



National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria
Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds
Chairperson Kristian Vigenin

Contribution from the Parliament of Finland to the work of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and “Doing Less More Efficiently”

On behalf of the Parliament of Finland I would like to congratulate you on the work you have done in the framework of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and “Doing Less More Efficiently” and offer the following observations for your consideration during the final stages of that work.

1. The Parliament of Finland believes the importance of “subsidiarity” and “proportionality” may be overstated. These are technical terms that are defined in the treaty. In our assessment, breaches of either principle are rare. The issue that should be addressed is another: ownership by and consultation of national parliaments on European legislation.
2. Since the Lisbon Treaty, a significant number of National Parliaments have made valuable inputs on EU legislation – beyond the narrow confines of “subsidiarity” and “proportionality”. However, national parliaments’ inputs do not feed into the legislative process, except in the rare cases of yellow cards.
3. We believe that the best way to address the concerns of the National Parliaments is to look at the interface between National Parliaments and Governments, and with a view to Member States’ actions in the Council. The Finnish solution, to require policy coordination between the Eduskunta and the Government before negotiations at the EU level, has for us solved the issue of parliamentary influence. The alternative is that Governments act unilaterally and place parliaments before a *fait accompli*. To do so is constitutionally untenable in almost all Member States. It is also unsustainable for parliamentary democracies to allow situations to arise where governments and the parliaments to which they are ultimately responsible openly disagree at the European level.
4. In addition to modifying the existing practices in each Member State, improving the way National Parliaments scrutinise their Governments requires increased transparency of Council decision-making. Opportunities to streamline the existing inter-parliamentary fora should be explored, emphasising the need to promote best practices among Parliaments. A critical review of the topics and working methods of the various inter-parliamentary meetings is needed to detect overlaps and inefficiencies.
5. On “doing less more efficiently”, we consider that the Juncker Commission has largely shown the way forward. The volume of regulation has diminished and legislative work has become more focussed. Experience since 2015 seems to indicate that this is a question for political judgement and common sense, rather than something to solve through prescriptive remedies. The focus should be on programming, beginning with the platforms of prospective Presidents of the Commission, and carried through all the existing Council, Commission and European Parliament programming cycles. Member States should take care to examine all programme documents through the prism of “doing less more efficiently” – and should apply the same standard to themselves, e.g.

when proposing EU action. When a Member State proposes new EU activity, it should always be expected to show why EU action provides added value compared to Member State activity.

Yours sincerely,



Arto Satonen
Chairperson of the Grand Committee