



Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC

Vienna, 8 – 9 July 2018

Draft Outline

30th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Chapter 1: The role of national Parliaments in ensuring transparency and bringing the EU closer to its citizens

Understanding what the EU is, what it is doing and how it is working is an important foundation for citizens participation and trust in democratic institutions, at all levels. Understanding and trust of citizens in political decision making can be attained if European and national institutions are transparent, responsive and communicate effectively with citizens. Transmission of European values and ideas at the European level can be uncoordinated and complex, unless it is seen as common goal and responsibility. National Parliaments play a crucial role and can make direct effect because of their close contact with citizens. It is therefore crucial that the national level contributes towards making the EU and its politics more transparent and accessible. Another aspect is to make sure that decision are made at right level. Taking too much - or too little - action at EU level leads to “underdelivery” in areas where citizens expect results. The discussion about the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality should focus on what to do and at which level to face the current challenges.

This chapter is divided into two sections.

The first section takes into account the views of Parliaments/Chambers on best practices of parliaments in their openness towards their citizens. More specifically the focus is put on how citizens are informed about, and involved with, their respective parliament’s work in regard to being able to follow committee and plenary meetings, getting in contact with parliamentarians and having a voice that is heard, and on outreach to citizens to promote participation in democratic institutions and elections.

The second section will concentrate on Parliaments’/Chambers’ views on the work and the outcome of the “Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and Doing Less More Efficiently”. It will take stock of Parliaments’/Chambers’ views about the future of the cooperation and coordination between the European and the national levels, especially concerning the question at which level action should be taken.

Chapter 2: Climate policy and Energy Union

The second Chapter of the 30th Bi-annual Report is based on the fact that it is becoming increasingly important to ensure that Europe and its citizens have secure, affordable and climate-friendly energy. As one of the priority projects of the current European Commission, the creation of the Energy Union means facilitating the free flow of energy across borders in every EU Member State by creating new infrastructure and technologies and putting Europe at the forefront regarding clean and renewable energy production as well as the fight against global warming.

This chapter is divided into two sections.

The aim of the first section is to get the views of Parliaments/Chambers on the importance and measure of climate policy and energy discussions in their plenaries and committees, by looking at the presence and degree of work of respective environment and energy committees.

The second section focuses on the discussion in Parliaments/Chambers about the 2020 climate & energy package of the European Union, including its implementation as well as the way towards the 2030 and 2050 Energy Strategies.

Chapter 3: State of play of Brexit - implications for the future of the EU

At the moment the EU finds itself in a very new situation, because for the first time since its creation it is now facing the withdrawal of one of its Member States. The Brexit negotiations are currently in their second stage, and constantly moving closer to 29 March 2019 when the United Kingdom will formally leave the EU. This withdrawal brings up several crucial changes, with the biggest discussion at the moment concerning the future EU budget, a solution for the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, as well as the future relations between the EU and the United Kingdom.

This chapter is divided into two sections.

The first section aims at analysing the current and past states of play of Brexit. Parliaments/Chambers will be asked about their respective handling of the discussions about a Member State leaving the European Union. They will be questioned about having special committees and other formats dealing with the question of Brexit and Article 50 TEU as well as their exchange and work with Chief negotiator Michel Barnier and other EU representatives and experts.

The second section will focus on Parliaments'/Chambers' views on the future relationship with the UK, on the one hand looking at any bilateral plans and on the other hand their part at the European level.