

Tithe an Oireachtais
An Comhchoiste um Ghnóthaí Eorpacha

Tuarascáil maidir le
Cruinniú Chathaoirligh COSAC agus Cruinniú Iomlánach
XLVI COSAC
Uachtaránacht na Polainne ar an Aontas Eorpach.

Iúil – Nollaig 2011

Houses of the Oireachtas
Joint Committee on European Affairs

Report on
Meeting of COSAC Chairpersons and Plenary Meeting of
the XLVI COSAC
Polish Presidency of the EU

July – December 2011

MEETING OF THE COSAC CHAIRPERSONS AND PLENARY MEETING OF THE XLVI COSAC

POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU

JULY – DECEMBER 2011

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MEETING OF THE COSAC CHAIRPERSONS AND PLENARY MEETING OF THE XLVI COSAC

POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU

JULY – DECEMBER 2011

CHAIRPERSONS MEETING, WARSAW, 11TH JULY 2011

The meeting of Chairpersons of the European Affairs Committees of the national parliaments along with representatives of the European Parliament took place in Warsaw on 11th July 2011. The Houses of the Oireachtas was represented by Mr. Joe Costello T.D., Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Affairs.

The meeting took place in the Senate building, and was co-chaired by Mr. Stanisław Rakoczy, Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, and Mr. Edmund Wittbrodt, Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee of Senate of the Republic of Poland.

Before the meeting commenced Mr. Wittbrodt welcomed two new chairpersons of Committees on European Affairs: Deputy Joe Costello and Mr. Paulo Mota Pinto of the Portuguese Assembleia da República.

The agenda for the meeting was as follows;

1. Opening address by Mr Bogdan BORUSEWICZ, Marshal of the Senat of the Republic of Poland
2. Briefing on the decisions of the Presidential Troika of COSAC and preparation for the XLVI COSAC
 - Draft agenda of the XLVI COSAC
 - Outline of the 16th Bi-annual Report
 - Nomination of the next Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat
3. Priorities of the Polish Presidency – guest speaker: Mr Mikołaj DOWGIELEWICZ, Secretary of State for European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
4. EU institutions vis-à-vis conflicts at the EU's external borders - guest speaker: Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM, Commissioner responsible for Home Affairs

1. Opening address by Mr Bogdan BORUSEWICZ, Marshal of the Senat of the Republic of Poland

Mr Borusewicz welcomed the meeting and underlined the importance of the role of European Affairs Committees and looked forward to the opportunity to discuss interparliamentary cooperation on foreign, security and defence policies. On the priorities of the Polish Presidency he gave particular attention to the Eastern Partnership and relations with southern neighbours and noted that countries in both regions could benefit from Poland's experience of transition to democracy. Mr Borusewicz concluded that economic prosperity and democracy would not be possible in Europe without transformation and democratisation in the neighbouring countries.

2. Briefing on the decisions of the Presidential Troika of COSAC and preparation for the XLVI COSAC

The Conference was briefed on the meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC which had approved the draft agenda for the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC, the draft programme for the XLVI COSAC meeting and the draft outline of the 16th Bi-annual Report. It had also approved the procedure for the nomination of the next Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat.

It was agreed that the 16th Bi-annual Report would deal with the following issues-

- Multiannual Financial Framework for Europe 2020 Strategy
- Two years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon - parliamentary experience

On the Bi-annual report a number of speakers stressed the need for Parliaments to reflect on the powers conferred by the Lisbon Treaty in order to maximise influence.

The Chairpersons approved the decisions taken by the Troika.

3. Priorities of the Polish Presidency

The Secretary of State for European Affairs, Mr. Mikolaj Dowgielewicz, presented the priorities of the Polish EU Presidency.

The first priority of the Polish Presidency, Secure Europe, he explained should be considered multidimensional to include defence security, energy security and food security. In this context, the Secretary of State mentioned also the Schengen agreement.

The second priority, **European Integration as a Source of Growth**, the Secretary of State underscored that the debate on economic issues should be about the development of a long-term strategy, fostering economic growth and job creation. He noted that one of the main goals of the Council in the coming six months would be the deepening of the internal market eg through conclusion of several trade agreements between the European Union and third countries and commencing negotiations with Moldova and Georgia.

Turning to the third priority, **Europe Benefiting from Openness**, the Secretary of State emphasized that openness had been a great asset of the European Union and in this context recalled the accession negotiations with Croatia, completed at the end of June 2011, and announced the acceleration of the accession negotiations with Iceland, further dialogue concerning the candidature of Serbia and steps towards a decision on starting accession negotiations with Montenegro.

The Secretary of State highlighted the crisis in the Eurozone as a key challenge both for the Presidency and for the EU institutions and stressed the importance of supporting countries facing difficulties.

Debate

Following the Secretary of States presentation, 20 Members of national Parliaments and the European Parliament took the floor. Participants welcomed the priorities of the Polish Presidency and discussed the following topics;

- the Multi annual Financial Framework,
- the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Schengen related issues, in particular the Danish Customs Control Agreement and
- accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen area.

The Chairman's contribution

The Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Affairs in his Contribution noted the importance for all member states of the MFF and stressed the need for the underlying principle to be one of solidarity. The Chairman stated that despite the economic crisis it is important to look forward and explained that Ireland's basic principle was to ensure that the overall size of the Budget would be adequate to support the agreed policy priorities as set out in the EU 2020 strategy for growth and jobs. He further noted the importance for Ireland and other countries of the maintenance of a strong agricultural sector, stating that a strong CAP ensures food security. On cohesion the Chairman agreed that it was fundamental to ensure funding provided where it was needed.

Response

In his reply Mr Dowgielewicz stressed that the debate on the MFF and the EU own resources had just started and first compromises were expected to be found during the Danish Presidency in the first half of 2012. He noted that of the discussion on the CCCTB Directive continued and that it had been a sensitive issue for a number of national Parliaments (nine of which adopted reasoned opinions amounting to 13 votes). The SO103 Committee of the Oireachtas had reported to the Dáil on this issue and subsequently a Reasoned Opinion had issued.

4. EU institutions vis-à-vis conflicts at the EU's external borders

Ms. Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner responsible for Home Affairs in her address underlined the four fundamental principles of the European Union, i.e. the free movement of capital, goods, services and people. While acknowledging that increased mobility posed challenges both for countries of destination and countries of origin, the Commissioner said the challenges did not outweigh the benefits.

In the context of the recent developments in **North Africa and the Arab world**, the Commissioner identified a clear need to increase the external dimension of the EU migration policy, given the demographic challenges facing the EU which needs labour immigration to be able to sustain its way of life. The Commissioner referred to two directives concerning the issue already in place: Blue Card and Single Permit, and noted another two regarding intra-corporate transferees and seasonal workers still under negotiation. The Commissioner expressed the view that to attract talented migrants, the EU needs a common framework with clear admission rules and workers rights.

Referring to migration from the **eastern neighbourhood countries**, Ms Malmström stressed the importance of good relations with eastern neighbours and informed the conference that migration profiles were being prepared for all the states of the Eastern Partnership within the context of the EU financed project "Building Migration Partnerships". The Commissioner emphasized the importance of good cooperation on readmission, and visa facilitation agreements that may lead to visa liberalisation and noted the readmission and visa facilitation agreements in place with Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. The Commissioner also referred to the EU's support for capacity building in the Eastern Partnership countries to prevent irregular migration. The Commissioner concluded by saying that the Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Warsaw on 29-30 September 2011 would be an opportunity to review the progress of the Eastern Partnership and to outline the actions to be taken over the next two years.

As regards the **southern neighbourhood**, Ms Malmström underscored that the latest developments in North Africa and in the Arab world might have far-reaching effects for Europe and stressed that the EU supported the democratisation movements and was ready to do more to foster democracy in the region. The Commissioner referred to the Commission's Communication (presented 24 May 2011) entitled "A dialogue for migration, mobility and security with the southern Mediterranean countries" in which it proposed a number of measures with the aim of reinforcing long-term relations between the EU and the countries of North Africa by supporting the democratic and economic transition in the region and thus preventing irregular migration. Ms Malmström recalled that the Communication had been endorsed by the European Council on 24 June 2011 which paved the way for the conclusion of Mobility Partnerships with southern Mediterranean countries starting with Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco.

The Commissioner's contribution was followed by a debate during which 14 speakers took the floor to address the need for ordered and safe migration while supporting all neighbouring countries to reduce poverty, to promote sustainable development and to strengthen civil society in order to ensure that no one should ever be forced to emigrate. Some participants pointed to a lack of coherence in the EU's response to the Arab Spring.

