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**Annex
to the Fifteenth Bi-annual Report on
Developments in European Union
Procedures and Practices
Relevant to Parliamentary Scrutiny:
Replies
of National Parliaments and
the European Parliament**



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Questionnaire: 15th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Input of national Parliaments and the European Parliament to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU economic governance and to the elaboration of the Commission Work Programme 2012

The 15th Bi-annual Report will be based on replies to the following questions:

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?
- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?
- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.
- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?
- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?
- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.
- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.
- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010¹, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.
- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?
- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?
- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.
- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

¹ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
29.9.2010

Questionnaire: 15^e Rapport Semestriel de la COSAC

Contribution des parlements nationaux et du Parlement européen à la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie Europe 2020, à la gouvernance économique de l'UE et à l'élaboration du programme de travail de la Commission pour 2012

Le 15^e rapport semestriel sera fondé sur les réponses aux questions suivantes:

1. Stratégie Europe 2020

- 1.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle contribué au programme national de réforme et au programme de stabilité et de convergence de votre pays et, dans l'affirmative, de quelle façon?
- 1.2 Quelles mesures estimez-vous nécessaires aux niveaux national et européen pour répondre aux cinq objectifs principaux de l'UE d'ici à 2020?
- 1.3 Les indicateurs nationaux énoncés par le gouvernement pour mesurer l'état de l'économie nationale ont-ils été examinés, débattus par votre Parlement/Chambre ou y a-t-il/elle apporté sa contribution ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser de quelle façon.

2. Le semestre européen et l'Examen annuel de la croissance

- 2.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle débattu ou entend-il/elle débattre des conclusions de l'Examen annuel de la croissance ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer la procédure et les conclusions.
- 2.2 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que les indicateurs de l'Examen annuel de la croissance correspondent aux indicateurs nationaux (ceux qui sont utilisés dans votre pays) ? Les différents indicateurs sont-ils considérés comme étant suffisamment cohérents pour donner une image réelle de l'état actuel de l'économie de l'UE?
- 2.3 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis qu'il conviendrait de modifier certains aspects des futurs Examens annuels de la croissance ? Dans l'affirmative, le(s)quel(s) et pour quelle(s) raison(s)?
- 2.4 Votre Parlement/Chambre apporte-t-il/elle sa contribution à l'action du gouvernement relative au semestre européen? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer laquelle et de quelle manière.
- 2.5 Avez-vous l'intention de mettre en œuvre une procédure spéciale dans votre Parlement/Chambre concernant le semestre européen ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez la préciser.

- 2.6 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle identifié des faiblesses relatives au semestre européen ? Si oui, quelles sont les principales modifications que votre Parlement/Chambre recommande d'y apporter en vue d'assurer le succès de sa mise en œuvre à l'avenir ?
- 2.7 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que tous les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen doivent être impliqués au déroulement du semestre européen? Si oui, veuillez en indiquer les modalités possibles (p. ex. conférence parlementaire annuelle sur le budget).

3. Gouvernance économique et réglementation financière en général

- 3.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que le paquet de surveillance financière et le paquet de propositions visant à renforcer les outils de la gouvernance économique présentés par la Commission le 29 septembre 2010² soit adéquat et suffisant pour une bonne reprise de l'économie européenne ? Devrait-il y avoir un débat parlementaire à ce sujet? Si oui, veuillez détailler votre réponse.
- 3.2 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que la justification légale du triple contrôle prévu par le paquet de gouvernance économique devrait être complétée d'avantage?
- 3.3 Avez-vous des recommandations concernant l'application graduelle des sanctions et incitations des mécanismes d'application prévus pour assurer le fonctionnement du système de surveillance économique ?
- 3.4 A votre avis, quel serait le meilleur moyen pour les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen de suivre les développements politiques actuels en matière de coordination des politiques économiques et fiscales ? Considérez-vous que les parlements disposent des outils adéquats pour répondre rapidement à ces développements ? Avez-vous des suggestions sur la façon d'améliorer cet aspect du travail parlementaire?

4. Programme de travail de la Commission pour 2012

- 4.1 Y a-t-il eu ou est-il prévu un débat dans votre Parlement/Chambre en vue d'apporter une contribution parlementaire au programme de travail pour 2012, avant sa publication par la Commission ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez en indiquer les modalités et les résultats.
- 4.2 Avez-vous des suggestions pour un débat ex-ante coordonné au sein de la COSAC sur le programme de travail de la Commission permettant d'influer le plus tôt possible sur le processus de planification stratégique de l'UE ?

² COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
29.9.2010

Austria: Nationalrat and Bundesrat

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

Each ministry submitted its yearly report on the Commission Work Programme 2011 to Parliament. These reports are dealt with by the relevant sectoral committees of both chambers of the Austrian parliament. The reports of the ministries in charge contain information about the national programmes and stability and convergence programme, which may be subject to resolutions of parliament. In addition the Europe 2020 Strategy has been dealt with at meetings of the Main Committee of the Nationalrat on 24 March 2010 and the EU-Committee of the Bundesrat on 13 April 2011.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

Coalition parties of government:

(Socialdemocrats, SPÖ)

Meeting the headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy is understood as key for securing prosperity and jobs in the future. Therefore, every member state should aim for ambitious national targets in these areas. The Commission should support the efforts made by the individual member states by regularly assessing their progress and their contribution to the achievement of the European goals. As the Europe 2020 process is of voluntary nature, any binding legislation in this field is rejected. Instead, the European institutions should streamline other policies towards the achievement of the Europe 2020 goals (e.g. especially the new multi-annual financial framework) while reducing bureaucracy and optimizing effectiveness.

(People's Party, ÖVP)

Besides restoring public finances, a successful Europe 2020 strategy demands ambitious, growth-enhancing structural reforms covering areas as pension systems, education, public administration or business environments. National and EU level efforts should be mutually reinforcing and therefore avoid duplicities and trade-offs. In regard to the recent developments in Japan, a strong focus on Research and Innovation and a further enhancement of renewable energy is deemed necessary.

Opposition parties:

(Freedom Party, FPÖ)

The Freedom Party rejects the Europe 2020 strategy and therefore does not see a need for a detailed debate.

(The Green Group, Die Grünen)

First of all the Green Group in the Austrian Parliament regrets that there is at present a lack of governance concerning the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy both on the European and on the national level. The process reveals shortcomings concerning

the democratic accountability, ownership and legitimacy. The European Parliament and the national parliaments should be involved at an early stage in the new economic governance framework via the European Semester.

The Green Group urges to shift away from the sole pursuit of GDP growth towards a broader political concept of the future of the EU. The GDP is not meant to be an accurate gauge of longer term economic and social progress and notably the ability of a society to tackle issues such as climate change, resource efficiency or social inclusion.

In order to meet the five headline targets the Green Group urges the Commission to propose a set of measures to help Member States to restore the equilibrium of public accounts and to finance public investments. Namely innovative forms of investments and financing such as Eurobonds; tax cooperation between the Member States; coordinated introduction of environmental taxes; EU-wide financial transaction tax; closing down of tax havens; project bonds; a progressive bank levy regarding the size of the institution and the level of uninsured short-term funding.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

see 1.1 above

According to the rules of procedure the Austrian Parliament usually debates such items on the occasion of concrete (legislative) motions, reports of the government, the federal budget or by putting the respective documents provided by the European Commission in the EU-committees. In May, these indicators are expected to be discussed within the framework of the Federal Medium term Financial Framework Act 2012 – 2015.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

At the moment there do not yet exist plans to hold a committee meeting or a plenary session where this issue would be discussed specifically. The topic might however be touched upon in the specialised committees (see 1.1 above).

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

Coalition parties:

(Socialdemocrats, SPÖ)

The indicators used in the AGS should focus not only on growth, but also on wealth and prosperity, as the former do not automatically lead to the latter. Growth alone is not enough, it also has to be fairly distributed. Therefore also more attention should be given to the Employment Report.

(People's Party, ÖVP)

The AGS considers standard micro- and macroeconomic as well as financial indicators which are well suited to reflect the current economic situation in the EU and are in line with Austrian concepts.

Opposition parties:

(Freedom Party, FPÖ)

The Freedom Party rejects this initiative and therefore does not see a need for a detailed debate.

(The Green Group, Die Grünen)

The Green Group is deeply concerned with the Commission's first Annual Growth Survey (AGS) because it is solely focused on austerity measures and budget cuts. These measures alone and the ten additional actions proposed by the Commission are inconsistent with the broad economic policy guidelines and employment guidelines, as well as with the objectives set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy. Moreover the AGS does not give indications on the way the flagships and the various events supporting their implementation shall be dealt with in the framework of the first European Semester. Concerning the lack of informative value of the GDP growth the Green Group proposes that the additional indicators should complement GDP for the next programme period. So GDP could be replaced in the long run by a more comprehensive concept of well-being.

- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

Coalition parties:

(Socialdemocrats, SPÖ)

The indicators and especially the conclusions drawn from them should be defined in a more transparent and accountable manner.

(People's Party, ÖVP)

Even though the AGS provide a broad assessment of recent developments and upcoming challenges, innovation and R&D as important drivers of growth are not sufficiently covered. As smart growth is one of the EU 2020 strategy's priorities, these two aspects should be adequately reflected.

Opposition parties:

(Freedom Party, FPÖ)

The Freedom Party rejects this initiative and therefore does not see a need for a detailed debate.

(The Green Group, Die Grünen)

As stated at Question 2.2 the Green Group urges that the AGS should not be solely focused on austerity measures and budget cuts, as austerity is not the answer to achieve the Europe 2020 targets and is not the only way to reduce public deficits. The Green Group therefore pushes for innovative forms of investment and finances that should be proposed and later on monitored by the Commission.

- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

Due to the recent introduction of the European Semester there are no specific rules or procedures yet as to the involvement of Parliament.

- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

This has not been decided yet.

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

Coalition parties:

(Socialdemocrats, SPÖ)

Deciding on the budget is one of the key prerogatives of parliaments. This prerogative must not be questioned by the necessary efforts to better coordinate policies within the European Union, especially with regard to the reform of the stability and growth pact. As budgetary decisions are always highly disputed, this political process must not be undermined by procedures which envisage a high level of automatism. The recommendations issued by the European Commission therefore may only have advisory character and should fully reflect the priorities set out in the national stability and convergence/national reform programmes. With regard to timing, the deadlines defined in the Code of Conduct should be set in a way which allows for appropriate time for parliamentary scrutiny in accordance with the national procedures.

(People's Party, ÖVP)

Since this is the first year the concept of ex ante coordination is applied, a full evaluation is not feasible yet. A major task will be to align national budgetary processes and preparative work streams to deadlines provided by the European Semester. The European Semester Initiative is in line with the Austrian Federal Medium term Financial Framework Act 2012–2015, which is on the parliamentary agenda every spring and provides the financial framework for the federal budget for the next 4 years.

Opposition parties:

(Freedom Party, FPÖ)

The Freedom Party rejects this initiative and therefore does not see a need for a detailed debate.

(The Green Group, Die Grünen)

The Green Group has identified several weaknesses of the European Semester initiative that are indicated as stated at question 2.2 and 2.3. In a nutshell the strongest points of criticism are the lack of involvement of the EP and the national parliaments and therefore the lack of governance in general; the strong focus on austerity measures instead of proposing innovative forms of investment and financing; the lack of ambition concerning the social and ecological dimension; the further economization and the menace of further reduction of social services.

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

Coalition parties:

(Socialdemocrats, SPÖ)

The transparency and effectiveness of the Commission's recommendations could benefit from an early involvement of the national parliaments in the Commission's run-up to these recommendations, based on mutual trust, which allows for an adequate exchange of views on the main topics. This could be done either personally (conference, meeting) or in writing.

(People's Party, ÖVP)

The current level and range of involvement (e.g. legal adoption of draft budgets, discussion of reports) is considered to be sufficient. The involvement of EP is laid down in the treaties, the involvement of national parliaments is a question of the constitutional provisions of the member states.

Opposition parties:

(Freedom Party, FPÖ)

The Freedom Party rejects this initiative and therefore does not see a need for a detailed debate.

(The Green Group, Die Grünen)

Yes, the Green Group urges a stronger involvement of the EP and the national parliaments. The National Stability and Convergence Programme should be accompanied by scrutiny in the national parliaments. At the same time the EP should get the chance to debate the AGS before its publication. An annual parliamentary conference on budget that brings together the results of the national and the European debate should be further discussed.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010³, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

Coalition parties:

(Socialdemocrats, SPÖ)

The Austrian parliament has debated the mentioned proposals at several occasions. While strengthening economic governance is on a good path (although it should take due account of the special budgetary situation after the crisis and the efforts to achieve the Europe 2020 goals), financial market reform remains largely incomplete. Decisive

³ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
29.9.2010

steps towards correcting the misguided developments at the financial markets, which lie at the core of the crisis, still have to be taken. The Commission's proposals regarding the capital requirements directive, the crisis resolution framework and the introduction of a financial transaction tax (cf. the resolution of the European Parliament) are therefore eagerly awaited. Only after these have been presented, a full answer to this question can be given.

(People's Party, ÖVP)

The legislative package presented by the European Commission on 29 September 2010 is considered to be a necessary condition for a balanced and sustainable growth in the European Union and especially the Euro area. However, it is not considered to be entirely sufficient to reach this goal but should be complemented by a better and more efficient regulation of financial markets.

The Austrian government was in close touch with the parliament and provided in-time-information conc. the considerations and the outcome of the Task Force. The financial supervision package then was put on the agenda of the EU-committees, which passed an opinion and sent it to the Commission and the Council.

Opposition parties:

(Freedom Party, FPÖ)

The Freedom Party rejects these initiatives and therefore does not see a need for a detailed debate.

