European Parliament*, said that attacking the European Parliament put COSAC in denial. He said the sovereignty of states was exercised in the Council and the sovereignty of people in the European Parliament. National Parliaments gave legitimacy to governments and while they were not part of the Union's legislative process they could request legislative proposals through their governments in Council. It was essential, however, that the Commission retained the right of initiative i.e. to determine the common intent among the competing needs of the Member States. Mr Konstantinos TRIANTAFYLLOS (S&D), Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Mr Andrzej GAŁAŻEWSKI (EPP), Polish *Sejm*, and Mr Christos MESSIS (GUE/NGL), Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, argued for more transparency noting that the national Parliaments could play a role in the institutional balance and were the guarantors of democracy and that more in-depth discussion of certain issues was required.

Mr Mehmet TEKELIOĞLU (EPP observer party), Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*, welcomed the opening by the Lithuanian Presidency of Chapter 22 on Regional Policy - the first in 3 years. Mr Herman DE CROO, Belgian *Chambre des Représentants*, stated that it would help if voting in the European Parliament elections was made mandatory and if there could be broader constituencies for the elections. Mr Michael CONNARTY (S&D), UK *House of Commons*, stated that no Treaty changes were required and EP powers had increased already while its mandate had declined. He favoured an interparliamentary conference model along the lines of the Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking of which he was a member. Ms Pervenche BERÈS (S&D), *European Parliament*, was of the view that each had to play their own role and that COSAC was for cooperation and not rivalry. She defended the community method and said that the EP improved legislation.

In response and throughout the debate the keynote speakers made the following observations. Ms Eva Kjer HANSEN said that Parliaments needed to stick together, but that the role of national Parliaments had been forgotten and they needed more tools. She agreed with more in-depth discussion on certain issues and in relation to Turkey noted that it required progress from both sides to move forward. Mr Dominic HANNIGAN said that the Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union was open to all even those who did not sign the Stability Treaty and that this added value to it. He noted the need for a discussion on the Social Dimension and asked what the Commission reaction would be if some of the indicators were not met. He asked that national Parliaments be given a role in promoting youth guarantee schemes. He noted that Ireland would exit its bailout programme but that few people realised the impact of the European Semester and the CSR. In this regard there was a need for continuity of discussion across COSAC meetings with room, of course, for new agenda items. Mr Hans-Gert PÖTTERING reiterated his view that no new institutions were needed but that for the Eurozone it was possible today to consult all Member States through the EP. The CFSP/CDSP area needed to be improved to

allow Member States to act more quickly; ERASMUS was the soul of Europe allowing students to exchange ideas etc.

9. 'Digital Agenda: challenges and perspectives'

Keynote speaker: Mr Rudolf Peter ROY, Head of division for Security Policy and Sanctions of the European External Action Service

Cyber security

Mr Rudolf Peter ROY, Head of the Division for Security Policy and Sanctions, European External Action Service, emphasised that information and communication technology-related activities accounted for more than 20 % of GDP growth in the world's major economies over the last five years. The Internet was already contributing up to 8 % to GDP in some of the G-20 economies. There were 2.4 billion Internet users in the world in 2013 and this number would double by 2020. He noted that cyberspace provided access to education, promoted freedom of speech, connected people worldwide and enabled essential services. It also worked as a crucial catalyst for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. While the digital world brought enormous benefits, it was also vulnerable.

On 5 February 2013 the College of Commissioners adopted the EU Cyber Security Strategy. The Strategy comprised internal market, home affairs and Common Foreign and Security Policy angles of cyberspace issues. It addressed how Member States can streamline their efforts in this field and what EU institutions and agencies could do in order to assist them. It also sought to improve horizontal cooperation between different policy areas in the EU. The strategy stressed that for cyberspace to remain open and free the EU's core values, norms and principles that were upheld offline must also apply online. Fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law needed to be protected in cyberspace globally. Mr ROY cautioned that, when it came to national level, there was still work to be done in order to achieve EU wide cyber resilience.

In its resolution of 12 September 2013 the European Parliament welcomed the Strategy and stressed that the Internet and cyberspace was of increasing and paramount importance for political, economic and societal transactions not only within the Union but also in relation to other actors around the world.

Mr ROY elaborated on the three key elements of the external dimension of the Strategy. The first element and a priority for EU international engagement in cyber issues was to promote cyberspace as an area of freedom and fundamental rights. Firstly, on the question of surveillance of mass data flows the EU and the US were conducting continuous consultations in order to discuss the related data protection issues. These actions should result in proposals for better protection of privacy in the digital age. Secondly, the allegations of spying on the diplomatic premises or officials of the EU and its MS raised an issue of trust. In his opinion, the Heads of State and Government of the EU delivered a clear message on both aspects in the statement annexed to the Conclusions of the 24-25 October European Council. He expressed hope that the discussion around these issues would lead, in the end, to more awareness and transparency.

The second element highlighted by Mr ROY was the need to preserve cyberspace by agreeing which actions were allowed and which were not. The third element was to ensure that trust and confidence in information and communication technology depended on knowledge and capacity. He concluded by saying that the EU would work on a model which would leverage best practices in global cyber security capacity building of countries and of the private sector. The EU would also look for synergies across many development areas to improve governance, ensure respect for human rights, build infrastructure and provide basic education.

