Procedure file

Basic information

INI - Own-initiative procedure	1994/2193(INI)	Procedure completed
Assessment of the Reflection Group's work; EP political priorities for the Intergovernmental Conference Subject 8.10 Revision of the Treaties, intergovernmental conferences		

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
INST Institutional Affairs		04/11/1994
	PSE MARTIN David	04/11/1994
	PPE BOURLANGES Jean-Louis	
Committee for opinion	**Rapporteur for opinion**	**Appointed**
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy		13/10/1994
	PSE BARÓN CRESPO Enrique	
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		14/11/1994
	PPE GOEPEL Lutz	
BUDG Budgets		04/10/1994
	PPE CHRISTODOULOU Efthymios	
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy		20/12/1994
	PSE HARRISON Lyndon H.A.	
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy		20/12/1994
	PPE VON WOGAU Karl	
ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy		12/12/1994
	PSE LINKOHR Rolf	
RELA External Economic Relations		22/11/1994
	ELDR DE CLERCQ Willy C.E.H.	
JURI Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights		13/12/1994
	PSE VERDE I ALDEA Josep	13/12/1994
	PPE PALACIO VALLELERSUNDI Ana	
REGI Regional Policy		22/11/1994

		PSE SPECIALE Roberto	
TRAN	Transport and Tourism	PSE SIMPSON Brian	02/12/1994
ENVI	Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	PSE ROTH-BEHRENDT Dagmar	05/10/1994
DEVE	Development and Cooperation	PSE PONS GRAU Josep E.	25/01/1995
LIBE	Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs	PSE BARROS MOURA José	02/12/1994
CONT	Budgetary Control		
PECH	Fisheries	PPE LANGENHAGEN Brigitte	30/11/1994
REGL	Rules of Procedure, Verification of Credentials and Immunities	ELDR WIJSENBEEK Florus A.	21/02/1995
FEMM	Women's Rights	PSE CRAWLEY Baroness Christine M.	02/12/1994
FEMM	Women's Rights	PPE LENZ Marlene	02/12/1994
PETI	Petitions	PPE DIMITRAKOPOULOS Giorgos	25/01/1995

Key events

16/12/1994	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
03/05/1995	Vote in committee		Summary
03/05/1995	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0102/1995	
16/05/1995	Debate in Parliament		Summary
17/05/1995	Decision by Parliament	T4-0201/1995	Summary
17/05/1995	End of procedure in Parliament		
19/06/1995	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1994/2193(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure

Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	INST/4/06184

Documentation gateway

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0102/1995 OJ C 151 19.06.1995, p. 0003	03/05/1995	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0201/1995 OJ C 151 19.06.1995, p. 0046-0056	17/05/1995	EP	Summary

Assessment of the Reflection Group's work; EP political priorities for the Intergovernmental Conference

