

## Conclusions of the XV COSAC

Dublin, 15-16 October 1996

1. Within the European Union, National Parliaments have their own role to play to strengthen democracy and improve the efficiency of the Union. COSAC, through its work, will give a high priority to the pursuit of these aims.

COSAC can assist individual National Parliaments by making available to them the experience and information of other Parliaments.

2. It is the view of COSAC that, to further the useful work of parliamentary cooperation, the organisation should be strengthened and its meetings should be organised to maximise its potential. A number of National Parliaments are in the course of considering sending official representatives to Brussels who could in time come together to offer a support service for COSAC.

3. It is appropriate that the flow of information from Union Institutions to the National Parliaments be improved and that National Parliaments should have control over the decisions of their respective Governments as set out in the constitutional arrangements of the Member States. To this end, COSAC believes that Declaration 13 should be reinforced by the Inter-Governmental Conference, by including it in the Treaty, to insure that Governments follow through on their commitments under the Declaration and that the National Parliaments have a period of at least four weeks for examining all proposals of relevance to the legislative process.

4. There is a desire to improve the working of COSAC. The following are among the ways in which this can be brought about:

the dates of COSAC should be set at the conclusion of the previous COSAC,

each delegation should have, within reason, the opportunity to include items on the agenda for COSAC,

each delegation should be allowed to distribute, before the COSAC, documentation and proposals relevant to the agenda,

a meeting of officials should be called to preview COSAC,

to allow each delegation and each delegate an opportunity to speak on an agenda item; time limits of, say, five minutes should be imposed on speakers from the floor and

to arrange during COSAC meetings for time for informal association and dialogue between delegates.

5. COSAC may pursue certain specific issues, e.g. Subsidiarity, 2nd and 3rd Pillar items and questions relating to the fundamental rights of European Union citizens, with a view to arriving at some ideas as to the way forward for these items. However, its conclusions will be offered as suggestions and would not seek to bind any delegate or delegations. The communiqués on the above will be forwarded by the President of COSAC to the Institutions of the European Union and to the Governments of Member States