Improving the operation of the Institutions without amending the Treaty

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The Committee adopted an own-initiative report by Fernand HERMAN (EPP, B) on improvements which could be made to the functioning of the EU institutions without modifying the Treaties. The report points the way to an agreement between the institutions on greater involvement for Parliament in the coordination of economic policies of the EU Member States. It also advances proposals to make certain EU policies more transparent and democratic. The committee considers it unacceptable that there are EU policy areas - particularly economic and monetary union (EMU) - in which powers of democratic control have been taken away from national parliaments without being replaced by scrutiny by the European Parliament. Since this problem was not resolved by the Amsterdam Treaty, the committee believes that interinstitutional agreements are the best way of achieving the objective of greater democratic scrutiny at EU level. As the question of democratic accountability in the area of EMU is particularly urgent, Mr Herman's report proposes a text for a preliminary draft interinstitutional agreement on procedures for setting out the broad guidelines of economic policy, multilateral surveillance and excessive deficits. Further to this aim of reducing the democratic deficit and enhancing the role of the European Parliament, the committee calls for interinstitutional agreements to be concluded on external economic policy, international agreements stemming from the Euratom Treaty, international fisheries agreements, collective agreements between employers and employees and the ad hoc procedure on agricultural expenditure. It also wishes to see improved information on competition policy and a code of conduct in the field of fiscal policy.