The Commissioner responding to the questions said that FRONTEX had helped save many lives and could not be held responsible for the activities of people engaged in human trafficking or those selling tickets to overloaded boats. As regards the EU reaction to the developments in North Africa, the Commissioner noted that everybody had been surprised by the domino effect of the events, but now the EU could help immigrants. She noted that the EU could not offer a perspective of membership to every neighbourhood country and stressed the need to tailor its policy towards individual countries of the region.

MEETING OF THE COSAC CHAIRPERSONS AND PLENARY MEETING OF THE XLVI COSAC

POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU

JULY – DECEMBER 2011

PLENARY MEETING XLVI COSAC, WARSAW, 2ND – 4TH OCTOBER 2011

The forty-sixth meeting of the Conference of Chairmen of the European Affairs committees of the member states of the European Union and the European Parliament (COSAC) took place in Warsaw on 2nd to 4th October 2011. The Houses of the Oireachtas were represented by Mr. Joe Costello T.D., Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Affairs, Mr. Timothy Dooley T.D., Mr. Colm Keaveney T.D. and Senator Fidelma Healy Eames.

The forty-sixth meeting of COSAC took place in the Senate building, and was co-chaired by Mr. Stanisław Rakoczy, Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, and Mr. Edmund Wittbrodt, Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee of the Senate of the Republic of Poland.

The agenda for the meeting was as follows;

1. Welcome addresses (Mr Grzegorz Schetyna, Marshal of the Sejm and Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Senat)
2. Opening of the session:
 - Adoption of the agenda of the XLVI COSAC
 - Decisions of the Presidential Troika of COSAC
 - Presentation of the 16th Bi-annual Report of COSAC.
3. Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2014–2020 from the EU budget perspective. *Keynote speakers: Mr Janusz Lewandowski, Commissioner for Budget and Financial Programming, and Mr Salvador Garriga Polledo, rapporteur of the European Parliament on the Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2014–2020.*
4. Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2014–2020 from the cohesion policy perspective. *Keynote speaker: Mr Waldemar Slugocki, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Regional Development.*
5. Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC
 - Appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat
 - Debate on the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLVI COSAC.

6. State of play of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. *Keynote speaker: Mr Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*
7. Two years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. *Keynote speaker: Mr Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration.*
8. Adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLVI COSAC.

1. Welcome addresses

Mr Grzegorz Schetyna, Marshal of the Sejm and Mr Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Senat in their address focussed on the economic crisis stressing the need for solidarity and cooperation and the importance of the role of national parliaments. The Marshals stressed the need for agreement on the "six-pack"¹ intended to reform economic governance in the EU.

In the context of the **Multiannual Financial Framework** (MFF) underlined the importance of the EU2020 strategy for growth and Jobs and the protection of Cohesion Policy. The Marshals called for deeper integration as necessary in order to emerge from an economic situation that no country could tackle alone.

2. Procedural matters: Opening of the Session, Adoption of the agenda of the XLVI COSAC; Decisions of the Presidential Troika of COSAC and Presentation of the 16th Bi-annual Report of COSAC.

The Conference adopted its agenda and was briefed on the decisions of the Presidential Troika. Mr Stanisław Rakoczy informed the conference that the Troika had interviewed two candidates for the post of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat but had not reached a consensus. The Troika agreed to ask the Chairpersons to make the decision by voting;

- a. to decide whether to choose the next Permanent Member by voting that day and if so
- b. a second vote on the appointment itself.

Mr Wittbrodt (Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee) presented the Bi-annual following which four participants took the floor stressing the importance of stronger interparliamentary cooperation in the EU and underscoring the value of COSAC meetings, especially in times of increased euroscepticism.

¹ European Commission proposals on strengthening economic governance (5 regulations and 1 directive)

3. Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2014–2020 from the EU budget perspective

Keynote speakers: Mr Janusz Lewandowski, Commissioner for Budget and Financial Programming, and Mr Salvador Garriga Polledo, rapporteur of the European Parliament on the Multiannual Financial Framework.

Presentations

In his address, Mr Janusz Lewandowski, presented the main features of the Commission's Communication "A Budget for Europe 2020" published on 29 June 2011 (the proposal on the MFF) and noted that it came amid specific economic conditions, when Europe was fighting the crisis.

The Commissioner pointed out that due to the present economic circumstances the core message of the MFF was based on the attitude of "more Europe and European policy for the same money". It reflected new responsibilities and policy areas of the EU enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon and must fill the gaps between Member States by financing a number of initiatives e.g. broadband internet, tackling immigration and energy issues.

As regards the negotiation of the MFF he stressed the need to be both ambitious and realistic which meant entailed no increase of the EU budget exceeding the 2013 level including inflation. The Commissioner noted the main areas of expenses of the MFF were the common agricultural policy (CAP) and cohesion policy.

On the **CAP** the Commission are proposing a nominal freeze translating into around 33 % of budget expenditure in 2020 and a "modest convergence" of direct payments. (The Commissioner cited the example in the current regime of direct payments in the Netherlands amounting to 470 euro per hectare as compared to approximately 100 euro per hectare in Lithuania, and below 100 euro per hectare in Latvia). The Commissioner stressed that convergence was feasible, but he did not envisage flat rates of direct payments in the future owing to differences across the EU.

The Commissioner explained that with regard to **cohesion policy**, the Commission also proposed a nominal freeze of its budget, without taking into account the inflation, with minor shifts from "rich" to less affluent countries.

The MFF proposal also includes the creation of the new **Connecting Europe Facility**, created to finance large European projects in energy, transport and internet infrastructure. The Commissioner also drew attention to the growing external responsibility of the EU in view of recent developments in the Arab world, which

resulted in an increasing number of refugees and a need for an appropriate funding (while protecting the Eastern Partnership).

The Commissioner also outlined the inclusion in the MFF proposal of a number of measures such as a

- **financial transaction tax (FTT)** which he believed should be introduced on a global scale and ratified by all national Parliaments in order to ensure the fiscal sovereignty of the Member States, and
- **a reform of the VAT system** consisting of transferring part of the tax to the EU budget

Mr Salvador Garriga Polledo, the European Parliament rapporteur on the new MFF, outlined the work of the SURE Committee (the European Parliament's Policy Challenges Committee) on the MFF (which was the first time that the European Parliament elaborated its Proposal on the MFF) and noting that the work of the special Committee had been adopted with a large majority of more than 60 % of the votes of the Members of the European Parliament. The rapporteur also underscored the importance of the dialogue on the MFF between the European Parliament, national Parliaments and the Commission, welcoming the idea of the Conference on the MFF on 20 - 21 October 2011 in Brussels.

As regards the specifics of the Commission's proposal on the MFF the rapporteur expressed the European Parliament's broad support for the proposals including the Connecting Europe Facility (which he added should be a basis for future growth) and the proposal for an FTT.

However, at odds with the Commission's proposal the European Parliament had suggested that the EU budget should be increased by 5 % and expressed concern at the limited financing for some policy areas, such as the CAP, and warned that the European Council was likely to reduce the amount of the financing which might result in an insufficient EU budget.

The rapporteur expressed the hope that by 2013 the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council would have reached an agreement on the MFF that would serve as a basis for growth in the period 2014-2020.

Debate

In the debate that followed the contributions by the Commissioner and the European Parliament Rapporteur 31 speakers took the floor. Speakers addressed the following main issues;

- many brought up the question of a more equitable CAP
- many speakers believed that cohesion funding should remain at an appropriate level.

- some speakers voiced concerns that the FTT might jeopardize the competitiveness of the EU at the global level, while those supporting the FTT stressed that it should be a pan-European measure
- many speakers stressed that austerity measures should not have a negative impact on the financing of the new competences laid down in the Treaty of Lisbon
- a few speakers suggested decreasing the EU budget in view of the financial crisis, while others argued that national Parliaments should defend the MFF, as it was impossible to decrease the budget further.
- some speakers were of the opinion that, while being relatively small in size, the EU budget should focus on priorities with higher added value for European economies such as innovations or life-long learning.
- some speakers referring to small and medium enterprises, being the basis of the EU economies, should be protected from over regulation.

