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## **An Comhchoiste um Ghnóthaí an Aontais Eorpaigh**

Tuarascáil ar Thaisteal – Cruinniú Iomlánach  
an LXVIII COSAC, Prág 13 - 15 Samhain 2022

Aibreán 2023

## **Joint Committee on European Union Affairs**

Travel Report – LXVIII COSAC Plenary,  
Prague, 13th to 15th November 2022

April 2023



## Joint Committee on European Union Affairs



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**Francis Noel Duffy T.D.**

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**Robert Troy T.D.**

Fianna Fáil



**Senator Lisa Chambers**

Fianna Fáil



**Senator Regina Doherty**

Fine Gael



**Senator Sharon Keogan**

Independent



**Senator Vincent P Martin**

Green Party



**Senator Michael McDowell**

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## REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AT COSAC PLENARY MEETING

Under the Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, it is outlined that:

*“The Joint Committee shall represent both Houses of the Oireachtas at the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) and shall report to both Houses of the Oireachtas thereon.”*

COSAC, the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs, is the principal forum for co-operation between committees of national parliaments dealing with European Union Affairs. COSC Meetings are held twice yearly and normally take place in the country holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The LXVIII COSAC Plenary took place in Prague, Czech Republic from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs was represented by **Deputy Joe McHugh** (Committee Cathaoirleach and Head of Delegation), **Deputy Robert Troy**, **Senator Sharon Keogan** and **Senator Lisa Chambers**. The delegation was accompanied by Darren Kelly, Policy Advisor to the Committee. Paul Conway, the Houses of the Oireachtas Permanent Representative in Brussels also attended.

The COSAC Plenary Meeting was chaired by Mr David Smoljak, Chairperson of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Czech *Sénat*, and Mr Ondřej Benešík, Chairperson of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*.

Invited speakers to the plenary session included:

- **H.E. Ms Markéta Pekarová Adamová**, Speaker of the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*
- **Mr Mikuláš Bek**, Minister for EU Affairs of the Czech Republic
- **Mr Othmar Karas**, First Vice-President of the European Parliament
- **Ms Věra Jourová**, Vice-President of the European Commission

- **Mr Maroš Šefčovič**, Vice-President of the European Commission
- **H.E. Mr Václav Bartuška**, Ambassador-at-large for Energy Security of the Czech Republic
- **Mr Tomáš Pojar**, Advisor to the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic on Security and Foreign Affairs Issues
- **Ms Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze**, Chairperson of the *Verkhovna Rada* (Ukrainian Parliament) Committee on EU Integration
- **Mr Mirek Topolánek**, Former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic
- **Mr Salvatore De Meo**, Chairperson of the European Parliament Committee on Constitutional Affairs
- **Ms. Ursula von der Leyen**, President of the European Commission (video message).



## Proceedings of the COSAC Plenary meeting

### 13<sup>th</sup> November

The delegation attended an official dinner at the Žofín Palace hosted by Mr Ondřej Benešík, Chairperson of the EU Affairs Committee of the *Poslanecká sněmovna*.

### 14<sup>th</sup> November

#### Opening of the LXVIII COSAC

The LXVIII COSAC plenary began with opening remarks by H.E. Ms Markéta Pekarová Adamová, Speaker of the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, Mr David Smoljak, Chairperson of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Czech *Sénat*, and Mr Ondřej Benešík, Chairperson of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*.

Ms Adamová pointed to the unique challenges to Europe presented by the invasion of Ukraine, citing the need for a strong European response to the humanitarian crisis and the energy crisis sparked by the war. Ms Adamová outlined the need for actions such as rollout of renewable energies, continuing financial and military support for Ukraine, and greater strategic autonomy. Mr Benešík outlined the need to defend to EU values such as Rule of Law that are challenged by Russian aggression, welcomed the presense at COSAC of representatives of EU candidate states, and his belief that COSAC should be an example of solidarity and unity. Mr Smoljak outlined the appropriateness of the venue, the *O2 Universum*, ordinarily a sports and cultural venue, as COSAC is based on values common in sport such as participation, teamwork to achieve a common objective, and respect for the rules. Mr Smoljak outlined that the situation Europe was currently facing was originated by the fact that one country decided to break those rules of the international order established after World War II.

