Resolution on reform of the Council and transparency

2002/2550(RSP) - 16/05/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted the resolution on the reform of the Council and transparency. Parliament repeats that the projected reform must give precedence to the Community method over the intergovernmental method in decision-making procedures in all the Union's spheres of activity and it stresses in this connection that the reform of the Council must be consistent with the more general objective of rebalancing the powers of the union's institutions with the aim of conferring legislative power on the Council and Parliament and executive power on the Commission. It notes that the re-establishing the European Council's role of laying down political guidelines is an initial step in the direction called for by Parliament. Moreover, it stresses nonetheless that upgrading the role of the General Affairs Council and reestablishing a single procedure for the preparation of decisions are essential corollaries to this reform. The primary aim, according to MEPs must be to adapt the Council's political set up and procedures to take account of the increasing number of its members. Parliament had already requested the Council when it acts as legislator to deliberate and vote in public. Furthermore, the Council should permit the presence of television cameras to film the debates and the voting. The Council secretary-general should report back to Parliament before the European Council meeting in Seville, this is particularly important following the European Council in Barcelona, which fell short of setting out clear guidelines for Council transparency. On a specific point relating to the co-decision legislative procedure, MEPs declared that it is essential that the Council be present when legislative texts are adopted in Parliament and, on the other, that Parliament be present when the Council takes final legislative decisions. Parliament should also be able to speak at Council meetings. Parliament and the Council should together publicly announce the final outcome of the legislative procedure. Finally, the Parliament called on the Council and Member States to join forces to launch an information campaign with a view of informing citizens of their fundamental right of public access to documents at European level.