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COVER NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) - Meeting of the LXIX COSAC (Stockholm, 14-16 May 2023) = Contribution = Conclusions

Delegations will find in the Annexes the abovementioned documents related to the LXIX Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC), held in Stockholm on 14-16 May 2023.

Contribution of the LXIX COSAC

Stockholm 14–16 May 2023

Ukraine

- (1) COSAC welcomes the prompt support and unwavering solidarity shown by the international community for Ukraine since February 2022 when Russia upscaled its unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine to a full-scale invasion, and the strong unity shown by the European Union in this regard
- (2) COSAC calls on the EU and its Member States, to continue to provide political, financial, technical, military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, while respecting the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States. COSAC acknowledges the continuous security threats in the Black Sea region, and help strengthening societal resilience in the Republic of Moldova.
- (3) COSAC condemns, in the strongest possible terms, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which is a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. It also condemns Belarus' involvement in Russia's military aggression. COSAC underlines that the EU sanctions policy remains an effective measure of deterrence towards both Russia and Belarus.
- (4) COSAC confirms its unyielding support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.
- (5) COSAC reiterates the contribution of the LXVIII COSAC in Prague and calls for the immediate and unconditional termination of Russia's illegal military actions and withdrawal of all Russian forces and military equipment from the territory of Ukraine.
- (6) COSAC stresses the importance of the UN General Assembly resolution on the Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, with full respect for Ukraine's independence and territorial sovereignty.
- (7) COSAC welcomes and gives its support to the work of all actors contributing to the restoration, recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine. COSAC welcomes the work being conducted regarding the use of Russian frozen and immobilised assets in order to support the reconstruction of Ukraine.
- (8) COSAC calls on all relevant actors involved to incorporate a gender equality perspective in all reconstruction, peace and security efforts.
- (9) COSAC underlines the crucial importance of the continued strengthening of the pluralistic and inclusive parliamentary democracy, the respect for human rights, including the rights of national minorities, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.
- (10) COSAC emphasises the importance of holding everyone to account who has ordered, committed or participated in war crimes or other extremely serious crimes in connection with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and fully supports the International Criminal Court investigation in Ukraine.

(11) COSAC welcomes efforts to establish a suitable judicial mechanism to investigate and prosecute people who have participated in crimes of aggression in Ukraine. In this regard, COSAC welcomes the start of operations of the Core International Crimes Evidence Database (CICED), and the establishment of a new International Centre for Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine (ICPA) at Eurojust. COSAC supports in the Member States the full implementation of the principle of universal jurisdiction, aiming at reinforcing our common values that condemn human rights violations and crimes against humanity.

(12) COSAC condemns the deportation of Ukrainian children by the Russian Federation. It also condemns the violation of the right of deported Ukrainian children to preserve their identity, as defined by Article 8 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with the practice of forced acceptance of Russian citizenship.

(13) COSAC welcomes and supports the ongoing enlargement process for the Ukraine, Western Balkans, Moldova and in perspective Georgia, based on the fulfilment of set criteria. COSAC underlines that the stability in the EU neighbouring countries is crucial for the stability and prosperity of the entire Europe.

On organised crime and corruption

(14) COSAC underlines the importance of increased cooperation and information exchange at the EU level in the fight against cross-border, organised crime. COSAC welcomes the coordinative role of Eurojust in this respect and calls for the strengthening of cooperation with third countries.

(15) COSAC welcomes the initiatives taken by the co-legislators to prevent and fight cross-border organised crime, and emphasises the importance of their timely implementation.

(16) COSAC calls for enhanced and effective action against migrant smugglers and trafficking in human beings which pose a major humanitarian and security challenge for the Union.

(17) COSAC welcomes new initiatives to fight corruption in all areas. Corruption must be regarded as organised crime.

(18) COSAC underlines the importance of working to combat corruption at both the national and the EU level, as well as cooperation with third countries.

The single market

(19) COSAC agrees with the Commission that the single market is one of EU's greatest achievements and underlines its importance for the development and prosperity of the EU over the past 30 years.

(20) COSAC stresses that people's wellbeing of people is dependent on well-functioning essential services such as energy, water and health provision, transport and telecommunications. Focus on the removal of barriers in the single market should remain, especially in the services sector.

(21) COSAC underlines that a good supply of skills is important for the Union's competitiveness. COSAC therefore welcomes that 2023 has been designated as the "European Year of Skills".

