

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF
COSAC
Zagreb, Croatia, 16 June 2020
(held via web conference)**

AGENDA:

- 1. Opening of the videoconference**
 - Welcome address by Mr Domagoj Ivan MILOŠEVI , Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*
- 2. Adoption of the agenda of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC**
- 3. Procedural issues and miscellaneous matters**
 - Briefing on the results of the videoconference meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC
 - Presentation of the 33rd Bi-annual Report of COSAC
 - Presentation of the Letter by the Presidency, to be offered for co-signing to the members of COSAC
- 4. Debate on current issues - part one: A common European response to the coronavirus outbreak and repercussions on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021 - 2027**

Keynote speakers: Mr Maroš ŠEF OVI , Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight; Mr Jan OLBRYCHT, Vice-President of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Co-Rapporteur on MFF
- 5. Debate on current issues - part two: Conference on the Future of Europe**

Keynote Speakers: Ms Dubravka ŠUICA, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of democracy and demography (via pre-recorded video message); Ms Mairead McGUINNESS, First Vice-President of the European Parliament in charge of relations with national Parliaments

PROCEEDINGS

IN THE CHAIR: Mr Domagoj Ivan MILOŠEVI , Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*

1. Opening of the meeting

- Welcome address by Mr Domagoj Ivan MILOŠEVI , Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*

Mr Domagoj Ivan MILOŠEVI , Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, welcomed the participants and noted that the LXIII COSAC had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak and consequences of two earthquakes that affected Zagreb in March.

Mr MILOŠEVI was nevertheless grateful that despite the extraordinary circumstances COSAC could still meet and carry out its work virtually. He concluded his intervention by wishing the participants a fruitful meeting.

2. Adoption of the agenda for the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC

Mr MILOŠEVI presented the draft agenda of the Extraordinary COSAC Chairpersons' meeting, which was approved without amendment.

3. Procedural issues and miscellaneous matters

- **Briefing on the results of the videoconference meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC**
- **Presentation of the 33rd Bi-annual Report of COSAC**
- **Presentation of the Letter by the Presidency, to be offered for co-signing to the members of COSAC**
- **Letters received by the Presidency**
- **Procedural issues**

Mr MILOŠEVI welcomed the Chairpersons who attended the Chairpersons' COSAC for the first time, namely Mr Patrick DEWAELE, Chair of Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs and President of the Belgian *Chambre des représentants*; Mr Tomáš VALÁŠEK, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Slovak *Národná rada*; and Mr Marko Pogorenik, who had attended COSAC meetings before but was attending COSAC for the first time in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Slovenian *Državni zbor*.

Mr MILOŠEVI informed the participants of the topics discussed during the meeting of the Presidential Troika of COSAC that had taken place on 20 May 2020 via videoconference, reminding the participants they had received the minutes of that meeting by email.

- Presentation of the 33rd Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Mr MILOŠEVI invited the Permanent Member of the COSAC Secretariat, Mr Kenneth CURMI, to present the 33rd Bi-annual Report of COSAC, which was based on Parliaments' replies to the related questionnaire circulated to delegations on 7 February 2020 with a deadline of 9 March 2020 for submitting replies.

Mr CURMI briefly referred to the three chapters of the Report: the first one followed up on the findings of the previous report, the second one reviewed the cooperation in place between various Union bodies and Parliaments/Chambers and the third one analysed the ways and means by which Parliaments/Chambers conducted their oversight.

- Letters received by the Presidency

Mr MILOŠEVI referred to the letters received by the presidency. These consisted of letters regarding participation at COSAC meetings as well as two letters, one from the UK *House of Commons* and one from the Czech *Poslanecká sn movna*.

Mr MILOŠEVI continued by pointing out that the migration of the COSAC web site to the IPEX platform had been finalised. Finally, he drew attention to the Presidency letter to the EU institutions, as an outcome of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC, and invited interested participants to co-sign the letter by Friday, 19 June.

