



Parliamentary Dimension
of the Estonian Presidency
of the Council of the
European Union



Mr Kristian Vigenin
Chair of the Committee on European Affairs and
Oversight of the European Funds
Bulgarian National Assembly

Tallinn, 28 May 2018 No 3-11/18-6/2

As the Chair of the IPEX Board, I would like to inform you that the Board met on 25 May 2018 in Tallinn and decided to support the integration of the COSAC website into the IPEX environment, and to forward you the corresponding technical analyses prepared for the IPEX Board meeting.

The Secretaries General and Speakers of the EU Parliaments as well as COSAC have repeatedly emphasised the significance of the increasing cooperation between IPEX and COSAC, and the potential of the IPEX platform to also host additional conferences. In the Conclusions of the LVIII COSAC, the IPEX Board was invited to present to the COSAC Presidency an analysis of the possibilities and technicalities pertaining to the integration of the COSAC website into the IPEX platform at its earliest convenience.

The IPEX Board was informed about the technical analyses at its meeting on 25 May 2018, including the current possibilities of both websites and the advantages that the integration would offer. By sharing the same platform, IPEX would permit a unified experience for the end-users, and provide them with more exhaustive search results; it would allow them to search a single source of information, and benefit from new developments in the framework of the IPEX Digital Strategy.

In light of the above, I would like to encourage you to support the idea of merging the two environments, so that the IPEX platform could host the COSAC website. We hope that this would help to avoid duplication and create more synergy between two key sources of EU information that is shared at the parliamentary level.

On behalf of the IPEX Board, I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Peep Jahilo
Secretary General
Riigikogu

IPEX – COSAC: Hosting and interconnections

Technical analysis prepared for the IPEX Board meeting on 25 May 2018

24/04/2018

Introduction

The COSAC in its Conclusions of the LVIII COSAC encouraged the COSAC Secretariat and the IPEX Board to cooperate towards increasing the interconnection between the COSAC website and the IPEX platform and to look for ways for a future integration of the two. COSAC invited the IPEX Board to present, in close cooperation with the COSAC Secretariat, to the COSAC Presidency an analysis of the possibilities and technicalities pertaining to the integration of the COSAC website into the IPEX platform at its earliest convenience.

During its meeting on 19 January 2018, the IPEX Board gave the mandate to analyse how such interconnection or integration could be best implemented.

Assessment of the current situation

The analysis started with a stocktaking of the current situation, as well as an attempt to assess the features currently offered by COSAC and IPEX. Following a first analysis done by the technical team to explore and document the COSAC site structure, a meeting was organised with the IPEX Information Officer and the COSAC secretariat.

The assessment of the COSAC website features showed a site structure of up to 4 levels allowing to navigate and search the text on the webpages; however, it did not reveal special functions.

With regard to IPEX, the platform for EU Interparliamentary Exchange, it already hosts the website of a number of conferences and has the potential to host extra conferences under the same scheme without major changes.

Both websites already have a number of crosslinks, which allow internet users to navigate from one to another. Little can be done here to improve that interconnection.

The content of the two websites sometimes seems redundant, but is definitely complementary between the two websites.

It should be pointed out that the look and feel and the navigation structure between the two websites is very different – therefore users coming to either site need to “re-orientate” before being able to find further content on the website.

So, while interconnection was already existing and did not offer identified possibilities for improvement, the main analysis focussed on an integration (of the COSAC website into the IPEX website), not pre-judging on the third proposed approach, i.e. to analyse and propose ways and related costs for renewing the COSAC website (to be done by the COSAC secretariat).

Analysis of integrating the COSAC website content into IPEX

IPEX already hosts the website of a number of conferences and has the potential to extend this service to other conferences.

