

CONCLUSIONS OF THE LII COSAC

Rome, 30 November - 2 December 2014

1. The Bi-annual Report

1.1. COSAC welcomes the 22nd Bi-annual Report prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and warmly thanks the Secretariat for its excellent work. The Report provides useful information on EU Parliaments' proposals on the mid-term review of Europe 2020, which will be completed in Spring 2015, on the future of the EU - focusing on significant innovations and new trends - and on the impact of the developments of the European integration process on EU Parliaments five years after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, and on EU Parliaments' role regarding EU relations with Mediterranean partners. It further explores whether EU Parliaments have scrutinised the role, functions and accountability mechanisms of EU agencies.

2. New instruments and ideas aimed at involving national Parliaments in the EU decision-making process

2.1. COSAC welcomes the increasing engagement of national Parliaments in the European decision-making process. To this end, a special emphasis should be placed on holding debates with their Governments before and after European Council meetings, with the aim of influencing their respective national positions. COSAC bi-annual meetings could also be convened shortly before European Council meetings.

2.2. COSAC notes that the majority of Parliaments/Chambers favoured the idea of creating new instruments aimed at involving national Parliaments in EU decision-making process without any formal Treaty changes. The ideas that could be further explored are the introduction of a possible "green card" procedure to give national Parliaments the possibility to recommend new legislation to the European Commission, and the enhancement of the cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament via a more structured political dialogue on legislative and non-legislative acts, that do not raise subsidiarity objections.

2.3. COSAC invites the European Parliament to take into account the opinions of national Parliaments concerning the substance of draft legislative acts or other European document under consideration. In this perspective, and with the aim of facilitating EP activities, national Parliaments are invited to provide a translation or a summary of their opinions in English or French, or both.

2.4. COSAC takes note that fourteen Parliaments/Chambers have developed specific tools or procedures with regard to the stipulation of intergovernmental treaties in the field of economic governance and twelve Parliaments/Chambers had developed specific tools or procedures regarding the involvement of Parliaments in trade agreement negotiations. COSAC invites all others Parliaments/Chambers to fully exploit their potential vis-à-vis their respective Governments with regard to such issues, especially on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations.

3. More efficient use of subsidiarity checks

3.1. COSAC notes that most national Parliaments/Chambers consider subsidiarity checks an important tool to influence the content of the EU policies and decisions, together with political dialogue. COSAC takes note, however, that some Parliaments/Chambers consider these checks not completely satisfactory. Future COSAC Presidencies are invited to explore further arrangements to make them more effective.

3.2. Taking into account the replies to the 22nd Bi-annual Report, Parliaments/Chambers suggest that a more efficient use of subsidiarity checks may be accomplished, among others, by:

- a list of prioritised proposals selected from the Commission's Annual Work Programme before 31st January;
- early information on the findings of other Parliaments/Chambers, especially through IPEX and through the network of national Parliament representatives in Brussels.

4. Voting of COSAC's Contribution and Conclusions

Taking into account the draft letter circulated by some Parliaments/Chambers on the occasion of the Chairpersons Meeting held in Rome on 18 July 2014, after an analysis by the Presidency, with the assistance of the Secretariat, the document on practices regarding voting on Contributions, drafted by the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat in 2012, has been updated.