4. Debate on current issues - part one: A common European response to the coronavirus outbreak and repercussions on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021 - 2027

Keynote speakers: Mr Maroš ŠEFČOVÍČ, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight; Mr Jan OLBRYCHT, Vice-President of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Co-Rapporteur on Multi Financial Framework (MFF)

Mr MILOŠEVI , Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, gave the floor to Mr Maroš ŠEF OVI , Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight.

Mr OLBRYCHT, Vice-President of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Co-Rapporteur on Multi Financial Framework (MFF), started his keynote address by stating that the current crisis was also bearing the opportunity for real change. In the months to come there was going to be a debate on the future of the Union, what some observers called a Hamilton's moment. The MFF 2021-2027 was a reduced version of the European Commission's proposal of 2018 and considerably reduced to what the European Parliament had proposed. It required the unanimous decision by the Member States as well as consent by the European Parliament, and included the European Commission's proposal of the recovery instrument "Next Generation EU", for which it was going to borrow money on the financial markets for the first time, and for which the Commission was seeking a speedy ratification. This required a clear position by each of the national Parliaments. Due to Article 122 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) the European Parliament was not to decide on the fund itself but it was going to be influential in the co-decision of its legal framework. The European Parliament was currently waiting for the political agreement of the Council in order to be able to start working on the bridge solution, i.e. the immediate correction of the commitment of the budget to 11.3 billion euros as well as the change of at least four regulations for the ongoing year of 2020. Mr OLBRYCHT emphasized that the European Parliament was prepared to start its work immediately. In the event that a political agreement was not reached, the treaty solution offered a contingency plan for 2021.

Mr MILOŠEVI thanked Mr OLBRYCHT and gave the floor to the second keynote speaker, Mr Maroš ŠEF OVI , Vice-President of the European Commission.

Mr ŠEF OVI started his keynote address by highlighting the importance of solidarity among the 27 Member States, particularly in times of crisis. The aim of the recovery plan was not only to restart European economies but to modernize them by making them greener, more digital and fairer. Despite affecting all Member States, the scope of the consequences of the crisis varied considerably. Therefore, the plan was based on detailed analysis of incurred costs, taking into account different indicators to ensure fair distribution and avoid additional division lines. The European Commission had put forward an unprecedented proposal which merged the MFF with a recovery plan, thus combining a budget worth 1.1 billion EUR with a recovery fund worth 750 billion euros. A temporary increase of the budget's own resources ceiling to 2 percent allowed the European Commission to use its favourable credit rating to borrow 750 billion euros on the financial markets which were to be paid back not before 2028 and not after 2058. Mr ŠEF OVI explained that "Next Generation EU" would siphon direct investment quickly to where it was most needed, reinforce the single market and help to provide the tools needed to step up cooperation in areas such as health and crisis management. He went on to emphasize that the budget would allow to drive the green and digital transition and build a fair and resilient economy. The European Commission hoped for an approval to the plan in July 2020 and to see the first draft in October 2020 in order to be able to use the full potential of the recovery instrument by the beginning of 2021. Mr ŠEF OVI underlined the crucial role of national Parliaments, particularly with regard to the own resources policy of the European Union, and invited all Parliaments to engage in fruitful discussions with the European Commission.

Mr MILOŠEVI thanked the keynote speakers and hoped that the European Union would use the crisis to redefine its relationship with China. He added that the current situation called for a Pan-European taxation of certain industries and sectors.

In the subsequent debate, 24 speakers took the floor, with the vast majority of them welcoming the European Commission proposal for a new long-term EU budget and recovery plan.

Mr Peter STROBEL, German *Bundesrat*, affirmed the need for a collective major European effort in order to overcome the crisis. He welcomed the European Commission's amended proposal as a bold and apt step in this direction. In his view, the combination of grants and loans took account of the general economic performance of the European economies and guaranteed European solidarity. Mr STROBEL underlined the need for regional strategies across borders, further noting that the regions of Europe had been severely affected by the reintroduction of border controls in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Commuter movements, as well as access to care and the social environment, had been disrupted, a situation which needed to be avoided in case of a future pandemic.

