



Newsletter

Issue 19, June 2016



Introductory words by Prof. Dr. Danuta Maria HÜBNER

Dear Readers,

I am very happy to present the 19th issue of the AFCO Newsletter, a tool prepared by the Secretariat which aims to inform you about AFCO activities and increase awareness on institutional challenges that the EU is facing.

At our meeting on Wednesday 15th June, relevant issues for the future of the Union will be considered. In the morning a public hearing on the role of the European Union in international organisations including the United Nations will be held. We will vote on the opinion on the establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights and on the opinion on monitoring the application of Union law referred to in the 2014 Annual report.

In the afternoon, AFCO will have a second exchange of views on the potential and challenges of e-Democracy in the Union. After this, a consideration of the draft opinion on the Budgetary capacity for the Eurozone will take place. AFCO will conclude its meeting with an exchange of views on the opinion on the implementation report on the Europe for Citizens programme and with an exchange of view on the state of play of an important institutional issue, the European Parliament's right of inquiry.

I hope you will find this issue useful,

Prof. Dr. Danuta Maria HÜBNER, Chair

Meeting languages available

CS, DA, DE, EL, EN, ES, FR, HR, IT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SV

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Meeting Documents

In light of the European Parliament's paperless project please bear in mind that only a very limited number of paper dossiers will be available in the meeting room.



Instead, meeting documents will be made available on the following public and internal websites:

<http://www.emeeeting.europarl.europa.eu/committees/archives/201512/AFCO>

and (EP internal only):

<http://www.emeeeting.ep.parl.union.eu/committee/>

MEETING DATE AND VENUE

15.06.2016 in BRUSSELS

Room: Altiero Spinelli (1G-3)

9.00- 11.30 and 16:00- 18:30

- Adoption of Agenda
- Chair's announcements
- Joint AFCO/AFET Hearing on The role of the European Union in international organisations including the United Nations
- Establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights (Adoption of the draft opinion)
- Monitoring the application of Union law. 2014 Annual Report (Adoption of the draft opinion)
- Chair's announcements concerning coordinators' recommendations

- e-Democracy in the European Union: potential and challenges (Exchange of views)
- Budgetary capacity for the Eurozone (Consideration of draft opinion and amendments)
- Implementation report on Europe for Citizens (Exchange of views)
- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament on the detailed provisions governing the exercise of the European Parliament's right of inquiry replacing the Decision of the European Parliament, the Council, and the Commission of 19 April 1995 (95/167/EC, Euratom, ECSC) (Exchange of views on the state of play)
- Any other business

Public hearing on the role of the European Union in international organisations including the United Nations



This public hearing is organised by AFCO in association with AFET and it aims at contributing to an already long-standing debate in the Parliament on the ways to better institutionalise the role of the European Union in the United Nations and in other international organisations, in view of making the EU a fully-fledged member of such organisations and enabling it to speak with one voice.

On 24 November 2015, the Parliament adopted a resolution on the role of the EU within the UN, to which AFCO has contributed with an opinion, being David McAllister (EPP) the rapporteur. The Parliament has adopted a number of other resolutions on the role of the EU in the context of several international organisations, and in particular, the resolution of 11 May 2011 on the EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations.

The Parliament has consistently held its commitment to improving governance through multilateral and global responses to global threats and challenges, in particular in the framework of the United Nations. Moreover, the Treaty on the European Union tasks the Union with developing relations and building partnerships with third countries, and international, regional and global organisations which share the principles which it seeks to advance in the wider world, and in particular democracy, the rule of law, and the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The public hearing will be co-chaired by AFCO Chair Danuta Hübner and by AFET Chair Elmar Brok. Three experts will make presentations:

- Professor Dr. Jan Wouters, Full Professor of International Law and International Organisations and Director at the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies of the Institute for International Law, of the Catholic University of Leuven, who will deliver a presentation entitled "Brussels Meet Westphalia: the EU in the UN and other international organisations";
- Dr. Mateusz Irmiński, Attorney-at-law at the "Sołtysiński Kawecki & Szlęzak" law firm in Warsaw will make a presentation on "Legal instruments of providing unanimity and conformity of actions of the EU and the Member States taken within international organisations"; and
- Mr. Jonas Jonsson, Head of Division, Multilateral Relations at the European External Action Service (EEAS) will present his views on "EU multilateral diplomacy in practice".

*** Voting Time ***

Establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights

Adoption of draft opinion

Rapporteur for the opinion: György Schöpflin (EPP)
Responsible Committee: LIBE - Rapporteur Sophia in't Veld (ALDE)

AFCO decided to deliver an opinion to the LIBE legislative own-initiative report on the establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights.

