



HOUSE OF LORDS

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Domagoj Ivan Milošević
Chair, European Affairs Committee
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Dear Mr Milošević,

Many thanks for offering me the opportunity to make a brief intervention at this weekend's meeting of the COSAC Chairpersons. The European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill passed the House of Commons on Thursday 9 January, and seems to be on track to be enacted in the week beginning 20 January. Subject to the consent of the European Parliament, it looks very likely that the Withdrawal Agreement will be ratified in time for the United Kingdom to cease to be a Member State on 31 January, after which we will enter into a transition period.

The House of Lords European Union Committee remains fully committed to close and cordial dialogue with the 27 EU national Parliaments and with the European Parliament. I am sure there will be further discussions in coming weeks on how best to support that dialogue, but in the meantime I would like to confirm that from 1 February onwards the House of Lords would be grateful to continue to receive invitations to attend COSAC and other interparliamentary meetings during the Croatian Presidency, in accordance with Rule 3.3 of the COSAC Rules of Procedure.

On a related matter, I would like to take this opportunity to update you the United Kingdom's contribution to the cost of the COSAC Secretariat. On 11 April 2017 our then Secretary General, David Beamish, sent a letter of intent confirming that the House of Lords would continue to make its contribution until the end of 2019. This was on the assumption that the United Kingdom would cease to be an EU Member State on 29 March 2019.

Last year, given the uncertainty over the timing and nature of UK withdrawal, we were not able to submit a further letter of intent. Now that the uncertainty has been removed, our current Secretary General, Edward Ollard, has expressed his willingness, on behalf of the House of Lords, to commit to the co-financing of the COSAC Secretariat for period up to 31 December 2020. I cannot of course prejudge the decision of the House of Commons, though I hope this will be clarified in the near future.

In the meantime, I look forward to our continuing cooperation, and of course to the opportunity to meet colleagues in a few days in Zagreb!

Yours sincerely,

Lord Kinnoull
Chair of the European Union Committee