Based on the assumptions that:

- COSAC will only use the existing possibilities of IPEX for hosting conferences
- COSAC secretariat would be allowed administrative rights on the IPEX website
- general information (e.g. about National Parliaments) present on the COSAC website is merged with information of the IPEX website

the proposed approach would allow to include COSAC content and meeting documents with no extra cost for IPEX as shown in the following previews, but requiring a manual operation with a workload that is yet to be determined to transfer the content from COSAC to IPEX.

A special attention was given to checking whether COSAC could still be reached by its domain name www.cosac.eu. Indeed, a redirect implemented by the domain name service provider for COSAC will allow to “land” on the specific conference page in IPEX, but further navigation would then be subject to the IPEX address structure.

Preview of the COSAC Homepage, when hosted as a conference in IPEX

IPEX | The platform for EU Interparliamentary Exchange

Home | Calendar | Documents | National Parliaments and the European Parliament | About IPEX | EU Speakers and other partners

EU Speakers Conference | CPSP | CDP | Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Co-ordination and Governance in the EU | COSAC

Home / COSAC

COSAC

COSAC
Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union

What is COSAC?

COSAC is a Conference of the committees of the national Parliaments of the European Union Member States Co-opted with the European Union itself as well as representatives of the European Parliament.

At the biennial meetings of COSAC, six Member States' own Parliament, in addition, the national Parliaments of the candidate countries are invited to participate with three observers each.

COSAC meetings usually take place in the capital of the country holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. History of COSAC

COSAC was established in May 1988 at a meeting in Madrid, where the Speakers of the Parliaments of the EU Member States agreed to strengthen the role of national Parliaments in relation to the Community matters by bringing together their Committees on European Affairs. The first meeting of COSAC took place on 16-17 November 1988 in Paris.

COSAC was formally recognised in a Protocol on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union of the Treaty of Amsterdam that was concluded by the Heads of State or Government in June 1997. The Protocol came into force 1 May 2004.

According to Article 10 of protocol (No 1) on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union of the Treaty of Lisbon, COSAC (Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs) "may submit any contribution it deems appropriate for the attention of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. The Committee shall in addition promote the exchange of information and best practice between national Parliaments and the European Parliament, including their bodies established. It may also organise interparliamentary dialogues on specific topics, in particular to discuss matters of national foreign and security policy, including common security and defence policy. Contributions from the Committee shall not bind national Parliaments and shall not prejudice their position." The Treaty of Lisbon came into force on 1 December 2009.

For full history of COSAC see here

COSAC Secretariat

Questions to the Presidency of the COSAC Secretariat - including technical queries concerning the COSAC website

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Publications
Contributions and Conclusions of COSAC
Final Biennial Reports of COSAC
Guest Note
History of COSAC in UNO

Parliamentary Information
Structure of EU Member as National Parliaments
Secondary Contact to National Parliaments
Subsidiarity note pre-Lisbon Treaty
Links to National Parliaments

Meetings
Belgium 2016
Estonia 2015
Malta 2017
Slovakia 2016
The Netherlands - 2010
Luxembourg 2019
Latvia 2010
July 2014
Greece 2014
Lithuania 2013
Cyprus 2013
Poland 2012
Belgium 2011
Sweden 2010
Czech Conference, October 2009
France 2009
Portugal 2009
Slovakia 2007
Denmark 2006
Hungary 2006
The Netherlands 2004
Greece 2003
Spain 2003
Sweden 2001
Spain 2000
Sweden 2001
July 2000

Preview of a meeting page

The screenshot shows the IPEX website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Calendar, Documents, National Parliaments and the European Parliament, About IPEX, and EU Speakers and other activities. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for EU Speakers Conference, CPSP / CDP, Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU, and COSAC. The main content area is titled 'COSAC' and features a sub-section for 'Bulgaria 2010' with a small image. To the right, there are two sidebars: 'Documents' listing various reports and tasks, and 'Parliamentary Information' listing sources of EU matters and subsidiarity control. At the bottom right, there is a 'Meetings' section listing various COSAC meetings from 2000 to 2016.

