

Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2013/2185(INI)
Relations between the European Parliament and the national parliaments	
Subject 8.40.11 Relations with Member State governments and national parliaments	
Procedure completed	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFCO Constitutional Affairs	PPE CASINI Carlo Shadow rapporteur S&D GUERRERO SALOM Enrique ALDE DUFF Andrew Verts/ALE HÄFNER Gerald ECR FOX Ashley EFD MESSERSCHMIDT Morten	17/12/2013

Key events			
12/09/2013	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
18/03/2014	Vote in committee		
27/03/2014	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0255/2014	Summary
16/04/2014	Results of vote in Parliament		
16/04/2014	Decision by Parliament	T7-0430/2014	Summary
16/04/2014	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2013/2185(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54

Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFCO/7/13740

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report	PE526.161	31/01/2014	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE529.764	04/03/2014	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A7-0255/2014	27/03/2014	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T7-0430/2014	16/04/2014	EP	Summary

Relations between the European Parliament and the national parliaments

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Carlo CASINI (EPP, IT) on relations between the European Parliament and the national parliaments.

Almost five years after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, and with a view to future Conventions, relations between the European Parliament and the national parliaments need to be continually developed in the light of new challenges.

National parliaments and the Unions democratic legitimacy: Members welcomed the Treaty provisions giving the national parliaments a range of rights and duties allowing them to contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union.

Pointing out that the twofold democratic legitimacy of the Union, as a union of citizens and of Member States, Members considered that the stances taken by national governments in the Council should take due account of the views of their national parliaments, thereby reinforcing the democratic nature of the Council.

Members recommended the national parliaments to take steps to:

- improve their guidance and scrutiny procedures with a view to achieving greater consistency;
- provide ministers and national governments with prior guidance on their work within the Council and the European Council;
- scrutinise the stances taken by ministers and national governments within the Council and the European Council;
- play an effective role in providing guidance on and scrutinising the implementation of directives and regulations;
- encourage the Council to improve the transparency of its deliberations on legislative acts, in particular during the preparatory stage of the legislative process, in order to reduce the information asymmetry between the European Parliament and the Council.

According to Members, they took the view that the monitoring of compliance with the subsidiarity principle by the national parliaments and the European institutions should be seen not as an undue restriction, but as a mechanism for guaranteeing the competences of the national parliaments.

The early warning mechanism should be viewed and used as one of the tools for ensuring effective cooperation between European and national institutions with a view to improving the quality of EU legislation by ensuring, in particular, that the EU operates within its competences.

The Commission is called upon to reply promptly and fully to reasoned opinions and contributions sent in by the national parliaments.

Interparliamentary relations and the European integration process: Members reiterated that EU interparliamentary cooperation does not take the place of the normal parliamentary scrutiny exercised by the European Parliament in accordance with the competences conferred on it by the Treaties. They viewed interparliamentary meetings as places where EU and national policies come together and feed off each other, to the benefit of both. They believed that a key function of such meetings is to allow the national parliaments to take account of the European perspective in national debates, and the European Parliament to take account of the national perspective in European debates.

The report welcomed the actions that have been taken in accordance with the recommendations of the steering group on relations with the national parliaments since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon to intensify cooperation between the national parliaments and the European Parliament, in particular as regards the planning of interparliamentary committee meetings. It stressed that interparliamentary meetings need to be organised in close cooperation with the national parliaments.

With a view to cutting costs and increasing effectiveness, Members called for greater internal and external coordination between the programme put forward by the parliament of the Member State holding the Council Presidency and the work programmes of the European Parliaments committees. Welcoming the effectiveness of interparliamentary committee meetings, they called for closer cooperation between rapporteurs on specific legislative issues. Members believed that COSAC could serve as a forum for discussion of the general state of the integration process.

Developments and proposals: Members proposed that an understanding be developed between the national parliaments and the European Parliament, which could form the basis for efficient cooperation pursuant to Article 9 of Protocol No 1 to the Lisbon Treaty and Rule 130 of its own Rules of Procedure. They called for regular, thematically structured and effective meetings between political groups and European political parties to be held in the framework of EU interparliamentary cooperation.

Lastly, the report stated that COSAC should: (i) remain the forum for a regular exchange of views, information and best practice regarding practical aspects of parliamentary scrutiny; (ii) take a detailed look at the difficulties experienced by the national parliaments in exercising the prerogatives conferred on them by the Lisbon Treaty.

