



EUROPEAN
AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE -
ASSEMBLEIA
DA REPÚBLICA
- PORTUGAL



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/PREFACE

The Chairman of the Committee

Vitalino Canas



The European Affairs Committee is the Committee in charge of monitoring matters that relate to the European Union, acting together with all the other specialised parliamentary committees that are specifically responsible for the matter in question, and preparing the Plenary debates.

This Committee monitors, assesses and gives its opinion on the European Union construction process, especially by appraising the work of the Government as a member of the Council and by monitoring the European Commission's legislative and non-legislative initiatives. This monitoring process is facilitated and stimulated by participation in interparliamentary meetings, especially those held at COSAC (Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union) and through its close ties to the European Parliament. Finally, the Committee also promotes consultations, conferences and public debates dealing with current European issues, in an attempt to inform and involve citizens in debating European affairs. The Committee that I chair understands that publishing this text is a part of the job of disclosing its work to European citizens, enabling serious, all-encompassing debate of the problems and solutions for a Europe that is, at times, distant and complex.



/PORTUGAL

Portugal is the most westerly country in Europe. It is bordered by Spain to the north and east and by the Atlantic Ocean to the south and west. It covers an area of 92,391 km² (land: 91,951 km² and water: 440 km²) and has a very long coastline: 1,214 km in mainland Portugal, 667 km in the Azores and 250 km in the Madeira Islands. For this reason, Portugal has one of the largest exclusive economic zones (EEZ) in Europe, covering 1,727,408 km². Even though it is a unitary State, divided administratively into 18 districts on the mainland, which are in turn sub-divided into 308 municipalities and 4257 parishes, there are two regions that have autonomous statutes: the archipelago of the Azores, consisting of nine islands, and the archipelago of Madeira, made up of two main islands and two groups of uninhabited islands, situated in

the northern hemisphere of the Atlantic Ocean.

The population of Portugal is 10.6 million people (2007 estimate) and the official language is Portuguese, which is also the official language of the seven other countries that make up the Community of Portuguese Language Countries - Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe and East Timor. Portuguese is spoken by around 230 million people around the world.

In 2006, the GNP was € 155,200 million, equivalent to € 14,669 *per capita*.

Portugal is nowadays an economically, politically and socially stable democratic state based on the rule of law, the sovereignty of the people, plural democratic expression and organisation, respect for and guaranteed effective implementation of fundamental rights and freedoms, and the separation and interdependence of powers.

/POLITICAL SYSTEM

The four sovereign bodies are the President of the Republic, the Assembleia da República (Portuguese Parliament), the Government and the Courts, and there is a semi-presidential system in force.

The **President** of the Republic is elected by universal, direct, secret suffrage for a five-year mandate. His/her main functions are to represent the Portuguese State abroad; to guarantee the independence of the nation, to guarantee that the democratic institutions are working properly and that the Constitution is being respected; to monitor the Government's activities; to name and remove members of other institutions (including Parliament and the Government); as well as to hold the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

The **Parliament** is the assembly that represents all Portuguese citizens in Portugal and in the world. Its 230 Members of Parliament are elected by universal, direct, secret suffrage, for a four-year mandate and by 22 plurinominal lists, according to political parties, using the D'Hondt method. Six political parties have parliamentary seats: the Socialist Party (PS), the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), the Popular Party (CDS-PP), the Left Bloc (BE) and the Ecologist Party "The Greens" (PEV). They have legislative and representative powers and can monitor the Government's activities.

The **Government** is nominated by the President of the Republic, and answers to the Parliament. It has political, legislative and administrative responsibilities.

The Courts have the exclusive responsibility to independently administer justice, in accordance with the law.

/THE ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA IN THE PORTUGUESE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

Responsibility to legislate / The Assembleia da República can legislate on all matters except for those that deal with the way that the Government is organized and operates.

There are matters that only the Parliament can legislate on (these are exclusively reserved matters such as, for example, the electoral system, political parties, the State budget, *referenda*, general education bases and national defence).

There are other matters for which the Parliament has relative exclusivity but where the Government may also legislate, requesting a legislative authorization law from the Parliament.

The Parliament approves treaties, especially those that involve Portugal's participation in international organizations, it proposes that the President of the Republic hold a referendum on matters of national interest, authorizes the President of the Republic to declare war and make peace, authorizes and confirms the declaration of a state of emergency, as well as making a legal pronouncement on matters concerning the European Union falling within the remit of its reserved legislative competence.

Responsibility to scrutinise / The Parliament is responsible for

verifying that the Constitution and the laws are being complied with and for appraising the acts of the Government and the Administration.