The Committee on Institutional Affairs adopted the report by Messrs. Jean-Louis BOURLANGES and David MARTIN by a large majority. This report does not confine itself to an analysis of the working of the Maastricht Treaty but sets out a series of specific proposals for reform aimed at: - reducing the democratic deficit which a growing number of Union citizens finds unacceptable; - redefining what are now overly complicated and often inefficient decision-making processes; - preparing the Union for future enlargement without slowing down the integration process or watering down progress already achieved. The proposals of the BOURLANGES/MARTIN report are outlined below. Foreign policy: A more efficient foreign policy integrating joint commercial policy, development cooperation policy and foreign and security policy issues needs to be implemented, with a permanent strategy within international organisations, given that the Union would have the same powers as the WEO. Provision needs to be made for a right of voluntary initiative which would allow a number of Member States voting by qualified majority to take humanitarian, diplomatic or military action, it being understood that no Member State would be forced to take part if it did not wish to, but that no Member State could prevent the majority from taking such action. The Commission needs to be fully involved in defining the CFSP and to have a right of initiative and a joint Commission/Council planning and analysis unit should be set up. The report proposes that a new position of Commissioner in charge of overall foreign affairs should be created, with a separate Commissioner in charge of defence policy, who would also exercise the authority of secretary-general of the WEO appointed by the European Council. Democratic control should be exercised jointly by the European Parliament and the national Parliaments. Justice and home affairs: Decisive progress is needed in the areas of justice and home affairs. Decisions on asylum policy, crossing external borders, immigration policy and the fight against drug addiction should gradually be communitised. Europol should be granted the necessary powers to act in order to facilitate the fight against major international crime. Economic and monetary union: The report recommends maintaining the EMU timetable, without amending the convergence criteria. However, monetary provisions should be counterbalanced by greater coordination of economic policies in order to maintain high levels of employment and social protection and the European Parliament should have greater powers of control. The report also suggests setting up a committee on employment with the same powers as the Committee on Monetary Affairs. The sections of the ECSC and Euratom treaties dealing with energy problems should be integrated into a common energy policy. Citizens' rights: The concept of Union citizenship needs to be fleshed out, mainly by: - acceding to the Council of Europe's human rights convention, - giving citizens the right to information on Union matters, - including a reference to the principle of equal treatment irrespective of race, sex, age, handicap or religion in the Treaty, - developing political citizenship, - inserting a provision making women's and girls' rights an integral part of human rights, - including a categorical rejection of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination in the Treaty. Current common policies: Agricultural policy should continue to comply with a number of fundamental principles, such as the unity and organisation of the markets, recognition of the economic, social and environmental dimension of the role of farmers and price-fixing and support measures to guarantee farmers sufficient revenue to combat the process of desertification of the countryside. The articles of the Treaty dealing with environmental policy need to be strengthened and expanded and provision needs to be made for a common transport policy, including air traffic control. Tourism should be the subject of a separate common policy. The identity and cultural diversity of Europe need to be preserved. Any restriction on the number of official languages of the European Union should be excluded.?

Assessment of the Reflection Group's work; EP political priorities for the Intergovernmental Conference

Although he pointed out that the report, which reflected completely the dominant trends in the EP, did not in any way meet his expectations, the co-rapporteur, Mr BOURLANGES (EPP, F), explained that his first concern was to be ?the honest broker of the trends of this House?. Having said that, faced with the EU?s three major problems (variable geometry, democratisation and the political dimension), Parliament had chosen to bury its head in the sand. With regard to the first problem, formulas that ?please us? were bandied about but these were not equal to the situation. With regard to the second, since Parliament did not have a government that was responsible before the legislature and it could not be dissolved, many more powers had been demanded without the necessary proposals being put forward (Mr Bourlanges? proposals had been poorly received). As far as the third issue was concerned, the co-rapporteur felt that the removal of the pillars should be accompanied by a new political balance between Parliament and the Council. Mr MARTIN (PSE, UK), co-rapporteur, highlighted the three objectives that should be on the agenda of the IGC. The first was to improve the Union?s ability to define clear political objectives (for example regarding the former Yugoslavia, the unemployment problem, etc.). The second was to simplify the EU?s complex operating procedures, both within its institutions and in its decision-making. Finally, the Union should prepare for further enlargements. As regards the means of achieving these objectives, Mr Martin believed that the key was to do away with the EU?s three pillars and replace them with a single structure. A better balance between the interests of the Community and those of the Member States required qualified majority voting on legislative matters and

