Codecision procedure: enlargement of the scope of the codecision

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OBJECTIVE: Presentation of the Commission report under Article 189b(8) of the Treaty, on the question of widening the scope of the codecision procedure on the agenda for the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference. SUBSTANCE: In the Commission's view, the extension of codecision is a natural step in the process of enhancing the democratic legitimacy of the Union. It considers that in the present stage of Community affairs proper, maintaining the European Parliament's diminished role is contrary to democratic principles. Its participation in enacting legislation by codecision with the Council should become the rule. This would mean extending codecision to all Community legislative activity. According to the Commission, codecision should be used for legislation only, the assent procedure for 'constitutional' areas and international agreements, and the consultation procedure for other areas. The cooperation procedure would be abolished. This approach would mean using the codecision procedure in the following areas: - regulations prohibiting discrimination; - citizenship (excepting the new rights which would remain subject to the consultation procedure); - aspects of the internal market not yet covered by the codecision procedure (social security for migrant workers, the right of establishment, services, capital movements); - the common transport policy; - indirect taxes; - minimum rules in the field of social policy (except agreements between the social partners); - vocational training (general objectives); - economic and social cohesion (decisions relating to the Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund or specific initiatives); - the environment (general objectives); - development cooperation (excluding international agreements); - financial measures; - Staff Regulations. The codecision procedure would not be used, however, in the following areas: - visa policy; - industrial policy; - the CAP (except for fundamental acts concerning agricultural policy conception and orientation: certain aspects of the common market organizations; the setting up of one or more agricultural guidance and guarantee funds, common rules on public health, animal and plant health; structural policy; policy on product quality); - the common commercial policy (except for measures of a legislative nature such as basic anti-dumping rules and regulations laying down general import and export rules); - trans-European networks; - implementation of the research framework programme; - international agreements; - association arrangements for overseas countries and territories; - agreements between social partners; - economic and monetary union: measures relating to EMU are traditionally seen as a government prerogative. Finally, the Commission points out that extending the scope of the codecision procedure is also dependent on simplification. This point will also be examined by the IGC.