

CONTRIBUTION OF THE XLIV COSAC

Brussels, 24 – 26 October 2010

1. Sustainable development in the EUROPE 2020 Strategy

- 1.1. COSAC considers the EUROPE 2020 Strategy to be a well integrated and co-ordinated approach that must lead to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, sufficiently taking into account both the economic and the scientific developments inside and outside the EU and its social and environmental consequences and respect for human rights.
- 1.2. COSAC's support for the EUROPE 2020 Strategy is not unconditional. Hence, the European Commission and the Council are invited, during the process of future legislation, to bear in mind the need to limit the number of targets, coordinate with other EU initiatives, ensure Europe's energy security and avoid productivity losses. The EUROPE 2020 Strategy must be taken into account in the reform process of the economic governance in Europe.
- 1.3. COSAC calls on national Parliaments and the European Parliament to take political ownership of the EUROPE 2020 Strategy by actively monitoring its implementation.
- 1.4. COSAC also calls on the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament to enhance the integration of the challenges of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development into legislative proposals and other initiatives.
- 1.5. COSAC notices with satisfaction that national Parliaments consider that the decision-making process is sufficiently stringent and that the parliamentary oversight is sufficiently guaranteed. In this context, peer pressure is of particular importance.
- 1.6. Finally, in the framework of the follow up of the EUROPE 2020 Strategy, COSAC invites national Parliaments to reflect on their future role with regard to National Reform Plans.

2. Parliamentary scrutiny of the common foreign and security policy and the common security and defence policy (henceforth "CFSP" and "CSDP")

- 2.1. COSAC stresses the need for parliamentary scrutiny of both CFSP and CSDP.
 - (i) Parliamentary oversight of CFSP and CSDP should involve both national Parliaments and the European Parliament;
 - (ii) The mechanism of parliamentary oversight of CFSP and CSDP should represent value for money and should add value to the work that Parliaments already do in this area;
 - (iii) There should be no new institutions or bodies established;
 - (iv) Parliamentary oversight should involve Members specialising in foreign affairs, defence and European Union affairs.

- 2.2. As a result, COSAC wishes that the new mechanism for parliamentary oversight of the CSDP be put in place during 2011.

3. Economic governance in the European Union

- 3.1. While COSAC welcomes the recent proposals on economic governance and calls for a fast track implementation approach, COSAC stresses that the far-reaching impact of the proposals calls for careful scrutiny and underlines the necessity for a thorough decision-making process that will lead to a genuine political commitment at the national and EU level alike. The effectiveness of parliamentary scrutiny exercised by national Parliaments and the European Parliament must not in any circumstances be jeopardised.

4. The future role of COSAC

- 4.1. COSAC emphasises its monitoring role through the exchange of information and best practice and, in particular, through its possible Bi-annual Reports.
- 4.2. COSAC considers an extensive debate on the Work Programme of the European Commission as an essential and recurrent part of its agenda. Therefore, COSAC encourages the incoming Presidencies to include a debate on the Work Programme of the European Commission in the agenda of the ordinary meetings of COSAC. When fixing the date of these meetings, COSAC Presidencies are invited to take into account the timing of the publication of the European Commission's Work Programme.
- 4.3. As forum for exchange, COSAC is the appropriate body to debate specific European policies and issues. The discussions in COSAC have revealed a converging interest of national Parliaments and the European Parliament for that kind of debate.
- 4.4. COSAC encourages national Parliaments to play an active role in the smooth functioning of the European Union by using all the possibilities offered to them by the Treaty of Lisbon. In particular, COSAC encourages the Chambers of the EU Parliaments to:
- a) monitor the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality according to the procedures outlined in Protocol 2 annexed to the Treaties;
 - b) continue the political dialogue with the European Commission not only limited to legislative proposals and going well beyond the issue of subsidiarity.

COSAC will take note of the results of these activities in order to share information and good practices between national Parliaments.

5. Cooperation with the European Union institutions

- 5.1. COSAC highly appreciates the participation for the first time of Mr. Herman Van Rompuy, the President of the European Council. It is convinced that its co-operation with the Council as well as with the European Council will continue to be as cordial as it is successful.

- 5.2. With reference to the definition of “draft legislative act”, COSAC refers to the Contribution of the XLIII COSAC and invites the Council to reconsider its initial position.
- 5.3. COSAC is delighted to have heard the address of Mr. José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, and welcomes the ensuing debate on the challenges for the Union over the next year. COSAC hopes that this direct dialogue will become a regular feature on the agenda of COSAC so that national Parliaments and the European Parliament can have an open discussion with the European Commission.
- 5.4. COSAC stresses that the application of the framework agreement between the European Parliament and the European Commission must be subject to constant legal monitoring.
- 5.5. COSAC underlines that all institutions are to respect the institutional balance resulting from the letter and the spirit of the Treaties.
- 5.6. In the light of the forthcoming consultation documents and legislative proposals on Europol and Eurojust, COSAC underscores the utmost need for a broad and timely preliminary consultation with national Parliaments by the European Commission. COSAC requests the European Commission to simultaneously publish the legislative proposals on Europol and Eurojust.
- 5.7. COSAC invites a response to this Contribution from the European Commission, the Council Presidency and the European Parliament.