Documents

- Contributing and Combining of COSAC
- Final Biennial Report of COSAC
- Score Tasks
- History of COSAC in EU

Parliamentary Information

- Source of EU Matters in National Parliaments
- Subsidiarity Control in National Parliaments
- Subsidiarity tests pre-Lisbon Treaty
- Links to National Parliaments

Meetings

- Bulgaria 2010
- Canada 2010
- Malta 2012
- Slovenia 2016
- The Netherlands - 2010
- Luxembourg 2010
- Latvia 2015
- Italy 2014
- Greece 2014
- Lithuania 2013
- Cyprus 2013
- Finland 2013
- Belgium 2011
- Sweden 2016
- Late Conference, Geneva 2008
- France 2008
- Portugal 2008
- Slovenia 2007
- Denmark 2006
- Hungary 2006
- The Netherlands 2004
- Greece 2003
- Spain 2002
- Sweden 2001
- Portugal 2000
- Slovenia 2007
- Denmark 2006
- Italy 2006

Conclusion on integrating the COSAC website content into IPEX

Hosting the COSAC website on IPEX along with other conferences – and taking account of the assumptions that:

- COSAC will only use the existing possibilities of IPEX for hosting conferences
- COSAC secretariat would be allowed administrative rights on the IPEX website
- general information (e.g. about National Parliaments) present on the COSAC website is merged with information of the IPEX website

is possible without extra development work, but will require manual work to transfer content from the current COSAC website into the IPEX environment.

By having COSAC share the same platform, IPEX would allow:

- end users to have a single ergonomic experience and provide them with more exhaustive search results;
- COSAC to benefit from new developments made for IPEX in the framework of changes proposed by the IPEX Digital Strategy.

Beyond a first integration without extra development, a couple of proposals for enhancements with an increasing number of conferences are listed in the next section.

General improvements proposed for the future

With new conferences being hosted on the IPEX website, a couple of improvements might be considered.

All of the following proposals would require an analysis for estimating the exact effort needed to implement them; however all of them require development work.

1/ allow for individual conferences to have separate administrative rights

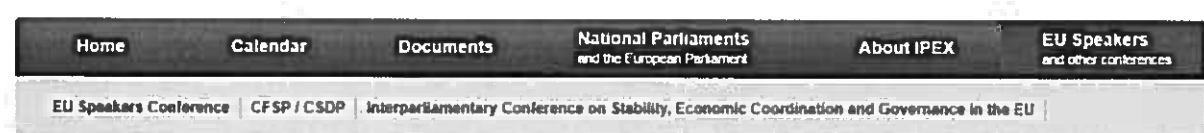
In the current version, a number of access groups have been defined and implemented (e.g. correspondents, general users, etc.), with the IPEX Information Officer having administrator rights.

With a view to extend the number of hosted conferences and while allowing conference secretariats to manage content on their specific pages (both with the aim to allow them to be able to rapidly update documents, as well as to alleviate the increasing workload of the IPEX Information Officer), every conference should be able to have its own administrator(s) who can manage all the content of the conference site without interfering with the other content of IPEX.

From a technical point of view, this will however require some detailed analysis on how to best implement and evaluate the overall impact. Only after such an analysis can any efforts be made.

2/ have an intermediate level for navigating to the conferences

In the current version of IPEX (initially designed to host mainly the EU Speakers conference) the main menu has an entry for "EU Speakers and other conferences". The access to individual conferences is then managed in a submenu.



With an increasing number of conferences hosted, this initial approach – while technically working – might need to be reconsidered with a view to

a/ change the main menu entry

b/ have an intermediate menu page listing the hosted conferences and allowing access to these (i.e. replacing the current submenu)

3/ review the possibilities for adding extra widgets on the conference homepage

In the current version, every conference can have key documents shown in the homepage

While extending the number of conferences that use this homepage, flexibility could be improved by allowing different conferences to slightly customize their homepages.