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

2008/2120(INI) - 07/05/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 379 votes to 65, with 16 abstentions, a resolution on the development of the relations between the European Parliament and national parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon.

The resolution stresses that the necessary parliamentarisation of the European Union must rely on two fundamental approaches: the broadening of the European Parliament's powers vis-à-vis all the Union's decisions and the strengthening of the powers of the national parliaments vis-à-vis their respective governments.

MEPs note 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. They welcome 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.

With regard to **future relations**, the Parliament 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.

MEPs deem it appropriate to **offer national parliaments support** in their scrutiny of draft legislation prior to its consideration by the Union legislature, as well as in the effective scrutiny of their governments when they are acting in the Council.

The resolution 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.

MEPs recommend 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. They also recommend examining the possibility of establishing the technical facilities for holding videoconferences between the rapporteurs in the specialised committees of

the national parliaments and the European Parliament. In this context, they recommend appropriate **financial support for the electronic platform for the exchange of information between parliaments, the IPEX website**.

The Parliament 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.

Role of COSAC: lastly, the Parliament considers that the political role of the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC) in the future will have to be defined by close cooperation between the European Parliament and the national parliaments, and that 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.

Moreover, it considers that information and debate should be focused, secondly, on legislative activities pertaining to the area of freedom, security and justice and on respect of the principle of subsidiarity at European Union level. According to MEPs, specialised committees should be more strongly involved in the preparation of, and representation at, COSAC meetings.