#### Adoption of Agenda and Procedural Issues

The plenary agenda was adopted without amendment. Mr Benešík outlined that the proposed conclusions and contributions would be discussed at the Chairpersons' meeting and that he hoped the texts would be agreed by consensus.



Mr Bruno Dias Pinheiro, the permanent member of the COSAC secretariat, presented the results of the 38<sup>th</sup> COSAC biannual report. The report provided a summary of the different approaches taken by national parliaments on the Conference on the Future of Europe, the proposals of the COSAC working groups, and the EU and Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

### **Keynote Video Message**

President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, addressed the plenary by video message. President von der Leyen thanked the Czech Republic for its support to Ukraine, and noted the recent reconstruction conference held in Berlin at the end of October, which had led the Commission to propose allocating 18 billion euros to Ukraine for 2023. President von der Leyen also outlined the Commission's actions in relation to energy security, the energy transition, and EU enlargement.

### **Plenary Session 1**

The plenary heard from Czech Minister for European Affairs, Mikuláš Bek, on the Czech Presidency on the Council of the European Union. The Minister reflected on the Czech Republic's journey as an EU member state since its last Presidency in 2009 and its accession in 2004, noting that enlargement was a priority for the Czech Presidency. The Minister outlined the importance of supporting Ukraine; mentioning humanitarian aid, post-war reconstruction, sanctions, and a strengthened Common Foreign and Security Policy. Minister Bek outlined EU actions in relation to energy security, digital transformation, the Fit for 55 package, and media freedom.

Deputy Joe McHugh thanked the Czech Presidency for its support to Ukraine and recognised the commitment of the European Commission to enlargement for the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkans states, citing Europe's historical responsibility.

### **Plenary Session 2**

Othmar Karas MEP, First Vice-President of the European Parliament, addressed the plenary on the Future of the EU. Vice-President Karas outlined that the issues the EU is facing, such as security, climate change, inflation, and the pandemic, are cross-border challenges that require cooperation among EU member states. Vice-

President Karas also outlined that the EU needs to strengthen its voice as a global player and reform its decision-making processes, including Treaty reform in order to implement the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Vice-President of the European Commission, Věra Jourová, outlined that the Conference on the Future of Europe was a unique tool for generating guidance and answers to some of the issues facing Governments and for allowing deliberation between citizens and elected representatives of all levels. Vice-President Jourová outlined the work undertaken by the Commission to progress the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe, noting that 43 of the 51 items in the European Commission Annual Work Programme tie in with the outcomes of the Conference. Vice-President Jourová also welcomed the work of the COSAC Working Group on the role of national parliaments in the EU.

Senator Lisa Chambers outlined that the discussions at COSAC demonstrate a lack of consensus on what should be the future of Europe. Senator Chambers acknowledged that the Conference on the Future of Europe put citizens at the heart of the discussion, while noting that those who interacted with the Conference may not be representative of all citizens. Senator Chambers urged caution regarding treaty change and a move to qualified majority voting, noting that there may be constitutional issues in member states such as Ireland and that unanimity can help to prevent power being concentrated in the hand of a small number of member states.

### **Plenary Session 3**

Vice President of the European Commission Maroš Šefčovič addressed the plenary on the topic of strategic autonomy. Vice-President Šefčovič outlined three priorities for tackling rising energy prices: accelerating the green transition, increasing energy savings, and diversifying energy sources. The Vice President also outlined the importance of better preparedness of EU economies and public institutions for future crises, and the financial support of €18 billion for Ukraine in 2023. Vice-President Šefčovič outlined the potential for the EU to achieve greater strategic autonomy in areas such as raw materials, microchips, batteries, and global partnerships.

Czech Ambassador-at-large for Energy Security, H.E. Václav Bartuška, outlined the EU's strategic dependencies for natural resources. While the EU had successfully diversified its energy sources away from Russian imports the EU is still dependent on imported energy. The Ambassador noted that diversification of supply for resources such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earths is much more difficult as the majority of global supply is controlled by a small number of countries.

