

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1981-1982

29 June 1981

DOCUMENT 1-333/81

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee

on the seat of the institutions of the European Communities and in particular of the European Parliament

Rapporteur: Mr M. ZAGARI

The European Parliament referred the following motions for resolutions to the Political Affairs Committee :

- at its sitting of 12.11.1979 the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-489/79) tabled by Mr COPPIETERS and others, on the place of work of the European Parliament,
- at its sitting of 14.11.1979 the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-493/79) tabled by Mr PRAG and others, on a single meeting and working place for the European Parliament,
- at its sitting of 14.11.1979 the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-495/79) tabled by Mr SIMPSON and others, on the costs of the Parliament's meeting and working in several places,
- at its sitting of 16.1.1980 the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-654/79) tabled by Mr SEEFELD, on behalf of the Socialist Group, on the question of the seat of the European Parliament,
- at its sitting of 11.2.1980 the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-746/79) tabled by Mr TYRRELL and Mr KIRK on behalf of the European Democratic Group, on the amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament,
- at its sitting of 13.2.1980 the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-770/79) tabled by Mr LUSTER and others, on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democratic Group) on the seat of the Institutions of the European Communities,
- at its sitting of 20.6.1980 the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-259/80) tabled by Mr OEHLER and others, on the European Parliament's definitive place of work.

At its meeting of 23 January 1980 the Political Affairs Committee appointed Mr ZAGARI rapporteur.

The following motion for a resolution was considered by the Political Affairs Committee at its meetings of 26, 27 and 28 November 1980, 21, 22 and 23 January 1981, 17 and 18 March 1981, 21, 22 and 23 April 1981, 13, 14 and 15 May 1981 and 23, 24 and 25 June 1981.

At the last meeting it adopted this report by 15 votes to 13 with 2 abstentions.

Present : Mr Rumor, chairman; Mr Haagerup, vice-chairman; Mr Zagari, rapporteur; Mr Berkhouwer, Mr Blumenfeld, Mrs Charzat (deputizing for Mr Estier), Mr De Pasquale (deputizing for Mr Berlinguer), Mr Deschamps (deputizing for Mr Tindemans), Mr Diligent, Lord Douro, Lady Elles, Mr Fergusson, Mr Fischbach (deputizing for Mr Antoniozzi), Mr Fotilas (deputizing for Mr Haralampopoulos), Mr B. Friedrich, Mrs Gredal, Mr Habsburg, Mr Hänsch, Mr Israël (deputizing for Mr de la Malène), Mr C. Jackson (deputizing for Lord Bethell), Mr Klepsch, Mr Lalor, Mrs Lenz (deputizing for Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti), Mrs Le Roux (deputizing for Mr Ansart), Mr van Minnen (deputizing for Mrs van den Heuvel), Mr Penders, Mr Schall (deputizing for Mr von Hassel), Mr Schieler, Sir James Scott-Hopkins, Mr Segré, Mr Seitlinger, Mr J.M. Taylor and Mr Van Miert.

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The Political Affairs Committee hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the seat of the institutions of the European Community and in particular the European Parliament

The European Parliament,

- whereas the provisions of the three Treaties establishing the European Communities attribute to the governments of the Member States the right and duty to determine 'the seat of the Institutions of the Community ... by common accord',
- noting that the governments - almost thirty years after the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community - have still not taken a decision on the seat of the Institutions,
- whereas it does not call into question either the rights or the duties of the governments of the Member States in this regard,
- whereas the French Government had proposed to the governments of the Member States that they begin talks without delay in order to achieve a satisfactory solution to the problem of the fixing of the seat of the Community institutions pursuant to Articles 77, 216 and 189 of the ECSC, EEC and EAEC Treaties respectively,
- having regard to the decision taken at Maastricht on 24 March 1981 by the Heads of State and Government which, by maintaining a highly equivocal status quo which disappoints the hopes of the citizens of Europe, leaves it open to doubt that there is any political will to resolve promptly the question of the seat of the institutions,
- whereas in the absence of an agreement on the seat of the institutions and following the decision of 8 April 1965 by the representatives of the governments of the Member States on the provisional location of certain institutions and departments of the Communities, the present situation is as follows :
 - Luxembourg, Brussels and Strasbourg remain the provisional places of work of the Community institutions,
 - the Council and the Commission of the European Communities have their provisional place of work in Brussels, although appreciable sections of the Commission's departments are located in Luxembourg,
 - during the months of April, June and October, the Council holds its meetings in Luxembourg,