The Chairman's contribution

The Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Affairs in his Contribution noted the importance for all member states of the MFF and explained that Ireland's basic principle was to ensure that the Budget allocated would be commensurate with the targets as set out in the EU 2020 strategy for growth and jobs, noting that growth was crucial in bringing Europe out of the economic crisis. He further noted the importance of the maintenance of the CAP particularly in the context of ensuring food security. The Chairman welcomed the ring-fencing of €4.5 billion for research and innovation on food security, bio-economy and sustainable development in the Common Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation

In conclusion the Chairman stressed that parliamentarians must be keenly aware of the wider context and the economic difficulties affecting the EU and Ireland which had have resulted in deep austerity measures and in that context stated that the introduction of a financial transaction tax would need to be carefully considered.

Response

In his reply, Commissioner Lewandowski reiterated that the Proposal on the MFF was a solid basis for further discussions, but did not exclude its revision. On concerns regarding the overall level of expenditure, the Commissioner stressed that the EU budget as compared to national spending had a clear tendency to decrease, despite the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon introduced new obligations at the EU level.

The Commissioner stressed that the EU had the tools and means to create jobs and growth as the invested money amounted to 80 % of the EU budget as compared to 6 % in budgets of Member States.

The Commissioner noted that resources for the CAP and cohesion had been frozen to enable the financing of research and development mobility and the European

Neighbourhood Policy. Specifically on the CAP the Commissioner explained that the convergence of direct payments would be beneficial to some countries but imperceptibly negative in others, e.g. Lithuania or Latvia should see a rise of by approximately 30 %, while the differences in Spain or Ireland would hardly be perceptible. He went on to say that each Member State decided how to divide the money received under the CAP between direct payments and rural development.

The Commissioner noted the mixed reactions on the proposal to introduce the FTT but offered the view that it could contribute to the consolidation of public finances in Europe, especially if introduced on a global scale.

Referring to the fear of over regulation, the Commissioner stated that "more Europe" was needed to overcome the crisis in the eurozone which was why the Commission needs to impose discipline by introducing the "sixpack" but that the EU should not be too invasive and overload entrepreneurs with unnecessary regulations.

Mr Salvador GARRIGA POLLEDO recalled the overall support of the European Parliament for the MFF, but repeated that the funding foreseen for the CAP seemed to be insufficient. He added that the success of the MFF depended largely also on national Parliaments controlling their Governments.

4. Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2014–2020 from the cohesion policy perspective

Keynote speaker: Mr Waldemar Ślugoński, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Regional Development.

Presentation

Mr Ślugoński started his speech by noting that in the current period of crisis, cohesion policy was of special importance and that national Parliaments played a significant part in the determination of future cohesion policy. Mr Ślugoński also stressed that cohesion policy after 2013 was to implement the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Mr Ślugoński explained that the proposal on the 2014-2020 MFF had allocated 33 % of the EU budget to cohesion policy (a decrease of 5 %) and that of the resources provided 48 % were to be earmarked for convergence and 25 % for competitiveness and inter-region development. Mr Ślugoński referred to the fact that Member States already had formed a critical opinion regarding the Commission's idea for a future cohesion policy and asked that the Commission would take the arguments of the Member States into consideration and reconcile the goal of cohesion policy with more flexibility.

The Undersecretary of State argued that since the Commission had centrally earmarked money from the Cohesion Fund to other projects, for instance 10 billion euro to infrastructural projects, the Cohesion Fund might lose some of its integrity. Mr Ślugocki said that the first negative reactions of the Member States had indicated that the connection of EU instruments would be a sensitive point and that Member States had voiced their concerns about the socio-economic development of European regions if money from the social funds were to be diverted to other programs.

Ms Danuta Hübner, Chairwoman of the European Parliament Committee for Regional Development and former Commissioner for Regional Policy, shared her views on regional policy and stressed that Europe needed growth and that all policies had to focus on the conditions for growth. Ms Hübner went on to say that the main objective of the MFF was to modernise EU policies and create opportunities for investments to reach poorer regions.

Ms Hübner explained that the EU budget should focus on those policies that could facilitate development and help implement the common European goals. She underlined that the Structural Funds were not to finance random projects, but should be utilised for carefully prepared projects. Ms Hübner specified that a good balance between cuts and indispensable policies should be reached.

Debate

During the ensuing debate 27 speakers took the floor and the Proposal on the MFF was generally considered as a good basis for negotiations. On Cohesion Policy, the vast majority supported cohesion policy as an important tool for building a common Europe. Several speakers expressed concern about the risk of growing disparity between Member States if the MFF did not include cohesion policy as one of the main policies to be financed by the EU budget and a few speakers feared that some Member States would not be able to recover from the economic crisis if the Cohesion Funds were to be cut.

There was overall support for investing in making Europe better connected, as infrastructure projects were considered to be important for economic success. However, a few speakers added that this should not be at the expense of cohesion policy. Several speakers noted that a more harmonised single market could be brought about through the reduction of social inequality, while others pointed out that the Commission's proposal to transfer funds from cohesion policy or from the CAP was not an option.

Response

Responding to the questions Mr Ślugocki reiterated that the Commission's proposal for the MFF was a good start and that cohesion was a development policy which

would boost the overall competitiveness of the EU. Mr Slugocki explained that the Polish Presidency had identified three areas of importance for a future cohesion policy:

- Introducing an award mechanism instead of sanctions,
- Securing financing for the poorest regions,
- Setting different limits of funding for different policy areas in different regions.

5. Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC:

- Appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat
- Debate on the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLVI COSAC.

On the nomination of the new Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for the term of office 2012-2013, Chairpersons were informed that the Troika had interviewed both candidates for the post, (*Ms Libby KURIEN nominated by the UK House of Commons and Ms Magdalena SKRZYŃSKA nominated by the Sejm of the Republic of Poland*) but had been unable to reach an agreement on the most suitable candidate.

The Troika reiterated its proposal that the Chairpersons vote on the matter as outlined to the entire Conference earlier. After a short debate, the first procedural vote took place resulting in a decision to take a vote on the matter of the appointment on that day. Both candidates made a five-minute presentation each following which a decision was taken by simple majority without counting abstentions. The Chairpersons duly appointed Ms Libby KURIEN as the next Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for a two-year term starting on 1 January 2012.

The second part of the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC was dedicated to the debate on the draft Contribution and Conclusions of the XLVI COSAC. An extensive debate on all amendments took place and an amended text of the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLVI COSAC was agreed.

6. State of play of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Keynote speaker: Mr Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Presentation

Mr Dowgielewicz, noted that this was a difficult time to hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU and that therefore, the unofficial goal of the Polish Presidency was to restore confidence, primarily by tackling the challenges of unemployment and

economic growth. Mr Dowgielewicz noted that the European Council meeting later in October 2011 would serve as a test for agreeing on both the external aspects of the EU economic policy and on orientations on other aspects of economic policy, especially as regards growth enhancing areas.

The Secretary of State took the opportunity to highlight some of the achievements of the Polish Presidency, including the compromise on the "six-pack" in the European Parliament and the presentation of a Presidency Report 'Towards a European consensus on growth' on sources of economic growth in Europe. The report would attempt to address two issues of key significance to the EU, (initiatives on growth and balancing stimulus with the need to maintain balanced public finances) and would make specific recommendations aimed at defining new sources of economic growth in Europe.

Another important development was the Proposal on the MFF. The Secretary of State recalled that a similar proposal in 2004 (i.e. the MFF for 2007-2013) had been rejected by the Council. In contrast, both the EU institutions and national Parliaments had now been working on the initial proposal of the Commission of 29 June 2011. He noted that the Polish Presidency would like to steer the initial debates on the next MFF by actively involving national Parliaments. In this context, the Secretary of State mentioned the Presidency's initiative to hold a conference on the MFF coorganised by the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament on 20-21 October 2011 in Brussels. National Parliaments had been invited to take an active part in this conference which would open a broad-ranging debate.

In the context of the debates within the Council, the Secretary of State also drew the attention of COSAC to such complex issues as the future of the Schengen area, the progress in the EU enlargement process and the European Neighbourhood Policy, including the Eastern Partnership.

The Secretary of State noted with satisfaction that the EU had managed to maintain the open-door approach in the context of its enlargement policy and that in mid-December 2011 it would be able to sign the treaty of accession with Croatia. The Secretary of State also expressed optimism with regard to the accession negotiations with Iceland and developments in Montenegro. On the other hand, the issue of granting the status of candidate country to Serbia was a "big question mark" primarily because of both the lack of progress in internal reforms and in Serbia's relations with Kosovo.

In the context of the openness of the EU, the Secretary of State also made reference to the European Neighbourhood Policy, including the response of the EU to recent events in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia and noted that the Presidency had aimed to

support the EU High Representative Catherine in promoting the important agenda of democratisation and modernisation of this region. Another important aspect of the European Neighbourhood Policy for the Polish Presidency was the Eastern Partnership, a successful summit on which had taken place on 29-30 September 2011 in Warsaw.