During its February meeting AFCO discussed the rapporteur's working document and held a public hearing organised jointly with LIBE on "Respect for Democracy, Fundamental rights and the Rule of law: the role of the judiciary".

In the draft opinion discussed in March, the rapporteur expressed the view that the Member States should move towards a shared culture of the meaning of the rule of law. Considering that the procedure under Article 7 TEU is virtually unusable he notes that the Union has no legally binding mechanism in place to monitor the compliance of the MS and EU institutions with the EU's fundamental values.

Taking note of the Rule of Law Framework established by the Commission in 2014 and of the creation of an annual dialogue on the rule of law in the General Affairs Council he considers it important to work towards a new consensus between the EU and its MS with the aim of promoting democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights.

He emphasises the key role that the European Parliament and the national parliaments should play in measuring the progress and monitoring the compliance with the shared values of the Union.

On the basis of those considerations he recommends to establish an EU mechanism for Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights (would require a Treaty change) and calls for a coordination of the different EU initiatives; informal trilogues should be regularly organised to ensure a coherent EU approach. He also recommends the conclusion of a pact between all EU institutions and national parliaments in order to establish an annual 'fundamental rights policy cycle' as part of a multi-annual structured dialogue among all stakeholders.

An annual pan-EU parliamentary debate on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights should be organised as part of this multi-annual structured dialogue between the European

Parliament and the national parliaments, on the one hand, and the Commission and the Council, on the other. Goals to achieve and means to measure changes from one year to another should be set.

An exchange of views on the 81 amendments tabled took place during AFCO meeting on April 20th and shadow rapporteurs and the rapporteur agreed on 8 compromises. In today's meeting AFCO is going to vote on the draft opinion.

Calendar Proposed:

Vote in LIBE: 5 September 2016

Shadow Rapporteurs: Pedro Silva Pereira (S&D), Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (ECR), Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz (ALDE), Kostas Chrysogonos (GUE/NGL), Josep-Maria Terricabras (Greens/EFA), Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD), Gerolf Annemans (ENF)

Monitoring the application of Union law. 2014 Annual Report



Adoption of draft opinion

Rapporteur for the opinion: Gerolf Annemans (ENF)
Responsible Committee: JURI - Rapporteur Heidi Hautala (Greens/EFA)

AFCO is delivering an opinion to the JURI report on "Monitoring the application of Union law. 2014 Annual Report".

Article 17 TEU sets out that the Commission has the obligation to monitor the application of Union law and under the current Interinstitutional agreement the Commission reports annually to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of Union legislation. Indeed, last 9 July 2015 the Commission published its report on

“Monitoring the application of Union law: 2014 Annual Report”.

During AFCO meeting of May 30th the rapporteur presented his draft opinion, in which he stresses that it is only by respecting the principle of conferral and the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as set out in article 5 TEU, that citizens may trust Union law.

He also welcomes the decreasing number of infringement proceedings launched by the Commission in the years 2010-2014, due to the Commission’s pilot structured dialogue with Member States and the increased number of preliminary rulings under article 267 TFEU.

18 amendments were tabled and the rapporteur proposes 1 compromise amendment. In today’s meeting the committee will vote on the draft opinion.

Calendar Proposed:

Vote in JURI: 12 July 2016

Shadow Rapporteurs: Cristian Dan Preda (EPP), Sylvia-Yvone Kaufmann (S&D), Kazimierz Michal Ujazdowski (ECR), Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz (ALDE), Kostas Chrysogonos (GUE), Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD)

*** End of vote ***

e-Democracy in the European Union: potential and challenges



Exchange of views

Rapporteur: Ramón Jáuregui Atondo (S&D)
Committee Responsible for an opinion: CULT -
Rapporteur Isabella Adinolfi (EFDD)

On 29 October 2015, Ramón Jáuregui Atondo was appointed rapporteur of an own-initiative report on e-Democracy in the European Union: potential and challenges.

The CULT Committee will provide an opinion under Rule 53 of the Rules of Procedure, with Isabella Adinolfi as Rapporteur.

During the last committee meeting on 14 March, the AFCO Committee held a public hearing on the subject of e-Democracy, this meaning that this year AFCO would like to focus on new, innovative and potential shapes of democracy and the ways of contributing to it. This has the aim of reinforcing citizens' participation in political life and of bringing citizens back to active involvement.

The Committee would now like to explore the possibilities of using digital technology to participate in the democratic life of the Union.

A first exchange of views, with a discussion on the rapporteur’s working document, was held last 20 April. After a constructive debate, the rapporteur decided to incorporate many of the AFCO Members’ suggestions into his working document and thus fine-tune it.

Today, AFCO will proceed to a second exchange of views on a modified working document.

