Improving the operation of the Institutions without amending the Treaty

1996/2236(INI) - 14/05/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Fernand HERMAN (EPP, B) Parliament considered it unacceptable that there were policy areas in which democratic control had been taken away from national parliaments and had not been replaced by scrutiny by the European Parliament, in particular Economic and Monetary Union, but also the common commercial policy, agreements stemming from the Euratom Treaty, agricultural policy, development cooperation policy, competition policy and the implementation of collective agreements negotiated between the social partners. This problem had not been resolved by the Amsterdam Treaty nor, as regards employment, by the compromises of the Amsterdam and Luxembourg European Councils. The same question of democratic accountability arose with regard to the European Central Bank. In order to deal with this shortfall, until a future intergovernmental conference Parliament considered that the conclusion of interinstitutional agreements was the most appropriate method of achieving the objective of strengthening democratic accountability at Union level. With regard to Economic and Monetary Union Parliament proposed a new interinstitutional agreement dealing with procedures setting out the broad economic policy guidelines, multilateral surveillance and the excessive deficit procedure. It also advocated the conclusion of interinstitutional agreements and systematic information to Parliament on external economic policy and in particular agreements based on Article 113 of the Treaty, international agreements under the Euratom Treaty, development cooperation, international fisheries agreements, collective agreements between the social partners (such as those on parental leave and on part-time work) and on the ad hoc procedure for agricultural expenditure. It asked the Commission and the Council to take account of the fact that the conclusion of any international agreement with financial implications required at the very least the prior consultation of the budgetary authority and its assent if the financial implications were significant. It also called for improved information on competition policy, in particular through the regular information meetings with the relevant Commissioner and a code of conduct with regard to fiscal policy.