Implementation of the Treaty provisions on national parliaments

2023/2084(INI) - 17/01/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 453 votes to 85, with 15 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the Treaty provisions on national parliaments.

National parliaments' active participation in European affairs and enhanced scrutiny of national governments by national parliaments are instrumental in ensuring the democratic accountability and legitimacy of the EU institutional system.

Moreover, national parliaments 'contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union' (Article 12 TEU) and, together with the European Parliament, play an essential role in strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the EU project, fostering citizens' trust and contributing to the sustainability and resilience of the European project.

Scrutinising governmental activity in European affairs

Parliament encouraged national parliaments to **fully exercise their European functions** in order to directly influence and scrutinise the content of European policies, in particular via the monitoring of their national governments acting as members of the European Council. It called on members of national and regional parliaments to foster a **European conscience** in their decision-making and to recognise the direct impact of EU policies on their constituents.

Member States should ensure that national parliaments are granted enough time, the capacity, the resources and the necessary access to information in order to **fulfil their constitutional role** of scrutinising and thus legitimating the activity of national governments when these governments act at European level. Members considered that transparency of the working methods and decision-making processes of the EU institutions represents a precondition for enabling national parliaments to effectively fulfil their institutional role deriving from the Treaties. They called therefore for the voting records and positions of Member States in the Council to be **made public**.

The resolution encouraged strengthened political dialogue between the European institutions and national parliaments.

Developing a European public sphere

Parliament reiterated its long-standing call to enable these parties to **actively engage in the Member States' political spheres** and support their member parties when EU issues are at stake. It called for the swift conclusion of the recast Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations to enable European political parties to support their member parties in campaigning for the European elections and referendum campaigns about EU matters.

Members believe that the establishment of an **annual European Week** would allow Members of the European Parliament, Commissioners and ministers of sitting Council presidencies to stand before all national and, where appropriate, regional parliaments in order to discuss and explain the European agenda alongside national parliamentarians.

Backing reform of the Early Warning System

The most substantial prerogative for national parliaments brought about by the Treaty of Lisbon was their ability to scrutinise compliance with the principle of subsidiarity in the early stages of EU legislative procedures. Noting that procedures such as the 'yellow' or 'orange' cards have not been used extensively, Members suggested that all EU institutions and Member States agree on a **common understanding of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality**.

Parliament acknowledged the request by national parliaments to extend the eight-week period during which they can issue reasoned opinions under Article 3 of Protocol No 1. It believes that the introduction of a **twelve-week period** should be considered in the framework of the next Treaty revision.

Members suggested setting up a system, sometimes called a **'green card'** procedure, whereby at least one third of national parliaments can request that the Commission or the European Parliament, once the latter has been granted a general direct right of initiative, submit proposals with the aim of positively influencing the European debate. The Commission or the European Parliament could enjoy the discretion either to take on board such proposals or to issue a formal response underlining its reasons for not doing so.

Envisaging better interinstitutional cooperation

Parliament considered that the current framework of relations between the Union and the national parliaments could be **simplified and harmonised** in order to make it more efficient and effective. It called, in this context, for a review of the engagement between the Union and its national parliaments across existing platforms and forums, with the aim of strengthening these relations and adapting them to current needs.

It encouraged the European institutions and regional parliaments with legislative powers to have more active engagement and direct interaction between each other, while fully respecting the role and competences of national parliaments.

Members believe that better **interinstitutional cooperation** could be attained if the Interparliamentary Committee Meetings (ICM) were accorded more relevance by the Members of the European Parliament and the national parliaments and if they were prepared for closer cooperation. The rules of procedure could be changed in order to regulate stronger forms of cooperation between national parliaments and the European Parliament, in full respect of their institutional competences and the distribution thereof.

Lastly, Members invited national parliaments to reflect in more detail on **defence capability prioritisation at EU level**, including through joint interparliamentary meetings between representatives from national parliaments and Members of the European Parliament, within the context of the IPC on the CFSP/CSDP and via political dialogue.