



HELLENIC PARLIAMENT

**Joint Meeting**  
**of the Special Standing Committee for European Affairs and**  
**the Standing Committee for Public Administration, Public Order and Justice**

The aforementioned committees of the Hellenic Parliament were convened to a joint session, on February the 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011, in order to examine :

**the Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the procedures for the scrutiny of Europol's activities by the European Parliament, together with national Parliaments (COM/2010/ 776 final)**

The members of the Committees , having considered:

- The text of the Communication,
- The information documents provided by the Ministry for Citizen's Protection and by the Directorate for European Affairs of the Hellenic Parliament,
- The oral report by the Minister for Citizen's Protection Mr Christos Papoutsis, concluded by majority on the following opinion:

The Communication is the starting point of consultation on the field, range and means for Europol's scrutiny. At the same time it is a record and assessment of ideas expressed so far on this issue.

The issue of exercising parliamentary control on Europol is practically a broader issue: it relates to the up- to- the- moment failure of establishing institutional bonds for probing into EU's democratic roots. In short, the public consultation on parliamentary control means of Europol's activity is intended to cover the lack of

institutional framework concerning parliamentary control exercise on all community organs and institutions, and, therefore, it must be treated as such.

The difficulty lies in the maximum possible utilization of room for exercising control, provided to national parliaments by the Treaty on EU functioning, as well as regarding their effective cooperation with the European Parliament. In order to meet the citizens' demand for democratization of European institutions, the main goal should be the exercise of substantial and creative control and not a seemingly provision of democratic legitimacy.

- The exercise of parliamentary control must be manifested in two directions: on the one hand, internally, by strengthening the existing framework of national parliaments' function and, on the other hand, at the European level, through the function of an interparliamentary cooperation forum
- Regarding internal procedures, members of national parliaments must be provided with the opportunity to address the competent minister in regular intervals on issues concerning Europol's activity. The minister shall be the broadcaster of national parliaments' concerns and comments to the organization, whereas, at the same time, Europol's obligation to answer to issues submitted through the minister shall be established.
- It would be useful as well to provide national parliaments with the right of submitting written questions directly to the organization, and also establish the obligation for answering on Europol's part, as well as the possibility of inviting the organization's Director to address national delegations.
- The setting up of a permanent interparliamentary forum with the participation of members of national parliaments' and European Parliament's competent committees has been discussed in various phases of the consultations so far, and it is the leading proposal That specialized forum will contribute to the

deepening of democratic control , through information exchange and undertaking of initiatives in a harmonized way, whereas cross-reference to relevant briefings conducted internally by the national representatives and the competent ministers will contribute to parliaments' fuller and clearer information . Regarding its function, it could be convened at a regular basis for examining and assessing the organisation's planning of activities, and on an extraordinary basis when needed. National Parliaments will participate by a few-member inter-party delegation. Europol's Head participation in regular meetings is dictated, whereas in extraordinary meetings it will be evaluated on an ad hoc basis.

- Concerning the forum's function, it is essential to avoid creating new structures, in order to not burden further both community and national budgets. Secretarial support could be provided by COSAC Secretariat, which is associated to the Parliament of the country holding the Council's presidency, whereas expertise could be provided by the secretariat of the Committee for Political Freedoms, Security and Justice (LIBE) of the European Parliament, which is more specialized in the field.
- In what concerns audit reports, it is crucial to attribute due attention to the staffing of both controlling and evaluation mechanisms, for securing procedures' independence.
- Concluding, in the event of establishing such a forum, it would be advisable for it to cover other functions as well, most major being Eurojust's oversight, given the inter-complementarity of the two organizations' missions, ratified by virtue of article 6 of the Europol-Eurojust Agreement, as well as on the basis of article 85 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU , stipulating controlling procedures similar to those of article 88 of the Treaty. Moreover, an ad hoc FRONTEX control could be conducted, the cooperation of which with Europol; is substantially being strengthened.