Transparency and Members' financial interests (Annex I of the EP Rules of Procedure)

1994/2143(INI) - 25/09/1995

The committee, which met in Brussels on 25 and 26 September, approved the report by Jean-Thomas NORDMANN (ELDR, F) seeking to strengthen the transparency of members' financial interests within the context of the current rules of conduct for MEPs by a majority of 7 votes to 2 with 2 abstentions. It also unanimously adopted the report by Robert EVANS (PSE, UK) on the vote of appointment of the executive Commission (EP 213.716). The proposed amendment allowed the vote of appointment to be postponed until the next parliamentary session. The NORDMANN report completes the implementing provisions of Article 9 of the Rules of Procedure in Annex I to the rules. According to Mr NORDMANN, the European Parliament is increasingly threatened by two-faced moralizers trying to destabilize Parliament in order to promote extremist doctrines. Given the increase in the powers and influence of the European Parliament, current practices in national parliaments and the growing demand by the European public for transparency from their politicians, provisions guaranteeing that parliamentary mandates are exercised with the greatest clarity need to be laid down. At the time of election, each MEP will be required to make a personal declaration in a register kept by the quaestors giving precise details relating to: - his or her professional activities and any other office or paid activity; - any donation or payment in cash or in kind within the scope of his or her mandate, stating the identity of the donor. This includes various payments in the form of support (assistants paid, even partly, by third parties, gifts, travel, cut price hotels etc.). The sum of donations or perquisites shall be set by the quaestors; - any movables or property owned; Mr Brendan DONNELLY (PPE, UK) tabled a reservation on behalf of the PPE group on this last point. These declarations must be updated annually or after any event which renders them inaccurate or incomplete. This register will be open to the public: it will be available in the European Parliament's place of work and in the European Parliament's information offices in the Member States and included in the European Parliament's databases. The Bureau of the European Parliament is called on to make the necessary arrangements to prevent the data published from being used by terrorists or criminals. Only members who have complied with their obligation to publish this information shall have their mandate validated. Vote of appointment to the Commission: the Treaty on European Union does not authorize a separate vote on each candidate Commissioner but the European Parliament wishes to assess candidate Commissioners in greater depth. In order to solve this dilemma, the EVANS report proposes a compromise solution to reconcile the views of the European Parliament and the Commission on votes of appointment to the Commission. At present, the European Parliament approves or rejects the Commission appointed at the end of the appointment debate. The amendment to Article 33 (4) of the Rules of Procedure makes provision for the vote of appointment to be postponed by the European Parliament to the following sitting in order to give it time to address reservations raised during the debate.