



Newsletter

Issue 14, January 2016



Introductory words by Prof. Dr. Danuta Maria HÜBNER

Dear Readers,

I am very happy to present the 14th 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.

Our meeting on Thursday 14th January will deal with a high variety of complex issues: during the morning, there will be an exchange of views with Jonathan Faull, Head of the Task Force for Strategic Issues related to the UK Referendum of the Commission, on the renegotiations of the UK constitutional relationship with the European Union; followed by an exchange of views with Bert Koenders, President of the Council of the European Union, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, who will present the Dutch Presidency's programme.

The afternoon will be focused on the questions related to: the outcome of the Luxembourgish Presidency, with Nicolas Schmit, Luxembourg Minister of Labour, Employment and the Social and Solidarity Economy; "Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon treaty"; the Inter-institutional agreement on Better Law-Making; the discharge 2014: the EU general budget - Council and European Council and finally to the Annual Report 2014 on subsidiarity and proportionality.

I hope you will find this issue useful, and wishing you a happy new year 2016,

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.emeeeting.europarl.europa.eu/committees/archives/201512/AFCO>

and (EP internal only):

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

MEETING DATE AND VENUE

14.01.2016 in BRUSSELS

Room: Altiero Spinelli (5G-3)

09:00- 10:00 (Coordinators' Meeting/ In camera)
10:00 - 12.30 and 15.00 - 18.30

- Coordinators' meeting
- Adoption of Agenda
- Chair's announcements
- Exchange of views with Jonathan Faull, Head of the Task Force for Strategic Issues related to the UK Referendum of the Commission, on the renegotiation of the United Kingdom constitutional relationship with the European Union
- Exchange of views with Bert Koenders, President of the Council of the European Union, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, and presentation of the Dutch Presidency's programme
- Exchange of views with Nicolas Schmit, Luxembourg Minister of Labour, Employment

and the Social and Solidarity Economy, on the outcome of the Luxembourgish Presidency

- Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty
- Inter-institutional agreement on Better Law-making
- Discharge 2014: EU general Budget-Council and European Council
- Annual Report 2014 on subsidiarity and proportionality
- Any other business



The renegotiation of the United Kingdom constitutional relationship with the European Union

Exchange of views

During the European summit of 17-18 December 2015, the political will to find a solution was expressed by the Head of States. However, no real decisions were taken on the UK requests.

The President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, announced that a concrete text will be submitted before the February European Council, where "real decisions" should be taken.

After the AFCO delegation to London in November last year and the first exchange of views in the AFCO committee in December, Mr. Jonathan Faull, General-Director of the European Commission's Task Force for Strategic Issues related to the UK Referendum, will update AFCO on the current situation.

Concerning the conclusion of the dossier, the role of the EP and of AFCO will depend on the concrete solutions to be adopted (Treaty change, protocol, secondary legislation, solemn declaration). There is also the issue of how the EP is/will be involved in the negotiations.

President Tusk has insisted that the EP should be consulted, and the interlocutors in London abundantly expressed themselves in favour of the participation of the EP in the process.

Depending on the outcome of the renegotiations with the EU, Prime Minister Cameron said he will campaign for a vote in favour of staying in the EU.



Council Presidency

Exchange of views with Bert Koenders, President of the Council of the European Union, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, and presentation of the Dutch Presidency's programme

The Netherlands has based its priorities for the Presidency on three principles: a Union that focuses on the essentials, which creates innovative growth and jobs and which connects with society.

The programme states the Netherlands' position concerning each individual Council configuration and subjects that will arise during the Netherlands Presidency.

The programme is closely linked with the programme of the trio (Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta). The main priorities of the trio's programme are growth, jobs, freedom, security, justice, the energy union and the Union as a strong global actor.

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Council Presidency

Exchange of views with Nicholas Schmit, Luxembourg Minister of Labour, Employment and the Social and Solidarity Economy, on the outcome of the Luxembourgish Presidency

Following a well-established tradition, at the end of each EU Council Presidency, the acting President of the Council reports on the outcome of the Luxembourgish Council Presidency, concerning in particular the matters related to AFCO competencies.

Ms Nicolas Schmit attended the AFCO meeting on 15 July 2015, highlighting the main goals the Presidency had set, and listening to the wishes formulated by the AFCO Colleagues.

Now AFCO would like to exchange views with him:

- on the specific results achieved by the EU Presidency, related for example to Electoral Law and the EP's Right of Inquiry,
- on the experience of the 12th Luxembourgish EU Presidency, and
- more generally, on the overall institutional process of EU integration, taking into account the recent UK proposals to review EU Membership.



Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty

Consideration of draft report

Co-rapporteurs: Mercedes Bresso (S&D), Elmar Brook (EPP)

Committee responsible:

AFCO

Committee(s) responsible for an opinion:

BUDG, CONT

During the joint Interparliamentary Committee Meeting (ICM) that took place on 19 November 2015, the two co-Rapporteurs of the INI report on "Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty", Mercedes Bresso (S&D-IT) and Elmar Brok (EPP-DE), presented their working document.