Responsibilities in relation to other bodies / The President of the Republic assumes power before the Assembleia da República and cannot leave the country without its consent. It is the responsibility of the Assembleia da República to approve the political and administrative statutes and the electoral laws of the autonomous regions, to pronounce on the dissolution of its own government and grant the respective Regional Legislative Assemblies authorization to legislate on certain matters. The Assembleia da República is (fully or partially) involved in electing the holders of positions of responsibility in some external bodies, including the Ombudsman, the Chairman of the Economic and Social Council, the judges of the Constitutional Court, Supreme Judicial Council, National Electoral Commission, the Information Services Supervisory Board, etc., and is also involved in the selection, nomination or indication of people for positions in the European Union as well as supervising and considering Portugal's participation in the process of constructing the European Union.



/PORTUGAL IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

On 28 March 1977, three years after the Democratic Revolution of 25 April 1974, Portugal formally asked to join the European Communities (ECSC, EEC and EAEC).

Seven years after membership talks began, on 12 June 1985, Portugal signed the Treaty of Accession, which took effect on 1 January 1986.

Not only has Portugal been a member of the European Union (EU) since 1986 (when it was still the EEC), it is also one of the founder members of the Euro Zone.

/THE ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA AND THE UE PRESIDENCIES

Since Portugal joined, it has held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) on three occasions:

- / in 1992, *when there were 12 Member States*, during the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty
- / in 2000, *when there were 15 Member States*, during the IGC for the Treaty of Nice and the launch of the Lisbon Strategy
- / in 2007, *when there were 27 Member States*, during the launch of the IGC following the period of reflection on the “Constitutional Treaty”

During the 2007 Presidency, the Assembleia da República organises a series of meetings:

- / Conference of the Chairmen of the Committees on European Affairs
- / Meeting of the Chairmen of the Committees on Justice and Home Affairs

- / Meeting of the Chairmen of the Committees on National Defence
- / Conference of the Chairmen of the Committees on Foreign Affairs
- / 38th Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees (COSAC)
- / Meeting of the Chairmen of the Committees on Budget and Finance

Together with the European Parliament:

- / Joint interparliamentary meeting on climate change
- / Joint parliamentary committee meeting on the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
- / Joint meeting of the parliamentary committees on Education
- / Joint interparliamentary meeting on the Future of Europe
- / Europe-Africa Interparliamentary Meeting (between the European Union and the African Union)

/THE ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA AND EUROPEAN TREATIES

The national parliaments of the EU Member States are not directly represented in Union institutions. Their intervention in the European decision-making process takes place at the national level, either through their actions of scrutinising the activities of the respective Government as the European legislator - at the time that the European legislation is being prepared - at the end of the process of transposing it into legislation, or through the approval of Treaties.

This is why the role of the national parliaments in European affairs differs from one Member State to the next, as the inter-institutional relationships between Parliament and the Government are defined differently in the legal and constitutional systems of the 27 EU Member States.

According to the **Constitution of the Portuguese Republic** (CPR): the Government negotiates (Article 197. 1. b), the Assembleia da República approves (Article 161. i) and the President of the Republic ratifies European treaties (Article 135, b).

In 1992, 1997 and 2001, the Assembleia da República approved for ratification, the Treaty of Maastricht, the Treaty of Amsterdam and the Treaty of Nice, respectively.

There are amendments, in the **seven revisions of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic** which were justified by European issues:

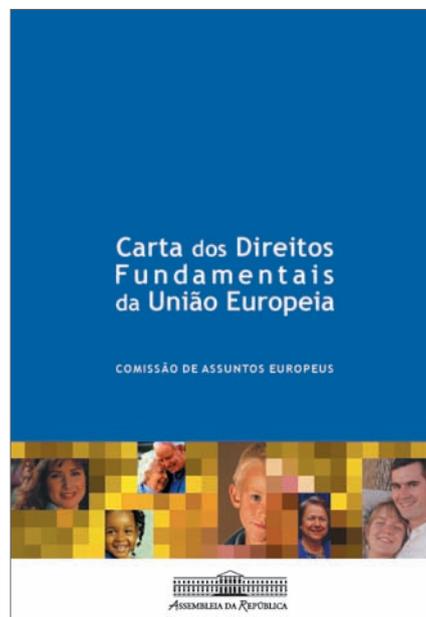
1982 - as a result of the preparations to join; 1989 - as a result of joining and the Single European Act; 1992 - in response to the terms of the Treaty of Maastricht and in consequence of the new European political environment, resulting from the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the USSR. This revision also included parliamentary monitoring of the European Union construction process; 1997 - after the Treaty of Amsterdam; 2001 - in response to the Treaty of Nice; 2004 - in the post-Convention environment; 2005 - after the signature of the Constitutional Treaty, where the possibility of calling a *referendum on the approval of the treaty that aims to construct and strengthen the European Union* was created.

