

Political parties at European level: statute and financing

2003/0039(COD) - 19/06/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution, which was based on the report by Jo LEINEN (PES, Germany) but differed in some respects by the report adopted by the committee. The main amendments to the Commission's proposal were as follows: - "European political party" is changed to "political party at European level"; - Such a party must meet the following conditions: 1) It must have legal personality in the Member State in which its seat is located; 2) It must be represented, in at least one quarter of the Member States, by Members of the European Parliament, in the national parliaments or regional parliaments or regional assemblies, or must have received, in at least one quarter of the Member States, at least three per cent of the votes cast in each of those Member States at the most recent European elections; 3) It must observe, in particular in its programme and through its actions, the principles on which the EU is founded: the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law; 4) It must have participated in elections to the European Parliament or expressed its intention to do so. - In order to receive funding, a political party at European level must file an application with the European Parliament each year. The latter will take a decision within three months. The first application has to be filed with a number of specified documents. If the relevant conditions are no longer met, the party will be excluded from financing under the Regulation. - The party must declare its sources of finance by providing a list specifying donors and donations exceeding EUR 500 (the Commission proposed that all donations above EUR 100 should be declared.) - The party may not accept donations from any undertaking over which the public authorities directly or indirectly may exert a dominant influence by dint of ownership, a financial holding or the rules by which it is governed. This clause replaces the Commission proposal to ban donations from bodies in which the State holds over 50% of the capital. - Donations exceeding EUR 12000 are also banned (this figure replaces the Commission's proposal of EUR 5000) - Dues from political parties which are members of a political party at European level are admissible so long as they do not exceed 40% of that party's annual budget. - The European Parliament will publish details of the technical support given to each political party at European level in an annual report. - Financing under this Regulation will apply from the opening of the first session following the 2004 European Parliament elections.