



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 16 March 2012

7426/12

PE-RE 3

NOTE

Subject: RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND OPINIONS adopted by the European Parliament at its part-session in Strasbourg from 12 to 15 March 2012

At the above mentioned part-session, the European Parliament adopted 32 acts as follows:

- 6 legislative resolutions
- 17 resolutions
- 9 other acts

1. Ordinary legislative procedure

First reading

- a) (i) Jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement of decisions and authentic instruments in matters of succession and the creation of a European Certificate of Succession

European Parliament legislative resolution of 13 March 2012 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement of decisions and authentic instruments in matters of succession and the creation of a European Certificate of Succession

(ii) European Fisheries Fund

European Parliament legislative resolution of 14 March 2012 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 on the European Fisheries Fund, as regards certain provisions relating to financial management for certain Member States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability

(iii) Autonomous tariff quota for imports of high-quality beef

European Parliament legislative resolution of 14 March 2012 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 617/2009 opening an autonomous tariff quota for imports of high-quality beef

(iv) Common commercial policy

European Parliament legislative resolution of 14 March 2012 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending certain regulations relating to the common commercial policy as regards the procedures for the adoption of certain measures

For each of these acts the European Parliament:

- adopted its position at first reading hereinafter set out;
- called on the Commission to refer the matter to Parliament again if it intended to amend its proposal substantially or replace it with another text.

2. Consent procedure

a) Agreement between the EU, Iceland and Norway on the application of certain provisions of the Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters

European Parliament legislative resolution of 13 March 2012 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway on the application of certain provisions of the Convention of 29 May 2000 on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Member States of the European Union and the 2001 Protocol thereto

b) International Cocoa Agreement 2010

European Parliament legislative resolution of 14 March 2012 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the International Cocoa Agreement 2010

For each of these acts the European Parliament:

- consented to conclusion of the Agreement.

3. Other procedures

a) Equality between women and men in the European Union - 2011

European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2012 on equality between women and men in the European Union - 2011

The European Parliament:

Equal economic independence

- called on the Council to move forward on the European Parliament’s position concerning the amendment of the Maternity Leave Directive, particularly with regard to pay for women who had recently given birth, so as to ensure continuity of women’s economic independence during this period (para 9);

Equality in decision-making

- regretted that economic recovery projects still focused mainly on male-dominated employment; called on the Member States and the Commission to address gender equality in a consistent manner when implementing the EU2020 Strategy and National Reform Programmes, and to give high priority to addressing barriers to women's participation in the labour market with particular emphasis on women with disabilities, migrant and ethnic minority women, women in the age group 54-65 years and Roma women; pointed out that women and men had to have access to flexible forms of employment, including teleworking, in order to achieve a good balance between work and family life and become financially independent; noted that women were under-represented in sectors that were likely to expand such as the renewable sector, science and technology-intensive jobs, and therefore invited the Council, the Commission and the Member States to formulate job creation policies concerning the balanced representation of men and women in these new sectors (para 25);

Governance

- called on the Council, within the on-going negotiations on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, to introduce gender-responsive budgeting in the EU budgetary process and to guarantee predictability and no reduction in the level of EU funding for activities on women’s rights and gender equality - including combating violence against women - as related to both internal and external policies (para 65);

b) Women in political decision-making

European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2012 on women in political decision-making – quality and equality

The European Parliament:

Women's representation in elected positions

- invited the Council, the Commission and the Member States to design and implement effective gender equality policies and multifaceted strategies for achieving parity in participation in political decision-making and leadership at all levels, especially in the areas of macro-economic policy, trade, labour, budgets, defence and foreign affairs, assessing the impact and making it available to the public by means of appropriate equality indicators, ensuring quantified targets, clear action plans and regular monitoring mechanisms followed up with binding corrective actions and their monitoring where the set targets were not met by the deadlines (para 1);
- invited, moreover, the Council, the Commission and the Member States to enforce parity at all levels by sending clear anti-discrimination messages, by providing appropriate resources, by using specific tools and by promoting necessary training for civil servants responsible for preparing budgets in gender budgeting (para 3);