During the 20 years since Portugal joined the EU, a consensus has formed around the need to constitutionalise the Portuguese Parliament's intervention in the European construction process, resulting in a certain "Europeanization" of the CPR, with the introduction of clauses relating to Portugal's participation in EU. Before treaties are approved, the Portuguese Parliament monitors the negotiations between the Governments of the Member States of the European Union (EU), in the Intergovernmental Conferences (IGC) to review European treaties, through holding meetings with members of the Portuguese Government, participating in interparliamentary meetings (e.g. COSAC) and organizing public consultations and hearings, whose results are published in books and digitally on the Assembleia da República website.



Out of the IGC's various parliamentary monitoring processes, the participation of the Assembleia da República is of particular importance, in both the Convention to draw up the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and in the Convention on the Future of Europe where, for the first time, parliamentarians, as direct representatives of the citizens, were included in the preparatory work for amending a treaty (IGC).

As well as the work involved in the Convention's meetings, the four Members of Parliament that represented the Assembleia da República, promoted a nationwide debate about the amendment of the Treaty, taking part in dozens of debates organized by universities, business organisations, trade unions, municipalities, schools, radio stations and newspapers. They also organised a Youth Convention and took part in the meetings of other parliamentary committees that were monitoring the work or giving it their final verdict.



EUROPEAN TREATIES	YEAR	CONSTITUTION (CRP)	LAW	COMMITTEE
	1974	DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION		
	1976	CONSTITUTION		
APPLICATION FOR ACCESSION TO THE EEC	1977			
	1980			EUROPEAN INTEGRATION COMMITTEE
	1982	1 ST REVISION		
TREATY OF ACCESSION	1985			
SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT	1986			
	1987		LAW NO. 28/87	EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
	1988		LAW NO.111/88	
	1989	2 ND REVISION		
TREATY OF MAASTRICHT (1ST PT PRESIDENCY)	1992	3 RD REVISION		
	1994		LAW NO.20/94	
TREATY OF AMSTERDAM	1997	4 TH REVISION		
TREATY OF NICE (2ND PT PRESIDENCY)	2000			
CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS LAEKEN DECLARATION	2001	5 TH REVISION		
CONVENTION ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE IGC	2002			
	2003			COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL POLICY
<i>CONSTITUTIONAL TREATY</i>	2004	6 TH REVISION		
	2005	7 TH REVISION		EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
	2006		LAW NO.43/2006	
IGC AND TREATY (3RD PT PRESIDENCY)	2007			

/THE ROLE OF THE ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA IN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS: THE CONSTITUTION

In Portugal, the Parliament's monitoring, assessment and pronouncement competencies concerning Portuguese participation in the European construction process are regulated by Articles 161. n), 163. f), 164. p) and 197. 1. i) of the **Constitution** and by **Law** No. 43/2006, of 25 August.

The Government is responsible for deciding on European matters, with the Parliament responsible for monitoring, assessing and pronouncing on the Government's actions without, however, imposing limits on its role as a European player. To compensate for the increase in competition for legislative power with the Government and with European institutions, the Parliament has attempted to reinforce and alter its institutional intervention strategy.

The **Constitution** enables the Parliament to:

- / receive information from the Government about the European construction process in good time;
- / supervise and consider Portugal's participation in the process of constructing the European Union;
- / make pronouncements about issues that have still to be decided on by EU institutions which fall within its sphere of reserved legislative competence;
- / transpose EU acts of law to the internal legal system;
- / legislate on the system for nominating members of EU institutions, with the exception of the Commission;
- / summon members of the Government to hearings, through the parliamentary committees;
- / propose a referendum on a European Treaty.

Besides the responsibilities laid down in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic and the Parliament Rules of Procedure, the parliamentary competences concerning European matters are defined in Law No. 43/2006, of 25 August.

43/2006

/THE ROLE OF THE ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA IN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS: LAW NO. 43/2006

Law No. 43/2006, of 25 August:

- / reinforces and gives value to the role of Parliament in the European construction process, expanding its responsibilities for monitoring and assessing Government actions relating to European issues;
- / gives the Parliament the power to pronounce on issues which falls under its reserved legislative competence;
- / establishes a compliance control mechanism of subsidiarity in European initiatives;
- / programs more meetings with the Government for debating European issues, at the European Affairs Committee, at the different specialised committees and at the Plenary session;
- / describes a selection and nomination procedure for members of EU bodies;
- / recognizes the importance of matters decided at the EU that affect the daily life of citizens, enabling parliamentarians to get more involved in debating European issues.