unanimity, as before, on constitutional issues, such as reform of the Treaties, enlargement, own resources, and so on. Moreover, the reduction in the number of decisions to three could be implemented as follows: codecision for all ordinary legislation, assent for agreements with third countries, enlargement and constitutional issues, and, finally, consultation solely for decisions on the CFSP. Mr Martin again called for a better balance between the rights of the institutions and those of the citizens. Moreover, EMU should be accompanied by firmer commitments to combat unemployment. He agreed nonetheless that this report presented a minimalist position of the Community for the next decade. 17/05/95? (continued) Mrs GREEN (PSE, UK) indicated that her group supported the proposals in the MARTIN/BOURLANGES report, which, by advocating a more open and democratic Europe, combined the principles with a pragmatic approach. Mr MARTENS (EPP, B) stated that a large percentage of his group would vote in favour as the Union needed to be reformed in order to meet the social, environmental and institutional challenges it faced. Mr DE VRIES (ELDR, NL) regretted the Union?s current shortcomings in the area of foreign and security policy and called for an end to the requirement for unanimity in the Council. Mr PUERTA (GUE, E) criticised the report and stated that many members of his group would vote against it. Mr DANESIN (FE, I) noted that his group would abstain because the report was not innovative enough and Parliament needed to be more courageous. Mr PASTY (RDE, F) criticised the report because it gave priority to the institutional approach and because the instruments could not replace political will; he therefore anticipated that his group would vote against the report. Mr LANGER (Greens, I) was worried about the risk of a new monster treaty (Maastricht Mark II) being produced and, highlighting the shortcomings of the report, stated that most of his group would abstain unless the Greens? amendments were adopted by the House. Mrs LALUMIERE (ARE, F) stated that her group would vote in favour if the report was not distorted by the amendments. Mr BONDE (EDN, DK) opposed the plan to create a European superstate, which he believed was contained in the report, and called for the veto to be maintained in the Council. Mr LE PEN (NI, F) gave a fairly negative assessment of the report, which would justify all sorts of aberrations and myths. Mrs MUSCARDINI (NI, I) stated that the Italian Members of her group would vote against the report because the programme had to be decided on before committing to reforms of the institutional system. Commissioner OREJA noted the similarities between Parliament?s report and that of the Commission, particularly with regard to involving the public in the revision process, improving the effectiveness of the CFSP, simplifying the decision-making procedures, and looking in greater detail at the different rates of integration that were compatible with respect for the EU?s unique institutional nature and shared common objectives. The Commissioner warned against the dangers of achieving a fragile and inadequate result.

Assessment of the Reflection Group's work; EP political priorities for the Intergovernmental Conference

In its resolution on the working of the Treaty in the run up to the 1996 intergovernmental conference, the European Parliament presented a series of specific proposals to reform the Treaty on European Union. This resolution, which was adopted by 289 votes to 103 with 74 abstentions, will be used as a negotiating position by the two European Parliament representatives, Mrs GUIGUOU (Socialist, F) and Mr BROK (Christian-Democrat, D) during the work carried out work in Messine on 2 June 95 by the Reflection Group in charge of preparing the actual conference. Parliament's position is a pragmatic approach which sets out a list of demands without dressing it up as a political project in the narrow sense of the term. The main demands set out by Parliament are as follows: 1) UNION OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES: . the Union should strengthen the current framework of its activities as a single institutional framework (by merging the three pillars of the Treaty into a clearer, more logical unified treaty); . it should be more efficient in taking on its new responsibilities under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In this respect, the common defence policy should safeguard the Union borders within the framework of the powers of the Western European Union (WEU). A number of Member States should be able to implement humanitarian or military projects ("joint actions") defined by qualified majority, although no Member State should be forced to take part in or able to prevent such action. The Commission should have a right of initiative in defining the CFSP and the European Parliament should be consulted when the Council decides on a common position or joint action. Article 223 should be deleted (obstacle to controls on the sale of arms to third countries). The European Parliament has suggested that a civil European peace corps be set up in order to settle conflicts peaceably; . action in the area of home affairs and justice should be more efficient and Union powers in this area should gradually be communitized (the same applies to powers derived from the Schengen agreements); . EMU should be more balanced: monetary provisions should be counterbalanced by stronger coordination of economic policies, while maintaining the present timetable. The European Parliament should have wider powers here. The Union should make employment its number one priority by setting up a committee on employment with the same powers as the Committee on Monetary Affairs; . the Union should increase its citizens' rights: it should accede to the Council of Europe's Convention on Human Rights, expressly include the principle of equal treatment (including of workers) and the abolition of the death penalty in the Treaty and make provision for more efficient protection of minorities; . at the same time, the Union should strengthen its current economic and social cohesion policies, it social policy, equal treatment etc. and clarify its powers on the basis of the principles of "subsidiarity" and "proportionality". The European Parliament feels that drawing up a set list of how powers are divided between the Union and the Member States is too inflexible. Article 235 should be maintained but used as a last resort and only with Parliament's assent. 2) THE UNION INSTITUTIONS: . the single institutional framework must be guaranteed (by incorporating the ECSC and EURATOM treaties in a single treaty and abolishing the "pillars"). The European Parliament is in favour of a Union with a legal personality. However, this unity should be flexible enough to incorporate future arrangements and the enlargement of the Union but should not result in an "à la carte Europe", to which the European Parliament was quite opposed; . the European institutions should be strengthened and democratized: the European Parliament called for the Member States' involvement in the institutions to be re-examined from the point of view of enlargement, so that it does not end up paralyzing the present institutional system in the Community (concept of statutory equality of the Member States and the fair participation and involvement of each); . the European Parliament redefined the role of each institution: - Commission: the president of the Commission should be directly elected by the European Parliament on the basis of a list of names proposed by the Council. The college as a whole (one Commissioner per Member State) should be given a vote of investiture by the European Parliament, which should be able to demand that certain of its members resign from office. - Council: the principle of transparency should be explicitly set out in the Treaty and applied (publication of more Council documents) and the current presidency system should be made more flexible. One of the European Parliament's main demands concerns extending qualified majority voting in the Council. Unanimity should continue to be required in a limited number of cases (amendment of the Treaty, enlargement, Community own resources, uniform electoral system and application of Article 235). However, Parliament is opposed to the principle of a "double majority" which would take account both of the Member States and populations, given that the European Parliament represents the population of the Community and the Council represents the Member States. The European Parliament also called for the current qualified majority threshold (of 71%) to be lowered. - European Parliament: the European Parliament intends to limit the size of Parliament to 700 members with a common status for Members of the European Parliament, who should be treated on an equal footing with the Council in all areas of legislative and budgetary jurisdiction. Its role should be enhanced in the area of the CFSP, justice and home affairs and EMU. Parliament should have the right to take recourse to the courts. It should also be involved in decisions on its headquarters. Finally, the European Parliament insists on suitable cooperation between it and the national parliaments. 3) DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES IN THE

