



**2015/2319(INI)**

27.4.2016

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Budgets

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on Control of the Register and composition of the Commission's expert groups  
(2015/2319(INI))

Rapporteur: Helga Trüpel

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas its Committee on Budgets, in light of the lack of transparency and the imbalanced composition of a certain number of expert groups (EGs), and given the need to make sure that the composition of EGs strikes the right balance in terms of expertise and of views represented, adopted budgetary reserves in 2011 and 2014 and formulated demands for their reform;
  - B. whereas a recent study it commissioned<sup>1</sup> has identified a widespread lack of transparency and an imbalance in composition in a certain number of EGs;
  - C. whereas the European Ombudsman put forward recommendations in which she underlined the need for greater EG transparency<sup>2</sup>;
  - D. whereas balanced composition and transparency are critical preconditions for the expertise to adequately reflect the needs for regulatory action and for fostering the legitimacy of this expertise and regulatory action in the eyes of European citizens;
  - E. whereas it welcomes, as a first step, the initiative taken by the Commission on an imminent reform of the EG;
- 1. Underlines that despite the progress that resulted from the 2011 budgetary reserve, the Commission has so far failed to alter the horizontal rules for EGs and their practices in a way that would meet Parliament's requests for transparency, and that the number of EGs in which there is an imbalance has remained largely unaltered since 2013 (currently 9 % of all EGs);
  - 2. Points out, in this context, and with regard to paragraphs 34-45 of the Ombudsman's aforementioned opinion, that, although the Commission has not yet formally defined its concept of 'balance', the latter is not to be understood as the result of an arithmetic exercise but rather as the result of efforts to ensure that the members of an EG, together, possess the necessary technical expertise and breadth of perspectives to deliver on the mandate of the EG in question; considers that the concept of balance should, therefore, be understood as tied to the specific mandate of each individual EG; considers that the criteria to assess whether an EG is balanced should include the tasks of the group, the technical expertise required, the stakeholders who would be most likely affected by the matter, the organisation of groups of stakeholders, and the appropriate ratio of economic and non-economic interests;
  - 3. Underlines that European citizens' trust in the EU is suffering owing to a lack of transparency and the over-reliance on economic actors in EU lawmaking, and therefore underlines that the effective reform of the Commission's expert groups system will make

---

<sup>1</sup> Policy Department D Budgetary Affairs, Composition of the Commission's expert groups and the status of the register of expert groups, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> European Ombudsman, Recommendation of the European Ombudsman in her strategic inquiry OI/6/2014/NF concerning the composition of Commission Expert Groups, 29.1.2016.

the EU more legitimate;

4. Welcomes the Commission's public announcement that the revised framework for EGs will take up a number of Parliament's and the Ombudsman's suggestions, such as mandatory open calls for application, an improved register, mandatory registration in the Transparency Register for stakeholder representatives, a definition, for each EG, of the profiles needed to ensure a balanced composition, and mandatory declarations on conflicts of interest, which will be put on the register;
5. Urges the Commission to implement, moreover, the Ombudsman's recommendations on transparency, namely that the agendas, background documents and minutes of EG meetings should be published, and that the published minutes should be as meaningful as possible and set out the positions expressed by the members;
6. Urges the Commission to follow best practice and build on existing positive examples to ensure a systematic implementation of improved horizontal rules, including an adequate oversight mechanism for all directorates-general in order to ensure coherent practice;
7. Invites the Commission to explore, in collaboration with the legislator and with civil society, ways to facilitate and encourage the participation of underrepresented groups, such as civil society and trade unions, in EGs, to tackle existing information asymmetries, and to assess the development of an allowance system which should support those groups in acquiring the expertise necessary for a fully effective participation in the EG;
8. Underlines that it will critically assess the reform efforts on the occasion of its vote on the 2017 annual budget and emphasises its determination to introduce a reserve if it considers that its demands are not being met in a satisfactory way;
9. Urges the Commission to ensure the full consultation of those groups currently underrepresented when putting forward proposals for the reform of the expert groups.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	26.4.2016
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 30 -: 0 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Nedzhmi Ali, Jean Arthuis, Jean-Paul Denanot, Gérard Deprez, José Manuel Fernandes, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Jens Geier, Bernd Kölmel, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Vladimír Maňka, Ernest Maragall, Sophie Montel, Clare Moody, Siegfried Mureşan, Liadh Ní Riada, Jan Olbrycht, Younous Omarjee, Paul Rübig, Petri Sarvamaa, Patricija Šulin, Inese Vaidere, Monika Vana, Daniele Viotti
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Andrey Novakov, Helga Trüpel, Derek Vaughan, Anders Primdahl Vistisen, Tomáš Zdechovský
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Isabella Adinolfi, Jens Gieseke