Women's representation in nominated positions

- called on the Commission and the Council to commit to meeting the target of parity in all their decision-making bodies, by establishing and implementing quota systems and other types of positive action when recruiting high-level officials; called on the national governments to nominate both women and men to high-level positions at EU level (para 13);
- took note of the Commission commitment expressed in its Strategy for Equality between Women and Men – 2010-2015 to monitor progress towards the aim of 40 % of members of one sex in its committees and expert groups, and called on the EU institutions, bodies and agencies to take concrete action and set up strategies with the aim of achieving balanced participation in their decision-making processes (para 14);
- acknowledged the other actors as a relevant part of the wider democratic process and thus invited the Council, the Commission and the Member States to promote and welcome the efforts of employers' organisations and trade unions, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and all organisations that normally form part of advisory councils related to government to achieve equality of women and men in their ranks, including equal participation in decision-making (para 21);

- called on the Council, Commission and Member States to enable women and men to take an active part in political decision-making by promoting reconciliation and a balance between family life and working life by means of measures such as sharing the costs of parenthood equally between both parents’ employers and ensuring accessible and adequate services for e.g. child and elderly care and called on the Commission to support equal access to services, minimum income and freedom from gender-based violence by appropriate legislative proposals in the form of directives (para 22);
- urged the Member States, the Council and the Commission, by strengthening the role and resources of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and by facilitating cooperation with women’s non-governmental organisations, to promote and exchange good practices that contribute to achieving gender balance in decision-making positions (para 25).

c) Bologna process

European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2012 on the contribution of the European institutions to the consolidation and progress of the Bologna Process

The European Parliament:

- asked the Member States and the EU institutions to support the transition from the “mono-disciplinary“ methodological concept of science that still prevails in European universities towards the “inter-disciplinary“ and “trans-disciplinary” concepts (para 28);
- called on the Member States and the EU institutions to promote the university-business dialogue and cooperation as a common goal of the consolidated EHEA in order to increase the employability of European university graduates (para 29);
- called on the EU institutions to set in place mechanisms to support Member States and higher education institutions in implementing Bologna goals, which could be done by regular reporting and by a targeted use of EU programmes, including those involving cooperation with the non-EU countries in the EHEA (para 62);
- called on the Commission and EU education ministers to fully utilise the opportunities of their joint participation in the EHEA to take a leading role in achieving the Bologna goals, and on Ministers to underpin their commitments in the Bologna Process with joint commitments at EU level in the Council, supported by the Commission, so that this mutually supportive process continued with an harmonious implementation (para 65);

- pointed out that the 2012 Biannual Ministerial Meeting in Bucharest had to take into account the fact that the creation of the EHEA enables the EU and the Member States to make a strong and unified contribution to the Bologna Process on the basis of their shared responsibilities on the issue of higher education, their joint participation in the process, and their shared commitment to action, supported by policy statements by the EU institutions (para 66).

d) General guidelines for the 2013 budget: Section III - Commission

European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2012 on general guidelines for the preparation of 2013 Budget - Section III - Commission

The European Parliament:

The role of the EU budget in addressing the economic and financial crisis

- acknowledged the fiscal consolidation efforts undertaken by most Member States because of the financial and budgetary crisis; underlined, however, the fact that the EU would never be able to respond properly to the current economic and social crisis or prevent future crises without further political integration, common instruments, such as automatic sanctions, and the Commission having the right to take legal action in a deficit procedure, but also common EU-funded programmes and the resources to make them work; insisted, that economic recovery requires measures to strengthen solidarity and boost sustainable growth and employment; welcomed the fact that the European Council recognised this in its statement of 30 January 2012 and in its Conclusions following the Summit of 1-2 March 2012, but insisted on the need for concrete measures to be taken, notably by making use of the EU budget as a common instrument; underlined the fact that the priorities singled out in the above-mentioned statements were those defended by Parliament in previous budgetary procedures (para 1);
- continued to be concerned at the unprecedented global crisis that has seriously damaged economic growth and financial stability and provoked a strong deterioration in the government deficit and debt position of the Member States; understood the Council's concern regarding economic and budgetary constraints at national level and insisted that 2013 would be a key year for economic recovery (para 2);

