

## History of COSAC - Copenhagen April 2012

The XLVII COSAC in Copenhagen on 22-24 April 2012 focused on the re-launch of the Single Market. In the light of the economic crisis and the 20th anniversary of the Single Market (in 2012), the European Commission presented the Single Market Act in October 2011 which included 12 key actions for strengthening the Single Market. At the COSAC meeting in Copenhagen different areas of the Single Market were discussed. As the first keynote speaker Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, talked about the 20 years anniversary of the Single Market and emphasised that it's full potential could only be achieved if there was a shared commitment to the governance of the Single Market. Hereafter the Danish Prime Minister, Ms Helle Thorning-Schmidt, gave a speech on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe where she called on the national parliamentarians to choose optimism over pessimism and focus on job creation and growth while also ensuring stable economies. Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, Mr Michel Barnier and Mr Malcolm Harbour, Chair of the Committee for the Internal Market and Consumer Protection of the European Parliament, both spoke about the full implementation of the Services Directive. Commissioner Barnier stated that the free movement of services was the least accomplished of the four freedoms and if the Services Directive was fully implemented 1,5 % could be added to the European GDP by 2020. Mr Harbour highlighted the work done by the IMCO-Committee on reviewing the implementation of the Services Directive and invited national Parliaments to be more closely involved in the work of the Committee. Commissioner for the Environment, Mr Janez Potočnik, talked about promoting the transition to a resource efficient economy in Europe. The Commissioner stressed that the economy and the environment were inter-related and inter-dependent and that the Single Market could be a driving force for greening the economy. Ms Neelie Kroes, Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Digital Agenda spoke about a digital Single Market and the fact that three things were needed to create this: broadband networks, a digitally literate workforce and legal frameworks - all three issues were on the Commission's agenda.

Although the debate in Copenhagen was mostly focused on political issues, COSAC agreed on a proposal of strengthening the political dialogue between the national Parliaments and the European Commission. Based on an initiative from the Danish presidency of COSAC, the Commission was asked to improve the cooperation with national parliaments in the following areas:

- The European Semester - COSAC asked that a representative of the Commission should appear before the competent committees of national Parliaments to respond to questions on the European Semester.
- Written enquiries - COSAC called on the Commission to give national Parliaments the opportunity to submit enquiries in writing to the Commission on legislative proposals and consultation documents.
- Pre-legislative phase - COSAC invited the Commission to alert national Parliaments to all public consultations thereby giving the national parliaments the opportunity to feed views into the pre-legislative phase of the EU proposals.
- Publication of contributions - the Commission was invited to make contributions received from national Parliaments public under a specific heading of the Commission website and to ensure that, where appropriate,

national Parliament contributions on consultations are explicitly referred to in the explanatory memorandum accompanying Commission proposals.

The XLVII COSAC meeting agreed a Contribution addressing the following topics:

- Re-launching the Single Market
- A Single Market for Services
- Sustainable growth and green economy
- The Digital Single Market
- Transposition and enforcement
- Proposal for strengthening the political dialogue with the European Commission

During the Danish presidency of COSAC the 17th Bi-annual Report was drafted on the basis of answers from all 40 national Parliamentary chambers of the 27 Member States and the European Parliament. The report had two chapters focusing on Information flow to and from the Parliaments and the Re-launch of the Single Market and Parliaments.