

Written question No 130/68 by Harri Bading, MEP, to the Council (28 June 1968)

Caption: Written question No 130/68 put by Harri Bading, Member of the European Parliament, to the Council on 28 June 1968, regarding the procedure established in 1959 according to which the EEC Commission consults the Council on certain written questions submitted to it by Members of the European Parliament.

Source: Journal officiel des Communautés européennes (JOCE). 23.08.1968, n° C 83. [s.l.]. "Question écrite n° 130/68 de M. Bading au Conseil des Communautés européennes (28 juin 1968)", p. 21.

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Written Question No 130/68, tabled by Harri Bading, Member of the European Parliament, to the Council of the European Communities on 28 June 1968

(28 June 1968)

Subject: Consultation of the Council on the answers to be given to some written questions submitted to the Commission

1. Would the Council describe the procedure, established in 1959, whereby the Commission of the EEC consults the Council on certain written questions tabled to it by Members of the European Parliament?
2. On what Treaty provisions does the Council base this procedure?
3. Does the Council share the view that — setting aside the technical assistance which national administrations may, in some circumstances, channel through the Council — the Commission is required, by virtue of its political obligations towards the European Parliament, to give prompt and exhaustive answers to the written questions tabled to it and to do so alone and on its own responsibility?
4. Is there not a risk that such consultation might lead the Council to seek to influence the wording of the Commission's answer and even to demand that the Commission give reasons for its reaction to such modifications as may be requested by the Council?
5. Does the Council agree, and this is the view taken by the European Parliament ⁽¹⁾, that it is for the Council to provide answers to the questions tabled to it just as it is for the Commission to answer the questions tabled to it, given that the European Parliament cannot ascertain the Commission's real opinion if the Council and the Commission agree in advance on the answer to be given?
6. Does the Council propose to challenge the power vested in the European Parliament to exercise political control over the Commission?
7. Is the Council aware that, given the delays that have occurred in the Council's programme of activity, the general public would have difficulty in accepting that the Council should also assume the right to oversee and censure the Commission?

Answer

(1 August 1968)

The procedure to which the Honourable Member refers was established in 1959 by the Councils and the Commissions by common consent. The procedure seeks to further the cooperation among the institutions provided for in the treaties and, in particular, in Articles 162 of the EEC Treaty and 131 of the EAEC Treaty, reproduced in Article 15 of the Treaty of 8 April 1965.

This procedure enables the Council and the Commission to advise each other of their draft answers to the questions put to them. It does not come into play where the institution to which a question has been put considers that it is not of direct interest to the other institution.

These draft answers are the subject of mutual consultation, a process which, as the President of the Commission stressed at the Assembly's sitting of 3 July 1968, has proved very useful, particularly with a view to formulating answers that are as comprehensive and to the point as possible.

It goes without saying that, in all cases, responsibility for the answers given to Members of the European Parliament lies solely with the institution to which the question was tabled.

(1) See the introductory statement made by Mrs Strobel in her capacity as general rapporteur on the Ninth General Report of the EEC, debates of 19 October 1966, p. 107.