

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TROIKA OF COSAC
Bucharest, Romania, 20 January 2019

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

CHAIRS: Ms Gabriela CREȚU, Chairwoman of the European Affairs Committee, Romanian *Senat*; Mr Angel TÎLVĂR, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, Romanian *Camera Deputaților*.

Mr Christian BUCHMANN, Chair of the EU Committee, Austrian *Bundesrat*; Mr Arto SATONEN, Chair of the Grand Committee, Finnish *Eduskunta*.

AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda of the meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC**
- 2. Approval of the draft programme of the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC**
- 3. Debate on the draft programme of the LXI COSAC**
- 4. Approval of the outline of the 31st Bi-annual Report of COSAC**
- 5. Letters received by the Presidency**
- 6. Any other business**

PROCEEDINGS

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

Ms CREȚU welcomed the delegations of the Presidential Troika of COSAC (hereinafter referred to as "the Troika"), and outlined the agenda of the meeting of the Troika, which was adopted without amendment.

2. Approval of the draft programme of the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC

Ms CREȚU outlined the topics on the programme of the meeting that would take place the following day.

The first session would focus on the "priorities of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU" and would be presented by Ms Ana BIRCHALL, Vice-Prime Minister for Romania's Strategic Partnerships' Implementation.

The second session would deal with "increasing cohesion and ensuring convergence through the Multiannual Financial Framework instruments", with Ms Corina CREȚU, Commissioner for Regional Policy, as well as Mr Daniel DĂIANU, member of the Board, National Bank of Romania and member of the Romanian Academy.

After the Chair noted a slight change in the participant's list, the draft programme of the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC was approved without amendment.

3. Debate on the draft programme of the LXI COSAC

Mr TÎLVĂR informed the Troika members that the LXI COSAC would take place on 23 – 25 of June 2019 in Bucharest. He then outlined the four sessions of the draft programme.

The first session would focus on the achievements of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union; the second session would deal with the prospects for international trade relations of the European Union; the future of relations between the European Union and the UK in the context of Brexit; the third session would address the European Education Area as a driving factor for reshaping and strengthening the Single Market; while the fourth session would tackle economy based on innovation, technological progress and social European Union impact; the role of national Parliaments in fostering the "New Economy" of the EU.

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

4. Approval of the outline of the 31st Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Mr TÎLVĂR outlined the structure of the 31st Bi-annual Report of COSAC noting that it would be divided in three chapters, with the first chapter dealing with the prospects for international trade relations of the European Union; the future of relations between the European Union and the United Kingdom in the context of Brexit; the second chapter seeks to get the views of parliaments on the European Education Area as a driving factor for reshaping and strengthening the Single Market; and, finally, the third chapter focusses on economy based on innovation, technological progress and social impact; the role of Parliaments in fostering the "New Economy" of the EU.

The questionnaire would be distributed by 12 February and the replies would be expected by 19 March 2019.

The outline of the 31st Bi-annual Report of COSAC was approved.

5. Letters received by the Presidency

Ms CREȚU referred to the following letters received::

- Letters from Ms Áslaug Arna SIGURBJÖRNSDÓTTIR, Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Icelandic *Althingi*; Ms Karin KELLER-SUTTER, President of the Swiss EFTA-EU delegation, Swiss *Assemblée fédérale*; Mr Tone Wilhelmsen TRØEN, President of the Norwegian *Stortinget*; and Ms Tamar KHULORDAVA, Chairwoman of the Committee on European Integration, Parliament of Georgia; requesting participation in COSAC meetings.
- A letter from Mr Michael HEALY-RAE, Chairman Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*, regretting his Chamber's inability to be represented at the meeting due to the 100th anniversary of the first meeting of the *Dáil Éireann*.
- A letter from Mr Kristian VIGENIN, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European funds, Bulgarian *Narodno sobranie*, proposing the participation of one or more members of the COSAC Presidential Troika to the meetings of the Conference of Committees for European Affairs/Integration of countries within the Stabilisation and Association Process of South-East Europe (COSAP), on a regular basis.
- A letter from Ms Mairead McGUINNESS, First Vice-President, European Parliament, regretting that she could not be able to participate at the Chairpersons of COSAC, as she would be representing European Parliament at a ceremony in Dublin.
- A letter from Ms Danuta HÜBNER, Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, regretting that she could not participate at the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC due to medical circumstances, and stressing a couple of remarks regarding the draft programme of the LXI COSAC Plenary meeting and the outline of the 31st Bi-annual Report of COSAC.

After consultation with the Troika, the Parliaments requesting participation had been invited as special guests, although Iceland would not be attending the Chairpersons meeting.

With regard to the letter sent by Mr VIGENIN, Mr BUCHMANN supported the general idea expressed in the letter in order to strengthen the ties between COSAC and COSAP. Mr SATONEN pointed out that over the years, COSAC has avoided making permanent commitments of this nature, in order not to bind the hands of future Presidencies. Mr SATONEN suggested keeping to the established practice, leaving it to each Presidency, in consultation with the Troika, to assess invitations on a case-by-case basis.

Ms CREȚU said the letter of Mr VIGENIN should be further discussed in the meeting the following day.

6. Any other business

Ms CREȚU highlighted the intention of the Romanian Parliament to send a letter of intent to the European Union Affairs Committees of national Parliaments asking them to confirm their intentions to maintain the current co-financing mechanism of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and the costs of running of the office of COSAC for two years starting from 1 January 2020.

In accordance with the LX COSAC Conclusions regarding the integration of the COSAC web-page into the IPEX platform, whereby COSAC invited the Romanian Presidency to closely monitor the transfer of information and to ensure the completion of the process by the LXI COSAC plenary meeting, the Chairs took note of the progress made thus far and the working timetable for the migration before the Plenary meeting in Bucharest provided by COSAC Secretariat and presented by its Permanent Member.

With regard to the future of the COSAC website, the Chairs agreed to take into consideration the recommendation of the IPEX Board meeting.