Law No. 43/2006, of 25 August, states that a regular consultation process has been established for the purpose of performing these functions through which the Government keeps the Parliament informed about, for example:

- / Matters that fall within the sphere of the Parliament's reserved responsibility which are pending a decision in EU bodies, as well as the position that the Government should assume, if this has already been defined;
- / All the relevant documentation, as soon as it is submitted to the Council, such as draft agreements or treaties to be entered into by the EU, proposals relating to binding or non-binding acts to be undertaken by EU Institutions;
- / The Commission's annual political strategy and the legislative and working programme, the reports on the application of the principle of subsidiarity and the annual report of the European Court of Auditors;
- / The Government also presents the Parliament with an annual report on Portugal's participation in the European construction process.

As far as the Parliament's monitoring, assessment and pronoun-



Session Hall of the Assembleia da República

cements on EU matters are concerned; the Government must keep it informed, in good time, with respect to the different issues identified in Law No. 43/2006 (especially Articles 2, 3, 5 and 9-11). The Parliament is responsible for assessing all matters of interest to Portugal within the framework of the construction of the European Union (Article 6. 2. a), and may analyse them, and formulate and issue its opinion, in accordance with the mechanisms laid down in that Law. The formal written opinions mentioned in the Law (pronouncements on matters that fall within the Parliament's reserved legislative competence and on the observance of the subsidiarity principle) are

mandatory, but are not legally binding in the sense that they do not give the Government a contractual mandate (as is the case in other national parliaments), however they are of a politically binding nature. The Law establishes an annual routine of three Plenary assembly debates, dedicated to European issues and working meetings between the Members of Parliament and the responsible members of the Government, depending on the issues, as follows:

/ a Plenary debate, attended by the Government, after the conclusion of the final Council of every Presidency (January and July);

/ an annual Plenary debate, attended by the Government, to discuss and approve the report on Portugal's participation in the construction of the EU, which the Government sends to the Parliament annually;

/ Meetings during the week before and the week after each European Council involving the European Affairs Committee (EAC) and the Government (with the Secretary of State for European Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, respectively);

/ Possibility of holding joint meetings with the EAC, the Parliamentary Committee that specializes in the relevant issue and the member of the Government responsible, during the week before or after the Council meeting in its different configurations (JAI, ECOFIN, etc.).



/THE PARLIAMENTARY SCRUTINY SYSTEM FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The relevant information for the purposes of the Parliament's monitoring of the EU construction process comes from three main sources:

- 1.** The Portuguese Government (the information is received by the Office of the President of the Assembleia da República, and is distributed to the EAC and the specialised committees, according to the subjects it deals with);
- 2.** European institutions, with special importance given to documentation sent by the European Parliament and, above all, the mechanism for directly transmitting European Commission initiatives to the national parliaments (since 1 September 2006). These initiatives are sent daily to the EAC support services;
- 3.** IPEX.

The EAC pre-sorts this material by subject, issuing a weekly list of all the initiatives received (legislative and non-legislative) to the specialised committees for information purposes, so that they can start up any scrutiny processes that may be necessary by preparing a report.

Simultaneously, the initiatives that are considered priority are selected (categorizing them in a three-level priority system: A, B or C, depending on whether they are of priority, moderate or occasional interest) so that the EAC can carry out its scrutiny processes, without depending on the activities developed by the specialised committees.

When the initiative falls within the remit of any other committee, and this committee decides to prepare a report, allocating it to one of its members, the EAC also nominates a rapporteur who will wait for the report from the committee responsible for the subject in question. Once this report has been received, the EAC-named rapporteur will prepare a formal written opinion which will, in the majority of cases, be used only to formalize the closure of the scrutiny process.

Thus, the EAC nominates Members of Parliament-rapporteurs for both the reports on initiatives that have been defined as priority by the EAC and for preparing the final formal written opinions about the reports sent by the specialised committees.

