

European Parliament Resolution on the seat of the institutions (7 July 1981)

Caption: European Parliament Resolution of 7 July 1981 on the seat of the institutions of the European Community and in particular of the European Parliament.

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European Parliament Resolution on the seat of the institutions of the European Community and in particular of the European Parliament (7 July 1981)

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 30 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 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,

— consequently recognizing the need for a single working place,

— 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 mouthpiece 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,

— whereas this Parliament has already asserted its right to meet and work where it chooses,

— 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 1980 (1) 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,

— considering that in view of the implications for their working conditions and for their personal and family lives and plans, there should be close consultation with the staff of the Parliament, through their representatives, about the execution of any decision which is taken, by the Parliament itself or by other institutions, about the seat or the place of work of Parliament;

— recalling its resolutions of 27 June 1980 (2) and 20 November 1980 (1),

— having taken note of the following motions for 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 (Doc. 1-333/81),

1. Calls on the Governments of the Member States to comply with their obligation under the Treaties and at long last fix a single seat for the institutions of the Community and asks for a conciliation procedure to be opened in good time on this matter;

2. Believes it is essential to concentrate its work in one place;

3. 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) — that the operation of the Secretariat and technical services of Parliament must be reviewed to meet the requirements set out in (a) and (b) above, particularly with a view to avoiding the need for a substantial number of staff of Parliament to travel constantly,

— that, with that end in view, the fullest possible use should be made of the latest means of telecommunication both for personal contacts and for document transmission,

— that the most advanced techniques must also be used to facilitate cooperation between the institutions, while road, rail and air links between the main centres of activity of the Community must be improved,

— that under the guidance of the President and enlarged Bureau, the appropriate bodies of Parliament shall determine the measures to be taken and evaluate their costs; before the end of the year, they shall present to Parliament a report accompanied by appropriate proposals;

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

(1) OJ No C 327, 15.12.1980.

(2) OJ No C 187, 24.7.1980.