7. Two years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon

Keynote speaker: Mr Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission for Inter- Institutional Relations and Administration.

Presentation

At the beginning of his speech, entitled "National Parliaments: Key Partners in Setting the EU Agenda", Mr Šefčovič referred to Mr Barroso's State of the Union speech the previous week to a plenary session of the European Parliament. The Vice-President emphasized that despite the crisis, Europe had much to be proud of, as the crisis did "not mean chaos or disaster", but was "an opportunity to make necessary changes".

The Vice-President then spoke about relations between the Commission and national Parliaments and noted that the number of reasoned opinions and contributions the Commission received from national Parliaments had risen constantly over time. However, the Commissioner admitted that sometimes delays occurred in replying to national Parliaments (he gave the example of the proposal on the CCCTB, where the Commission was already late with its replies to the reasoned opinions), or the replies were not exhaustive or fully satisfactory. He confirmed that the Commission was committed to improving the speed and the level of detail of its replies.

The Vice-President underlined that there could be situations where a written reply could not be as explicit and definitive as one would wish, for instance because of sensitive interinstitutional negotiations or because it was too early for the Commission to take a position. Therefore, he emphasized that the "political dialogue could and should go well beyond a written exchange of views". In this context, he referred to the replies of national Parliaments to the questionnaire for the 16th Bi-annual Report, indicating that they had not continued the political dialogue with the Commission after receiving its initial reply. The Vice-President hoped that this would change in future in order "to clarify misunderstandings, to get an accurate picture and a better understanding of each others' positions and reasoning".

The Vice-President referred to the doubts expressed by some national Parliaments about procedural issues concerning delegated acts. According to the Commission, however, "there were sufficient safeguards", as the decision on the delegation to the Commission was in the hands of the legislator (Council - therefore Member States - and the European Parliament), "who could also revoke a delegation or object to any

act". In this context, the Vice-President assured the participants of the debate that the Commission was "always ready to listen to any comment and engage in discussions about what was to be considered an essential element of a legal proposal".

The Vice-President then turned to the issue of the crisis and Europe's economic situation, emphasising the high level of interdependence between Member States and the implications of this interdependence. He underlined that considering Europe's prominence in the global economy, "the stakes were high", in efforts to avoid global recession. In the opinion of the Vice-President, this challenge was "an economic challenge for families, businesses and communities across Europe. But it was also a political challenge, a fight for tolerance and reason in social and international relationships, a fight for European integration itself". Therefore, the focus for the immediate future should be on:

- "restoring confidence in Europe",
- "rebuilding stability and discipline",
- "making solidarity real", and
- "delivering growth and jobs".

He referred to the problems of structural deficiencies and long-term competitiveness, emphasizing the danger of the accumulation of debts and excessive deficits. These should be corrected "in a determined and sustainable way", by carrying out "long-overdue structural reforms", even in cases where political courage was needed "to drive change forward". He underlined that national Parliaments played a key role in this process, by "holding governments to account", by "driving national reform programmes, for rebalancing public finances and for reaching rapid agreement on the most urgent matters". The Vice-President reiterated that "delay in delivery had been at the heart of the current uncertainty in financial markets".

According to the Commission, the following tasks were the most urgent:

1. To implement the package agreed on 21 July 2011 by all eurozone Heads of State and Government, including measures to increase the flexibility and effectiveness of the European Financial Stability Facility,
2. To implement the "six-pack" on reinforced economic governance,
3. To demonstrate that Member States are seriously committed to the Europe 2020 Strategy and the first European Semester.

Speaking about the Commission's Work Programme for 2012, the Vice-President indicated that a very strong focus would be on tackling the problems of competitiveness, growth and job creation in Europe.

Finally, the Vice-President reiterated the commitment on the part of the Commission to foster the cooperation with national Parliaments, underlining that the Commission

was keen on hearing the views of national Parliaments, including in the framework of COSAC. He finished his speech by concluding that two years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon national Parliaments were undoubtedly "at the heart of European politics, and that Europe was on the top of national political agendas".

Debate

Following the Vice-President's contribution 20 Members of national Parliaments and the European Parliament took the floor. They touched upon various issues, in general giving a positive feedback on the work of the Commission and its cooperation with national Parliaments. Many underlined the seriousness of the situation in Europe, as the crisis brought about not only financial problems but also revealed structural deficiencies in Member States. Speakers considered that a closer involvement of national Parliaments in the efforts to overcome the consequences of the crisis would be beneficial.

The participants of the debate also shared their two-year experience in applying provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon, in particular on ensuring that the principle of subsidiarity is respected, on promoting interparliamentary cooperation and on a possible future revision of the Treaties. A number of speakers commented on the political dialogue with the Commission, by both expressing their support to the initiative and by voicing concerns about the content and timeliness of the Commission's replies to national Parliaments' opinions.

The debate included reference to a number of interesting ideas on ways for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to interact, for instance to "revive" the European Convention to further improve the Treaties and to streamline interparliamentary meetings to improve coordination and attendance and to actively cooperate with the committees of the European Parliament on important, controversial delegated acts.

In addition, the speakers raised such issues as interparliamentary debates on CFSP, including CSDP, on energy security, the future of Europol and Eurojust, fight against corruption and the implementation of the Stockholm Programme.

The Chairman's contribution

The Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Affairs in his Contribution (which was delivered in Irish) noted that the 380 opinions forwarded to the Commission during 2010 highlights how seriously national parliaments take their engagement with the Commission. Deputy Costello raised the issue of the slow response times on behalf of the Commission, but warned against improving this by responding with generic replies. Furthermore, Deputy Costello highlighted that eight weeks is relatively short period of time for parliamentary scrutiny but affirmed his belief that it

can be done if national parliaments continue their commitment to and prioritise such engagement.

Following his contribution many participants congratulated the Chairman on his contribution made in Irish which was they believed the first time a contribution had been made in the Irish language.

Response

In his replies, Commissioner Sefcovic reiterated the Commission's intention to foster the political dialogue and to improve its replies to reasoned opinions and contributions of national Parliaments. The Vice-President also shared some of the Commission's ideas on how to tackle the crisis and stressed the need for a more effective cooperation between the EU institutions and a better communication with the citizens. In addition, he answered the questions on such issues as energy security and the forthcoming Commission's proposals on Europol and Eurojust.

8. Adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions of the XLVI COSAC (plenary session)

At the end of the meeting, conclusions and a "contribution" were adopted, which are brought to the attention of the EU institutions. The final Contribution and Conclusions are included as an Annex to this Report.

DECISION OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs at its meeting of 19 July 2012 considered this report and agreed that the Report be laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas.



Dominic Hannigan TD
Chairman
19 July 2012

Appendix I

Oireachtas Response to the Questionnaire on the 16th Biannual report

QUESTIONNAIRE: 16TH BI-ANNUAL REPORT OF COSAC

CHAPTER 1: Multiannual Financial Framework for Europe 2020 Strategy

Questions:

On the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014 – 2020 the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs has to date drawn together some initial views. Given that the Commission's proposal was published on 29 June and is a complex document concerning a wide variety of policy areas the timeframe envisaged by this questionnaire does not allow for the full response the Committee believes is merited. The Joint Committee believes that such questions might be more suited to the COSAC in the first half of 2012 which would allow the Committee to consult as appropriate and to produce a considered view.

The questions posed are in the main, very specific and varied, covering “own resources”, cohesion policy v competitiveness, the Europe 2020 Project Bond initiative and the Single market Act and will require some detailed consideration and may require consultation with a variety of stakeholders.

In the autumn, the Joint Committee intends to fully engage in consideration of the MFF and will consult with government and other stakeholders as it sees fit with a view to the agreement of a Contribution to be sent to the EU Institutions.

Until further consideration of the document can be completed the Joint Committee can offer the following initial views;

- ➔ The Joint Committee's initial views are that the 1.05% GNI proposal made by the Commission is broadly acceptable. While conscious of budgetary constraints it is nonetheless important that the Budget is fully able to achieve the policy priorities of the Union and the EU 2020 Strategy.
- ➔ The Joint Committee believes that the Budget should be adequate to fund a strong CAP for a strong European agricultural sector, vital for the European Union's food security and welcomes that the Commission in its proposal has not made cuts in this area.
- ➔ The Joint Committee welcomes the focus on economic growth and job creation and the proposals on access to funding for SMEs. The Joint Committee believes that an increased focus on growth is important for the EU and for Ireland as a means to put the economic crisis behind us.

