



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Constitutional Affairs

2012/2308(INI)

6.6.2013

DRAFT REPORT

on the location of the seats of the European Institutions
(2012/2308(INI))

Committee on Constitutional Affairs

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the location of the seats of the European institutions

(2012/2308(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 232 and 341 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Protocol 6, annexed to the Treaties, on the location of the seats of the institutions and of certain bodies, offices, agencies and departments of the European Union ,
- having regard to Articles 10, 14 and 48 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to its stated position on these matters, in particular in its recommendation from 21 June 1958, its resolution of 7 July 1981 adopting the Zagari Report, its recommendations for the Intergovernmental Conference of 13 April 2000, and its accompanying resolutions to 2010/2211(INI), 2011/2202(DEC), 2012/2001(BUD), 2012/2006(BUD) and 2012/2016(BUD),
- having regard to Written Questions E-000181-2007, E-006174-2009, E-006258-2009, E-002934-2012, E-002935-2012, E-004134-2012 and E-004135-2012 to the Commission and to the Council,
- having regard to the Secretary-General's report to the Bureau of September 2002 regarding the cost of maintaining three places of work,
- having regard to the joint working group report of the Bureau and the Committee on Budgets on Parliament's budget for 2012,
- having regard to its activity reports for 1993-1999, 1999-2004, 2004-2009 and 2009-2011,
- having regard to the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ), in particular Cases C-230/81¹, C-345/95² and joined cases C-237/11 and C-238/11³,
- having regard to the petition gathered in 2006 by the One Seat campaign, which was signed by more than 1.2 million EU citizens,
- having regard to Rules 41, 48 and 74a of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Petitions (A7-0000/2013),

¹ Case C-230/81, Luxembourg v Parliament.

² Case C-345/95, France v Parliament.

³ Case C-237/11 and C-238/11, France v Parliament.

- A. whereas Article 341 TFEU and Protocol 6 annexed to the Treaties establish that Parliament shall have its seat in Strasbourg where 12 periods of monthly plenary sessions, including the budget session, shall be held, that the periods of additional plenary sessions shall be held in Brussels, that its committees shall meet in Brussels, and that its General Secretariat and its departments shall remain in Luxembourg;
- B. whereas Articles 10 and 14 TEU state that the EU is a representative democracy with Parliament as the direct representation of European citizens and as co-legislator on equal terms with the Council;
- C. whereas Article 232 TFEU allows Parliament to adopt its own rules of procedure and to determine the length of plenary sessions;
- D. whereas the ECJ has stated that the location of the seat is not to hinder the well-functioning of Parliament; whereas it has further stated that there are disadvantages and costs engendered by the plurality of working locations, but also that any improvement of the current situation requires a Treaty change and, thus, the consent of the Member States;
- E. whereas Parliament has undergone a complete transformation, from a consultative body with 78 seconded members that – mostly for practical reasons – shared its facilities with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, into a fully fledged, directly elected Parliament with 754 members that is today co-legislator on equal terms with the Council;
- F. whereas this is most clearly illustrated by the growth of its legislative capacity, as reflected in the increase in the number of co-decision procedures (now ordinary legislative procedures) from 165 in 1993-1999 to 454 in 2004-2009, to an even greater number in the current legislature;
- G. whereas the increase in legislative activity and responsibility is reflected in the fact that the number of statutory staff in Brussels increased by 377 % (from 1 180 to 5 635 staff members) from 1993 to 2013, by far exceeding the 48 % increase in the number of MEPs in the same period;
- H. whereas the changing role of Parliament is also reflected in the increase by 150 % of inter-institutional meetings, from 16 000 to an estimated 40 000 between 2009 and 2013, and in the constant negotiations and trilogues with the Commission, the Council and individual Member States, that now are part of the legislative process, and that have led to a sharp increase in the number of first-reading agreements, from 28 % in 1999-2004 to 72 % in 2004-2009;
- I. whereas the structure of Parliament's calendar (fixed during the Edinburgh Summit in 1992) predates all changes to its role arising from the adoption of the Treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon;
- K. whereas the Council and the European Council have already concentrated their work in Brussels, where all European Council meetings – which previously were always held in the country of the rotating presidency – are now exclusively held;

- L. whereas the geographical distance between the official seats of the co-legislative bodies – 435 km – isolates Parliament not only from the Council and the Commission, but also from other stakeholders, such as NGOs, civil society organisations and Member State representations, and from one of the world’s largest international journalistic communities;
- M. whereas the additional annual costs resulting from the geographic dispersion of Parliament have conservatively been estimated to range between EUR 169 million and EUR 204 million⁴, which is equivalent to between 15 % and 20 % of Parliament’s annual budget, while the environmental impact is also significant, with the CO₂ emissions associated with the transfers to and from the three working locations estimated to amount to at least 19 000 tonnes⁵;
- N. whereas 78 % of all missions by Parliament statutory staff (on average, 3 172 each month) arise as a direct result of its geographic dispersion; whereas while Parliament’s buildings in Strasbourg are currently only being used 42 days per year (remaining unused for 89 % of the time), they need to be heated, staffed and maintained for the entire year;
- O. whereas the expenditure arising from the geographic dispersion of Parliament constitutes an important area of potential savings, particularly in the current economic climate;
- P. whereas Parliament, since its suggestion in 1958 to be sited in proximity to the Council and the Commission, has via numerous reports, declarations and statements always expressed its wish for a more practical and efficient working arrangement;
- Q. whereas citizens of the EU – including the 1.27 million citizens who signed a petition asking for a single seat – have repeatedly expressed their discontent with the current arrangements;
1. Believes that Parliament should have the right to determine its own working arrangements, including the right to decide where and when it holds its meetings;
 2. Commits itself, therefore, to initiate an ordinary treaty revision procedure under Article 48 TEU with a view to propose the changes to Article 341 TFEU and to Protocol 6 necessary to allow Parliament to decide fully over its internal organisation, including the setting of its calendar and the location of its seat;
 3. Decides not to make any recommendations regarding the seats of the other EU institutions;
 4. Acknowledges that any future decision by Parliament on its working arrangements must allow sufficient time for debate and reflection, as well as for an orderly transition;
 5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Council, and the Heads of State and Government and parliaments of the

⁴ Discharge 2010: EU general budget, European Parliament (Liberadzki Report) (A7-0120/2012), texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0155.

⁵ ‘European Parliament two-seat operation: Environmental costs, transport & energy’, report prepared by Eco-Logica Ltd. for the Greens/EFA, November 2007.

Member States.