In their working document and draft report they are examining the yet unused possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty to tackle the challenges that the Union is currently facing, by adapting its institutional structure, enhancing its democratic accountability, deepening the Economic and Monetary Union, completing the Internal Market and furthering joint efforts in the fields of External Action and Justice and Home Affairs.

Calendar proposed:

Exchange of views on the draft report in AFCO: 14 January 2016

Deadline for amendments: 12 February (at noon)

Consideration of amendments: 22/23 February

Vote on draft report: 14/15 March (tbc)

Plenary: April (tbc)

Shadow rapporteurs: Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (ECR), Charles Goerens (ALDE), Barbara Spinelli (GUE/NGL), Sven Giegold (Greens/EFA), Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD), Gerolf Annemans (ENF)



Inter-institutional agreement on Better Law Making

Consideration of draft report

Rapporteur: Danuta Maria Hubner (PPE)
Committee responsible:
AFCO
Committee responsible for an opinion:
tbc

Following the proposal for a new Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) by the Commission on 19 May, negotiations on a new IIA on Better Law-Making were formally opened on 25 June 2015 and have been concluded on 8 December with a provisional agreement which was endorsed politically by the Conference of Presidents on 16 December. An extraordinary joint meeting of the AFCO and JURI committees took place on 16 December to discuss the outcome of the negotiations.

In the draft report, the rapporteur recommends the approval of the draft Interinstitutional agreement and of the related joint declaration. The draft report also contains an appreciation of some of the main provisions of the new IIA, calls for an examination of the extent to which amendments or interpretations of the Rules of Procedure are necessary for the implementation of the agreement and points to a number of issues where further follow-up is needed.

Calendar proposed:

Exchange of views on the draft report: 14 January
Deadline for amendments: 2 February (at noon), tbc
Consideration of amendments and vote on draft report: 22/23 February (tbc)
Plenary: 9/12 March

Shadow Rapporteur: Richard Corbett (S&D)



Discharge 2014: EU general budget - Council and European Council

Exchange of views on draft opinion

Rapporteur: Pascal Durand (Verts-ALE)
Committee Responsible:
CONT

On 19 November 2015, the AFCO committee decided to deliver an opinion to the 2014 discharge report regarding the Council and the European Council in view of highlighting persisting problems with regard to the cooperation between Council and Parliament in the framework of the discharge procedure, notably concerning the provision of information that Parliament considers necessary to scrutinise the implementation of the budget of the Council and the European Council.

Calendar proposed:

Presentation of a draft opinion: 14 January
Possible deadline for amendments: 26 January (at noon)
Consideration of amendments and vote on the draft opinion: 22/23 February

Shadow rapporteurs: György Schöpflin (EPP), Claudia Tapardel (S&D), Charles Goerens (ALDE)



Annual Report 2014 on subsidiarity and proportionality

Consideration of draft opinion

Rapporteur: Kazimierz Michal Ujazdowski (ECR)
Committee responsible:
JURI

AFCO decided to deliver an opinion to the JURI INI report on the "Report from the Commission - Annual Report 2014 on subsidiarity and proportionality (COM (2015) 315 final)". The JURI timetable is not yet decided.

In his draft opinion, the rapporteur welcomes the package of better regulation measures adopted on 19 May 2015.

He regrets the decrease in the number of reasoned opinions received from national parliaments in 2014 (as a result of the declining number of legislative proposals from the Commission). The rapporteur believes that it is important to raise awareness of national parliaments on subsidiarity issues; that national parliaments should be supported with tools permitting information exchange and that a mechanism should be developed for the participation of national parliaments in the EU legislative process. He is also of the opinion that the eight weeks period given to national parliaments to issue a reasoned opinion under Article 6 of the Protocol on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality should be extended significantly and that material criteria for establishing the existence of a violation of the subsidiarity and proportionality principles should be proposed.

Finally he considers that the Commission should provide an adequate response to the request by a number of national chambers for a stronger subsidiarity control procedure and proposes that

the Commission should be bound to withdraw or amend its proposal when a yellow card is triggered. The idea of a 'green card' should be considered as a means of raising the participation and activity of national parliaments in the EU legislative process.

Calendar proposed:

Deadline for amendments: 21 January, 6.00 p.m.
Exchange of views on amendments: 22-23 February
Vote: 14-15 March

Shadow rapporteurs: Cristian Dan Preda (EPP), Claudia Tapardel (S&D), Morten Messerschmidt (ECR), Charles Goerens (ALDE), Max Andersson (Greens/EFA).

Any other business

Next Meetings

22 February 2016, 15.00 - 18.30 (Brussels)
23 February 2016, 09.00 - 12.30 (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.

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