Senator Sharon Keogan outlined that Irish neutrality is held in high esteem and allows Ireland to be a highly trusted broker of peace in Europe, and that Irish membership of a military alliance would harm Ireland's credibility as a unique voice for peace and reconciliation. Senator Keogan outlined Ireland's commitment to supporting the humanitarian response to the war in Ukraine, citing Ireland's commitment to international protection.

Deputy Joe McHugh expressed his recognition and gratitude to Vice President Šefčovič's role in the EU response to Brexit. Deputy McHugh spoke about humanitarian issues such as drought and famine in Northeast Africa. Deputy McHugh outlined that the EU has a role to play alongside the UN, humanitarian issues and NGOs in the provision of aid to this region.

Deputy Robert Troy thanked Vice President Šefčovič for his role in seeking a solution to the impasse on the Northern Ireland Protocol. Deputy Troy outlined that the war in Ukraine has demonstrated the error the EU has made in becoming dependant on a rogue state for energy security. Deputy Troy noted that the conversation on the need to diversify and transition to renewable energies has been happening for a long time, but the current cost of living crisis has added urgency to these efforts. Deputy Troy acknowledged the efforts of the European Commission in its response to the energy security crisis and urged the Commission to maintain these efforts in the longer term.

Following the conclusion of this session, the delegation briefly spoke informally with Vice-President Šefčovič and welcomed his commitment to a post-Brexit EU-UK relationship based on respect for the Good Friday Agreement and maintaining an open border on the island of Ireland.

Deputy McHugh also briefly spoke informally to the interpretation staff providing Irish-English interpretation, welcoming their efforts which allowed Oireachtas delegates to make their contributions through Irish.

### **Meeting of COSAC Chairpersons**

Deputy Joe McHugh, as Committee Cathaoirleach, represented the delegation at this meeting which voted on wording of final Conclusions and Contribution of the LXVIII COSAC.<sup>1</sup> The Oireachtas delegation secured unanimous agreement on an amendment that specified that support to Ukraine's military effort should be with respect to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.

### **Official Dinner**

The delegation attended a formal dinner hosted by H. E. Ms Markéta Pekarová Adamová, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, at the Municipal Hall.

## **15<sup>th</sup> November**

### **Plenary Session 4**

Special Advisor to the Czech Prime Minister on Security and Foreign Affairs Issues, Mr Tomáš Pojar, addressed the plenary on the issue of the war in Ukraine. Mr Pojar outlined the long history of shifting borders between Russia and Europe and that the EU must support Ukraine's territorial integrity as a means of defending its own borders. He outlined that Ukraine is fighting on Europe's behalf and that it requires economic support for its reconstruction. Mr Pojar also outlined that the EU response to the war had lagged behind that of the USA.

Ms Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, chairperson of the Committee on Ukraine's European Integration of the Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada* addressed the plenary, thanking the COSAC presidency for demonstrating its support and visiting Ukraine in September 2022. Ms Klympush Tsintsadze outlined some of the developments in the war, such as Russia's sham referenda in occupied territories of Ukraine, the use of Iranian drone technology by Russia, and the destruction of a large proportion of

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<sup>1</sup> See "Outcomes" chapter for full conclusions and contributions

Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure. She outlined the importance of national parliaments in recognising the Russian regime as a terrorist regime and continuing to push for support for Ukraine. Ms Klympush-Tsintsadze discussed the types of supports Ukraine needs, such as macro-financial assistance, critical parts for infrastructure such as generators, and the possibility that frozen Russian assets could be requisitioned to part-fund the reconstruction of Ukraine.

Deputy Joe McHugh outlined his experiences of witnessing the humanitarian support provided to Ukrainian refugees at border crossings in Romania and Moldova, and that Ireland is currently considering what further support it can provide. Deputy McHugh outlined the importance of supporting refugees experiencing physical and emotional trauma. Deputy McHugh noted that the EU will need to stand in support of Ukraine during its reconstruction.

