





Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1998/2120(COS)	Procedure completed
Monitoring of the application of Community law. 15th annual report 1997		
Subject 8.50.01 Implementation of EU law		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur
	 Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights		Appointed 24/06/1998
			GUE/NGL SIERRA GONZÁLEZ Angela del Carmen
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion
	 Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection		Appointed 21/07/1998
			PSE COLLINS Kenneth D.
Council of the European Union	 Petitions		22/07/1998
			PSE MARINUCCI Elena

Key events			
19/05/1998	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1998)0317	Summary
01/07/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
23/02/1999	Vote in committee		Summary
23/02/1999	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0092/1999	
22/03/1999	Debate in Parliament		
23/03/1999	Decision by Parliament	T4-0222/1999	Summary
23/03/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		
22/06/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1998/2120(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	JURI/4/10176

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(1998)0317	19/05/1998	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(1998)0961	02/06/1998	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(1998)1733	15/10/1998	EC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0092/1999 OJ C 175 21.06.1999, p. 0005	23/02/1999	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0222/1999 OJ C 177 22.06.1999, p. 0013-0056	23/03/1999	EP	Summary

Monitoring of the application of Community law. 15th annual report 1997

OBJECTIVE: presentation of the Fifteenth Annual Report (1997) by the Commission on monitoring the application of Community law.

SUBSTANCE: the Commission's report on 1997 stated that there had been several salient features of activities in that year: - statistically speaking, the year saw a sharp rise in the number of Article 169 letters (notices of failure to fulfil a Treaty obligation) addressed to the Member States (1460, as against 1168 in 1996, an increase of 23%). The number of new complaints rose by 17% (from 819 to 957). Thus the downward trend of previous years was reversed. The number of cases detected by the Commission's own investigations remained stable at 261. However, the Commission noted that the number of cases terminated was also up, while the total number of cases in progress was down; - rates of transposition of Directives had risen in 1997 for the Member States as a whole, with some impressive performances by some of them (particularly Sweden and Finland): as at 31/12/1997, Member States had notified the Commission of 94% of the necessary national measures to implement Directives; - from a procedural point of view, it was in 1997 that the Commission first made use of its power to propose to the Court that a Member State be ordered to pay a penalty for failure to comply with a judgment until such time as it complied. Eight such proposals had already been decided upon, two of which had already reached the Court; - also in 1997, following the Ombudsman's own-initiative inquiry into infringement procedures, the Commission decided to increase the information provided to complainants under these procedures; - following the Amsterdam European Council on 16 and 17/06/1997, the Commission submitted a proposal for a Regulation establishing a new procedure to be used by the Commission to combat certain barriers to free movement of goods; - parliamentary questions and petitions were playing an increasingly important part in the detection of infringements, and led to fresh infringement proceedings every year (17 in 1997); - it was also in 1997 that the Commission submitted a proposal for a decision establishing an action programme to improve awareness of Community law for the legal professions (Robert Schuman Project). In conclusion, the Commission expressed the opinion that the rise in the number of complaints and infringement procedures showed firstly that the Community's citizens were increasingly keen to see their rights properly respected and secondly that the Commission had assumed its proper share of the responsibility for enforcing Community law.?

Monitoring of the application of Community law. 15th annual report 1997

This Commission working document deals with the CELEX system (interinstitutional system of automated documentation of Community law) and presents the annual management report for this database for 1997. To recap, CELEX (Communitatis europae lex) is the official legal database of the EU institutions, which covers: - Community legislation (including preparatory work and reference to national implementation measures); - case law of the Court of Justice; - parliamentary questions. CELEX is currently diffused by the server of the OPOCE (Office of Community publications) as well as by around 40 other servers and CD-ROM distributors in Europe and the United States. During 1997, the report indicates that significant work was carried out with a view to improving the system (a qualitative revision of CELEX, loading of the texts of resolutions and written questions of the European Parliament...) The report also notes a significant increase in direct use of CELEX. However, the modification of the pricing of this database has led to a significant fall in income in 1997 and the objective of freedom of access to Community law in 1998 may further accentuate this trend. The report concludes that this fall in income will have an impact on the budget for CELEX and will require decisions to be taken at an appropriate level.?

Monitoring of the application of Community law. 15th annual report 1997

The Committee has adopted that report by Angela Sierra Gonzalez (GUE/NGL, E) on the Commission's annual report on monitoring the Community law (1997). The Committee considers in particular that more needs to be done to simplify European legislation, and calls on the Commission to take appropriate measures. As concerns the transposition of Community rules by the member states, the Committee notes that though the directive incorporation rate increased in all the Member States in 1997, most states do still not succeed in adopting measures by the deadline set. The Committee suggests that more extensive links should be established between the Member States and the Commission

in order to make Community Law to be more successfully applied and that technical assistance from the Commission should be made available both to the Member State bodies responsible with incorporating Community rules and to applicant countries. In order to gain the public's confidence and improve the democratic character of the EU, the Committee also demands more transparency in the decision-making process, that the institutions do not refuse public access to documents and undertakes to improve its own drafting of legislative texts in order to make them more comprehensible. From a procedural point of view, the Committee welcomes the fact that the Commission for the first time in 1997 has used its right to propose to the Court of Justice that a Member State failing to implement a judgement should be required to pay a daily penalty until it does comply, which clearly had a strong deterrent effect. The Committee considers, however, that stricter deadlines must be introduced for the application of Article 169; for example, the Committee considers that a decision to refer a case to the ECJ should be taken within twelve months. Furthermore, the Committee demands that the teaching of Community Law should be made compulsory in all Member States on a university level, and that greater priority is given to facilitating access to Community Law in order to allow greater awareness amongst the public and legal professionals on the application of Community law ?

Monitoring of the application of Community law. 15th annual report 1997

The Parliament adopted its Resolution drafted by Ms. Angela del Carmen SIERRA GONZALEZ (GUE/NGL, Spain) concerning the application of Community law. The resolution was adopted without amendment. The Resolution stresses that the lack of clarity in Community law is not only a problem stemming from the complexity and the increasingly technical nature of the EU's legislative process, but is primarily a political problem since it affects everyday people who simply do not understand Community legislative texts and this leads to an even more serious consequence, namely a questioning of the Union's legitimacy and that of its representative bodies. It states that the European Parliament should, under these circumstances, assume its political responsibility to legislate in order to serve the people, this being the basis and foundation of democracy. It undertakes to implement (once it is signed) the inter-institutional agreement on the quality of the drafting of legislative texts. In relation to the implementation of the procedure laid down in Art. 169 (future Art. 226) of the EC Treaty, it calls on the Commission to indicate the average amount of time that passes between the sending of a letter of formal notice and the delivery of a reasoned opinion, and between the latter and the point at which a case of infringement lapses or is brought before the Court of Justice. It calls on the Commission to discuss cases of infringement at least once every three months instead of once every six months. It also calls on the Commission to establish, as part of the general register of the documents it has received, a register of all complaints received. ?