

CONTRIBUTION OF THE XLVIII COSAC

Nicosia, 14-16 October 2012

1. Nobel Peace Prize

COSAC welcomes the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union as recognition of its substantial contribution to the advancement of peace, reconciliation, democracy, human rights and solidarity. COSAC believes that this award constitutes both an immense honour for the European family but at the same time a challenge for the European Union to maintain and to further advance the values of democracy, peace and human rights worldwide.

2. From words to action: Making More Europe a reality.

2.1. COSAC acknowledges the need to complement and strengthen the existing economic and monetary union and supports the reinforcement of the EMU architecture that will secure the prevention, management and resolution of crises.

2.2. In view of the current developments within the European Union, COSAC appreciates that the deepening of the EMU will mark a new stage in the process of the European integration.

2.3. COSAC believes that the reinforcement of the EMU architecture, through a fiscal and banking union should be in line with the principles of democratic legitimacy and accountability. COSAC underlines the crucial role that the European Parliament as well as the national parliaments should play in this respect. COSAC recommends that the European Parliament and the national Parliaments be fully consulted on and involved in the future architecture of the EMU in order to strengthen democratic legitimacy and accountability.

3. Energy

3.1. COSAC recognises the efforts of the European Union to ensure a continuous supply of energy at competitive prices for the optimal functioning of the European economy as well as the welfare of its citizens, pursued in a manner that supports the attainment of the Union's long term sustainability objectives.

3.2. The completion of the Union's internal energy market through the extension and modernization of its energy infrastructure will enable the speedy and effective transport of electricity, gas and other forms of energy across Europe, thereby securing a continuous and

competitive energy supply for Europe's citizens and allowing all EU Member States to reap the benefits of the internal energy market. COSAC therefore welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a regulation on the Trans-European Energy Infrastructures, aimed at laying the foundations for the attainment of the goals set out in Europe 2020 and the Union's long term sustainability objectives.

3.3. COSAC notes that all national Parliaments that scrutinised the above mentioned proposal were in favour (17) or partly in favour (8) of its objectives. However, a number of national Parliaments have expressed selective concerns over various aspects of the above proposal, as documented in the 18th Biannual Report of COSAC. The overview of the parliamentary scrutiny of the above mentioned proposal, as documented in the said report, indicates that in the early stage of the legislative process at the European level, particular concerns as expressed by national Parliaments may vary widely.

3.4 COSAC, therefore, calls upon the Council and the European Parliament to take the considerations expressed by national Parliaments into account and to bring the said proposal to a successful conclusion as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the timely modernisation of Europe's energy infrastructures.

4. Single Market Governance

4.1 COSAC acknowledges the importance of the Single Market as a vehicle for the promotion of European integration as well as the driving force behind sustainable economic growth and the creation of more positions of employment for the citizens of Europe. COSAC, however, believes that the full potential of the Single Market has not yet been realised, largely owing to problems in the implementation and enforcement of the Single Market rules.

4.2 COSAC welcomes the European Commission's Communication on Better Governance for the Single Market, aiming, on the one hand, at identifying key areas with potential for growth and taking action to rapidly promote such growth, and on the other, at proposing measures to improve the way in which Single Market rules are designed, implemented, applied and enforced.

4.3 COSAC calls on the European Commission to work closely with the European Parliament and national Parliaments in order to attain the objectives set out in the said Communication, and to engage in a fruitful debate as to how the Single Market can be further improved for the benefit of Europe's citizens and businesses.

4.4 COSAC welcomes the European Commission's commitment to draft a first report on the integration of the single market and the implementation of the objectives of the Communication on Better Governance for the Single Market as part of its Annual Growth

Survey in 2013, as a useful tool in recording the progress made. COSAC calls for further measures to verify the implementation of the Single Market rules on a regular basis comparable to the European Semester exercise and acknowledges the importance of a Single Market test in order to assess the impact of existing legislation on the Single Market.

5. Europe 2020 Strategy – Recovery from the Economic Crisis

5.1 COSAC reaffirms the need for collective effort in order to effectively tackle the economic and social crisis and lead the Union to economic recovery and sustainable and inclusive growth. COSAC therefore underlines the crucial role of the Europe 2020 Strategy in achieving these objectives.

5.2 COSAC acknowledges the efforts of the European Commission to promote appropriate measures and means in support of growth, employment and better economic governance in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and in full respect of the solidarity principle. Furthermore, COSAC underlines the need that these objectives are met by Member States.

5.3 The ongoing economic crisis makes it clear that national targets must be set in areas where progress needs to be made, in order to better track performance in each sector and take rectifying action where appropriate. In this respect, COSAC encourages national Parliaments to increase efforts to monitor progress in meeting the Europe 2020 strategy goals and in particular through the scrutiny of implementation of Country-Specific Recommendations addressed to the Member States in the framework of the European Semester and their national reform programmes.

6. Political dialogue

6.1 COSAC recognises the importance of the political dialogue as a tool that reinforces the cooperation between the European institutions and national Parliaments. Although COSAC acknowledges that significant progress has been made to date regarding the political dialogue, it believes that this dialogue can be further enhanced.

6.2 In this respect, COSAC welcomes the Commission's firm commitment to further strengthening the political dialogue with national Parliaments in its reply to the Contribution of the XLVII COSAC.

6.3 COSAC calls on the European Commission to further enhance its cooperation with national Parliaments by sending more substantive responses and in a more timely manner, as requested by a number of Parliaments. COSAC welcomes the suggestion that the annual reports of the European Commission on the relations with national Parliaments could reflect with more clarity the influence that the opinions or other input by national Parliaments have

had on the final text of the proposal concerned. Furthermore it calls for intensified cooperation on proposals on which a significant number of Reasoned Opinions have been issued.

6.4 COSAC notes that for the first time since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, a sufficient number of national Parliaments or chambers submitted a Reasoned Opinion in order to trigger the "yellow card" mechanism on the proposal for a Regulation on the exercise of the right to take collective action within the context of the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services. COSAC acknowledges that the European Commission has now withdrawn the proposal. COSAC calls upon the European Commission to provide individual responses to the Reasoned Opinions submitted and reasoning for why it considers that the principle of subsidiarity has not been breached.

6.5 COSAC recognises the value of frequent contact between national Parliaments and the Commission on specific proposals and thanks the Commission for its efforts in this regard. It calls on the Commission to further enhance the political dialogue by paying more visits to national Parliaments and taking a tailored approach to the needs of each Parliament/Chamber.

6.6 COSAC appreciates the value of interparliamentary dialogue and of discussions with Commissioners within its meetings and calls on the Commission to continue its efforts to prioritise attending meetings of COSAC to build on the fruitful discussions to date.

