# Relations between the European Parliament and the national parliaments

1996/2145(INI) - 12/06/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

TEXT Adopting the report by Mrs Annemie NEYTS-UYTTEBROECK (ELDR, B) on relations between the European Parliament and national parliaments, the European Parliament noted that there is still a serious democratic deficit at Union level and that this was particularly acute in cases where suitable scrutiny cannot be carried out at national level or at the level of the European Parliament. Parliament considered that general problems lie at the heart of the democratic deficit, which is blatant in a number of specific areas: common foreign and security policy, home affairs and justice, economic and monetary union, agricultural policy and international trade agreements and amendments to treaties. It also considered that the advent of "increased cooperation" between certain Member States will pose new problems with regard to parliamentary scrutiny. The general principle of openness and transparency therefore needed to be introduced into the Treaty and the public needed to be allowed access to documents. In particular, the democratic control exercised by the national parliaments needed to be facilitated by improving the decision-making structures and processes within the framework of the IGC (mainly by reducing the number of processes and legislative procedures and unifying the budget of the Communities). As far as strengthening the European Parliament's democratic control is concerned, Parliament advocated extending the codecision procedure (especially with regard to budgetary matters), extending the assent procedure to all amendments to the Treaty, to decisions based on Article 235 and to all international agreements, strengthening Parliament's role in approving the President of the European Commission and giving it an increased say on second and third pillar matters and agriculture. With regard to increased scrutiny of European affairs by national parliaments, the European Parliament considered that minimum time limits should be imposed for consideration of EU legislative documents as proposed by COSAC (Conference of European Affairs Committees). It also considered that various practical problems should be resolved such as the 4-week notice for legislative and non-legislative documents, the definition of which protocols qualify as "legislative", the conditions governing urgent demands and the assurance of maximum openness in relation to conciliation undertaken under the codecision procedure. It suggested that European Commission documents should be transmitted to national parliaments electronically on a more regular basis and called for the Commission's annual legislative programme to be sent to the national parliaments as quickly as possible and that they be notified of its execution. Finally, Parliament called for increased cooperation between the parliaments of the European Union and the European Parliament at various levels, especially within the framework of joint meetings of national parliamentary committees and the committees of the European Parliament with responsibilities in the same area, bilateral committee meetings and meetings between rapporteurs and representatives of the corresponding political groups.