


Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	1997/2190(INI) Procedure completed
The information and communication policy in the European Union	
Subject 3.30 Information and communications in general	

Key players	
European Parliament	
Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion Appointed
BUDG Budgets	23/09/1997
	PPE TILLICH Stanislaw
JURI Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights	27/11/1997
	ELDR DE CLERCQ Willy C.E.H.
INST Institutional Affairs	26/01/1998
	PSE DURY Raymonde M.E.A.

Key events			
18/07/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
18/03/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
18/03/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0115/1998	
14/05/1998	Debate in Parliament		
14/05/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0298/1998	Summary
14/05/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
01/06/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2190(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	A4-0115/1998 OJ C 167 01.06.1998, p. 0003	18/03/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T4-0298/1998 OJ C 167 01.06.1998, p. 0181-0230	14/05/1998	EP	Summary

The information and communication policy in the European Union

Providing the public with better information on EU policies, helping it to understand the role of the institutions and the way they operate, as well as increased efficiency: these are some of the goals of the report by Peter PEX (EPP, NL) on information and communication policy in the European Union. This own-initiative report, which was adopted on March 18th by Parliament's Committee proposes that a European Information Board be set up to ensure better coordination between Parliament and the Commission. It also calls for greater decentralisation of EU information activities. The Board would be composed of the Commissioner responsible for information, the Director-General of the Commission's DG X (Information, Communication, Culture and Audiovisual Media), the Vice-President of Parliament responsible for information, the chairs of Parliament's Budget and Culture Committees and the Director-General of Parliament's DG III (Information and Public Relations). The Board would meet at least once every three months and would be responsible for coordinating the information and communication activities of the two institutions, assessing them and establishing guidelines for their development. It would report to Parliament. Although greater coordination is needed in the area of information, the Commission and Parliament have both common and separate objectives. Common or individual communication policies should therefore be devised according to requirements, says the report. This means that all communication activities geared to the needs of the general public, covering general information on the way the institutions operate and the content of policies, should be carried out jointly. Activities aimed at the press and those specific to each institution would be carried out by the respective information services of the two institutions. In addition, the infrastructure of the audiovisual services and press centres should be merged in order to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency. The committee also believes that information activities should be decentralised more. However, to enable the public to turn to a "one-stop shop", the national offices of the Commission and Parliament should be housed under one roof so as to create "European Union Houses" in all the Member States at national and eventually regional level.?

The information and communication policy in the European Union

In adopting the report by Mr Peter PEX (EPP, NL) on communication policy in the Union, Parliament considered the establishment of an effective information and communication policy for the European institutions to be essential. It called for the setting of a global financial envelope for support activities of the Union's priority policies and for support to encourage citizens' participation in the European Parliament elections in 1999. With regard to the Commission, Parliament considered that it should make better use of multimedia applications both in public and private places and at home. Activities should be undertaken in relation to schools and pupils using appropriate publications. Parliament stressed the need to match the information made available more closely to the main target groups such as the press, education establishments, industry and private citizens. The Commission should also carry out feasibility studies on European communication policy in order to ensure that citizens were provided with quality information. Specific campaigns aimed in particular at young people, women or those in a precarious situation would be welcome. Specific information for decision makers should also be planned. The Commission was called on in all its official documents to use simple and clear language and to submit a proposal allowing public access to legislative documents. Parliament also proposed the establishment of greater cooperation between Parliament and the Commission on all communication activities directed towards the general public concerning general information on the functioning of the institutions and the contents of policies adopted. However communication activities directed towards the press and those concerning activities of the two institutions as regards the specific institutional responsibilities would be executed by the separate information departments of the two institutions. Within the framework of the working party on ongoing information activities it called for the establishment of regular coordination meetings between the Vice-President of Parliament with responsibility for information, the chairmen of Parliament's Committees on Budgets and Culture and the Director-General of Parliament's DG III and the Commissioner with responsibility for information and the Director-General of the Commission's DG X. This Working Party would be responsible for the coordination of the information and communication activities of the European Commission and the European Parliament and the follow-up of the combined activities of both institutions. It would meet once every three months, would assess the activities on a regular basis and would propose the appropriate guidelines for their development. It would also be responsible for a series of associated initiatives. The Commission and Parliament should also recognize the need for greater coordination of their communication activities and more effective decentralization of information (making better use of the offices in the various Member States). Combined use of their audiovisual infrastructures and respective press centres should also be considered whenever possible in order to make most effective use of resources. Parliament also proposed the opening of European Union Houses combining the information offices of Parliament and the Commission. These centres would offer one-stop shopping to citizens seeking information on European Union activities and the specific responsibilities of both institutions. As part of the decentralization of the institutions and the strengthening of their presence at local level, Parliament called lastly for the strengthening of the Info Points (including funding). It also advocated a strengthening of interinstitutional cooperation, intensifying contacts with citizens, decentralization, mobility and rotation of staff at external offices and value for money. On this point Parliament, as the budgetary authority, considered that it should investigate the appropriate amount of funds necessary to realize an information policy in conformity with its targets. In particular it called for an increase in the information budget in 1999 and for the definition with the Commission of an action programme in this field. ?