

Conclusions of the LXII COSAC

1 – 3 December 2019, Helsinki

The 32nd COSAC Bi-Annual Report

1. COSAC expresses thanks to the Secretariat for preparing the 32nd Bi-annual report, which evaluates aspects of COSAC's existing forms of work. The report identifies a need to reassess the preparation of Bi-annual Reports (BAR). Parliaments are equally divided as to whether the reports should recur bi-annually, or be prepared in response to a particular need for information identified by the presidency. The presidency in office should assume a leading role in ensuring that each BAR corresponds to needs for information that are widely felt among parliaments.
2. COSAC notes that, while a large majority of national parliaments are satisfied with their influence on their respective Member State's EU decision-making, a majority also see a need to improve how their inputs feed in to EU legislative outcomes through the reasoned opinion and political dialogue procedures. COSAC invites future presidencies to pursue this issue.
3. COSAC notes that, in spite of differences of opinion, a majority of chambers are in favour of exploring whether in future the COSAC secretariat could be deployed also in support of other recurring inter-parliamentary conferences, subject to a general review of the COSAC secretariat's tasks and resources. COSAC observes that the EU Speakers' Conference in May 2020 is to update the EUSC Guidelines on inter-parliamentary cooperation in the EU. COSAC calls on the relevant presidential Troikas to cooperate in further exploring synergies among the permanent inter-parliamentary conferences.

Transparency and parliaments' access to information

4. COSAC welcomes the efforts by the Finnish government in the context of the EU Presidency on the issue of legislative transparency and democratic accountability and calls on future Presidencies to continue this work. COSAC observes that the issue of transparency, democratic accountability and public access to information, particularly concerning the EU Council and the EU's legislative trilogues, has been raised by individual delegations at successive COSACs, but could not be accommodated in the plenary agenda. COSAC considers that the subject falls within its purview, but that a plenary debate requires a broadly shared experience and understanding of the issue and how it should be discussed. COSAC invites interested parliaments together with future presidencies-in-office to explore further how to frame and discuss the issue of transparency, democratic accountability and public access to information in a way that is meaningful for a plurality of parliaments.

COSAC's on-line visibility

5. COSAC notes that the LX COSAC (Vienna, November 2018) welcomed the migration of the COSAC website to the IPEX platform, and called for the completion of the process by the LXI COSAC. COSAC regrets that the migration has yet to be completed and calls on the Croatian Presidency to monitor closely that the process is finalised without further delay. COSAC sees IPEX as an important reference tool for parliaments and the public, who expect both databases and contact information to be unfailingly accurate and up to date.

Reappointment of the Permanent Member of COSAC's secretariat

6. The LXII COSAC records with approval that the Chairpersons decided to appoint Mr Kenneth CURMI of Malta to a second term as Permanent Member of COSAC's secretariat, for the years 2020 – 2021.