(The Green Group, Die Grünen)

The Green Group agrees that the EU needs a strong, credible EU economic governance and sustainable public finances. However the chosen measures are not sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy. The role of the EP and the national parliaments must be enforced. It needs the involvement of the EP, the national parliaments and the social partners throughout. The future structure of economic governance in the EU should be subject a European Economic Governance Conference organised according to the convention model.

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

Coalition parties:

(Socialdemocrats, SPÖ)

The general approach set out by the Council does provide for a satisfying legal justification under the current treaty provisions.

(People's Party, ÖVP)

The three folded control under the economic governance package does not need further complementation. The envisaged amendment to Art. 136 TFEU concerning the ESM is regarded to be helpful for implementing the overall package on financial stability. Important for the national parliament is the issue of maintaining budgetary sovereignty.

Opposition parties:

(The Green Group, Die Grünen)

It is important that the indicators of the warning mechanism ("scoreboard") are not defined without the involvement of the EP after the so called "six-pack" is adopted.

- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

Coalition parties:

(Socialdemocrats, SPÖ)

The current compromise as set out in the general approach of the Council can be accepted. Any changes towards increased automaticity would conflict with the constitutional prerogatives of the national parliaments.

(People's Party, ÖVP)

The current design of financial sanctions is in line with the Austrian position on this matter. After entry into force of the legislative amendments, the stringent applications of these sanction mechanism have to be secured.

Opposition parties:

(The Green Group, Die Grünen)

The Green Group sees the problem of the sanction in their pro-cyclical implications and would push for EU funds suspensions rather than fines that turned out to be quite ineffective in the past. Furthermore there is a focus on expenditures rather than on budgetary balance, which means that the income side is missing.

- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

Coalition parties:

(Socialdemocrats, SPÖ)

The accountability of decisions taken in these fields should be improved by involving national parliaments and the European parliament to a larger extent. The new rules therefore should reflect the spirit of protocol nr. 1 in an increased manner, especially by strengthening the communication between the various actors. These rules should also provide for a balance between these actors with regard to the information available to them.

(People's Party, ÖVP)

The current situation, the discussion of topics in the area of economic and fiscal coordination in parliamentary committees is considered to be sufficient. The involvement of EP is laid down in the treaties, the involvement of national parliaments is a question of the constitutional provisions in the member states. Furthermore, the better involvement of the Parliament is currently discussed by introducing a legal act granting new information possibilities for members of the national Parliament.

Opposition parties:

(The Green Group, Die Grünen)

The Green Group does not consider the current situation concerning the involvement of the parliaments as accurate and adequate. A way of cooperation between the national parliaments and the EP has to be debated within the parliaments and naturally at the

COSAC. Therefore the Green Group pushes for a European Economic Governance Conference organised according to the convention model in order to discuss the future structure of economic governance, in particular the democratic accountability, ownership and legitimacy.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

Not before the publication. According to Austrian constitutional law, at the beginning of the year every member of the Austrian government has to submit a report to the parliament on the Commission's Work programme and the programme of the Presidencies from the point of view of his or her ministry. These reports are on the agenda of the respective committees in the national parliament.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

Discussing the Commission Work Programmes ex ante within COSAC could have been feasible taking the Annual Policy Strategy as a basis. However, this document has not been adopted anymore since 2010. As an alternative the President or a Vice-President of the Commission could present the legislative and work programme as soon it has been published in front of COSAC in order to discuss the implementation of the programme - which also has some symbolic value.

Belgium: Chambre des représentants et Sénat

1. Stratégie Europe 2020

- 1.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle contribué au programme national de réforme et au programme de stabilité et de convergence de votre pays et, dans l'affirmative, de quelle façon?

Au Parlement fédéral belge, le suivi du programme de stabilité et du programme national de réforme s'est fait dans le cadre des pré- et post-briefings (par le premier ministre) des Sommets européens relatifs à la gouvernance économique et au semestre européen. Concrètement, pendant la période mars – avril 2011, une demi-douzaine de réunions (de plusieurs commissions mais sous la conduite du Comité fédéral d'avis chargé de questions européennes) ont été consacrées à ces problématiques.

Toutefois, il est à noter que, dans le cadre institutionnel de la Belgique, les Communautés et Régions sont appelées à s'exprimer sur une partie importante des éléments contenus aussi bien dans le programme national de réforme que dans le programme de stabilité.

- 1.2 Quelles mesures estimez-vous nécessaires aux niveaux national et européen pour répondre aux cinq objectifs principaux de l'UE d'ici à 2020?

Des réunions susmentionnées, il s'avère que les membres du Parlement fédéral sont généralement d'avis que les efforts et investissements consacrés à la recherche et au développement devraient être largement accrus.

De plus, la commission de la Santé publique et de l'Environnement de la Chambre a adopté une résolution⁴ par laquelle elle demande au gouvernement de:

- **se prononcer clairement pour un renforcement des ambitions de l'Union européenne en matière de climat et pour la fixation d'un objectif unilatéral de réduction d'ici 2020 afin de réduire les émissions de gaz à effet de serre de 30 % par rapport à 1990;**
- **veiller à la compétitivité des entreprises et du marché du travail européens et, le cas échéant, d'instaurer, après analyse approfondie des impacts sociaux, un mécanisme fiscal européen dit "d'inclusion carbone" à l'égard des pays tiers qui ne participeraient pas à la réduction et à l'atténuation des émissions de gaz à effet de serre.**

Par ailleurs, les autres objectifs de la Stratégie Europe 2020 relèvent des Communautés et Régions.

- 1.3 Les indicateurs nationaux énoncés par le gouvernement pour mesurer l'état de l'économie nationale ont-ils été examinés, débattus par votre Parlement/Chambre ou y a-t-il/elle apporté sa contribution ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser de quelle façon.

Les indicateurs nationaux ont été abordés au cours des réunions relatives à la gouvernance économique et au semestre européen (voir question 1.1.).

⁴ document parlementaire n° 53 1245

2. Le semestre européen et l'Examen annuel de la croissance

- 2.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle débattu ou entend-il/elle débattre des conclusions de l'Examen annuel de la croissance ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer la procédure et les conclusions.

L'Examen annuel de la croissance a également été brièvement abordé au cours des réunions relatives à la gouvernance économique et au semestre européen (voir question 1.1.).

- 2.2 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que les indicateurs de l'Examen annuel de la croissance correspondent aux indicateurs nationaux (ceux qui sont utilisés dans votre pays) ? Les différents indicateurs sont-ils considérés comme étant suffisamment cohérents pour donner une image réelle de l'état actuel de l'économie de l'UE?

Lors des réunions susmentionnées (voir question 1.1.), certains membres ont plaidé pour la prise en compte d'autres indicateurs, notamment sociaux et environnementaux.

- 2.3 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis qu'il conviendrait de modifier certains aspects des futurs Examens annuels de la croissance ? Dans l'affirmative, le(s)quel(s) et pour quelle(s) raison(s)?

Ce point n'a pas été abordé.

- 2.4 Votre Parlement/Chambre apporte-t-il/elle sa contribution à l'action du gouvernement relative au semestre européen? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer laquelle et de quelle manière.

Voir question 1.1.

En outre, lors des réunions mentionnées à la question 1.1., plusieurs membres ont demandé au gouvernement que le Parlement soit mieux associé aux travaux du semestre européen et avant même que des engagements ne soient pris.

- 2.5 Avez-vous l'intention de mettre en œuvre une procédure spéciale dans votre Parlement/Chambre concernant le semestre européen ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez la préciser.

Jusqu'à présent, aucune initiative n'a été prise dans ce sens.

- 2.6 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle identifié des faiblesses relatives au semestre européen ? Si oui, quelles sont les principales modifications que votre Parlement/Chambre recommande d'y apporter en vue d'assurer le succès de sa mise en œuvre à l'avenir ?

L'examen parlementaire n'a pas abordé ces aspects-là. Toutefois, plusieurs membres ont insisté sur le respect des compétences et procédures budgétaires existantes dans le chef des parlements nationaux.

- 2.7 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que tous les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen doivent être impliqués au déroulement du semestre européen? Si oui, veuillez en indiquer les modalités possibles (p. ex. conférence parlementaire annuelle sur le budget).

Le débat est en cours. Les discussions qui ont eu lieu permettent de penser que le parlement fédéral de Belgique est favorable à une implication accrue de tous les parlements nationaux et du Parlement européen.

Par ailleurs, lors de la dernière Conférence des présidents des parlements de l'Union européenne, les présidents ont soutenu la proposition formulée par le Président de

l'Assemblée nationale française de « concrétiser le nécessaire dialogue budgétaire entre le Parlement européen et les parlements nationaux en organisant une réunion interparlementaire annuelle, une « Conférence budgétaire », réunissant les présidents des commissions chargées du budget des parlements nationaux et les présidents des commissions concernées du Parlement européen selon des modalités à préciser ».

3. Gouvernance économique et réglementation financière en général

- 3.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que le paquet de surveillance financière et le paquet de propositions visant à renforcer les outils de la gouvernance économique présentés par la Commission le 29 septembre 2010 soient adéquats et suffisants pour une bonne reprise de l'économie européenne ? Devrait-il y avoir un débat parlementaire à ce sujet ? Si oui, veuillez détailler votre réponse.

En principe, les mesures proposées par la Commission européenne feront l'objet d'une analyse de subsidiarité et de proportionnalité.

- 3.2 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que la justification légale du triple contrôle prévu par le paquet de gouvernance économique devrait être complétée davantage ?

Plusieurs membres sont d'avis qu'il convient que les institutions européennes respectent les compétences nationales.

- 3.3 Avez-vous des recommandations concernant l'application graduelle des sanctions et incitations des mécanismes d'application prévus pour assurer le fonctionnement du système de surveillance économique ?

Certains membres sont d'avis qu'il devrait y avoir plus de mesures incitatives et moins de mesures coercitives (sanctions).

De plus, lors des réunions mentionnées dans la réponse à la question 1.1., certains membres (majorité et opposition confondues) ont émis l'avis que les mesures proposées se focalisent sur l'aspect des dépenses plutôt que sur l'aspect des recettes.

- 3.4 A votre avis, quel serait le meilleur moyen pour les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen de suivre les développements politiques actuels en matière de coordination des politiques économiques et fiscales ? Considérez-vous que les parlements disposent des outils adéquats pour répondre rapidement à ces développements ? Avez-vous des suggestions sur la façon d'améliorer cet aspect du travail parlementaire ?

Ni la Chambre des représentants ni le Sénat ne disposent d'outils d'analyse et d'évaluation en ce qui concerne les matières évoquées. Ils peuvent dès lors faire appel à des analyses et évaluations externes (par le biais de – par exemple – la Banque nationale, le Bureau du Plan, le Conseil central de l'économie, etc.).

4. Programme de travail de la Commission pour 2012

- 4.1 Y a-t-il eu ou est-il prévu un débat dans votre Parlement/Chambre en vue d'apporter une contribution parlementaire au programme de travail pour 2012, avant sa publication par la Commission ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez en indiquer les modalités et les résultats.

Il n'y a pas encore eu de débat à cet effet.

- 4.2 Avez-vous des suggestions pour un débat ex-ante coordonné au sein de la COSAC sur le programme de travail de la Commission permettant d'influer le plus tôt possible sur le processus de planification stratégique de l'UE ?

Le Commissaire européen chargé des relations interinstitutionnelles pourrait venir expliquer à la COSAC du printemps les lignes de force du programme de travail de l'année prochaine. Cette année-ci, M. Sefcovic a déjà participé à une réunion à ce sujet du Comité d'avis fédéral chargé des questions européennes.

Bulgaria: Narodno Sabranie

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The Bulgarian Parliament participated in the preparation of the National Reform Programme (NRP) 2011-2015 (*Draft version 1*). Therefore, the NRP is a result of broad public discussion in the framework of the third Council for Public Consultations (CPC) to the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds (CEAOEF). The CPC, which took place on 28 September 2011, was dedicated to: “Europe 2020 – a strategy for sustainable, intelligent and inclusive growth”. During the sitting its main priorities were identified, combining the efforts of the government, the business and the civil society.

The NRP 2011-2015 (*Draft version 2*) was subject of discussion at a joint session of the CEAOEF and the Budget and Finance Committee on 30th of March 2011.

The Deputy Minister of Finance presented the main aspects of the NRP, which in the light of the launched European Semester, shall be sent to the European Commission by the end of April at the latest. The NRP was discussed in the context of the 10 measures of the Annual Growth Survey which have been incorporated in the NRP.

In the light of the Lisbon Treaty, the CEAOEF contributed to the debate on the NRP focusing on the Bulgarian priorities in the context of Europe 2020 Strategy. The CEAOEF stipulates that the NRP reflects to a great extent the philosophy of the new economic governance of the EU.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The five EU headline targets are fully incorporated in the respective Bulgarian national policies and specific indicative values have been set to measure the progress. The CPC to the CEAOEF actively participated in the discussion on the national target indicators between all the stakeholders such as representatives of the legislative power, the executive power, NGOs, business sector and the academic society. We believe that the CPC to the CEAOEF proved to be a working model for reaching a wide consensus on topical issues of the EU Agenda. It is a good practice worth sharing.

To avoid the shortcomings of the Lisbon Strategy, we encourage all Member States to make all necessary efforts for “Europe 2020” Strategy to become reality rather than a document of good intentions. In this regard, we deem important that an Action plan for implementation of the Strategy be developed by each Member State, focusing on measurable indicators, responsibilities and visible results.

The national parliaments are to play an extensive role in the political monitoring of the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy, by legislative initiatives, subsidiarity checks, public debates and discussions on the topical issues.

We consider that achieving coordination and finding balance between the national interests in the context of the EU 2020 Strategy should be stimulated at EU level (i.e. COSAC meetings and interparliamentary forums).