- the Court of Justice has its provisional place of work in Luxembourg,
- the Secretariat of the European Parliament and its services are located in Luxembourg,
- the Economic and Social Committee has its provisional place of work in Brussels, whilst the Court of Auditors and the European Investment Bank are located in Luxembourg,
- the Monetary Committee meets in Luxembourg and Brussels,
- whereas the European Parliament is, therefore, the only Community institution and the only Parliament in the Community which carries on its work in three different geographical locations,
- pointing out that this dispersal of its places of work involves an enormous and growing burden on the budget of the European Parliament which it is becoming increasingly difficult to explain or justify to Community taxpayers,
- whereas the morale and efficiency of Parliament's staff will continue to suffer until real improvements are made and whereas the present arrangements involve costly, onerous and inefficient transport, communication and administration problems for Parliament, and seriously inhibit the work of the Members,
- whereas direct elections gave the European Parliament and its Members greater responsibility towards public opinion, of which it is the mouth-piece and representative,
- recognizing the difficulty of directly elected Members to explain to the European electorate the work and functions of the European Community and in particular of the European Parliament without being able to appeal to the imagination of the electorate by having an identifiable building for the Parliament,
- whereas under the terms of Parliament's resolution of 20 November 1980,¹ failure by the Governments of the Member States to meet the deadline of 15 June 1981 requires the Parliament to improve its own working conditions,
- whereas it will be impossible to implement such improvements before the next direct elections unless action is taken forthwith,
- whereas the enlargement of the Community makes it even more urgent for the European Parliament to improve its own working conditions,
- having considered the conflicting claims, interests and expectations of Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg in this matter,
- whereas the European Parliament cannot remain silent on the question of its working conditions, especially its meeting and working place, and whereas any reticence in this connection would therefore be interpreted by public opinion as an inexplicable refusal to exercise a political prerogative,

- whereas in its resolution of 20 November 1980¹ it requested that it should be consulted before the decision on the seat was taken and whereas this procedure - by analogy with the existing procedure for conciliation between the European Parliament and the Council - is justified by the extremely important financial consequences of the fixing of the seat,
 - recalling its resolutions of 27 June 1980² and 20 November 1980¹,
 - having taken note of the following resolutions:
 - (a) on the place of work of Parliament (Doc. 1-489/79),
 - (b) on a single meeting and working place for the European Parliament (Doc. 1-493/79),
 - (c) on the costs of the Parliament's meeting and working in several places (Doc. 1-495/79),
 - (d) on the question of the seat of the European Parliament (Doc. 1-654/79),
 - (e) on the amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament (Doc. 1-746/79),
 - (f) on the seat of the institutions of the European Communities (Doc. 1-770/79),
 - (g) on the European Parliament's definitive place of work (Doc. 1-259/80),
 - having regard to the report of the Political Affairs Committee
1. Solemnly affirms the political nature of the choice of the seat of the Parliament which will become established as the future political and parliamentary capital of the Community, since it will influence the function and role of Parliament in the Community's institutional structure;
 2. Declares that the fixing of the seat of the European Parliament is a matter of prime concern to Parliament itself and therefore demands the right to participate on a permanent basis, in the consultations with the governments of the Member States, in reaching the common accord on the seat of the European Parliament;
 3. Requests that the conciliation procedure be initiated immediately with a view to fixing a single seat;

