

PARLIAMENT OF FINLAND - THE GRAND COMMITTEE

XXIIIrd COSAC - Versailles - 16-17 October 2000

Questionnaire for the Parliaments of the Member States

12.9.2000

- 1) Finland became a member of the European Union 1995. The parliamentary scrutiny of the EU affairs in Finnish Parliament was created one year earlier and is unchanged.. Since 1995 the Grand Committee (GC) has been the principal EU affairs committee of Parliament. The specialised committees play an active role in the procedure. They deliver opinions to the Grand Committee on legislative proposals; these opinions are mostly adopted by the GC.
- 2) The Grand Committee receives European legislative proposals in sufficient time in most cases. The protocol on the role of the national parliaments in the European Union of the Treaty of Amsterdam has not had any noticeable effect.
- 3) In some cases, the time available is not sufficient for proper scrutiny, involving also the specialized committees.
- 4) Parliament's right of information is more strongly and effectively guaranteed in the Finnish Constitution. The Amsterdam Protocol and the definition of legislative proposals in art. 7 of the Council's Rules of Procedure are fairly irrelevant to us.
- 5) The Grand Committee has a regular and systematic exchange of documents ex ante only with Swedish Parliament's EU Committee. The written observations of the EU affairs committee of the French Senate and National Assembly are sent to us afterwards. In addition, information is shared with other national parliamentary EU Committees on an ad hoc basis when required. We believe that this arrangement is satisfactory.
- 6) Members of the GC or of the specialized committees(which participate in the scrutiny of EU proposals, and usually bear the brunt of the substantive work) regularly attend meetings at the European Parliament. There is some concern here about the growing number of these meetings, and some doubt whether their format actually provides any meaningful exchange of views.