- ➔ The Joint Committee also can welcome the ring-fenced €4.5 billion for research and innovation on food security, bio-economy and sustainable agriculture in the Common Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation.

CHAPTER 2: Two years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon - parliamentary experience

Questions:

2.1. Reasoned opinions

2.1.1. How many reasoned opinions have been adopted in your Parliament/Chamber since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon? Please identify COM documents concerned.

One. Dáil Éireann (Lower House) issued a reasoned opinion on the Proposal for a Council Directive on a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) (COM(2011)121). Seanad Éireann did not have an opportunity to consider a reasoned opinion on the proposal as there had not been time to convene the Seanad Select Committee on European Union Affairs following the General Election in Ireland.

2.1.2. How many reasoned opinions did your Parliament/Chamber receive replies to from the European Commission?

None (See 2.1.3)

2.1.3. Were those replies sent within the Commission self-imposed time-limit of three months?

The three month period in relation to the CCCTB proposal subsidiarity deadline will not expire until 18 August 2011.

2.1.4. Were those replies satisfactory? If not, please indicate why.

N/A

2.1.5. Could you please describe how the European Commission's replies are dealt with in your Parliament/Chamber?

The reply, in the case of the CCCTB proposal will be forwarded to the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs and the Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform for consideration. The reply will also be included in a weekly report of documents received by the European Commission and laid in the Library of both Houses.

2.1.6. To your Parliament's/Chamber's knowledge were the reasoned opinions reflected in EU draft legislative acts? If so, please indicate the specific cases.

N/A

- 2.1.7. Has your Parliament/Chamber ever continued dialogue with the European Commission on a draft legislative act after receiving the Commission's reply to a reasoned opinion? If so, please indicate the COM documents.**

N/A

- 2.1.8. Does your Parliament/Chamber regard the eight-week period for subsidiarity check as a sufficient period of time to examine the Commission's proposal both on the basis of subsidiarity and on other aspects of the proposal?**

In our view, the eight week period could, potentially, be an insufficient time for proposals to be considered for compliance with subsidiarity and in particular if other aspects of the proposal are at issue. This is obviously compounded if the proposal is very complex or during the period following General Elections. However, to date, we have conducted the subsidiarity checks within the eight week deadline.

- 2.1.9. Has your Parliament/Chamber ever considered the lack of a legal basis or lack of (or insufficient) subsidiarity justification in the explanatory memoranda as a breach of the subsidiarity principle, and as a consequence adopted a reasoned opinion?**

N/A

- 2.1.10. What is your Parliament's/Chamber's opinion on the quality of impact assessments of EU draft legislative acts? Should full impact assessments for draft legislative acts be translated into all EU official languages?**

To date, the impact assessments have been used to assist in the drafting of policy documents for the Committee to consider and have not been considered in the past by the Committee on an individual basis. However, following the recent General Election, the scrutiny of EU draft legislative acts has been mainstreamed across Sectoral Committees of the Oireachtas. This revised scrutiny system will include more scope for the consideration of the impact assessments given that each committee will focus on its own Sectoral interests.

The Joint Committee does not have a view regarding the translation of impact assessments into all EU official languages. This would depend on the requirements of our colleagues in other Member State National parliaments.

- 2.1.11. Has the internal subsidiarity control mechanism of your Parliament/Chamber been satisfactory so far? Have you modified**

this procedure at any stage? If so, please describe the modifications.

We are satisfied that the internal subsidiarity control mechanism is sufficient. The procedures for considering proposals for consideration with subsidiarity have been modified. Standing Orders of both Houses have been agreed to provide the mechanism for subsidiarity checks and following the recent General Election, sectoral Committees have been specifically delegated the power under the Standing Orders to consider draft legislative acts under their remit for compliance with subsidiarity.

The Parliament has also put in place a procedure whereby, following a General Election and prior to the establishment of the Committee system, a transitional Committee is established within three days of its first sitting, specifically to consider the subsidiarity aspect of proposals. This mechanism was used for the first time after the General Election and provided the basis for the Dáil to consider the draft Reasoned Opinion. See also reply to 2.1.1 and 2.1.8

Questions to the European Parliament

2.1.12. Could you please describe how reasoned opinions issued under Protocol 2 and contributions² of national Parliaments issued under the informal political dialogue with the European Commission are dealt with in the European Parliament?

2.1.13. Have any reasoned opinions and contributions of national Parliaments been reflected in the legislative documents of the European Parliament? If so, please indicate specific cases.

2.2. Informal political dialogue

2.2.1. How many contributions within the framework of the informal political dialogue with the European Commission has your Parliament/Chamber sent to the European Commission since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon? Please specify the COM documents.

The Joint Committee on European Affairs submitted two Contributions on;

- COM(2009) 622 Green Paper on a European Citizens' Initiative,
- COM(2009) 647: Commission Working Document: Consultation on the future "EU2020" Strategy

The Parliament is very committed to the informal political dialogue and the mainstreaming of EU affairs across sectoral Committees of the

² The generic term "contribution" means an opinion, a conclusion, a resolution or any other document issued by a national Parliament in the framework of the informal political dialogue with the European Commission.

Oireachtas following the recent General Election will enhance this dialogue.

Prior to the Lisbon Treaty, the Joint Committee on European Affairs submitted contributions to the European Commission.

2.2.2. How many contributions did your Parliament/Chamber receive replies to from the European Commission?

The Joint Committee received replies to both contributions.

2.2.3. Were those replies satisfactory? If not, please indicate why.

The replies were presented to the Committee on receipt and were deemed satisfactory by the Members.

2.2.4. Could you please describe how the European Commission's replies to contributions are dealt with in your Parliament/Chamber?

The replies are presented to the Committee on receipt and are considered as appropriate.

2.2.5. Were there cases when your Parliament/Chamber continued the informal political dialogue after receiving a reply from the European Commission on a contribution? If so, please provide the underlying reasons and specify the COM documents.

The replies were considered by the Committee and were accepted and noted by the Members in all cases.

2.3. Parliamentary scrutiny and delegated acts (Article 290 TFEU)

2.3.1 Could you please describe the opinion of your Parliament/Chamber regarding proposals which provide for delegated acts (Article 290 TFEU)?

The Joint Committee has noted the concern expressed by other Member State parliaments regarding aspects of proposals providing for delegated acts. The Joint Committee believes that there should be an increase in focus on consideration of the delegation of powers as part and parcel of the normal scrutiny of legislative proposals post Lisbon.

The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs will liaise with the Sectoral Committees of the Oireachtas to ensure that particular attention is paid to the subject of delegated acts and to request that they raise any concerns with the Committee as they arise.

2.3.1.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber have any concerns regarding the subject of the delegated acts (that in some cases essential elements of EU legislative acts are subject to the application of Article 290 TFEU)?

No specific instances have arisen to date.

2.3.1.2 Are the essential features of the delegated act (the objectives, content, scope and duration) properly described in the relevant proposals?

The Joint Committee is considering whether it should be a requirement for the Commission to specifically address this issue, in the explanatory memorandum accompanying a proposal, where the proposal confers the power to adopt delegated acts.

2.3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber foresee any room for cooperation with the EU institutions in the process of the monitoring of delegated acts?

YES. The Joint Committee would be happy to consider an appropriate mechanism.

Appendix II

Contribution and Conclusions of the Conference

CONTRIBUTION OF THE XLVI COSAC

1. Multiannual Financial Framework

1.1. Having regard to the ongoing economic and financial crisis in some Member States; to the problems of excessive budget deficits forcing a number of Member States to implement far-reaching austerity programmes; to social unrest feeding euroscepticism on the one hand, and the growing needs and challenges related to sustainable economic development of the European Union, the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and to keeping up with global competition on the other hand; COSAC supports the efforts of the EU institutions resulting in the proposed Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020, which will provide a basis for debate and decision in the European Union. However, the result of the discussion has to take into account national budget frameworks and national budget strategies.

1.2. COSAC considers it necessary to simplify and increase the transparency of the rules and procedures related to the accumulation, allocation and utilisation of the European Union's own resources and encourages the EU institutions to take appropriate measures in this area. National Parliaments and the European Parliament will consider the merits of these specific measures in due course.

1.3. COSAC has been carefully analysing proposals for the establishment of different types of European taxes which would provide a new source of revenue for the EU budget. COSAC takes the view that, in the period of recovery from the crisis, new instruments should not impose an increased financial burden on the private sector or on individuals. In certain cases, such measures could also distort the level playing field between EU entities and their global competitors.