### **Plenary Session 5**

Former Czech Prime Minister, Mirek Topolanék, addressed the plenary on the topic of the European Perspective of the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership. Mr Topolanék outlined the values-based nature of the EU and the need to defend those values against threats that may develop so gradually that there is insufficient focus on them. He questioned whether all member states were truly in the same boat when dealing with the financial crisis during the last Czech Presidency in 2009, and questioned the progress made on the Czech priorities from 2009, energy security, economic recovery and the Eastern Partnership. Mr Topolanék outlined that the Czech Republic had demonstrated what new member states can offer the EU, although noted that its warnings on Russian aggression were not fully heeded. He outlined that a change in paradigm is needed to expand the area of prosperity, freedom and peace in Europe.

Salvatore De Meo MEP, Chairperson of the European Parliament Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO), addressed the plenary. Mr De Meo outlined the importance of the EU for peace, prosperity and democracy in our continent and the importance of defending EU values. Mr De Meo outlined that enlargement is an important tool in the context of security threats in the Balkan region and in Eastern Europe, and that the Western Balkans are the EU's most important partnership. He

called for the commencement of accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia, the acceleration of accession negotiations with Serbia and Montenegro, for support to be given to Bosnia and Herzegovina in making reforms, and for visa liberalisation to be granted to Kosovo. Mr De Meo outlined his hope that commitment to the Western Balkans would be expressed at the upcoming Balkans Summit. He further outlined the historic nature of candidate status being granted to Moldova and Ukraine and a European perspective being granted to Georgia.

### **Closing of LXVIII COSAC**

Members of the COSAC presidency troika closed the meeting and the contribution and conclusions of the LXVIII COSAC were adopted unanimously.

## Appendix I: Committee Terms of Reference

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| <p>(1) Go gceapfar Roghchoiste, dá ngairfear an Roghchoiste um Ghnóthaí Eorpacha, ar a mbeidh 9 gcomhalta de Dháil Éireann, chun breithniú a dhéanamh ar cibé nithe a éiríonn—</p> <p>(a) as ballraíocht na hÉireann san Aontas Eorpach, agus</p> <p>(b) as Éirinn do chloí leis an gConradh ar an Aontas Eorpach agus leis an gConradh ar Fheidhmiú an Aontais Eorpaigh,</p> <p>a roghnóidh sé agus nach bhfuil tarchurtha chuig aon Choiste eile.</p> <p>(2) Gan dochar do ghinearáltacht mhír (1), breithneoidh an Roghchoiste—</p> <p>(a) cibé Billí a bpléann an Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus an Roinn Cosanta leis an dlí reachtach ina leith,</p> <p>(b) cibé tograí a bheidh in aon tairiscint, lena n-áirítear aon tairiscint de réir bhrí Bhuan-Ordú 220, agus</p> <p>(c) cibé nithe eile,</p> <p>a tharchuirfidh an Dáil chuige.</p> | <p>(1) That a Select Committee, which shall be called the Select Committee on European Union Affairs, consisting of 9 members of Dáil Éireann, be appointed to consider such matters arising from—</p> <p>(a) Ireland's membership of the European Union, and</p> <p>(b) Ireland's adherence to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,</p> <p>as it may select and which are not referred to any other Committee.</p> <p>(2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Select Committee shall consider such—</p> <p>(a) Bills the statute law in respect of which is dealt with by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Defence,</p> <p>(b) proposals contained in any motion, including any motion within the meaning of Standing Order 220, and</p> <p>(c) other matters,</p> <p>as shall be referred to it by the Dáil.</p> |
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| <p>(3) Beidh an tAire Gnóthaí Eachtracha (nó comhalta den Rialtas nó Aire Stáit a ainmneofar chun gníomhú ina áit nó ina háit chun na críche sin), ina chomhalta nó ina comhalta <i>ex officio</i> den Roghchoiste chun na nithe atá leagtha amach i mír (2)(a) agus (b) a bhreithniú agus beidh sé nó sí i dteideal vótáil in imeachtaí an Roghchoiste.</p> | <p>(3) The Minister for Foreign Affairs (or a member of the Government or Minister of State nominated to act in his or her stead for that purpose) shall be an <i>ex officio</i> member of the Select Committee for the purpose of consideration of the matters outlined at paragraph (2)(a) and (b) and shall be entitled to vote in Select Committee proceedings.</p> |
| <p>(4) Beidh ag an Roghchoiste na cumhachtaí a mhínítear i mBuan-Ordú 96, seachas míreanna (6) go (10).</p>  | <p>(4) The Select Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 96, other than paragraphs (6) to (10).</p>  |
| <p>(5) Déanfar an Roghchoiste a chomhcheangal le Roghchoiste arna cheapadh ag Seanad Éireann chun bheith ina Chomhchoiste um Ghnóthaí Eorpacha, agus, gan dochar do ghinearáltacht mhír (1), déanfaidh an Roghchoiste an méid seo a leanas a bhreithniú—</p>   | <p>(5) The Select Committee shall be joined with a Select Committee appointed by Seanad Éireann, to form the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, which, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), shall consider—</p>  |
| <p>(a) doiciméid phleanála straitéiseacha an Choimisiúin Eorpaigh lena n-áirítear Clár Oibre an Choimisiúin,</p>   | <p>(a) the European Commission's strategic planning documents including the Commission Work Programme,</p>  |
| <p>(b) forbairtí beartais tras-earnála ag leibhéal an Aontais Eorpaigh,</p>  | <p>(b) cross-sectoral policy developments at European Union level,</p>  |
| <p>(c) nithe a liostaítear lena mbreithniú ar an gclár gnó i gcomhair cruinnithe de Chomhairle (Airí) Gnóthaí Ginearálta an Aontais Eorpaigh agus toradh cruinnithe den sórt sin.</p>  | <p>(c) matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of the General Affairs Council (of Ministers) of the European Union and the outcome of such meetings,</p>  |
| <p>(d) cibé rialacháin faoi Achtanna na gComhphobal Eorpach, 1972 go 2009 agus ionstraimí eile arna ndéanamh faoi reacht agus is gá de dhroim na n-oibleagáidí a ghabhann le ballraíocht san</p>   | <p>(d) such regulations under the European Communities Acts 1972 to 2009 and other instruments made under statute and necessitated by the obligations of membership of</p>  |

