


Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1997/2237(COS)	Procedure completed
Amsterdam draft treaty		
Subject	8.10 Revision of the Treaties, intergovernmental conferences	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur
	INST Institutional Affairs		Appointed
			01/07/1997
			PSE TSATSOS Dimitris
			01/07/1997
			PPE MÉNDEZ DE VIGO Íñigo
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion
	AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy		Appointed
			24/06/1997
			PPE SPENCER Tom
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		08/07/1997
			PSE IZQUIERDO ROJO María
	BUDG Budgets		09/10/1997
			ARE DELL'ALBA Gianfranco
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy		14/07/1997
			PSE RANDZIO-PLATH Christa
	ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy		02/07/1997
			V AHERN Nuala
	RELA External Economic Relations		30/06/1997
			PPE KITTELMANN Peter
	JURI Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights		01/07/1997
			UPE JANSSEN VAN RAAY James L.
	REGI Regional Policy		24/06/1997
			ELDR VALLVÉ Joan
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		23/09/1997
			PSE SIMPSON Brian
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection		02/07/1997
			PSE ROTH-BEHRENDT Dagmar
	DEVE Development and Cooperation		23/07/1997

		PPE DIMITRAKOPOULOS Giorgos	
	LIBE Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs		28/01/1997
		V ROTH Claudia	
	CONT Budgetary Control		21/07/1997
		PSE TOMLINSON The Lord John E.	
	PECH Fisheries		24/06/1997
		PPE LANGENHAGEN Brigitte	
	REGL Rules of Procedure, Verification of Credentials and Immunities		03/07/1997
Council of the European Union		UPE CROWLEY Brian	
	FEMM Women's Rights		18/06/1997
		PSE TORRES MARQUES Helena	
	PETI Petitions		09/10/1997
		PSE BARROS MOURA José	
	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	General Affairs	2029	06/10/1997
	General Affairs	2027	15/09/1997
	General Affairs	2019	26/06/1997

Key events			
15/09/1997	Debate in Council	2027	
02/10/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	N4-0538/1997	
06/10/1997	Debate in Council	2029	
24/10/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
04/11/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
04/11/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0347/1997	
19/11/1997	Debate in Parliament		
19/11/1997	Decision by Parliament	T4-0565/1997	Summary
19/11/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
08/12/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2237(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	INST/4/09366

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		N4-0538/1997	02/10/1997	OS	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0347/1997 OJ C 371 08.12.1997, p. 0003	04/11/1997	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0565/1997 OJ C 371 08.12.1997, p. 0051-0099	19/11/1997	EP	Summary

Amsterdam draft treaty

The Committee welcomed the Amsterdam Treaty, albeit with reservations. The report by Iñigo MÉNDEZ DE VIGO (EPP, E) and Dimitri TSATSOS (PES, Gr), adopted by 22 votes to 11, with 3 abstentions, recommended that the Member States ratify the treaty, as it marks a new stage in the process of building European political union. However, the committee believes that the new treaty also has its failings, particularly as far as the shape of the EU's institutions is concerned. MEPs were disappointed that the treaty had failed to take the concrete decisions on the reform of the institutions which will be needed if an enlarged EU is to function more efficiently and more democratically. In this connection, the committee noted that the Protocol on the institutions envisages additional institutional reforms as a pre-requisite for enlargement; it also expressed approval of the Declaration by Belgium, France and Italy on the same subject. However, it felt that the need for enlargement to be preceded by an overhaul of the institutions should be further underlined. These reforms should start as soon as possible, so as not to delay the accession of new countries to the Union. The committee therefore called on the European Council to set the process in motion by holding a political dialogue with Parliament on the basis of its report, which is to be debated plenary. MEPs believe the following steps are needed before any further enlargement takes place: -adjustments to be made to the weighting of votes in the Council and to the number of Commissioners; -qualified majority voting to become the general rule in the Council; -the unanimity requirement to be restricted to decisions of a constitutional nature; -decisions to be taken on all other reforms required for enlargement. To ensure rapid progress, the Commission is asked to take over Parliament's position and submit to it, at an early date and certainly before the European Council summit of December 1998, a report containing proposals for a comprehensive reform of the Treaties. These proposals should also be forwarded to the parliaments of the Member States. Parliament, the committee says, should be fully involved in the next Intergovernmental Conference and a binding arrangement is needed to the effect that the Treaty may enter into force only with Parliament's assent. ?

Amsterdam draft treaty

In adopting the report by Mr Inigo MENDEZ DE VIGO (PPE, E) and Dimitris TSATSOS (PSE, Gr), the European Parliament recommends Member States to ratify the Amsterdam Treaty. However, it regrets that the Treaty does not incorporate the institutional reforms needed for the effective and democratic functioning of an enlarged Union and affirms that these reforms must be completed before enlargement and as soon as possible so as not to delay accessions. Under these circumstances, it calls for the following steps to be taken before any enlargement: - adjustments to be made to the weighting of votes in the Council and to the number of Commission Members, with the Member States retaining equal status with each other; - qualified majority voting to become the general rule in the Council; - the unanimity requirement to be restricted to decisions of a constitutional nature (amendments to the Treaty, accessions, decisions on own resources, electoral procedure, application of Article 308 of the EC Treaty). Generally speaking, Parliament welcomes the fact that the Amsterdam Treaty gives precedence to the Community method. However, it believes that the opportunities afforded by the Treaty will lead to results only if a desire for common action in all areas of the Treaty is generated. It urges Member States to prevent a decision by a majority vote on the grounds of important national interests only in extreme cases. Parliament notes that the Amsterdam Treaty improves the Union's instruments for shaping policy in the interests of its citizens (employment, social issues, environment, health, internal security), but still calls for further improvements, in particular application of the Community method in the field of internal security, and improvement of the employment situation. Parliament calls for the prospect of developing a common defence policy to be strengthened, for the strategic planning and early warning unit to become operational without delay, and for Community competence to be extended to all questions examined in the context of the WTO. In the area of justice and home affairs, it advocates a common approach towards fighting organized and international crime and improving legal protection for Union citizens. On institutional matters, the European Parliament would like the following to be subject to its approval: - important international agreements, - any amendment of the basic Treaties, - the system of own resources. It calls for the codecision procedure to be extended to the following policy areas: agriculture and fisheries, tax and competition, structural policy, tourism, water resources, and legislative acts under the third pillar. It regrets the fact that, in important areas of European citizenship (free movement, right of establishment, mutual recognition of diplomas), the codecision procedure exists alongside unanimous voting within the Council. It advocates extending qualified majority voting to culture. It calls for the Union and the Communities to be merged into a single legal personality, for a specific list of fundamental rights of the Union to be drawn up, and for the committeeology procedures to be amended. It advocates urgent revision of the Euratom Treaty in order to remedy the democratic deficit. Regarding transparency and openness, it calls for: - measures which ensure that citizens have effective access to information; - documents which are comprehensible to citizens and which show who bears political responsibility; - codification and simplification of the constituent Treaties. Finally, Parliament requests the Commission to submit to it, before the European Council of December 1998, a report with proposals for a comprehensive reform of the Treaties and asks for the future Treaty to enter into force only with the assent of Parliament. It asks to be associated on an equal footing in any subsequent revision of the Treaties. ?

