

MONDAY, 23 JANUARY 2017

16.00 - 18.30

TUESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2017

09.00 - 12.30 and 15.00 - 18.30

Room: Altiero Spinelli (5G-3)

MONDAY, 23 JANUARY 2017

16.00 - 16.30

PUBLIC MEETING

Opening of the meeting with the provisional Chair

1. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

With the newly elected Chair

2. ELECTION OF THE 1ST VICE-CHAIR

3. ELECTION OF THE 2ND VICE-CHAIR

4. ELECTION OF THE 3RD VICE-CHAIR

5. ELECTION OF THE 4TH VICE-CHAIR

See Annexe I of this CONT News concerning these elections.

MONDAY, 23 JANUARY 2017

16.30 - 18.30

PUBLIC MEETING

6. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The draft agenda was emailed to Members on 17 January 2017 and is in the [file for the meeting](#).

7. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman draws attention to the following points:

Languages available

FR, DE, IT, NL, EN, DA, ES, PT, FI, CS, HU, LT, PL, SL, BG, RO.

Webstreaming

The CONT meeting is webstreamed on the [Europarl web-site](#).

Please be aware that each time a speaker activates the microphone to make an intervention, the camera will be automatically directed to the speaker.

8. CONT DELEGATION TO ITALY (16-20 JULY 2016)

CONT/8/06641



Exchange of views on the delegation report

Rapporteur: [Martina Dlabajová](#) (ALDE)

Administrator: Hrvoje Svetić

Youth unemployment was aggravated by the financial and debt crisis and continues to be a problem in the Member States. The unemployment rate in the EU went from more than 15% in 2008 to 20% in 2015. The Youth Guarantee programme was created to support young people in finding a job and to implement structural reform to improve school-to-work transitions, in particular for young people which are neither in employment nor in any education or training (NEET). The Youth Guarantee scheme is financed through the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the European Social Fund (ESF) and from national budgets.

In Italy, labour market is characterised by a low level of participation of young people. The number of NEETs significantly increased in the last years, and a high number of young people in it has only a lower secondary level of education. In particular, Sicily and Calabria regions have one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in Italy, which is why the CONT Committee decided to visit different projects in both regions. The visited projects were principally related to internships, civil service, education and training and inclusion of young people into the world of work.

After the mission the delegation is presenting a mission report to be considered by the Committee. It includes an analysis of the general situation in Italy on a national and regional level, as well as a detailed description of the issues encountered during the meetings with national, regional and local authorities. In addition, the report includes the recommendations of the delegation to improve the situation related to the youth unemployment and the implementation of the Youth Guarantee programme.

CONT Members will have an exchange of views on the mission report and its recommendations. The mission report is available on the [CONT website](#).

9. STUDY ON “THE COSTS OF EACH EURO FROM THE EU BUDGET TO IMPLEMENT EU POLICIES IN DIFFERENT MEMBER STATES: MASTERING IMPLEMENTATION COSTS OF EUROPEAN GRANTS” CONT/8/08992

Presentation of Policy Department D Study

Administrator: Alexandre Mathis (PolDep)

Grants are the major funding scheme of EU policies. The EU budget foreseen for these grants is substantial, making it a very important EU policy instrument. However, the costs linked to grant management from both the grant provider and the grant seeker are unknown or at least not well defined.

To investigate this further, a study has been prepared by Deloitte. It analyses the costs linked to the grant seek (e.g. the costs to build the application file) and the costs for the administrative authorities which provide the grant (i.e. the European Commission or its agencies in the case of direct management or the Member States in the case of shared management).

As a result, the report identifies cost and efficiency drivers and formulates a number of recommendations aimed at removing cost generating inefficiencies and unnecessary burden.

The study is available on the [CONT website](#).

10. ECA SPECIAL REPORT N° 25/2016 (2015 DISCHARGE) ON “THE LAND PARCEL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM: A USEFUL TOOL TO DETERMINE THE ELIGIBILITY OF AGRICULTURAL LAND - BUT ITS MANAGEMENT COULD BE FURTHER IMPROVED” CONT/8/08242



Presentation of the Special Report by the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible, *Nikolaos Milionis*, and consideration of a working document

Rapporteur: [Claudia Schmidt](#) (EPP)

Administrator: Philippe Godts

Shadow Rapporteurs: Luke Ming Flanagan (GUE/NGL), Marco Valli (EFDD), Karin Kadenbach (S&D)

A Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) is an IT system based on aerial or satellite photographs recording all agricultural parcels in the Member States. It is a key control mechanism under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) designed to verify eligibility for area-based subsidies, which amounted to approximately 45.5 billion euro in 2015. The Court's Statement of Assurance estimated the level of error for the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) at 2.9 % (2.2 % without cross compliance errors) in 2014. Close to half of the errors were area related.