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

Yes, we gave our input by:

- Taking part in the elaboration of the national indicators;
- Control on their implementation;
- Holding public discussions;
- Hearings of the responsible Ministries

In addition, please see answer to questions 1.1 and 1.2 above.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

The Bulgarian Parliament realizes the importance of the European Semester successful implementation for improving the EU economic coordination and governance. We find the ten measures laid down in the Annual Growth Survey a good start of the Semester and a strong impetus for economic reforms.

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

See answer to question 1.1 above.

The discussion on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey was held on 30th March 2011 in the frames of a joint session of the CEAOEF and the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC), dedicated to the NRP.

We find that the NRP which was presented by the Minister of Finance before the 2 parliamentary committees incorporates the 10 measures of the Annual Growth Survey. Given the opportunity to assess whether the measures taken are pointing in the right direction and whether those measures have the right emphasis, the National Assembly will monitor the process of their realization.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

We consider the national indicators in line with the Annual Growth Survey, as they were presented by the Ministry of Finance working group on the elaboration of the NRP 2011-2015 (*Draft version 2*) in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

Having in mind that the Annual Growth Survey is the first of such scope, we would like to see the impact of the measures proposed before considering any changes to it.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

The Bulgarian parliament gave its input to the European debate on the coordination of the national economic and fiscal policies by conducting a number of discussions and making reports and statements on topical issues such as the European Semester, the new economic governance of the EU and the NRP.

On 29th March 2011 the CPC to the CEAOEF held a debate with all stakeholders on the topic: “From European Semester to the Single Market Act – financial stability and sustainable development of the EU Europe”. The timely discussion on the Bulgarian priorities in the context of the European Semester, led to a national position on the new economic governance and the Single Market Act which reflects the interests of the civil society, the business and the parliament.

The joint session on 30th March 2011 of the CEAOEF and the Budget and Finance Committee, dedicated to the NRP, came as a logical continuation of the launched parliamentary action on the EU Semester.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No. We intend to use the existing procedures to exercise parliamentary oversight on the issue.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

We believe it is too early to give recommendations at this point. First, we need to gather impressions on how the economic and fiscal coordination measures will be put in practice and what potential bottlenecks will be observed in the process.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

Yes, we do. In the light of the Lisbon Treaty the cooperation between the national parliaments and the EP should be further developed and deepened. We support the idea of organizing an annual parliamentary conference on budget as well as joint meetings within the EP of the relevant national parliamentary committees and vice versa.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010⁵, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The proposed European Commission legislative initiatives for economic recovery of the EU are relevant to the main challenges of the crisis. In the Bulgarian National Assembly there is an on-going debate on each of the suggested measures and actions. We are convinced that conducting a single economic policy within the EU requires joint efforts in the spirit of cooperation and solidarity among the Member States. In this regard, the specific economic development of each country should be taken into account in the implementation of those acts. We consider of high importance that the risk of “**Europe on two speeds**” be avoided.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

We believe that all stakeholders should take active part in the realization of the new economic governance. The adoption as well as the implementation of the new measures should be exercised in the light of mutual compromise and balance between the interests of the European and national institutions. The Financial Stability Pact, proposed by the Bulgarian Minister of Finance, is the Bulgarian response to the new economic reality in the EU, guaranteeing fiscal discipline and macroeconomic stability (incl. legislative initiatives).

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

CEAOEF presented their concrete proposals during the sitting held on 9 February 2011 in regard to the package of six legislative proposals of the European Commission, concerning the strengthening of the Economic Governance of the EU (Report of CEOEF № 040-01-44 of 15 February 2011 with attachments 1 and 2) in relation to the European Parliament Resolution of 20 October 2010 on the financial, economic and social crisis: proposals on the measures and initiatives which must be undertaken.

CEAOEF made its contribution to the subsequent debate in the frames of the inter-parliamentary meeting, held on 14 March 2011, arranged by the Special Committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis (CRIS) of the European Parliament (EP). The topic was “Investing in the real economy”. With this statement the Members of the Bulgarian Parliament from CEOEF and Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) reiterate their principle support on the above mentioned legislative proposals package of the European Commission.

CEAOEF and BFC consider that the approach to the new economic governance has to efficiently combine the development of the EU economy as a whole, the different economic

⁵ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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growth models in the Member States as well as the specific economic factors for sustainable growth in each one of them. **The catching-up process of the new EU Member States should be carefully analyzed and taken into account. CEAOEF and BFC believe that doing so, the “Europe on two speeds” risk would and should be avoided.**

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

In the light of the greater role of the national parliaments after the Lisbon Treaty, they have the opportunity to intensify the closer cooperation and open political dialogue with the European Commission. The national parliaments now have the chance to participate more actively and to give their input to the EU policy- and decision-making process. The new philosophy after the Lisbon Treaty requires new commitments of the national parliaments on EU Affairs.

We consider the existing tools (*ad-hoc hearings of responsible ministers before the relevant national parliamentary committees and in plenary, subsidiarity checks and political dialogue with the European Commission, debate in the framework of COSAC meetings, strong communication between the national parliaments and the EP*) suitable for responding rapidly to the political developments. The problem we see is the way they are put in practice. Therefore, we suggest that focus be put on capacity building of the stakeholders and administrations on their new role after the Lisbon Treaty.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

In the Bulgarian National Assembly we realize this new perspective and the CEAOEF is trying to get even more involved in the debates on topical EU issues by bringing the public and political attention to them. In the process of setting up the priorities of the Annual Working Program of the Bulgarian National Assembly on issues of the European Union for 2011, we held a broad discussion on the main aspects of the Commission Work Program for 2011 with all stakeholders - the Bulgarian EU Commissioner, the Bulgarian Members of the European Parliament, the Government representatives. As a result, the Working Program of the National Assembly on EU Affairs became a document of broad political consensus on the national priorities in the context of the EU Agenda. This innovative approach proved to be fruitful and certain amendments to the Parliament’s Rules of Procedure are at stake in order to give the right to Members of the European Commission to participate in plenary debates on EU Affairs.

We intend to apply this new approach in the process of setting up the 2012 priorities.

Having in mind, the Bulgarian Commissioner portfolio - International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response and the setting up of the **European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps** in 2012, we intend to start giving our input to the Commission Work Programme for 2012 this year.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

Single Market

In the context of the new EU economic governance, the growth stimulating measures of the Annual Growth Survey which marks the start of the European Semester, CEAOEF and BFC reckon that the **Single Market** is one of the tools for recovery from the financial, economic and social crisis and is capable of becoming a real growth engine. We would highly appreciate if the different aspects of the Single Market Act are subject to a future ex-ante debate in COSAC. The topical issue for Bulgaria in this regard is the **acceleration of the processes of lifting the national barriers and providing a free and equal access to it for every EU citizen.**

The future of the EU Cohesion Policy

The CEAOEF takes the view that Cohesion Policy should be the basic solidarity policy for the next financial framework. It should focus on the most poorly developed European regions encountering structural problems.

CEAOEF feels that achieving the Bulgarian objectives in the context of the EU 2020 Strategy should be linked to, and coordinated with, the activities under the EU Cohesion Policy. Within the context of the debate on Bulgaria's preparations for the next Cohesion Policy programming period, some of the priority tasks identified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria through CEAOEF in relation to the future of the regional policy and structural instruments after 2013 are:

- Concentrating European and national resources on a small number of priorities reflecting the specific needs of the Republic of Bulgaria as well as the requirements of the EU 2020 Strategy with a view to achieving a greater impact;
- Drafting clear and quantifiable targets and indicators for each chosen priority at the start of the programming period to enable the progress made to be measured;
- Maintaining a stable macroeconomic environment and a strong institutional framework as an important precondition for Structural Funds funding;
- Using Structural Funds to achieve visible results, leading to real enhancements in people's living conditions.

The CEAOEF emphasizes the importance of the successful implementation of the **Danube Strategy** for Bulgaria and the region. Considering the challenges facing this macro-region, we expect adequate funding to be allocated from the common EU budget.

In the light of the coming Polish Presidency of the EU and its focus on the CSDP, we consider that more attention should be put on the future development of this policy.

Cyprus: Vouli ton Antiprosopon

Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1. Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

No, the Cyprus Parliament is not directly involved in the preparation of the National Reform Programme (NRP) and Convergence Programme of Cyprus EU 2020, due to the fact that the Cyprus' political system (presidential democracy with a complete separation of powers) does not allow the imposition of views and opinions on the government. The parliament cannot legally bind the government. However, the House of Representatives is vested with the power of scrutiny of the actions of the executive.

1.2. Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The relevant parliamentary committee has not examined the issue. Therefore, the political parties did not have the opportunity to submit their proposals yet.

1.3. Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The House of Representatives has already examined the issue in a meeting organized by the parliamentary committee on European Affairs. The Minister of Finance, who was invited and attended the meeting, informed the Committee about the position of the Government on the particular issue. Due to the fact that Cyprus is a Presidential Democracy with a clear separation of powers, a factor that essentially limits the amount of influence that the Parliament can exercise over the actions of the executive, the position formulated by the Parliament on a given matter cannot have a mandatory character.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1. Has your Parliament / Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure of the findings.

Not yet.

2.2 Does your Parliament / Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country?) Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The relevant parliamentary committee has not examined the issue yet.

2.3. Does your Parliament / Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The relevant parliamentary committee has not examined the issue yet. Thus, a specific answer to the question cannot be given yet.

2.4. Does your Parliament / Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

The financial supervision package and the package of proposals for the economic governance in the European Union were examined by the parliamentary Committee on European Affairs in a meeting held on the 13th of December 2010. In the context of this meeting the Minister of Finance, who was invited and attended the meeting, informed the president and the members of the Committee about the position of the Government on the particular issue. The Committee expressed its commitment to observe and to re-examine the specific issues involved in the above proposals in due time.

2.5. Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament /Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No decision has been taken on such special procedure. Cyprus's political system (presidential democracy with a complete separation of powers) does not allow the imposition of views and opinions on the government. The parliament cannot legally bind the government. However, the issue can be examined in the framework of parliamentary control exercised by the House of Representatives with regard to government policy.

2.6. Has your Parliament / Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament / Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

No.

2.7. Does your Parliament /Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on Budget).

A dialogue and exchange of views between national parliaments and the European Parliament on the ways that national parliaments, on the basis of their characteristics, could be involved in the running of the European Semester could be a useful tool that would promote the democratic dimension to the facilitation of the European Semester. A Parliamentary Conference in the context of which the national parliaments could discuss the challenges and compare perspectives would strengthen parliamentary influence.

3. Economic Governance and Financial Regulation in general.

3.1. Does your Parliament /Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance,

presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The legislative measures for the financial supervision as well as for the economic governance provide a concrete basis upon which sustainable growth can be achieved. The key of success, therefore, lies in the effective enforcement of these measures. In this context, a parliamentary debate on the issue could attach a democratic dimension in the application of the above measures. As noted above, the House of Representatives has already examined the issue in a meeting organized by the parliamentary committee on European Affairs and expressed its commitments to re-examine the specific issues involved in the above proposals in due time. Political parties will be able to submit their proposals during the meeting of the relevant Parliamentary Committee.

3.2 Does your Parliament /Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

No.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

No.

3.4. In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

An enhanced role of European Parliament in the assessment and surveillance process would enhance the accountability of the European Commission. Furthermore, the timely flow of information on the economic policy and budgetary positions to the national parliaments would be a useful aspect of the national parliaments contribution to the legitimizing of the economic governance measures.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament /Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

No such debate has taken place in Cyprus Parliament. This issue is still under consideration.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

Long term policy issues and/or strategic priorities (e.g. priorities/objectives with regard to the EU 2020 Strategy) of the Commission or issues which are considered to be of great interest for a certain number of parliaments or even issues which constitute priorities of a given Presidency TRIO could be included in the agenda of COSAC for purposes of ex-ante debate.

Czech Republic: Poslanecká sněmovna

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The NRP is now being prepared by the Government, it should be passed by the end of April, and then, we expect a discussion in both Chambers of the Parliament. This Thursday (7th April), we held a debate on the update of the Convergence Programme on the ground of the Committee for European Affairs. This preliminary debate included a presentation of basic macroeconomic framework and expected trends. The debate will continue in next weeks when relevant macroeconomic data will be available.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

It is mainly a question, above all, of national governments measures and also of resources that can be made available on this. The first headline target (75% employment) is closely linked to economic situation; economic growth is a key factor for creating new jobs, and well prepared structural reforms of labor markets can support it too. Meeting of the other four headline targets will be directly proportional to resources that will be allocated for it. At the EU level, a complementary funding linked to national government expenditures could stimulate allocation of more resources. Within the climate and energy 20-20-20 target, the priority should be given to energy efficiency measures – the EU framework is already prepared, now it is a question of realization of national action plans.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

No.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

No, it was not debated. The Committee for European Affairs only took note of it, without deliberation on its session.

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The Annual Growth Survey was not debated or analyzed in our Chamber.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The Annual Growth Survey was not debated or analyzed in our Chamber.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

No input given so far, no resolution passed. However, the Committee for European Affairs carefully examines the governmental activities concerning the European Semester and keeps being continuously well informed on this.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

This is a subject for a discussion in next weeks. As it is a very first year when the European Semester is being applied, there is no specific procedure implemented so far. The Committee for European Affairs continuously discusses on this with the Government and keeps being well informed.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

No weaknesses identified.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

It should rather be a subject for budgetary committees of national Parliaments, making use of their exchange of views and their best practices.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010⁶, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

A parliamentary debate on this subject would be always useful, it could be perhaps one of the points on a COSAC meeting. Generally spoken, we welcome the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance from the point of bringing more fiscal and budgetary discipline, better enforcement of the Stability and Growth Pact or thorough discussions on the budgetary framework and trends each year. However, we identify also some problematic parts within the package like reporting some economic data from regions

⁶ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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and municipalities or sanctioning budgetary surpluses (in the case they are created) or possible problems with budgetary deficits created due to some reforms that are necessary to be realized in some countries (like a pension system reform). As for the financial supervision package, we call on attention on the need to respect national regulator's competence and responsibility. We do not support further transmission of competence to EU bodies while responsibility is still kept on national level. Furthermore, we are of the opinion that any new regulation must be thoroughly discussed, broadly supported and must be proved as really necessary and helpful for a given segment. The excessive regulation could cause even more damage in a long term view.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

No.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

No.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

Parliaments are able to respond to up-to-date developments, it is their responsibility and they are disposed to it.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

No.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

We find useful to have a possibility of an ex-ante debate on the Commission Work Programme in COSAC.

