

**Chairman of the European Affairs Committee  
Folketinget**

To  
COSAC chairmen and COSAC delegations

9 October 2002

**Regarding the performance of the practical and decision-making aspects of the COSAC meeting in Copenhagen from 16-18 October 2002.**

**Agenda item: The future role of the National Parliaments and the reform of COSAC.**

Dear COSAC chairmen and COSAC delegations

In my letter dated 8 October 2002 I sent you 13 notes with the aim of concretising the main items in the proposals to strengthen the role of the national parliaments and for a reform of COSAC. *In the letter the delegations were asked to take a political stance in connection with the main items at the COSAC meeting in Copenhagen from 16-18 October 2002.*

We will be taking a comprehensive reform proposal into consideration and there is not a great deal of time available for the meeting. In addition the proposal will be discussed amongst many delegations.

I will therefore like to outline how I suggest we can proceed with the consideration of the documents and how we can make a few, but necessary, *decisions in principle* on the reform proposal at the same time as we set up a *working group* to carry out further work on the details of the proposals.

I would add that *none* of the proposals will interfere with the work being carried out in the European Convention regarding the national parliaments.

***1. Strengthening the national parliaments in general***

I imagine that after a deliberation we can consider note no. 1 on *"Strengthening the role of the national parliaments in general and in relation to our own governments."*

This is solely a question of *proposals for consultative guidelines* or minimum standards of some kind that the *COSAC meeting should be able to adopt*. Such guidelines and opportunities have been requested by several parliaments. In the given case adopting the proposal would mean a positive step forward.

The guidelines are well within the limits of the protocol in the EU Treaty on the role of the national parliaments. This is exclusively a question of the *first step* in a better implementation of the protocol.

## **II. Reform of COSAC**

We then turn to the question of an actual reform of COSAC, also within the current framework of the treaty. It could be said that this is the *second step* in a better performance of the protocol.

In connection with this I imagine we would have an initial discussion of note no. **2** on "*COSAC's area of competence*" and note no. **3**, which concerns "*What COSAC has done to date*". I hope that we can agree on the contents of these two factual documents.

We then move on to the main document, namely document no. **4** regarding a "*Proposal for strengthening COSAC*". Here I hope that, after a discussion, we can make a *political decision in principle* to the effect that we would like a strengthening of this kind in accordance with the guidelines that the document contains.

This means that we should reach consensus that a small secretariat be established for COSAC and that the rules for voting in general will be changed from unanimity to majority decisions.

The details and guidelines for these must be established by a working group with instructions to reach decisions with the shortest possible delay, and which I propose be set up. The main guidelines for these two issues are contained in note no. **5** on "*New rules for voting for COSAC*" and in note no. **6** on a "*Proposal for a permanent secretariat for COSAC*".

I also hope that we can make a political decision in principle to the effect that COSAC should have a more permanent leadership and that meetings should be more effective in accordance with the guidelines in respectively note no. **7** on a "*New composition of the chairmanship of COSAC*" and note no. **8** on "*Future meetings and the composition of the delegations*". The working party will also have to look more closely at the details of these proposals.

If time allows I would also like us to discuss the question of a new, more popular name for COSAC. This question is discussed in note no. **9** and entitled "**Should COSAC have a more easily understandable, more popular name?**". We need not make up our minds about this now, but we can leave it to the working party.

The other, more administrative issues regarding a new IT strategy for COSAC (note no. **10**) and cooperation between the EU's administrative bodies in the countries' parliaments (note no. **11**) will both find a natural solution if we agree to a strengthened COSAC. There may also be some matters for the working party to consider in this connection. The same goes for the question of the national parliaments' EU delegations in Brussels (note no. **12**).

### ***III. Collaborative agreements with the EU's institutions***

In order for the national parliaments to be able to work more efficiently with EU matters it has been suggested that, through COSAC, the national parliaments could enter into a series of agreements with the EU's institutions (i.e. the Council, the Commission, and the European Parliament). Proposals for the more detailed contents of these agreements are discussed in note no. **13**.

At the meeting I hope that we will be able to declare that we agree that the proposed agreements are a good point of departure for further discussions and we can otherwise leave it to the working group to continue with the issue.

### ***IV. Concluding remarks***

As mentioned I hope that, at the meeting, we can make a series of political decisions in principle. This will mean a great step forward for our reform proposals. But many of the details in the proposals must be considered in greater detail in a working group which I suggest be set up in accordance with article 1.5 of the rules of procedure which concerns the setting up of working groups. We will consider the composition of the working groups at the meeting.

See you at the meeting!

Yours faithfully,

Claus Larsen-Jensen