The system also increasingly plays a role in checking compliance with various environmental obligations. In the 28 Member States, there are currently 44 national or regional LPISs in operation, containing over 135 million reference parcels.

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The European Court of Auditors sought to answer the overall audit question: is the Land Parcel Identification System well managed?

The Court concludes that the LPIS is a useful tool to determine the eligibility of agricultural land but that its management could be further improved.

1. While the ortho imagery was mostly up to date, the Court found that the audited Member States experienced difficulties in correctly determining the maximum eligible areas of reference parcels. This happened mainly in cases where ortho images alone did not make it possible to conclusively assess land eligibility e.g. for certain types of grassland.
2. Member States did not evaluate the cost effectiveness of their LPISs in order to better design the related checks.
3. The LPIS provisions in the 2014-2020 CAP legal framework have increased the number of requirements that must be checked by the Member States. The Court found that adaptation of LPISs for greening is progressing, although not yet complete, and the greening payment conditions can only partially be checked using the LPIS. According to the new legislation, Member States have also to register all permanent ecological focus areas in a layer in their LPISs by 2018, in order to check whether farmers have complied with their obligation to generally maintain at least 5 % of their land as ecological focus areas. The findings of the Court in certain regions were concerning.
4. The Court found that simplification remains a challenge as some provisions are either not used in practice (the 2 % stability threshold) or present significant implementation challenges (the 100-tree rule or the new categories of eligible land).
Six major changes potentially affecting the LPIS were introduced in May 2015 but the Court found that the complexity of the rules and the procedures required to deal with those changes has further increased the administrative burden for Member States.
5. The Commission's monitoring of legality and regularity in LPISs has improved compared to the previous CAP period. The Commission's audit work is comprehensive, action plans are instigated as required and financial corrections are applied.
6. However, the Commission's LPIS related guidance essentially addresses aspects of legality and regularity and does not focus on how to improve the overall effectiveness of the LPIS system.

The rapporteur endorses the main conclusions of the Court.

In particular the rapporteur recommends that the Member States, in the current CAP period, strengthen their efforts to increase LPIS data reliability based on timely and thoroughly conducted updates of the system.

The Commission should re-examine the current legal framework in order to simplify and streamline the LPIS related rules for the next CAP period, e.g. by re-considering the need for the 2 % stability threshold and the 100-tree. Before the start of the quality assessment exercise 2017, the Commission should also carry out a cost benefit analysis to determine whether the representativeness of quality assessment samples could be improved so that a better coverage of the population of parcels in the LPIS can be achieved.

The rapporteur conclusions will possibly form part of the Commission's discharge report for the financial year 2015.

The EN version of the working document is available on the [CONT website](#).

11. ECA SPECIAL REPORT N° 28/2016 (2015 DISCHARGE) ON “DEALING WITH SERIOUS CROSS-BORDER THREATS TO HEALTH IN THE EU: IMPORTANT STEPS TAKEN BUT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE” CONT/8/08807



Presentation of the Special Report by the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible, *Janusz Wocichowski*, and consideration of a working document

Rapporteur: [Brian Hayes](#) (EPP)
Administrator: Tereza Pinto De Rezende

In previous decades, various events posing threats to health and life have led to increased attention for health security at international and EU levels. Those events have also showed that serious health threats are often cross-border problems, and may require a multi-sectorial and multilateral response.

Within the EU framework, the Commission defined an EU health strategy for 2008-2013, and a key milestone was the adoption in 2013 of a Decision on serious cross-border threats to health, introducing important innovations such as, the coordination of preparedness planning, the strengthening of the role of the Health Security Committee and the introduction of joint procurement for medical counter-measures.

The audit addressed the following question: Is the EU framework for protecting citizens from serious cross-border threats to health adequately implemented?

The Court concluded that the Decision 1082/2013/EU on serious cross-border threats to health represents an important step for dealing better with such threats in the EU. However, significant weaknesses at the level of the Member States (MS) and the Commission affect the implementation of the decision and the related EU framework.

