Basic information

2003/2085(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
European governance **Subject** 8 State and evolution of the Union 8.10 Revision of the Treaties, intergovernmental conferences	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFCO Constitutional Affairs	VAN DEN BERG Margrietus (PSE)	23/04/2003

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market	MEDINA ORTEGA Manuel (PSE)	07/07/2003
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	EVANS Jill (V/ALE)	15/01/2003
CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Secretariat-General	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
11/12/2002	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2002)0705	Summary
15/05/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
06/11/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
06/11/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0402/2003	
03/12/2003	Debate in Parliament		

04/12/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0540/2003	Summary
04/12/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2003/2085(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFCO/5/19519

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0402/2003	06/11/2003	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0540/2003 OJ C 089 14.04.2004, p. 0031-0103 E	04/12/2003	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	COM(2002)0704	11/12/2002	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2002)0705	11/12/2002	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	COM(2002)0713	11/12/2002	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0019/2003 OJ C 256 24.10.2003, p. 0024-0029	02/07/2003	

European governance

2003/2085(INI) - 11/12/2002 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present an examination of improved procedures and guidelines enhancing the use of experts for the establishment of Community policies. CONTENT : this Communication is a direct result of the White Paper on European Governance adopted in July 2001. It seeks to examine ways in which the Commission can make better use of those experts at its disposal when formulating policies. Specifically this would include scientific

expertise. All things being equal experts are currently requested to perform "classical" scientific assessments, rooted in the natural or social sciences. In most cases this is fairly straightforward in which questions are addressed and the evidence considered based on uncontroversial, well-established, facts. On other occasion the evidence in not nearly so clear or evident. Take, for example, BSE and GMO's. In these cases policies have to be adopted in the face of significant uncertainty. As the Communication notes, scientific expertise is, in such cases, as much about stating what is unknown, or uncertain with differing degrees of probability, as about setting out commonly agreed and accepted views. Other examples include policy decisions relating to air quality, authorising cosmetic products, establishing automobile safety standards, determining sustainable fish catches, developing strategies to tackle unemployment and designing European research programmes. When considering such matters, the interplay between policy-makers, experts, interested parties and the public at large is a crucial part of policy-making and attention has to be focused not just on policy outcome but also on the process followed. These matters are made all the more problematic given that the Union is required to apply the precautionary principle and acknowledge the role of risk assessment and risk management when deciding policy outcomes. This Communication therefore sets out a number of objectives aimed at establishing sound principles for the gathering of expert opinion. The first objective is to help the Commission departments mobilise and exploit the most appropriate expertise with a view to establishing a sound knowledge base for better policies. The second objective is to uphold the Commission's determination that the process of collecting and using expert advice should be credible. Under the measures to be outlined the Commission is not advocating a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Rather, it aims to set out principles, guidelines and practical questions that encapsulate and promote good practices. Three core principles are thus proposed. Firstly, seeking advice of an appropriately high quality. Secondly, seeking and acting on advice from experts in an open manner and thirdly, ensuring that its methods for collecting and using expert advice is effective and proportionate. Underpinning these three core principles are a series of guidelines which include inter alia, maintaining an adequate level of in-house expertise, involving other interested departments, requiring departments to cast their nets as widely as possible in seeking appropriate expertise, assessing both mainstream and divergent views (to be supported by plausible evidence), requiring experts to declare immediately any direct or indirect interest in the issues at stake and maintaining a culture of openness vis-α-vis the public. In terms of implementation, the Communication foresees an evolutionary and organic process based on on-going assessments.Initial implementation measures should include inter-departmental collaboration, requesting the directorate-generals to establish procedures to assess the experience gained in implementing the guidelines, requiring directorate-generals to report on their experiences and lastly, organising in 2005, a Commission led independent evaluation of the application of the present guidelines.

European governance

2003/2085(INI) - 11/12/2002 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to offer improved general principles and minimum standards for the consultation of interested parties. CONTENT : in its Communication on consultation and dialogue the Commission notes that it has a long tradition of open and transparent consultations with interested parties. However, this is based on a variety of methods and traditions. Currently, there is no one unifying set of procedures in place governing aspects of consultation and /or dialogue. In its White Paper on European Governance published in July 2001 the Commission identified improved guidelines for consultation as an area requiring further improvements. This Communication is a response to that observation. Indeed the large reaction the Commission received to the White Paper on Governance confirms that consultation is indeed a matter of interest to many. The overall rationale of this document is to ensure that all relevant parties are properly consulted. The principle aims of the approach can be summarised as follows: - to ensure more involvement of interested parties through a more transparent consultation process, which will enhance the Commission's accountability; - to provide general principles and standards for consultation that help the Commission to rationalise its consultation procedures and to carry them out in a meaningful and systematic way; - to build a framework for consultation that is coherent, yet flexible enough to take account of the specific requirements of all the diverse interests and of the need to design appropriate consultation strategies for each policy proposal; - to promote mutual learning and exchange of good practices within the Commission. The consultation relationship between the Commission and interested parties should be underpinned by certain fundamental principles. The principles are - participation, openness, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. When consulting on major policy initiatives the Commission will be guided by the general principles and minimum standards set out in this document. However, neither the general principles nor the minimum standards will be legally binding. In the Communication the Commission defines "consultation" as a process through which the Commission wishes to trigger input from outside interested parties for the shaping of policy prior to a decision by the Commission. Under this definition specific consultation frameworks already provided for in the Treaties will be excluded. As will consultation requirements under international agreements and decisions taken in a formal process of consulting Member States (comitology procedure). In terms of the minimum standards which are to apply to the consultation procedure, the Commission requires a clear content of the consultation process including, for example, a summary of the context, scope and objectives of consultation details of any hearing, contact details and deadlines and informing participants of what feed-back to expect. The Commission should ensure wide coverage of policy issues so that all target groups affect by the policy, those who will be involved in implementation or bodies that have stated objectives giving them a direct interest in the policy are informed. The Commission further suggests that the web portal "Your-Voice-in-Europe" should be used to publicise anyforthcoming policy initiatives as well as relying on other means such as press briefings and mailings. Time limits for participation will be set allowing enough time for interested parties to prepare their responses and lastly, the Commission will offer a receipt of contributions. The results of open public consultations should be displayed on websites linked to a single access point on the Internet.

European governance

2003/2085(INI) - 04/12/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Max VAN DEN BERG (PES, NL) on European Governance. (Please see the summary dated 06/11/03.) On the question of global governance, Parliament also felt that the recent failure of the WTO Conference in Cancun demonstrated the need to reform the rules, procedures and decision-making mechanisms of the WTO. Such reform would create a more efficient, transparent and democratic organisation in which a parliamentary dimension must comprise an important element. The Commission is asked to make proposals to this end.