Czech Republic: Senát

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

No. The Senate did not have any direct input to the NRP and SCP. However, it did address several general issues related to the content of these programmes in its Resolutions on various European dossiers, which were also intended as guidelines for the Government in the given area.

As for the SCP, the Senate supported the efforts of the Government to bring the budget deficit below 3 % of GDP by 2013. This should be done by appropriately combining necessary changes both on the revenue and expenditure side of the budget. The Senate also underlines the necessity to tackle the long-term sustainability of public finances, which implies engaging in a broad political debate on the future of the pension and health-care systems.

The appropriate form of debate on the NRP in the Senate is currently being discussed. The Government will adopt the NRP at the end of April 2011. Subsequently, political deliberations on the document could be held in the Senate at the beginning of May (on committee and possibly also on the plenary level).

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The Senate considers macroeconomic stability to be one of the key preconditions for reaching the five headline targets. That is why it is necessary to continue with the efforts aimed at fiscal consolidation and structural reforms, as reaffirmed in the Conclusions of the European Council of 24-25 March 2011.

As for individual headline targets, the commitment of Member States to their National Reform Programmes will be essential. Unless the ownership of the EU2020 goals is claimed by Member States, the EU2020 as such risks failing, like the Lisbon Strategy did. That is why it is important for national Parliaments to be thoroughly informed about the contents of the NPR, as it is expected that many measures will take form of legislative acts that will require a vote in the Parliament.

Regarding the measures at the EU level aimed at reaching the goals of EU2020, the Senate is of the opinion that the efforts to re-launch the single market should be primarily based on removing barriers to its effective functioning and facilitating cross-border business activities.

When scrutinizing the Communication from the Commission "Towards a Single Market Act For a highly competitive social market economy", the Senate identified several positive measures. To name a few, the Senate supports

- the idea of European Union patent;*
- ensuring proper functioning of digital economy within the single market;*
- small and medium enterprises by simplifying access to financing and reducing administrative burden;*
- building energy, transport, as well as telecommunication infrastructure necessary for effective functioning of the single market;*
- student mobility by creating 'A Youth on the Move' card, which would make studies in another Member State easier, and workers' mobility by reforming the systems for*

recognition of personal qualifications and implementing the European qualifications framework;

Furthermore, the Senate supports the idea of ongoing liberalization of international trade as an important factor for boosting effectiveness of the EU economies.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The Senate focused its attention on the general nature of the EU2020 headline targets without scrutinizing the specific national indicators. In particular, it does not consider the goal of reducing poverty suitably formulated as it is convinced that poverty reduction is best achieved through fostering favourable conditions for job creation together with corresponding work-related motivation measures.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Annual Growth Survey will be debated in the Committee on National Economy, Agriculture and Transport on April 19, 2011, and subsequently in the Committee on the EU Affairs. If a recommendation for a resolution is given by the EU Committee, the AGS will be discussed at the plenary session of the Senate (poss. end of April).

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The answer is subject to the outcome of the scrutiny of the AGS in the Senate that has not taken place yet.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The answer is subject to the outcome of the scrutiny of the AGS in the Senate that has not taken place yet.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

No, the Senate is not involved at this stage.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

The Committee on EU Affairs was duly informed by the Government about the preparation and the content of the draft NRP that was submitted to the European Commission in November 2010. It is expected that the Government will present the final NRP in the Senate

at the beginning of May 2011. The Senate also regularly holds a debate on the Convergence Programme that is submitted by the Ministry of Finance. First, it is debated in the Committee on EU Affairs, the Committee on National Economy, Agriculture and Transport and subsequently in the plenary session of the Senate. Apart from that, no special procedure is foreseen.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

The Senate finds useful that the European Semester is based on a comprehensive approach integrating structural policies, macroeconomic issues as well as fiscal coordination. The Semester is started by the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) every year. Therefore, the quality of this document is of essence. It must provide a solid analytical input for political debate in the Council, based on the up-to-date data and forecast. The Senate will be able to comment on this matter in more detail after it has completed the scrutiny of this year's AGS.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The Senate holds the view that all Parliaments should be involved in the European Semester in accordance with their constitutional duties of overseeing the Government's activities and holding the Government to account. They should engage in an active dialogue with the Government regarding the legislative measures of the economic policy within the framework of the European Semester. The Parliament, as the ultimate law-making body exercising its democratic control of the Government, participates in this capacity in the European Semester. Nevertheless, the prime responsibility of the Government as a key agent of economic policy should be acknowledged.

The Senate, at this stage, does not see any substantial added value in holding an annual parliamentary conference on budget.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010⁷, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The Senate views the newly proposed framework for enhanced economic governance in the EU to be complementary to the economic policy-making at the national level. The Governments in the respective Member States are the key players as far as the economic policy is concerned, and it is their responsibility to design and pursue such economic policies that can help their economies back on track of economic growth and lower unemployment.

⁷ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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Their success or failure to do so will be judged by the public and determined in general elections.

However, the role of economic governance at the European level is indispensable. The interdependence of Member States on the economic performance of other Member States has been steadily rising and it is quite obvious that an economic crisis in one Member State, regardless of its primary causes, does have a serious impact on the welfare in the rest of the Union. It is needless to say that this link is much stronger among the members of the eurozone. It is, therefore, crucial that the new framework for economic governance in the EU help ensure

- coherence of economic policies undertaken in Member States, and, in so doing, contain the evolution of potential harmful macroeconomic divergences within the EU;*
- compliance with the rules governing budgetary discipline, e.g. compliance with the Stability and Growth Pact, and*
- competitiveness of the European economies that will be enhanced by pursuing the goals of the EU2020 Strategy, which will be the main focus of National Reform Programmes.*

The Senate held a detailed debate, both in its committees and in the plenary session, concerning the Commission's legislative package on economic governance. The debate resulted in passing a resolution, in which the Senate:

- expresses its general support for strengthening the Stability and Growth Pact, setting requirements for national fiscal frameworks and putting in place a system of surveillance over macroeconomic stability in Member States together with a corrective mechanism in case of adverse imbalances threatening the functioning of the monetary union;*
- agrees with the graduated approach towards sanctions ranging from interest-bearing deposits to financial sanctions, as well as with their imposition in an early stage of discovering fiscal problems, and emphasizes that the system of sanctions must function above all preventively and encourage fiscal discipline of Member States;*
- supports giving a more prominent role to the criterion of overall public debt under the excessive deficit procedure and producing a definition of the satisfactory pace of diminishing government debt, whose absence was one of the key shortcomings of the Stability and Growth Pact;*
- takes a reserved stand on comparing the pace of expenditure growth with the so called prudent medium-term rate of growth of GDP because it believes that the explanatory value of this indicator, which is supposed to be assessed on the basis of projections over a ten-year horizon and updated at regular intervals, is considerably limited;*
- believes that requirements for national fiscal frameworks should be set, rather than by a directive, in the form of a recommendation or a codex of standards from which Member States could draw guidelines corresponding to specific national features of their respective budgetary processes, but should a directive be adopted, the Senate supports prolongation of the implementation period;*
- considers introducing the surveillance mechanism over macroeconomic stability in the EU to be an appropriate tool for preventing macroeconomic divergences that may disrupt smooth functioning of the economic and monetary union;*
- believes, however, that the level of integration into the economic and monetary union as well as the level of real convergence of a given economy towards the EU average must be taken into account when drawing up the scoreboard and assessing the threshold levels of indicators;*

- *disagrees strongly with the application of symmetric approach to certain indicators such as the balance of the current account of the balance of payments because surpluses of the current account would, according to this approach, be viewed as the same economic sin as deficits, which is unfounded.*

As for the financial supervision package, the Senate expressed its reserved stand on creating new supervisory bodies in its political dialogue with the Commission. In brief, the Senate did not approve of the fact that the European supervisory authorities (ESAs) would be given new and far-reaching powers without making them bear responsibility for their decisions. The Senate was also concerned that the ESAs could address binding decisions to individual financial institutions with possible fiscal implications for the national budget.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

It is not clear what is meant by the “three-folded control”. As far as the legal basis of the economic governance package is concerned, the Senate finds the Art. 121, Art. 126 and Art. 136, that is currently being revised, of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU adequate and sufficient, and does not consider any additional changes necessary.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The Senate welcomes the introduction of the gradual approach to sanctions under the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) and Excessive Imbalance Procedure (EIP). It also supports the reverse majority voting system for imposing sanctions as it can work as a more efficient deterrent to fiscal indiscipline for countries that are subject to EDP, and as an incentive for choosing the right macroeconomic policy.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

The Senate considers it useful to continue with the established practice of interparliamentary meetings organized by the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee of the European Parliament. The work of the ad-hoc CRIS Committee, including the organization of the interparliamentary meeting "Investing in the real economy: A tool kit for growth, innovation and cohesion" on 14 March 2011 in Brussels, is also to be commended.

Using the platform of interparliamentary meetings, the European Parliament and national Parliaments can keep themselves informed about their respective positions on current events, engage in a political dialogue and follow together developments in the area of economic governance.

The Senate, at this stage, does not see any substantial added value in holding an annual parliamentary conference on budget.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

In the last years, the debate on Annual Policy Strategy (APS) took place regularly in the Senate, resulting in recommendation to the Commission regarding the Work and Legislative Programme. Since APS is not prepared by the Commission any more, the Commission Work Programme (CWP) is not debated until its publication. We do not see any possibility for such ex-ante debate in the Senate without any background document from part of the Commission.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

Taking into account Background Note prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and presented to the meeting of the COSAC Chairpersons in Budapest in February 2011, we have following remarks:

- *We do not see any added value of ex-ante debates in COSAC on CWP. Without any lines from part of the Commission, identifying priorities and possible key initiatives, the debate will be vague and inconclusive.*
- *The idea of presentation of the CWP during ordinary meeting of COSAC in the second semester of the year will be hardly feasible, taking into account demanding coordination of the date of the COSAC meeting which would be dependent on the date of publication of the CWP. Moreover, no debate can be conducted in this phase due to lack of time for creation of NPs' positions on CWP.*
- *The core of the debate on the CWP should be at the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC in the first semester of the year where the national Parliaments should have an opportunity to inform each other on their intention to scrutinize certain EU draft legislative acts, in particular those which might raise subsidiarity concerns.*

Denmark: Folketing

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The National Reform Programme (NRP) of Denmark is being prepared by the Government after consultation with a contact group composed of representatives of a number of Danish NGO's.

The Folketing receives a copy of the NRP before it is being transmitted to the Commission, but is otherwise not involved in the preparations of the programme itself. However the Folketing is of course involved in the deliberations and adoption of legislation that needs to be in place in order to implement the NRP.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The Folketing has not expressed an official position on this

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

No

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Commission's Annual Growth Survey has been discussed by the European Affairs Committee at a number of meetings prior to the debates in the various Council formations (For instance at meetings in the Committee on 14 January and 28 January 2011)

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The Folketing has not expressed an official position on this

- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The Folketing has not expressed an official position on this

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

The Government obtained a mandate to sign up to the European Semester from the European Affairs Committee at a meeting on 9 July 2010. The European Semester has been discussed subsequently at a number of meetings. One important message was that the European Semester should not undermine the Folketing's right to adopt the annual national budget.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

There are currently no such plans

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

The Folketing has not expressed an official position on this

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The Folketing has not discussed a possible involvement of the European Parliament in the European Semester. However to the extent EU-legislation is necessary for its implementation the EP will be involved in accordance with the EU treaty. Generally the Folketing is against establishing new interparliamentary bodies. Instead it should be explored how to use existing bodies for such debates such as COSAC or the meeting between the chairmen of budget or Finance Committees of national parliaments.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010⁸, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance have been discussed at numerous occasions in the European Affairs Committee and the Government has obtained a mandate on four of the six proposals. Two of the proposals were not applicable to Denmark because of the Euro opt-out.

⁸ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

The Folketing has not expressed an official position on this

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The Folketing has not expressed an official position on this

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

The Folketing has not discussed if or how national parliaments and the European Parliament should be involved further in the area of economic and fiscal coordination. The Folketing already has good tools at its disposal such as the mandating system and the possibility to express its views directly vis a vis the European Union institutions either through the subsidiarity early warning mechanism or the Barroso initiative.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

No debate on the Commission's WP2012 is currently planned in the Folketing. However the WP2012 will be a very important tool for the European Affairs Committee and sectoral committees when it comes to identifying EU legislative initiatives or proposals which will require further scrutiny or debate in the committees.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

The debate should be organised in such a way that it focuses on 2-3 major future legislative initiatives from the Commission. The proposals should be selected from the Commission's Work Programme 2011, which provides a very helpful overview of what the Commission sees as likely initiatives until 2014. The debate in COSAC should take place in the presence of the relevant Commissioner.

Estonia: Riigikogu

This year on, the 4th of March there were parliamentary elections in Estonia and the European Union Affairs Committee meetings have not yet been held, as a result some answers may appear too general or not yet discussed. The given answers are based on the deliberations of the previous composition of the Riigikogu.