To overcome those weaknesses, the Court proposes supplementary measures to speed up the development and implementation of the innovations and tackle the operational and strategic challenges for the Health Security Committee; further actions by the Commission, in cooperation with the MS and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), in order to upgrade the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) and develop more integrated solutions for related risk management procedures; further activities by the Commission to address the main weaknesses identified in the performance of the health programme for actions addressing health threats; and actions relevant to bridge the gaps in the Commission's internal coordination and improve the design of its Health Emergencies Operations Facility.

The Rapporteur welcomes the ECA report, endorses its recommendations and encourages the Commission to taken them into account when in the future dealing with serious cross-border threats to health in the EU. He asks for a consistent reporting process across all MS and stresses the need for better and more strategic monitoring. The Rapporteur also highlights the need for improved cooperation within the Commission's inter-services dealing with health. MS should have a coordinated approach to speed up the joint procurement of the pandemic influenza vaccine in order to benefit the health of EU citizens and reduce costs. The Commission, MS and ECDC should work together to further develop the Early Warning and Response System to ensure that technological changes are upgraded and the system's optimal use.

The EN version of the working document is available on the [CONT website](#).

TUESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2017

09.00 - 10.30

PUBLIC MEETING

12. 2015 DISCHARGE TO THE AGENCIES



Exchange of views with the Representatives of seven invited Agencies in the presence of the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible, *Rimantas Šadžius*, and the Deputy Executive Director of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), *Christian Archambeau*, currently responsible for the coordination of the Agencies' network.

Rapporteur: [Inés Ayala-Sender](#) (S&D)
Administrators: Hrvoje Svetić

Shadow Rapporteurs: Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP), Raffaele Fitto (ECR), Nedzhmi Ali (ALDE), Dennis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Marco Valli (EFDD), Louis Aliot (ENF), Benedek Jávor (Greens/EFA)

From the 32 decentralized EU agencies, which are subject to discharge, the Rapporteur selected seven agencies to be invited to the hearing:

- European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living & Working Conditions (EUROFOUND)
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
- European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)
- European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX)
- European Medicines Agency (EMA)
- European Banking Authority (EBA)

Other agency representatives are also welcome to attend the hearing if they so wish.

The written questions by the Rapporteur, the Shadow Rapporteurs and other Members, addressed to the agencies network as well as to the individual agencies, were submitted to the agencies on 18 November 2016.

The deadline for replies was set for 9 January 2017 and they were sent to the CONT Members on 17 January 2017. The replies are published on the [CONT website](#).

It is proposed that the hearing shall proceed as follows:

- Introduction by the Member of the European Court of Auditors (ECA), Rimantas Šadžius, who will present the findings of the respective Annual Reports 2015,
- Deputy Executive Director of the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), Christian Archambeau, will reply to this introduction on behalf of the Agencies' network,
- The CONT Rapporteur, Inés Ayala Sender, will present her introduction on key issues in the 2015 agencies' discharge and put questions to the agencies' network, individual agencies and the Court,
- The Chair, Shadow Rapporteurs and other Members will question the agencies' network, individual agencies and the Court,

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- Closing remarks by the EUIPO Deputy Executive Director,
- Closing remarks by ECA,
- Closing remarks by the CONT Rapporteur.

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Consideration of draft report	CONT	27-28 February 2017
Deadline for amendments	CONT	6 March 2017
Adoption in CONT	CONT	23 March 2017
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	APRIL II

TUESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2017

10.30 - 12.30

IN CAMERA

13. WORKSHOP ON “FINANCING EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND FOUNDATIONS”

CONT/8/08999



Rapporteur: [Dennis de Jong](#) (GUE/NGL)
Administrators: Mauro De Oliveira and Hrvoje Svetic

Article 10(4) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 12(2) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union state that political parties and (their affiliated political foundations) at European level contribute to forming European political awareness and to expressing the political will of citizens of the Union. Those transnational bodies should play a key role in articulating the voices of citizens at European level by bridging the gap between politics at national level and at Union level.

Since July 2004 and September 2008, respectively, European political parties and foundations have been able to receive annual funding from the European Parliament’s budget. The funding takes the form of an operating grant up to 85% and by own resources such as membership fees and donations. This funding is based on Regulation 1141/2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations and the implementing Bureau decision 2014/C 63/01.

The Regulation started to apply from 1 January 2017 and established an independent Authority for European political parties and foundations (‘the Authority’) for the purpose of registering, controlling and imposing sanctions on European political parties and European political foundations.

