



Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

COSAC LIV Plenary Meeting

Luxembourg

29 November - 1 December 2015

Report of the Delegation

31ENUA0037

Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

Report on attendance at COSAC LIV Plenary Meeting

Luxembourg, 29 November – 1 December 2015

1. COSAC, the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union, is the principal forum for co-operation between committees of the national parliaments dealing with European affairs. COSAC meetings are held biannually and normally take place in the country holding the EU-presidency. The COSAC LIV was held in Luxembourg, 29 November to 1 December 2015. (See **Annex 1** for COSAC Programme)
2. The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs was represented by Deputy Dominic Hannigan, Chairman, Deputy Derek Keating and Senator Aideen Hayden. The delegation was accompanied by Ms. Bríd Dunne, Clerk to the Committee and Ms. Fiona Cashin, Policy Advisor to the Committee. Ms. Cáit Hayes, Oireachtas Permanent Representation to the EU also attended.
3. The COSAC meeting was chaired by Mr. Marc Angel, Chair of the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Defence, Cooperation and Immigration, Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*.
4. The main guest speakers at the conference were: **Mr Gaston Stronck**, Director of the International Economic Relations and European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg; **Ms Laura Ferrara**, Member of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee of the European Parliament; **Mr Jean-Pierre Schembri**, European Asylum Support Office (EASO); **Mr Michele Bordo**, Chair of the Committee on EU Policies of the Italian *Camera dei deputati*; **Rear Admiral Hervé Bléjean**, Deputy Commander of EUNAVFOR MED; **Mr Simon Mordue**, Director of Strategy and Turkey, DG NEAR, European Commission; **Mr Kamal Izidor Shaker**, Chair of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Slovenian *Državni zbor*, and **Mr Gunter Krichbaum**, Chair of the Committee on EU Affairs of the German *Bundestag*.

Day 1- 30 November 2015

5. Procedural Issues

- The draft agenda of the LIV COSAC which was adopted without amendment.
- A deadline of 12 noon on 30 November 2015 for accepting amendments to the draft contribution of LIV COSAC applied;
- COSAC secretariat presented the 24th Bi-annual Report of COSAC, consisting of three chapters: 1) The future of parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs, 2) A European agenda on migration, and 3) Enlargement policy;
- The Presidency presented details of the letters received by the Presidency;

Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

- The Chair presented a draft COSAC statement for adoption at the Chairperson's meeting;
6. Members of the Irish delegation contributed to the discussions on agenda items as follows:-

Session I - 'European Agenda on Migration'

Common asylum policy and legal migration policy *(Deputy Dominic Hannigan)*

Following the address by the key note speakers, a wide-ranging debate took place, which included 33 contributions from the floor.

Opening his contribution to the debate in Irish, Deputy Dominic Hannigan referred to the unprecedented numbers of migrants and refugees arriving in the EU and the enormity of the problem. He reiterated Ireland's support for the European Agenda on Migration and outlined Ireland's significant contribution to addressing the migration crisis including the provision of €12 million in support of the Syrian people in 2015, bringing Ireland's contribution to €41m towards alleviating migration-related hardship. He also referenced Ireland's voluntarily 'Opt In' to the European Commission relocation plans for 120,000 refugees and the agreement to accept up to 4,000 refugees. He stated that Ireland would continue to show solidarity with member states and welcomes the European Agenda on Migration in an effort to deal with the future challenges this crisis presents.

(Link to LIV COSAC minutes, reference pages 8–12 for full debate on this item [LIV COSAC Minutes](#))

Fight against irregular migration and securing Europe's external borders *(Senator Aideen Hayden)*

Following the key note speakers, debate heard 37 contributions from the floor including a contribution by Senator Aideen Hayden for Ireland. She highlighted the scale of the problem and that Ireland was fully supportive of the EU approach to the crisis and was determined to assume responsibility and share the burden. She reaffirmed Ireland's political support for 'Operation Sophia'. She also expressed Ireland's continued co-operation with and support for Italy in the management of the operations at sea. She reminded the EU not to limit its actions to the sole fight against smugglers, but to always consider the conflicts as a reason for fleeing and the pleas of those who could not escape.

