Control of the Register and composition of the Commission's expert groups

2015/2319(INI) - 14/02/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 663 votes to 16, with 13 abstentions, a resolution on control of the Register and composition of the Commission's expert groups.

Parliament welcomed the Commission Decision of 30 May 2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission's expert groups. It reiterated the importance of reviving forms of involvement of **representatives of civil society and the social partners** in crucial areas.

Reform of the system: Parliament recalled that a lack of transparency has a negative effect on the trust that EU citizens have in the EU institutions. In this regard, it called for the effective reform of the Commission's expert group system, based on clear principles of **transparency** and balanced composition.

Selection of experts: Parliament took the view that the entire selection process should guarantee a high level of transparency and should be governed by clearer, more concise criteria, with particular emphasis on **candidates' practical experience**, alongside their academic qualifications, and on possible conflicts of interest the experts might have. It also welcomed the fact that a connection has already been established between the Register of Commission Expert Groups and the Transparency Register, thus ensuring improved transparency.

The Commission is asked to:

- make progress towards a **more balanced composition** of the expert groups and make it clear, in the public call for application, how it defines a balanced composition and which interests (economic and non-economic) it seeks to be represented when the expert groups are established;
- investigate whether a new **complaints mechanism** is required, if the definition of balanced composition is contested by interested stakeholders or whether current arrangements are adequate, Parliament should be associated in this control mechanism;
- explore ways to facilitate and encourage the **participation of underrepresented organisations or social groups** in expert groups (e.g. experts representing SMEs, consumers, trade unions);
- assess the development of an **allowance system** that supports underrepresented groups in acquiring the necessary expertise;
- make it possible for **European non-governmental organisations** to be represented in the expert groups by representatives of their national member organisations, when provided with a clear mandate from the European organisations;
- provide for the meetings and minutes to be made **public**;
- develop specific guidelines explaining how it interprets the provision that the minutes of the expert groups should be meaningful and complete;
- devote **sufficient resources** to the activities relating to the Register.

Lastly, Members noted that the Commission has stated that by the end of 2016, the new framework for Commission expert groups will have to be implemented by all Directorates-General. They requested the Commission to submit to Parliament **a report on the implementation and evaluation** at the latest one year after the adoption of the Decision, i.e. before 1 June 2017.