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

On the 28th of October 2010 EU Affairs committee, Finance-, Economic affairs, Cultural affairs and Social affairs committee had a joint committee meeting where the Government's Strategy Unit introduced the Draft of National Reform programme up to 2020. We are planning to have similar meeting in the end of April before the programmes are submitted to the European Commission. At the same time the Stability and Convergence Programme is introduced to Finance and European Union Affairs Committee.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

Estonia will set out the main measures required to move towards the Europe 2020 headline targets as agreed in June 2010. In the end of April Estonia will present policy measures to correct harmful and persistent macroeconomic imbalances and improve competitiveness.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

As we answered in 1.1 we did have an introduction of the National Reform Programme and our parliamentarians discussed deeply with the Government's representative Estonian goals but no specific input were given. And it is planned to have a new meeting on that matter.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

European Union Affairs Committee of Estonia has not held a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators

considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

No

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

European Affairs Committee has not considered that aspect.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

European Affairs Committee is planning to have a joint meeting with the Finance Committee where the Government is introducing the National Reform Programme and Stability and Convergence Programme that are submitted to the European Commission.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No special procedure is planned.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

Estonia has supported the European Semester initiative from the beginning. Estonia believes that for the effective functioning of the economic and monetary union it is necessary for the broader and stronger budgetary policy coordination. Estonia will continue its sustainable economic and fiscal policy implementation, including the consistent improvement of the budgetary position and expects to receive the surplus in 2014.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

We are aware that in the Speakers Conference of national Parliaments it was decided that the annual parliamentary conference on budget is convened. At the present moment the new composition of the Riigikogu has not yet discussed the issue.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

Estonian Parliament considers the financial supervision package to be adequate and sufficient for healthy recovery no special parliamentary debate is needed.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

This issue has not been discussed.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

No

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

Estonian Parliament (European Union Affairs Committee) is in an opinion that the right tools are at our disposal and we are responding rapidly to these developments.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

No

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

No

Finland: Eduskunta

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

Yes. The Government has regularly communicated to Eduskunta all proposals falling within the competence of Eduskunta.

The procedure leading to the adoption of the Finland's draft National programme which will be basis for the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme has not been any different from other EU matters. In Finland the oversight exercised by Eduskunta directly flows from the Finnish Constitutional Provisions. The Constitution guarantees the right of Eduskunta to participate in the national preparation of EU affairs. As far as Finland's positions are concerned, the Government is politically obliged to take Eduskunta's views into account.

Chambers in charge: The Grand Committee and several sector Committees.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

In various context Eduskunta has taken the view that the national targets for Finland are the following: raise the employment rate to 78 n% by 2020, maintain the ratio of R&D funding at a minimum of 4 % of GDP, reach the climate and energy targets set by the EU, raise the proportion of people with tertiary level of education to 42 %, keep the proportion of early school leavers below 8 % and reduce the number of people living at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Eduskunta has also emphasised that any of the five EU headline targets of 2020 cannot be met unless an effective enforcement and commitment at the national level is ensured.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

Yes, as reasoned in 1.1 above

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

Chambers in charge: The Grand Committee and the sector Committees (the Finance Committee and the Commerce Committee)

The procedure is the same as in all EU affairs. One should note that Eduskunta primarily scrutinises documents describing the Government's position, with the documents of the EU institutions as background material.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

Yes, the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey conform with the national ones.

In its debate Eduskunta has focused more on discussing how to balance public finances and remove economic imbalances and support growth at the same time.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

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2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

Yes. The governmental activities concerning the European Semester are subject to scrutiny in the same way as any other government activity on EU Affairs.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No, as reasoned above.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

No, the European Semester initiative is in line with national budgetary planning and practises.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

We do not think yes/no answers are either appropriate or unequivocal.

The intensity of involvement and parliamentary scrutiny exercised by national parliaments and the European parliament depend first ad foremost on various national constitutional arrangements and the competences given in the EU Treaties.

Periodic conferences are always useful for dialogue, for establishing best practices and benchmarks and for debating focal issues, but they can not replace actual scrutiny by each national parliament.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010⁹, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy?

Eduskunta/ the Grand Committee agreed with the Government about the goals of the Commission's proposals and agreed that the proposed measures to enhance economic coordination are necessary and well-conceived in their fundamentals. The proposals would improve economic coordination in the EU and euro zone, which would increase stability.

The Grand Committee regretted that however, that the issues of financial stability related to the global financial crisis that began in the autumn of 2008 have been left outside this package. The Committee recalled that the primary goal should be the prevention of a new financial crisis, as the financial system of the entire EU was threatened by the compound effects of losses by financial institutions.

Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

Parliamentary debate at the national level: Eduskunta has held debate in plenary session on proposals as the topic was of great interest and contributed to the parliamentary scrutiny of the matter. The debate was held after the Grand Committee's opinion in the matter was completed. The debate in plenary session took place immediately before the European Council's meeting, where the matter was considered for the first time.

A need for interparliamentary debates: Eduskunta is of the opinion that interparliamentary exchange of views in COSAC or other forums is useful only to the extent that it reflects active and effective scrutiny at the national level.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

We are not sure that we understood the question. However, we are broadly satisfied with the legal justifications that have evolved in the Council procedure. As before, Eduskunta has some reservations about the latitude given to the Commission in setting target indicators.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

Yes. Eduskunta has pointed out that the Union's transfers to member states (e.g., cohesion fund, structural funds, agricultural payments, etc.) are based on European regulations. In principle, it would be possible to insert into the regulations a conditionality clause, permitting the withholding of funds from member states that transgress against budgetary discipline. Legally, however, such sanctions would need to be linked to the policy objectives of the regulation in question: if funds are withheld on grounds of fiscal under-performance, it would be necessary to demonstrate that the underperformance has a direct bearing on the

⁹ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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effectiveness of, for example, a payment from structural funds. A similar causality would need to be created separately for each policy area. The likelihood of accomplishing such a setup would appear doubtful.

- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

The intensity of involvement and parliamentary scrutiny exercised by national parliaments and the European parliament depend first and foremost on various national constitutional arrangements and the competences given in the EU Treaties.

In Finland the governmental activities concerning the European economic and fiscal coordination are subject to scrutiny in the same way as any other government activity on EU Affairs.

Eduskunta believes that there is a worrying tendency to bypass the decision-making methods established in the EU Treaties. The way in which the European economic policy making has been organised does not necessarily give a favourable impression of how post-Lisbon decision-making works. When the European Council acts in isolation from the Lisbon Treaty's procedures it will ultimately affect the democratic legitimacy of the union and the genuine commitment of member states to EU-decisions. Getting the legal commitment of the Member States is possible only through the EU Council, whose procedures are lined to national constitutional rules on policy formulation and delegation of power between the executive and legislator.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

National ex-ante positions on Commission Work Programme are subject to scrutiny the same way as any other government activity.

Eduskunta comes into the process as soon as the Government has informed Eduskunta about its position on the work programme. The Finnish system is designed to accommodate the fact that national parliaments can only have influence if they participate in policy formulation from the start.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

No. We would consider anything on an ad hoc or experimental basis. Exchange of information and views on topical EU affairs is always beneficial to all parties. However, timing constraints make it difficult that such debates on this particular subject have a real impact.

France: Assemblée nationale

1. Stratégie Europe 2020

- 1.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle contribué au programme national de réforme et au programme de stabilité et de convergence de votre pays et, dans l'affirmative, de quelle façon?

L'Assemblée nationale s'apprête à débattre et à voter sur le projet de programme de stabilité transmis par la France. Son examen est inscrit à la séance du 2 mai 2011, conformément à une proposition conjointe des Présidents de la Commission des affaires européennes et de la commission des Finances, MM. Lequiller et Cahuzac, et du rapporteur général du budget, M. Carrez. Il est à noter que le projet de loi constitutionnelle relatif à l'équilibre des finances publiques, tel qu'amendé par la Commission des lois le 13 avril 2011, prévoit qu'un tel débat soit désormais organisé, chaque année, en préalable à la transmission du programme aux institutions européennes.

- 1.2 Quelles mesures estimez-vous nécessaires aux niveaux national et européen pour répondre aux cinq objectifs principaux de l'UE d'ici à 2020?

Dans les conclusions qu'elle a adopté le 25 mai 2010, la Commission des affaires européennes de l'Assemblée nationale (CAUE) a considéré que « *la stratégie « Europe 2020 » ne pourra être un succès que si trois conditions sont réunies : une série d'objectifs ciblés, une complémentarité entre les actions des Etats membres de l'UE et les politiques communautaires, et une gouvernance renforcée* ».

Dans ses conclusions du 27 octobre 2010, elle a précisé que « *la question des investissements dans les projets d'avenir est essentielle pour le succès de la stratégie Europe 2020, et [regretté] qu'elle ne soit pas suffisamment traitée à ce stade* ». Par conséquent, elle a demandé « *qu'un débat sur le financement de ces investissements soit organisé, en envisageant d'une part une mutualisation des budgets des Etats membres qui le souhaitent dans les domaines de la recherche et de l'innovation, de l'énergie, des transports, de la défense et du numérique, et d'autre part un emprunt européen consacré à ces grands projets d'intérêt commun* ».

La clef du succès de la nouvelle stratégie européenne, miroir des échecs de la stratégie de Lisbonne, réside en effet, aux yeux de la CAUE, dans une plus forte intégration des budgets nationaux et européens dans la poursuite des objectifs opportunément resserrés, afin de bénéficier des économies d'échelle et, surtout, de se concentrer sur des actions concrètes et précises impliquant plusieurs Etats membres, si besoin par le biais de coopérations renforcées, ou l'ensemble des 27 et des institutions européennes. Les rapporteurs de la CAEU sur cette question, MM. Herbillon et Caresche, ont ainsi appelé, dans leur rapport (n° 2922) du 27 octobre 2010 à « *une mutualisation de certains budgets nationaux consacrés à des investissements d'intérêt commun* », commençant par exemple par une démarche franco-allemande, « *dans les réseaux énergétiques, des transports, du numérique ou de la recherche* ».

- 1.3 Les indicateurs nationaux énoncés par le gouvernement pour mesurer l'état de l'économie nationale ont-ils été examinés, débattus par votre Parlement/Chambre ou y a-t-il/elle apporté sa contribution ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser de quelle façon.

Ces indicateurs n'ont pas fait l'objet d'un débat spécifique. Ils sont toutefois examinés à l'occasion des débats relatifs aux programmes de stabilité et de réforme ou du débat annuel organisé sur le prélèvement sur recette du budget de l'Etat au profit de l'Union européenne.

2. Le semestre européen et l'Examen annuel de la croissance

- 2.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle débattu ou entend-il/elle débattre des conclusions de l'Examen annuel de la croissance ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer la procédure et les conclusions.

L'Examen annuel de croissance, intégré dans le champ plus vaste du gouvernement économique européen, a été notamment débattu au cours de la réunion conjointe des Commissions des affaires européennes de l'Assemblée nationale et du Sénat et des représentants français au Parlement européen organisée le 30 mars 2011 (http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/13/europe/c-rendus/c0196.asp#P17_870). Il n'a toutefois pas fait l'objet de conclusion.

- 2.2 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que les indicateurs de l'Examen annuel de la croissance correspondent aux indicateurs nationaux (ceux qui sont utilisés dans votre pays) ? Les différents indicateurs sont-ils considérés comme étant suffisamment cohérents pour donner une image réelle de l'état actuel de l'économie de l'UE?

La Commission des affaires européennes ne s'est pas exprimée sur cette question. MM. Herbillon et Caresche, dans le rapport précité du 27 octobre 2010 sur le gouvernement économique européen, ont néanmoins relevé l'extrême importance du choix des indicateurs, et de la nécessité d'adapter leur examen aux particularités des économies de chaque Etat membre.

- 2.3 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis qu'il conviendrait de modifier certains aspects des futurs Examens annuels de la croissance ? Dans l'affirmative, le(s)quel(s) et pour quelle(s) raison(s)?

Voir réponse précédente.

- 2.4 Votre Parlement/Chambre apporte-t-il/elle sa contribution à l'action du gouvernement relative au semestre européen? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer laquelle et de quelle manière.

L'Assemblée nationale s'est pleinement impliquée dans le semestre européen. Ainsi, le Président de la Commission des affaires européennes, M. Lequiller, et les Président et Rapporteur général de la commission des Finances MM. Cahuzac et Carrez ont-ils proposé, dès le printemps 2010, que le semestre européen fasse l'objet de débats réguliers :

- Fin avril/début mai, un débat suivi d'un vote serait consacré au projet de programme de stabilité transmis par la France aux institutions européennes ;
- Début juin, les observations de la Commission européenne sur les programmes français de stabilité et de réforme feraient l'objet d'une résolution de l'Assemblée ;

- Une conférence interparlementaire réunissant les représentants des commissions des Finances des 27 et des commissions compétentes du PE serait organisée en mai/juin, afin que les parlementaires puissent débattre entre eux des données précises des programmes des Etats membres.

La première proposition a été concrétisée (voir réponse 1.1), la seconde devrait l'être début juin, tandis que la proposition de conférence budgétaire interparlementaire, soumise par le Président de l'Assemblée M. Accoyer à ses homologues, a été retenue par la Conférence des Présidents des Parlements de l'Union de Bruxelles.

- 2.5 Avez-vous l'intention de mettre en œuvre une procédure spéciale dans votre Parlement/Chambre concernant le semestre européen ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez la préciser.

Voir réponses précédentes.

- 2.6 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle identifié des faiblesses relatives au semestre européen ? Si oui, quelles sont les principales modifications que votre Parlement/Chambre recommande d'y apporter en vue d'assurer le succès de sa mise en œuvre à l'avenir ?

