Procedure file

Basic information

REG - Parliament's Rules of Procedure	2007/2272(REG)	Procedure completed
EP Rules of Procedure: work of the plenary and initiative reports Subject 8.40.01.08 Business of Parliament, procedure, sittings, rules of procedure		

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFCO Constitutional Affairs		02/10/2007
		PSE CORBETT Richard	

Key events

13/03/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/05/2008	Vote in committee		Summary
29/05/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0197/2008	
07/07/2008	Debate in Parliament		
08/07/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
08/07/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0334/2008	Summary
08/07/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2007/2272(REG)
Procedure type	REG - Parliament's Rules of Procedure
Procedure subtype	Rules
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 243-p1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFCO/6/57055

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE400.716	07/02/2008	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE404.478	13/03/2008	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE405.871	23/04/2008	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0197/2008	29/05/2008	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0334/2008	08/07/2008	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2008)4891	27/08/2008	EC	

EP Rules of Procedure: work of the plenary and initiative reports

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted the report drafted by Richard CORBETT (PES, UK) on the amendment of Parliament's Rules of Procedure in light of the proposals by the Working Party on Parliamentary Reform concerning the work of the Plenary and initiative reports.

The main technical amendments concern the following:

The reform of the procedures concerning written questions to the Council or the Commission under Rule 110: in order to respond to claims from the Commission that the number of written questions imposes an additional administrative workload, MEPs suggest partially amending Rule 110 in association with the insertion of a new Annex II a to the Rules of Procedure. This modification establishes that the President will rule on the admissibility of written questions. Clear provisions are also introduced to avert any abuses of this right, the requirement to set aside identical or similar questions, as well as the non admissibility of questions making use of offensive language.

The introduction of a new Rule 131a concerning the short presentation of a report not needing a full debate: with a view to technically improving the presentation of this type of report, the committee proposes that the Parliament could decide in the future, at the request of the rapporteur and on a proposal of the Conference of Presidents that a report not needing a full debate is presented to the plenary by the rapporteur during a specific time slot. The presentation by the rapporteur would only be followed by a reaction by the Commission, and no other interventions by Members would be possible. Members will, however, have the opportunity to hand in written interventions according to the provisions of Rule 142(7).

The increase of Parliament's visibility in the debates (allocation of speaking time): in order to increase Parliament's visibility and to enhance the liveliness of discussions, it is proposed to modify the organisation of debates. As a general rule, discussions on legislative texts should be introduced and concluded by the rapporteur. The formulation proposed ensures finally also that, after the statement given by the Council and/or Commission and by the Speakers who are officially designated by their Political Groups, the second part of the debate could be reserved for interventions and questions by those Members who have been attending and participating to the assembly.

The modification of the Rules concerning own-initiative reports: there are five categories of initiative reports, each with a distinct procedure for authorisation and treatment in plenary: Legislative Initiative Reports; Strategic Reports (reacting to strategic and priority initiatives included in the Commission's annual Legislative and Work Programme); Non-Legislative Initiative Reports; Annual Activity and Monitoring Reports; Implementation Reports. In this context, a number of amendments have been proposed to clarify and consolidate the Rules with regard to reports dealing with rights of initiative conferred to Parliament by the Treaties. A new Rule 38a has thus been proposed enabling the committee responsible to take the decision to draw up such a report subject to authorisation by the Conference of Presidents. This new Rule also introduces the possibility to suspend, similarly to the procedure under Rule 53, the final vote on such reports in Plenary, in order to find an agreement with the Council and the Commission where it is required. Rule 45 is also amended introducing a simplified procedure for the other categories of Own-initiative Reports with the exception of those initiatives qualified as strategic reports by the Conference of Presidents. The proposed new paragraph 1a of Rule 45 provides for these reports to be presented in plenary by the rapporteur, with a reaction by the Commission pursuant to Rule 131a.

Lastly, an amendment is provided which stipulates that a political group or at least forty members may table an alternative motion for a resolution to a non-legislative motion for a resolution contained in a committee report.

EP Rules of Procedure: work of the plenary and initiative reports

The European Parliament approved by 516 votes to 143, with 36 abstentions, a decision aiming to amend the Parliament?s Rules of Procedure concerning the work of the Plenary and initiative reports.

The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Richard CORBETT (PES, UK) on behalf of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs.

Most of the amendments stem from proposals by the Working Party on Parliamentary Reform.

The main technical amendments concern the following:

The reform of the procedures concerning written questions to the Council or the Commission under Rule 110: in order to respond to claims from the Commission that the number of written questions imposes an additional administrative workload, Parliament suggests partially amending Rule 110 in association with the insertion of a new Annex IIa to the Rules of Procedure. This modification establishes that the President will rule on the admissibility of written questions. Clear provisions are also introduced to avert any abuses of this right, the requirement to set aside identical or similar questions, as well as the non admissibility of questions making use of offensive language.

The introduction of a new Rule 131a concerning the short presentation of a report not needing a full debate: with a view to technically improving the presentation of this type of report, it is proposed that the Parliament could decide in the future, at the request of the rapporteur and on a proposal of the Conference of Presidents that a report not needing a full debate is presented to the plenary by the rapporteur during

a specific time slot. The presentation by the rapporteur would only be followed by a reaction by the Commission, and no other interventions by Members would be possible. Members will, however, have the opportunity to hand in written interventions according to the provisions of Rule 142(7).

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Lastly, an amendment is provided which stipulates that a political group or at least forty members may table an alternative motion for a resolution to a non-legislative motion for a resolution contained in a committee report.

It should be noted that the amendments proposed by the ALDE and Greens/EFA Groups were all rejected in Plenary.