UNION: The European Parliament called for: - the legislative function to be revised so that there are only 3 decision-making procedures: . consultation, for decisions relating to the CFSP; . assent, for revision of the Treaties, international agreements, enlargement and own resources; . co-decision, in all other cases; . cooperation: abolished. The European Parliament is in favour of streamlining the codecision procedure and of being given the same amount of time as the Council for examining proposals at first reading. The European Parliament also called for a reduction in the volume of acts submitted to it (introduction of a hierarchy of standards). In addition, the European Parliament called for the "comitology" procedures to be simplified (implementing measures to be granted solely to the Commission, with an advisory committee where necessary). The European Parliament also called for greater say when international agreements are concluded (especially during the negotiating stage); - the budgetary function to be clarified (distinction between own resources, financial regulation and budgetary rigour) and the budgetary procedure to be simplified. The European Parliament called for the EDF to be included in the budget, together with activities under the second and third pillars. Finally, the budgetary authority should be responsible for revenue; - the control function to be strengthened, mainly by taking more decisive action to combat fraud. IV. ENLARGEMENT PROSPECTS: The European Parliament reserved the right to table proposals needed within the framework of enlargement in order to safeguard the principles of competition, cooperation and solidarity which underpin the European structure. V. MONITORING: The European Parliament is in favour of an open debate during the Reflection Group stage, publication of the minutes of the group's discussions and a hearing on the main agenda of the IGC. It therefore called for a greater say by being granted the possibility of giving its assent to the outcome of IGC negotiations. The national parliaments should likewise be involved by consulting them as a matter of course on major amendments to the Treaty. The European Parliament hoped that the new Treaty would be ratified by a referendum at Union level or that the Member States would decide to organize national referenda at the same time. Finally, the European Parliament is in favour of amending article N of the Treaty so that, like the Commission, it can submit proposed amendments to the Treaty and these changes can be approved jointly by Parliament and the Council before being ratified by the national parliaments.?