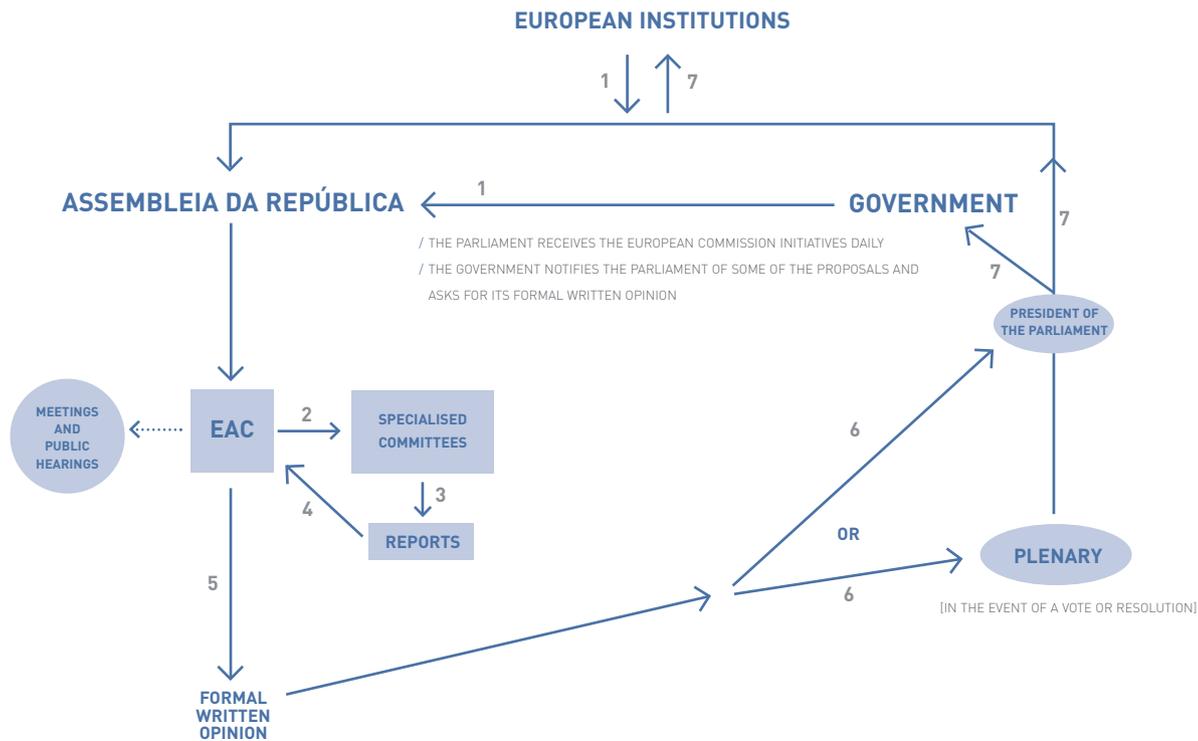
In this process, the EAC and the specialised committees can monitor Government's actions with respect to a given initiative more closely and can organise public hearings with the scientific community, representatives of civil society, trade unions, business circles, NGOs, members of the European Parliament, representatives of the European Commission and, depending on the matter in question, with the Legislative Assemblies of the autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira, etc.

If the scrutiny process results in a decision to issue a «prior parliamentary pronouncement on matters that are the reserved legislative competence of the Assembleia da República» or a «formal written opinion on the compliance of a European initiative with the principle of subsidiarity», the EAC can submit a draft resolution to the Plenary which, after being voted on, is sent by the President of the Assembleia da República to the

Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council or the European Commission. In case of special urgency, the EAC's decision is sufficient.

Nevertheless, parliamentary practice has above all favoured political debate on the major European questions, especially institutional matters, and contact with citizens instead of the systematic, *ex ante* assessment of the European legislation.

/THE PARLIAMENTARY SCRUTINY SYSTEM FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS



MATTERS WITHIN THE RESERVED LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA

ARTICLE 164 OF THE CONSTITUTION

Exclusive responsibility to legislate

- a) Elections to bodies that exercise sovereign power;...
- d) The organisation of national defence,.....
- g) The definition of the limits of territorial waters, the exclusive economic zone and Portugal's rights to the adjacent seabed;
- h) Political associations and parties;
- i) The basic elements of the education system;
- p) The rules governing the appointment of members of European Union bodies, with the exception of the Commission;
- q) The rules governing the Republic's intelligence system and state secrets;...
- s) The rules governing national symbols;

ARTICLE 165 OF THE CONSTITUTION

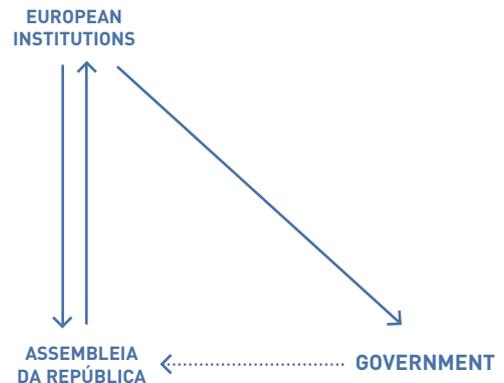
Partially exclusive responsibility to legislate

- a) People's status and legal capacity;
- b) Rights, freedoms and guarantees;
- c) The definition of crimes, sentences, security measures and the preconditions therefore, and the laying down of criminal procedure;...
- f) The basic elements of the social security system and the national health service;
- g) The basic elements of the rules for protecting nature, the ecological balance and the cultural heritage;
- i) The creation of taxes and the fiscal system;...
- n) The basic elements of the agricultural policy;...
- o) The monetary system and the standard for weights and measures;...

