Basic information

1998/2150(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
The progress achieved by the European Union. Report 1997 **Subject** 8 State and evolution of the Union	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	INST Institutional Affairs	SPAAK Antoinette (ELDR)	03/06/1998

Council of the European Union	**Council configuration**	**Meetings**	**Date**
	Environment	2106	1998-06-16

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
09/06/1998	Non-legislative basic document published	08690/1/1998	Summary
15/07/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
05/10/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
05/10/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0357/1998	
20/10/1998	Debate in Parliament		
21/10/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
09/11/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1998/2150(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	INST/4/10274

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0357/1998 OJ C 341 09.11.1998, p. 0002	05/10/1998	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0613/1998 OJ C 341 09.11.1998, p. 0066-0083	21/10/1998	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	08690/1/1998	09/06/1998	Summary

The progress achieved by the European Union. Report 1997

1998/2150(COS) - 09/06/1998 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: to present the annual report, adopted by the Cardiff European Council, on the progress achieved by the Union in 1997. SUBSTANCE: the European Council's report describes - albeit without being exhaustive - the main activities of the European Union in 1997 in all fields. It is firstly recalled that, on 16 and 17 June 1998, the Heads of State and of Government reached agreement on the Amsterdam Treaty which aspires to make a practical response to the challenges facing the EU: - to bring the Union closer to its citizens and make it more comprehensible to them; - to establish an area marked by freedom, security and justice; - to improve the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) so as to render the Union's external policy more consistent and effective and to raise its profile; - to make a number of institutional changes (increasing the number of fields where codecision applies and procedures are simplified, extending qualified majority voting, increasing the participation of national parliaments, transparency, subsidiarity); - to introduce the concept of enhanced cooperation among Member States in particular fields. As far as the main issues are concerned, the report stresses that substantial progress has been made in the following fields: 1) Enlargement: the European Council confirmed that enlargement of the Union will be possible only on condition that the institutions are first strengthened and their functioning improved. A European Conference is to be held, which will be attended by the Member States and all the European countries which have applied for membership and which share the Union's internal and external values and objectives. The criteria and principles which Member States must endorse in order to participate in the Conference have been laid down. The European Council decided to hold bilateral intergovernmental conferences in spring 1998 to begin the accession negotiations with Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Meanwhile, preparations for the negotiations with Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria would be speeded up by studying the Union's acquis and by means of the bilateral meetings at ministerial level with Member States of the Union. 2) Agenda 2000: the need to ensure that before enlargement the Union will be optimally prepared to cope with it was confirmed; this meant making the necessary adjustments to its policies - on agriculture, economic and social cohesion, and internal and external affairs - and to their financing within a predetermined financial framework and taking account of the imperative of budgetary discipline. The Union's intention of continuing to develop the present model of European agriculture was also confirmed. Generally speaking, the proposals made by the Commission in Agenda 2000 were regarded as a good working basis for the continuation of negotiations. 3) Economic and Monetary Union: 1997 saw decisive progress towards the third stage of EMU. Key legislation required for the proper functioning of the single currency was finalised. The Amsterdam European Council in June 1997 agreed the following points: - a stability and growth pact to ensure long-term budgetary discipline during the 3rd stage of EMU; - the main elements of the new exchange rate mechanism linking the euro to the currencies of the Member States not participating in the euro zone; - the legal framework for the euro (continuity of contracts, rules on conversion and rounding, the possibility for Member States to bring forward the full application of the euro to a date before 31/12/2001); - the designs of the euro coins. 4) Employment: the European Council adopted two resolutions, one on the stability and growth pact, and the other on growth and employment. They provide for greater coordination of economic policies, to supplement the procedure laid down by the new Title on employment in the future Amsterdam Treaty, which the Council wished to be implemented immediately. It was in this context that an extraordinary meeting of the European Council devoted to employment was held in Luxembourg on 20-21 November 1997, which adopted at Union level guidelines for 1998 with four main objectives: - to improve people's employability (especially that of young people and the long-term unemployed); - to develop entrepreneurship; - to encourage the adaptability of businesses and their employees; - to strengthen policies on equal opportunities. On the basis of these guidelines, each Member State is now to adopt a national action plan for 1998, which it is to present before the Cardiff European Council in June 1998.

The progress achieved by the European Union. Report 1997

1998/2150(COS) - 21/10/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mrs Antoinette Spaak (ELDR, B) on the progress achieved by the Union in 1997, Parliament regrets that the Council report makes no political assessment of the progress achieved, the problems encountered or the shortcomings still to be remedied; before objectives can be

defined, minds must concentrate on the political nature of the European enterprise. (1) Amsterdam Treaty and institutional balance: Parliament draws attention to its call for institutional reform to be completed before accession of any new Member State. Noting that the intergovernmental method has failed to bear fruit at institutional level, it calls on the Council to learn the lessons of that failure and considers that it is now necessary to reactivate the Community method. The Commission should undertake to draw up a preliminary draft reform plan by the end of the year. Parliament also stresses the need to preserve the institutional balance by clearly restating the role and powers of each Institution: the Commission, guardian of the Treaties, permitted to exercise the right of initiative, must have its independence reaffirmed; unanimous decisions in the Council should be required for constitutional matters only and Parliament must bring the necessary democracy to decision-making in all legislative matters and tighten its supervision of the Commission. (2) The euro and enlargement: Parliament maintains that revitalisation of European integration to bring about political union will be impossible unless the single currency and enlargement are successful. The Agenda 2000 reforms must be successfully completed; the new financial framework must serve to meet the cost of enlargement without jeopardising the continuity of the solidarity and cohesion policies and demonstrate by hard evidence that further enlargement will not work to the detriment of deeper integration. (3) The CFSP: Parliament hopes that the institutional reforms will also extend to the CFSP to ensure that the Union's political weight is commensurate with its status as the principal donor of aid. It regrets that the Member States are failing to invoke the Treaty provisions that would enable them to act together on the international stage and hopes that the provisions of the Treaty of Amsterdam will be implemented (planning and analysis unit, appointment of secretary-general to represent the Union, Commission's exercise of its right to submit proposals, defence policy coordination and integration of the WEU into the EU, respect for human rights, consistency between the CFSP and the common trade policy). Parliament also draws attention to its proposals to set up a European civil intervention corps and establish diplomatic representation at EU level in non-member countries where fewer than four Member States have diplomatic posts. (4) Justice and home affairs: Parliament calls for a political analysis of the opportunities offered by the new provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty and, after drawing attention to the principle of incorporating the Schengen acquis, calls on the Council to give effect to this integration.