



## Newsletter

Issue 21, June 2016



### **Introductory words by Prof. Dr. Danuta Maria HÜBNER**

Dear Readers,

I am very happy to present the 21st 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 Monday 11 July in the afternoon we will host the Dutch Ambassador Pieter de Gooijer to discuss the outcome of the Dutch Presidency, which term approaches the end. Moreover, during the afternoon, we will consider the challenging issue of the European Defence Union. Lastly, AFCO will have an exchange of views on the draft opinion on the General Budget of the Union for the financial year 2017.

On Tuesday 12 July, AFCO will consider important institutional issues such as the state of play of the working group on the reform of the Rules of Procedure, the draft report on the possible evolution and adjustment of the institutional set up of our Union and an exchange of views on possibilities to improve the functioning of the EU by building on the potential of Lisbon Treaty. Members will also have an exchange of views on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2015.

I hope you will find this issue useful,

Prof. Dr. Danuta Maria HÜBNER, Chair

### **Meeting languages available**

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

### **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**

11 / 12.07.2016 in BRUSSELS  
15:00 - 18:30 / 9:00 - 12:30

Room: Paul-Henri Spaak (5B001)

- Adoption of Agenda.
- Chair's announcements.
- Approval of minutes of meeting of 14-15 March 2016.
- Council Presidency. (Exchange of views on the outcome of the Dutch Presidency)
- European Defence Union (Exchange of views and consideration of draft opinion)
- General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2017 - all sections. (Exchange of views and consideration of draft opinion)
- Working Group revisiting the Rules of Procedure (Exchange of views and presentation of the results)

- Possible evolutions and adjustments of the current institutional set up of the European Union.(Consideration of draft report and announcement of timetable)
- Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty (Exchange of views)
- The situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2015 (First exchange of views and announcement of timetable)
- Any other business

### Dutch Council Presidency



Following a well-established tradition, at the end of each EU Council presidency, an exchange of views on the outcome of the Presidency takes place, in particular concerning the matters related to AFCO competences.

Ambassador Pieter de Gooijer, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, will be present in our meeting to discuss with us about the most relevant questions of the last six-month EU Council Presidency.

During the AFCO meeting in January 2016, Bert Koenders, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, presented the Dutch Presidency's Programme. On that occasion, the issues discussed related to AFCO competences were the reform of the electoral law, a common transparency register for the three institutions, the right of inquiry of the European Parliament, among other matters.

Mr de Gooijer will discuss with AFCO the outcome of the Presidency on these matters.

### European Defence Union

#### *Consideration of draft opinion*



Rapporteur for the opinion: David McAllister (EPP)  
Responsible Committee: AFET - Rapporteur Urmas Paet (ALDE)

On 15 March, the AFCO committee decided to deliver an opinion to AFET on its INI report on a European Defence Union.

Article 42 TEU requires the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy as part of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Nevertheless, progress on matters related to CSDP has been very limited and most tools and mechanisms provided for in the Treaty have not been used, so far. Although defined by the Treaty as a "common" policy, common foreign and security policy (CFSP), in which CSDP is integrated, is subject to very specific rules and procedures, which differentiate it very clearly from other competences of the Union. Within CFSP, CSDP is subject to yet another special subset of rules. Despite the ambivalences and special legal frameworks, CFSP and CSDP are part of the external affairs of the Union and, thus, subject to its general principles and objectives.

Moreover, a lack of political will and of mutual trust between Member States in an area that is at the core of national sovereignty is perceived as one of the obstacles to the achievement of the Treaty objectives regarding the progressive framing of a common defence policy that might lead to a common defence.

In his draft opinion, David McAllister recalls the exact terms of the Treaty regarding the framing of a common defence policy, and encourages the need to start by deploying the several tools and mechanisms, which were inserted by the Treaty of Lisbon in the area of CSDP, such as the permanent structured cooperation.

Furthermore, the Rapporteur defends a reinforcement of the institutional setting, through the establishment of a Council of Defence Ministers and of a permanent strategic civil-military headquarters, emphasising also the role of the European Defence Agency in the development of capabilities, while reiterating the need to further strength the strategic EU-NATO partnership. Finally, the draft opinion defends the adoption of a White Book on defence on the basis of the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy.

During today's meeting, AFCO will discuss the draft opinion presented by Mr McAllister.

*Calendar proposed:*

Deadline for amendments: 5 September 2016

Vote: 29 September 2016

*Shadow Rapporteurs:* Enrique Guerrero Salom (S&D), Charles Goerens (ALDE), Kostas Chrysogonos (GUE)

### **General Budget of the European Union for the financial year 2017 - all sections**



*Exchange of views*

*Consideration of the draft opinion*

Rapporteur for the opinion: György Schöpflin (EPP)

Responsible Committee: BUDG - Rapporteurs Jens Geier (S&D) and Indrek Tarand (Greens/EFA)

AFCO is delivering an opinion to the BUDG report on "General Budget of the European Union for the financial year 2017 - all sections".

The Commission delayed the adoption of the Draft Budget 2017, normally foreseen for the end of May, to the end of June.