A well-coordinated and responsible budget for 2013

- stressed that well-coordinated, coherent and timely implementation of political commitments and priorities shared at national and EU level required national and European institutions to work together to prioritise public spending on growth areas, assess ex ante the effects of planned actions, increase synergies between them and ensure that they had a positive impact by removing obstacles and tapping into under-utilised potential; in this regard, underlined the

importance of continuing to organise, before the Spring Summit, the presentation by the Commission of its draft budget, and the start of the national budgetary procedures in Member States, interparliamentary debates on the common economic and budgetary orientations of the Member States and the Union in order to ensure that there was coordination between the national and EU budgets in the general framework of Parliament's upgraded activities in the European Semester in order to enhance its democratic legitimacy as demanded in the resolution of 1 December 2011 on the European Semester for Economic Policy Coordination (para 11);

A 2013 budget oriented towards fulfilling the Union's programmes and priorities

- noted that the level of payments, which, being the mere result of past commitments, should be determined on the basis of technical criteria such as implementation figures, absorption forecasts or the level of outstanding commitments (RAL), had become the main political issue within the Council in the past few budgetary procedures; pointed to the growing level of RAL at the end of 2011, amounting to EUR 207 billion, which represented almost 7% more than the level at the end of 2010; in view of the upcoming interinstitutional meeting on the difference between commitment and payment appropriations would establish a dialogue with the Commission in order to fully clarify how the RAL was composed; insisted that the Council refrained from deciding a priori the level of payments without taking account of actual needs and legal obligations; noted further that accruing RAL actually undermined a transparent EU budget in which it was clearly visible how commitments and payments were related in a specific budgetary year (para 20);
- regretted the fact that, while the Council refused in December 2011 to finance identified additional needs, some payment claims amounting to more than EUR 10 billion could not be honoured in late 2011, which was now impacting directly on available 2012 payments; was concerned at the fact that this resulted from the Council's questioning of the Commission's implementation data and assessments of need without providing any alternative data or source (para 23);
- reiterated its call for the Council to refrain from making artificial cuts in payments during the budgetary procedure, and stressed that this seemed to be leading to an unsustainable level of payments; requested, in the event of such proposals being made, that the Council clearly and publicly identified and justified which of the EU's programmes or projects it believed could be delayed or dropped altogether (para 25);

- in this context, asked the Council to align its position to one of realistic and responsible budgeting, and undertakes to continue to monitor constantly the implementation of the 2012 appropriations and, in particular, payments; called on the Council to follow suit, so that the budgetary authority could work on the basis of common, updated implementation data and make reliable estimates of expenditure; to this end, invited the Council and the Commission to an interinstitutional meeting to be held during the first semester of 2012 at an appropriate political level with a view to clarifying and settling any possible misunderstanding as to implementation figures and estimated payment needs and to jointly taking stock of the payments situation for the budget years 2012 and 2013 (para 26).

e) Enlargement report for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2012 on the 2011 progress report on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The European Parliament:

- reiterated its call on the Council to set a date for the start of accession negotiations with the country without further delay (para 1);
- shared the assessment made by the Commission in its 2011 progress report on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as regards the country's continuous fulfilment of political criteria; regretted that the Council had not followed the Commission's recommendation for the third consecutive year and had not decided to open the accession negotiations with the country at its meeting on 9 December 2011 (para 2);

The name dispute

- reiterated its call on the Vice-President/High Representative and the Commissioner responsible for enlargement to facilitate an agreement on the name issue and offer political guidance; took the view, moreover, that the country's leadership and the European Union should consistently explain to the public the benefits of the solution when it was agreed, ahead of the referendum on the issue (para 14);
- reiterated its call on the Commission and the Council to start developing, in accordance with the EU Treaties, a generally applicable arbitration mechanism aimed at solving bilateral issues between enlargement countries and Member States (para 17).

f) Discriminatory internet sites and government reactions

European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2012 on discriminatory internet sites and government reactions

