

## Newsletter

Issue 32, January

2017

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



Dear Readers,

I am very happy to present the 32nd issue of the AFCO Newsletter, a tool prepared by the Secretariat, which aims at informing you about AFCO activities and increasing awareness on institutional challenges that the EU is facing.

During our meeting on Monday 30 January, in the afternoon, an important Workshop will take place with three eminent experts on "The composition of the European Parliament", which represents the kickoff of discussions for the decision of the repartition of seats in the next term (2019-2024). Another important issue will be the exchange of views with representatives from the governments of Scotland and Gibraltar on "the constitutional relationship of the United Kingdom with the European Union: the consequences of the results of the referendum of 23 June 2016".

On Tuesday 31 January in the morning, the AFCO meeting will concentrate on political debates with:

- the First Vice-President of the European Commission, in charge of "Better Regulation, Inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights", Frans Timmermans;
- Ambassador Peter Javorčík, Permanent Representative of the Slovak republic to the EU, to discuss the outcome of the Slovak presidency; and
- the Maltese Presidency, with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta, Hon. Louis Grech, and the Parliamentary Secretary for EU funds and 2017 Presidency, Ian Borg, presenting the programme of the Council Presidency.

Prof. Dr. Danuta Maria HÜBNER, Chair  
**Meeting languages available**

FR, DE, IT, NL, EN, ES, PT, PL, 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/committees/>

### **MEETING DATE AND VENUE**

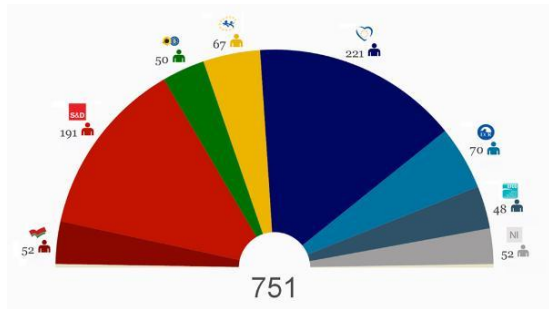
30 / 31.01.2017 in BRUSSELS  
15:00 - 18:30 / 9:00 - 12:30

Room: Altiero Spinelli (1G-3)

Please find below the link to the latest committee draft agenda:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/a-fco/draft-agendas.html>

### **Workshop on "The composition of the European Parliament"**



Exchange of views

According to the Treaty on the European Union, the number of Members of the European Parliament cannot exceed seven hundred and fifty (750), plus the President (+1). It provides for representation to be degressively proportional, with a minimum threshold of six and a maximum of ninety-six seats per member state.

The composition of Parliament is adopted through a European Council decision taken upon an initiative of the European Parliament and requiring its consent. In the currently applicable European Council Decision, the Parliament was called upon to come up, before the end of 2016, with an objective, fair, transparent and sustainable system that would make it possible before each fresh election to apportion its seats. Due to compelling political reasons linked to the British referendum of 23 June 2016, Parliament could not prepare a proposal before the end of 2016, as required by the European Council Decision of 28 June 2013, but is determined to do everything in its powers to finalise the procedure in time for the 2019 elections.

The aim of this workshop would be to hear from the experts proposals on methods for the apportionment of seats in the Parliament that would satisfy the requirements of Article 14 (2) TEU (minimum and maximum number of MEPs per Member State, maximum size of Parliament, the principle of degressive proportionality) and which would be able to automatically adjust the distribution of seats to the changing demographic picture in the Union as well as be able to accommodate changes in the number of EU Member States.

The hearing will start with the presentation of Professor *Friedrich Pukelsheim* - expert on the mathematical analysis of the proportional representation system at the Institute for Mathematics, University of Augsburg - whose research focuses on "linking the permanent

system of the allocation of seats in the EP with the new double-majority voting rule in the Council of Ministers".

Thereafter, Professor *Victoriano Ramírez González* - head of the research group on electoral methods (GIME Granada) at the University of Granada in Spain - will present "the different methods to allocate the EP seats to Member States".

Finally, Dr. *Wojciech Słomczyński* - adjunct professor in the Institute of Mathematics and the chair of the academic board of the Center for Quantitative Research in Political Science at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow - will present the paper elaborated together with Professor *Karol Zyczkowski* on the topic of "Degressive proportionality in the European Union".

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



Exchange of views

Today, the AFCO Committee will hold the first debate of 2017 on the withdrawal of the UK from the Union, which is the continuation of the ongoing regular debates on this subject. The AFCO committee welcomes today Scotland and Gibraltar representatives for an exchange of views with those territories, where the majority of citizens voted to remain in the European Union in the 23 June 2016 referendum.

AFCO will thus hear from Ms. *Fiona Hyslop* - Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs of the Scottish Government -, and from Mr. *Fabian Picardo* - Chief Minister of the Government of Gibraltar.

### **Exchange of Views with First Vice-President Frans Timmermans**

This exchange of views with the First Vice-President of the Commission *Frans Timmermans*, responsible for Better Regulation, Inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, takes place in the framework of the regular political dialogue between the AFCO Committee and the Commissioner responsible for AFCO matters on the implementation of the Commission Work Programme for 2017 and on the preparation of the future Commission Work Programme. As such, it also provides an opportunity to exchange views on the ongoing reflections on the future of the Union for which the Commission intends to present a White Paper on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties. The AFCO committee adopted two reports as input for that process, namely the report on "Improving the functioning of the European Union, building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty" (co-rapporteurs Mercedes Bresso and Elmar Brok) and the report on "Possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union" (rapporteur Guy Verhofstadt).



### **Council Presidency: outcome of the Slovak 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 matters related to AFCO competences.

Ambassador *Peter Javorčík*, Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the EU, will be present to discuss with us about the most relevant questions of the last six-month EU Council Presidency.

### **Council Presidency: presentation of the priorities of the Maltese Presidency**



**MALTA EU2017**

Deputy Prime Minister Hon. *Louis Grech* and the Maltese Parliamentary Secretary for EU funds with special responsibility for the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Mr. *Ian Borg*, will present the priorities of the Maltese Presidency in the AFCO domain of competences, which provides an opportunity to discuss on ongoing files in the AFCO committee.

### **Next Meeting**

- 9 February 2017, 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 @EPInstitutional.

**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](mailto:afco-secretariat@ep.europa.eu)

**Legal disclaimer**

The items contained herein are drafted by the Secretariat of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and are provided for general information purposes only. The opinions expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Parliament. The AFCO Newsletter may contain links to websites that are created and maintained by other organisations. The AFCO Secretariat does not necessarily endorse the views expressed on these websites.