A well-founded formal written opinion on the failure to comply with the principle of subsidiarity of a proposed legislative or regulatory text may be sent by the Assembleia da República, as a result of a resolution, to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council or the European Commission and, if necessary, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee. In cases of proven urgency, a formal written opinion issued by the European Affairs Committee is sufficient.

When the formal written opinion refers to matters that fall within the remit of the Legislative Assemblies of the autonomous regions, these must be consulted in good time.

/ FORMAL WRITTEN OPINION BASED ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY



/ THE GOVERNMENT MUST NOTIFY THE ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA IN GOOD TIME

During the first year that the European Commission's initiatives were received, 66 initiatives underwent scrutiny processes. In 26 of these cases, the scrutiny process was concluded, resulting in 31 Specialised Committee reports and 12 EAC final formal written opinions, sent to the Government and the European institutions.

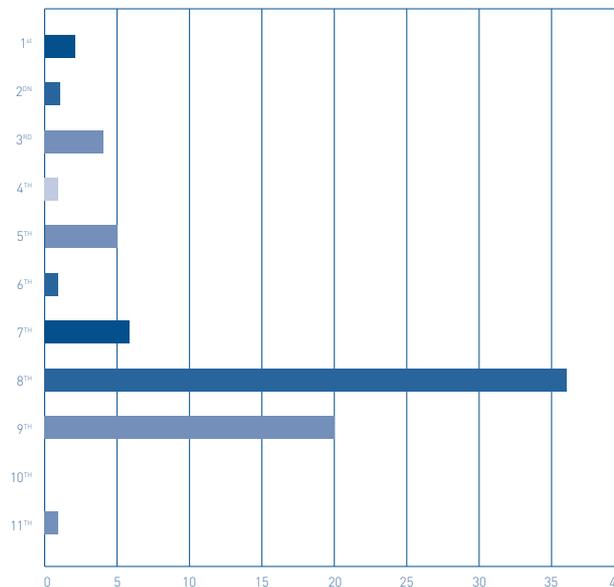
NUMBER OF EU DOCUMENTS

with scrutiny process	66
with scrutiny process in progress from which	40
await additional information by the Government	3
await report by specialised committees	3
await report/opinion by the EAC	34
with scrutiny concluded	26

REPORTS AND OPINIONS SUBMITTED TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT

Reports by the Specialised Committees	31
Reports/opinions by the EAC	12

EUROPEAN UNION REPORTS WITH SCRUTINY PROCESSES AT THE PARLIAMENT APPROVED BY COMMITTEE AND EAC FORMAL WRITTEN OPINIONS



1st / Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Rights, Freedoms and Guarantees

2nd / Committee on Foreign Affairs and Portuguese Communities

3rd / European Affairs Committee

4th / National Defence Committee

5th / Budget and Finance Committee

6th / Committee on Economic Affairs, Innovation and Regional Development

7th / Committee on Local Government, Environment and Territorial Planning

8th / Committee on Education, Science and Culture

9th / Committee on Public Works, Transport and Communications

10th / Health Committee

11th / Committee on Labour and Social Security

/THE EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The European Affairs Committee (EAC) monitors, assesses and gives its opinion on Portugal's participation in the EU construction process, as laid down in Law No. 43/2006, of 25 August.

/ 21 Members of Parliament, drawn from the six political parties with parliamentary seats (PS-11, PSD-6, PCP-1, CDS-PP-1, BE-1 and PEV-1)

/ weekly meetings

/ regular meetings with Members of the Government

/ public hearings

/ preparation of three Plenary sessions dedicated to European affairs

/ annual meeting with the President of Parliament, the Secretary of



Members of the European Affairs Committee | July 2007

State for European Affairs, Members of the European Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assemblies of the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira

/ direct broadcasts of the public hearings by *Canal Parlamento* (The Parliament Channel)

/ information made available on the Parliament website

/ participation in COSAC

/ participation in meetings at the European Parliament, in Brussels

/ participation in the IPEX database

Responsibilities

a) To assess all subjects of interest to Portugal within the framework of the construction of the European Union, the European institutions or the cooperation between the Member States of the European Union, especially the performance of the Government with respect to these subjects;