The final reports of the parties and foundations are available at the Parliament’s website (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/contracts-and-grants/en/20150201PVL00101/Political-parties-and-foundations>) including a financial statement of the eligible expenditure, a summary of revenue and expenditure corresponding to the accounts for the period of eligibility covered by the grant decision and a report on an external audit of the accounts carried out by an independent auditor, certifying that the grant has been used in compliance with the rules.

TUESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2017

15.00 - 17.30

PUBLIC MEETING

14. DISCHARGE 2015: EU GENERAL BUDGET - EUROPEAN COMMISSION

CONT/8/07174



Exchange of views with *Carlos Moedas*, Member of the European Commission responsible for Research, Science and Innovation in the presence of the ECA Member responsible, *Alex Brenninkmeijer*

Rapporteur: [Joachim Zeller](#) (EPP)

Administrators: Philippe Godts and Christian Ehlers

Shadow Rapporteurs: Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D), Anders Primdahl Vistisen (ECR), Martina Dlabajová (ALDE), Luke Ming Flanagan (GUE/NGL), Bart Staes (Greens/EFA); Marco Valli (EFDD), Louis Aliot (ENF)

On 8 October 2016, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) presented its Annual Report 2015. In chapter 5 (competitiveness for growth and jobs), the ECA examined 150 transactions. The ECA estimates the most likely error rate in the area in question to be 4,4%. The most common errors relate to incorrectly calculated personnel costs, ineligible direct costs, non-compliance with public procurement rules and ineligible subcontracting rules.

It is noteworthy that if the Commission and national authorities had used the information available to them (for example, from the final beneficiaries, their auditors or from the national authorities' own checks) to prevent, detect and correct the errors before declaring the expenditure to the Commission the most likely error estimated for this chapter would have been 0,6 percentage points lower.

The documents of particular relevance for the exchange of views as regards the 2015 Commission discharge are:

- The ECA's 2015 Annual Report - Chapters 1-3 and 5.
- The Commission's follow-up report COM (2016) 674 final and SWD (2016) 338,
- 2015 Annual Management and Performance Report for the EU Budget
- The Annual Activity Reports of the respective Directors General.

These documents are available on the [CONT website](#).

Members submitted 63 written questions that, in accordance with the timetable for the discharge procedure, were sent to the Commission on 12 January 2017 and e-mailed to Members on the same day.

The answers from the Commission should arrive on 20 January, 12 h and will be emailed to Members immediately.

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It is proposed that today's hearing with the Commissioner shall proceed as follows:

- Introduction by the Member of the European Court of Auditors, who will present the findings of the respective chapters of the Annual Report 2015,
- Commissioner in charge will reply to this introduction,
- CONT Rapporteur will put questions to the Commissioner and the Court,
- Other Members will question the Commissioner and/or the Court,
- Closing remarks by the CONT Rapporteur.

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Consideration of draft report	CONT	27-28 February 2017
Deadline for amendments	CONT	6 March 2017
Adoption in CONT	CONT	22 March 2017
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	APRIL II

15. 2015 DISCHARGE TO THE JOINT UNDERTAKINGS



Exchange of views with Representatives of the Joint Undertakings in the presence of ECA Member responsible, *Kevin Cardiff*

Rapporteur: [Miroslav Poche](#) (S&D)
Administrators: Michal Czaplicki

Shadow Rapporteurs: Raffaele Fitto (ECR), Indrek Tarand (Greens/EFA), Marco Valli (EFDD), Louis Aliot (ENF), Brian Hayes (EPP), Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE), Younous Omarjee (GUE/NGL)

For the financial year 2015, the seven Joint Undertakings (JUs) subject to the discharge procedure by the Parliament are the following: IMI, ECSEL, SESAR, CLEAN SKY, FCH, BBI and F4E. Bio-Based Industries (BBI) JU will be subject of discharge for the first time.

The Rapporteur has selected all Joint Undertakings to be invited to the hearing. However, due to limited amount of time, only three of them will be invited to make a presentation, namely:

- Electronic Components & Systems for European Leadership (ECSEL Joint Undertaking),
- Bio-Based Industries (BBI Joint Undertaking)
- Fusion for Energy (F4E Joint Undertaking).

Other Joint Undertakings representatives can be addressed during the Q&A part of the hearing.