¹ Doc. 1-500/80, OJ No. C 327, 15.12.1980

² Doc. 1-277/80, OJ No. C 187, 24.7.1980

4. Decides, pending a final decision on a single meeting place of the European Parliament,
 - (a) to hold its part-sessions in Strasbourg,
 - (b) to organize the meetings of its committees and political groups as a general rule in Brussels,
 - (c) to take account of the conditions and requirements arising from provisions (a) and (b) when taking a decision on the seat of its secretariat;

5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the governments of the Member States, the Council and Commission, and the other Community institutions.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 1-489/79)

tabled by Mr COPPIETERS,
Mr BLANEY and Mrs CASTELLINA

pursuant to Rule 25 of the
Rules of Procedure

on the place of work of the Parliament
The European Parliament,

- noting that the lack of a single seat considerably reduces the effectiveness and prestige of the Parliament, and thus its ability to exercise democratic control over the activities of the Communities,
- concerned about the fact that having the Parliament's activities spread between three cities results in major additional costs at a moment when the Parliament is exerting itself to obtain a cut in unjustified expenditure and increased spending on vital human and social problems,
- noting with regret that the seat of the Parliament has been and is the object of acute competition between city authorities and even between national governments, with both the amour-propre of the nation states and the material and financial gains for the cities concerned taking precedence over the true interests of Europe; and that this situation has even had repercussions within the Parliament itself,
- recalling in particular that work is currently in progress on two new buildings, one in Luxembourg and one in Strasbourg, both intended to house the Parliament, before the directly elected Parliament has even debated the problem of its future place of work,
- distressed to note that as a result of the uncertainty about the permanent seat the staff of the Parliament and of other institutions, and others working in and around the Parliament, have to put up with unbearable working conditions, while their private and family lives are affected by the lack of permanence,
- convinced therefore of the urgent need, for political, financial and social reasons, to establish a single seat for the Parliament, providing it with a home worthy of its task, and members and staff with efficient and agreeable working conditions,

- aware of the decisions taken in the past by the representatives of the governments about the seats of the Institutions and the compensation to be granted to the cities concerned in the event of changes,
 - recognizing that the decision on the seat of the Parliament must be seen in the broader context of relations between institutions,
 - asserting nevertheless that it is sovereign as regards the choice of its place of work,
1. Instructs the President to request urgently from the Court of Auditors an assessment of the total extra burden on the Community budget resulting from the current on-going 'provisional' situation as compared with a single working place for the Parliament;
 2. Decides to establish a working party with the mandate to report back to it within six months on the range of choices available, and if it deems fit then to make a recommendation about a single place of work;
 3. Decides to hold at the latest in the second quarter of 1980 an extraordinary session devoted to a full debate on the problem and to a decision on a single place of work.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 1-493/79)

tabled by Mr PRAG, Mr SIMPSON,
Mr TYRRELL, Mr SELIGMAN and Mr PRICE

pursuant to Rule 25 of the
Rules of Procedure

on a single meeting and working place
for the European Parliament

The European Parliament,

- conscious of its obligation to carry out its task of ensuring democratic control of the Community as effectively as possible and in the full interest of the people of Europe,
 - determined to avoid the costs resulting from the present situation in which members and staff work in three different cities,
 - convinced that the plurality of parliamentary working places leads to a gross waste of Members' and officials' time and of the Parliament's funds,
1. Regrets the failure of the governments of the Member States over more than 20 years to reach a decision on the seat of the Community Institutions;
 2. Calls on the governments of the Member States to take a decision forthwith on a single seat for the Parliament;
 3. Resolves that failing this, it will itself decide on a single working and meeting place for the Parliament.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 1-495/79)

tabled by Mr SIMPSON, Mr PRAG,
Mr TYRRELL, Mr SELIGMAN and Sir Peter VANNECK

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on the costs of the Parliament's meeting
and working in several places

The European Parliament,

- conscious of its accountability to the people of Europe,
- convinced of the need for the greatest possible economy in the operation of all the Institutions of the Community,
- having regard to the observations made in Annex II to the Report on the 1980 budget of the Parliament (PE 59.994),
- having regard to Article 206a(4) of the EEC Treaty,

