

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	1996/2236(INI)	Procedure completed
Improving the operation of the Institutions without amending the Treaty		
Subject 8.40 Institutions of the Union		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur
	INST Institutional Affairs		Appointed 29/05/1996
			PPE HERMAN Fernand H.J.
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion
	BUDG Budgets		Appointed The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy		Appointed 17/12/1997
			PSE RANDZIO-PLATH Christa

Key events			
15/11/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/03/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
16/03/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0117/1998	
14/05/1998	Debate in Parliament		
14/05/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0285/1998	Summary
14/05/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
01/06/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1996/2236(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Documentation gateway

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0117/1998 OJ C 138 04.05.1998, p. 0006	16/03/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0285/1998 OJ C 167 01.06.1998, p. 0175-0211	14/05/1998	EP	Summary

Improving the operation of the Institutions without amending the Treaty

The Committee adopted an own-initiative report by Fernand HERMAN (EPP, B) on improvements which could be made to the functioning of the EU institutions without modifying the Treaties. The report points the way to an agreement between the institutions on greater involvement for Parliament in the coordination of economic policies of the EU Member States. It also advances proposals to make certain EU policies more transparent and democratic. The committee considers it unacceptable that there are EU policy areas - particularly economic and monetary union (EMU) - in which powers of democratic control have been taken away from national parliaments without being replaced by scrutiny by the European Parliament. Since this problem was not resolved by the Amsterdam Treaty, the committee believes that interinstitutional agreements are the best way of achieving the objective of greater democratic scrutiny at EU level. As the question of democratic accountability in the area of EMU is particularly urgent, Mr Herman's report proposes a text for a preliminary draft interinstitutional agreement on procedures for setting out the broad guidelines of economic policy, multilateral surveillance and excessive deficits. Further to this aim of reducing the democratic deficit and enhancing the role of the European Parliament, the committee calls for interinstitutional agreements to be concluded on external economic policy, international agreements stemming from the Euratom Treaty, international fisheries agreements, collective agreements between employers and employees and the ad hoc procedure on agricultural expenditure. It also wishes to see improved information on competition policy and a code of conduct in the field of fiscal policy. ?

Improving the operation of the Institutions without amending the Treaty

In adopting the report by Mr Fernand HERMAN (EPP, B) Parliament considered it unacceptable that there were policy areas in which democratic control had been taken away from national parliaments and had not been replaced by scrutiny by the European Parliament, in particular Economic and Monetary Union, but also the common commercial policy, agreements stemming from the Euratom Treaty, agricultural policy, development cooperation policy, competition policy and the implementation of collective agreements negotiated between the social partners. This problem had not been resolved by the Amsterdam Treaty nor, as regards employment, by the compromises of the Amsterdam and Luxembourg European Councils. The same question of democratic accountability arose with regard to the European Central Bank. In order to deal with this shortfall, until a future intergovernmental conference Parliament considered that the conclusion of interinstitutional agreements was the most appropriate method of achieving the objective of strengthening democratic accountability at Union level. With regard to Economic and Monetary Union Parliament proposed a new interinstitutional agreement dealing with procedures setting out the broad economic policy guidelines, multilateral surveillance and the excessive deficit procedure. It also advocated the conclusion of interinstitutional agreements and systematic information to Parliament on external economic policy and in particular agreements based on Article 113 of the Treaty, international agreements under the Euratom Treaty, development cooperation, international fisheries agreements, collective agreements between the social partners (such as those on parental leave and on part-time work) and on the ad hoc procedure for agricultural expenditure. It asked the Commission and the Council to take account of the fact that the conclusion of any international agreement with financial implications required at the very least the prior consultation of the budgetary authority and its assent if the financial implications were significant. It also called for improved information on competition policy, in particular through the regular information meetings with the relevant Commissioner and a code of conduct with regard to fiscal policy. ?