

## Newsletter

Issue 24, September 2016



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

Dear Readers,

I am very happy to present the 24th 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 Thursday 29 September, AFCO will consider important and topical institutional issues such as the role established by the Lisbon Treaty for national Parliaments in the EU framework, the discussion about the constitutional relationship of the United Kingdom with the European Union after the referendum of 23 June with experts and representatives of Think Thanks, or “Transparency” in the EU Institutions. Furthermore two other Opinions related to the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2015 and to the implementation of the EU Programme on Europe for Citizens will be discussed.

Prof. Dr. Danuta Maria HÜBNER, Chair

### Meeting languages available

DA, DE, EN, EL, ES, FR, 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

29.09.2016 in BRUSSELS  
09:00-12:30 and 15:00 - 18:30

Room: Paul-Henri Spaak (4B001)

Please find below the link to the committee draft agenda:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fNONSGML%2bCOMPARL%2bAFCO-OJ-20160929-1%2b01%2bDOC%2bPDF%2bV0%2f%2fEN>

### The implementation of the Treaty provisions concerning national Parliaments



Rapporteur: Paulo Rangel

The rapporteur, Paulo Rangel (S&D, PT) will present his ideas for the report on the implementation of the Treaty provisions concerning national Parliaments. This will be an implementation report, a category of reports which saw its scope recently widened in order to take on board the implementation of the treaties. Implementation reports should be based on "reliable facts regarding the state of implementation of the relevant legislation".

The Treaty of Lisbon has considerably increased the role of national Parliaments, notably by recognising (article 12 TEU) a series of prerogatives of national Parliaments in terms of information and control of subsidiarity on European legislative procedures (further detailed in protocols 1 and 2) and in what concerns inter-parliamentary cooperation.

In fact, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, national Parliaments have repeatedly expressed their wishes to be more associated to the development of the integration process, and many more or less informal means of cooperation have been developed between the EP and national Parliaments. The aim of the report would be, first, to assess the use of the current mechanisms for national Parliaments' participation in the European political process provided for in the treaties. Based on that assessment, the report may then look into possible improvements to those mechanisms, in order to associate national Parliaments more closely in the overall integration process.

This report will also examine the implementation thus far of the political structured debate established between the European Commission and national Parliaments as detailed in the Annual report 2014 on relations between the European Commission and national Parliaments (COM(2015)0316).

The report will require carrying out fact-finding activities which will imply the setting up of a specific Project Team by involving the relevant EP departments and units.

*Calendar proposed:*

Possible Workshop: 30 January 2017

Exchange of views on a Working Document: 9 February 2017

Possible meeting with the participation of national Parliaments: 20 March 2017

Exchange of views on a Draft Report: 11 April 2017

Adoption of the draft Report: 20 June 2017

*Shadow Rapporteurs:* Pervenche Bérès (S&D), Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (ECR), Sylvie Goulard (ALDE), Barbara Spinelli (GUE/NGL), Max Andersson (Verts/ALE).

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



*Rapporteur:* Dan Preda

The Union recognizes 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.

Fundamental rights are not only to be upheld by the Member States and by the Union collectively, but also to be respected. In case of infringements, the Treaties provide the possibility of adopting political stances leading to proceedings under Art. 7 TEU as well as judicial remedies under Art. 258 TFEU.

On 11 March 2014, the Commission adopted the Rule of Law Framework, which is a set of new rules and procedures that can be activated in case there are indications a Member State poses systemic threats to the rule of law, with the aim of allowing the Commission to enter into a dialogue with the Member State concerned in order to prevent the escalation of systemic threats to the rule of law and thus avoid the use of the procedure provided for in article 7 of the TEU.

Under Annex XVII to the Rules of procedure, the Committee on Civil liberties (LIBE) is responsible for drawing up an annual activity and monitoring report on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union.

LIBE is preparing its annual report concerning the year 2015 and the AFCO committee will present an opinion to it under Rule 53.

*Calendar Proposed:*

Possible deadline for amendments: 11 October (at 5pm)

Vote: 8 November

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

## Implementation report on Europe for Citizens



*Rapporteur:* Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski

The "Europe for Citizens" programme was established in December 2006 for a period of seven years (2007-2013) in accordance with Decision n° 1904/2006/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.

The Committee on Culture is the main committee drafting an implementation report on the current 7 year-programme that will obviously focus on the implementation of the programme only in the years 2014 and 2015.

The rapporteur calls for greater awareness of the programme and highlights the important role of the Member States in providing better information through the National Contact Points.

He recommends paying special attention to the projects submitted by applicant countries and proposes fostering cooperation between the non-governmental organizations of EU and non-EU countries.

