



President of the European Parliament
Mr David Maria Sassoli

President of the European Council
Mr Charles Michel

President-in-Office of the Council of the European Union
Mr António Costa

President of the European Commission
Ms Ursula von der Leyen

Lisbon, 1 June 2021

Dear Excellencies,

The COVID-19 pandemic has substantially changed the way of interparliamentary cooperation. The adjustment to the new reality, without the possibility of holding physical meetings, posed great challenges to the national Parliaments that held the last COSAC Presidencies (Croatia, Germany and Portugal).

The parliamentary dimension of the Portuguese Presidency thus held the meeting of COSAC Chairpersons and the LXV COSAC plenary meeting in a videoconference format, regretting not being able to receive COSAC members and yourselves in person in Lisbon.

During the work of COSAC in this semester, discussions on the priorities of the Presidency, namely the promotion of Europe's recovery leveraged by the climate and digital transitions, the work regarding the recovery and resilience plans in the framework of Next Generation EU, the implementation of the Social Pillar of the EU as a key element in the abovementioned transition or the first steps concerning the Conference on the Future of Europe and Social Europe were recurrent.



COSAC members welcomed the endeavours of the Portuguese Presidency with regard to the signature of the Joint Declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe by the three institutions and the fact that the Conference was officially launched on 9 May, thus allowing a wide reflection and debate on the challenges Europe is facing and its long-term future and putting citizens at the centre of European policies. With that regard, COSAC encourages all stakeholders to make full use of the tools available for this debate, namely the potential of the Multilingual Digital Platform.

The role of national Parliaments in the Conference was indeed acknowledged from the outset in the Joint Declaration, by including the members of the COSAC Troika as permanent observers in the Conference Executive Board, enabling an active engagement of national Parliaments in the early proceedings and shaping of the Conference. COSAC welcomes that its proposal on the number of representatives from the national Parliaments at the Plenary of the Conference was accepted, meaning that *the Conference Plenary shall be composed of 108 representatives from the European Parliament, 54 from the Council and 3 from the European Commission, as well as 108 representatives from all national Parliaments on an equal footing, and citizens*. The establishment and functioning of the thematic working groups in the framework of the Conference was also discussed during the LXV COSAC meeting.

Moreover, and referring to the role of the Plenary, it is stated that *“The Plenary will on a consensual basis put forward its proposals to the Executive Board”* and that *“consensus has to be found at least between the representatives of the European Parliament, the Council, the European Commission, as well as representatives from national Parliaments, on equal footing”*. COSAC members are keen on engaging in the debate at local, regional, national and European level and call on the EU institutions to make sure that the recommendations made are debated without a predetermined outcome and that national Parliaments are fully involved in the deliberations leading to the final report to be presented to the Joint Presidency by Spring 2022.

Although recognizing the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic have put on its way, COSAC members highlight the decisive and unprecedented European response to the health, economic and social crisis, namely the positive development of the mechanisms



created. Next Generation EU, including the EU4Health programme, the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism and, consequently, the submission by Member States of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, in line with the established rules and green and digital development goals to enhance European competitiveness, resilience and autonomy, were broadly discussed. In particular, Parliaments were able to debate the ownership of these instruments and exchange information and best practice regarding the future scrutiny and monitoring of its implementation. In this regard, COSAC members also welcomed the ratification of the Own Resources Decision by the Member States.

The COSAC Plenary meeting was held only a few weeks after the Porto Social Summit, which called on Member States to set ambitious national targets which, taking due account of the starting position of each country, constitute an adequate contribution to the achievement of the European targets. Therefore, this was one of the main issues discussed at our meeting, with contributions from the social partners as well as the youth. National Parliaments positively noted the development of the European Pillar of Social Rights through the Action Plan. Europe's recovery also lays on the efforts to develop education, training, lifelong learning, an active support to employment and social protection, with a special emphasis on youth, as specified by the COSAC members.

In the scope of the work developed by COSAC, its members also highlight the results presented in the 35th COSAC Bi-annual Report, which analyses the positions and best practice of national Parliaments on the different topics discussed: 1. The action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights; 2. The EU-Africa Strategy; 3. NGEU: scrutiny of national recovery and resilience plans - implications for the European Semester; 4. The Conference on the Future of Europe. The results contributed to a more informed debate, stressing the importance of sharing best practices among the Parliaments, especially bearing in mind the involvement of national Parliaments in Europe's recovery but also in the discussion about its future.



COSAC members remain committed to maintain and develop interparliamentary cooperation and on adapting strategies to keep it active and regular, upholding a close relationship between the Parliaments of the European Union as well as between them and the European Institutions.

Yours sincerely,

Luís Capoulas Santos

Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Assembleia da República and
current COSAC Chair

Co-signatories:

Marko Pogačnik

Chair of the Committee on European Union Affairs
Slovenian National Assembly

Bojan Kekec

Chair of the Committee on International Relations and European Affairs
Slovenian National Council

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Deputy Chair of the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union
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