

Power of the European Parliament to monitor the executive

Source: CVCE. European Navigator. Susana Muñoz.

Copyright: (c) CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/power_of_the_european_parliament_to_monitor_the_executive-en-9c8644f0-84ff-4b4b-b06f-d72896f67b10.html

Last updated: 10/08/2016



Power of the European Parliament to monitor the executive

The power to monitor the executive was the only power conferred on the Common Assembly by the 1951 Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (Article 20) — which expired on 23 July 2002. The main purpose of the Assembly was to exercise democratic supervision over the High Authority.

The 1957 Treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) extended parliamentary supervision, which was exercised principally in two ways:

- discussion of the Annual General Report on Community Activities, submitted by the Commission,
- the possibility of passing a vote of censure forcing Members of the Commission to resign as a body. The motion might be tabled, not only with regard to the general report, as stated in the ECSC Treaty (Article 24), but at any time with regard to the management of the Commission. It would be carried by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, representing a majority of the Members of the Assembly (Article 144 of the EEC Treaty – Article 201 of the EC Treaty, following the Treaty of Amsterdam – and Article 114 of the EAEC Treaty). Permanent and simultaneous supervision is involved.

Originally, this power applied solely to the activities of the Commission. With time, however, it has been extended to the Council and, in general, to all the institutions and bodies of the Community. It covers all Community activities.

In addition to the annual report and the motion of censure, the European Parliament has available other supervisory instruments provided for by the Treaties:

- approval of the nomination by Member State governments of the President of the Commission and the approval of the President of the other Members of the Commission as a body (Article 214 of the EC Treaty and Article 127 of the EAEC Treaty; see also Article 10 of the ECSC Treaty),
- written and oral questions tabled by the European Parliament or by its members to the Commission. The Council is also heard by the European Parliament (Article 140 of the EC Treaty and Article 110 of the EAEC Treaty; see also Article 23 of the ECSC Treaty). Accordingly, the President-in-Office of the Council presents his programme to Parliament at the beginning of a presidency and summarises its achievements at the end of the presidency. Members of the Council also attend part-sessions, and MEPs may table written and oral questions to them.
- temporary committees of inquiry set up by the European Parliament to investigate alleged contraventions or maladministration in the implementation of Community law (Article 193 of the EC Treaty and Article 107(b) of the EAEC Treaty; see also Article 20(b) of the ECSC Treaty).