

CONCLUSIONS

of the

Meeting of the European Affairs Committees of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, the National Assembly of the Hungarian Republic, the Senate and the Sejm of the Republic of Poland and the National Council of the Slovak Republic

The Representatives of the European Affairs Committees of the Visegrad Group Countries, participating in the meeting in Prague,

Regarding the future of the principle of subsidiarity in the European Union

- **Believe** that a renewed focus on subsidiarity and proportionality and ensuring a genuine respect for these principles will strengthen the public support of EU policies;
- **Welcome** therefore the Report of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently" and appreciate the work done by the Task Force while taking a special note of the expectation for the discussion to continue;
- **Are of the opinion** that COSAC meetings are among the most relevant forums for such a discussion;
- **Agree**, in general, with the recommendations made by the Task Force and call on the Commission to adopt and implement the recommendations;
- **Fully support**, in particular, the Task Force Recommendations 2 and 3 on the subsidiarity check procedure (i.e. flexible application of the 8-week deadline taking account of common holiday periods and recesses and future extension of this deadline to 12 weeks; responding to reasoned opinions within 8 weeks);
- **Are of the opinion** that the proposed common assessment grid (Recommendation 1) is a step in the right direction, because it is not limited to technical and economic considerations, but also incorporates the idea that decisions should be taken as closely to the citizen as possible;
- **Agree** with the opinion of the Task Force that more effective implementation of EU law is necessary; it is also preferable to frequent and hurried revisions of EU legislation and unnecessary centralization of policy areas that do not fall within the scope of EU exclusive competence;
- **Therefore call on the Commission**, while noting that the primary responsibility for implementation of EU law rests with the Member States,
 - to cooperate closely with the Member States, early in the legislative procedure, on identifying and evaluating administrative and technical steps that will be necessary for successful national implementation and on amending the proposals for EU legislative acts accordingly, so that they do not lead to serious problems with implementation;

- to strive for greater legislative-technical quality and clarity of proposals for legislative acts in order to avoid legal uncertainty; and
- to publish proposals of delegated and implementing acts at least 12 months before the end of the period for transposition of the legislative act they are based upon, for the purpose of enabling a timely transposition;

Regarding Energy union and climate policy

- **Agree**, that energy and energy security are among the top priorities for the Visegrád region as well as the EU as a whole; therefore they support creating a resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as effective reshaping of the European electricity market and improvement of the position of energy consumers in the EU;
- **Are of the opinion**, that the proposal for a Strategy for long-term EU greenhouse gas emissions reduction, expected to be published by the Commission in November 2018, should not call for another increase in ambition of energy-climate targets but should rather focus on the achievement of current targets and finalization of legislative works which are prerequisite for meeting the given commitments, while ensuring a just transition of the workforce across the EU which will contribute to improvement of the quality of life and prosperity of its citizens in all regions;
- **Point out** that discussion on any energy-climate policy targets must take into consideration different economic, historical and geographic conditions of the Member States as well as their right to choose which sources will be part of their energy mix;
- **Underline**, in this context, the importance of support for research and innovation programmes in the field of energy and protection of climate because new technologies may considerably contribute to meeting the energy-climate commitments; they consider also the nuclear energy to be one of the adequate sources to achieve the EU targets in reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- **Note** that given the high dependence of Member States on energy imports from third countries and on one dominant supplier of oil and gas, it is essential to strengthen the energy security of the EU; therefore they support diversification of energy supplies (sources, suppliers), construction of better cross-border connections not only in the EU, but also between the EU and Western Balkan countries, and building new transit routes, such as the Southern Gas Corridor;
- **However, are of the opinion**, that the intended Nord Stream II gas pipeline is a politically motivated project and that it will not lead to diversification of gas supply sources but rather to the deepening of energy dependence of the EU, especially of Central and Eastern European countries, on Russia; underline that Nord Stream II, if constructed eventually, must fully comply, like any other infrastructure project, with EU law, especially with the provisions of the Third Energy Package;
- **Consider** the reduction of greenhouse gases and pollutant emissions from road transport to be one of the important prerequisites for meeting the 2030 climate targets and improving environment in the EU and therefore

support cost-effective and economically sustainable activities leading to their reduction as quickly as possible, also taking into consideration the technological aspects and factors influencing supply and demand in the area of transport; underline also that any proposals in this policy area must maintain technological neutrality;

- **Support** completion at COP24 in Katowice of the PAWP (Paris Agreement Work Programme), that will enable the Paris Agreement to be fully implemented, as a key objective identified by incoming Polish COP Presidency.

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