

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

S É N A T

Questionnaire for the Parliaments of the applicant states XXIIIrd COSAC - Versailles - 16-17 October 2000

The case of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus

The Committee on Foreign and European Affairs of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus is responsible for dealing with european integration issues.

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 Government provides the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs with most of the necessary information regarding european integration, and in particular the european course of Cyprus including the accession negotiations between the European Union and Cyprus.

However, the Committee gets information from other sources like the information and documentation services offered usually on the Internet by the institutions of the European Union, as well as academic, professional and other institutions. Some of them are:

- The European Commission and its delegation in Cyprus.
- The European Parliament.
The Europa database.
The CELEX database.
The information relays set up by the European Commission in the Member States, such as the Information Centres on Europe, the Info-Points Europe (IPEs).
The European Documentation Centres (EDCs) of Universities such as the European University Institute in Florence, as well as the Depository Libraries in the major national libraries.
The Euro-Info Centres (EICs) for businesses and the European Consumer Information Centres.
The Official Publications Office (EUR-OP) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat).
- The Office of the Head of the Negotiating Delegation for the accession of Cyprus to the European Union.
The Press and Information Office of the Republic (PIO).
The European Institute of Cyprus (EIC).
The Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The information available from the sources listed above proved to be satisfactory in terms of both volume and quality. But the pace of political, social and economic developments in the European Union suggest that it needs to be constantly updated.

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?

In the context of transposing European legislation into the national law, the House of Representatives has adopted a fast-track procedure.

All bills of law submitted by the Government to the House of Representatives, which aim at harmonizing the national legislation with the *acquis*, are forwarded to the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, rather than to the respective Parliamentary Committees. The Committee on Foreign and European Affairs examines and approves or amends the bill in question, which is then forwarded along with a report to the Plenary for discussion. The Plenary is entitled to approve, reject or amend the proposed bill.

However, notwithstanding the fast-track procedure, it may still be the case that, due to the significance of the substance of a bill of law, the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign and European Affairs considers it expedient that the bill of law be examined by the respective Parliamentary Committee, which would normally examine bills of law of similar substance. In this case, the examination and final adoption of the bill follows the normal parliamentary practice.

3. Accession negotiations.

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

The Head of the Negotiating Delegation for the accession of Cyprus to the European Union (Chief Negotiator) is regularly invited to attend meetings of the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs. The Chief Negotiator informs the Committee of all developments relating to the accession negotiations. The Committee has a say in the accession negotiations in the sense that it is informed by the Chief Negotiator and expresses its opinion on the position papers before those are submitted to the European Commission. Moreover, the Committee expresses its position to the Chief Negotiator on many aspects of the negotiations before these take place. The position of the Committee has been always taken seriously into consideration both in the formulation of the position papers, as well as in the accession negotiations.

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?

Last year, a new parliamentary department was set up, of officers qualified in European law. This department is responsible to assist the Committee on Foreign and European Affairs in carrying out its harmonization related tasks. The tasks assigned to this specialized service include, among others, the examination of conformity with the *acquis communautaire* of the bills of law, which are submitted to the Parliament.

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?

The House of Representatives has looked into the experience of the Parliaments of other applicant states (who had established such Committees by that time), as well as member states before setting up its own Committee on European Affairs.

The Committee on Foreign and European Affairs of the House of Representatives is closely co-operating with the respective committees of the Parliaments of many applicant states, mainly those of the "Luxembourg Group". It should be noted that the Chairmen of the Committees on European Affairs of the Parliaments of the applicant states of the above mentioned Group meet regularly twice a year and exchange ideas on European issues and the European course of their respective countries.

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?

As part of the accession process, the House of Representatives has received some technical assistance from the TAIEX Office of the European Commission. This assistance took the form of seminars or workshops organized by the TAIEX Office, either on its own or in co-operation with Parliaments of member states. Moreover, the TAIEX Office has organized a one-week workshop in Cyprus in co-operation with the Planning Bureau of the Republic and the House of Representatives. This workshop focused on the accession process and the role of national Parliaments in this process.

The technical assistance received by the House of Representatives is not considered sufficient. Cyprus should definitely be allowed to participate in some specific Community programmes, whose objective is to assist the applicant states in adapting and strengthening the public administration and organisations responsible in implementing and enforcing Community legislation.