European Communities

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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Legal Affairs Committee

on the addition of a Rule 47 a) to the Rules of Procedure introducing a question time in the European Parliament followed by a debate if so requested and on an outline implementing procedure

Rapporteur: Mr L. MEMMEL

PE 31.370/fin.

English Edition

By letter of 18 October 1972, the President of the European Parliament requested the Legal Affairs Committee on behalf of the enlarged Bureau to submit to Parliament a motion for a resolution on the addition of a Rule 47A to the Rules of Procedure introducing a question time in the European Parliament, followed by a debate if requested.

Mr Memmel was appointed rapporteur on 8 November 1972.

At its meeting on 7 December 1972 the Legal Affairs Committee examined the report and unanimously adopted motions for resolutions I and II, together with explanatory statements.

The following were present: Mr Bermani, deputy-chairman; Mr Memmel, rapporteur; Mr Armengaud, Mr Broeksz, Mr d'Angelosante, Mr Dittrich, Mr Duval, Mr Glesener (deputizing for Mr Heger), Mr Koch, Mr Lautenschlager, Mr Meister, Mr Outers, Mr Pianta, Mr Reisch, Mr Springorum and Mr Vermeylen.

Owing to practical difficulties, the motions for resolutions are not accompanied by a written explanatory statement.

A

The Legal Affairs Committee hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motions for resolution:

I

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on

the addition of a Rule 47A to the Rules of Procedure introducing a question time in the European Parliament followed by a debate if requested

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its Rules of Procedure;

- having regard to the report of the Legal Affairs Committee (Doc. 252/72);

1. Decides to add a Rule 47A, worded as follows, to its Rules of Procedure:

'Rule 47A

1. A question time shall be set aside at the commencement of the second sitting day during a part-session, when any Representative may put a brief oral question to the Commission or Council.

   Rule 46 shall not be affected by this provision.

   The detailed procedure for the conduct of questions shall be governed by guidelines.

2. Before the close of question time any political group or at least five Representatives may request that a debate be held immediately thereafter during which brief oral questions, suggestions or comments may be addressed to the Commission on a matter of topical interest.

   Rule 47 shall not be affected by this provision.

The detailed procedure for the conduct of such debates shall be governed by guidelines.'

2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution for information to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

II

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on

the guidelines for the conduct of questions and subsequent debate on request

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its Rules of Procedure, and in particular to Rule 47A;

- having regard to the report of the Legal Affairs Committee (Doc. 252/72);

1. Decides to lay down the following guidelines for the conduct of questions and subsequent debate on request and to publish them in the Parliamentary Companion under 'Selected texts on the application of various provisions in the Rules of Procedure'.

"I. Right to put questions

1. Any Representative may put an oral question to the Commission or Council during question time.

Questions shall be brief and allow of a brief answer.

To be in order questions shall:

- fall within the competence and sphere of responsibility of the Commission or Council and be of general interest;

- not require lengthy studies or inquiries by the institution concerned;

- be worded concisely and relate to specific points;

- not relate to business on the agenda for the current part-session;

- contains no assertions or expressions of opinion;
- not relate to purely personal matters;
- not seek to obtain documents or statistical information;

2. The questioner may put a supplementary question. The same right shall be enjoyed by all other Representatives.

Supplementary questions shall likewise be subject to the foregoing rules of order.

The President shall not be obliged to accept a supplementary question, even where in order, if the proper conduct of questions would thereby be jeopardized, if the main question to which it relates has already been adequately covered by answers to other supplementary questions or if it has no direct bearing on the main question.

II. Submission of questions

1. Questions shall be submitted in writing to the President who shall check that they are admissible and determine in what order they shall be taken.

2. The questioner shall be notified immediately of the President's decision.

Should this decision be unfavourable, the questioner may appeal against it. The decision on the appeal, which shall be taken by the enlarged Bureau, shall likewise be notified immediately to the questioner.

3. Questions shall reach the President at least one week before the start of question time.

Questions not received within this time-limit may be taken during question time, subject to the approval of the institution concerned.

4. Questions ruled in order shall be distributed to Representatives and forwarded to the institution concerned.

III. Question time procedure

1. Question time shall not exceed 60 minutes.

2. Questions shall be called and answered in the order decided by the President.

3. A question may be answered only if the questioner is present, or has written to the President before the start of question time nominating a deputy.

If neither the Representative nor his deputy is present, the question shall be answered in writing by the institution concerned. The same rule shall apply to questions which cannot be answered for lack of time unless before question time is over, the Representative withdraws his question or, stating that he wishes an oral answer, requests postponement of the question until the following question time.

The provisions of Rule 45 (2 and 3) of the Rules of Procedure shall apply to written answers.

IV. Debate on request

Before question time is over, a political group or at least five Representatives may request a debate immediately thereafter on the Commission's answer to a clearly specified question of general topical interest.

V. Length of debate and order of speaking

1. The debate shall be limited to one hour, excluding speaking time taken up by the Commission.

No Representative may speak for more than five minutes.

2. In principle, speeches shall not be read.

3. The order of speaking shall be governed by Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure, with the proviso that the first speaker shall be a spokesman for the political group or Representatives who requested the debate.

Rules 30 and 32 of the Rules of Procedure shall also apply, where appropriate.

2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution for information to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

Luxembourg
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