1.4. In the light of the complexity of current circumstances and the number of problems relating to the need to improve the planning, approval and performance of future EU budgets, COSAC encourages the competent institutions to accelerate the legislative work in this area and, where possible, to undertake more frequent and extensive social consultations.

1.5. COSAC encourages the EU institutions to negotiate and adopt the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020 that will enable the medium and long-term EU policies to be fully implemented in compliance with the European principle of solidarity and with regard to the ongoing economic and financial crisis. In this context COSAC stresses that the cohesion policy together with a fair and equitable common agricultural policy are essential instruments and play an important role in fostering solidarity, reducing economic and social disparities among the Member States and achieving EU strategic goals. They should remain focused on further growth and development of the least developed regions.

1.6. COSAC emphasizes the particular importance of EU funding for projects of European interest which may not attract sufficient funding from the private sector alone but are essential for achieving the EU policy objectives of a well-functioning internal market.

1.7. COSAC welcomes the announcement of the Polish Presidency to organise a conference on the Multiannual Financial Framework on 20-21 October 2011. COSAC also welcomes the Presidency's intention to invite representatives of national Parliaments and stresses the importance of an early involvement of national Parliaments.

1.8. COSAC encourages the EU institutions to include the objective of improving the accountability and transparency of the management of EU funds during the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework. COSAC calls on Member States, with due regard to the position of the European Commission, to improve accountability and transparency of the spending of EU funds at the national level.

2. Two years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon – parliamentary experience

2.1 COSAC notes with satisfaction its first debate on the evaluation of parliamentary experience and best practices two years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

2.2 COSAC welcomes the active involvement of national Parliaments in subsidiarity checks under Protocol 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality of the Treaty of Lisbon. National Parliaments have taken different points of view on the practical implementation of the principle of subsidiarity. COSAC believes that national Parliaments and the EU institutions should actively exchange information and their existing practices on the application of Protocol 2, and that its application should become more specific as part of a continuous dialogue between all the parties concerned.

2.3 In accordance with Article 5 of Protocol 2, COSAC underlines that for national Parliaments to exercise the powers vested in them it is necessary to enable the financial effects of EU draft legislative acts to be evaluated, and, in the case of Directives, the implications for national legal systems also to be evaluated. Moreover, COSAC recalls that EU draft legislative acts should be justified on the basis of qualitative and quantitative indicators. COSAC notes that subsidiarity analyses in the Commission's explanatory memoranda have, to date, not met the requirements of Article 5.

2.4 COSAC notes the concerns of national Parliaments with the quality and independent nature of impact assessments of EU draft legislative acts which at times are considered to be schematic and not satisfactory in substance. COSAC draws attention to the suggestion by a number of national Parliaments to have the full text of impact assessments translated into all official languages of the EU.

2.5 COSAC welcomes the debate it held on the cooperation of national Parliaments with the European Commission. COSAC requests the European Commission to take

the results of the debate into account in the Commission's own evaluation of the state of the Union and in the preparation of the Commission's Work Programmes.

2.6 In principle COSAC is satisfied with national Parliaments' close and open cooperation with the European Commission, established under the Treaty of Lisbon. The informal political dialogue between the European Commission and national Parliaments will contribute to strengthening the parliamentary dimension in the EU decision process. However, COSAC notes that pursuant to Article 6 of Protocol 2, reasoned opinions submitted must state why the draft in question does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity, rather than why it does.

2.7 COSAC calls upon the European Commission to provide more precise and substantive replies to reasoned opinions on EU draft legislative acts. Many national Parliaments consider that the European Commission's replies should focus to a greater extent on specific doubts expressed in reasoned opinions submitted by national Parliaments. COSAC requests the European Commission to take the necessary steps to ensure that her replies to reasoned opinions or contributions within the scope of the informal political dialogue are transmitted within three months.

2.8 COSAC notes the concerns voiced by numerous national Parliaments, some of them in reasoned opinions, that the powers granted to the European Commission to regulate by means of delegated acts are too extensive. COSAC notes that this may lead to a situation where essential elements of an area, reserved for the EU draft legislative acts, will be outside the scope of control of national Parliaments.

2.9 Having regard to further interparliamentary cooperation, COSAC stresses the importance of intensified communication as part of the dialogue and exchange of information and best practice between the European Affairs Committees of national Parliaments of the EU Member States and with the European Parliament.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE XLVI COSAC

1. Appointment and Co-financing of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat

1.1 COSAC thanks Ms Loreta Raulinaitytė for four years of intensive and fruitful work as the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat. During her two terms of office, Ms Loreta Raulinaitytė has performed her duties in reliable, diligent and committed manner, contributing to the tightening and development of interparliamentary cooperation in the European Union.

1.2 COSAC welcomes the decision taken by the Chairpersons at its plenary meeting held in Warsaw on 3 October 2011 to appoint Ms Libby Kurien as a new Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for the term of office of two years from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2013 in accordance with Rule 9.3 of the COSAC Rules of Procedure.

1.3 COSAC welcomes letters of intent from 38 Parliaments/Chambers expressing their commitment to co-finance the position of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat and the running of the COSAC office and website.

1.4 Moreover, COSAC is grateful to the European Parliament for providing the COSAC Secretariat with appropriate office facilities on its premises in Brussels.

2. Bi-annual Report

2.1 COSAC welcomes the 16th Bi-annual Report prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and thanks the Secretariat for its excellent work. The Report provides comprehensive information on the present and future role of national Parliaments in cooperation with governments and their scrutiny within the process of establishing the new Multiannual Financial Framework of the EU attuned to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and the evaluation of parliamentary experience and best practices in the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon.

2.2 COSAC is convinced that the 16th Bi-annual Report will provide a valuable source of information on interparliamentary cooperation and set new directions for national Parliaments' further cooperation with the EU institutions.

3. IPEX website

3.1 COSAC thanks the IPEX Board and in particular the European Parliament for the rewriting of the IPEX website and its launch on 28 June 2011 and welcomes the new technological facilities offered by the new platform.

3.2 COSAC invites national Parliaments to publish on time and regularly update their information posted on the IPEX website. The provision of comprehensive and reliable information will contribute to better and more effective interparliamentary cooperation. COSAC encourages national Parliaments to reconsider the role of IPEX correspondents in the light of the new tasks requested for the new website in order to ensure that IPEX becomes a more reliable source of information.

3.3 COSAC believes that efficient interparliamentary exchange of information via IPEX makes citizens familiar with the functioning of the European Union and enhances their awareness of EU matters.

Appendix III

List of Participants Chairpersons Meeting

MEMBER STATES/ETATS MEMBRES

Presidency/Presidence

Poland/Pologne

Diet/Diete/Sejm

Mr Stanisław RAKOCZY - Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee

Mr Andrzej GAŁAŻEWSKI - Deputy Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee

Mr Bogdan JANOWSKI – Deputy Director of the International Affairs Bureau

Mr Adam DUDZIC - Deputy Director of the International Affairs Bureau

Ms Kaja KRAWCZYK - Head of the EU Division

Ms Anna TRĘBACZKIEWICZ - Official, EU Division

Ms Joanna KOWALSKA - Official, EU Division

Ms Magdalena SKRZYŃSKA - Permanent Representative of the Polish Sejm
Chancellery to the EU

Senate/Senat/Senat

Mr Edmund WITTBRODT - Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee

Mr Janusz RACHOŃ - Deputy Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee

Mr Leszek KIENIEWICZ - Director of the Office for International and EU Affairs

Ms Lidia ŚMIETANKO - Head of the EU Affairs Unit

Ms Agnieszka NIEWCZAS - Official, EU Unit

Ms Joanna KWIECIEŃ - Official, EU Unit

Ms Magdalena SKULIMOWSKA - Permanent Representative of the Polish Senate
Chancellery to the EU

Austria/Autriche

National Council/Conseil national/Nationalrat

Mr Fritz NEUGEBAUER - Second President of the National Council, Chairman of the Standing Subcommittee on EU Affairs

Mr Gerhard KOLLER - Head of European Relations Division

Ms Katharina STOURZH - Head of the Office of Mr. Fritz Neugebauer, Second President of the National Council

