



COSAC Chairpersons 

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Draft Outline of the 12th Biannual Report on Procedures and Practices Relevant to Parliamentary Scrutiny

English

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**Draft Outline of the 12th Biannual Report on Procedures
and Practices Relevant to Parliamentary Scrutiny**

(to be approved by the COSAC Chairs' Meeting in Stockholm on
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Chapter 1:

Transparency of the Parliamentary Scrutiny Process

An open and transparent process is of paramount importance in order to allow citizens to follow the work of the European Union and to enhance their sense of participation. Transparency is therefore an ever-topical issue. Certain aspects of it have previously been dealt with by COSAC in the second Biannual Report (Transparency and traceability – Nov. 2004) and the fourth Biannual Report (Transparency in the Council – Oct 2005).

The discussion on transparency is often focused on access to documents, however the interests of, and development towards, a more transparent European Union reach beyond this. One example is the increasing openness of the deliberations on legislative matters in the Council. Of particular importance for citizens is access to information and opportunities to follow procedures during the parliamentary scrutiny processes of particular European issues.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the transparency of the process in parliaments when conducting scrutiny at different stages of the decision-making process in the Union. The issue covers the accessibility of documents that parliaments receive from EU institutions and governments in the course of negotiations. It also includes the openness of national parliaments and the European Parliament as regards information on the actual negotiations in the European Union, as well as on their own scrutiny procedures and positions. The chapter will present what information parliaments make available to the public as well as when and in which ways.

Chapter 2:

Parliamentary Scrutiny of the Stockholm Programme

Negotiations on the next five-year programme concerning cooperation on judicial and home affairs are scheduled to begin during the Swedish Presidency of the Council. Following on from the Tampere and Hague Programmes, a new Stockholm Programme would set the framework for cooperation during the years 2010–2014 in this field, which includes inter alia police and customs cooperation, criminal and civil law cooperation as well as asylum, migration and visa policies. It is thus a broad political programme covering issues at the core of parliaments' responsibilities, issues which are also of fundamental importance to European citizens. This Programme may concern both EU Affairs Committees and specialised committees in EU parliaments.

It is evident that the individual legislative proposals to be introduced in different policy areas covered by the programme will be subject to scrutiny and control. Given the importance of the programme to citizens, and in order to ensure effective influence, a strong case may also be made for parliamentary scrutiny of policy decisions on the Programme as such, and its development into action plans and specific measures.

This chapter will examine how acceptance of this kind of multi-annual political programme can be ensured in parliaments, by describing how parliaments foresee that the Stockholm Programme and its different elements will be scrutinised, when this scrutiny will be conducted and by which parliamentary bodies.

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