IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union
(COSAC)

Contribution of the XLII COSAC
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(2009/C 322/04)

1. Institutional issues and the Treaty of Lisbon

1.1. Having reached its 20th anniversary, COSAC is pleased to have its role enhanced as a forum for parliamentary cooperation and a place for the expression of deliberative democracy within the European Union, giving more possibilities for national parliaments to have a dialogue with the EU Institutions and to make any appropriate contribution to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

1.2. Noting the progress achieved during the past five years in developing cooperation between national parliaments and the European Union Institutions, COSAC wishes to thank Ms Margot Wallström, Vice-president of the European Commission, for her dedicated work towards this end.

1.3. Given the approval of the Treaty of Lisbon by all chambers of the European Union national parliaments after due deliberation and debate, although pending formal approval by the Irish chambers, following the referendum on 2 October 2009, COSAC holds that the democratic legitimacy of this process cannot be questioned and should be recognised by all parties. While respecting the constitutional requirements of all Member States, COSAC calls for the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon as soon as possible.

COSAC looks forward to cooperation with the European Union Institutions as reconstituted under the Treaty. COSAC welcomes the strengthened role of national parliaments laid down in the Treaty and emphasises the importance of the full, immediate and efficient implementation of the new Treaty once it comes into force, observing the time period set out in the Treaties to allow for full and effective scrutiny by national parliaments and by the European Parliament.

1.4. COSAC underlines the importance of establishing well-functioning procedures between the European Union Institutions and national parliaments for the subsidiarity checks and for the parliamentary oversight of Europol and evaluation of Eurojust. In this context, COSAC reiterates the contribution of the XLI COSAC in Prague.

1.5. COSAC stresses that openness and accessibility remain crucial for the sense of participation of European citizens. Increased transparency in the European Union Institutions as well as in national parliaments is an important element in gaining acceptance of European Union measures.
2. The economic and financial crisis

2.1. COSAC notes that, while there are hopeful signs of recovery, it remains necessary to continue dealing with the financial and economic crisis, safeguarding longer-term growth and employment potential. The effects of the current decline have to be mitigated and measures promoted that facilitate a rapid yet sustainable recovery. Further efforts are necessary to improve the functioning of credit and capital markets. In the long term, Europe needs a renewed strategy for sustainable growth and employment - a revitalised Lisbon Strategy to transform the Union into an economy ready to reap the benefits of globalisation, while meeting the social and environmental challenges it presents. Efforts to prevent and limit job losses should take the form of measures with a sustainable positive effect on employment.

2.2. COSAC supports the European Council’s response to the crisis in the conclusions of its June 2009 meeting and welcomes the comprehensive preparations, with the extra informal summit on 17 September 2009, for the G20 meeting in Pittsburgh on 24 September 2009.

2.3. COSAC notes with satisfaction that thorough preparations enabled the European Union to play an active role in Pittsburgh. The Union contributed to a result which constitutes a step forward on the main features of a common regulatory framework and a more sustainable financial system, including measures countering unsound bonus practices.

2.4. COSAC welcomes the Commission’s recent proposals on a new architecture for European financial supervision and underlines that the intended rapid conclusion of the negotiations should not hamper the necessary parliamentary scrutiny.

2.5. With a view to the upcoming European Council on 29-30 October 2009, COSAC reiterates its warning against any kind of economic protectionism. Openness of world markets and a successful conclusion of the Doha Round remain one of the keys to overcoming the global crisis.

3. The Climate challenge — the road to Copenhagen

3.1. COSAC reiterates its conviction that the economic situation must not lead the European Union to lower its ambitions in terms of sustainable development and the climate strategy as adopted by the European Council. This includes being ready to give its fair share to supporting the least developed countries in their efforts to cut carbon emissions and contribute to the fight against climate change. An effective and sustainable architecture for financing this fight against climate change is essential.

3.2. The negotiations relating to the UN Climate Conference — COP15 — in Copenhagen in December 2009 are extremely complex. COSAC welcomes in general the strengthening of the European Union as a global actor and notes with satisfaction that the Union stands out as an ambitious, decisive and influential party to the Climate negotiations. The outcome of the Pittsburgh summit underlines that it is necessary for the European Union to keep a leading role in the run-up to and during the Climate Summit. COSAC urges all the European Union Institutions and Member States to contribute towards creating a strong platform for this leading role.

4. The Stockholm Programme

4.1. COSAC notes that the Eurobarometer and other opinion polls suggest that citizens expect European initiatives in the area of freedom, security and justice. This includes asylum and immigration policy as well as the fight against human trafficking and other cross-border crimes. Stressing that citizens should be at the heart of the new multi-annual programme, COSAC emphasises the need to keep the balance between law enforcement measures and measures to safeguard individual rights and the rule of law.

4.2. COSAC notes that these areas of fundamental importance to European citizens are at the core of parliaments’ responsibility. COSAC emphasises the importance of parliamentary scrutiny and active participation during the negotiations of the Stockholm Programme and of all parts and elements to be decided subsequently, noting that the broad Programme is scheduled to be adopted by the European Council on 10-11 December 2009.
5. **Regional strategies and neighbourhood policy**

5.1. The proposed Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region aims not only at tackling the region's ecological and other specific challenges, but also at serving as a pilot project for macro-regional strategies. The model could in the future be applied in other regions with their regional challenges, such as the Danube region. COSAC looks forward to the scheduled adoption of the Baltic Sea Strategy by the European Council on 29-30 October 2009.

5.2. COSAC reiterates its long-term support for the European Neighbourhood Policy, including the Eastern Dimension. COSAC welcomes the meeting to be organised by the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Swedish Riksdag on 21 October 2009 regarding the shaping of the parliamentary dimension of the Eastern Partnership.

5.3. COSAC also reiterates its support for the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean as an essential tool for ensuring peace, stability and security in the Mediterranean Area and in the Middle East, notably for addressing immigration and energy.

6. **Enlargement**

6.1. COSAC underlines the strategic importance of the continued European Union enlargement process and welcomes Iceland's application for membership. Recognising that a clear membership perspective is a major incentive for reform, COSAC stresses the necessity for the European Union to stand by its commitments and established principles in this area, particularly the requirement to fulfil the Copenhagen Criteria for accession. COSAC notes with satisfaction recent positive developments in already ongoing enlargement negotiations.