

Development of the relations between the European Parliament and national parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon

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The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Elmar BROK (EPP-ED, DE) on the development of the relations between the European Parliament and national parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon. The committee notes that the last resolution adopted by the European Parliament on the issue of relations with national parliaments dates from 2002, and it carries out a reassessment of relations between the two. It welcomes the obligations and rights of the national parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon – which is a 'Treaty of the parliaments' – which enhance their role in the political processes of the EU. Members note with satisfaction that relations with the national parliaments and their members have developed fairly positively in recent years, but not yet to a sufficient extent, notably through the following forms of joint activities.

They make a series of observations and recommendation on **future relations**. The committee is of the opinion that new forms of pre- and post-legislative dialogue between the European Parliament and national parliaments should be developed. It urges national parliaments to:

- strengthen their efforts to hold national governments to account for their management of the spending of EU funds;
- scrutinise the quality of national impact assessments and the manner in which national governments transpose EU law into domestic law and implement EU policies and funding programmes at the level of the state, regions and local authorities;
- monitor rigorously the reporting of the national action plans of the Lisbon agenda.

The report states that regular bilateral Joint Committee Meetings of corresponding specialised committees allow for dialogue to take place at an early stage on legislation or political initiatives and should therefore be developed systematically into a permanent network of corresponding committees. Such meetings can be accompanied by ad hoc bilateral committee meetings to deal with specific national concerns. It recommends granting an adequate budget to organise meetings of specialised committees with corresponding committees of national parliaments and of European Parliament rapporteurs with their counterparts in national parliaments. It also recommends examining the possibility of establishing the technical facilities for holding videoconferences between the rapporteurs. Members believe that increased powers of the national parliaments with regard to compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, as provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon, will allow European legislation to be scrutinised at an early stage and will contribute to better law-making as well as to improved coherence of legislation at EU level. They recommend appropriate financial support for the electronic platform for the exchange of information between parliaments, the IPEX website.

The committee envisages more systematic monitoring of the pre-legislative dialogue between the national parliaments and the Commission (the "Barroso initiative") in order to be informed about the national parliaments' position at an early stage of the legislative process. It calls on national parliaments to make the opinions they issue in this context available to the European Parliament at the same time.

It also calls for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU) to be dissolved as soon as the WEU has been absorbed fully into the EU with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

The committee goes on to consider that the political **role of COSAC** will have to be defined by close cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments. COSAC should remain primarily a forum for the exchange of information and debate on general political issues and best practices with regard to the scrutiny of national governments. That information and debate should be focused on legislative activities pertaining to the area of freedom, security and justice and on respect of the principle of subsidiarity at EU level. Members believe that specialised committees should be more strongly involved in the preparation of, and representation at, COSAC meetings.