Federal Council/Conseil federal/Bundesrat

Mr Georg KEUSCHNIGG - Chairman of the EU Committee

Belgium/Belgique

House of Representatives/Chambre des representants/Kamer van

Volksvertegenwoordigers

M. Herman DE CROO - Membre du Bureau de la Chambre et du Comité d'avis chargé des questions européennes

M. Carlos DEMEYERE - Premier Conseiller d'Affaires européennes

Senate/Senat/Senaat

M. Philippe MAHOUX - Président du Comité d'avis chargé des questions européennes

M. Tim DE BONDT - Secrétaire du Comité d'avis chargé des questions européennes

Bulgaria/Bulgarie

National Assembly/Assemblée nationale/Narodno Sabranie

Mr Mladen LAMBEFF - Chief Adviser to the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds

Cyprus/Chypre

House of Representatives/Chambre des Représentants/Vouli ton Antiprosopon

Mr Averof NEOFYTOU - Member of the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs

Ms Hara PARLA - International Relations Officer A'

Czech Republic/Republique tchèque

Chamber of Deputies/Chambre des Députés/Poslanecká Sněmovna

Mr Jan BAUER - Chairman of the Committee for European Affairs

Ms Lenka MOZGOVA - Head of the Secretariat of the Committee for European Affairs

Senate/Senat/Senat

Mr Luděk SEFZIG - Chairman of the Committee on European Union Affairs

Ms Adela MIKOVA - Head of the EU Unit

Denmark/Danemark

Danish Parliament/Parlement danois/Folketing

Ms Anne-Marie MELDGAARD - Chairwoman of the European Affairs Committee

Ms Iben SCHACKE - Official

Mr Thomas SARUP - Representative of the Folketing to the EU

Estonia/Estonie

Parliament/Parlement/Riigikogu

Mr Taavi ROIVAS - Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee
Mr Olev AARMA - Head of Secretariat of the European Union Affairs Committee

Finland/Finlande

Parliament/Parlement/Eduskunta

Mr Antti KAIKKONEN - Vice-Chairman of the Grand Committee
Ms Anna SORTO - Counsel to the Grand Committee
Ms Pia NIEMINEN - Permanent Representative of the Parliament of Finland to the EU

France/France

National Assembly/Assemblée nationale

M. Pierre LEQUILLER - Président de la commission des affaires européennes
M. Guy CHAUVIN - Chef de division du secrétariat de la commission

Germany/Allemagne

Federal Diet/Diete federale/Bundestag

Mr Gunther KRICHBAUM - Chairman of the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union
Ms Miriam DENKINGER - Secretary to the Committee
Federal Council/Conseil federal/Bundesrat
Ms Ute MULLER - Head of the secretariat of the Committee on European Union Questions

Greece/Grece

Hellenic Parliament/Parlement hellénique/Vouli ton Ellinon

Ms Elsa PAPADIMITRIOU - Vice Chair of the European Affairs Committee

Hungary/Hongrie

National Assembly/Assemblée nationale/Országgyűlés

Mr Richard HORCSIK - Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs
Ms Angela RAGANY - Adviser of the Committee on European Affairs
Ms Katalin SZALOKI - Permanent Representative of the Hungarian National Assembly to the EP

Ireland/Irlande

Parliament/Parlement/Tithe an Oireachtais

Mr Joe COSTELLO - Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs
Ms Siobhan MALONE - Policy Clerk

Italy/Italie

Chamber of Deputies/Chambre des deputes/Camera dei Deputati

Mr Enrico FARINONE – Vice Chairman of the Committee on EU Policies

Mr Gianfranco NERI – Official of the EU Department

Senate/Senat/Senato della Repubblica

Ms Rossana BOLDI - Chairwoman of the Standing Committee on EU Policies

Mr Giovanni BAIOCCHI - Head of the Office

Mr Davide CAPUANO - Official of the Bureau for relations with EU institutions

Latvia/Lettonie

Saeima / Diet / Diēte

Mr Imants LIEGIS - Chairman of the Committee on European Union Affairs

Mr Girts OSTROVSKIS - Adviser to the Committee on European Union Affairs

Lithuania/Lituanie

Parliament/Parlement/Seimas

Mr Česlovas Vytautas STANKEVIČIUS - Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs

Mr Julijus GLEBOVAS - Adviser to the Committee on European Affairs

Luxembourg/Luxembourg

Chamber of Deputies/Chambre des deputes

M. Fernand BODEN - Président de la délégation luxembourgeoise auprès de la COSAC

Mme Isabelle BARRA - Secrétaire générale adjointe

Malta/Malte

House of Representatives/Chambre des representants/Kamra tad-Deputati

Ms Eleanor SCERRI - Research Analyst

Netherlands/Pays-Bas

House of Representatives/Chambre des representants/Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal

Mr Peter VAN KESSEL - Deputy Clerk to the European Affairs Committee

Senate/Senat/Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal

Ms Tineke STRIK - Chairwoman of the Standing Committee for European Co-operation Organisations
Ms Eva BUITENKAMP - Official of the Standing Committee for European Co-operation Organisations

Portugal/Portugal

Assembly of the Republic/Assemblée de la République/Assembleia da Republica

Mr Paulo MOTA PINTO - Chairman of the Committee on European Affairs
Mr Bruno PINHEIRO - Permanent Representative of the Portuguese Parliament to the EU

Romania/Roumanie

Chamber of Deputies/Chambre des deputes/Camera Deputailor

Mr Angel TILVAR- Member of the Committee on European Affairs
Mr Andrei MOCEAROV - Director of the EU Law Department

Senate/Senat/Senatul

Mr Radu Catalin MARDARE - Member of the Committee on European Affairs

Slovakia/Slovaquie

National Council/Conseil national/Narodna rada

Mr Ivan ŠTEFANEC - Chairman of the European Affairs Committee
Ms Viktoria LOVACKA - IPEX correspondent

Slovenia/Slovenie

National Assembly/Assemblée nationale/Državni zbor

Mr Bogdan BAROVIČ - Deputy Chairman of the Committee on EU Affairs
Mr Zvonko BERGANT - Secretary of the Committee on EU Affairs

National Council/Conseil national/Državni svet

Mr Vincenc OTONIČAR - Chairman of the Commission for International Relations and European Affairs
Ms Neža DULAR - Adviser

Spain/Espagne

Cortes Generales (Congreso de los Diputados and Senado de Espana)

Mr Alex SAEZ JUBERO - Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee for the European Union

Mr Ignacio CARBAJAL IRANZO - Clerk of the Joint Committee for the European Union

Sweden/Suede

Parliament/Parlement/Riksdag

Mr Gustav BLIX - Member of the Committee on European Union Affairs

Ms Margareta LJUNGGREN HJORTH - Head of Secretariat

Ms Pia TORSLEFF HERTZBERG - Deputy Secretary

United Kingdom/Royaume-Uni

House of Commons/Chambre des Communes

Mr Edward BEALE - Representative to the EU

House of Lords/Chambre des Lords

Lord John ROPER - Chairman of the European Union Committee

Ms Jane VAUGHAN - Clerk of the European Union Committee

Mr Duncan SAGAR - EU Liaison Officer

European Parliament/Parlement européen

Mr Miguel Angel MARTINEZ MARTINEZ - Vice-President of the European Parliament

Mr Carlo CASINI - Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

Mr Krzysztof BERNACKI - Head of the Institutional Cooperation Unit, Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments

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Ms Maria GORSKA - Member

Mr Wojciech KUŹMA - Member

Ms Magdalena SKRZYŃSKA - Member

Ms Magdalena SKULIMOWSKA - Member

Mr Andre DE MUNTER - Member

Ms Katalin SZALOKI - Member

Mr Thomas SARUP - Member

CANDIDATE COUNTRIES/PAYS CANDIDATS

Croatia/Croatie

Croatian Parliament/Parlement de Croatie/Hrvatski sabor

Mr Neven MIMICA - Chairman of the European Integration Committee

Ms Vesna LONČARIĆ - Secretary of the European Integration Committee

Iceland/Islande

Parliament/Parlement/Altingi

Mr Arni Thor SIGURDSSON - Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

Mr Stigur STEFANSSON - Adviser to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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Parliament/Parlement/Skupština Crne Gore

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Mr Jasmin BOJADŽIĆ - Adviser to the Committee on International Relations and European Integration

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Ms Camilla HANSSON - Member of the Cabinet of Commissioner Cecilia Malmström

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Ms Cecilia MALMSTROM – Commissioner in charge of Home Affairs

Mr Mikołaj DOWGIELEWICZ - Secretary of State for European Affairs,
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Appendix IV

