



MINUTES OF THE LXXII COSAC

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, 28-29 OCTOBER 2024

Note: The text of keynote interventions which have been shared with the Presidency will be published on [IPEX](#). A video recording of the full meeting is available via the [webpage of the Parliamentary Dimension of the Hungarian Presidency](#).

OPENING SESSION

Mr TESSELY opened the LXXII COSAC by welcoming delegations. He then gave the floor to Mr László KÖVÉR, Speaker of the Hungarian *Országgyűlés*.

In his speech, Mr KÖVÉR recalled that the first Hungarian Presidency of 2011 faced fewer challenges, than it does in 2024. He urged European politicians to avert the danger of social and economic destabilisation. He informed his audience that the Presidency events organised by the Hungarian *Országgyűlés* were attended by hundreds of members of parliaments of Member States, candidate countries and other invited countries, as well as representatives of the European Parliament. The Speaker added that the highlight of the semester was the organisation of the LXXII COSAC. He conveyed the greetings of the Prime Minister of Hungary, Mr Viktor ORBÁN, who unfortunately had to cancel his participation due to an official visit to Georgia. The Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly then introduced the topics of the sessions of the LXXII COSAC. Commenting on the topic of the 15th anniversary of the Lisbon Treaty, he argued that national Parliaments do not enjoy the role in EU decision making as they ought to, which he attributed to the Commission's effort to take away competences from Member States. He reminded COSAC participants on the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) - another innovative tool introduced by the Lisbon Treaty - and said that the Commission often rejects these for political reasons, as happened with the Minority Safe Pack initiative. Commenting on the session on demographic trends, Mr KÖVÉR warned against more migration to Europe and suggested instead to implement family friendly policies by Member States, aiming at demographic growth. On the topic of European security and defence, he stressed the need for enhanced external border protection, curbing illegal migration, increasing internal security and accelerating enlargement with the countries of the Western Balkans.

PROCEDURAL ISSUES AND MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Mr TESSELY presented the draft agenda for the LXXII COSAC plenary meeting, which was adopted without any comments. He then went on to report from the Troika meeting the preceding day. The Troika had made significant progress on and agreed to a new draft of the

LXXII COSAC Contribution. The document had been communicated to delegations after the meeting, and there was a possibility to submit new proposals for amendments until 12.00 the same day (28 October). He then went on to inform delegations about the letters received by the Presidency. These, which had been made available on IPEX, include requests to participate in the meeting from the Andorran *Consell General*, Armenian *Azgayin Zhoghov*, Kosovan¹ *Kuvendi i Kosovës*, Monégasque *National Council*, Norwegian *Storting*, Swiss *Assemblée fédérale* and the United Kingdom *House of Lords*. After consultation with the Troika, these had been replied to favourably. He also noted that Iceland had cancelled their participation at a late stage due to the internal political situation. Furthermore, the Presidency received a letter from the Chair of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Lithuanian *Seimas*, Mr Žygmantas PAVILIONIS. The letter referred to two initiatives for joint declarations, on the halt of LNG imports from Russia and on the external border protection of the EU, respectively. Mr TESSELY informed delegations that the letters had been published on IPEX and were open to co-signatures.

Mr. TESSELY welcomed fellow chairs of EU affairs committees attending COSAC for the first time: Ms Brigitte KLINTSKOV JERKEL (Danish *Folketing*), Mr Peeter TALI (Estonian *Riigikogu*), Mr Erik OTTOSON (Swedish *Riksdag*), Mr Sven SIMON (European Parliament) and finally he welcomed also Mr Esteban GONZÁLEZ PONS (European Parliament) attending COSAC for the first time as the Vice-President of EP.

SESSION I - PROGRAMME AND RESULTS OF THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The session was chaired by Mr TESSELY.

The session began with a keynote intervention by Mr János BÓKA, Minister for European Union Affairs of Hungary. In his speech the minister recalled the results of the first Hungarian Presidency of 2011, adding that the situation the EU is facing in 2024 is more complicated and challenging. He explained that the Hungarian Presidency strives to be the catalyst of much-needed change in Europe. The Hungarian Presidency, Mr. BÓKA stressed, aims to be an honest broker and intends to raise issues and make proposals for peace, security and prosperity of Europe. As regards European competitiveness, the objective is to adopt a new European competitiveness deal at the informal meeting of the European Council scheduled for 8 November 2024 in Budapest. He emphasised that competitiveness as a horizontal issue has to be mainstreamed into EU activities in all policy areas. Regarding migration he stressed the importance of stronger protection of the EU's external borders, improving cooperation with third countries on returns, and the development of hotspots outside the EU. Mr BÓKA believed that the proposal by Prime Minister Mr ORBÁN on regular Schengen-summits would be the way to save the Schengen Area. The minister put special focus on European security and defence and on the European Defence Industrial Strategy and Defence Industrial Plan. He explained that enlargement must remain a merit-based, balanced and credible process. Mr

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

BÓKA underpinned that accelerating the accession process of the Western Balkans is a priority for the Hungarian Presidency. He concluded his speech by highlighting the necessity of a strategic review of the Common Agricultural Policy in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and that cohesion policy should remain a backbone of the EU's investment policy in the future.

During the following debate, 42 speakers took the floor.

More than a third of those called for more support for Ukraine and expressed their disappointment that this was not listed among the priorities of the Hungarian Presidency. Many speakers linked this issue to the importance of fundamental values. Along the same lines, several participants criticised Hungarian Prime Minister ORBÁN for having undertaken journeys to third countries in a way they considered questionable, and some implied that the Hungarian Presidency had failed in acting as an honest broker. Among other topics raised, the importance of strengthening the competitiveness of Europe, as well as the need for a new industrial strategy, was underscored by many participants. Challenges linked to migration, and the importance of strong border controls, was similarly a topic raised by several members. Many speakers, including all speakers from candidate countries, also raised the issue of enlargement and the importance of making progress in this area.

The following speakers took the floor during this debate:

Peter DE ROOVER (Belgian *Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers/Chambre des représentants*), Marek KRZAKAŁA (Polish *Sejm*), Grzegorz SCHETYNA (Polish *Senat*), Ernő SCHALLER-BAROSS (European Parliament), Hajnalka JUHÁSZ (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*), Markus TÖNS (German *Bundestag*), Gusty GRASS (Luxembourgian *Chambre des Députés*), Alessandro GIGLIO VIGNA (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*), Mirela FURTUNĂ (Romanian *Camera Deputaților*), Bastiaan VAN APELDOORN (Dutch *Tweede Kamer*), Dimitrios KAIRIDIS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*), Ján FERENČÁK (Slovak *Národná rada*), Jean-François RAPIN (French *Sénat*), Heikki AUTTO (Finnish *Eduskunta*), Brigitte KLINTSKOV JERKEL (Danish *Folketing*), Harris GEORGIADES (Cypriot *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*), Telmo FARIA (Portuguese *Assembleia da República*), Arminas LYDEKA (Lithuanian *Seimas*), Liliana TANGUY (French *Assemblée nationale*), Dagmar BELAKOWITSCH (Austrian *Nationalrat*), Peeter TALI (Estonian *Riigikogu*), Edmunds CEPURITIS (Latvian *Saeima*), Erik OTTOSON (Swedish *Riksdag*), Giulio TERZI DI SANT'AGATA (Italian *Senato della Repubblica*), Francisco José CONDE LÓPEZ (Spanish *Cortes Generales*), Thomas HACKER (German *Bundestag*), Christian BUCHMANN (Austrian *Bundesrat*), Matilda ERNKRANS (Swedish *Riksdag*), Lucija TACER (Slovenian *Državni zbor*), Tobias WINKLER (German *Bundestag*), Stefan SCHENNACH (Austrian *Bundesrat*), Szymon SZYNKOWSKI VEL SEK (Polish *Sejm*), Elvira KOVÁCS (Serbian *Narodna skupština*), Meryem GÖKA (Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*), Kreshnik ÇOLLAKU (Albanian *Kuvendi i Shqipërisë*), Igor ZDRAVKOVSKI (North Macedonian *Sobranie*), Ivanna KLYMPUSH TSINTSADZE (Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*), Mile LEFKOV (North Macedonian *Sobranie*), Ilir HASANI (North Macedonian *Sobranie*), Rrezarta KRASNIQI

(Kosovan *Kuvendi i Kosovës*²), Lord Peter RICKETTS (United Kingdom *House of Lords*), and Hårek ELVENES (Norwegian *Storting*).

SESSION II - THE STATE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE YEAR OF INSTITUTIONAL TRANSITION AND THE 15-YEAR APPLICATION OF THE TREATY OF LISBON

The session was chaired by Mr TESSELY.

The session began with the presentation of the 42nd Bi-annual Report of COSAC made by the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, Mr Jakob SJÖVALL. In his presentation, Mr SJÖVALL informed that the 42nd Bi-annual Report was based on responses gathered from all national Parliaments/Chambers and the European Parliament. He further recalled that the Report consisted of three chapters: 1. The State of the European Union in the year of Institutional Transition and the 15-year Application of the Treaty of Lisbon; 2. European Demographic Trends and National and Union Responses and 3. The Enlargement of the European Union.

The session proceeded with keynote interventions of Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight (video message), Mr Barna Pál ZSIGMOND, State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of European Union Affairs, Mr Sven SIMON, Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament and Mr Alessandro GIGLIO VIGNA, Chairman of the EU Policies Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament.

In his video message, Mr ŠEFČOVIČ underlined that the year of institutional transition allowed putting a pause and making a reflection on what has been done in the last years, but also what should be done in order to build a better future. He also mentioned that the Treaty of Lisbon helped the EU adapt to unforeseen circumstances and take swift decisions in the time of the crisis, simultaneously ensuring a high level of parliamentary scrutiny and democratic accountability in the EU. He appreciated the growing interest among national Parliaments to participate in the decision making process at an earlier stage, as well as their active engagement and suggestions made in the political opinions.

During his intervention, Mr ZSIGMOND focused on the challenges and ambitions of the Hungarian presidency. He also underlined the need to address the EU's delay in global competitiveness, which includes proposals such as the Budapest Declaration on the New European Competitiveness Deal. Mr ZSIGMOND voiced concerns about the increasing centralization of EU institutions and shift towards a federal model. He recalled that Hungary was cautious about calls for institutional reform that would increase federal elements, and underlined the importance of the dialogue between national Parliaments and EU institutions, supporting a model that strengthens the role of the Member States rather than the EU

² This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

institutions. Mr ZSIGMOND called for a Europe that respects its founding principles and emphasises consensus as a tool to resolve internal differences.

In his intervention, Mr SIMON underlined that the 15th anniversary of the Treaty of Lisbon was a significant milestone that consolidated the European Union's legal structure and empowered its institutions. He also focused on the European Union's evolution and the need for continued reform to address current issues such as migration crisis, defence against external threats, European competitiveness and technological innovation. Mr SIMON highlighted the significance of the Treaty of Lisbon and the necessity for collective action among EU member states, criticising bureaucratic processes that hinder timely responses to global and regional challenges. He emphasised the need to utilise the existing mechanisms of the Treaty of Lisbon in order to amend and revoke outdated regulations, the increasing national parliament's involvement in European legislative process, expanding qualified majority voting and enforcing subsidiarity principles to reduce overregulation.

In his speech, Mr GIGLIO VIGNA focused on the criticism of the centralization of power, recalling that the Treaty of Lisbon was supposed to increase democracy and transparency, not to consolidate power within EU institutions, therefore undermining national sovereignty. He also noted a decline in the use of directives in favour of regulations, which in his opinion restricted the ability to address local issues and marginalised national and regional parliaments. He concluded that the renewed EU should respect national and regional identities, which is embodied in the Hungarian Presidency's motto - Make Europe Great Again - Europe that is strong through diversity, not uniformity.

During the following debate, 32 speakers took the floor.

In the following debate, there were several interventions focused on the role of national Parliaments in the EU legislative process, including calls to strengthen the tools for subsidiarity checks and allow for a so-called "green card" initiative to allow a more proactive role for national Parliaments. Some speakers highlighted that the Lisbon Treaty had proved to be a flexible framework that has withstood various crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, economic downturns, and the ongoing war in Ukraine. Enlargement was another topic raised in the debate. The need for internal reform within the EU to accommodate new members without revising treaties was a common theme. Different speakers emphasised the need for maintaining momentum in accession talks; ensuring that the EU is prepared for expansion; and considering strategic integration of neighbouring countries. Furthermore, some speakers argued for a strengthened common security and defence policy. Some called for moving away from unanimity to qualified majority voting in this area to improve response times and enhance EU strategic autonomy. Migration, the rule of law, and the need for Europe to remain competitive globally were other topics discussed during this debate.

The following speakers took the floor during this debate:

Peter DE ROOVER (Belgian *Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers/Chambre des représentants*), Marek KRZAKAŁA (Polish *Sejm*), Loránt VINCZE (European Parliament),

Péter BALASSA (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*), Dimitrios KAIRIDIS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*), Dagmar BELAKOWITSCH (Austrian *Nationalrat*), Ján FERENČÁK (Slovak *Národná rada*), Liliana TANGUY (French *Assemblée nationale*), Seán HAUGHEY (*Irish Houses of the Oireachtas: Dáil Eireann*), Ivan RAČAN (Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*), Ricardo CARVALHO (Portuguese *Assembleia da República*), Filippo SCERRA (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*), Miapetra KUMPULA-NATRI (Finnish *Eduskunta*), Liliana REIS (Portuguese *Assembleia da República*), Marina NIKOLAOU (Cypriot *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*), Manon BOUQUIN (French *Assemblée nationale*), Riina SOLMAN (Estonian *Riigikogu*), Stefan SCHENNACH (Austrian *Bundesrat*), Milagros MARCOS ORTEGA (Spanish *Cortes Generales: Congreso de los Diputados*), Alexander VAN HATTEM (Dutch *Eerste Kamer*), Magnus BERNTSSON (Swedish *Riksdag*), Jean-Michel ARNAUD (French *Sénat*), Pietro LOREFICE (Italian *Senato della Repubblica*), Meryem GÖKA (Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*), Ivanna KLYMPUSH-TSINTSADZE (Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*), Anđela VOJINOVIĆ (Montenegrin *Skupština Crne Gore*), Dubravka FILIPOVSKI (Serbian *Narodna skupština*), Etjen XHAFAJ (Albanian *Kuvendi i Shqipërisë*), Fjolla UJKANI (Kosovan³ *Kuvendi i Kosovës*), Lord Peter RICKETTS (United Kingdom *House of Lords*), and Arman YEGHOYAN (Armenian *Azgayin Zhoghov*).

At the end of the session, the floor was given to Mr Marek KRZĄKAŁA, Deputy Chair of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Polish Sejm, who briefly mentioned that during the upcoming Polish Presidency, COSAC Chairpersons meeting would take place on 26 and 27 January 2025, and the LXXIII COSAC on 8 to 10 June 2025. The meetings will to a large degree focus on the topic of security.

MEETING OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF COSAC

The session was chaired by Mr TESSELY. During the meeting, the draft Troika proposal for the Contribution of LXXII COSAC was discussed. Following several votes on proposed amendments, an amended draft Contribution was adopted. The adopted text was put forward for approval by LXXII COSAC at the closing session (see below).

SESSION III - EUROPEAN DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND RESPONSES AT NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL

The session was chaired by Mr TESSELY.

The session began with a keynote intervention by Ms Zsófia KONCZ, State Secretary for Families. Ms KONCZ pointed out that the number of children born within the territory of the current Member States of the European Union had been the lowest since 1960, adding that Hungary was the lowest ranked among EU Member States in terms of fertility for 15 years. She explained that in order to withstand these unfavourable demographic trends the Hungarian government had started to introduce significant changes in its family policy since 2010 altering its objectives and methods to take a so-called “family-friendly” turn. Ms KONCZ stressed that as a result, Hungary had managed to move up to the 6th place in terms of fertility among EU

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Member States. The Government's family policy has also contributed to 178,000 more children born in Hungary since 2010. She emphasised that the most effective policy tools in this respect can be based on three pillars: providing adequate housing, ensuring financial stability and promoting work-life balance. As an example she mentioned the Family Action Plan, which consisted of 7 measures when it was launched in 2019: Baby Expecting Subsidy, extension of Family Housing Subsidy (CSOK), mortgage loan waiver, personal income tax exemption for mothers with four or more children, car purchase programme for large families, nursery care development, grandparent's child care benefit. Completing the picture of introduced measures she highlighted the Hungarian nursery development, provision of free textbooks, energy protection subsidies, the grandparent's child care benefit and the introduction of a 13th month pension and a pension premium. Ms KONCZ underlined that women's employment had also gone up significantly since 2010. Hungary had the 7th best female unemployment rate in the EU by 2023. She concluded her speech by expressing hope that Hungary would succeed in drawing the attention of the governments of the EU member states to the demographic challenges facing the whole of Europe and the importance of family policy.

During the following debate, 35 speakers took the floor.

Members mentioned several instances of significant demographic shifts in Europe, such as ageing and decline of populations, low fertility rate, gender and social inequality and increased migration, highlighting that these trends pose challenges to social welfare systems, labour markets and economic growth. Various national strategies aimed to address these demographic issues, including policies to encourage higher birth rates (e.g. availability of childcare), family support initiatives (e.g. housing policy, parental leaves, work-life balance initiatives) and integration programs for migrants were mentioned. Many speakers identified the migration phenomenon as a solution to the advancing depopulation and encouraged participants to perceive it more as an opportunity rather than a threat. On the other hand, the problems with illegal migration have also not gone unnoticed.

The discussion also covered EU-wide strategies aimed at addressing demographic changes, including funding for regional development, incentives for families and support for labour mobility within the EU. There was a visible consensus on the need for a proactive stance in adapting to population trends with a focus on sustainability, inclusivity and the potential benefits of a diverse workforce. Participants called for ongoing dialogue and collaboration between member states and EU institutions to implement effective measures.

While most of the Member States underpinned the necessity for cohesive strategies that combine national and European efforts to tackle the complex demographic landscape of Europe, some pointed out that demographic trends do not concern all European countries to the same extent. Therefore some kind of autonomy in setting up national initiatives is needed as a one-fits-all solution is not possible. The different magnitude and nature of demographic changes was also emphasised by all candidate countries, which appealed for immediate and comprehensive action in that matter.

During the debate several references were also made to the war in Ukraine and its impact on migration. It was mentioned that around 6.5 million people have moved from Ukraine to EU countries since February 2022. In that context, measures to prevent forced migration from the Ukraine and incentives encouraging migrants to return and engage in reconstruction of their country were discussed.

The following speakers took the floor during this debate: Peter DE ROOVER (Belgian *Kamer van volksvertegenwoordigers/Chambre des représentants*), Patryk GABRIEL (Polish *Sejm*), Romana TOMC (European Parliament), Hajnalka JUHÁSZ (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*), David KLOBASA (Slovenian *Državni svet*), Gabriela CREȚU (Romanian *Senat*), Adéla ŠÍPOVÁ (Czech *Senát*), Michael SACHER (German *Bundestag*), Ivan RAČAN (Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*), Cinzia PELLEGRINO (Italian *Senato della Repubblica*), Ana MENDES GODINHO (Portuguese *Assembleia da República*), Riina SOLMAN (Estonian *Riigikogu*), Andreja RAJBENŠU (Slovenian *Državni zbor*), Zoltán ZAKARIÁS (Romanian *Camera Deputaților*), Milagros MARCOS ORTEGA (Spanish *Cortes Generales*), Leonid YURKOVSKIY (Swedish *Riksdag*), Filippo SCERRA (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*), Alexander VAN HATTEM (Dutch *Eerste Kamer*), Evangelos SYRIGOS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*), Tom WEIDIG (Luxembourgian *Chambre des Députés*), Christos CHRISTOU (Cypriot *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*), Sari TANUS (Finnish *Eduskunta*), Ana Sofia ANTUNES (Portuguese *Assembleia da República*), Vicente MONTÁVEZ AGUILLAUME (Spanish *Cortes Generales*), Vladimír ZLÍNSKÝ (Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*), Franz FAYOT (Luxembourgian *Chambre des Députés*), Onni ROSTILA (Finnish *Eduskunta*), Ana JAKOVLJEVIĆ (Serbian *Narodna skupština*), Nikolla CAMAJ (Montenegrin *Skupština Crne Gore*), Branislav BORENOVIĆ (Bosnian *Parlamentarna skupština*), Etjen XHAFAJ (Albanian *Kuvendi i Shqipërisë*), Hans-Peter PORTMANN (Swiss *Assemblée fédérale*), Rrezarta KRASNIQI (Kosovan⁴ *Kuvendi i Kosovës*), Ahmet Mücahit ARINÇ (Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*) and Olena VINTONYAK (Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*).

SESSION IV - EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE

The session was chaired by Mr TESSELY. The keynote speeches were delivered by Mr Esteban GONZÁLEZ PONS, Vice-President of the European Parliament, and Mr Péter SZTÁRAY, State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Mr GONZÁLEZ PONS began by highlighting that the current unstable geopolitical environment represented a threat for EU values such as democracy, freedom and respect for international law and singled out, in relation to this, Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. In this new context, he noted that the European Union was the necessary instrument for Member States to ensure that Europe is not, once again, trapped by superpower rivalry. He stressed the need to intensify cooperation with NATO, while emphasising that European defence needs to be given more strength, autonomy and capacity to complement NATO. Mr GONZÁLEZ PONS called for a common European Defence Strategy to strengthen

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Europe's defence industry, provide a collective response to military challenges, and enhance crisis preparedness to respond to new hybrid threats to the EU's security. Mr GONZÁLEZ PONS concluded by committing to use the full potential of interparliamentary cooperation to ensure that the voice of national Parliaments is properly channelled into the European Parliament.

Mr SZTÁRAY began by underlining the changed geopolitical situation and multiple security challenges facing the EU: from the war in Ukraine, to the instability in the Middle East, the US-China rivalry, the threats posed by climate change or illegal migration. He pleaded for a clear analysis to allow a frank discussion and joint actions by the EU. Mr SZTÁRAY stressed that NATO remained the final guarantee of defence for the EU, but that the current material and ammunition shortages required an increase in defence spending, at least to the agreed two percent of GDP. He outlined how Hungary had increased its defence spending to secure the modernisation of the Hungarian armed forces. Mr SZTÁRAY noted that strengthening European defence was one of the Hungarian presidency's priorities, while stressing the need to maintain the intergovernmental approach to European security and defence.

During the following debate, 37 speakers took the floor.

Members discussed a variety of aspects relating to European security and defence during the session. Some speakers underlined that the basis of the EU's security lies in protecting democracy and human rights. Numerous interventions placed the emphasis on the need for common European defence and to better coordinate actions relating to the security agenda, underlining that there is strength in unity. Some examples of common actions cited included joint procurement for the defence industry, research and development, and interoperability in defence capabilities. On the other hand, some members called for Member States' autonomy and sovereignty in this policy area. Alignment between the EU and NATO was mentioned several times.

Another common theme was the need to strengthen Europe's defence industrial base, with many speakers calling for increased defence spending. The goal of two percent of GDP expenditure on defence was mentioned, but some members argued that this is not enough. Some members called for defence expenditure to be excluded from the EU's fiscal rules, while others objected to this. Speakers also called for strategic autonomy in the EU's defence technologies and its industrial base, involving also SMEs and universities. There were warnings to not cause a new arms race, while speakers also underlined the need for a broader concept of security that included strengthened resilience, hybrid threats and cybersecurity.

Other topics mentioned included: the need for further support to Ukraine and the war in Ukraine more broadly; the situation in the Middle East; the recent elections in Georgia and questions about their fairness; the potential impact of the US elections; and Chinese policy on security and defence. Migration was also linked to the security and defence policy by some members, stressing the need to fight illegal and weaponised migration. Speakers from candidate countries indicated the need for advancing on the EU's enlargement as an essential investment in

European security, notably to avoid further Russian interference, particularly in the Western Balkans.

The following speakers took the floor during this debate:

Mr Vincent BLONDEL (Belgian *Senaat/Sénat*), Mr Henryk SIEDLACZEK (Polish *Senat*), Ms Elena DONAZZAN (European Parliament), Ms Hajnalka JUHÁSZ (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*), Mr Giulio TERZI DI SANT'AGATA (Italian *Senato della Repubblica*), Mr Constantinos EFSTATHIOU (Cypriot *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*), Mr David KLOBASA (Slovenian *Državni svet*), Mr Bastiaan VAN APELDOORN (Dutch *Eerste Kamer*), Mr Dimitrios KAIRIDIS (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*), Mr Alessandro GIGLIO VIGNA (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*), Ms Mirela FURTUNĂ (Romanian *Camera Deputaților*), Mr Arminas LYDEKA (Lithuanian *Seimas*), Mr Tobias WINKLER (German *Bundestag*), Mr Peeter TALI (Estonian *Riigikogu*), Mr Erik OTTOSON (Swedish *Riksdag*), Ms Gabriela CREȚU (Romanian *Senat*), Ms Dagmar BELAKOWITSCH (Austrian *Nationalrat*), Mr Thomas HACKER (German *Bundestag*), Ms Lucija TACER (Slovenian *Državni zbor*), Mr Didier MARIE (French *Sénat*), Mr Vicente MONTÁVEZ AGUILLAUME (Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados*), Ms Liliana REIS (Portuguese *Assembleia da República*), Ms Eirini DOUROU (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*), Ms Matilda ERNKRANS (Swedish *Riksdag*), Mr Mikko POLVINEN (Finnish *Eduskunta*), Mr José María SÁNCHEZ GARCIA (Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados*), Mr Pedro CORREIA (Portuguese *Assembleia da República*), Mr Wolfgang GERSTL (Austrian *Nationalrat*), Mr Vladimír ZLÍNSKÝ (Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*), Ms Zdravka BUŠIĆ (Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*), Ms Elvira KOVÁCS (Serbian *Narodna skupština*), Mr Ivan VUKOVIĆ (Montenegrin *Skupština Crne Gore*), Ms Ivanna KLYMPUSH-TSINTSADZE (Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*), Mr Etjen XHAFAJ (Albanian *Kuvendi i Shqipërisë*), Ms Aysu BANKOĞLU (Turkish *Büyük Millet Meclisi*), Mr Mile LEFKOV (North Macedonian *Sobranie*), Ms Fjolla UJKANI (Kosovan⁵ *Kuvendi i Kosovës*) and Ms Meri GALSTYAN (Armenian *Azgayin Zhoghov*).

CLOSING SESSION OF THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE LXXII COSAC

Mr TESSELY referred to the discussions and votes on amendments on the proposal for the COSAC Contribution during the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC the preceding day. Ms Ana MENDES GODINHO of the Portuguese delegation announced that a declaration would be submitted, by which the positive aspects of migration would be highlighted. She expressed regret at the wording in the agreed text of the COSAC Contribution in this regard. Mr TESSELY took note of this, while also referring to that proposed amendments with similar content had been voted on during the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC the preceding day but without gaining sufficient support to be included in the final text.

Following this, the LXXII COSAC Conclusions and LXXII Contribution were unanimously adopted by the assembled delegations.

⁵ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Mr TESSELY summarised that several issues which will determine the future of the EU had been discussed during the meeting, and thanked the speakers and delegations for their participation.