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

Tuarascáil Taistil, An Cruinniú de Chathaoirligh COSAC,

Madrid 17-18 Meán Fómhair 2023

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

Travel Report, COSAC Chairpersons' Meeting

Madrid 17 - 18 September 2023

[33EUA23]

## Joint Committee on European Union Affairs



**Colm Brophy T.D.**

Fine Gael

*Cathaoirleach*



**Matt Carthy T.D.**

Sinn Féin



**Francis Noel Duffy T.D.**

Green Party



**Damien English T.D.**

Fine Gael



**Seán Haughey T.D.**

Fianna Fáil



**Brendan Howlin T.D.**

Labour

*Leas-Chathaoirleach*



**Marian Harkin T.D.**

Independent



**Robert Troy T.D.**

Fianna Fáil



**Ruairí Ó Murchú T.D.**

Sinn Féin



**Senator Lisa Chambers**  
Fianna Fáil



**Senator Regina Doherty**  
Fine Gael



**Senator Sharon Keogan**  
Independent



**Senator Vincent P Martin**  
Green Party



**Senator Michael McDowell**  
Independent

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## Report on attendance at COSAC Chairpersons 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. COSAC Chairpersons Meetings are held twice yearly and normally take place in the country holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The COSAC Chairpersons Meeting marking the Spanish Presidency of the Council took place in Madrid from 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs was represented by **Deputy Seán Haughey** who was designated as acting chairperson for the purpose of the meeting. Policy Advisor to the Committee Darren Kelly accompanied Deputy Haughey at the meeting.

The COSAC Plenary Meeting was chaired by Mr José Ignacio Landaluce Calleja, member of the Spanish *Senado*, and Ms Susana Sumelzo Jordán, member of the Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados*.

Invited speakers to the plenary session included:

- Ms Francina Armengol Socías, Speaker of the *Congreso de los Diputados*
- Mr Pedro Rollán Ojeda, Speaker of the *Senado*
- Mr José Manuel Albares Bueno, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation
- Mr Othmar Karas, First Vice-President of the European Parliament
- Ms Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, Chair of the Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada* Committee on Ukraine’s Integration into the European Union
- Mr Hans Wallmark, Chair of the Swedish *Riksdag* Committee on European Union Affairs

## Proceedings of the COSAC Chairpersons Meeting

### 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The delegation attended an official dinner hosted by the *Cortes Generales* at the Prado National Museum.

### 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023

#### Opening of the COSAC Chairpersons Meeting

Mr José Igancio Landaluce Calleja, member of the *Senado*, welcomed delegates to Madrid noting that it was in Madrid that the idea of COSAC was first conceived, and expressed his hope that COSAC will help to foster the spirit of solidarity and cooperation amongst Member States and Parliaments. Ms Francina Armengol Socias, speaker of the *Congreso de los Diputados* reflected on the challenges Europe has faced since the last Spanish Presidency in 2010 and outlined the priorities of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU. She also noted proposals for a “Charter on the role of parliamentarism in a functioning liberal democracy”. Mr Pedro Rollán Ojeda, speaker of the *Senado*, outlined the role of the *Senado* in ensuring territorial representation of the *Cortes Generales*, and noted the progress made in terms of the active participation of national parliaments and the European Parliament in European Union affairs. He outlined the importance of COSAC in fulfilling the expectations of EU citizens towards their parliamentarians.

#### Procedural and other general matters

The agenda for the Chairpersons Meeting was adopted without amendment, and delegates were informed that the Presidential Troika had approved the outline for the 40<sup>th</sup> biannual COSAC report and the agenda for the LXX COSAC plenary meeting. Delegates were informed that following recent elections in Spain, there was not an active Joint Committee for European Union Affairs of the *Cortes Generales*, and as such the topic for Session III of the Chairpersons meeting had been amended to a general debate on European Union issues.

A draft programme for the LXX COSAC plenary was circulated, which comprised of thematic sessions on areas including the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the

EU, Migration and Asylum, the Energy Crisis and the Green Transition, and Open Strategic Autonomy and EU-Latin America relations.

Delegates were presented with the outline of the 40<sup>th</sup> biannual report of COSAC. The report will examine the role of parliaments in EU open strategic autonomy, the role of parliaments in handling energy policy, and the role of parliaments in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

Delegates were informed that the term of office for the current Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, Mr Bruno Dias Pinheiro, would expire on 31 December and a new appointment would be made at the next COSAC plenary. The Presidency of the COSAC troika outlined their support for the reappointment of Mr Dias Pinheiro, noting the support of his candidacy by the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* and the current smooth running of the secretariat.

Delegates were further informed that all national parliaments had committed to continue with co-financing of COSAC for the 2024-2025 period.

### **Session 1**

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperate, Mr José Manuel Albares Bueno, addressed delegates on the topic of the priorities of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU. The Minister outlined four priorities. Firstly, reindustrialisation of the EU, including progress on legislation for Critical Raw Materials, Artificial Intelligence, and EU-Latin America Relations. Secondly, the green transition including opportunities for job creation through the Fit-for-55 package. Thirdly, social and economic justice, including reform of economic governance rules and progress in gender equality and disability access. And finally, upholding European unity, including a true European horizon for enlargement candidates and a more efficient management of migration.

First Vice-President of the European Parliament, Mr Othmar Karas, outlined the multiple crises facing Europe currently, and urged the Spanish Presidency to finalise as many open legislative files as possible. He also outlined his proposal for a Charter on the role of parliamentarism in a functioning liberal democracy.

