Basic information

2013/2083(REG) REG - Parliament's Rules of Procedure	Procedure completed
EP Rules of Procedure, Rule 116 and Annex II: Question Time **Subject** 8.40.01.08 Business of Parliament, procedure, sittings, rules of procedure	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFCO Constitutional Affairs	GURMAI Zita (S&D)	22/04/2013
	Shadow rapporteur LE GRIP Constance (PPE) JÄÄTTEENMÄKI Anneli (ALDE) HÄFNER Gerald (Verts/ALE) FOX Ashley (ECR) SCHOLZ Helmut (GUE/NGL) MESSERSCHMIDT Morten (EFD)	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
12/12/2013	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
11/02/2014	Vote in committee		
18/02/2014	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0123/2014	Summary
16/04/2014	Decision by Parliament	T7-0408/2014	Summary
16/04/2014	Results of vote in Parliament		
16/04/2014	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2013/2083(REG)
Procedure type	REG - Parliament's Rules of Procedure

Procedure subtype	Rules
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 243-p1
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFCO/7/12575

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE519.814	10/10/2013	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE526.250	16/01/2014	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0123/2014	18/02/2014	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0408/2014	16/04/2014	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

EP Rules of Procedure, Rule 116 and Annex II: Question Time

2013/2083(REG) - 18/02/2014 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted the report by Zita GURMAI (S&D, HU) on the amendment of Parliament's Rules of Procedure with regard to parliamentary questions.

In June 2011 the Conference of Presidents revised the format for Question Time with the Commission, with a view to improving its quality and liveliness. The new format was foreseen to run for a trial period from September 2011 and be subject to an evaluation before any changes were made definitive.

At its meeting of 17 January 2013, the Conference of Presidents examined an evaluation report on the trial period drafted and presented by the Vice-President responsible, Mr Mcmillan-Scott, and decided to confirm the revised format of Question time.

The committee proposed to introduce a number of amendments to the Rules of Procedure. Besides Rule 116, Question Time, the report should cover Rules 117 and 118, Questions for Written Answer, because of the vicinity of the subjects involved and informed the President accordingly.

The main features of the modification are:

- Question Time with the Commission shall be held at each part-session for a duration of 90 minutes on one or more specific horizontal themes to be decided upon by the Conference of Presidents one month in advance of the part-session;
- the number of participating Commissioners should, as a general rule, be limited to two per session, with the possibility of including a third depending on the topic;
- the Conference of Presidents should in principle decide upon the specific topic for discussion a month in advance of the part-session concerned, with a view to ensuring the presence of the appropriate Commissioners;
- the regular 'catch the eye' system should be replaced by a ballot system and to evaluate this system at a later stage;
- questions are not submitted in writing in advance and no verification of their admissibility takes place except where questions are not directly related to the specific horizontal theme chosen;
- Annex II which establishes in great length guidelines for the verification of the admissibility of questions, supplementary questions and time-limits has been adapted to the new ballot system.

As regards the questions for written answer, the following clarifications have been made:

- each Member may submit a maximum of five questions per month;
- in justified cases of urgency, the President may request that a question be answered within three weeks;
- questions and answers shall be published on Parliament's website;
- any Member may put a maximum of six questions per month for written answer to the European Central Bank;
- questions should fall exclusively within the limits of the competences of the institutions as laid down in the relevant Treaties and within the sphere of responsibility of the addressee, and be of general interest.

EP Rules of Procedure, Rule 116 and Annex II: Question Time

2013/2083(REG) - 16/04/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 598 votes to 66, with 8 abstentions, to amend Parliament's Rules of Procedure with regard to parliamentary questions.

The amendments adopted concern Rule 116, Question Time, as well as Rules 117 and 118, Questions for Written Answer.

The main features of the amendments are as follows:

Question time (Rule 116):

- Question Time with the Commission shall be held at each part-session for a duration of **90 minutes** on one or more specific horizontal themes to be decided upon by the Conference of Presidents one month in advance of the part-session;
- the Commissioners invited to participate by the Conference of Presidents shall have a **portfolio related to the specific horizontal theme or themes** on which questions are to be put to them. The number of Commissioners shall be limited to **two per part-session**, with the possibility of adding a third being dependent on the specific horizontal theme or themes chosen for the Question Time;
- Question time shall be conducted in accordance with a **ballot-system**;

- Annex II which establishes in great length guidelines for the verification of the admissibility of questions, supplementary questions and time-limits has been adapted to the new ballot system.

After a period expiring one year from the beginning of the eighth parliamentary term, the Conference of Presidents should carry out an assessment of the regime in respect of additional questions.

Questions for written answer (Rules 117 and 118):

- questions should be submitted to the President. Doubts concerning the admissibility of a question should be settled by the President. The President's decision should be based not exclusively on the provisions of annex III on criteria for questions for written answer but on the provisions of these Rules of Procedure in general. The questioner should be notified of the President's decision;
- questions should be submitted in electronic format. Each Member may submit a maximum of **five questions per month.** By way of exception, additional questions may be submitted in the form of a paper document tabled and signed personally by the Member concerned in the relevant service of the Secretariat;
- questions and answers should be published on **Parliament's website**;
- any Member may put a maximum of six questions per month for written answer to the European Central Bank. Doubts concerning the admissibility of a question shall be settled by the Chair. The questioner shall be notified of the Chair's decision;
- questions should fall exclusively **within the limits of the competences of the institutions** as laid down in the relevant Treaties and within the sphere of responsibility of the addressee, and be of general interest. They should not contain more than three sub-questions;

Lastly, if a question seeks factual or statistical information that is already available to Parliament's research services, it should not be forwarded to the addressee but to those services, unless the President decides otherwise upon request by the author.

These amendments should enter into force on the first day of the first part-session of the eighth parliamentary term.