Aontas Eorpach a roghnóidh an Coiste,	the European Union as the Committee may select,
(e) fógraí arna dtarchur ag an Dáil faoi Bhuan-Ordú 134(1)(a),	(e) notifications referred by the Dáil under Standing Order 134(1)(a),
(f) fógraí i dtaobh tograí chun na Conarthaí a fuarthas ón gComhairle Eorpach de bhun Airteagal 48.2 den Chonradh ar an Aontas Eorpach a leasú,	(f) notifications of proposals for the amendment of the Treaties received from the European Council pursuant to Article 48.2 of the Treaty on European Union,
(g) fógraí i dtaobh iarratais ar bhallraíocht san Aontas Eorpach a fuarthas ón gComhairle Eorpach de bhun Airteagal 49 den Chonradh ar an Aontas Eorpach, agus	(g) notifications of applications for membership of the European Union received from the European Council pursuant to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, and
(h) cibé nithe eile a tharchuirfidh an Dáil chuige ó am go ham.	(h) such other matters as may be referred to it by the Dáil from time to time.
(6) Tabharfaidh an Comhchoiste tuarascáil do dhá Theach an Oireachtais ar oibriú Acht an Aontais Eorpaigh (Grinnscrúdú), 2002.	(6) The Joint Committee shall report to both Houses of the Oireachtas on the operation of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002.
(7) Beidh ag an gComhchoiste na cumhachtaí a mhínítear i mBuan-Ordú 96, 133 agus 135 agus beidh aige an chumhacht chun moltaí a chur faoi bhráid an Aire Gnóthaí Eachtracha (nó faoi bhráid Aire Stáit) i dtaobh nithe a bhaineann leis an Aontas Eorpach.	(7) The Joint Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 96, 133 and 135 and shall have the power to make recommendations to the Minister for Foreign Affairs (or Minister of State) on European Union matters.
(8) Féadfaidh na daoine seo a leanas freastal ar chruinnithe den Chomhchoiste agus páirt a ghlacadh in imeachtaí gan ceart vótála a bheith	(8) The following may attend meetings of the Joint Committee and take part in proceedings without having a

acu ná ceart tairiscintí a dhéanamh ná leasuithe a thairiscint:

right to vote or to move motions and amendments:

