

Questionnaire for the Parliaments of the applicant states

**Committee for European integration
of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic**

1. *Information of the European integration committee.*

How does your Committee get the necessary information ? From the Government ? From the European Commission ? From the European Parliament ? From other sources ? Does your Committee consider the information in its possession sufficient ?

The Committee for European integration of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic gets all the necessary information from all the Ministries dealing with European affairs and from the Government as the whole. It's in permanent contact with the Minister of Foreign affairs who co-ordinates the European integration process in the Czech Republic, and with the State Secretary for European affairs who is discharging the function of the Chief Negotiator of the Czech Republic with the EU.

The Committee is also in contact with the Delegation of the European Commission in Prague and gets requested information.

The Committee doesn't have direct relations with the European Parliament; it's the competency of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), established under art. 110 of the European Agreement. It shall be a forum for members of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and the European Parliament to meet and exchange views. However, the Chairman of the JPC is at the same time Deputy Chairman of the Committee for European integration, and some more MPs are members of both bodies, so the free circulation of information is ensured.

The Committee receives information from many other sources the bigger source being the internet.

The Committee generally considers the available information sufficient

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2. *Integration of European legislation.*

Do the standard legislative proceedings apply to the integration of European legislation into national law or do you apply special proceedings ? Does your Committee play a specific role in the legislative integration process ?

Special legislative proceedings under art. 90(2) of the Act on the Rules of Procedure

The Czech Parliament applies standard legislative proceedings. However, it approved recently an amendment to the Act on Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies applicable mainly to the transposing EC law into Czech law. Under this amendment, the Chamber of Deputies can approve bills, on special conditions, just in the first reading. It also enables to shorten substantially the deadline for completing discussion of a bill in a Committee, which allows speeding up the legislation process.

Preliminary consultation under Resolution of the Czech Government
No. 257/2000

The preliminary consultation procedure with the Committee for European integration concerning selected bills transposing EC legislation has been introduced. Since May 2000, under above mentioned resolution, all the Ministries preparing a European bill shall present it, even before submitting it to the Government meeting, to the Committee for a preliminary consultation. All the bills shall be accompanied by an analytic comparative table, containing relevant EC legislation on one side and corresponding provisions of the bill on the other side. The main task of a rapporteur of the Committee is to check, with support of an expert of the parliamentary Centre for European Law, the compatibility of the bill with EC law. The opinion concerning formal and substantial issues is signed by the Chairman and the rapporteur of the Committee, after having been discussed with the Ministry in question.

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3. *Accession negotiations.*

How does your European integration committee follow the accession negotiations ? Does the Committee give its opinion ?

The Committee systematically monitors the accession negotiations. It regularly invites the Chief Negotiator of the Czech Republic with the EU for hearings concerning the process of negotiations. It however doesn't give its opinion.

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4. *Conformity of national law to European legislation.*

Is there a procedure aiming at scrutinising the compliance of bills submitted to Parliament to European legislation ? Does your Parliament play a role in this procedure ? Is your committee associated to this procedure ?

Since 1995, there exists an elaborated system of scrutinising the compliance of bills submitted to Parliament to European legislation in executive branch of the Government, including Electronic database of Approximation of Law (ISAP), now accessible through internet for general public. Via preliminary consultation procedure (see sub. 2 above) the Committee for European Integration has been involved even in this pre-parliamentary stage of the legislative process.

Committee for European Integration systematically follows all the legislation transposing EC law. Expert support for this Committee is represented by a department of the Office of the Chamber: Parliamentary Institute - Centre for European Law. This department is obliged to elaborate an information concerning compatibility with Community law as regards all non-government bills, and, in pursuance of a request of the Committees, also as regards government bills, in accordance with Resolution of the Organization Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic No. 168, from 1997. The opinions are available electronically in the intranet of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and in Electronic database of Approximation of Law (ISAP). Similar information is provided on request on compatibility for amendments of the MPs.

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5. *Other committees for European legislation.*

Did you take your inspiration from the experience of other applicant states when your Committee was created ? Are you in touch with European integration committees from other applicant states ?

We studied the experience of partner Committees of other applicant countries but the work of the Committee developed principally in concordance with the Czech reality. We have both bilateral and multilateral contacts with parliamentary Committees on European affairs of other applicant countries. Meetings of the Chairmen of parliamentary Committees on European affairs of the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia are held regularly.

A comparative study on «European Committees in the EU Member States» (80 pages) is available to all MPs in intranet of the Parliament.

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6. *Community aid.*

As part of the accession process, had your Parliament received any technical assistance from the Community or from some member states ? What kind of assistance ? Was this assistance sufficient ?

Since 1993, the Parliamentary Institute has been carrying out a Phare project, the aim of which is to reinforce the active participation of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in the process of transposing EC legislation into Czech law. An absolutely necessary condition for the high-quality activity of the legislators in this sphere has shown itself to be the creation of the appropriate professional and technical background. The basic requirements to achieve this aim have been made possible by the implementation of the Phare project CZ 9201-27-03-03 and CZ 9405-03-03.

In the scope of these projects the Parliamentary Centre for European Law has been formed, which serves as an expert department of the Parliamentary Institute for Community law. In implementing the above-mentioned Phare projects, the workers of the Parliamentary Institute have been trained in co-operation with foreign experts from the T. M. C. Asser Institute for Private and Public International Law in the Hague and a technical and documentary background has been formed for the provision of information about the EU and for processing analyses in the sphere of Community law.

Within the project COP97 – CZ 9703-01-02-11, which is now being implemented MPs and officials of the both Chambers are trained in EU affairs and legislation and language training is also organized for them. The project shall be accomplished by the end of this year.

Even if the amount of the assistance was cut substantially, this technical assistance represented a substantial help for introduction of a systematic mechanism of information and parliamentary control over European legislation and promotes the role of the Czech Parliament in the integration process. Further assistance could help the Czech Parliament to establish broader background enabling to provide information on EU also for general public and to finish the training of all the officials of the both Chambers.