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*Committee on Constitutional Affairs*

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**2012/2256(INI)**

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# **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: Annual Growth  
Survey 2013  
(2012/2256(INI))

Rapporteur: Paulo Rangel

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs calls on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Recalls that the Annual Growth Survey, as endorsed by the Spring European Council, is the basic document that guides the drafting of the Member States' National Reform Programmes (NRPs) and Stability and Convergence Programmes (SCPs), on the basis of which the Commission draws up country-specific recommendations;
2. Calls on the Commission to provide an explicit account of the reasons why certain priorities have been selected in the Annual Growth Survey each year and to include in the document an assessment of the possible spill-over effects across policy areas and across countries;
3. Stresses that the Annual Growth Survey, as the initial document of the European Semester cycle, plays a major role in the Semester and therefore needs to reach a broad consensus between the different institutions;
4. Recalls that, considering its importance, the Commission should consult Parliament prior to the adoption of the Annual Growth Survey; believes, in this connection, that Parliament should invite the Commission to discuss the general *ex ante* guidance earlier in the process, before the Annual Growth Survey is completed and released;
5. Notes that the economic dialogue should aim at reinforcing the democratic legitimacy of the process through proper parliamentary scrutiny of the preparation of, and follow-up to, the Annual Growth Survey and the country-specific recommendations; considers that the economic dialogue should be used at key moments of the European Semester, namely at the beginning of the cycle before the Annual Growth Survey is published, and also shortly after its publication, before the adoption by the Council of the country-specific recommendations, and at the end of the process after the European Council has endorsed the country-specific recommendations;
6. Takes the view that, shortly after the publication of the Annual Growth Survey, Parliament could signal its own endorsement or rejection of the policy priorities and objectives through a vote in plenary;
7. Believes that, in order to reinforce Parliament's role and position in setting the agenda, consideration should be given to the possibility of it preparing a multi-year policy priorities document at the beginning of each five-year electoral mandate;
8. Reiterates the need fully to involve Parliament both in economic policy coordination and in decisions intended to foster the creation of a genuine economic and monetary union and promote the necessary steps towards a full banking, economic, fiscal and political union, in order to increase the legitimacy of decisions which affect all citizens;

9. Recalls, in this regard, that the European Semester must in no way jeopardise the prerogatives of the European Parliament or of national parliaments;
10. Is of the opinion that, in order to reduce concerns over transparency and legitimacy, national parliaments should play a more active role in the process and suggests that the Member States adjust their internal procedures so that national parliaments can be involved in the discussion of their countries' fiscal and reform plans before these are submitted to the EU;
11. Considers that close cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments, pursuant to Article 9 of Protocol No 1, is essential in order to establish the necessary democratic legitimacy and national ownership of the Semester process;
12. Lauds the dialogue held so far between the European Parliament and national representatives and welcomes the organisation of an interparliamentary week on the European Semester at the end of January 2013;
13. Expresses the view that the European Parliament is the appropriate venue for dialogue and cooperation between national parliaments and the European institutions; is nevertheless of the opinion that the Commission and the Council should also be present at those interparliamentary meetings;
14. Points out that, in addition to ensuring cooperation between parliaments, it is also necessary to make greater efforts to communicate with citizens and actively include them in the process in order to increase its legitimacy and strengthen its ownership at national level;
15. Reiterates that, in order to preserve the credibility of the Annual Growth Survey and of the entire Semester process, the Council must justify its reasons should it refuse to follow the Commission's recommendations based on the Annual Growth Survey; welcomes the 'comply or explain' principle introduced by the 'six pack' regarding country-specific recommendations, according to which the Council is publicly accountable for any changes it introduces to the Commission's proposals, and considers that this principle should be reinforced in practice;
16. Recalls that Parliament must be recognised as the appropriate European democratic forum to provide an overall evaluation at the end of the European Semester; believes that, as a sign of this recognition, representatives of the EU institutions and the economic bodies involved in the process should provide information to Members of the European Parliament when asked to do so;
17. Calls for an interinstitutional agreement between Parliament, the Commission and the Council in order to enhance democratic control and accountability throughout the European Semester process;
18. Instructs its President to present the Annual Growth Guidelines, as amended by Parliament, at the European Spring Council and considers that Parliament should be represented at the Spring Council and involved in the drafting of the Council conclusions.