



Info

Distribution of EP seats: Constitutional Affairs Committee approves proposal

A proposal for the new allocation of seats in the European Parliament after the next legislative elections, in 2009, was approved by the Constitutional Affairs Committee on Tuesday. Committee members also called for a revision of the proposed distribution of seats for the 2014-2019 parliamentary term.

The following allocation of seats in the European Parliament for the 2009-2014 parliamentary term, as proposed by the two co-rapporteurs, Alain Lamassoure (EPP-ED, FR) and Adrian Severin (PES, RO), was approved in committee with 17 votes in favour, five against and three abstentions.

Member State	Proposed new proposed distribution2009-2014
Germany	96
France	74
United Kingdom	73
Italy	72
Spain	54
Poland	51
Romania	33
Netherlands	26
Greece	22
Portugal	22
Belgium	22
Czech Rep.	22
Hungary	22
Sweden	20
Austria	19
Bulgaria	18
Denmark	13
Slovakia	13
Finland	13
Ireland	12
Lithuania	12
Latvia	9
Slovenia	8

Estonia	6
Cyprus	6
Luxembourg	6
Malta	6
EU-27	750

The allocation of seats approved in committee follows the rules established by the June 2007 European Council, which invited the European Parliament to present a proposal by October this year. The Council stipulated that the EP is limited to a total of 750 seats and that no Member State should have more than 96 seats or less than six. Finally, it also said that the distribution should respect the "degressive proportionality" principle.

The committee agreed that the "degressive proportionality" means that bigger Member States agree to accept fewer seats than they would receive if the total were divided according to population size, so as to allow for better representation of less-densely populated states. The two co-rapporteurs based their proposal on the EUROSTAT figures for the number of residents in each Member State, as approved by the Council.

Call to revise distribution in time for the 2014-2019 elections

In approving the European Council's draft decision, the committee asked that the proposed distribution be revised, well in advance of the beginning of the 2014-2019 legislative term, so as to set up an objective and fair system for allocating the seats in the EP, in order take account of demographic changes and "avoid the traditional political horse-trading between Member States".

Committee members also proposed examining the political and technical feasibility of replacing the number of residents, as established annually by the EU statistics office, with the number of European citizens.

The committee decided not to consider future Member States, such as Croatia, when allocating seats, so as to avoid pre-judging future enlargements. It also proposed that future accessions may be accompanied by a temporary increase over and above the 750-seat ceiling, as was done for Bulgaria and Romania.

According to current rules, as laid down by the 2005 Accession Act of Bulgaria and Romania, the number of MEPs should be reduced to 736. The draft reform treaty lays down that the new composition of the EP will be decided by the European Council acting by unanimity, on the basis of Parliament's proposal and after obtaining its consent. In the approved report, MEPs call on the Member States to adopt this proposal immediately after the reform treaty enters into force.

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