

CONCLUSIONS OF THE XLVII COSAC
Copenhagen, 22-24 April 2012

1. Bi-annual Report

- 1.1. COSAC welcomes the 17th Bi-annual Report prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and thanks the Secretariat for its excellent work. The Report provides comprehensive information on the information flow to and from parliaments as far as EU documents are concerned and on the involvement of national Parliaments in the re-launch of the Single Market.

2. Access to EU and EU related documents by national Parliaments

- 2.1. COSAC notes that the exchange of information between Parliaments is becoming increasingly common and indeed essential, as a result of the strengthened role of Parliaments in the Treaty of Lisbon.
- 2.2. COSAC emphasises that access to EU documents and EU related documents produced by Governments is essential to ensure that national Parliaments can properly carry out their scrutiny functions.
- 2.3. COSAC notes the frequent and varied use made of the documents transmitted directly by the European Commission to national Parliaments and welcomes the formalised transmission arrangements included in the Treaty of Lisbon.
- 2.4. COSAC acknowledges it is for each Member State to independently determine arrangements for Parliamentary access to EU and EU related documents. As far as access to Council documents is concerned, COSAC notes that 28 national Parliaments/Chambers have access to Limited documents, this amounts to 70% of all Parliaments/Chambers - a significant proportion. It also notes that 17 out of 40 national Parliaments/Chambers have access to EU Restricted documents and eight Parliaments/Chambers have access to EU Confidential documents.
- 2.5. COSAC highlights that a number of Parliaments have access to Council documents and/or EU related documents through a database but notes that the majority of Parliaments/Chambers continue to be sent documents by their Government.

3. Exchange of information between Parliaments

- 3.1. COSAC welcomes that IPEX is being used by staff from a large majority of Parliaments on a daily or weekly basis.
- 3.2. COSAC recognises that the most commonly used sources of information from other Parliaments are the network of national Parliament Representatives based in Brussels and the IPEX database.

- 3.3. COSAC takes note that although a number of Parliaments consider IPEX to be reliable or very reliable, slightly more believe that IPEX, though a valuable tool, needs improvement. To improve the reliability of IPEX, COSAC encourages national Parliaments to upload more comprehensive information to IPEX in a timely manner and to use the IPEX symbols correct.
- 3.4. COSAC is pleased to note that an overwhelming majority of Parliaments/Chambers provide translations or summaries of important decisions in English and/or French and welcomes this development. COSAC thanks the European Parliament for its work in translating reasoned opinions into 21 EU languages.
- 3.5. COSAC considers it beneficial that reasoned opinions are uploaded onto IPEX within one or two days of adoption by a large majority of Parliaments/Chambers. It calls on all Parliaments/Chambers to follow this example of best practice.
- 3.6. COSAC welcomes the extensive use made of additional parliamentary networks sources of information such as ECPRD and additional sources such as the COSAC website and considers all attempts made to exchange information between Parliaments as constructive and helpful for enhancing Parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs.