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An
Domagoj Ivan Milošević
Chair, European Affairs Committee
Parliament of Croatia

Berlin, 19 May 2020

Meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC

Dear Mr Milošević,

Firstly please allow me to express my deep sadness regarding the earthquake that affected Zagreb on 22 March 2020, damaging the city's precious historic buildings. My thoughts are with all my friends from Croatia, especially the victims and their families. I firmly want to express my deep regret that this tragic event, coupled with the global COVID-19 outbreak, has caused a disruption to the parliamentary dimension of the Croatian Council Presidency.

To my sincere regret and due to another urgent obligation I will not be able to attend the meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC.

Please allow me to present my proposition for the Troika meeting in written form:

I strongly support convening an Extraordinary Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC. Such a meeting would provide an opportunity to exchange views on current important European policy issues.

Since the onset of the crisis, rapid and effective action was required from the governments of EU Member States, with the result that national parliamentary involvement did not happen in an appropriate form and parliaments were often left out of the decision-making process. The voice of the national parliaments must now, however, be made heard again, especially to develop a constructive and solidarity-based European response to the major challenges ahead.

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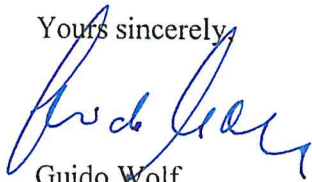
In the view of the Bundesrat, there are no additions to the proposed agenda and the foreseen topics for the Extraordinary Chairpersons' Meeting are well chosen. The topics are of current interest, subjects of relevance and should be discussed in a broader European context. However, I propose that the debate will be divided into two blocks of two topics each, with a ten-minute break in between. Such a procedure has proved to be useful in other videoconferences for logistical reasons. Let me point out that a video conference requires an even higher level of concentration and attention.

I welcome the proposal to provide the Extraordinary Chairpersons' Meeting with a written outcome. However, the term "COSAC conclusions" is a term laid down in our Rules of Procedure and is reserved for the plenary of COSAC. In order to remain consistent with our Rules of Procedure, I would therefore suggest that the results of the Extraordinary Chairpersons' Meeting are to be presented in a different form, such as a declaration by the Presidency or a letter to the EU institutions, open to co-signature by COSAC members.

Let me conclude with an outlook on the second semester: In July 2020, Germany will assume the presidency in the Council of the European Union. The global COVID-19 outbreak also affects the planning for the German Council Presidency. We regret to inform you that after careful consideration of the circumstances due to the spread of COVID-19 our colleague Gunther Krichbaum and I decided to cancel the COSAC Chairpersons' Meeting, scheduled for July 19 - 20, 2020 in Berlin. Protecting the health, safety, and well-being of our attendees is paramount, and serves as the reason for our decision to postpone the meeting to another date. Following the procedure under the Croatian Presidency, we plan to convene a meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC via videoconference in July to discuss, inter alia, the postponement of the Chairpersons' Meeting to mid-September, probably in the format of a videoconference as well. So please expect to receive an invitation from us in good time.

I wish you all the best in the meeting and look forward to see you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Guido Wolf', written over the typed name.

Guido Wolf

Chairman of the Committee on European Union
Questions of the Bundesrat