Mr Richard HÖRCSIK, Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, informed the audience of the foreseeable termination of the state of emergency previously declared in the country, as Parliament intended to vote on the issue on the same day of the COSAC Chairpersons meeting. With regard to the European Commission's proposal, he expressed worries over any possible financial cuts to the cohesion fund. He called for the fair treatment of less developed European countries, and stressed that the recovery plan should not put any extra burden on them. Mr HÖRCSIK closed his statement by underlining the interconnected nature of Europe and the particular importance of the Western Balkans in that context.

Mr Yiorgos LILLIKAS, Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, stated that Cyprus was host to the highest number of asylum seekers within the EU, a number equivalent to 3.8 percent of its population, and called for the Union's effective solidarity in order to alleviate disproportional migratory pressures on front-line Member States. Mr LILLIKAS went on to say that the proposal by the European Union had not met Cyprus' expectations with regard to REACT-EU. He expressed his hope that cohesion funds could be strengthened and that all funds would be attributed to Member States in a flexible manner. He concluded by stressing that Cyprus was not in favour of additional own resources.

Mr Gunther KRICHBAUM, German *Bundestag*, commented on the lack of solidarity at the outset of the crisis and welcomed the recovery fund as a means to support in particular those countries which had been hit the hardest. Mr KRICHBAUM stressed that no institutional power for health affairs existed in Europe and suggested the further development of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in order to be better prepared in case of a future pandemic.

Mr Václav HAMPL, Czech *Senát*, expressed concern with regard to the total amount of the loan which the European Commission would take out in order to execute its recovery plan, expressing reservations as to whether that amount of money was actually needed. He would also not rule out another pandemic occurring in the next 30 years, in which case the hands of the Union would be tied due to the commitment of the recovery plan.

Ms Ria OOMEN-RUIJTEN, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, stated that a sustainable recovery was in the interest of all Member States. She also pointed out that this was the first digital COSAC to be held in the history of the Conference, as a direct result of the need to explore new ways and digital formats of conducting meetings, a need brought about by the crisis. She also hoped that the crisis would open

up other possibilities in a similar fashion. . She stated that a sustainable recovery was in the interest of all Member States.

Mr Gediminas KIRKILAS, Lithuanian *Seimas*, stated that single market barriers should be removed, Schengen should be restored and investments directed at the digital transformation and research capacities. He emphasized the need for European economies to strengthen their autonomy especially with regard to China. Mr KIRKILAS welcomed the proposal by the European Commission but expressed disappointment as to the budget adjustments regarding cohesion.

Ms Mairéad McGUINNESS, European Parliament, explained that the European Commission had assured the unchanged priority status of the Green Deal and digital transformation within the revised proposal. In view of the complexity of the recovery package, the role of national Parliaments was absolutely vital. The withdrawal of the UK from the EU should also be given due attention.

Mr ŠEF OVI affirmed the importance of national Parliaments in the process of explaining the proposal in the respective Member States. He used his concluding remarks to appeal once more to the solidarity and political leadership of national Parliaments. Mr ŠEF OVI went on to explain that within the recovery and resilience facility of Next Generation EU, the resilience of national economies had been added to investments and reforms related to the green and digital transition. He called on the national governments to draw up ambitious individual recovery plans in order to accelerate economic growth and modernize European economies. Additional own resources were supposed to cover large parts of the debt. In this regard, the European Commission was currently looking at the possibility of introducing new taxes, such as an import carbon tax or a digital tax.

Mr Marko POGA NIK, Slovenian *Državni zbor*, declared Slovenia's support of the proposal and welcomed in particular the increased funding for the Justice Transition Mechanism.

Mr Tomáš VALÁŠEK, Slovak *Národná rada*, remarked that the absorption capacity had an unfavourable effect on the transformation agenda. If the focus was on absorption only, the opportunity to actually transform economies might be missed. In a similar vein, he suspected that the European Commission's reference to own resources paying the debt decreased the incentive for national governments to use the money effectively. Mr VALÁŠEK pointed out that the money was in fact being borrowed from the next generation, and thus entailed some responsibility towards it.

