



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Constitutional Affairs

2012/2150(INI)

19.9.2012

OPINION

of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: implementation
of 2012 priorities
(2012/2150(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. Considers that the European Semester reinforces economic coordination among Member States under the Community method, thus guaranteeing a better economic governance which represents added value for Europe;
2. Welcomes the fact that the European Semester has been institutionalised by means of Regulation (EU) No 1175/2011 amending Regulation (EC) No 1466/97 on the strengthening of the surveillance of budgetary positions and the surveillance and coordination of economic policies;
3. Is nevertheless of the opinion that the legitimacy, transparency and effectiveness of the European Semester should be improved;
4. Considers it essential to enhance the Semester's legitimacy and to clear the remaining legal ambiguities which may otherwise give rise to institutional conflicts in the future, including the superimposition and duplication of competencies and responsibilities, and the lack of clarity and increased complexity of the EU institutional framework;
5. Regrets that parliamentary scrutiny plays only a minor role in the process, and stresses that the European Semester must in no way jeopardise the prerogatives of the European Parliament and the national parliaments;
6. Notes with concern that the European Parliament has been constantly marginalised in the main economic decisions resulting from the crisis, and considers that it must be involved in order to increase the legitimacy of decisions which affect all citizens;
7. Expresses the view that the European Parliament is the appropriate venue for economic dialogue and cooperation between national parliaments and the European institutions;
8. Reiterates that the provisions on the economic dialogue and the new coordination mechanism incorporated into Regulation (EC) No 1466/97 should be fully enforced, and that the European semester should be subject at all stages to full democratic scrutiny;
9. Is of the opinion that the economic dialogue should be extended on the model of the monetary dialogue with the ECB, to include regular discussions between the European Parliament, the Commission and the ECOFIN President on the preparation of and follow-up to the Annual Growth Survey and the Country-Specific Recommendations;
10. Recalls that, with a view to ensuring democratic legitimacy, transparency and access to information should be a key element of the process, and that the European Semester and the economic dialogue should be regarded as part of the EU institutional framework and should promote the Community method, involving the Union institutions at all stages;
11. Recalls Herman Van Rompuy's report presented to the Council meeting of 28 and 29 June

2012, entitled ‘Towards a genuine economic and monetary union’ and calling for a more enforceable framework for policy coordination in the context of the European Semester;

12. Considers that close cooperation between the European Parliament and the 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; calls for a reinforcement of the dialogue between the European and the national levels, respecting the division of labour between them;
13. Considers that in addition to ensuring cooperation between parliaments, it is also necessary to make greater efforts to communicate with the citizens and actively include them in the process;
14. Takes the view that, in order to reduce concerns over legitimacy, the national parliaments should play a more active role in the process, and suggests that the Member States adjust their internal procedures so that the national parliaments can be involved in the discussion of their countries’ fiscal and reform plans before their submission to the EU;
15. Calls for closer involvement of and active participation by the European Parliament in the process, and considers that, on the basis of Article 121(5) TFEU, the Commission and the Council should be accountable to Parliament for the country-specific recommendations adopted;
16. Urges the Commission to provide proper justification of its policy recommendations, and to differentiate and prioritise policy actions across countries in order to guide the Council on the countries to which it should pay particular attention;
17. Considers that, in order to preserve the credibility of the Annual Growth Survey on which the Commission’s recommendations are based, as well as the transparency of the European Semester, it is important that the Council should continue to justify any divergences on its part from the Commission’s recommendations;
18. Recalls that economic policy coordination under the European Semester should be based on Article 5 TFEU, and that the priorities determined by the Semester should fully respect the objectives and requirements set out in Article 3 (3) TEU and in other treaty provisions, with particular reference to Article 121 TFEU (broad economic policy guidelines), Article 126 TFEU (excessive government deficits) and Article 148 TFEU (employment policy);
19. Recalls that the European Parliament must be recognised as the appropriate European democratic forum for providing 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;
20. Expresses the view that the European Parliament should adapt its organisational structure to the newly introduced European semester, by measures such as the creation of an ad hoc/temporary committee or a working or steering group for the yearly monitoring of the European Semester.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	17.9.2012
Result of final vote	+: 19 -: 2 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Andrew Henry William Brons, Carlo Casini, Andrew Duff, Roberto Gualtieri, Enrique Guerrero Salom, Zita Gurnai, Gerald Häfner, Daniel Hannan, Stanimir Ilchev, Constance Le Grip, Paulo Rangel, Algirdas Saudargas, József Szájer, Rafał Trzaskowski, Manfred Weber, Luis Yáñez-Barnuevo García
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Zuzana Brzobohatá, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Isabelle Durant, Marietta Giannakou, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, György Schöpflin