La Commission des affaires européennes procédera à un bilan de la première expérience du semestre européen à la fin de l'année 2011.

- 2.7 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que tous les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen doivent être impliqués au déroulement du semestre européen ? Si oui, veuillez en indiquer les modalités possibles (p. ex. conférence parlementaire annuelle sur le budget).

Voir réponses précédentes.

3. Gouvernance économique et réglementation financière en général

- 3.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que le paquet de surveillance financière et le paquet de propositions visant à renforcer les outils de la gouvernance économique présentés par la Commission le 29 septembre 2010¹⁰ soit adéquat et suffisant pour une bonne reprise de l'économie européenne ? Devrait-il y avoir un débat parlementaire à ce sujet ? Si oui, veuillez détailler votre réponse.
- 3.2 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que la justification légale du triple contrôle prévu par le paquet de gouvernance économique devrait être complétée d'avantage ?
- 3.3 Avez-vous des recommandations concernant l'application graduelle des sanctions et incitations des mécanismes d'application prévus pour assurer le fonctionnement du système de surveillance économique ?

¹⁰ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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- 3.4 A votre avis, quel serait le meilleur moyen pour les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen de suivre les développements politiques actuels en matière de coordination des politiques économiques et fiscales ? Considérez-vous que les parlements disposent des outils adéquats pour répondre rapidement à ces développements ? Avez-vous des suggestions sur la façon d'améliorer cet aspect du travail parlementaire ?

L'ensemble du paquet gouvernance a été examiné par la CAEU le 27 octobre 2010, qui a adopté les conclusions suivantes :

« La Commission des affaires européennes,

1. Considère que la procédure du « semestre européen » approuvée par le Conseil le 7 septembre 2010, qui prévoit notamment la remise simultanée par les Etats membres à la Commission européenne et au Conseil de leurs programmes pluriannuels de finances publiques, des principaux paramètres de préparation des budgets nationaux annuels et de leurs programmes de réformes structurelles, permettra une meilleure intégration de la dimension européenne dans les budgets des Etats membres ;

2. Demande que les parlements nationaux soient pleinement associés à ce dispositif, à travers la tenue d'une réunion annuelle de représentants des parlements nationaux et du Parlement européen ;

3. Souligne la nécessité, dans le cadre des réformes actuellement envisagées, de créer un mécanisme permanent de gestion des crises, qui devra se baser sur la pérennisation du Fonds européen de stabilité financière ;

4. Note que le débat sur le gouvernement économique européen s'est concentré jusqu'à maintenant sur la surveillance budgétaire, et notamment sur la question des sanctions dans le cadre du Pacte de stabilité et de croissance ;

5. Considère que les considérations légitimes tendant au renforcement de la discipline budgétaire des Etats membres doivent être conciliées avec la nécessité, pour le futur dispositif de gouvernement économique européen, d'intégrer une forte dimension de solidarité entre les Etats membres de l'Union européenne, et en particulier entre les Etats membres de la zone euro ;

6. Insiste sur l'importance de la surveillance macro-économique dans le cadre du futur système, procédure nouvelle qui va permettre de rééquilibrer le Pacte de stabilité et de croissance en ne se focalisant plus exclusivement sur les données budgétaires, et souhaite que les travaux sur la définition d'un tableau de bord et d'indicateurs aboutissent rapidement ;

7. Considère que la question des investissements dans les projets d'avenir est essentielle pour le succès de la stratégie Europe 2020, et regrette qu'elle ne soit pas suffisamment traitée à ce stade ;

8. Demande qu'un débat sur le financement de ces investissements soit organisé, en envisageant d'une part une mutualisation des budgets des Etats membres qui le souhaitent dans les domaines de la recherche et de l'innovation, de l'énergie, des transports, de la défense et du numérique, et d'autre part un emprunt européen consacré à ces grands projets d'intérêt commun ;

9. *Prend acte de la déclaration adoptée par le Président de la République française et la Chancelière de la République fédérale d'Allemagne à Deauville le 18 octobre dernier sur le gouvernement économique européen ;*

10. *Réaffirme que, quelles que soient les dispositions qui seront finalement adoptées pour construire un véritable gouvernement économique européen, ces réformes devront être suffisamment lisibles pour les citoyens européens, et appelle dans ce but les institutions européennes et les gouvernements nationaux à prévoir et mettre en œuvre un ensemble de mesures d'information des citoyens, afin de renforcer la légitimité démocratique du nouveau système et d'empêcher qu'il soit perçu comme une ingérence excessive de l'Europe dans les budgets nationaux ou comme une contrainte supplémentaire exercée au nom de celle-ci. »*

4. Programme de travail de la Commission pour 2012

4.1 Y a-t-il eu ou est-il prévu un débat dans votre Parlement/Chambre en vue d'apporter une contribution parlementaire au programme de travail pour 2012, avant sa publication par la Commission ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez en indiquer les modalités et les résultats.

La CAEU n'organise plus de débat sur le programme de travail de la Commission européenne depuis 2006, considérant que ce document, qui engrène des propositions nombreuses sans réel souci de hiérarchie, ne constitue pas un aperçu pertinent de la stratégie annuelle de l'Union. Le Président de la CAEU, M. Lequiller, a ainsi proposé que soit organisé un « état de l'Union » annuel, réunissant représentants des parlements nationaux et du Parlement européen, au cours duquel le Président du Conseil européen, le Président de la Commission européenne et le Haut représentant dresserait un bilan général et formulerait les grandes orientations stratégiques de l'Union européenne.

4.2 Avez-vous des suggestions pour un débat ex-ante coordonné au sein de la COSAC sur le programme de travail de la Commission permettant d'influer le plus tôt possible sur le processus de planification stratégique de l'UE ?

Il apparaît plus pertinent que la COSAC débattre des grandes priorités que les parlements nationaux souhaitent assigner à l'Union européenne au préalable, en formalisant les points de consensus dans ses conclusions et ses contributions, soumises aux institutions européennes.

France: Sénat

1. Stratégie Europe 2020

- 1.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle contribué au programme national de réforme et au programme de stabilité et de convergence de votre pays et, dans l'affirmative, de quelle façon?

Le « programme de stabilité » a été abordé dans le cadre d'une loi de programmation des finances publiques pour la période 2011-2014. Le « programme national de réforme » sera pour la première fois débattu au mois d'avril.

- 1.2 Quelles mesures estimez-vous nécessaires aux niveaux national et européen pour répondre aux cinq objectifs principaux de l'UE d'ici à 2020?

Il n'existe pas de texte adopté permettant de répondre à cette question.

- 1.3 Les indicateurs nationaux énoncés par le gouvernement pour mesurer l'état de l'économie nationale ont-ils été examinés, débattus par votre Parlement/Chambre ou y a-t-il/elle apporté sa contribution ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser de quelle façon.

Cette question est abordée lors de la discussion de la loi de finances annuelle.

2. Le semestre européen et l'Examen annuel de la croissance

- 2.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle débattu ou entend-il/elle débattre des conclusions de l'Examen annuel de la croissance ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer la procédure et les conclusions.

Il n'y a pas eu de débat cette année. Il est possible qu'un débat soit organisé l'année prochaine.

- 2.2 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que les indicateurs de l'Examen annuel de la croissance correspondent aux indicateurs nationaux (ceux qui sont utilisés dans votre pays)? Les différents indicateurs sont-ils considérés comme étant suffisamment cohérents pour donner une image réelle de l'état actuel de l'économie de l'UE?

Il n'existe pas de texte adopté permettant de répondre à cette question.

- 2.3 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis qu'il conviendrait de modifier certains aspects des futurs Examens annuels de la croissance ? Dans l'affirmative, le(s)quel(s) et pour quelle(s) raison(s)?

Il n'existe pas de texte adopté permettant de répondre à cette question.

- 2.4 Votre Parlement/Chambre apporte-t-il/elle sa contribution à l'action du gouvernement relative au semestre européen? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer laquelle et de quelle manière.

Un débat suivi d'un vote sur le programme de stabilité et le programme national de réforme aura lieu au mois d'avril.

- 2.5 Avez-vous l'intention de mettre en œuvre une procédure spéciale dans votre Parlement/Chambre concernant le semestre européen ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez la préciser.

Ces points sont encore en discussion.

- 2.6 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle identifié des faiblesses relatives au semestre européen ? Si oui, quelles sont les principales modifications que votre Parlement/Chambre recommande d'y apporter en vue d'assurer le succès de sa mise en œuvre à l'avenir ?

Ces points sont encore en discussion.

- 2.7 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que tous les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen doivent être impliqués au déroulement du semestre européen? Si oui, veuillez en indiquer les modalités possibles (p. ex. conférence parlementaire annuelle sur le budget).

L'idée d'une conférence interparlementaire annuelle sur le budget, sans doute au mois de mai, paraît largement soutenue.

3. Gouvernance économique et réglementation financière en général

- 3.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que le paquet de surveillance financière et le paquet de propositions visant à renforcer les outils de la gouvernance économique présentés par la Commission le 29 septembre 2010¹¹ soit adéquat et suffisant pour une bonne reprise de l'économie européenne ? Devrait-il y avoir un débat parlementaire à ce sujet? Si oui, veuillez détailler votre réponse.

Ces sujets ont été abordés à plusieurs reprises dans les débats en séance plénière, mais sans donner lieu au vote d'un texte.

- 3.2 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que la justification légale du triple contrôle prévu par le paquet de gouvernance économique devrait être complétée d'avantage?

Ces sujets ont été abordés à plusieurs reprises dans les débats en séance plénière, mais sans donner lieu au vote d'un texte.

¹¹ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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- 3.3 Avez-vous des recommandations concernant l'application graduelle des sanctions et incitations des mécanismes d'application prévus pour assurer le fonctionnement du système de surveillance économique ?

Ces sujets ont été abordés à plusieurs reprises dans les débats en séance plénière, mais sans donner lieu au vote d'un texte.

- 3.4 A votre avis, quel serait le meilleur moyen pour les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen de suivre les développements politiques actuels en matière de coordination des politiques économiques et fiscales ? Considérez-vous que les parlements disposent des outils adéquats pour répondre rapidement à ces développements ? Avez-vous des suggestions sur la façon d'améliorer cet aspect du travail parlementaire ?

Des outils supplémentaires ne paraissent pas nécessaires sur le plan national. À l'échelon européen, la concertation interparlementaire devrait être renforcée (voir le point 2.7.).

4. Programme de travail de la Commission pour 2012

- 4.1 Y a-t-il eu ou est-il prévu un débat dans votre Parlement/Chambre en vue d'apporter une contribution parlementaire au programme de travail pour 2012, avant sa publication par la Commission ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez en indiquer les modalités et les résultats.

Non

- 4.2 Avez-vous des suggestions pour un débat ex-ante coordonné au sein de la COSAC sur le programme de travail de la Commission permettant d'influer le plus tôt possible sur le processus de planification stratégique de l'UE ?

Non

Germany: Bundestag

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The draft NRP was considered in the specialised Committee on Labour and Social Affairs in January 2011. The government finalized the NRP on April 6, 2011. The same day the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union deliberated the final version with the Minister of Economics and Technology. The majority commended the economical approach of the NRP and the successful implementation of the Strategy Europe 2020. The opposition criticized an imbalance between economical and social targets as well as insufficient targets in the field of environmental/climate policy.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

So far, deliberations in the Bundestag primarily focused on the targets of Europe 2020, not on measures.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

National indicators have been debated especially concerning the target poverty reduction. Long-term unemployment was accomplished as the main indicators for the named target.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

A specific debate on the Annual Growth Survey has not been held. Nevertheless, it was part of the deliberations on the strategy “Europe 2020”.

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

Please refer to question 2.1.

- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

Please refer to question 2.1.

- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

Parliamentary input follows the usual procedure for EU documents and European Union affairs in general. As mentioned under 1.1. the NRP is discussed in the responsible parliamentary committees.

- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

Implementing a special procedure is not intended so far.

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

Concrete weaknesses of the European Semester initiative have not been part of official documents of the Bundestag.

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

Democratic legitimacy of the European Semester, questions of budget sovereignty and the parliamentary power of the purse are part of the political discussion on the European Semester and the economic reforms on the EU level in general. However, a special format of parliamentary control concerning the European Semester has not been discussed.

During debates of COSAC and the Weimar Triangle the EU affairs committee of the Bundestag supported a proposal of the French Assemblée nationale to organize annual/regular meetings of the EP's and national parliament's budget committees on the European Semester.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010¹², are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

Parliamentary deliberations on the general strategy to stabilize the Euro the majority considered the six COM proposals as one important tool of the comprehensive package in order to stabilize the financial markets. The parliamentary deliberations on the proposals (EU documents) have not been finished, yet. The Budget Committee which is in the lead for four of the six proposals held a hearing on March 14, 2011 on the budgetary and economic coordination in the EU.

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

Please refer to question 2.7.

¹² COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the

functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The mechanisms, especially automatic sanctions, are broadly discussed in the Bundestag. The majority asks for at least quasi-automatic sanctions as proposed by the European Council.

- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

German National law on the cooperation of federal government and the Bundestag in EU affairs contains important tools and measures on parliamentary participation and democratic control. Moreover, more concrete parliamentary rights concerning new forms of intergovernmental cooperation on the ESM and within the Euro group are currently discussed.

The interparliamentary cooperation could be intensified through meetings of the budget committees (please refer to 2.7), through an enhanced use of IPEX and by making it a permanent agenda point on the COSAC agenda.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

A debate on the Commission Work Programme 2012 before its publication is currently not planned and has not taken place so far.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

The earliest point of time for a coordinated ex-ante debate of COSAC - as it was discussed by the XLIV. COSAC in Brussels – would be the Chairperson's meeting in February. The debate itself should be prepared by the COSAC Secretariat, e.g. by distributing the draft and collecting questions/remarks in advance.

