

XXXI COSAC
DUBLIN
19 - 20 MAY 2004

CONTRIBUTION (20 MAY 2004)

1. NEW MEMBERS.

COSAC welcomes each of the 10 new Member States of the European Union.

2. INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE.

COSAC takes note of the information from the President in Office on progress in negotiating a Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe and calls on all parties concerned to conclude the Intergovernmental Conference by the next European Council in June on the basis of the text adopted by the Convention.

3. COUNTER TERRORISM COORDINATOR.

COSAC welcomes the appointment of a Counter Terrorism Coordinator to co-ordinate the work of the Council in combating terrorism and to maintain an overview of the instruments at the Union's disposal. It notes the progress reported by the Coordinator and wishes to be kept informed of progress at future meetings.

4. PARLIAMENTARY SCRUTINY OF BUDGETARY IMPLEMENTATION.

COSAC calls for a closer coordination between the Parliaments concerning scrutiny and implementation of the general budget of the European Union.

COSAC takes note of the report tabled by the Presidency on the role of the European Court of Auditors, and compliments its authors for this work. The report is a valuable source of information and ideas on the organisation and work of the Court, and it provided the basis for a stimulating debate on the subject at today's plenary meeting of COSAC.

COSAC notes that some of the recommendations in the report fall within the competence of the Intergovernmental Conference.

COSAC will forward a copy of the report to the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the Court of Auditors for their consideration.

5. SCRUTINY OF EU BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROTOCOL ON THE ROLE OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN THE EU IN THE AMSTERDAM TREATY

1. COSAC welcomes the first Biannual Report on developments in European Union procedures and practices relevant to parliamentary scrutiny and considers that the report has provided a valuable basis for debate in COSAC. The report will also be a useful source of information for national parliaments in carrying out their functions in relation to European matters.
2. COSAC welcomes the publication, since 2003, by the European Commission of its Annual Policy Strategy in spring and of its Legislative and Work Programme in autumn of each year. Given the importance of these actions for scrutiny it invites future Presidencies' in Office to place on the agenda an exchange of views with political representatives of the Commission.
3. The draft Protocols on National Parliaments and on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality and the provision of Title III-article 9.3 on subsidiarity are of major significance for national parliaments' scrutiny. The debate today indicated the opportunity of deepening understanding of the full implications of these provisions if adopted as part of the Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe.
4. At the COSAC meeting in the 2nd half of 2004, COSAC will discuss the models of subsidiarity. The meeting of the Chairpersons will prepare this debate.

6. LISBON STRATEGY

COSAC welcomes the document by the Presidency and reaffirms its commitment to the Lisbon Strategy and the second phase of the implementation of this strategic goal of the European Union.

7. EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

The participants in the XXXI Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union, gathered in Dublin on 19 and 20 May 2004, call on all voters in the European Union to participate in the sixth direct elections to the European Parliament, which will take place between 10 and 13 June 2004.

Twenty-five years have passed since the first direct elections to the European Parliament. As the only elected EU body, the European Parliament contributes to strengthening democratic decision-making in the enlarged European Union which, since 1 May 2004, encompasses 25 Member States and 450 million citizens.

All those who call for more democracy, more transparency and greater closeness to the citizens within the European Union are urged to cast their vote in the 2004 European elections.