(Link to LIV COSAC minutes, reference pages 12-17 for full debate on this item [LIV COSAC Minutes](#))

Session II - 'A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe' (Deputy Derek Keating)

Following the address by the key note speakers, in the debate that followed, Deputy Derek Keating stated that the DSM strategy reflected the changing nature of business and the importance of the digital economy, however, commented that the full potential of the digital economy for business and consumers across the EU had to be fully realised. He welcomed the aim of the European Commission to make better access possible and referred to the fact that European SME trading online was currently low. He stated that future EU action should aim at assisting SME in digital commerce and in developing a strategy, that Europe must adopt a flexible approach that avoids imposing an excessive regulatory burden and must balance this flexibility with adequate consumer protection. Policy-makers must work with business to ensure new rules support the innovative use of digital tools and actively encourage investment in new infrastructure and improved quality goods and services for consumers.

(Link to LIV COSAC minutes, reference pages 17-21 for full debate on this item [LIV COSAC Minutes](#))

7. Meeting of Chairpersons of COSAC

Deputy Dominic Hannigan, Chairman remained in attendance for the Chairpersons' meeting.

(i) Appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2016 and 2017

In line with the proposal of the Troika on the re-appointment of Ms Christiana Fryda as the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, the Chairpersons agreed on Ms Fryda's reappointment for the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017.

(ii) Debate on the Draft Contribution and draft Conclusions

The Chair informed the meeting that the Presidency had submitted the draft conclusions and contribution to delegations on 16 November 2015. Since then, the Presidency had received amendments from national Parliaments and the European Parliament on both documents. A modified document, as well as the complete list of the amendments tabled both before the meeting and until the deadline of noon of that day had been circulated.

The Chair then invited the Chairpersons to discuss all the amendments paragraph by paragraph. Following a lengthy debate on the amendments and electronic voting in the case of some amendments, an amended text of the Contribution and

Joint Committee on European Union Affairs

Conclusions of the LIV COSAC was agreed by the Chairpersons for adoption.

Links to final text:

See **Annex 2** for list of amendments submitted by Ireland.

8. The Irish delegation did not attend at day 2 of the conference due to travel arrangements.



Dominic Hannigan T.D.

Chairman

20 January 2016

ANNEX I



Draft as of 16 November 2015

LIV C O S A C **29 November - 1 December 2015** **Luxembourg**

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Sunday 29 November 2015

14.00 - 19.00 Arrival of delegations and registration for the meeting at the hotels

Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC

16.30 Departure from the hotels

17.00 - 19.00 Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC

*Venue :European Convention Center Luxembourg (room D)
L-1499 Luxembourg
4, place de l'Europe*

19.00 Departure for the reception

19.00 Departure from the hotels for the reception

19.30 **Reception** hosted by Mr Marc Angel, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Defence, Cooperation and Immigration, at the Hotel Sofitel Europe L-2015 Luxembourg, 4, rue du Fort Niedergrunewald

around 21.30 Return to the hotels

Monday 30 November 2015

7.30 Departure from the hotels for participants in meetings of political groups
Registration (for those who are not yet registered)

Meetings of political groups

8.00 - 9.00 Meetings of political groups
European Convention Center Luxembourg

Joint Committee on European Union Affairs



L-1499 Luxembourg, 4, place de l'Europe

Group of the European People's Party (room E)
Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
in the European Parliament (room B)
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (room D)
The Greens / European Free Alliance (room workshop 1)