Mr Dragomir STOYNEV, Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie*, expressed his support for the European Commission proposal, but argued that the approval by all national Parliaments should be linked to their opportunity to participate actively in the process of adopting policies in national recovery plans as well as in monitoring their implementation. The role of national Parliaments should be strengthened in this regard. Mr STOYNEV stressed the importance of active involvement of national Parliaments in setting priorities for investment and reinforcement.

Ms Satu HASSI, Finnish *Eduskunta*, argued that the Finnish Parliament regarded these exceptional measures as justified due to the exceptional situation but also held reservations. She stressed that the European economies were tightly interconnected. The Finnish Parliament had questions regarding the size of the package, the proportion of grants and loans and the length of the payback period. The Constitutional Committee of the Finnish Parliament had also raised the question of the legal basis. With regard to the criteria, Ms HASSI stated that particular attention should be paid to those economies that had been hit particularly hard by the coronavirus crisis. It was important that

investments were carbon neutral. She stressed that the measures would not relieve national governments of their responsibility to take care of their own economies.

In her statement, Ms Marina BERLINGHIERI, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, pointed out the difficult situation in Italy due to the COVID-19 pandemic and emphasized the importance of developing common strategies and projects. She praised the European Commission's revised MFF proposal, describing it as very innovative.

Mr Luis CAPOULAS SANTOS, Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, asserted the support of the Portuguese Parliament for the proposal. It was in the hands of policy makers to restore hope among European citizens and renew Europe based on the Union's founding principles. Similarly, Ms Vita Anda TERAUDA, Latvian *Saeima*, called for Latvia to support the European Commission proposal. She stated that the proposal was a good response to the needs of an economic recovery. The proposal required solidarity and significant mutual commitment. She pledged Latvia's solidarity, but stressed that Europe's other great ambitions should not be completely sidelined.

Mr Dimitros KAIRIDIS, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, also welcomed the European Commission's ambitious proposal, but was skeptical about how state aid was going to be used, pointing out that there would be legal restrictions on granting legal aid to problem companies, and that most Greek companies had been classified as problem companies. He called for Greek entrepreneurs not to be left on their own.

In his intervention, Mr Ondřej BENESIK, Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, pointed out the need to gain detailed knowledge on all aspects of the origin and spread of the current pandemic and China's failure to inform the international community in a timely and adequate manner. He said this information was crucial in order to be able to deal effectively with pandemic situations in the future. Ms Gabriela CREŤU, Romanian *Senat*, praised the Union's quick reaction to the pandemic with regard to short-term problems, but stressed that long-term thinking was needed to turn this situation into an opportunity. The main problem was the lack of trust and the necessity of reconsidering rules and priorities. The Union had to reduce its internal economic gaps and build cohesion in order to face the ongoing challenges. She regretted that the old trend of using more financial instruments and less grants was continuing.

Mr Ettore Antonio LICHERI, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, called for support for the European Commission proposal. He hoped that an agreement would be reached before August. Italy was particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and needed support. He said that the EU member states needed to show solidarity.

Ms Annika QARLSSON, Swedish *Riksdag*, stressed that there were different ways to solve the current problems related to the pandemic. She stressed that the instruments needed to be temporary and limited to the imminent aim of recovery from the crisis. Conditionality with criteria such as the rule of law was necessary.

In her intervention, Ms Anniken HUITFELDT, Norwegian *Storting*, called on the members to stand up against authoritarian politicians and agreed with Mr ŠEFĀK OVIĆ that the response had to be based on solidarity. She went on to emphasize the importance of free trade and open borders, a sentiment echoed by Mr Pere LÓPEZ, *Consell General* of Andorra, who advocated common rules for the free movement of persons.

