

CONCLUSIONS OF THE LI COSAC

Athens, 15-17 June 2014

1. The Bi-annual Report

1.1 COSAC welcomes the 21st Bi-annual Report prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and warmly thanks the Secretariat for its excellent work. The Report provides extensive and useful information on the future of COSAC, on interparliamentary cooperation and in particular on cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament and examines how social and employment related policies can be better monitored, coordinated and scrutinised at the European and national level. It also explored ways to enhance democratic legitimacy and accountability in national budgetary, fiscal and economic policy in the framework of the European Semester and focused especially on the issue of parliamentary scrutiny over the "Troika's" (European Central Bank, European Commission and International Monetary Fund) working methods in cases of countries under macroeconomic adjustment programmes.

2. The Future of COSAC

2.1 COSAC welcomes the diversity of ideas expressed by a large majority of EU Parliaments in relation to its future development with a view to adapting to the evolving landscape of interparliamentary cooperation.

2.2 COSAC notes that EU Parliaments largely expressed the view that both policy and institutional issues should be included on the agenda of future meetings. In this respect, COSAC encourages future Presidencies to take into consideration the proposals submitted by the Parliaments in the Bi-annual Report. COSAC welcomes the call for developing further exchanges of information and best practices on the subsidiarity principle checks in the framework of COSAC following the issuing of two "yellow cards". Furthermore, it takes particular notice of the mechanisms put forward by the majority of the Parliaments and primarily the discussion in COSAC meetings of the European Commission's response to a "yellow card".

2.3 COSAC acknowledges the importance attributed to networking between members of Parliament and therefore supports, amongst others, initiatives that enhance closer cooperation between Members on specific issues of common interest, such as formal and informal meetings of members of Parliaments. In this respect, COSAC welcomes the inaugural meeting of Chairpersons of Committees of European Union Affairs of Parliaments of the EU South.

3. Cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament

3.1 COSAC notes with satisfaction that interparliamentary cooperation appears to be a generalised practice involving the majority of EU Parliaments. It stresses, however, the need for further improvement of interparliamentary meetings held at the premises of the European Parliament and organised by the Presidency Parliament in the Member States to meet the concerns expressed by a large majority of EU Parliaments.

3.2 COSAC recognises the importance of further enhancing cooperation between national Parliaments and the European Parliament by fully exploiting the provisions envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty. More specifically, it considers that there is significant room for improving interparliamentary cooperation, especially at the level of informal dialogue. In this regard, COSAC appreciates the recent *ad hoc* initiatives taken by the European Parliament (namely inviting rapporteurs or specialised members of national Parliaments on specific topics/draft proposals for discussion in Committee meetings in the European Parliament; inviting members of national Parliaments to hearings in the European Parliament; inviting members of national Parliaments to Committee enquiries in the European Parliament) and strongly supports the continuation and further development of such initiatives.

4. Lisbon guidelines for interparliamentary cooperation

4.1 COSAC stresses that a large majority of EU Parliaments considers that there is a need to update the Lisbon guidelines for interparliamentary cooperation, mainly to take into account the establishment of new interparliamentary fora. Therefore, COSAC encourages future Presidencies to submit a working document based on the replies to the COSAC questionnaire as a useful input to future EU Speakers Conferences in relation to a possible reflexion on the update of the Lisbon guidelines.

5. Democratic legitimacy and accountability in the budget process

5.1 COSAC is of the opinion that national Parliaments and the European Parliament must ensure the democratic legitimacy of the Economic Governance in the E.U. and further enhance their functioning and role on their respective competences. COSAC takes particular interest in the proposals submitted by national Parliaments in order to enhance their participation in the process, identifying political dialogue as a very effective tool in this process between the national Parliaments and relevant stakeholders and forms of interparliamentary cooperation, and in particular the Interparliamentary Conference on Economic Governance of the European Union.

5.2 COSAC welcomes the initiative taken by the European Parliament to launch an inquiry into the role and operations of the Troika with regard to the Euro area programme countries.