Meeting of the European Affairs Committee | 2007

- b)** To prepare a formal written opinion, when there are issues that are waiting for decisions by European Union institutions which fall within the remit of the Assembleia da República's reserved legislative competence;
- c)** To encourage greater participation of the Assembleia da República in the activity developed by the European institutions;
- d)** To coordinate information exchange and suitable methods of collaboration with the specialised committees responsible for the matter in question;
- e)** To formulate draft resolutions aimed at assessing proposed community acts of a normative nature;
- f)** To hold an annual meeting with the members of the Legislative Assemblies of the Autonomous Regions and to ask them for their formal written opinions, in accordance with the terms of Article 3, Paragraph 3, and whenever their regional legislative competences are involved;
- g)** To intensify interchange between the Assembleia da República and the European Parliament;
- h)** To promote meetings or hearings with European Union institutions, bodies and agencies;
- i)** To promote interparliamentary cooperation within the European Union;
- j)** To nominate the Portuguese representatives to the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC), assess their performance and the results of the Conference;

- l)** To conduct the hearings of the people indicated or to be nominated by the Portuguese Government and assess their *curricula*, in certain cases;
- m)** To conduct hearings and debates on European matters with civil society representatives, contributing to the creation of a European public area at the national level.

All committees have the same statute in the Portuguese Parliament. However, the EAC does have some specific powers:

- / In the event of proven urgency, a decision or formal written opinion issued by the EAC is sufficient to bind Parliament, in terms of both pronouncements in the scope of matters falling within its reserved legislative competence and formal written opinions on compliance with the principle of subsidiarity;
- / The EAC, as a Committee, can submit draft resolutions to the Plenary assembly;
- / The EAC coordinates the exchange of information with the specialised committees, notably in parliamentary pronouncement processes dealing with European matters, where the final formal written opinion brings the scrutiny process to a close.

/HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

After the Government had submitted its request to join the EU, on 28 March 1977, a delegation to set up an information exchange with the corresponding European Parliament (EP) was created in 1979.

In 1980, this delegation was transformed into the European Integration Committee, which had the double objective of monitoring the negotiation

process being undertaken by the Government and of establishing regular contact with the EP, with other national parliaments and with representatives of civil society.

Portugal became a full member of the Community on 1 January 1986 and, in 1987, the Parliamentary Committee for European Integration took on the name of European Community Affairs Committee, before adopting the name of European Affairs Committee[1] in 1988. (vide page 25)

/EUROPEAN INTEGRATION COMMITTEE

LEGISLATURE	LEGISLATIVE SESSION	CHAIRPERSON
I	4 TH SESSION	 VITOR MANUEL CONSTÂNCIO PS
II	1 ST SESSION	 HELENA ROSETA PSD
	2 ND SESSION	 HELENA ROSETA PSD
	3 RD SESSION	 RUI BARRADAS DO AMARAL PSD
III	1 ST SESSION	 RUI FERNANDO PEREIRA MATEUS PS
	2 ND SESSION	 RUI FERNANDO PEREIRA MATEUS PS
IV	1 ST SESSION	 JOSÉ SILVA LOPES PRD
	2 ND SESSION	 JOSÉ SILVA LOPES PRD

/EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

LEGISLATURE	LEGISLATIVE SESSION		CHAIRPERSON
V	1 ST SESSION		JOSÉ ANGELO CORREIA PSD
	2 ND SESSION		JOSÉ ANGELO CORREIA PSD
	3 RD SESSION		JOSÉ ANGELO CORREIA PSD
	4 TH SESSION		JOSÉ ANGELO CORREIA PSD
VI	1 ST SESSION		HELENA TORRES MARQUES PS
	2 ND SESSION		HELENA TORRES MARQUES PS
	3 RD SESSION		LEONOR BELEZA PSD
	4 TH SESSION		JORGE BRAGA DE MACEDO PSD
VII	1 ST SESSION		JOSÉ MEDEIROS FERREIRA PS
	2 ND SESSION		JOSÉ MEDEIROS FERREIRA PS
	3 RD SESSION		JOSÉ MEDEIROS FERREIRA PS
	4 TH SESSION		JOSÉ MEDEIROS FERREIRA PS
VIII	1 ST SESSION		MANUEL ANTÓNIO DOS SANTOS PS
	2 ND SESSION		MANUEL ANTÓNIO DOS SANTOS PS
	3 RD SESSION		ALBERTO COSTA PS
IX			JAIME GAMA PS
X	1 ST SESSION		ANTÓNIO VITORINO PS
	2 ND SESSION		VITALINO CANAS PS

[1] The number of specialised committees and their names are decided in every Legislature. During the 9th Legislature (2002-2004), the EAC was merged with the Foreign Affairs Committee, on 2 May 2002, taking on the name of the European Affairs and Foreign Policy Committee (EAFPC). In the 10th Legislature (2005-2009), the two committees - Committee on Foreign Affairs and Portuguese Communities and the European Affairs Committee - regained their autonomy.

