

CONCLUSIONS OF THE LII COSAC

Rome, 30 November - 2 December 2014

1. The Bi-annual Report

1.1. COSAC welcomes the issuance of 22nd Bi-annual Report prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and warmly thanks the Secretariat for its excellent work.

1.2. The Report provides useful information on EU Parliaments' proposals: a) on the mid-term review of Europe 2020, which will be completed in Spring 2015; b) 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; c) on EU Parliaments' role regarding EU relations with Mediterranean partners; d) on 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 put on holding debates with their respective Governments before and/or after European Council meetings, and engaging in the political dialogue with the Commission early in the policy-formation process, 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 better involving national Parliaments in the EU decision-making process without any need for formal Treaty changes. Among the ideas that could be further explored were the introduction of a possible "green card" procedure, to grant national Parliaments the ability to recommend new legislation, and the enhancement of the cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament by means of a better structured political dialogue on legislative and non-legislative acts, that do not raise subsidiarity issues.

2.3. COSAC invites the European Parliament to take into account the opinions of national Parliaments on the substance of draft legislative acts and/or of other European documents under consideration.

2.4. COSAC notes that fourteen Parliaments/Chambers have developed specific tools or procedures with regard to stipulating intergovernmental treaties in the field of economic governance, and twelve Parliaments/Chambers have developed specific tools or procedures on the involvement of Parliaments in trade agreement negotiations. COSAC invites all other Parliaments/Chambers to make full use of their power vis-à-vis their respective Governments with regard to such issues, especially where the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations are concerned.

3. More efficient use of subsidiarity checks

3.1. COSAC notes that most national Parliaments/Chambers consider subsidiarity checks an important tool, together with political dialogue, towards influencing the content of the EU policies and decisions. COSAC notes, however, that some Parliaments/Chambers view these checks as not fully satisfactory. Future COSAC Presidencies are invited to explore further arrangements to make such checks 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 achieved, among others, by:

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

4. Voting of COSAC's Contribution and Conclusions

4.1. 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.