It is proposed that the hearing shall proceed as follows:

- Introduction by the Member of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) Kevin Cardiff, who will present the findings of the respective Annual Reports 2015,
- Presentation of the Rapporteur,
- Presentation of each of ECSEL and BBI JUs;

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- Presentation of F4E;
- The Chair, Shadow Rapporteurs and other Members will ask questions to the invited guests,
- The Joint Undertakings will reply to the questions posed,
- Closing remarks of the ECA Member and Rapporteur

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Consideration of draft report	CONT	27-28 February 2017
Deadline for amendments	CONT	6 March 2017
Adoption in CONT	CONT	23 March 2017
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	APRIL II

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17. NEXT MEETINGS

TUESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2017

17.30 - 18.30

IN CAMERA

18. COORDINATORS' MEETING

Meeting in Camera



- 30 January 2017, 15.00 to 18.30 (Brussels)
- 31 January 2017, 09.00 to 12.30 and 015.00 to 18.30 (Brussels)

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8TH PARLIAMENTARY TERM (2014-2019)

JANUARY 2017

CONSTITUTIVE MEETINGS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

**RULES OF PROCEDURE¹ RELEVANT TO THE CONSTITUTIVE MEETINGS OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES**

**Rule 14
Provisional Chair**

1. At the sitting provided for under Rule 146(2), and at any other sitting held for the purpose of electing the President and the Bureau, the outgoing President or, failing him or her, one of the outgoing Vice-Presidents in order of precedence or, in the absence of any of them, the Member having held office for the longest period shall take the chair until the President has been elected.

2. No business shall be transacted while a Member is provisionally in the chair by virtue of paragraph 1 unless it concerns the election of the President or the verification of credentials in accordance with the second subparagraph of Rule 3(2). Any other matter relating to the verification of credentials raised when he or she is in the chair shall be referred to the committee responsible.

**Rule 15
Nominations and general provisions**

1. The President, shall be elected by secret ballot, followed by the Vice-Presidents and the Quaestors, in accordance with Rule 180a.

Nominations shall be with consent of the nominee, and may only be made by a political group or Members reaching at least the low threshold. New nominations may be handed in before each ballot.

If the number of nominations does not exceed the number of seats to be filled, the candidates shall be elected by acclamation, unless Members or political group(s) reaching at least the high threshold request a secret ballot.

In the event of a single ballot for more than one office holder, the ballot paper shall only be valid if more than half of the available votes have been cast.

¹ The wording and numbering of the rules is according to the version of the Rules of Procedure, which is applicable from 16 January 2017.

2. When electing the President, Vice-Presidents and Quaestors, account should be taken of the need to ensure an overall fair representation of political views, as well as gender and geographical balance.

Rule 168a **Thresholds**

1. For the purposes of these Rules, and unless specified otherwise, the following definitions shall apply:

- (a) “low threshold” means one-twentieth of Parliament’s component Members or a political group;
- (b) “medium threshold” means one-tenth of Parliament’s component Members, made up of one or more political groups or individual Members, or a combination of the two;
- (c) “high threshold” means one-fifth of Parliament’s component Members made up of one or more political groups or individual Members, or a combination of the two.

2. Where, for the purpose of determining whether an applicable threshold has been attained, a Member’s signature is required, that signature may be either handwritten or in electronic form, produced by the electronic signature system of Parliament. Within the relevant time-limits, a Member may withdraw, but may not subsequently renew, his or her signature.

3. Where the support of a political group is necessary in order for a threshold to be attained, the group shall act through its chair or through a person duly designated by him or her for that purpose.

4. The support of a political group shall be counted as follows for the application of the medium and high thresholds:

- where a Rule laying down such a threshold is invoked in the course of a sitting or meeting: all Members who belong to the supporting group and are physically present;
- in the other cases: all Members who belong to the supporting group.

Rule 177 **Right to vote**

The right to vote is a personal right.

Members shall cast their votes individually and in person.

Any infringement of this Rule is considered as a serious case of disorder as referred to in Rule 166(1) and will have the legal consequences mentioned in that Rule.

Rule 178

Voting

1. As a general rule Parliament shall vote by show of hands.

However, the President may at any time decide that the voting operations will be carried out by means of the electronic voting system.

2. The President shall declare votes open and closed.

Once the President has declared a vote open, no-one except the President shall be allowed to speak until the vote is declared to be closed.

3. In calculating whether a text has been adopted or rejected account shall be taken only of votes cast for and against, except where a specific majority is laid down by the Treaties.

