

Note on COSAC's 4th biannual report on procedures and practices relevant to parliamentary scrutiny (to be presented to the XXXIV COSAC in London in October 2005)

Chapter 1: Scrutiny of CFSP and ESDP in national parliaments

This chapter will aim to provide a short presentation of the scrutiny systems for scrutinising Common Foreign and Security Policy (including European Security and Defence Policy) in the national parliaments. It will examine how procedures and practices for scrutiny in this area differ from the procedures in place for scrutiny of normal EU affairs. There will be a particular focus on areas where national parliaments may face difficulties scrutinising CFSP.

As the 3rd biannual report contained information on standard EU scrutiny procedures in place in national parliaments, there is no need for answers to the questionnaire to cover this ground - rather the aim is to build on this information by looking at a particular policy area.

Chapter 2: Scrutiny of Impact Assessments

The Commission issued a Communication entitled "*Better Regulation for Growth and Jobs in the European Union*" in March 2005 (Com(2005) 97 final), and 'better regulation' will be a key theme of the UK Presidency. The idea is therefore that this chapter should examine how parliaments scrutinise impact assessments of the Commission and ask whether such assessments should be amended so as to help parliamentary scrutiny and so produce better legislation.

As with chapter 1, this chapter should also build on work done in previous biannual reports and so help further to ensure continuity to the work of COSAC. Chapter 2 of the 1st COSAC biannual report explained the process of Impact Assessments and the Commission's plans for better lawmaking. Chapter 4 of the 2nd COSAC biannual report (entitled "Documents from Governments to National Parliaments concerning EU draft legislation [explanatory memoranda]") showed which national parliaments oblige their government to include impact assessments in explanatory memoranda on EU proposals.

As a complement to this previous work, this chapter will focus on the *procedures* in place in parliaments for scrutinising impact assessments of the Commission, and the *practice* of the Commission and parliaments.

Chapter 3: Raising European Awareness

The Contribution adopted by the XXXIII COSAC (17-18 May 2005, Luxembourg) asked the COSAC secretariat "to report on the progress made in national parliaments" with regard to the declaration on the role of national parliaments in the European debate: "Raise national European awareness", "so as to inform any debate on this matter in a future plenary".

NB. *The COSAC secretariat is researching this issue by a separate email correspondence with the national parliaments, and so this chapter is not covered in the questionnaire.*

Chapter 4: Council meetings in public

Chapter 2 of the 1st biannual report explained how in July 2002 the Council's rules of procedure had been amended so as to open Council meetings to the public when the Council is acting in accordance to the co-decision procedure with the European Parliament.

This chapter will aim to examine the extent to which the practice of the Council has changed since it changed its procedure. What effect has the rule change had? How often and for how long does the Council meet in public? Has the Council discussed both A and B points in public? What statistics are available to demonstrate all of this?

NB. *The information and data necessary for this chapter will be provided by the Council secretariat, and so this chapter is not covered in the questionnaire.*

Chapter 5: Co-Decision First and Second Reading agreements

This chapter will present information on the practice of co-decision in the first half of 2005. It will show how many proposals were agreed to at each stage of this legislative procedure. It will be based on empirical data systematically collected over the last 6 months (since 1 January 2005).

NB. *The information and data necessary for this chapter will be primarily provided by the Conciliation and Codecision secretariat of the European Parliament, and so this chapter is not covered in the questionnaire.*

The UK Presidency has also asked the COSAC secretariat to present a separate short document to the XXXIV COSAC on **Future Topics for COSAC**.

This document will present proposals made by the delegations (in accordance with Articles 7 and 7.1 of the Rules of Procedure) for topics that COSAC should deal with in 2006.

NB. *This document will be based on a single question in the questionnaire for the biannual report and will be discussed at the end of the XXXIV COSAC in London in October.*