

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE EU SCRUTINY SYSTEMS OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS OF EU 27

This chapter will aim to provide a short presentation of the different scrutiny systems of European Union Affairs in the National parliaments of the 27 member states. There will be a particular focus on how the national parliaments see their influence vis-à-vis to their governments, but this chapter also focuses on other aspects of the EU scrutiny. An attempt is made to categorise different scrutiny systems by looking at what the national parliaments are scrutinising (documents and/or procedures), who are the subjects of the scrutiny (their respective governments and/or EU -institutions) and at what point during the EU decision making process the national parliaments come in to the process and when the scrutiny is considered to be completed.

Questions:

Before answering could you please check the following link on the COSAC website in order to verify that the information displayed there concerning your country/parliament is correct?

<http://www.cosac.eu/en/info/scrutiny/countryspecific/>

In case of mistakes/omissions please notify the secretariat.

- 1. What is your parliament scrutinising primarily (documents emanating from EU institutions, documents describing government's negotiation position)?*
- 2. Who is the primary subject of the scrutiny (Government and/or European Commission)? Please state reasons.*
- 3. At what point during the EU decision making process your parliament comes in to the process and when the scrutiny is considered to be completed? (Prelegislative phase, after Commission's legislative proposal, as reaction to the Government memorandum, before the Council (working group) meeting, during the implementation phase on national level after the decision is taken on the EU-level)?*
- 4. Do you consider having influence on the decisions taken either on the national or EU-level? How is this guaranteed?*
- 5. The 3rd Biannual Report suggested a possible categorization of National Parliaments according to the scrutiny systems used. Would you agree with the categorisation used there dividing national parliaments in the so called "procedural" and "document" based systems. Is your parliament in the adequate category?*

(While answering this last question please have a look at the 3rd biannual report <http://www.cosac.eu/en/documents/biannual/>)

CHAPTER 2: NATIONAL PARLIAMENT'S EXPECTATIONS FROM THE IGC

The expected Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) in the second half of 2007 will discuss among other things the role of National Parliaments in any future institutional settlement. In its contribution to the EU Institutions, the XXXVII COSAC in Berlin insisted that "the National Parliaments and the European Parliament will be kept fully involved and that their views will be duly taken into account" and formulated a number of concrete expectations with regard to the role of National Parliaments in the European Union. The purpose of this chapter is to gather information on which role National Parliaments wish to assume in the future institutional system of the EU. Concrete statements and suggestions which are formulated with a view to the negotiations could be compiled and possibly prepared as COSAC's input into the IGC.

Questions:

1. *What are your parliament's expectations towards the Reform Treaty to be negotiated during the Intergovernmental Conference in the second half of 2007, especially with regard to the future role of national parliaments?*
2. *What impact do you foresee for national parliaments if the Reform Treaty takes up the stipulations concerning national parliaments and the early warning system according to the negotiating mandate agreed at the European Council in June 2007?*

CHAPTER 3: PARLIAMENTARY MONITORING OF THE LISBON STRATEGY

This Chapter seeks to analyse the role and involvement of National Parliaments in the Lisbon Process. The most important areas of policy and practice for the revitalisation of the European economy fall almost exclusively within the competence of the Member States, whereas the EU has a more coordinating role to play. Nevertheless the Lisbon Strategy has very often been discussed at EU rather than at national level.

The focus of the chapter would be on whether and how parliaments can influence the definition of policies and the setting of priorities and to which extent they are involved in the so-called "open method of coordination" through which the Member States can steer their policies towards certain common objectives. A further point of interest would be to consider in how far National Parliaments monitor the implementation of the Lisbon strategy and to which extent they claim ownership of it by putting the issue on their parliamentary agendas. Finally, it will also be analysed whether and in how far the revision of the Lisbon Strategy in 2005 had any influence on the role and participation of National Parliaments in the process.

Questions

1. *Does your parliament have any influence on the definition of policies and the setting of priorities in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy? In how far is your parliament involved in the so-called "open method of coordination"?*
2. *Is your parliament involved in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, especially with regard to the establishment of the National Reform Programmes and the related national Progress Reports?*
3. *Did the revision of the Lisbon Strategy in 2005 have any influence on the role and participation of your parliament in the process?*

CHAPTER 4: MEDITERRANEAN DIMENSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The aim of this chapter is to provide background information on the Mediterranean Dimension of the EU, in order to inform the discussion that will take place at the XXXVIII COSAC. The chapter intends to look into the concept of the Mediterranean Dimension, its development and the challenges it faces.

There will be no questionnaire on this Chapter.

CHAPTER 5: NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS' MONITORING OF EU FINANCIAL PROGRAMMES: PRIORITY SETTING AND ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

The Inter-institutional Agreement between the Commission, Council and the European Parliament on the new financial perspective 2007 - 2013 is a financial framework for the Commission when it formulates the legislative package that sets out details of the funding of EU programmes. The legislative package then enters into either the co-decision or assent procedure between the Council and the European Parliament.

The aim of this chapter is to establish, whether and how National Parliaments are involved in this decision making process. Have they been informed by their respective governments on the developments in the inter-institutional decision-making procedure? Do they monitor the EU financial programmes? How are they involved in the priority setting for the respective funds? Do they monitor the allocation of funds at the national level? The discussion at the chairpersons meeting will further help to orientate the direction of this chapter to provide information on the best practises of the National Parliaments in this field.

Questions

- 1. Does your Parliament scrutinise the multi-annual financial framework (Financial perspectives)? Are specialist committees involved in the scrutiny? If 'yes', what is their role? What was the role of the sector committee, responsible for budget control?*
- 2. Does your Parliament scrutinise the spending programmes (Seventh Research Framework Programme, Trans-European Networks for Transport and Energy, Galileo, Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity, etc...)? Which of the above mentioned programmes have been scrutinised?*
- 3. Does your Parliament scrutinise the annual budget of the EU? Does the scrutiny of the multi-annual financial framework and of the spending programmes, if performed, bring an added value in scrutiny of the annual budget of the EU? Please specify.*
- 4. Does your Parliament intend to scrutinize the 2008-2009 Budget Review? Please specify.*
- 5. Any other observations?*

FUTURE TOPICS THAT CAN BE DISCUSSED IN COSAC MEETINGS

In accordance with Articles 7 and 7.1 of the Rules of Procedure, the Portuguese Presidency invites delegations to present proposals about topics that can be discussed in future COSAC Meetings.

These proposals will be compiled by the Secretariat in a short document, with the purpose of establishing a list of topics that COSAC might discuss in the near future, should the forthcoming Presidencies - who are not bound by this list in any manner - wish to do so.