4. If the President decides that the result of a vote by show of hands is doubtful, a fresh vote shall be taken using the electronic voting system and, if the latter is not working, by sitting and standing.

5. The President shall establish the result of the vote and announce it.

6. The result of the vote shall be recorded.

Rule 180a

Voting by secret ballot

1. In the case of appointments, voting shall be by secret ballot without prejudice to Rules 15(1) and 204(2), first subparagraph.

Only ballot papers bearing the names of candidates who have been nominated shall be taken into account in calculating the number of votes cast.

2. Voting shall also be by secret ballot if this is requested by Members or political group(s) reaching at least the high threshold. Such requests must be made before voting begins.

3. A request for a secret ballot shall take priority over a request for a vote by roll call.

4. Between two and eight Members chosen by lot shall count the votes cast in a secret ballot, unless an electronic vote is taken.

In the case of votes under paragraph 1, candidates shall not act as tellers.

The names of Members who have taken part in a secret ballot shall be recorded in the minutes of the sitting at which the ballot was held.

Rule 199

Composition of committees

1. Members of committees and committees of inquiry shall be elected after nominations have been submitted by the political groups and the non-attached Members. The Conference of Presidents shall submit proposals to Parliament. The composition of the committees shall, as far as possible, reflect the composition of Parliament.

When Members change their political group they shall retain, for the remainder of their two-and-a-half year term of office, the seats they hold in parliamentary committees. However, if a Member's change of political group has the effect of disturbing the fair representation of political views in a committee, new proposals for the composition of that committee are made by the Conference of Presidents in accordance with the procedure laid down in paragraph 1, second sentence, so that the individual rights of the Member concerned are guaranteed.

The proportionality of the distribution of committee seats among political groups must not depart from the nearest appropriate whole number. If a group decides not to take seats on a committee, the seats in question will remain vacant and the committee will be reduced in size by the corresponding number. Exchange of seats between political groups is not allowed.

2. Amendments to the proposals by the Conference of Presidents shall be admissible only if they are tabled by at least 40 Members. Parliament shall vote on such amendments by secret ballot.

3. Members shall be deemed to be elected on the basis of the proposals from the Conference of Presidents, as and where amended in accordance with paragraph 2.

4. If a political group fails to submit nominations for membership of a committee of inquiry in accordance with paragraph 1 within a time limit set by the Conference of Presidents, the Conference of Presidents shall submit to Parliament only the nominations communicated to it within that time-limit.

5. The Conference of Presidents may provisionally decide to fill any vacancy on a committee with the agreement of the persons to be appointed, having regard to paragraph 1.

6. Any such changes shall be placed before Parliament for ratification at the next sitting.

Rule 200

Substitutes

1. The political groups and the non-attached Members may appoint a number of permanent substitutes for each committee equal to the number of full members representing them on the committee. The President shall be informed accordingly. These permanent substitutes shall be entitled to attend and speak at committee meetings and, if the full member is absent, to take part in the vote.

In the event that the seat of a full member of a committee falls vacant, a permanent substitute from the same political group shall be entitled to vote in place of the full member, on a temporary basis pending the provisional replacement of the full member in accordance with Rule 199(5), or, in the absence of such provisional replacement, pending the appointment of a new full member. Such entitlement is based on Parliament's decision concerning the numerical composition of the committee, and aims at ensuring that the number of members of the political

group concerned who can take part in the vote is equal to the number entitled to do so before the seat fell vacant.

2. In addition, in the absence of the full member and where permanent substitutes either have not been appointed or are absent, the full member of the committee may arrange to be represented at meetings by another member of the same political group, who shall be entitled to vote. The Chair of the committee shall be notified of the name of the substitute prior to the beginning of the voting session.

Paragraph 2 shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to the non-attached Members.

The advance notification provided for in the last sentence of paragraph 2 must be given before the end of the debate or before the opening of the vote on the item or items for which the full member is to be replaced.