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| <p>(a) Comhaltaí de Pharlaimint na hEorpa arna dtoghadh ó thoghcheantair in Éirinn,</p> <p>(b) Comhaltaí de thoscaireacht na hÉireann chuig Tionól Parlaiminteach Chomhairle na hEorpa, agus</p> <p>(c) ar chuireadh a fháil ón gCoiste, Comhaltaí eile de Pharlaimint na hEorpa.</p> | <p>(a) Members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies in Ireland,</p> <p>(b) Members of the Irish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and</p> <p>(c) at the invitation of the Committee, other Members of the European Parliament.</p> |
| <p>(9) Déanfaidh an Comhchoiste ionadaíocht do dhá Theach an Oireachtais ag Comhdháil na gCoistí um Ghnóthaí Comhphobail agus Eorpacha de chuid Parlaimintí an Aontais Eorpaigh (COSAC) agus tabharfaidh sé tuarascáil ar an gcéanna do dhá Theach an Oireachtais.</p>                | <p>(9) The Joint Committee shall represent both Houses of the Oireachtas at the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) and shall report to both Houses of the Oireachtas thereon.</p>                                   |
| <p>(10) Beidh Cathaoirleach Roghchoiste na Dála ina Chathaoirleach nó ina Cathaoirleach ar an gComhchoiste freisin.</p>   | <p>(10) The Chairman of the Dáil Select Committee shall also be the Chairman of the Joint Committee.</p>  |

## Appendix 2: Contribution and Conclusions of COSAC

### Contribution

Prague, 13 – 15 November 2022

On Ukraine

(1) COSAC condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign and democratic state. It also condemns Belarus' involvement in Russia's military aggression.

(2) COSAC condemns the organisation by Russia of illegal sham referenda in regions within the internationally recognised borders of Ukraine and the attempted illegal annexation of the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine. Russia's unilateral decisions deliberately violate the UN Charter and disregard the rules-based international order. Russia has no legitimate basis for any action in the territory of Ukraine.

(3) COSAC is appalled by and strongly condemns Russia's missile and kamikaze-drone attacks on Ukraine, targeting civilian and energy infrastructure and educational institutions, destroying homes and killing civilians. COSAC states that these acts are crimes against humanity and therefore calls on national Parliaments to recognize current Russian regime as a terrorist one.

(4) COSAC calls for immediate and unconditional termination of Russia's illegal military actions and withdrawal of all Russian forces and military equipment from the territory of Ukraine and calls for a just peace based on full respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.

(5) COSAC calls for the establishment of the Special International Criminal Tribunal to secure accountability for the crime of aggression and calls for prosecution and punishment of war crimes and other crimes according to international law committed in Ukraine, including through the implementation of the universal jurisdiction principle.

(6) COSAC calls for the establishment of an effective mechanism in line with international law to seize individual and national assets frozen as the result of EU sanctions and to use these assets to compensate for the damage caused to Ukraine and its people by the Russian aggression. COSAC calls for Russia to pay full reparations for material and immaterial damage caused to Ukraine.

(7) COSAC calls on the EU leaders to further reinforce sanctions on Russia and Belarus in order to stop the unprovoked Russian aggression.

(8) COSAC calls on the EU leaders to continue to show unity and strength and provide Ukraine with humanitarian, political, financial and military support (while respecting the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States) as well as immediate, medium and long-term assistance for reconstruction and recovery. COSAC also calls on the European Commission to continue its work on a comprehensive recovery package for Ukraine.

(9) COSAC calls on the national Parliaments of the EU Member States to continue to provide assistance to the best of their ability to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in its efforts to meet the requirements of EU membership.

(10) COSAC supports the European Parliament's calls to use existing European institutions to improve mechanisms for coordination for the delivery of modern weapons systems as well as the training of Ukrainian soldiers in EU Member States, while respecting the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States. In doing so, we underscore our recognition that our shared European security is threatened by Russia. It is therefore our shared responsibility to counter this threat.

