

Procedure file

Basic information	
REG - Parliament's Rules of Procedure	2007/2137(REG)
EP Rules of Procedure, Rule 173: verbatim reports	Procedure completed
Subject	8.40.01.08 Business of Parliament, procedure, sittings, rules of procedure

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFCO Constitutional Affairs	PSE CORBETT Richard	07/06/2007

Key events			
21/06/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
02/10/2007	Vote in committee		Summary
05/10/2007	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0354/2007	
22/10/2007	Debate in Parliament		
24/10/2007	Results of vote in Parliament		
24/10/2007	Decision by Parliament	T6-0460/2007	Summary
24/10/2007	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2007/2137(REG)
Procedure type	REG - Parliament's Rules of Procedure
Procedure subtype	Rules
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 237-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFCO/6/50435

Documentation gateway				
Committee draft report		PE390.737	01/07/2007	EP

Amendments tabled in committee	PE394.061	18/09/2007	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A6-0354/2007	05/10/2007	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T6-0460/2007	24/10/2007	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2007)6028	21/11/2007	EC	

EP Rules of Procedure, Rule 173: verbatim reports

There are currently two versions of the verbatim report of proceedings (Compte Rendu in Extenso ? CRE): a ?rainbow? version, containing the speeches in the original language in which they are delivered, and a translated version, where each speech is translated into other official languages. The CRE is published electronically in the Official Journal (on CD-ROM and on the internet).

Following the enlargement of the European Union in 2004, Parliament has continued to have the CRE translated into the 11 ?older? official languages only, owing to insufficient capacity for translation into the languages of the new Member States.

This derogation from the rule of translation into all official languages based on Rule 139 will be in force until September 2007. As the justification provided for differential treatment as a result of the derogation is the fact that translation into all languages is impossible for practical reasons, it is clear that such a situation should not last; that such a situation should be seen as nothing more than a temporary measure, and that a fairer system must be found. It is for this reason that, in 2006, the Bureau and the Parliament agreed on the principle that verbatim reports of proceedings in the plenary should be published as a multi-lingual document including speeches in the original language only, on the understanding that filmed versions of the debates, together with live interpretation into all the official languages should be made available to all Members and to the general public on demand on an appropriate technical support (e.g. initially DVDs, subsequently video on-demand via the internet). The Bureau also decided that Members of the European Parliament should be entitled on demand and at short notice to have extracts from debates translated into their official language of choice.

The report highlights the problem with the total translation of debates and states that in terms of quality and transparency of information, it is clear that the ideal solution is the translation and publication of all debates of the European Parliament into all the official languages as Rule 173 (1) provides up to now.

There are aspects to this solution which should be considered:

- the cost of translation is extremely high (a figure in the region of EUR 10 million per annum);
- the cost-benefit; one must also consider this expense in the light of the likely readership of parliamentary debates.

It is against this background that the report by Richard CORBETT (PES, UK) has been adopted by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs. It aims to amend Rule 173 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure on verbatim reports. The report states that:

- a verbatim report of the proceedings of each sitting shall be drawn up as a multilingual document in which all oral contributions appear in their original language. It shall be published as an annex to the Official Journal of the European Union and preserved in the records of Parliament;
- speakers shall be required to return corrections to typescripts of their speeches to the Secretariat within one week. Members may request extracts of the verbatim report to be translated into an official language of their choice;
- a complete audiovisual record of the proceedings of each sitting, including the soundtracks from all interpretation booths, shall be produced and preserved in the records of Parliament. It shall be accessible to the public via the Internet;
- in so far as speeches, notably those delivered at solemn sessions or statements by representatives of other institutions, have already been translated into other languages, the translations shall also be made available via the Internet as an annex to the multilingual report.

The Bureau shall lay down the implementing rules relating to the verbatim report and the audiovisual record. The Bureau may decide that an exceptionally important debate be translated and published in some or all official languages. The Bureau shall monitor technological advances and may make available on the Internet unofficial computer-generated translations. The Bureau shall adopt the appropriate technical measures to ensure that there is a lasting record of all data, in particular providing for regular checks to be carried out on the condition of the media, duplication thereof and storage of the various copies in separate locations.

EP Rules of Procedure, Rule 173: verbatim reports

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Richard CORBETT (PES, UK) to amend Rule 173 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure on verbatim reports. The resolution was adopted by 568 in favour, 94 against and 17 abstentions. The report states that:

- a verbatim report of the proceedings of each sitting shall be drawn up in all official languages;
- speakers shall be required to return corrections to typescripts of their speeches to the Secretariat within one week;
- the verbatim report shall be published as an annex to the Official Journal of the European Union;
- Members may request extracts of the verbatim report to be translated at short notice.

Lastly, the resolution states that, immediately after the sitting, an audiovisual record of the proceedings, including the soundtrack from all interpretation booths, shall be produced and made available on the Internet.