*Calendar Proposed:*

Possible deadline for amendments: 11 October (at 5pm)

Vote: 8 November

LIBE vote: 17 November

*Shadow Rapporteurs:* Constance Le Grip (EPP), Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D), Kazimierz Mikal Ujazdowski (ECR), Maite Pagazaurtundúa (ALDE), Kostas Chrysogonos (GUE).

## The constitutional relationship of the United Kingdom with the European Union: the consequences of the results of the referendum of 23 June 2016



*Presentation by experts:* Guntram Wolff (Director of Bruegel); Giorgio Maganza (former Director for Institutional Affairs at the Council of the EU); Yves Bertoncini (Director of Notre Europe)

Although it is not yet clear when the UK will trigger the procedure of Article 50 TEU, formally launching the withdrawal procedure from the Union, AFCO has already had a number of discussions about the withdrawal process and the future relationship between the Union and the UK. This meeting, three guest speakers will share with us their views and expertise on these issues:

- Mr Guntram Wolff is currently the director of the Bruegel think tank in Brussels, and recently co-authored (with Andre Sapir, Jean-Pissani Ferry, Norbert Röttgen and Paul Tucker) an article entitled "Europe after Brexit: A proposal for a continental partnership". Mr. Wolff will introduce to us some of the most salient elements of this proposal.



- Mr Georgio Maganza, who for a number of years has served as a director on Institutional Affairs in the Legal Service of the Council of the European Union. Mr Maganza will discuss proposals aiming at framing a new relationship between the EU and the UK. He will analyse constitutional and institutional challenges related to setting up such solutions.
- Finally, Mr Yves Bertoncini, director of the Jacques Delors Institute, who will provide his comments on the options for the future constitutional relationship between the EU and the UK.

### **Transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institutions**

*Rapporteur:* Sven Giegold



Last 3 December 2016 Sven Giegold, rapporteur for the INI report on "Transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institutions" presented his draft report, expressing the importance of clear rules on lobbying, on dealing with conflicts of interests within the EP, on cooling off periods, and on improving transparency, with special reference in this context also to the Eurogroup and the ECB. The discussions underlined the importance of high standards of transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institutions for regaining the trust of citizens in the European project. Whilst generally supporting the aims of the report, several members pointed out the need to find the right balance between different principles when evaluating certain proposals and asked for sufficient time to discuss the proposals further with the rapporteur and in the groups.

At the deadline for amendments last 29 February 2016, 466 amendments have been tabled by individual members and 118 suggestions made by the consulted committees for opinions. The discussion will concentrate on the proposals for compromise amendments presented by the rapporteur.

*Shadow Rapporteurs:* György Schöpflin (PPE), Jo Leinen (S&D), Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (ECR), Maïte Pagazaurtundúa (ALDE), Helmut Scholz

(GUE/NGL), Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD), Gerolf Annemans (ENF)

### **The role of whistle-blowers in the protection of EU's financial interests**

*Rapporteur:* Morten Messerschmidt



Last 20 April, AFCO appointed Morten Messerschmidt as the Rapporteur for an Opinion on the own Initiative report of CONT committee on "The role of Whistle-blowers in the protection of EU's financial interests". Over the past decade the European Parliament has called for whistle-blower protection, and most recently the special Tax committee's report called on the Commission to propose legislation by June 2016.

Actually, the European Parliament is pushing forward this issue in two different committees:

The Legal Affairs Committee (JURI) will draft a legislative initiative report, which will authoritatively call on the Commission to produce a proposal and will include details about the legal bases for whistle-blower legislation, the scope of the proposed protection, and key principles that should be included in the legislation.

In addition, the Budgetary Control Committee (CONT) is drafting an own-initiative report on the need for whistle-blower protection in the context of the spending of EU funds, on which AFCO will deliver the current opinion being drafted by Morten Messerschmidt.

In his draft opinion, distributed last 31st of August, the rapporteur, in particular:

- calls on the Commission to set up an EU legal framework on the protection of whistle-blowers without undermining Member State competences;
- encourages all EU institutions and bodies to adopt internal rules on whistle-blowing.

*Calendar proposed:*

Deadline for tabling amendments to the draft

Opinion: 5th October 2016

Vote on the Draft Opinion and amendments: 20th  
October 2016

Final Vote in CONT, as responsible committee: 8th  
November 2016

Possible Final Vote in Plenary: December (12-15)

**Next Meeting**

Wednesday 12 October 2016, 9.00 - 12.30 and  
15.00 - 18.30 (Brussels)

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*Shadow rapporteurs:* Constance Le Grip (PPE);

Ramón Jáuregui Atondo (S&D); Sylvie Goulard

(ALDE); Barbara Spinelli (GUE/NGL); Isabella

Adinolfi (EFDD); Gerolf Annemans (ENF)

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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 @EPInstitutional.

**Contact the editor**

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