#### On the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership

(11) COSAC expresses its full and unequivocal commitment to support the process of EU integration of the Western Balkans and calls for an enhanced merit-based accession process, underpinned by the rule of law and alignment with the *acquis* and good neighbourly relations. COSAC welcomes that the European Commission recommended the status of candidate country to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(12) COSAC welcomes the decision of the European Council to grant the status of candidate country to Ukraine and to the Republic of Moldova, as well as its readiness to grant the status of candidate country to Georgia, and fully supports their progress towards joining the European Union.

(13) COSAC welcomes the first meeting of the European political community in Prague that shall constitute an area of political dialogue and co-operation among democratic countries in Europe insofar as this does not overlap with the existing regional organisations in Europe. COSAC notes that the European political community should not serve as a substitute for the enlargement of the European Union.

#### On strategic autonomy

(14) COSAC underlines the need for the EU to autonomously set its own strategic objectives and to develop the capabilities to pursue them.

(15) In the face of Russia's weaponisation of energy and in light of the ongoing crisis, COSAC supports all efforts to ensure security of supply, to reduce demand where possible and to lower energy prices for households and businesses across the Union.

(16) At the same time, COSAC considers it essential to increase investment in a future-proof energy infrastructure, including interconnections, and in innovative renewable technologies.

#### On the future of the EU

(17) COSAC takes note of the proposals set out in the Report on the outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe. The Conference has been an opportunity to engage with European citizens. An effective follow-up to this report is to be ensured by the institutions, each within their own sphere of competences and in accordance with the Treaties. COSAC notes that work has already been undertaken in this regard. Citizens should be informed clearly, in detail and in all the official EU languages about the follow-up to individual proposals.

(18) COSAC supports citizen participation and consultation mechanisms at the European level and emphasises the necessity of broad public access to information and documents from EU institutions. COSAC highlights the importance of the Commission's genuine and constructive approach to interaction with citizens and to the contributions and opinions of Parliaments as direct representatives of EU citizens.

(19) COSAC calls on the EU institutions to invite the national Parliaments to the follow-up event on the Conference on the Future of Europe scheduled on 2 December 2022.

On the inter-parliamentary cooperation and the 38th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

(20) COSAC welcomes the initiative of setting up two Working Groups under Article 2.6 of its Rules of Procedure, one on the role of national Parliaments in the EU, and the other one on the place of values at the heart of the sense of belonging to the European Union, which have finalised their activities on 14 June 2022. COSAC calls upon the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament to take note of the proceedings and invites them to reflect on the issues covered by the Working Groups and the findings of the 38th Bi-annual Report of COSAC.

## Conclusions

Prague, 13 – 15 November 2022

On the 38th COSAC Bi-annual Report

(1) COSAC expresses thanks to the COSAC Secretariat for preparing the 38th Bi-annual Report, which monitored parliamentary participation and debate on the Conference on the Future of Europe, positions on the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe related to institutional affairs and democratic procedures, including citizens' participation, positions on the proposals of both COSAC working groups convened during the French presidency, as well as parliamentary opinions and scrutiny regarding the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the applications for EU membership by Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.



(2) National Parliaments take note of the Conclusions of the COSAC Working group on the Role of national Parliaments in the EU and the Conclusions of the COSAC Working group on the place of values at the heart of the sense of belonging to the European Union from June 2022. COSAC invites national Parliaments to reflect further on the proposals presented in the Conclusions of the COSAC Working groups. COSAC shall continue the debate on the common understanding of the role of national Parliaments in the European Union and the instruments necessary to fulfil it. COSAC notes that a majority of parliaments consider it important to feature rule of law on the agenda of COSAC depending on the circumstances.

#### On other activities of COSAC

(3) COSAC takes note of the solidarity visit of Chairs of Committees on European Affairs of EU national Parliaments and of the First Vice-President of the European Parliament to Ukraine on 30 September 2022. COSAC is determined to stand for freedom and democracy in Europe, in accordance with the purpose of inter-parliamentary cooperation.

(4) COSAC appreciates the practice established in recent years of conducting informal videoconferences between COSAC delegates and members of the European Commission, as an opportunity for timely and detailed discussions about concrete European initiatives, which enhances the political dialogue as well as inter-parliamentary cooperation.









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