EP Rules of Procedure, Rules 106 and 192 and Annex XVII: hearings of Commissioners-designate

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The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted a report drafted by Andrew DUFF (ADLE, UK) on amendment of Rules 106 and 192 of, and Annex XVII to, Parliament's Rules of Procedure.

The approval of the Commission by Parliament in February 2010 was based on an enhanced process of hearings which ensured that the entire Commission-designate was assessed in an open, fair and consistent manner. Drawing conclusions from the approval process, the committee proposes, in collaboration with the Commission, that further modifications to Parliament's Rules of Procedure are both necessary and desirable.

The main amendments proposed are as follows:

- the possibility for the President to invite the President-elect of the Commission to inform Parliament about the allocation of portfolio responsibilities in the proposed college of Commissioners in accordance with his or her political guidelines;
- the presentation, by the President-elect, of the college of Commissioners and their programme at a sitting of Parliament which the President of the European Council and the President of the Council shall be invited to attend;
- the convocation of the committee coordinators by their committee Chair to prepare the organisation of the hearings of Commissioners-designate;
- the declarations of interest of the Commissioners-designate shall be sent for scrutiny to the committee responsible for legal affairs;
- for each Commissioner-designate there shall be two common questions drafted by the Conference of Committee Chairs, the first relating to the issues of general competence, European commitment and personal independence, and the second relating to the management of the portfolio and cooperation with Parliament;
- lastly, each hearing shall be scheduled to last three hours.

Members recall the need to revise its Code of Conduct for Commissioners, and in particular the provisions thereof concerning financial declarations by Commissioners, with a view to achieving for the European Union the highest standards of governance.