(22) COSAC welcomes measures that can further promote the green and digital transitions and can strengthen the EU's competitiveness, while ensuring its open strategic autonomy, on the global arena. COSAC welcomes in particular measures taking into account small and medium-sized enterprises.

(23) COSAC emphasises that the single market has been exposed to various crises in recent years. Disruptions to global value chains during the pandemic led to shortages of important products. Russia's war in Ukraine is exacerbating the challenges to the single market. The war has led to an extensive energy crisis which, in turn, has led to higher prices in most areas.

(24) COSAC underlines how important it is that the EU and the Member States, also in times of crisis, continue to remove obstacles, lessen bureaucracy, implement and apply existing legislation and adapt the single market to today's modern and digital society in order to meet the expectations of the citizens and of companies. The single market must continue to adapt to new challenges, while extending the Schengen area to Romania and Bulgaria to consolidate furthermore EU's cooperation and economic resilience. These are strongly interdependent with strengthening the external borders.

Green transition

(25) COSAC welcomes efforts to realise all the various elements of the Fit for 55 package. The EU has ambitious climate goals which are necessary in order to meet the challenges of the future.

(26) COSAC welcomes work with the green transition and emphasises that a holistic approach is required in order to create a sustainable world.

(27) COSAC stresses that the EU has a central role in the green transition and needs to be at the forefront of global climate efforts, while recognising the importance of cooperation with third countries as climate change is a global challenge that knows no borders.

(28) COSAC stresses that the green transition is a necessary step in reducing the EU's energy dependence, while respecting the energy mix of each Member State, and that the transition must be accelerated.

(29) COSAC notes that the green transition involves both challenges and opportunities at all levels of society, and calls for it to be accompanied by appropriate social and economic support.

Conclusions of the LXIX COSAC Stockholm 14-16 May 2023

1. On the 39th COSAC Bi-annual Report

1.1 COSAC expresses its thanks to the COSAC Secretariat for preparing the 39th Bi-annual Report, which covers the participation of Parliaments in the handling of the Fit for 55 climate legislation, the role of Parliaments in accelerated decision-making processes in response to crises and best practices for information exchange between Parliaments, including use of IPEX.

1.2 COSAC invites all Parliaments to share the best practices emphasized in the Bi-annual Report within their Parliament.

1.3 COSAC encourages all Parliaments to use IPEX in order to exchange information and to upload useful information regarding parliamentary activity in EU affairs including the subsidiarity and proportionality checks.

2. On de-activation of the old COSAC website

2.1 Recalling the Conclusions of the LIX COSAC held in Sofia in June 2018, and following the Conclusions of the LVIII COSAC held in Tallinn in December 2017, COSAC hereby decides to de-activate the old COSAC website (www.cosac.eu) since all of its contents have successfully been transferred and uploaded on IPEX.

2.2 COSAC expresses its thanks to the COSAC Secretariat for its work with the transfer of all the content from the old COSAC website to IPEX, and also to the IPEX Information Officer for its support throughout this process.

2.3 De-activation of the old COSAC website corresponds to the purpose outlined by the Conference of Speakers of the Parliaments of the EU of establishing IPEX as the “one-stop shop” for interparliamentary exchange on EU affairs and documents, including hosting information related to all interparliamentary conferences.

3. COSAC Secretariat

3.1 COSAC recalls that the co-financing of the current Permanent Member and the office of the COSAC Secretariat ends on 31 December 2023. The Swedish Presidency invited Parliaments to renew their commitment to the co-financing agreement for the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025.

3.2 COSAC notes that 39 out of the 39 National Parliaments/Chambers have signed and sent their letters of intent indicating that they are willing to participate in the co-financing for the above stated period. COSAC welcomes the fact that all 39 National Parliaments/Chambers have signed the letter of intent and therefore the co-financing of the Permanent Member and the office of the COSAC Secretariat will continue.

3.3. COSAC thanks the European Parliament for hosting the COSAC Secretariat on its premises in Brussels and for providing it with appropriate office facilities

4. On the Conclusions of the Presidency of the Conference of Speakers in Prague on 24-25 April 2023

4.1 COSAC takes note of the Conclusions of the Presidency of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments held in Prague on 24-25 April 2023, in particular the invitation to COSAC to propose an exchange of best practices and to reflect on possible ways to strengthen modern parliamentarism.

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