

XXIIIrd COSAC - Versailles - 16-17 October 2000

Questionnaire to the Parliaments of Applicant States Answers of the Estonian Parliament

Question n°1

European Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu obtains its information from the Government and its agencies, diplomatic representations (including Commission Delegation). Information is obtained from NGOs , local governments. Committee considers information sufficiency a complicated question: the answer depends on topic . It is important to mention that the Members of the Committee form the Estonian delegation to EU- Estonia JPC.

Question n°2 - Integration of European legislation.

Do the standard legislative proceedings apply to the integration of European legislation into national law or do you apply special proceedings ? Does your Committee play a specific role in the legislative integration process ?

EU- related legislation is dealt with according to ordinary procedures. European Affairs Committee is a special (select) committee and has not been given tasks to deal with legislative proceedings in a usual manner.

Question n°3 - Accession negotiations.

How does your European integration committee follow the accession negotiations ? Does the Committee give its opinion ?

The negotiations process is monitored by the Committee by means of hearings of the members of the negotiations delegation, monthly meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Frequent meetings with the Prime Minister give the Members sufficient information regarding the activities of the Government in fulfilling its tasks set by the NPAAAs. Regarding the negotiations positions the Committee has given its opinion on several occasions.

Question n°4 - Conformity of national law to European legislation.

Is there a procedure aiming at scrutinising the compliance of bills submitted to Parliament to European legislation ? Does your Parliament play a role in this procedure ? Is your committee associated to this procedure ?

The compliance with the *acquis* is largely the responsibility of the executive; there are no routinized ways or procedures in the Riigikogu for such analysis, but it can be made *ad hoc*.

Question n°5 - Other committees for European legislation.

Did you take your inspiration from the experience of other applicant states when your Committee was created ? Are you in touch with European integration committees from other applicant states ?

European Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu was formed in 1997 (January) and after general elections in 1999, formed again on May 18, 1999. The models of Member States' European Affairs Committees were examined as well as some of the applicant states' parliamentary committees (existing at that time).

European Affairs Committee has contacts with other parliamentary committees both in Member States and Applicant States. COSAC is one of forums for such contacts. The "5+1" Chairmen are meeting twice a year and the three Chairmen of the European Affairs Committees of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have had 2 meetings.

Question n°6 - Community aid.

As part of the accession process, had your Parliament received any technical assistance from the Community or from some member states ? What kind of assistance ? Was this assistance sufficient ?

EU- assistance is provided by TAIEX (civil servants) and PHARE (politicians and civil servants). PHARE has financed two projects.

Bilateral assistance has been provided by Denmark, Sweden, Finland: training, seminars partial financing of conferences.