There were wide ranging contributions from delegates, addressing topics such as migration, the single market, enlargement, the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen zone, and EU-Turkey relations.

Deputy Haughey welcomed the focus of the Spanish Presidency on EU-Latin America relations, noting that Europe needs friends in that region to deal with the issue of deforestation in the Amazon Rainforest. Deputy Haughey further outlined Europe's need for friends in its closer neighbourhood, in the context of both enlargement and of EU-UK relations, noting the importance of the Windsor Framework as a basis for a renewed EU-UK relationship going forward.

## Session 2

Chair of the *Verkhovna Rada* Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the European Union, Ms Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, addressed delegates on the topic of the future of Ukraine in Europe. Ms Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze outlined the invasion of Ukraine began not in February 2022 but with the occupation of Crimea in 2014. She spoke of Russian air strikes in Kyiv the previous night, noting that a number of drones and cruise missiles were shot down by Ukrainian defence forces with the help of advanced military equipment provided by international partners. Ms Klympush-Tsintsadze shared her concerns that the sense of urgency among international partners had faded and asked for increased support to win the war, rebuild the country, and achieve EU and NATO membership. Ms Klympush-Tsintsadze outlined further the steps take to make the necessary reforms in Ukraine for EU membership and called for the opening of formal negotiations in 2023.

Chair of the *Riksdag* Committee on European Union Affairs, Mr Hans Wallmark, pointed out that two factors are currently central to the state of affairs in Europe: a full-scale war is taking place and for the foreseeable future Europe will be dealing with a nationalistic and imperialistic Russia. He argued for continued pressure on Russia and Belarus via sanctions, and that the EU should continue to support Ukraine in many different ways. Mr Wallmark acknowledged Ukraine's progress in making the reforms needed for EU membership and called for long-term support and investments to support Ukraine's EU future.



There were wide ranging contributions from the floor, addressing topics such as support for granting Ukraine candidate status, the broader state of play in relation to EU enlargement, the need for internal EU reforms to manage enlargement, conditions for peace talks, and the threat presented to security in Europe.

### **Session 3**

This was an open session on current issues related to the European Union. A broad range of issues were raised by delegates, such as the demonstration of resilience by the EU in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine, the need for a credible and merit-based enlargement process, the need to strengthen the EU's external relations and open strategic autonomy, the challenges facing European democracy including Russian propaganda, the management of natural disasters, the importance of managing the economic impacts of the green transition, and the importance of addressing illegal migration.

### **Closing remarks**

Ms Susana Sumelzo Jordán, member of the *Congreso de los Diputados*, thanked participants for their contributions and noted the role of COSAC in bringing more democratic legitimacy to the EU political process. She further emphasised the responsibility of parliamentarians to work on behalf of EU citizens and that Europe should be a place of freedom and peace.

Mr Pedro Rollán Ojeda, Speaker of the *Senado*, emphasised the importance of parliamentary politics to the European political project and noted that steps towards greater political union have always been accompanied by a strengthening of the role of the European Parliament and of interparliamentary cooperation. He noted that the inauguration of COSAC in 1989 coincided with the fall of the Berlin Wall and a new era of democracy in Europe, while stating that democracy is vulnerable in the context of the ongoing invasion of Ukraine. He spoke of the responsibility of parliamentarians to defend the principles and values that inspired the European democratic system.

## 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>  |

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| <p>Aontas Eorpach a roghnóidh an Coiste,</p>  | <p>the European Union as the Committee may select,</p>  |
| <p>(e) fógraí arna dtarchur ag an Dáil faoi Bhuan-Ordú 134(1)(a),</p>   | <p>(e) notifications referred by the Dáil under Standing Order 134(1)(a),</p>   |
| <p>(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,</p>  | <p>(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,</p>  |
| <p>(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</p>   | <p>(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</p>  |
| <p>(h) cibé nithe eile a tharchuirfidh an Dáil chuige ó am go ham.</p>  | <p>(h) such other matters as may be referred to it by the Dáil from time to time.</p>   |
| <p>(6) Tabharfaidh an Comhchoiste tuarascáil do dhá Theach an Oireachtais ar oibriú Acht an Aontais Eorpaigh (Grinnscrúdú), 2002.</p>   | <p>(6) The Joint Committee shall report to both Houses of the Oireachtas on the operation of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002.</p>  |
| <p>(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.</p> | <p>(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.</p> |
| <p>(8) Féadfaidh na daoine seo a leanas freastal ar chruinnithe den Chomhchoiste agus páirt a ghlacadh in imeachtaí gan ceart vótála a bheith</p>   | <p>(8) The following may attend meetings of the Joint Committee and take part in proceedings without having a</p>   |

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| acu ná ceart tairiscintí a dhéanamh ná leasuithe a thairiscint:   | right to vote or to move motions and amendments:   |
| (a) Comhaltaí de Pharlaimint na hEorpa arna dtoghadh ó thoghcheantair in Éirinn,  | (a) Members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies in Ireland,   |
| (b) Comhaltaí de thoscaireacht na hÉireann chuig Tionól Parlaiminteach Chomhairle na hEorpa, agus   | (b) Members of the Irish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and  |
| (c) ar chuireadh a fháil ón gCoiste, Comhaltaí eile de Pharlaimint na hEorpa.   | (c) at the invitation of the Committee, other Members of the European Parliament.  |
| (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. | (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. |
| (10) Beidh Cathaoirleach Roghchoiste na Dála ina Chathaoirleach nó ina Cathaoirleach ar an gComhchoiste freisin.  | (10) The Chairman of the Dáil Select Committee shall also be the Chairman of the Joint Committee.  |