Patrick DEWAELE, *Belgian Sénat*, thanked the Presidency for organizing the videoconference despite all obstacles, and praised the Commission's recovery, and appreciated the philosophy behind it. It was important to ensure appropriate funding and investment was kept in certain fields, such as digitalization and research. The funding proposed by the Commission would allow to repair the social and economic damage done by the pandemic, and ensure the economy can be relaunched. Solidarity was important and Member States should be ready to contribute in one form or another but this should not be considered as a blank cheque and should come with certain conditions, such as the respect for the rule of law to encourage necessary reforms in order to ensure more productive economies.

Mr Jean BIZET, French *Sénat*, stated that the unprecedented challenges faced by the European Union required unprecedented solutions, materialising progressively through measures by the European Central Bank and the European Stability Mechanism as well as the European Investment Bank. The Council had also agreed to an instrument specifically aimed at relaunching the European economy. France and Germany took the initiative, inspiring the Commission with a proposal to revise the MFF with measures directed at increasing economic resilience of affected countries, and with measures to ensure a greener and more digital Europe, a proposal which the French Senate welcomes, while underlining the importance of the European alimentary sovereignty; a greener CAP; the necessity to increase the funding for the European autonomy, notably the European Defence Fund, space policy, ITER and Frontex; the creation of the EU Health Programme and the financial resources allocated to filtering foreign investment. It was important to ensure that measures taken did not boomerang on the European economy, while optimising European competition and trade policies.

In his concluding remarks, Mr Jan OLBRYCHT stressed the need for solidarity and close cooperation. He made it clear that the European Commission proposal was the beginning of the debate on the future of Europe, which would invariably lead to complex debates in the Council and in each Parliament. He stressed that the European Parliament was ready to start its work, and that a compromise was urgently needed.

5. Debate on current issues - part two: Conference on the Future of Europe

Keynote speakers: Ms Dubravka ŠUICA, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of democracy and demography (pre-recorded video message).

Ms Mairead McGUINNESS, First Vice-President of the European Parliament in charge of relations with national Parliaments.

In her pre-recorded video message, Ms Dubravka ŠUICA, Vice-President of the European Commission, referred to the role of national Parliaments in the Conference on the Future of Europe (the Conference) and urged participants to ask their respective governments to conclude the negotiations in the Council in order to pave the way for a Joint Declaration on the Conference, to be agreed by the EU institutions. Ms ŠUICA referred to the Conference as a new public space, complementary to representative democracy, in which EU citizens could engage with policymakers, physically or digitally. Ms ŠUICA further underlined that, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Conference was now needed more than ever.

Ms Mairead McGUINNESS, First Vice-President of the European Parliament, referred to the short resolution on the Conference to be adopted by the European Parliament in the coming days, and urged the Council to agree on a position. According to Ms McGUINNESS, the launch of the Conference was becoming more urgent with COVID-19 and related EU recovery plans, as well as possible future

pandemics, all of which were matters linked to the future of the European Union. Ms McGUINNESS pleaded for the involvement of national Parliaments, which needed to be active vis-à-vis their respective governments, and called on them to put citizens first. Finally, Ms McGUINNESS referred to the letter from national parliaments/chambers to Mr David Maria SASSOLI, President of the European Parliament, Mr Gordan Grli RADMAN, President-in-Office of the General Affairs Council, as well as Vice-President ŠUIČA, signed on 21 January by 34 Chairpersons of just as many Member States' EU Affairs Committees (representing 24 national Parliaments), hoping that the letter would help the Council to agree on a common position.

Fifteen speakers took the floor during the ensuing debate, with a vast majority of participants calling for a greater role of national Parliaments in the Conference and urging the Council to agree swiftly on a common position.

A number of speakers called for greater involvement of national Parliaments in the Conference (Mr Christian BUCHMANN, Austrian *Bundesrat*; Mr Vaclav HAMPL, Czech *Senát*; Mr Yorgos LILLIAS, Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*; Mr Hayke VELDMAN, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*; Ms Sabine THILLAYE, French *Assemblée nationale*; Mr Peter STROBEL, German *Bundesrat*; Mr Gunther KRICHBAUM, German *Bundestag*; Ms Gabriela CREȚU, Romanian *Senat*).