Instructs its President to request the Court of Auditors to submit observations and deliver an opinion on the total costs to the Community, both financial and in terms of Members' and officials' time, resulting from the plurality of working places of the Parliament.

tabled by Mr SEEFELD
on behalf of the Socialist Group

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on the question of the seat of the European Parliament

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 216 of the EEC Treaty, which specifies that 'The seat of the institutions of the Community shall be determined by common accord of the Governments of the Member States',
- stressing that under this article the Community institutions, and in particular the European Parliament, have a legal right to a single seat, which the Member States' governments have been violating for some twenty years by failing to take action,
- having regard to the Council's responsibility to ensure that the governments of the Member States take a decision pursuant to Article 216 EEC,
- having regard to the numerous complaints by Members of the European Parliament concerning:
 - the obstacles to Parliament's work,
 - the wasteful extra expenditure incurred,
 - the paralysis of cooperation between the Community institutions,
 - the impediment to contacts between Parliament and the public,resulting from the practice of having three different places of work,
- taking into account its responsibility to European taxpayers,
- convinced, therefore, that in the longer term the Members of the European Parliament can fulfil the expectations of their constituents and carry out their duties only if they have a single place of work,
- noting that all the Member States' parliaments have only one seat, where Members can carry out their work effectively,
- having regard to the decision of 8 April 1965 by the representatives of the governments of the Member States on the provisional location of certain institutions and departments of the Communities¹,
- having regard to the criticism voiced by the European Parliament in its decision to give a discharge in respect of the 1977 budget at the additional costs entailed by having three places of work (Doc. 463/79),
- having regard to the special report of the Court of Auditors on the accommodation policies of the institutions of the European Communities²,

¹OJ No. 152, 13.7.1967, p. 18

²OJ No. C 221, 3.9.1979

- having regard to the enlarged Bureau's decision to convene group and committee meetings in Brussels as a general rule,
- 1. Calls on the Governments of the Member States to take a decision on a seat for the institutions pursuant to Article 216 of the EEC Treaty;
- 2. Calls on the Council to deliver an opinion for the governments of the Member States;
- 3. Expects the Governments of the Member States to take a decision in agreement with Parliament by 31 December 1980 at the latest;
- 4. Hereby gives notice that, if the Governments of the Member States continue to disregard Article 216 of the EEC Treaty, Parliament will take such decisions as are within its powers to meet the objective of that article;
- 5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States and to the Council.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 1-746/79)
tabled by Mr TYRRELL and Mr KIRK
on behalf of the European Democratic Group
pursuant to Rule 25 and Rule 54
of the Rules of Procedure
on the amendment of the Rules of Procedure
of the European Parliament

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure, decides to amend the Rules of Procedure as follows :

Rule 2

The present text of the rule to be replaced by the following :

1. Subject to Rules 2(3) and 2(4), Parliament shall hold its plenary sittings and its committees shall meet and its principal secretariat shall be located at the place fixed as the seat of the institutions of the Community under the provisions of the Treaties;
2. Subject to Rules 2(3) and 2(4), if no place has been designated as the seat under the provisions of the Treaties, Parliament shall hold its plenary sittings and its committees shall meet and its principal secretariat shall be located at any such single working place as, on a resolution adopted by a majority of its current members, shall be specified;
3. Exceptionally, however, on a resolution adopted by a majority of its current Members, Parliament may decide to hold one or more plenary sittings elsewhere than at its seat or specified working place;
4. Any Committee may decide to ask that one or more meetings be held away from the said seat or specified working place. Its request, with the reasons therefore, shall be made to the President, who shall place it before the Bureau. If the matter is urgent, the President may take the decision himself. Should the decision taken by the Bureau or the President be unfavourable, the reasons therefore shall be stated.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 1-770/79)

tabled by Mr LUSTER, Mr KLEPSCH,
Mrs CASSANMAGNAGO-CERRETTI, Mr VERGEER,
Mr ADONNINO, Mr RYAN, Mr PENDERS and Mr MICHEL
on behalf of the Group of the European People's
Party (Christian-Democratic Group)
pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure
on the seat of the institutions of the European
Communities

