EP Rules of Procedure: changes in Parliament's relationship with the European Council and the Eurogroup following entry in force of the Lisbon Treaty

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The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted the report drafted by Alain LAMASSOURE (EPP, FR) on amending the Rules of Procedure to take into account the changing relationships between the European Parliament and the institutions representing the national governments following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

By letter of 4 March 2011, the President of the European Parliament referred to the Committee on Constitutional Affairs a proposal to amend the Rules of Procedure following discussions held in the Conference of Presidents on 17 February 2011.

During those discussions, the Conference of Presidents pointed out that, following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, Parliament had become a co-legislator in the EU and that its powers were on a par with those of the Council in the ordinary legislative procedure and in the budget procedure. Given this new balance between the institutions, the Conference of Presidents took the view that there was no longer any need for Council Question Time to be included on the agenda every part-session, as is the case at the moment. The Conference of Presidents does, however, take the view that question hours with the President of the Commission, the Vice-President/High Representative and the President of the Eurogroup should continue to be an option.

Abolishing Council Question Time in its present form would reflect the shift in the institutional balance referred to by the Conference of Presidents. For the reasons set out above, however, it would be sensible to retain the option of putting questions to the Council – during a specific question hour – on matters relating to responsibilities other than those linked to the exercise of its legislative and budgetary functions.

Given these considerations, the Constitutional Affairs Committee proposes that Parliament should amend **Article 116 of its Rules** in the following way:

- Parliament and the Council have equal powers in the ordinary legislative procedure and in the budget procedure. Given the new balance between the institutions, **there is no longer any reason for the agenda to continue to include Council Question Time in its present form**.
- In view of the Council's other responsibilities, in particular its policy-making, coordinating and implementing functions, it ought to be possible for **specific question hours to be held with the Council**.