EP Rules of Procedure, Rule 116 and Annex II: Question Time

2013/2083(REG) - 16/04/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 598 votes to 66, with 8 abstentions, to amend Parliament's Rules of Procedure with regard to parliamentary questions.

The amendments adopted concern Rule 116, Question Time, as well as Rules 117 and 118, Questions for Written Answer.

The main features of the amendments are as follows:

Question time (Rule 116):

- Question Time with the Commission shall be held at each part-session for a duration of **90 minutes** on one or more specific horizontal themes to be decided upon by the Conference of Presidents one month in advance of the part-session;
- the Commissioners invited to participate by the Conference of Presidents shall have a **portfolio related to the specific horizontal theme or themes** on which questions are to be put to them. The number of Commissioners shall be limited to **two per part-session**, with the possibility of adding a third being dependent on the specific horizontal theme or themes chosen for the Question Time;
- Question time shall be conducted in accordance with a **ballot-system**;

- Annex II which establishes in great length guidelines for the verification of the admissibility of questions, supplementary questions and time-limits has been adapted to the new ballot system.

After a period expiring one year from the beginning of the eighth parliamentary term, the Conference of Presidents should carry out an assessment of the regime in respect of additional questions.

Questions for written answer (Rules 117 and 118):

- questions should be submitted to the President. Doubts concerning the admissibility of a question should be settled by the President. The President's decision should be based not exclusively on the provisions of annex III on criteria for questions for written answer but on the provisions of these Rules of Procedure in general. The questioner should be notified of the President's decision;
- questions should be submitted in electronic format. Each Member may submit a maximum of **five questions per month.** By way of exception, additional questions may be submitted in the form of a paper document tabled and signed personally by the Member concerned in the relevant service of the Secretariat;
- questions and answers should be published on **Parliament’s website**;
- any Member may put a maximum of six questions per month for written answer to the European Central Bank. Doubts concerning the admissibility of a question shall be settled by the Chair. The questioner shall be notified of the Chair's decision;
- questions should fall exclusively **within the limits of the competences of the institutions** as laid down in the relevant Treaties and within the sphere of responsibility of the addressee, and be of general interest. They should not contain more than three sub-questions;

Lastly, if a question seeks factual or statistical information that is already available to Parliament's research services, it should not be forwarded to the addressee but to those services, unless the President decides otherwise upon request by the author.

These amendments should enter into force on the first day of the first part-session of the eighth parliamentary term.