Basic information

2012/2308(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Location of the seats of the European Union's institutions **Subject** 8.10 Revision of the Treaties, intergovernmental conferences 8.40 Institutions of the Union	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFCO Constitutional Affairs	HÄFNER Gerald (Verts/ALE) FOX Ashley (ECR)	18/02/2013 18/02/2013
	Shadow rapporteur LE GRIP Constance (PPE) DROUTSAS Dimitrios (S&D) ILCHEV Stanimir (ALDE) SØNDERGAARD Søren Bo (GUE/NGL) MESSERSCHMIDT Morten (EFD)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	PICKART ALVARO Alexander Nuno (ALDE)	26/03/2013
PETI Petitions	CHICHESTER Giles (ECR)	22/01/2013

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Secretariat-General	BARROSO José Manuel

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
22/11/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		

14/10/2013	Vote in committee		
23/10/2013	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0350/2013	Summary
19/11/2013	Debate in Parliament		
20/11/2013	Decision by Parliament	T7-0498/2013	Summary
20/11/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		
20/11/2013	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2012/2308(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/7/11302

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE513.103	06/06/2013	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE514.747	05/07/2013	
Committee opinion	PETI	PE510.780	23/09/2013	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE519.753	26/09/2013	
Committee opinion	BUDG	PE514.622	27/09/2013	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0350/2013	23/10/2013	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0498/2013	20/11/2013	Summary

Location of the seats of the European Union's institutions

2012/2308(INI) - 23/10/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Ashley FOX (ECR, UK) and Gerald HAFNER (Greens/EFA, DE) on the location of the seats of the European Union's Institutions.

It believed that the European Parliament, given that it is the only body directly representing the European citizens, should be granted the prerogative of determining its own working arrangements, **including the right to decide where and when it holds its meetings**. The current situation is that, in accordance with Article 341 TFEU, Member States have determined the seat of the institutions: Protocol 6 annexed to the Treaties establishes that Parliament shall have its seat in Strasbourg, where 12 periods of monthly plenary sessions – including the budget session – shall be held, that the periods of additional plenary sessions shall be held in Brussels, that its committees shall meet in Brussels, and that its General Secretariat and its departments shall remain in Luxembourg.

The committee agreed with the principle that the European Parliament would be more effective, cost-efficient and respectful of the environment if it were located in a single place. Members note that the continuation of the monthly migration between Brussels and Strasbourg has amongst most EU citizens become a symbolic, negative issue detrimental to the European Union's reputation, especially at a time when the financial crisis has led to serious and painful expenditure cuts in the Member States.

The report noted that the **additional annual costs resulting from the geographic dispersion** of Parliament have been estimated to range between EUR 156 million and EUR 204 million, equivalent to approximately 10 % of Parliament's annual budget, while the environmental impact is also significant, with the CO2 emissions associated with the transfers to and from the three working locations estimated to be between 11 000 and 19 000 tonnes.

Treaty revision procedure: Members considered it perfectly legitimate to launch a debate on its right to determine its own working arrangements, including the right to decide where and when it is to meet. Accordingly, they **committed themselves to initiating an ordinary treaty revision procedure under Article 48 TEU with a view to proposing the changes to Article 341 TFEU and Protocol 6 necessary to allow Parliament to decide on the location of its seat and its internal organisation**.

They also called on the Parliament not to make any recommendations regarding the seats of the other EU institutions.

The committee asked the Court of Auditors, or a similar independent agency, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the potential savings for the EU budget if Parliament had Brussels as its only seat. This analysis should include budgetary aspects and ancillary costs such as savings made through reduced loss of working time and greater efficiency. Furthermore, the committee asked the Bureau to commission Eurobarometer, or a similar professional polling service, to conduct, by 1 January 2014, a survey of the European citizens' views on the prospect of maintaining Parliament's three places of work, with specific reference to the financial, environmental and efficiency costs of this arrangement.

Lastly, Members acknowledged that any future decision by Parliament on its working arrangements must allow sufficient time for debate and reflection, as well as for an orderly transition.

Location of the seats of the European Union's institutions

2012/2308(INI) - 20/11/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 483 votes to 141, with 34 abstentions, a resolution on the location of the seats of the European Union's Institutions.

It recalled that Article 341 TFEU establishes that the seats of the institutions of the Union shall be determined by common accord of the governments of the Member States and that the European Parliament, given that it is the only body directly representing the European citizens, should be granted the prerogative of determining its own working arrangements, **including the right to decide where and when it holds its meetings**.

The current situation is that, in accordance with Article 341 TFEU, Member States have determined the seat of the institutions: Protocol 6 annexed to the Treaties establishes that Parliament shall have its seat in Strasbourg, where 12 periods of monthly plenary sessions – including the budget session – shall be held, that the periods of additional plenary sessions shall be held in Brussels, that its committees shall meet in Brussels, and that its General Secretariat and its departments shall remain in Luxembourg.

It also recalled that the EU citizens (more than one million have endorsed the 'One Seat campaign' petition) are continuing to express their discontentment with the current situation.

Parliament agreed with the principle that the European Parliament would be more effective, cost-efficient and respectful of the environment if it were located in a single place. It noted that the continuation of the monthly migration between Brussels and Strasbourg has amongst most EU citizens become a symbolic, negative issue detrimental to the European Union's reputation, especially at a time when the financial crisis has led to serious and painful expenditure cuts in the Member States.

It noted also that the **additional annual costs resulting from the geographic dispersion** of Parliament have been estimated to range between EUR 156 million and EUR 204 million, equivalent to approximately 10 % of Parliament's annual budget, while the environmental impact is also significant, with the CO2 emissions associated with the transfers to and from the three working locations estimated to be between 11 000 and 19 000 tonnes.

Treaty revision procedure: Parliament considered it perfectly legitimate to launch a debate on its right to determine its own working arrangements, including the right to decide where and when it is to meet. Accordingly, it **committed themselves to initiating an ordinary treaty revision procedure under Article 48 TEU with a view to proposing the changes to Article 341 TFEU and Protocol 6 necessary to allow Parliament to decide on the location of its seat and its internal organisation**.

It stated that it shall not make any recommendations regarding the seats of the other EU institutions.

Parliament asked the Court of Auditors, or a similar independent agency, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the potential savings for the EU budget if Parliament had Brussels as its only seat. This analysis should include budgetary aspects and ancillary costs such as savings made through reduced loss of working time and greater efficiency. Furthermore, it asked the Bureau to commission Eurobarometer, or a similar professional polling service, to conduct, by 1 January 2014, a survey of the European citizens' views on the prospect of maintaining Parliament's three places of work, with specific reference to the financial, environmental and efficiency costs of this arrangement.

Unresolved questions: in addition to the issue of the location of seats, there are other essential matters directly related to Parliament's status and its function within the EU institutional machinery, and – on those points – **convincing solutions have yet to be found**. These issues pertain to:

- electoral law,
- rules for a no-protest zone,
- immunity matters,
- points related to the Statute for Members.

According to the Parliament, attending to these should either be encompassed within Parliament's right of organisational self-determination, exercised in the form of a general decision-making power, or, at the very least, be brought within the scope of the ordinary legislative procedure based on codecision.

Lastly, the resolution acknowledged that any future decision by Parliament on its working arrangements must allow sufficient time for debate and reflection, as well as for an orderly transition.