

Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC

1–2 February, Riga

Introductory speech by Ms Lolita Čigāne, Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the European Affairs Committee of the Saeima – the Parliament of Latvia – I take great pleasure in welcoming you to the COSAC Chairpersons' meeting here in Riga, at the Saeima's main building. This Building was designed by *Mr Jānis Baumanis*, the first academically trained Latvian architect. This important cultural monument has witnessed many events that have proved significant and decisive for Latvia throughout time: from meetings of the Constitutional Assembly, to the decision to renew Latvia's independence in 1991.

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The first month of Latvian presidency is already behind us. I think we started this presidency with lots of enthusiasm and energy, and a clear commitment towards achieving tangible and durable results which will further contribute to the common good of the EU.

It is important to mention, that the tragic events in Paris at the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, which occurred just before Latvia assumed the presidency of the EU, along with the renewed violence in the East Ukraine and the attacks on civilians in Mariupol, – are stark reminders of the manifold challenges we face. They underscore both the uncertainty of events and the fact that we must be ready for any challenges that may happen.