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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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COVER NOTE

from: The President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal
date of reception: 22 July 2010
to: Mr. Yves LETERME, President of the Council of the European Union
Subject: Council Regulation (EU) Noamending Regulation (EC) No 479/2009 as regards the quality of statistical data in the context of the excessive deficit procedure
- Reasoned opinion¹ on the application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality

Delegations will find annexed a copy of the above letter.

¹ This opinion is available in English on the Interparliamentary EU information exchange Internet site (IPEX) at the following address: http://www.ipex.eu/ipex/cms/home/Documents/dossier_NLE20100035/lang/en

Assembleia da Republica

(courtesy translation)

Mr. Yves Leterme
President of the Council of the European Union
Brussels,

**Subject: Process of parliamentary scrutiny of the European initiatives
Opinion – COM (2010) 53 Final**

Please find enclosed the Opinion issued by the European Affairs Committee of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, as well as the Report issued by the Parliamentary Committee with responsibility for the matter in question (Budget and Finance Committee), within the framework of the process of parliamentary scrutiny of the European initiatives, on the following text:

- *COM (2010) 53 Final – “Council Regulation (EU) amending Regulation (EC) No 479/2009 as regards the quality of statistical data in the context of the excessive deficit procedure”.*

In addition, we would like to inform you that the Assembly of the Republic has, therefore, concluded the process of scrutiny of the aforementioned initiative.

On this date, the above-mentioned documents were also forwarded to the President of the European Parliament and the President of the European Commission.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my highest consideration and esteem.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC

JAIME GAMA

Lisbon, 19 July 2010
Official letter no. 309/PAR/10/hr

SECRETARIAT DU CONSEIL DE L'UNION EUROPEENNE	
56E10/ 8148	
REÇU: 22. 07. 2010	
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**ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Written Opinion

**COM (2010) 53 Final
Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 479/2009 as
regards the quality of statistical data in the context of the excessive deficit
procedure.**

I - Introductory note

In accordance with the terms of Article 6 of Law 43/2006 of 25 August, which regulates the monitoring, assessment and pronouncement by the Assembly of the Republic within the scope of the process of constructing the European Union, the European Affairs Committee is the committee responsible for the overall monitoring and assessment of European affairs.

Carrying out this remit, in accordance with the terms of Article 7 of the above-mentioned Law and after having referred the matter under consideration to the Budget and Finance Committee for its information and to provide the chance to issue an opinion, the European Affairs Committee makes the following remarks within the scope of the regulation proposed by the European Commission:

II – Analysis

The aim of the proposed regulation is to allow the European Commission to monitor the budgetary position and public debt of Member States in order to identify divergences through a common framework for the collection, compilation and evaluation of accounting data.

The initiative discussed herein has its origins in the "Greek case" of 2004 (reevaluation of GDP) and the situation of 2009 (data reported to the Commission concerning public debt and deficit), with both situations having demonstrated that the current system for fiscal statistics does not mitigate the risk of incorrect or inaccurate data being reported.

As such, there are several objectives sought through this proposal with a view to ensuring competent national authorities have the means and conditions to assess public finances in a correct and consistent manner.



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- a) The proposal provides for the monitoring of national data by Eurostat at the time of collection and compilation in Member States prior to being sent to Brussels, in order to allow the Commission to work more effectively together with these States to improve and ensure the quality and reliability of public finance statistics.
- b) It proposes that whenever substantial doubts ("substantial risks or potential problems") exist, methodological visits will be made to Member States in order to monitor the processes and verify the accounts which justify the reported actual data and to draw detailed conclusions as to the quality of this data.

Moreover, Eurostat will be given access to all data, including confidential records of the national statistics system.

Within the scope of these visits, Member States will be required, when requested by the Commission, to provide experts in national accounting to assist the visiting delegation.

This Regulation will also change the framework of the methodological visits, enabling them to directly access the accounts of public entities at central, state, local and social security levels, but also enabling access to analytical documents and the accounting data of other public bodies that under the terms of Whereas 7 of the Proposed Regulation ¹ could include public units classified outside the general government sector.

Finally, this Proposed Regulation will require Member States to take appropriate measures to ensure that staff responsible for reporting to Eurostat comply with the principles laid down in European regulations.

III - Conclusions

1. The present Opinion has been drawn up in accordance with and following the provisions of Law 43/2006 of 25 August, which determines the Assembly of the Republic's powers of *monitoring, assessment and pronouncement within the scope of the process of constructing the European Union*.
2. The initiative respects the *principle of subsidiarity* and therefore there are no problems regarding the content of the proposal in European terms;
3. The matter in question does not fall within the scope of the Assembly of the Republic's exclusive legislative responsibility; therefore, Article 2 of Law 43/2006 of 25 August is not applicable.

¹ "Public accounts of individual general government units, as well as of public units classified outside general government sector, should be the main object of the controls, and the public accounts should be assessed in terms of their statistical use."



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Opinion

Thus, the European Affairs Committee is of the opinion that the scrutiny of the initiative under analysis is now complete.

São Bento Palace, 14 July 2010

Opinion drawn up by MP – Vânia Jesus

Chairman – Vitalino Canas