8.15	Departure from the hotels (other participants)
9.00 - 9.30	<p>Opening of the meeting</p> <p>Welcome address by H. E. Mr Mars Di Bartolomeo, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg</p> <p>Introductory remarks by Mr Marc Angel, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Defence, Cooperation and Immigration of the Chamber of Deputies</p> <p>Adoption of the agenda</p> <p>Procedural issues and miscellaneous matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Information on the results of the Presidential Troika of COSAC- Presentation of the 24th Bi-annual Report of COSAC- Letters received by the Presidency- Procedural issues <p>Debate</p>
9.30 - 13.00	<p>Session I - European Agenda on Migration</p> <p>Common asylum policy and legal migration policy</p> <p>Keynote speakers :</p> <p>Mr Jean Asselborn, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg Ms Danuta Hübner, Chairperson of the Committee on constitutional affairs of the European Parliament Mr Robert José Carreira, Executive Director ad interim of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO)</p> <p>Debate</p>
11.00	Coffee break

Joint Committee on European Union Affairs



11.30 **Fight against irregular migration and securing Europe's external borders**

Keynote speakers :

Mr Michele Bordo, Chairman of the Committee on EU policies of the *Camera dei Deputati* of Italy
Rear Admiral Hervé Bléjean, Deputy Commander of EUNAVFOR MED

Debate

13.00 **Family photo**

13.15 **Lunch** at the European Convention Center Luxembourg

13.45 Informal lunch session on the current negotiations on EU reform ahead of the referendum on UK membership (on request of the UK delegation)

14.45 **Session II - A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe**

Keynote speakers :

Mr Andrus Ansip, Vice-President of the European Commission for Digital Single Market
Mr Jean-Paul Zens, Premier Conseiller de Gouvernement, Direction « Médias, audiovisuel et société de l'information », Ministère d'Etat du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg
Mr Kalle Palling, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the *Riigikogu* of Estonia
Ms Angelika Mlinar, Member of the European Parliament

Debate

16.15 End of session

Return by bus to the hotels

16.30 **Meeting of COSAC Chairpersons**

Appointment of the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat for 2016 and 2017

Debate on the Draft Contribution and Draft Conclusions of the LIV COSAC

18.00 Return to the hotels

Joint Committee on European Union Affairs



- 19.45 Departure by bus from the hotels to the Grand Théâtre de la Ville de Luxembourg
L-2525 Luxembourg, 1, rond-point Schuman
- 20.00 **Dinner** hosted by H.E. Mr Mars Di Bartolomeo, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies
- 22.00 Return to the hotels

Tuesday 1 December 2015

- 8.45 Departure from the hotels
- 9.15 **Session III - Enlargement policy**
- Keynote speakers :
- Mr Simon Mordue, Director « Strategy and Turkey », DG NEAR, European Commission
Mr Kamal Izidor Shaker, Chairman of the Committee on EU Affairs of the *Drzavni zbor* de Slovenia
M. Gunther Krichbaum, Chairman of the Committee on EU Affairs of the German *Bundestag*
- Debate
- 10.45 Coffee break
- 11.15 **Adoption of the Contribution and Conclusions** of the LIV COSAC
- 12.00 **Lunch** at the European Convention Center Luxembourg
- 14.30 Departure of delegations
-

ANNEX 2

Ireland's Proposed Amendments to the Draft COSAC Contribution

A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe

2.5. COSAC acknowledges the necessity of EU tax systems to adapt to the challenges raised by the digital economy and calls on the European Commission to formulate proposals to this respect relying on the work accomplished by EU Parliaments.

Ireland's Proposed Amendment:

- (i) To Delete 'EU' and substitute 'member states' before tax systems *and*
- (ii) To delete all words after economy

New 2.5

2.5. COSAC acknowledges the necessity of member states tax systems to adapt to the challenges raised by the digital economy.

Introducing Green Cards

5.2. COSAC stresses that a « green card » could suggest introducing new EU legislation, as well as amending and repealing existing EU legislation.

Ireland's Proposed Amendment:

- (i) To insert “, while respecting the role of the EU Commission” after ‘ that’

New 5.2

5.2. COSAC stresses that while respecting the role of the EU Commission, a « green card » could suggest introducing new EU legislation, as well as amending and repealing existing EU legislation.

24 November 2015