Of these, some expressly called for national Parliaments' involvement in the steering and supervisory bodies of the Conference (Mr STROBEL) or for the full integration of national Parliaments in the structure of the Conference (Ms THILLAYE). Mr Gunther KRICHBAUM, German Bundestag, expressed disappointment at the content in the late reply by Ms Dubravka ŠUIČA on behalf of the Commission to the letter sent on 21 January to the EU institutions by 24 national Parliaments asking for a greater role in the Conference. Mr KRICHBAUM underlined that national Parliaments needed to be at the same level as the European Parliament, and stated that if treaty changes were needed to be agreed to, national Parliaments were key for ratification. Both Mr HAMPL and Mr BUCHMANN concurred with Mr KRICHBAUM, with the latter urging the Council to agree on a common position (a position shared with Mr STROBEL and Mr LILLIKAS) and suggested that besides COVID-19 pandemic, digitalisation, fundamental values and recovery plan could also be topics covered by the Conference.

Mr Bogdan KLICH, Polish *Senat*, asked for the topic of EU values, as the basis of the EU, to be debated in the Conference, and called for a focus on the strategic objectives of the EU, with a more democratic EU decision-making process closer to its citizens, all of which could be fulfilled within the existing EU treaties.

Ms Vita Anda TERAUDA, Latvian *Saeima*, underlined the importance of transparency (a sentiment echoed by Mr VELDMAN and Mr BUCHMANN) and a strong feedback mechanism in the Conference in order to bring about active participation, engagement and legitimacy, with no predetermined outcome and open to Treaty changes.

Ms Marina BELINGHIERI, Italian *Camera dei Deputati*, called for pragmatism and realism, and for ambitious but achievable goals, and drew attention to the need for reforms in the Council and the simplification of EU decision-making including through the extension of qualified majority voting to areas such as taxation and foreign policy. Mr Nikitas KAKLAMANIS, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, called for more resources and stressed the importance of being courageous when taking decisions.

Ms Gabriella GIAMMANCO, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, called for the issue of tax dumping to be addressed, and argued for the need of a common minimum tax base, EU digital tax and a genuine common European foreign policy.

Lord KINNOULL, UK *House of Lords*, referred to the importance of inter-parliamentarism and parliamentary relations, in order to promote understanding and progress among states, and the necessity to defend Western liberal democracy.

Mr Angel TÎLV R, Romanian *Camera Deputatilor*, emphasised the importance of the education sector for the EU single market.

In her concluding remarks, Ms McGUINNESS stated that she would convey the message expressed by national Parliaments to the European Parliament and asked national Parliaments to convey the message to their executives to agree on a common position in the Council. Ms McGUINNESS mentioned in particular that if treaty changes were to be agreed to, national Parliaments engagement was of paramount importance. Finally, Ms McGUINNESS concurred with the opinion expressed by Lord KINNOULL on defending Western liberal democracy.

Finally, Mr Guido WOLF, Chair of the Committee on European Union Questions of the German *Bundesrat*, thanked the Croatian Presidency for its work in maintaining dialogue and relations between the Member States during these challenging times, and informed the participants of the incoming German Presidency, whose motto would be “Together for Europe’s recovery”. He announced that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chairpersons’ meeting would not take place in July as planned. Instead, and as agreed with his colleague, Mr KRICHBAUM, a videoconference would be organised on 14 September. A live COSAC plenary session was still not ruled out, he added.

Mr MILOŠEVI thanked Mr WOLF for the message and wished the forthcoming German Presidency all the success. He asked the Commission to understand the importance and leverage of national Parliaments and called for a joint vision on the development of the EU. Mr MILOŠEVI referred to the challenges that the Coronavirus had brought to life and democracy, and stressed the importance of working together in the face of such challenges. The main focus for the way forward was to ensure a competitive Europe thanks to a more entrepreneurial, younger generation.