

COSAC CHAIRPERSONS

London

17 & 18 July 2005

Information concerning the meeting of COSAC Chairpersons

Meeting

The meeting is being hosted by the European Scrutiny Committee of the House of Commons and the EU Committee of the House of Lords. Queries about the content of the meeting should be addressed to:

Dorian Gerhold, Clerk of the European Scrutiny Committee, House of Commons
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Simon Burton, Clerk of the EU Committee, House of Lords
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Administrative Arrangements

The administrative arrangements for the meeting will be made by the Overseas Office (European Section) in the House of Commons. Please contact the staff below if you have any queries.

Overseas Office (European Section)
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Hotel

Rooms have been provisionally booked in the Marriott, London County Hall. Delegates are asked to complete the enclosed booking form and fax it to the hotel as soon as possible to secure their room. **The hotel will release any unsold rooms after 17 May.** Delegates should be aware that July is the height of the tourist season in the UK and it may be difficult to find rooms in Westminster after that date. The hotel is conveniently situated just over Westminster Bridge and transport between the hotel and the venues to be used by COSAC will be provided.

The rates are as follows:

Single Room	£182 Room Only Inclusive of VAT
Double Room (single occupancy)	£192 Bed and Breakfast Inclusive of VAT
Double Room (double occupancy)	£202 Bed and Breakfast Inclusive of VAT

Venue of the Session

Portcullis House
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

All meetings will be held in Portcullis House, which is situated over the road from the Palace of Westminster and within walking distance of the designated hotel, Marriott London County Hall.

An information desk will be located in the foyer of the hotel which will be manned by staff from the Houses of Parliament. They will be able to answer any queries you might have.

Travel to London

There are numerous arrival points in London (Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and City Airport and Waterloo for Eurostar). We regret it will not be possible to meet delegates on arrival. Advice on getting into Central London from your arrival point is available on www.baa.co.uk. If you need further assistance on travelling to London please contact the Overseas Office (European Section).

Immigration and Customs Checks

Every visitor must have a valid passport to enter the United Kingdom. Visa requirements are subject to the guidelines issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (www.ukvisasgov.uk). We urge you to check current requirements before your departure. If you require a visa you should contact the British Embassy in your country for further information.

Airport Passenger/Departure Duty is normally included in airline tickets at the point of issue, but this should be confirmed with travel agents. The United Kingdom has very strict regulations regarding the import of firearms, knives and other offensive weapons, inflammable goods and foodstuffs. Further information can be found at www.hmce.gov.uk

Transport during the Session

Coach transport will be provided for the duration of the meeting between the meeting venue and the hotel as well as to and from the social function.

Registration and Information Desk

A registration and information desk will be open in the Marriott Hotel from 2 pm on Sunday 17 July. Please register as soon as possible after your arrival. All participants will be able to collect badges, handbook and all further conference literature upon registration.

Badges

For security reasons, all participants, including accompanying persons, observers, accompanying staff and members of the press, will be required to wear **photo identity badges** throughout the meeting. Please can you send us electronically to hocoverseasoffice@parliament.uk a colour passport style photograph (preferably a jpg c. 20K in size). Badges must be worn at all meetings and social functions, as well as for all transport organised for the session. **There will be no admittance to any aspect of the programme without the appropriate identity badge.**

Insurance

Personal and medical insurance is the responsibility of individual participants. The UK Parliament will not be responsible for any loss of luggage, currency or personal effects, or for any medical costs.

Embassies

We will send details of the meeting to your Embassy. They may be able to meet you from your arrival point and bring you to your hotel. However, these arrangements will need to be made by you with your Embassy.

Accompanying Persons

There will not be a programme for accompanying persons but they will be welcome at the dinner on Sunday night, provided they have registered in advance.

Travellers= Tips And Information

Banking services

Numerous banks are located in the Westminster area and are generally open between 0900 and 1700. Most banks in the UK are closed at the weekend, but cashpoints (ATMs) are available 24 hours a day.

Currency

The UK currency is the pound sterling. While sterling travellers= cheques and credit cards such as VISA, Amex, Diners= Club and MasterCard are readily accepted, euros and US dollars are not.

Dress

Lounge suit (or female equivalent) will be required for the Dinner in the House of Lords on Monday night.

Time

In July the United Kingdom will be on British Summer Time which is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

Medical Facilities

A first-aid facility will be available for participants throughout the meeting. However, illness requiring medical treatment or hospitalisation is the liability of the individual. Delegates taking medication should bring enough for their needs and ensure they have adequate insurance.

Electricity

Electricity throughout the UK is 240 volts 60 Hz, with square three pin plugs. Participants should bring adapter plugs for their own appliances.

Telecommunications

The international code for the United Kingdom is + 44. International telephone and fax services are available at the hotel. Charges for telephone calls from hotels are extremely high.

Value Added Tax

Value Added Tax (VAT) is a sales tax of 17.5% and is charged on virtually all goods and services sold in the UK (the main exceptions are books, food and children=s clothes). Visitors to Britain from outside the European Union who stay no longer than three months may claim back VAT on items purchased when they depart. Further details can be found at <http://www.hmce.gov.uk/public/vatrefunds/vatrefunds.htm>.