The draft budget pays particular attention to the migration crisis and foresees the use of the flexibility instrument and contingency margin for commitments for that purpose. This means that in Heading 3, which is of the greatest interest to AFCO, there is no margin left for a possible increase in funds.

Meanwhile, the Commission draft budget already foresees an increase in funds for the Europe for Citizens programme, as well as an increase in funds for communication.

The rapporteur welcomes these increases, and furthermore in his draft opinion and draft budgetary amendments pays particular attention to the promotion of the use of the ECI, to involving the elderly in the debate on the future of Europe and to digital citizenship at EU level.

In our committee meeting, an exchange of views with the presence of Jens Geier, general rapporteur of the responsible committee, will take place.

*Calendar Proposed:*

Deadline for amendments, in English: 19 July 2016 at 12 am

Consideration of amendments and vote: 5 September 2016

*Shadow Rapporteurs:* Claudia Tapardel (S&D), Morten Messerschmidt (ECR), Charles Goerens (ALDE), Helmut Scholz (GUE), Pascal Durand (Greens/EFA)

### **Working Group: Revisiting the Rules of Procedure**



*Exchange of views*

Chair: Rainer Wieland (EPP)

Participants: Richard Corbett (S&D), Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (ECR), Charles Goerens (ALDE), Helmut Scholz (GUE), Max Andersson

(Greens/EFA), Isabella Adinolfi (EFDD), Gerolf Annemans (ENF).

EP Vice-President Wieland, Chair of the AFCO Working Group on "Revisiting the Rules of Procedure" will report on the outcome of its work, which lasted for one and a half year. The aim was to review the whole of the Rules in order to *identify possible errors, inconsistencies and lacuna as well as provisions that had become obsolete or required adaptation in the light of the experience of the last years.*

A number of important suggestions are made by the Working Group, which will serve as a basis for the draft report, which the Committee will now prepare. The adoption of the draft report should take place in time for the plenary to vote on the changes to the Rules at its December part-session at the latest, so that the changes can enter into force at Parliament's mid-term in January 2017.

### **Possible evolutions and adjustments of the current institutional set up of the European Union**



#### *Consideration of the draft report*

Rapporteur: Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE)  
Committee delivering an Opinion: BUDG - José Manuel Fernandes (EPP) and CONT - Petri Sarvamaa (EPP)

The rapporteur, Guy Verhofstadt, will present his draft report, which was authorised by the Conference of Presidents on 11 December 2014. BUDG and CONT have requested an opinion based on rule 53. One workshop in November 2014, two hearings in May 2015 and November 2015, and an interparliamentary meeting in November 2015 took place in AFCO to help give input for this draft report.

In today's meeting, we will have the opportunity to exchange views on the draft report presented by Mr Verhofstadt.

#### *Calendar Proposed:*

Deadline for amendments: 1 September 2016 at 15 pm  
Consideration of amendments: 12 September 2016  
Vote: 29 September 2016

*Shadow Rapporteurs:* Paulo Rangel (EPP), Jo Leinen (S&D), Morten Messerschmidt (ECR), Barbara Spinelli (GUE), Pascal Durand (Greens/ EFA), Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD), Gerolf Annemans (ENF).

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



#### *Exchange of views*

Co-Rapporteurs: Elmar Brok (EPP) and Mercedes Bresso (S&D)

Committee delivering an Opinion: BUDG - Jean Arthius (ALDE) and CONT - Petri Sarvamaa (EPP)

During the joint Interparliamentary Committee Meeting (ICM) that took place on 19 November 2015, the two co-rapporteurs Mercedes Bresso

and Elmar Brok presented their working document, which was further discussed during the AFCO meeting on 3 December. On 14 January the committee held an exchange of views on the draft report on which 888 amendments have been tabled.

In their working document and draft report the rapporteurs 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.

In this meeting, AFCO will discuss the draft report, the amendments tabled and a possible calendar.

*Calendar Proposed:*

Consideration of amendments: 5 September 2016  
Vote: 29 September 2016

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

**The situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2015**



*Exchange of views*

Rapporteur for the opinion: Cristian Dan Preda (EPP)  
Responsible Committee: LIBE - Rapporteur József Nagy (EPP).

AFCO is delivering an opinion to the LIBE report on "The situation of fundamental rights in the European Union 2015".

The Union recognises the fundamental rights enshrined in the *Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union*, which entered into force together with the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009, and promotes its respect in its legislation.

Furthermore, fundamental rights as they result from Member States' common constitutional traditions and as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights of the Council of Europe constitute general principles of Union law.

AFCO will have a first exchange of views on this matter and will decide on the Calendar.

*Calendar Proposed:*

Consideration of a draft opinion: 29 September 2016.

Deadline for amendments: 4 October 2016 at 5pm (TBC)

Vote in AFCO: 20 October 2016

Vote in LIBE: 17 November 2016

*Shadow Rapporteurs:* Sylvia-Yvone Kaufmann (S&D), Morten Messerschmidt (ECR), Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz (ALDE), Kostas Chrysogonos (GUE), Josef-Maria Terricabras (Greens/ EFA).

**Next Meeting**

Wednesday 5 September 2016, 15.00 - 18.30 (Brussels)

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### **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.

### **Contact the editor**

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