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# Press Release

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## **PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

### *Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC*

The Romanian Parliament hosted the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC in Bucharest, the first of a series of inter-parliamentary meetings to be organised within the framework of the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency of the Council of the EU.

The Chairpersons of COSAC (Conference of Chairpersons of the European Affairs Committees) debated two main topics. The first item dealt with the priorities of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU which are based on four pillars: convergence, safety, global actor and common values. This session was introduced by the Vice Prime Minister of Romania, Ana Birchall. In his intervention, Aaron Farrugia commended the Romanian Presidency's priorities pointing towards a more ambitious European Union with cohesion being the central theme. However, he said there was no consensus amongst the member states about the future of the cohesion policy and disagreements are still the order of the day on important issues of migration, deeper economic and monetary union and climate change amongst others. Farrugia said that the European Union we are living today is not the EU of Spinelli, De Gasperi and Schuman and therefore the approach should be less romantic and nostalgic and perhaps more pragmatic. He added that the sooner the EU agrees on a common path based on the White Paper on the Future of Europe, the better it can face its challenges and competition. He augured that tangible results will be achieved in the summit in Sibiu in May this year.

The second session dealt with the Multiannual Financial Framework focusing on the importance of cohesion policy. The subject was introduced by EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Crețu and Prof. Daniel Dăianu. Farrugia opined that the cohesion policy, as the EU's main investment tool, apart from continuing to assist less developed regions to achieve convergence, should consolidate the progress that has been made to date in the transition and more developed regions. "It is important to ensure that these regions do not lose momentum or stagnate in a position where they are unable to adequately compete within the Single Market or even at a global level. Thus, all regions and member states should remain eligible for resources under this policy, including those regions that have attained a degree of convergence." When it comes to financing the EU budget, Farrugia stated that EU income based on the Gross National Income has provided to be a fair instrument since its introduction thirty years ago, providing sufficient and stable flow of funding for the EU budget. However, he stressed that Malta is against the financing of the EU budget through taxes, since it firmly believes that fiscal policy should be decided upon by individual member states, to safeguard national sovereignty. Farrugia called for further flexibility and simplification and urged the member states to support financial instruments, with the latter

**Attachments: photos**

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complimenting EU grants and not replacing them. He finally called for a better geographical balance in the distribution of EU direct funds.