Relations between the European Parliament and the institutions representing the national governments

2012/2034(INI) - 18/10/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Alain LAMASSOURE (EPP, FR) on relations between the European Parliament and the institutions representing the national governments.

The committee noted that under the pressure of the crisis, the European Council has considerably aggrandised its role. By raising to European Council level matters normally dealt with at Council of Ministers level; it has gone beyond the crucial Treaty injunction that it has no legislative functions. Thus, the **temptation for the heads of state or government to resort to intergovernmental expedients** jeopardises the 'Community method', in breach of the Treaties.

Members believed that, in the light of the experience gained over these four years, there is a need to **improve and formalise the working relations between the European Council and Parliament**; this could take the form of either a joint statement or an interinstitutional agreement or an exchange of letters.

In order to strengthen the democratic nature of the decision-making process, **proper parliamentary scrutiny arrangements shall be implemented**.

The committee recommended the following:

- other than in cases of exceptional urgency, any meeting of the European Council should be preceded by a debate in Parliament, allowing the adoption of a resolution, with the President of the European Council coming to present the subjects on the agenda in person;
- Parliament and the European Council should organise their respective work so as to give to Parliament the opportunity to make known its opinion on these subjects in good time, and to allow the President of the European Council to report back after each meeting of the European Council in front of the plenary sitting;
- where an agreement is concluded between the representatives of Parliament and of the Council in the context of a legislative procedure, the European Council should not to raise the matter again;
- it called for Parliament's timely involvement whenever the European Council initiates an action plan or a procedure likely to include a legislative dimension to be decided in cooperation with Parliament in a form appropriate to each case.

Members pointed out that the conclusions of the European Council are negotiating instructions for the Council of Ministers, and that in no case do they constitute red lines which cannot be negotiated with Parliament.

The European Council is called upon to state clearly, before the start of the European election campaign, how it intends, for its part, to respect the choice of European citizens in the appointment of the President of the Commission, in accordance with the Treaty on European Union, in the context of the consultations to be held between Parliament and the European Council.