* * *

The provisions of this Rule encompass two concepts which are clearly defined by this text:

- a political group may not have more permanent substitutes on a committee than it has full members;*
- only political groups are entitled to appoint permanent substitutes, on the sole condition that they inform the President.*

To conclude:

- the status of permanent substitutes depends exclusively on membership of a given political group;*
- if the number of a political group's full members in a committee changes, the maximum number of permanent substitutes which it can appoint to that committee changes accordingly;*
- Members who change their political group may not keep the status of permanent substitute which they had as members of their original group;*
- a committee member may not under any circumstances be a substitute for a colleague who belongs to another political group.*

Rule 203

Subcommittees

1. Subcommittee may be set up in accordance with Rule 196.A standing or special committee may also, in the interests of its work and subject to prior authorisation by the Conference of Presidents, appoint one or more subcommittees, at the same time determining their composition, in accordance with the relevant provisions laid down in Rule 199, and their areas of responsibility, which shall fall within the areas of responsibility of the parent committee. Subcommittees shall report to their parent committee.

2. Unless otherwise specified in these Rules, the procedure for subcommittees shall be the same as for committees.

3. Full members of a subcommittee shall be chosen from among the members of the parent committee.
4. Substitutes shall be allowed to sit on subcommittees under the same conditions as on committees.
5. The Chair of the parent committee may involve the Chairs of the subcommittees in the work of the coordinators or may allow them to chair debates in the parent committee on issues specifically dealt with by the subcommittees in question, provided that this way of proceeding is submitted to the committee bureau for consideration and approved.

Rule 204

Committee bureaux

1. At the first committee meeting after the appointment of committee members pursuant to Rule 199, the committee shall elect a bureau consisting of a chair and of vice-chairs who shall be elected from among the full members of that committee in separate ballots. The number of vice-chairs to be elected shall be determined by Parliament upon a proposal by the Conference of Presidents. The diversity of Parliament must be reflected in the composition of the bureau of each committee; it shall not be permissible to have an all male or all female bureau or for all of the Vice-Chairs to come from the same Member State.

2. Where the number of nominations corresponds to the number of seats to be filled, the election shall take place by acclamation. However, if there is more than one candidate on a given ballot, or members or political group(s) reaching at least the high threshold in the committee requested a vote, the election shall take place by secret ballot.

If there is only one candidate, the election shall be won by an absolute majority of the votes cast, these to include votes cast for and against.

If there is more than one candidate, the candidate who obtains an absolute majority of the votes cast at the first ballot shall be elected. At the second ballot, the candidate who obtains the highest number of votes shall be elected. In the event of a tie, the oldest candidate shall be elected.

3. The following Rules concerning the Officers of Parliament shall apply mutatis mutandis to committees: Rule 14 (Provisional Chair), Rule 15 (Nominations and general provisions), Rule 16 (Election of President - opening address), Rule 19 (Term of office of Officers) and Rule 20 (Vacancies).

Rule 208

Voting in committee

1. Without prejudice to Rule 66(3) on second readings, amendments or draft proposals for rejection tabled for consideration in committee shall always be signed by a full or substitute member of the committee concerned or co-signed by at least one such member.

2. A committee may validly vote when one quarter of its members are actually present. However, if so requested by members or political group(s) reaching at least the high threshold

in the committee before voting begins, the vote shall be valid only if the majority of its members have taken part in it.

3. Any single and/or final vote in committee on a report or opinion shall be taken by roll call in accordance with Rule 180(3) and (4). The vote on amendments and other votes shall be taken by a show of hands, unless the Chair decides to proceed to an electronic vote or members or political group(s) reaching at least the high threshold in the committee request a vote by roll call.

The provisions of Rule 208(3) on voting by roll call do not apply to the reports provided for in Rule 8(2) and Rule 9(4), (7) and (9) in the context of procedures relating to the immunity of a Member.

4. In the light of the amendments tabled, the committee may, instead of proceeding to a vote, ask the rapporteur to submit a new draft taking account of as many of the amendments as possible. A new deadline shall then be set for amendments.

Rule 209

Provisions concerning plenary sittings applicable in committee

The following Rules concerning voting, interruptive and procedural motions shall apply mutatis mutandis to committees: Rule 164a (Prevention of obstruction), 168a (Thresholds), Rule 169 (Tabling and moving amendments), Rule 170 (Admissibility of amendments), Rule 171 (Voting procedure), Rule 174 (Order of voting on amendments), Rule 176 (1) (Split voting), Rule 177 (Right to vote), Rule 178 (Voting), Rule 179a (Tied votes), Rule 180(3) and (4) (Voting by roll call), Rule 180a (Voting by secret ballot), Rule 181 (Use of electronic voting system), Rule 182a (Disputes on voting), Rule 184a (Points of order), Rule 190 (Adjournment of a debate or vote) and Rule 191 (Suspension or closure of the sitting).