The European Parliament:

- strongly called on Prime Minister Mark Rutte, on behalf of the Dutch Government to condemn and distance himself from this deplorable initiative; stressed, furthermore, the obligation of all European Union governments to guarantee the rights of free movement and non-discrimination, and thus called on the European Council formally to condemn the PVV hotline since it undermined those rights and was an affront to European values and principles (para 3);
- called on the Commission and the Council to do their utmost to stop the spread of xenophobic attitudes such as those expressed on this website and to ensure the effective implementation of the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia in all Member States (para 8).

g) Kazakhstan

European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2012 on Kazakhstan

The European Parliament:

- called on the EU, and in particular the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to monitor developments closely, to raise all issues of concern with the Kazakh authorities, to offer assistance, and to report regularly to Parliament (para 19).

h) Situation in Nigeria

European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2012 on the situation in Nigeria

The European Parliament:

- underlined that obstacles still existed in many parts of the world that impede the free profession of faith or belief and called on High Representative Ashton and on the Commission to insist on such issues in the context of its relevant initiatives concerning human rights (para 19);
- called upon the High Representative, who was responsible for the European External Action Service, to undertake measures in Nigeria combining diplomacy with long-term development cooperation in order to achieve peace, security, good governance and respect for human rights (para 20).

i) 6th World Water Forum

European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2012 on the 6th World Water Forum taking place in Marseille on 12-17 March 2012

The European Parliament:

- reiterated its call on the Commission and the Council to encourage EU local authorities to devote a proportion of the levies collected from users for the supply of water and sanitation services to decentralised cooperation measures; drew attention to the principle of ‘1% solidarity for water’ adopted by some Member States as a possible example to promote (para 17).

j) Human trafficking in Sinai, in particular the case of Solomon W.

European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2012 on human trafficking in Sinai, in particular the case of Solomon W.

The European Parliament:

- called on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission to put this topic as a matter of high priority on the agenda of political dialogue with Egypt and to urge its government to combat human trafficking and to uphold its obligations under international refugee conventions, with a view to promoting international cooperation on taking action against trafficking in human beings (para 13).

k) Palestine: raids by Israeli forces on Palestinian TV stations

European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2012 on Palestine: raids by Israeli forces on Palestinian TV stations

The European Parliament:

- called on the Vice President/High Representative, the Council, and the Commission to place this issue, which concerned the basic rights of public access to information, press freedom and freedom of expression, on the agenda of the EU-Israel Association Council, and reiterated in this context the EU’s obligation to ensure consistency between the different areas of its external action and between those and its other policies, pursuant to Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union (para 7).

l) Human rights violations in Bahrain

European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2012 on human rights violations in Bahrain

The European Parliament:

- called on the VP/HR to hold the Bahraini Government to its promises to respect human rights, implement the necessary reforms, start independent investigations into human rights violations and ensure that those responsible were held to account, as well as to urge the Bahraini Government to drop all charges against doctors and medical staff and to release all those detained for participating in the peaceful pro-democracy protests (para 9).

m) Science Capacity Building in Africa: promoting European-African radio astronomy partnerships

Declaration of the European Parliament of 15 March 2012 on Science Capacity Building in Africa: promoting European-African radio astronomy partnerships

The European Parliament:

- urged the Commission, Council and the parliaments of the Member States to:
 - support the development of science capacity in Africa through greater investment in research infrastructures, with particular focus on radio astronomy projects,
 - promote the science of radio astronomy and the innovation and research potential of radio astronomy initiatives in future Africa-EU partnerships,
 - mobilise EU funding mechanisms, including the Framework Programmes and the Development Cooperation Instrument, to support these objectives (para 1).

n) Establishment of a maximum 8-hour journey limit for animals transported in the European Union for the purpose of being slaughtered

Declaration of the European Parliament of 15 March 2012 on the establishment of a maximum 8-hour journey limit for animals transported in the European Union for the purpose of being slaughtered

The European Parliament:

- called on the Commission and the Council to review Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 to establish a maximum 8-hour limit for the journeys of animals transported for the purpose of being slaughtered (para 2).