/THE EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND CITIZENS

As well as the Plenary meetings being publicly held and the committee meetings also usually being open to the public, the Parliament also organises conferences, seminars and public consultations on European questions, as well as hearings with Members of the Government, Commission Members, Members of the European Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assemblies of the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira. These can also be followed through the Parliament Channel or the information available on the Parliament's website. The EAC has organised some decentralised debates, as was the case in 2007, with the *Cycle of Conferences on the Challenges about the Future of Europe* .



Public hearing organised by the European Affairs Committee, in the Senate Hall at the Assembleia da República | 2006



European Affairs Committee Website | 2007



"The social and economic challenges; the Lisbon Strategy" | 2007
The Senate Hall of the Assembleia da República



"The architecture and geography of the European Union" | 2007
Auditorium, UTAD Library in Vila Real



"Common Foreign and Security Policy" | 2007
Auditorium of the University of Aveiro

/THE EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Law No. 43/2006 states in Article 6. g): "Intensifying the exchanges between the Assembleia da República and the European Parliament, by proposing the allocation of appropriate reciprocal facilities and regular meetings with interested members, particularly those elected in Portugal."

Article 2. c) of the EAC regulations already predicts this formulation and Article 3. 1 allows the Members of the European Parliament to take part in the EAC meetings. In practice, this relationship is intensified through the holding of an annual meeting to debate the Legislative and Work Programme of the

European Commission, participation in joint meetings at the European Parliament, in Brussels, and in the context of COSAC and bilateral visits between the two parliaments.

/THE EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND COSAC

The Assembleia da República, through EAC, participates in the *Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union* (COSAC).

This Conference was first held in 1989, and is a structure of cooperation between the Committees that are responsible for European Union matters in each national parliament. It was sanctioned in the Protocol Annexed to the Treaty of Amsterdam, which determines that COSAC is able to direct “all contributions that it considers appropriate” to European institutions within the framework of the European Union’s activities.

COSAC meets every six months in the capital of the Member State that holds the presidency of the Union. The 27 EU national parliaments participate in this meeting, with delegations made up of 6 MPs. Candidate states are also invited along.

During this meeting, the Members of Parliament debate issues of current importance in Europe and share experiences of good parliamentary scrutiny practice.

From 1 January 2007 to 30 June 2008, the Assembleia da

República was a member of the COSAC Secretariat, which operates in the European Parliament Buildings, in Brussels, and is made up of a representative from each of the “Troika”, a permanent member and a representative of the European Parliament.



Conference of EAC Chairmen of the National Parliaments of the 27 Member States, 9-10 July 2007, Assembleia da República.

/THE ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA AND IPEX

IPEX (Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange) is a platform for the electronic exchange of EU-related information amongst the different national parliaments and the EP, covering:

- / documents and information database from the European Union Institutions and the national parliaments;
- / parliamentary scrutiny and control of the European legislative process (information about the relevant scrutiny activities performed by each one of the national parliaments);
- / *fora* for exchanging points of view about political scrutiny issues, including aspects relating to subsidiarity;
- / an up-to-date calendar of interparliamentary meetings.

The Assembleia da República participated, through the EAC, in the conception of IPEX (2000-2006) and has actively participated in the management of this information exchange platform.

The Assembleia da República correspondent at IPEX is a member of the EAC support team, whose contribution is to enable IPEX to be used as a source of information which is fundamental for the scrutiny of European initiatives, sensitising all the committees and the Plenary of the need to get involved both in inputting and accessing information.



/THE ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA AND INTERPARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

The participation of the Assembleia da República, European Affairs Committee in COSAC; in the IPEX Project has already been mentioned; as has the participation of the other specialised committees in meetings to debate specific subjects, usually at the initiative of the parliament that assumes the EU Presidency or the corresponding EP Committee.

The President of the Assembleia da República participates in the Conference of Presidents of EU Parliaments, which meets annually, together with the EP, to exchange information and debate topics of common interest, such as strengthening the parliamentary scrutiny of the Union's initiatives.

Finally, as Portugal is a member of several international organizations (founder member of the Council of Europe, NATO and OECD), the Assembleia da República has parliamentary delegations at: the Interparliamentary Union (IPU); the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE); the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), the Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (MPA), the Assembly of Western European Union (WEU), the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATOPA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the

Portuguese Language Parliamentary Forum (PLPF) and the Ibero-American Parliamentary Forum (IAPF).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

European Affairs Committee

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www.parlamento.pt/const_leg/lei43_06/index.html

www.cosac.eu

www.ipex.eu

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