



AFCO
Constitutional Affairs

Newsletter

Issue 10, September 2015



Introductory words by Prof. Dr. Danuta Maria HÜBNER

Dear Readers,

I am very happy to present the 10th issue of the AFCO Newsletter, a tool prepared by the secretariat which aims to inform about AFCO activities and increase awareness on institutional challenges that the EU is facing.

At our extraordinary meeting on the afternoon of Monday 28th September, we will have three important votes. The first on the reform of the EU electoral law; the second on the implementation of the European Citizens' Initiative; and finally on the opinion concerning the role of the EU within the UN. Furthermore, the committee will debate with the chief EP negotiator on the proposed Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Regulation, Guy Verhofstadt, on the state of play of the negotiations.

I hope you will find this tenth 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

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.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/organes

[/afco/afco_8leg_meetinglist.htm](http://afco.afco.8leg.meetinglist.htm)

and (EP internal only):

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



Webstreaming

Members are informed that this AFCO meeting will be webstreamed (apart from the Coordinators' meeting) under the following link:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/wps-europarl-internet/frd/live/live-program?language=en>

The videos will be available to watch or download within 24 hours at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/?legislature=8&start-date=&end-date=&committee=AFCO>

Please be aware that each time a speaker activates the microphone to make an intervention the camera will be automatically directed to the speaker.

eCommittee (EP internal only): further information on the work of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs can be found on our eCommittee page:

<http://www.afconet.ep.parl.union.eu>

MEETING DATE AND VENUE

28.09.2015 in BRUSSELS: Altiero Spinelli (ASP 3E-2)

15:00 - 18.30

- Adoption of agenda
- Chair's announcements
- The reform of the electoral law of the European Union
- European Citizens' Initiative
- The role of the EU within the UN - how to better achieve EU foreign policy goals
- State of play regarding the negotiations on the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Regulation



*** Voting time ***

The reform of the electoral law of the European Union (point 3 of the draft agenda)

Consideration of amendments

Co-rapporteurs: Danuta Hübner (EPP) and Jo Leinen (S&D)

284 amendments to the draft report on the reform of EU electoral law have been received : 76 amendments to the Electoral Act of 1976, including the 11 amendments to it already suggested by the two co-Rapporteurs in their draft report, and 208 to the legislative resolution.

On this basis the two co-Rapporteurs Chair Hübner (EPP-PL) and Jo Leinen (S&D-DE), in collaboration with the Shadow Rapporteurs, prepared 17 compromise amendments, which cover issues such as: specifications on what exactly should be indicated on the ballot papers concerning the affiliation of national candidates with European political parties, as well as the appearance of their logos on the ballot papers, in television and radio campaign broadcasts, posters and other material used in European elections; measures to ensure that minimum standards of transparency and democratic accountability are observed by national parties when nominating their candidates for Members of European Parliament; the use of postal, electronic and internet voting in order to increase the participation of citizens and especially those with reduced mobility and working or living abroad; measures to ensure that all EU citizens working and living abroad, including their families, have the right to vote; measures to ensure the better representation of women, as well as ethnic, linguistic and other minorities; details on the procedure for nomination of candidates for the position of Commission President;

the possibility to explore ways to establish an European electoral authority to act as a network of Member States' single contact authorities and therefore facilitate the access to information relevant for European elections and contribute to avoiding double voting; encourage the Member States to look for ways to harmonize the minimum age of voters at 16 and encourage the convergence of the minimum age of candidates;

Date	Event
28 September	Vote of draft report in AFCO
26 - 29 October	(STR) Vote in Plenary

Shadow rapporteurs:

ECR Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski
 ALDE Sylvie Goulard
 GUE/NGL Helmut Scholz
 Greens/EFA Josep-Maria Terricabras



European Citizens' Initiative (point 4 of the draft agenda)

Adoption of draft report

Rapporteur: György Schöpflin

The Draft Report delivers an evaluation of the implementation of the European Citizens Initiative (ECI). The ECI, which was introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, represents an extraordinary and innovative tool of participatory democracy in the European Union. Its potential must be exploited fully in order to achieve the best results.

After the presentation of the draft report last June, 127 amendments have been tabled. In cooperation with the Shadows, the Rapporteur prepared 22 compromises on the main points, such as publicity, easier accessibility of the tool and the political follow up given by the Commission on the successful ECI. The GUE together with the Greens propose an additional compromise.



The role of the EU within the UN - how to better achieve EU foreign policy goals (point 5 of the draft agenda)

Adoption of draft opinion

Opinion-giving rapporteur: David McAllister
Committee(s) responsible: AFET

The draft opinion opens a larger perspective on the work of the Union in a global world, through the very complex structure of the United Nations and delivers the institutional point of view on these reflections.

After the presentation of the draft opinion last 15 July, 41 amendments have been tabled, and in cooperation with the Shadows, the Rapporteur prepared 4 compromises. A fifth compromise is proposed by the S&D and GUE, on the support of a female candidate for the position of the UN Secretary General in the upcoming elections.

Shadow rapporteurs:

EPP David McAllister - rapporteur
S&D Ana-Claudia Tapardel
ECR Marcus Pretzell
ALDE Maite Pagazaurtundúa
GUE/NGL Helmut Scholz
Greens/EFA Josep-Maira Terricabras
EFDD Fabio Massimo Castaldo

*** End of vote ***

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State of play regarding the negotiations on the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Regulation (point 6 of the agenda)

Presentation by Guy Verhofstadt

On 19 May 2015, the Commission adopted a '[Better Regulation Package](#)', containing, inter alia, a proposal for an Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA) on Better Regulation ([COM\(2015\) 216/2](#) and annexes).

On 11 June 2015 the [Conference of Presidents](#) endorsed the President's proposal that Mr Verhofstadt would represent him in conducting the negotiations on this IIA, working in close cooperation with the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and reporting regularly to the Conference of Presidents.

A first [kick-off meeting](#) took place on 25 June 2015 between EP President Martin Schulz, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, Latvia's Prime Minister, Laimdota Straujuma, representing the then Council Presidency and Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel representing the current Council Presidency. Subsequently, the first working meeting took place between the negotiators of the three institutions on Wednesday 16 September.

In its resolution adopted on the same day on the Preparation of the Commission Work Programme 2016 ([P8_TA-PROV\(2015\)0323](#)), Parliament welcomed the opening of negotiations on a new IIA and outlined a number of priorities in this respect.

Mr Verhofstadt will present the state of play with regard to the negotiations.

Under the Rules of Procedure, AFCO is the committee responsible for 'interinstitutional relations, including, with a view to their approval by Parliament, examination of interinstitutional agreements pursuant to Rule 140(2) of the Rules of Procedure' (Annex VI, Powers and Responsibilities of standing committees, [XVIII-4](#)), while the Legal Affairs committee is responsible for 'better law-making and the simplification of Union law' (Annex VI, [XVI-3](#)).

The article 140 (2) of the Rules of Procedure states that interinstitutional agreements "...shall be signed by the President after examination by the committee competent for constitutional affairs and after approval by the Parliament".

Next meetings

* 22 October 2015, 9.00 – 12.30 and 15:00 - 18.30
(Brussels)

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 [@EPIInstitutional](https://twitter.com/EPIInstitutional)

Contact the editor

European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union, Secretariat of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs.

Tel: + 32 2 28 43676 – e-mail: afco-secretariat@ep.europa.eu

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