

## Newsletter

Issue 33, February 2017

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



Dear Readers,

I am very happy to present the 33rd 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 Wednesday 9 February, in the morning, the AFCO Committee will vote first with AFET-SEDE on the "Constitutional, legal and institutional implications of a CSDP", then on the report of Ramón Jáuregui Atondo on "e-Democracy in the European Union: potential and challenges"; immediately after the votes we will hold an exchange of views on "the constitutional relationship of the United Kingdom with the European Union: the consequences of the results of the referendum of 23 June 2016" with Kirsty Hughes (Associate Fellow of Friends of Europe); followed by the presentation by Professor Steven Blockmans, Head of EU Foreign Policy at CEPS (Brussels), of a briefing note commissioned by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs: "the 2016 "Winter Package" on European Security and Defence".

During the afternoon the meeting will re-start with an exchange of views with Guy Verhofstadt, the coordinator for the CoP on the Brexit negotiations concerning the latest developments of this file. As a final point, the hearing of the representatives of the Alliance for Peace and Freedom (APF) will take place on the "Implementation of Rule 225, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Procedure".

Prof. Dr. Danuta Maria HÜBNER, Chair

### Meeting languages available

FR, DE, IT, NL, EN, ES, PT, SV, 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.emeeting.europarl.europa.eu/committees/archives/201512/AFCO>

and (EP internal only):

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

### MEETING DATE AND VENUE

9 February 2017 in BRUSSELS  
10:00 - 12:30 / 15:00 - 18:30

Room: Altiero Spinelli (5G-2)

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

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

### Constitutional, legal and institutional implications of a common security and defence policy

AFET-SEDE and AFCO will vote on the report "Constitutional, legal and institutional implications of a CSDP: possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty" from the co-rapporteurs Michael GAHLER and Esteban GONZALEZ PONS (under rule 55), in room JAN 4Q2.

This joint-report was drafted following an AFCO initiative in October 2015 to follow-up the joint AFET-AFCO hearing “The Common Foreign and Security Policy under the Treaty of Lisbon: unlocking its full potential”.

The aim of the report is to address the institutional challenges in EU Foreign Policy by using the potential of the Lisbon Treaty, and to position the EP as regards the institutional and strategic implications of framing common defence policy.

Members will be voting on 458 amendments and 23 compromise amendments presented by the co-rapporteurs.

### **e-Democracy in the European Union: potential and challenges**



*Rapporteur:* Ramón Jáuregui Atondo (S&D - ES)

On 29 November 2016, the AFCO Committee held a debate on the 233 amendments that were tabled to the draft report prepared by Rapporteur Ramón Jáuregui Atondo: 19 compromise amendments were agreed between the rapporteur and the shadow rapporteurs and during this meeting, the AFCO Committee will proceed to the vote.

The draft report focuses on the significant role played by new technologies in order to face the current challenging times that Europe is living.

The rapporteur, in particular, stresses that the new technologies provide a great potential which might be used to enhance democracy and democratic participatory procedures - e-democracy being one of their applications. Nevertheless, Mr Jáuregui notes that e-democracy is not meant to be an alternative form of democracy but instead a means to help regain citizens' affection and interest in politics.

Among other things, the draft report calls on the Member States and the EU to provide educational and technical means for improving ICT competences as well as digital access for all EU citizens in order to bridge the digital divide, and recommends a larger use of e-democracy tools (e-government, e-governance, e-participation, e-consultation, e-voting...) at EU and national level.

*Shadow rapporteurs:* Cristian Dan Preda (EPP); Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (ECR); Sylvie Goulard (ALDE); Barbara Spinelli (GUE); Max Andersson (Greens/ EFA); Isabella Adinolfi (EFDD).

### **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*

In our last meeting AFCO Committee held an exchange of views with representatives of Scotland and Gibraltar governments on their views regarding the issues stemming from the withdrawal of the UK for those territories.

The discussion will continue today with an exchange of views with Ms. Kirsty Hughes, associate fellow of Friends of Europe, who has published a number of papers on Scotland and Brexit, and will bring further evidence on the particular situation of this devolved territory of the United Kingdom.

Moreover, in the afternoon (at 15.00) there will be a follow up of the debate with Guy Verhofstadt, who was appointed by the Conference of Presidents coordinator for the negotiations on the UK withdrawal from the EU, highlighting the latest developments on this important file.

## The 2016 "Winter Package" on European Security and Defence



*Presentation by Professor Steven Blockmans, Head of EU Foreign Policy at CEPS (Brussels), of a briefing note commissioned by the Policy Department for Citizens' Right and Constitutional Affairs*

Professor Blockmans, Head of EU Foreign Policy at the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels, and Professor of EU External Relations Law and Governance at the University of Amsterdam, was requested to provide AFCO with expertise on strengthening the CSDP in the context of the Treaty of Lisbon by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs.

He has produced a briefing entitled "The 2016 "Winter Package" on European Security and Defence: Constitutional, legal and institutional

### 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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implications", which has been distributed to Members in January.

## Implementation of Rule 225, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Procedure



AFCO is holding a hearing of the representatives of "Alliance for Peace and Freedom", in the framework of the procedure of Article 225 of the Rules of Procedure, in view of verifying the compliance of that European Political Party with EU fundamental rights.

### Next Meeting

20 March 2017, 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)

21 March 2017, 09.00 – 12.30 (Brussels)