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 77 ECSC Treaty, Article 216 EEC Treaty, and Article 189 EAEC Treaty which share the common text: 'The seat of the institutions of the Community shall be determined by common accord of the governments of the Member States',
- noting that the ECSC Treaty was signed on 18.4.1951, that the EEC Treaty was signed on 25.3.1957 and that the EAEC Treaty was also signed on 25.3.1957,
- in the light, therefore, of the fact that over 28 and 22 years respectively have elapsed since the Treaties were concluded, without the governments of the Member States fulfilling their Treaty obligations to determine the seat of the Institutions,
- having regard moreover to the fact that the Merger Treaty of 8.4.1965 merely gave rise to a 'Decision of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on the provisional location of certain institutions and departments of the Communities' (Official Journal of the European Communities No. 152, 13.7.1967, p. 18),
- and finally based on its experience that the lack of a permanent seat for the Community creates a multitude of costly legal, logistic and technical problems,

Resolves:

1. To call upon the Council of Ministers to obtain the long overdue decision of the Governments of the Member States on the final seat of the institutions;

2. To accompany this demand with a request that the Council report to the European Parliament after three months on the progress made in terms of,
 - when a final decision can be expected on the seat of the Institutions,
 - the form this decision is to take,
 - whether there are any obstacles to such a decision and what these obstacles are, and
 - when any obstacles which may exist will have been removed;
3. To inform the Council of Ministers that if the Governments of the Member States are unable to determine the seat of the Institutions as provided for in the Treaty by the end of 1980, that the European Parliament will take the initiative regarding its own seat,
4. Instructs the Bureau to forward the necessary communications to the Council of Ministers, with all due courtesy but with the necessary urgency, and to the Commission of the European Communities for information.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (Doc. 1-259/80)

tabled by Mr OEHLER, Mr Karl SCHON, Mrs BUCHAN, Mr SCHIELER, Mrs HERKLOTZ, Mr LOO, Mr LINKOHR, Mr SCHWENCKE, Mrs FUILLET, Mrs VAYSSADE, Mr BOYES, Mr JAQUET, Mr Maurice FAURE, Mr KLINKENBORG, Mr JOSSELIN, Mr PISANI, Mrs CRESSON, Mr SARRE, Mr MOTCHANE, Mrs CHARZAT, Mr ESTIER, Mr DELORS, Mr JALTON, Mr PERCHERON, Mr SCHWARTZENBERG, Mr SUTRA, Mrs ROUDY and Mr LOMAS

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure
on the European Parliament's definitive place of work
The European Parliament,

- whereas the conditions laid down by Article 77 of the ECSC Treaty, Article 216 of the EEC Treaty, and Article 189 of the EAEC Treaty have not been met inasmuch as the Member States have been unable to agree on a definitive seat for the institutions of the Community,
 - whereas under the terms of the decisions of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, dated 1958 and 1965, agreement was reached on the provisional places of work of the European institutions,
 - whereas it deploras that over the years this agreement has proved particularly difficult to apply,
 - whereas tribute should be paid to the considerable efforts made by the cities of Luxembourg and Brussels to accommodate certain part-sessions of the Assembly and meetings of its committees,
 - whereas, however, it considers the present rivalry between Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg regrettable,
 - whereas the Assembly should therefore have a single and definitive place of work in the interest of greater efficiency, the present situation being detrimental to the working conditions both of Members of Parliament and of Community staff,
 - whereas the original idea was that the city which housed the Assembly should symbolize peace in Europe, the unity of European society and the political resolve of peoples linked by a single culture,
 - whereas a final decision in favour of a city that enshrines these ideals and is not a capital of a Member State would be more desirable than any other,
1. Insists that a decision be taken as soon as possible, but at the latest by the end of 1980;
 2. Hopes that Strasbourg will in fact be in the European Parliament's definitive place of work.