Relations between the European Parliament and the national parliaments

The European Parliament adopted by 449 votes to 73, with 31 abstentions, a resolution on relations between the European Parliament and the national parliaments.

Members recalled that the European Parliament and the national parliaments are, in their respective spheres, the pillars of the Union's twofold democratic legitimacy, the former as the institution in which EU citizens are directly represented and the latter as the national institutions to which the governments represented in the Council are directly accountable. They stressed that Article 12 of the TEU, covering the activities of the national parliaments, fleshes out the principle of sincere cooperation by stating that the national parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union.

National parliaments and the Union's democratic legitimacy: Parliament welcomed the Treaty provisions giving the national parliaments a range of rights and duties allowing them to contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union. These rights and duties should cover:

- active involvement in EU affairs (Treaty ratification powers, participation in Conventions under Article 48 of the TEU, scrutiny of national governments, scrutiny of subsidiarity, ability to oppose legislation under exceptional circumstances, transposition of EU legislation into national law);
- political dialogue (interparliamentary cooperation and mutual exchange of information with the European institutions, in particular the European Parliament).

Pointing out that the twofold democratic legitimacy of the Union, as a union of citizens and of Member States, Members considered that the stances taken by national governments in the Council should take due account of the views of their national parliaments, thereby reinforcing the democratic nature of the Council.

Parliament recommended the national parliaments to take steps to:

- improve their guidance and scrutiny procedures with a view to achieving greater consistency;
- provide ministers and national governments with prior guidance on their work within the Council and the European Council;
- scrutinise the stances taken by ministers and national governments within the Council and the European Council;
- play an effective role in providing guidance on and scrutinising the implementation of directives and regulations;
- encourage the Council to improve the transparency of its deliberations on legislative acts, in particular during the preparatory stage of the legislative process, in order to reduce the information asymmetry between the European Parliament and the Council.

According to Parliament, it took the view that the monitoring of compliance with the subsidiarity principle by the national parliaments and the European institutions should be seen not as an undue restriction, but as a mechanism for guaranteeing the competences of the national parliaments. The early warning mechanism should be viewed and used as one of the tools for ensuring effective cooperation between European and national institutions with a view to improving the quality of EU legislation by ensuring, in particular, that the EU operates within its competences.

The Commission is called upon to reply promptly and fully to reasoned opinions and contributions sent in by the national parliaments.

Interparliamentary relations and the European integration process: Members stressed that interparliamentary cooperation can play an essential role in driving the European integration process forward by allowing exchanges of information, joint examination of issues, mutually beneficial dialogue and smoother transposition of EU legislation into national law. They reiterated that EU interparliamentary cooperation does not take the place of the normal parliamentary scrutiny exercised by the European Parliament in accordance with the competences conferred on it by the Treaties.

Members viewed interparliamentary meetings as places where EU and national policies come together and feed off each other, to the benefit of both. They believed that a key function of such meetings is to allow the national parliaments to take account of the European perspective in national debates, and the European Parliament to take account of the national perspective in European debates.

Parliament welcomed the actions that have been taken in accordance with the recommendations of the steering group on relations with the national parliaments since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon to intensify cooperation between the national parliaments and the European Parliament, in particular as regards the planning of interparliamentary committee meetings. It stressed that interparliamentary meetings need to be organised in close cooperation with the national parliaments.

With a view to cutting costs and increasing effectiveness, it called for greater internal and external coordination between the programme put forward by the parliament of the Member State holding the Council Presidency and the work programmes of the European Parliament's committees. Welcoming the effectiveness of interparliamentary committee meetings, Parliament called for closer cooperation between rapporteurs on specific legislative issues.

The European Parliament considered that it should be more closely involved in the political dialogue in particular the enhanced version engaged in as part of the European semester for economic policy coordination that the Commission has established with the national parliaments.

Developments and proposals: Parliament proposed that an understanding be developed between the national parliaments and the European Parliament, which could form the basis for efficient cooperation pursuant to Article 9 of Protocol No 1 to the Lisbon Treaty and Rule 130 of its own Rules of Procedure. It called for regular, thematically structured and effective meetings between political groups and European political parties to be held in the framework of EU interparliamentary cooperation.

Lastly, the resolution stated that COSAC should remain the forum for a regular exchange of views, information and best practice regarding practical aspects of parliamentary scrutiny.