List of Participants Plenary Meeting XLVI COSAC

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Presidency/Presidence

Poland/Pologne

Diet/Diete/Sejm

Mr. Stanisław RAKOCZY – Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee

Mr. Andrzej GAŁAŻEWSKI – Deputy Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee

Mr. Edward SIARKA – Deputy Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee

Mr. Krzysztof J. ROMMEL – Director of the International Affairs Bureau

Mr. Bogdan JANOWSKI – Deputy Director of the International Affairs Bureau

Mr. Adam DUDZIC – Deputy Director of the International Affairs Bureau

Ms. Kaja KRAWCZYK – Head of the EU Division

Ms. Anna TRĘBACZKIEWICZ – Official, EU Division

Ms. Joanna KOWALSKA – Official, EU Division

Ms. Magdalena SKRZYŃSKA – Permanent Representative of the Polish Sejm
Chancellery to the EU

Senate/Senat/Senat

Mr. Edmund WITTBRODT – Chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee

Mr. Jan WYROWIŃSKI – Chairman of the National Economy Committee, member of the EU Affairs Committee

Mr. Leszek KIENIEWICZ – Director of the Office for International and EU Affairs

Ms. Lidia ŚMIETANKO – Head of the EU Affairs Unit

Ms. Agnieszka NIEWCZAS – Official, EU Unit

Ms. Joanna KWIECIEŃ-ROSIŃSKA – Official, EU Unit

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Chancellery to the EU

Austria/Autriche

National Council/Conseil national/Nationalrat

Mr. Fritz NEUGEBAUER – Second President of the National Council, Chairman of the Standing Subcommittee on EU Affairs

Mr. Hannes WENINGER – Member of the Standing Subcommittee on EU Affairs

Mr. Andreas KARLSBOCK – Member of Parliament

Mr. Wolfgang PIRKLHUBER – Member of the Standing Subcommittee on EU Affairs

Mr. Stefan MARKOWITZ – Member of Parliament

Federal Council/Conseil federal/Bundesrat

Mr. Georg KEUSCHNIGG – Chairman of the EU Committee

Mr. Stefan SCHENNACH – Deputy Chairman of the EU Committee

Mr. Gerhard KOLLER – Head of European Relations Division

Ms. Katharina STOURZH – Head of the Office of the Second President

Mr. Georg MAGERL – Permanent Representative of the Austrian Parliament to the EU

Belgium/Belgique

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M. Herman DE CROO – Membre du Bureau de la Chambre et du Comité d'avis charge des questions européennes

M. Peter LUYKX – Membre du Comité d'avis charge des questions européennes

M. Carlos DEMEYERE – Premier Conseiller d'Affaires européennes

Senate/Senat/Senaat

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M. Frank BOOGAERTS – Membre du Comité d'avis fédéral charge des questions européennes

M. Tim DE BONDT – Secrétaire du Comité d'avis fédéral charge des questions européennes

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Mr. Assen AGOV – Member of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds

Ms. Kalina KRUMOVA – Member of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds

Mr. Plamen ORESHARSKI – Member of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds

Mr. Svetlen TANCHEV – Member of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds

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Cyprus/Chypre

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Mr. Christos MESSIS – Member of the House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs

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Mr. Thomas SARUP – Representative of the Folketing to the EU

Estonia/Estonie

Parliament/Parlement/Riigikogu

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Mr. Aivar SOERD – Member of the European Union Affairs Committee
Ms. Ester TUIKSOO – Member of the European Union Affairs Committee
Mr. Rannar VASSILJEV – Member of the European Union Affairs Committee
Ms. Kristi SOBER – Adviser to the EU Affairs Committee
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Finland/Finlande

Parliament/Parlement/Eduskunta

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Mr. Antti KAIKKONEN – Deputy Chairman of the Grand Committee
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Ms. Anni SINNEMAKI – Member of the Grand Committee
Ms. Astrid THORS – Member of the Grand Committee
Mr. Jan VAPAAVUORI – Member of the Grand Committee
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M. Guy CHAUVIN – Chef de division du secrétariat de la commission

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Federal Diet/Diete federale/Bundestag

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Ms. Eva HOGL – Member of the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union
Mr. Jerzy MONTAG – Member of the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union
Mr. Michael STUBGEN – Member of the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union
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Ms. Caroline MAs – Secretariat to the Committee

Federal Council/Conseil federal/Bundesrat

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Hellenic Parliament/Parlement hellenique/Vouli ton Ellinon

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Hungary/Hongrie

National Assembly/Assemblée nationale/Országgyűlés

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Parliament / Parlement / Saeima

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Parliament/Parlement/Seimas

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M. Ben FAYOT – Membre de la delegation luxembourgeoise aupres de la COSAC

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Mr. Kees DE LANGE – Member of the Committee for European Co-operation Organisations

Mr. David RIJKS – Official

Ms. Ilse VAN DEN DRIESSCHE – Official

Portugal/Portugal

Assembly of the Republic/Assemblée de la République/Assembleia da Republica

Mr. Paulo MOTA PINTO – Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Portuguese Communities

Mr. Vitalino CANAS – Member of the Committee on European Affairs

Mr. Alberto COSTA – Member of the Committee on European Affairs

Mr. Carlos SAO MARTINHO – Member of the Committee on European Affairs

Mr. Jose Lino RAMOS – Member of the Committee on European Affairs

Mr. Antonio RODRIGUES – Member of the Committee on European Affairs

Ms. Joana FIGUEIREDO – Official

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Romania/Roumanie

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Ms. Marina BRUCHER – Counselor of the secretariat of the European Affair Committee of the Chamber of the Deputies

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Mr. Vasile NEDELCU – Chairman of the European Affairs Committee
Mr. Albert ALMOS – Member of the European Affairs Committee
Ms. Aurelia STANCIU – Councilor, Secretariat of the European Affairs Committee

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Mr. Ivan ŠTEFANEC – Chairman of the Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on European Affairs
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Mr. Andrej KOLESIK – Member of the Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on European Affairs
Mr. Peter OSUSKY – Member of the Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on European Affairs
Ms. Katarina KOKAVCOVA – Secretary of the Committee on European Affairs

Slovenia/Slovenie

National Assembly/Assemblée nationale/Državni zbor

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National Council/Conseil national/Državni svet

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Cortes Generales (Congreso de los Diputados and Senado de Espana)

Mr. Miguel ARIAS – Chairman of the Joint Committee for the European Union
Mr. Juan MOSCOSO DEL PRADO – Member of the Joint Committee for the European Union
Ms. Eva PARERA – Senator, Member of the Joint Committee for the European Union

Mr. Inaki ANASAGASTI – Senator, Member of the Joint Committee for the European Union

Mr. Ignacio CARBAJAL – Legal Adviser

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Sweden/Suede

Parliament/Parlement/Riksdag

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Ms. Bodil CEBALLOS – Member of the Committee on European Union Affairs

Ms. Margareta CEDERFELT – Member of the Committee on European Union Affairs

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Mr. Michael CONNARTY – Member of the European Scrutiny Committee

Mr. Alistair DOHERTY – Clerk of the European Scrutiny Committee

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House of Lords/Chambre des Lords

Lord John ROPER – Chairman of the European Union Select Committee

Mr. Peter BOWNESS – Chairman of the European Union Select Committee

Mr. Lyndon HARRISON – Member of the European Union Select Committee

Mr. Jake VAUGHAN – Clerk of the European Union Committee

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European Parliament/Parlement européen

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Ms. Jutta HAUG – Deputy Chairperson of the Committee on Budgets (BUDG)

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Mr. Wojciech KUŹMA – Member
Ms. Magdalena SKRZYŃSKA – Member
Ms. Magdalena SKULIMOWSKA – Member
Mr. Andre DE MUNTER – Member
Ms. Katalin SZALOKI – Member
Mr. Thomas SARUP – Member
Ms. Louise JUUL – Member

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Mr. Alex WINTHER – Official

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Mr. Bogdan BORUSEWICZ – Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland

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Mr. Waldemar ŚLUGOCKI – Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Regional Development

Mr. Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ – Vice-President of the European Commission for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration

Mr. Janusz LEWANDOWSKI – European Commissioner for Budget and Financial Programming

Ms. Danuta Maria HUEBNER – Chairperson of the Committee on Regional Development (REGI)

Mr. Salvador GARRIGA POLLEDO – Member of the European Parliament - Rapporteur on the EP Resolution of 8 June 2011: "Investing in the future: a new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for a competitive, sustainable and inclusive Europe". Special committee on the policy challenges and budgetary resources for a sustainable European Union after 2013 in the European Parliament (SURE)