Calendar Proposed:

Consideration of a draft report: 29 September 2016

Deadline for amendments: 13 October 2016

Consideration of amendments: 08 November 2016

Vote: 05 December 2016

Shadow Rapporteurs: Cristian Dan Preda (EPP), Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (ECR), Sylvie Goulard (ALDE), Barbara Spinelli (GUE/NGL), Pascal Durand (Greens/EFA), Isabella Adinolfi (EFDD)

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Budgetary capacity for the Eurozone



Consideration of draft opinion
Consideration of amendments tabled

Rapporteur for the opinion: Paulo Rangel (EPP)
Responsible Committees: BUDG- Rapporteur Reimer Böge (EPP) and ECON- Rapporteur Pervenche Berès (S&D)

On 14 January 2016 AFCO agreed to draft an opinion under Rule 54 to this joint initiative report by BUDG-ECON (Rule 55) and appointed Paulo Rangel as rapporteur.

An exchange of views on the draft opinion took place during the AFCO meeting of 20 April 2016 and 86 amendments were tabled. In his draft opinion the rapporteur expresses his support for the establishment of a budgetary capacity of the Eurozone. He recalls the obligations arising from the Treaty articles dealing with the budget (article 311 TFEU) and the Multiannual Financial Framework (article 312 TFEU), as well as other articles of the Treaties and the provisions of the MFF Regulation and the Financial Rules. The rapporteur points furthermore to the need for democratic legitimacy and accountability of this capacity, to the possibilities offered by existing protocols for involving the national parliaments, and to the relationship between Eurozone and non-Eurozone members.

Calendar Proposed:

Vote in AFCO: 12 July 2016
Vote in BUDG-ECON: 26 September 2016

Shadow Rapporteurs: Mercedes Bresso (S&D), Morten Messerschmidt (ECR), Sylvie Goulard (ALDE), Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL), Pascal Durand (Greens/EFA), Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD)

Implementation report on Europe for Citizens



Exchange of views

Rapporteur for the opinion: Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (ECR)
Responsible Committee: CULT - Rapporteur María Teresa Giménez Barbat (ALDE)

AFCO decided to present an opinion to the CULT report on the Implementation of Europe for Citizens, which will be focused on implementation of the programme in the years 2014 and 2015.

"Europe for Citizens" is a programme established in December 2006 for a period of seven years (2007-2013) in accordance with Decision n° 19041904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (of 12 December 2006), to promote active European citizenship.

Council Regulation (EU) n° 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 established the successor programme "Europe for Citizens 2014-2020", which aims at achieving through various actions and initiatives the following two general objectives:

- a) Contributing to citizens' understanding of the Union, its history and diversity;
- b) Fostering European citizenship and improving conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level.

AFCO will have a first exchange of views on the matter in today's meeting.

Calendar Proposed:

Consideration of draft opinion: 29 September 2016
Deadline for amendments: 11 October 2016
Vote in AFCO: 8 November 2016
Vote in CULT: 5 December 2016

Shadow Rapporteurs: Constance Le Grip (EPP), Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D), Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruíz (ALDE), Kostas Chrysogonos (GUE/NGL)

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament on the detailed provisions governing the exercise of the European Parliament's right of inquiry replacing the Decision of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission of 19 April 1995 (95/167/EC, Euratom, ECSC)



Exchange of views on the state of play

Rapporteur: Ramón Jáuregui Atondo (S&D)

The Rapporteur, Ramón Jáuregui, will inform AFCO Members of the developments that have taken place on this important issue after the adoption in AFCO of the negotiating mandate, discussed on 19 November and formally adopted on 3 December 2015.

Further information

For any further information, please visit the AFCO committee website:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/afco/home.html>

Twitter Activities of the AFCO committee may be followed on twitter @EPInstitutional.

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In particular, the rapporteur will inform AFCO about the meeting he had jointly with Chair Hübner and the Dutch Council Presidency, represented by Ambassador De Gooijer and the Commission this past February. Furthermore, the rapporteur will give a summary of the discussions at shadow-rapporteurs level on the way of proceeding towards a new negotiating strategy with the Council and the Commission.

Calendar Proposed:

Meeting with Council/Commission and national Parliaments on EP's right of inquiry: November 2016

Shadow Rapporteurs: Rainer Wieland (EPP), Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (ECR), Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz (ALDE), Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL), Max Andersson (Greens/EFA), Isabella Adinolfi (EFDD), Gerolf Annemans (ENF)

Next Meetings

Monday 27 June, 15.00 - 18.30 (Brussels)
Monday 11 July, 15.00 - 18.30 (Brussels)
Tuesday 12 July, 09.00 - 12.30 (Brussels)

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