

**** Votes ****

General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2021 - all sections

Rapporteur for the opinion: Antonio Tajani (PPE)

(Responsible committee: BUDG, Rapporteur: Pierre Larrourou (S&D))



AFCO will vote on the budget amendments and the corresponding draft opinion. Sixteen amendments to the opinion have been tabled and two compromise amendments negotiated. AFCO Members tabled seven budgetary amendments, among them 3 pilot projects.

Since the Council has not yet adopted its position on the Union's budget for 2021, the budgetary amendments and the amendments to the opinion refer to the Draft Budget 2021, as presented by the Commission.

AFCO traditionally gives priority to the meaningful communication with citizens, support for participatory democracy, and fighting disinformation. These activities need to be properly addressed also in next year's EU budget, especially in view of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

INTRODUCTORY WORDS BY THE CHAIR

Dear Readers,

This 16th issue of the AFCO Newsletter for the 9th legislative term comes in the very special context of the COVID-19 epidemic.



In line with the precautionary measures taken by the European Parliament to contain the spread of epidemic while safeguarding Parliament's core activities, our AFCO Committee meeting will take place in Brussels via videoconference.

This Newsletter is a tool prepared by the Secretariat to keep you informed of AFCO activities and to increase awareness of the current institutional challenges facing the European Union.

This will be the seventh AFCO remote meeting. The Committee will vote on four draft opinions and the amendments tabled. In addition, the Minister of State for Europe of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr Michael Roth will be our guest to present and discuss the program of the German Presidency with Members. Finally, we will also consider proposed amendments to Parliament's Rules of Procedure and the amendments tabled to the draft report on the stocktaking of the European elections of 2019.

Antonio Tajani, Chair

Public Access to Documents (Rule 122(7)) – Annual report for the years 2016-2018 - consideration of draft opinion

Rapporteur for Opinion: Loránt Vincze (PPE)

(Responsible committee: LIBE Rapporteur: Ioan Rareș Bogdan (EPP))

AFCO will vote on 33 amendments and seven compromise amendments tabled to its draft opinion. It will also vote on the draft opinion, which recalls the need to upgrade the current legal regime on access to documents, in order to take into account legal and technological developments in the last 20 years and implement in full Article 15(3) TEU, which provides a legal base for access to documents.

At the inter-institutional level, the draft opinion highlights, in particular, the need to enhance the transparency of the Council in line with recent Ombudsman recommendations, streamline the access to the trilogue documents, implementing recent court rulings and to deliver on the commitment to provide a single inter-institutional database for documents related to the legislative procedure.

Recommendation to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning the Implementation and governance of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)

Rapporteur for Opinion: Esteban González Pons (PPE)

(Responsible committee: AFET, Rapporteur: Radosław Sikorski (PPE))



The Committee will vote on the draft opinion and the 49 amendments, which have been tabled and the four compromise amendments, which have been negotiated.

The draft opinion aims at contributing to Parliament's position on the review of permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and related legal acts at the end of the first phase of implementation (2018-2020).

The Establishment of an EU Mechanism on Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights

Rapporteur: Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (S&D)

(Responsible committee: LIBE, Rapporteur: Michal Šimečka (Renew))

AFCO will vote on the draft opinion, as well as the 93 amendments and eleven compromise amendments tabled.

According to the draft opinion, the establishment of the annual monitoring cycle on the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights, should be driven by strong cooperation between the EU institutions and provide for a process that is transparent and impartial. Such a process should also maintain equality between Member States and be objective-based. The proposed mechanism should include a regular and open consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and build on existing experience from the EU, as well as from the international organisations active in this field.

The draft opinion also calls for close integration with other instruments, including financial ones, and for this whole process to feed into more efficient enforcement by the Commission, as well as by the ECJ.

*** END OF VOTES ***

Presentation of the Council Presidency's programme



Following a well-established tradition, at the beginning of each EU Council Presidency, a presentation of the programme of the Council Presidency takes place. The Committee will hear Mr Michael Roth, President of the Council of the European Union, Minister of State for Europe at the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, who will present the priorities of the German Presidency in the domains of competence of AFCO.

A debate will follow.

Stocktaking of European elections

Rapporteur: Pascal Durand (Renew)



An exchange of views on the draft report by Mr. Durand took place during the AFCO meeting of 2 July 2020. On 1 September, AFCO will consider the 265 amendments tabled to the draft report.

In his draft report, the Rapporteur looks at the impact of the 2019 elections and how they reflected the goals of the reform initiated by Parliament in 2015. Those included, among others, enhancing the democratic dimension of the European elections, reinforcing European citizenship, improving the functioning of the Parliament and the governance of the Union, and enhancing the effectiveness of the European elections' conduct. In this context, AFCO is also evaluating the Spitzenkandidaten procedure and addressing the issue of transnational lists.

Amendments to the Rules of Procedure in order to ensure the functioning of Parliament in extraordinary circumstances

Rapporteur: Gabriele Bischoff (S&D)

The Committee will continue its discussion on the draft report on new provisions to be inserted in the Rules in order for Parliament to be able to function in extraordinary circumstances, such as the ones it is currently facing due to the sanitary crisis.

It is envisaged that the discussion will be continued in a future AFCO meeting. The aim is to adopt the new provisions in October, both in AFCO and then in plenary, so that in the case of a prolongation of the current crisis or the emergence of a new one - whatever its nature would be - Parliament can rely on sound and clear rules for facing and managing them.

The draft report is largely based on the work of the AFCO Working Group on the Rules of Procedure, which met remotely eight times since early May, under the chairmanship of the EP Vice-President Wieland.

Digital solutions should allow remote participation of all or only a significant number of Members (meaning a hybrid situation, both physical and remote). The aim is to allow business continuity in the Parliament, in order to continue carrying out its legislative and budgetary roles, as well as to ensure its function of political control.

In the case of such exceptional circumstances, the President, in agreement with the Conference of Presidents could decide to activate derogatory Rules, comprising a set of measures proportional to the nature of the circumstances and the number of Members affected. These measures could, under certain conditions, be reversed by the plenary.

MEETING DOCUMENTS

In light of the European Parliament's paperless project, please bear in mind that no paper dossiers will be available in the meeting room. Instead, meeting documents will be made available on the following **public** and **EP internal** websites:

MEETING DATE AND VENUE

Tuesday 1 September 2020, 9.00 – 11.00 and 16.45 – 18.45
Room: Altiero Spinelli (3G3), Brussels (*and with remote participation of AFCO Members*)

MEETING LANGUAGES AVAILABLE

FR DE IT NL EN ES

NEXT MEETING

24 September, Brussels

FURTHER INFORMATION



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