Benefits for business

Keynote speaker: Mr Ilja LAURS, Chief Executive Officer of GetJar, winner of “European Manager of the Year 2011 Award”, presented by the European Business Press (EBP)

Mr Ilja LAURS, Chief Executive Officer of GetJar, winner of “European Manager of the Year 2011 Award” presented by the European Business Press, introduced the problems, challenges and opportunities that technological entrepreneurs face in Europe. He stated that Europe lagged behind massively by world standards for the number of companies who reach the maturity stage in innovation and sell their shares in an initial public offering (IPO). The European market was small: it represented only 13 % of the global market in IPOs (the US represents 52 % of the market). Mr LAURS said Europe was a challenging place for innovating and highlighted four main points. The first point was the lack of education on entrepreneurship, innovative business “start-ups” and understanding of the basic business philosophy, principles and models. The second point was strict, inflexible labour regulation, bureaucracy and data/privacy policy which were the reasons why Europe had become an unfavourable place for new companies to explore new business ideas. The third point was working mentality (40 hours per week working time), the rare use of the practice of issuing share options and other motivation methods, low tolerance to failure, etc. The fourth point was that public funding for business was low on efficiency and unfair competition in Europe. He introduced “The Manifesto” initiative supported by nine of Europe’s most successful tech entrepreneurs. This initiative called for action and gave twenty practical suggestions (education and skills, access to talent, access to capital, data, policy, protection and privacy, thought leadership, etc.), and on how EU institutions and Governments of EU Member States could help to systematically improve the environment for business in Europe.

In the debate which followed, 15 speakers took the floor. A number of speakers explicitly mentioned cyber threats and expressed concern about issues of cyber security and privacy. Respecting the principles of fundamental rights and human rights were also highlighted. It was mentioned that some cyber defence issues would be addressed during the European Council in December. Mr ROY agreed with some speakers who stated that there was overregulation in the area of the digital market in the EU which restricted its development. The lack of education and training were mentioned as some of the biggest challenges of the digital market. A number of speakers considered the digital agenda as the main strategic initiative for helping Europe to overcome the current economic crisis and to improve its competitiveness. Some speakers made specific reference to the importance of the digital market as a tool to create wealth and achieve a better future for Europe. According to Ms Laima Liucija ANDRIKIENĖ, *European Parliament*, the digital agenda could reboot the EU economy: EU GDP was expected to grow by 5 % because of the implementation of the digital agenda over the next eight years (through investment in information and communication technologies, the building of capacities and facilitating the development of the cyber economy). Mr LAURS drew attention to the value in the digital market which was being created very quickly. For example, one digital game could generate 2 million dollars profit per day. Ms Axelle LEMAIRE, French *Assemblée nationale*, suggested finding ways to finance digital tools not only from public but also from private funds. Concerning the digital market she noted the existing discrepancy between the positions of the EU institutions and of the EU Members States. Mr Börje VESTLUND (S&D), Swedish *Riksdag*, stated that it was important to remember that there were groups of people who never used digital services. Mr Jožef HORVAT (EPP), Slovenian *Državni zbor*, noted that special attention should be paid to the problems resulting from the fragmentation of the European telecommunication market with more than eight thousand operators. He also pointed out the problems with digital incompatibility, shared use of electronic documents and the necessity to continue the harmonisation of digital legislation. The participants of the debate mentioned a number of important policy areas, for example, public administration, consumer protection etc. related to the digital market. The significance of freedom of expression was mentioned as well as importance of preventing hate-guided campaigns in the cyberspace.

10. Adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC

Mr AUŠTREVICIUS, Lithuanian *Seimas*, presented the final draft of the Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC to the meeting. He reported that the documents had been amended during a lively debate in the Chairpersons' meeting held the previous evening. Presenting the draft of the Contribution of the L COSAC, Mr AUŠTREVICIUS drew attention to articles 1.2 and 7.3 and proposed some technical amendments which were accepted.

He presented the draft of the Conclusions of the L COSAC. The common amendment proposed by the Swedish *Riksdag* and UK *House of Commons* to point 3.4 was accepted.

Hereafter, the conference adopted by consensus the texts of the Contribution and Conclusions of the L COSAC as amended. Once translated into all official languages of the EU, the Contribution of the L COSAC will be published in the Official Journal of the EU.

Finally, Mr TRAGAKIS, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, said that this Presidential Trio – Ireland, Lithuania and Greece – had cooperated very closely to ensure continuity in the EU agenda. He stressed that Lithuania and Ireland had conducted their proceedings very successfully and he thanked the Lithuanian *Seimas* and the Chair Mr KIRKILAS for excellent organisation of L COSAC in Vilnius. Mr TRAGAKIS said that he was looking forward to the continuation of this cooperation with Trio during the coming 6 months of the Greek Presidency, which would coincide with the elections of the European Parliament. He invited everyone to Athens for the COSAC Chairpersons meeting and the LI COSAC plenary meeting.