Germany: Bundesrat

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The Federal Government has involved the federal states in the process of drawing up the National Reform Programme. The federal states' positions are reflected in particular in the statements on education. On 15th April 2011 the Bundesrat examined the National Reform Programme adopted by the federal cabinet on 6th April 2011.

The federal states were not involved in drawing up the Federal Government's Stability and Convergence Programme, tabled at the same time as the National Reform Programme, and, as was the case in previous years, this document will not be examined by the Bundesrat.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The Bundesrat has examined the Commission Communication on the Europe 2020 Strategy carefully and has adopted three Resolutions on this strategy. In these Resolutions, the Bundesrat takes a somewhat critical stance in respect of quantitative national goals for the key objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Bundesrat is opposed to the establishment of national goals in the educational sphere, as this would not be compatible with provisions in the EU Treaties on the allocation of competences. This is reflected in the European Council's decisions. The National Reform Programme refers explicitly to this and notes that the Member States bear sole responsibility for establishing and implementing goals in the fields of education and combating poverty.

Please refer to the appended National Reform Programme for further information on the measures considered to be necessary. In the education sphere, which in the first instance affects the federal states, the following measures are considered to be particularly important:

- *Increased investment in education and research for the 2010 to 2013 period.*
- *Improving the quality of school education, inter alia by developing standards for Abitur (general qualification for university entrance) examinations in key subjects.*
- *Implementing comprehensive assistance programmes for under-performing pupils in order to reduce the rate of pupils not completing schooling.*
- *Continuation of the Training Pact concluded between the Federal Government, central business associations and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (Kultusministerkonferenz) to ensure that a sufficient number of training positions for young people are available.*
- *Increased investment in developing tertiary education in order to further increase the number of students entering tertiary education.*

- *Concluding the Pact for Research and Innovation to ensure that a framework can be implemented by 2015 to support young academics and intensify technology transfer to the world of business.*

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The Bundesrat has not commented on this question.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Bundesrat deliberated on the Commission's Annual Growth Survey in its session on 18th March 2011 and adopted the appended Opinion (BR-Drs. 85/11 (Resolution)). The Bundesrat plenary adopted its Opinion on the basis of recommendations from the committees involved in deliberations. In addition to the lead committee, namely the Committee on European Union Questions, the document was also examined by the Committee on Labour and Social Policy, the Committee on Women and Youth, the Finance Committee, the Culture Committee and the Committee on Economic Affairs.

In its Opinion the Bundesrat emphasises that the Annual Growth Survey must be used as the point of departure for a new culture of stability in Europe, which must also be given practical expression. In the view of the Bundesrat the report sets the right priorities by focussing on consistent budgetary consolidation, promoting employment and fostering growth. The Bundesrat agrees with the Commission's appraisal that budgetary consolidation is a central political priority for the Member States. However, the Bundesrat also draws attention to the fact that decisions on the volume of state expenditure impinge on the core realm of the budgetary autonomy of parliaments in Member States. Furthermore the Bundesrat notes that the Survey also contains demands that extend beyond the scope of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Where this is the case, the Bundesrat rejects the inclusion of specific requirements for the Member States in the Annual Growth Survey. Similarly, the Bundesrat is opposed to the proposal that two percent of GDP should be invested in higher education.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

In its Resolutions concerning the Communication on the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Bundesrat has already called for the choice of indicators and the related parameters to be made readily comprehensible. The Bundesrat has for example called into question whether the number of higher education diplomas obtained is a meaningful indicator, both in terms of the pace of growth and in terms of very different educational systems. The Bundesrat took the view in these Resolutions that a benchmark relating to a tertiary education diploma, would not serve as a meaningful indicator in terms of the quality of the educational system or of

participation in education in the tertiary sector; this is particularly true for Germany with its highly differentiated system of vocational education.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The Bundesrat is opposed to the incorporation of specific requirements for the Member States in the Annual Growth Survey if this Survey comprises requirements that extend beyond the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This applies in particular to the proposals on unemployment benefits and to amendments to provisions on protection against unlawful dismissal. In addition, the Bundesrat criticises the one-sided, highly negative depiction of the educational policy situation in the draft of the Joint Employment Report appended to the Annual Growth Survey. The Bundesrat does not agree, at least with reference to Germany, with the Commission's view that one of the main weak points in vocational initial and further training lies in a lack of high-quality, attractive training at all levels. Focussing solely on existing weak points could even have a counter-productive effect.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

In the initial phase of the European Semester, the federal states participated in devising the National Reform Programme, which the Bundesrat discussed on 15th April 2011. At present a decision has not yet been taken on the extent to which the Bundesrat and/or the federal states will participate in the second phase of the European Semester.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No special procedures related to the European Semester are currently planned.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

The Bundesrat has not commented on this question.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The Bundesrat has not commented on this question.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the

Commission on 29 September 2010¹³, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The Bundesrat examined the financial supervision package in its session of 6th November 2009. In the Bundesrat Opinion on this package, the Bundesrat expressed its support for the Commission's proposal to set up a European system of financial supervisory authorities. The Bundesrat welcomed the planned European financial supervision system as a European network that will enable coordinated cooperation between national authorities, the three new European supervisory authorities – the European Banking Authority, the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority, the European Supervisory Authority (Securities and Markets) - and the European Systemic Risk Board. The Bundesrat has requested the Federal Government to address certain aspects in negotiations at the EU level. For example the Bundesrat took the view that the scope envisaged for the Commission and the aforementioned supervisory authorities to take individual decisions directly vis-à-vis financial institutions would amount to excessive encroachment on the powers and responsibilities of national supervisory authorities.

In its session on 26th November 2010, the Bundesrat examined the economic governance package. In its Opinion the Bundesrat in principle welcomes the goal pursued through these proposals, namely averting new crises that might arise due to increasing levels of state debt or major macro-economic distortions in individual Member States. The Bundesrat emphasised in particular that the proposals seek not merely to improve and extend the scope of budgetary policy monitoring, but also to ensure improved and extended monitoring of general economic and structural reform policy, taking into account the weaknesses of previous legal provisions. The Bundesrat expressed its opposition to various points, such as appraisal of Member States' budgetary policy based on expenditure trends for each Member State or the notion of penalties linked to a stringently rule-based evaluation of increases in expenditure by individual Member States.

The Bundesrat did not comment on the question of whether there should be a parliamentary debate to consider whether the aforementioned packages are appropriate and sufficient to ensure sound recovery of the European economy.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

The Bundesrat has not commented on this question.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The Bundesrat has not commented on this question.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic

¹³ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

A debate is not currently planned in the Bundesrat on ways to bring influence to bear on the content of the 2012 Work Programme prior to its publication. However the Bundesrat finds it regrettable that the Strategic Planning Document has been abandoned in the Commission's new planning cycle. In previous years this document has given rise to lively discussions with Commission representatives in the EU Committee. The annual general policy debate advocated by Commission President Barroso would have added value if it were conducted on the basis of a paper along the lines of the previous Annual Strategic Planning Document, which parliaments would need to have sufficient time to scrutinise.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

See answer to question 4.1.

Greece: Vouli Ton Ellinon

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

Both the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme will be presented and discussed at the Standing Committees of Economic and European Affairs of the Greek Parliament.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

Given the austerity measures taken by the Government and the subsequent GDP decline, we believe that it will be very difficult to meet the five EU headline targets and especially the target of reducing unemployment. Therefore, all the efforts at the national level should focus in improving the overall macroeconomic performance by speeding up structural reforms, improving the business environment, ameliorating administration and tax collection efficiency, rationalizing the functioning of state owned enterprises and implementing the privatization programme.

At the EU level, we consider important to develop mechanisms for closer coordination, geared towards the management of acute common problems, such as sovereign overdebtbness. Considering resource scarcity, it is urgent to develop new investment financing instruments, such as the project bonds. Last but not least, it is important to maintain an EU budget that can meet adequately the challenges of the strategy Europe 2020.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The topic has not yet been debated.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

Even though the Annual Growth Survey was part of the planning of the European Affairs Committee, the debate did not take place according to preliminary plans.

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?
- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.
- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

A Budget Office under the auspices of the Greek Parliament has been established with the mandate to provide independent advice and expert scrutiny on fiscal issues, and report publicly on the budgetary plans and execution of spending entities of the general government, and on the macroeconomic assumptions used in the budget. The operational procedures of the budget office have been defined by a Decision of the President of the Parliament, while staffing is in progress.

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

We consider that we should review the first results of this new process in due time and then recommend possible changes if necessary. In general, there is a positive view towards the initiative of European Semester.

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

There might be a variety of proposals on the form and level of interparliamentary cooperation. However, the intensity of cooperation is constrained by the uneven distribution of budgetary competences among the Parliaments of the member-states and the consequent divergence of initial positions in terms of interparliamentary institutional capabilities. The model of COSAC could perhaps provide a useful guide. The Conference of Committee Chairs could convene early in January to set the agenda of peer review during the European Semester. Then, delegations from the competent Committees could meet in the Parliament of the member-state holding the rotating EU Presidency, exchange best practices and review the available national documents. That could happen most probably in May, that the submission of the material to be reviewed will have been concluded. In any case, the interparliamentary meeting should take place before the presentation of the Commission's country-specific proposals in June.

3 Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010¹⁴, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery

¹⁴ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
29.9.2010

of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The Hellenic Parliament has welcomed all ongoing procedures towards the creation of a new European frame for financial supervision and market operation, which should be completed as soon as possible. More specifically we wish for a more effective control of OTC Derivatives, to function with more transparency and less risk. Credit rating agencies must operate under stricter criteria and produce, as much as possible, more objective assessments. At the same time further control should be exercised on hedge funds' operation placing it under a uniform frame of risk monitoring. Members of the competent Committees of our Parliament have also expressed themselves in favour of limiting Short Selling and Credit Default Swaps' operation and extent, since, they believe, these are to blame to a large degree for speculative and profiteering attacks. The present crisis has illustrated the need for defending the common currency and for improving the European economic governance mechanisms, by strengthening fiscal discipline and enhancing at the same time macroeconomic surveillance. In this context, the launching of the European Semester in January 2011 is expected to enhance the ex-ante coordination covering all financial surveillance aspects of the Stability and Growth Pact.

The Committee for European Affairs has recently set up a Subcommittee for EU Economic Governance, and among its priorities is to examine closely these proposals, (COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527 29.9.2010) and the progress reached at Ecofin councils regarding their completion.

Parliamentary debates on thie above mentioned topics could be usefull, but only in a sense of reviewing the implementation of the foreseen procedures, as the legislative proposlas are almost finalized and an agreement upon them is expected by next June.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

This particular topic was not highlighted during the debates that have taken place.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The sanctions are considered necessary in order to achieve the common goals. However the have to be designed very carefully, so as to not create further problems than those they were intended to solve. Further more, their application should not depend strictly on quantitative criteria, but take into account a wide range of aspects.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

National Parliaments have to take advantage of all the available tools in order to scrutinize as efficiently as possible their government's activity in this field. As we already mentioned, the Committee for European Affairs of the Hellenic Parliament realized the need of expertise when dealing with these issues and therefore asked the Speaker of Parliament to set up a small sized sub-committee, comprised mostly by common members of the Committee for European Affairs and the Committee for Economic Affairs.

Interparliamentary cooperation in this field is essential, mainly in order to exchange experience and best practices.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

A debate as described above has not taken place neither it is scheduled for the near future. However, in many cases (after the Commission's legislative Programme for 2011 was discussed by the Committee for European Affairs) proposals for action at EU level were suggested by individual MPs, usually related to topical issues. As an example we could mention the proposal for legislative action aiming to intensify security controls in the operation of nuclear plants inside the EU or candidate countries, that was mentioned during a recent hearing of the Commissioner for the Environment Mr J. Potocnik.

Therefore, it might be a good idea to sum up different proposals made on several occasions during the year and send them to the Commission, before or while the legislative programme is being drafted. (the exact timing should be recommended by the Commission).

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

See above.

Hungary: Országgyűlés

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

Firstly, the draft National Reform Programme submitted in November 2010 was discussed by the Committee on European Affairs of the Hungarian National Assembly (hereinafter called: the Committee) last December within the framework of a hearing of the responsible Government member. In addition, during the first part of the Hungarian EU Presidency, the Committee invited several ministers and state secretaries presiding the different Council formations (i.e. ECOFIN, Competitiveness) in relation to the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) in order to give an oral briefing about the main issues. The finalized National Reform Programme (NRP) and Convergence Programme (CP) presented by the competent Government member will also be discussed in the framework of a Committee meeting.

Secondly, the NRP was also on the agenda of the so-called Consultation Meeting of 22 March, where the Prime Minister summarised at an in camera meeting the position to be represented at the European Council. At the plenary session of 4 April 2011, prior to the orders of the day, the Prime Minister gave an oral report about the European Council of 24-25 March which indicated guidance to the Members States for the finalization of the SGP and NRP.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The headline targets of the Europe2020 Strategy are in line with the main national objectives. It is essential in our views that the appropriate financial resources are allocated to the priorities of the EU2020 strategy in the context of the financial framework starting in 2014.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

See reply 1.1.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The parliamentary debates and the committee discussions focus on the National Reform Programme as well as on the Convergence Programme.

See reply 1.1.

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The indicators used in the AGS are all relevant, coherent and in line with the national ones.

- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The AGS published on 12 January 2011 and the Synthesis Report regarding the Implementation of the European Semester based on the AGS and the discussion in the various Council formations (Council doc. 7745/11, 18 March 2011) refer to a mid-term review in 2014, which is fully supportable. In our views, thorough evaluation of the NRP and progress reports regarding the implementation of the Europe2020 Strategy would be beneficial for all parties.

- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

The issue of budgetary authority of the Hungarian National Assembly was on the agenda at the Consultation Meeting of 22 March, where the Prime Minister highlighted in the framework of an in camera meeting the position to be represented at the European Council of 24-25 March.

The Committee on European Affairs will also discuss in detail the European Semester. In the first half of the EU Presidency, the competent state secretaries summarised the discussions and the main political messages of the various Council formations in relation to the AGS, in the framework of the European Semester.

- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

Parliamentary and committee means already in place will be applied for the follow up of the European Semester. No special procedure will be implemented related to the European Semester.

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

In our views, as economic governance includes closer cooperation regarding fiscal policies between the governments at EU level, it should therefore allow national parliaments to carry out effective scrutiny over concrete government measures in this field. This would constitute an important prerequisite for the successful implementation.

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The Conference of Chairpersons of Committees on Budget and Finance to be organised by the national parliament holding the EU Presidency during the first semester would be an excellent framework for the thorough and regular discussion of the European Semester. In this respect, the Presidency Conclusions of the Conference of the Speakers of the parliaments of the EU held in Brussels on 4-5 April 2011 should be taken into account as the format of an annual inter-parliamentary meeting, which brings together the chairs of the budget committees of the national parliaments and the chairs of the relevant committees of the European Parliament, is to be specified.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010¹⁵, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The package of six legislative proposals on economic governance forms a crucial part of the EU-level comprehensive response to the crisis and they aim firstly to strengthen the Stability and Growth Pact. Among the six legislative proposals, four deal with the enhanced surveillance of fiscal policies, including a wide-ranging reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, while two new regulations aim at detecting and addressing effectively emerging macroeconomic imbalances within the EU and the euro area.

The Committee follows closely the Council activities in this field. The State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry for National Economy was invited to the sitting of the Committee following the February and the March meetings of the ECOFIN Council. The members of the Committee held a vivid discussion with the state secretary concerning the elements of the six legislative proposals.

However, for the healthy recovery of the European economy, the other measures adopted at the European Council of 24-25 March 2011 are also necessary, for example the recently adopted decision amending the TFEU with regard to the setting up of the European Stability Mechanism aiming to ensure financial stability in the euro area.

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

No.

¹⁵ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry for National Economy informed in detail the members of the Committee about the general approach reached during the ECOFIN Council of 15 March. Since it is widely acknowledged that the financial crisis requires new set of sanctions, the Committee welcomed the agreement on the six legislative proposals.

- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

As the European Semester initiated a new cycle of economic governance in the European Union, we consider that the traditional inter-parliamentary meetings for the Chairpersons of parliamentary committees should also cover these issues. For details, see reply 2.7.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

At this stage, prior to the XLV COSAC, there is no specific debate foreseen in the Hungarian National Assembly concerning the Commission Work Programme for 2012.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

In our views, ex-ante debate on Commission Work Programmes should be part of the agenda of COSAC Chairpersons' meetings. Specific proposals could be also selected for discussion. A general policy debate on the State of the Union held on an annual basis would provide the adequate framework for coordinated parliamentary inputs and exchange of views.

Italy: Camera dei Deputati

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

According to an amendment to the Law on accounting and public finance – adopted on 7 April 2010 in order to make it consistent with the European semester – the Parliament has to be involved in the setting up both of the SCP and the NRP.

To this end the draft NRP and any other (EU or national) related document has to be submitted to the Chambers before being transmitted to the EU Institutions.

Some inputs for the elaboration of the NRP were also set out by the Committee on Budget in the final document on the Annual Growth Survey 2011 (see answer 2.1.).

Concerning the transitional stage in view of the first European semester, on 12th November 2010 the Committee on Budget of Italian Chamber of deputies approved a resolution on the draft NRP, which was sent on the same day by the Government to the European Commission.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

According to the documents approved jointly by the Committee on budget and the Committee on EU policies on Europe 2020 and :

- a) the EU 2020 Strategy will be successful only if it is based on sustainable public budget policies;
- b) at the same time, the EU needs to be provided with specific instruments to finance growth, in particular the issuance of European debt securities (Eurobonds), and consideration should also be given to the possibility of allocating – also in the EU Budget - significant resources to European projects and products with elevated added value;
- c) a special focus should be reserved to the SMEs, and, in particular, to micro-businesses, which are the engine of the European economy. The policy line adopted with the introduction of the Small Business Act therefore needs to be reinforced by means of greater deregulation and better access to funding;
- d) the development of the European economy along Single Market lines can be achieved only if important advances are made towards the harmonisation of tax regulations;
- e) the objective of full, sustainable and high-quality employment needs to be prioritised by promoting labour mobility in the EU, matching labour supply and demand, enhancing the capacity of the social partners to resolve social issues through dialogue at all levels (EU, national, regional or by industrial sector or company) and developing a European Skills, Competences and Occupations framework (ESCO). The success of these initiatives requires adequate financial support from the Structural Funds;
- f) as regards the European commitments to poverty reduction, it is appropriate to prioritise the development of an indicator of absolute poverty, which would be calculated with

reference to a minimum income necessary for the purchase of a basket of certain goods and services;

- g) as regards the flagship initiative “A resource-efficient Europe”, the launch of EU and public investment in the environmental and energy sectors, both of which are closely tied to the prospects for the sustainable and lasting development of the European economy, constitute a fundamental priority. The enhancement of trans-European networks in the energy sector through the use of structural funds and the EIB and the promotion of highly strategic infrastructural projects for the EU in the Balkans, the Mediterranean and Euroasia are also matters of the utmost priority;
- h) close attention needs to be paid to the EU's commitment to reducing its CO₂ emissions by at least 20 per cent by 2020, though it also needs to be stressed that the EU's willingness to reduce its output of greenhouse gases by 30 per cent needs to be matched by commitment by other members of the international community to adopt adequate measures in this area;
- i) the growth of the European economy cannot be achieved without the development of basic and applied research, which is the real engine of growth and a fundamental requisite for competitiveness.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

Not yet. However during the examination of the Draft NPR this issue was raised by several Mps

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Committee on Budget scrutinised the Annual Growth Survey, with the opinions of other sectorial Committees, and organised some hearings of stakeholders (the Minister of economy, representatives of economic and social partners) in the framework of a fact-finding inquiry. On 7th April 2011 the Committee on Budget approved a final document including guidelines addressed to the Government for the setting up the NRP.

The main findings set out in the final documents are:

- the AGS confirms the main weakness of the new economic governance : a strong imbalance between the strict rules of the SGP and the weak mechanism for the coordination of the policies for growth and employment as well as of the social policies. Such an imbalance affects both the Europe 2020 goals and the public finance sustainability. Only with a high growth rate is possible to reduce timely the stock of public debt;
- the implementation of the new rules on the GSP should therefore not pre-empt MS from adopting measure for promoting growth and employment. At the same time Italy should concentrate the public expenditure on real priorities while cutting duplication and unnecessary costs for the public budgets. Cuts to investments and general interest services should be avoided. Independent monitoring and assessment on the trends of the public expenditure in Italy should also be provided;

- it should be established a European Agency for Debt which could buy part of the National debt ensuring a stronger stability of the Euro Area and to make available more resources for growth and employment measures;

In view of the Italian NRF the final documents sets out several priorities:

- for reducing macroeconomic imbalances and relaunching the growth in Italy structural reforms are required in particular a further liberalization of the service markets, a simplification of the public administration and regulations, the improvements of the civil justice system;
- significant investments in the fields of innovation and education should also be undertaken. Investment in R&D should be increased towards the Europe 2020 objectives notably in strategic areas for Italy (digital agenda, innovation, energy). A specific assessment should be carried out on how to increase R&D for SME;
- it is essential for Italy to ensure the energy supply security, to reduce energy dependence and to cut cost of energy for business. To this end the renewable resources should be increased and carbon free technologies should be furtherly developed;

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

.....[See answer 1.3.](#)

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

.....[See answer 2.1.](#)

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

The amendment to the Law on accounting and public finance (law n. 196/2009) adopted on 7 April ensures adequate prior consultation of the Houses of Parliament in the drafting of the national reform and stability programmes as well as the definition of the Italian position in relation to the decisions of the European Council and Ecofin Council within the context of the European Semester.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

The changes to the law on accounting and public finance comprehensively reform the national economic and financial planning cycle, bringing it into line with the rules adopted by the European Union on the coordination of the economic policies of the Member States.

In particular, the deadlines for submitting the NRP and the SP to the EU institutions have been changed (for both of them it is 30th April), and the multi-year programming document (the Economy and Finance Document, EFD) has to be submitted to the Parliament by 10th April each year. The EFD includes forecasts and targets both of the SP and the NRP. Following the assessment and the guidelines approved by the European Council in June, the Government has to submit the Budget bill in October.

The Rules of procedure of the Chamber concerning the Annual budget Cycle could be changed accordingly.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

According to the opinion jointly approved on 10th December 2010 by the Committee on budget and the Committee on EU policies related to the legislative package on economic governance, the main weakness of the European semester are:

- j) the lack of binding mechanisms for the coordination of the policies for growth and employment as well as of the social policies;
- k) the lack of an obligation for the EU institutions to designate of specific European financial resources to pursue the common objectives set out within the Semester.

The final document adopted by the Committee on Budget on the AGS reiterates such statements. In addition it stresses that the European semester 2011 is not focused enough on growth.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The opinion approved jointly on 10th December 2010 by the Committee on budget and the Committee on EU policies related to the legislative package on economic governance, stress the importance of a strong interparliamentary cooperation at EU level.

To this end, the final document supports the initiative, suggested by the European Parliament and the French National Assembly, to organise an annual interparliamentary conference within the framework of the European Semester, before the spring European Council, to give each national parliament information on the political and economic context in which national and European budgetary and economic policy decisions will be made.

The Italian Chamber strongly therefore supported the conclusions on this item adopted by the Last EUSC in Brussels on 4-5 April (para 16-18) as well as the suggestion (para 19) to add a section to the IPEX database for the exchange of information on the European Semester and economic governance.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010¹⁶, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

On 22nd September 2009 the Committee on finance approved a final document on the financial supervision package.

The Italian Chamber of deputies consider adequate the package while stressing the importance of making full use of the potential of the new European framework of financial supervision; in particular, the new European supervision authorities should proceed rapidly to adopt one or more harmonised regulatory frameworks or 'codes' (single rulebooks) that are applicable to all financial institutions and legally binding on the competent national

¹⁶ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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authorities, made up first and foremost of directly applicable European rules, and only to a lesser extent by national rules.

See also answer n. 2.6

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

No specific position has been adopted on this item.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

With regard to the procedures for imposing sanctions during both the preventive and corrective stages, according to the abovementioned documents jointly approved by the committee on Budget and Committee on EU policies, stressed that:

- from an institutional standpoint, the introduction of the principle of reverse majority voting does not comply with Treaty provisions, which set out the required majorities for the institutions to make decisions in their respective areas of competence. As a result of the application of this rule, the Council could in fact make decisions not supported by the majority of its members, which could change the balance of powers between the institutions. These decisions should therefore be approved by ordinary qualified majority or, in special cases, by a simple reverse majority of the Member States;
- sanctions or financial incentives should also be introduced for the implementation of the Europe 2020 objectives as applied by each European semester.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

See answer n. 2.7 and 2.5.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1. Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

The Italian Chamber could give an input on the future EU policy priorities (also in view of Commission Work Programme for 2012) within the framework of the scrutiny on the Commission Work Programme for 2011 and on the Council Trio Presidency. Such documents have not yet been scrutinized as - in accordance to a new procedure set out by the Chamber's Committee on Rules - they should be considered jointly with the Government priorities for 2011 which have not yet been transmitted to the Parliament.

4.2. Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

The Italian Chamber considers that it would be suitable to discuss in the COSAC organized in the first semester the priorities to insert in the Commission Work Programmes. To this end it would be desirable that the COSAC meeting be organized in a date between the middle of April and the middle of May, that is when the Commission is elaborating its programs. Each Parliament /Chamber participating to COSAC should send in due time its priorities to the Presidency, that could prepare a paper to discuss with the President of the Commission or/and with the Commissioner responsible for the relations with National Parliaments. The following COSAC should be organized in the first half of October, in order to be able to discuss the draft Programs of the Commission, before their official presentation.

Italy: Senato della Repubblica

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The Italian Government submitted a Draft National Reform Programme for the Implementation of a Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth (Europe 2020) (doc. CCXXXVI) on 5 November 2010.

In the Senate, the document was referred to the Budget Committee and opinions were solicited from all other 13 standing committees. In the wide-ranging debate that followed, opinions were submitted both by government and opposition groups. In a nutshell, awareness emerged on the relevance of the National Reform Programme (NRP) and expectations on the final version of the NRP – which should be out by late April – are high. The Government has pledged to endorse the suggestions made by several committees.

Recommendations were introduced in the plenary by members of government and opposition groups, most notably:

- resolution 6-00046 by Sen. Maurizio GASPARRI (Freedom People, *government*) *et al.*, adopted on 10 November 2010;
- resolution 6-00047 by Sen. Anna FINOCCHIARO (Democratic Party, *opposition*) *et al.*;
- resolution 6-00045, by Sen. Alfonso MASCITELLI (Italy of Values, *opposition*) *et al.*;
- motion 1-00314, by Sen. Francesco RUTELLI (non-attached, *opposition*) *et al.*.

All these documents were considered by the Senate on 10 November 2010 and a lively debate followed, with one government rapporteur (Sen. PICHETTO FRATIN, Freedom People) and one opposition rapporteur (Sen. MORANDO, Democratic Party).

The Stability Programme for Italy, (*Programma di stabilità dell'Italia, aggiornamento 2009, doc. XXVII n. 19; Nota informativa 2010-2012, doc XXVII n. 20*) was considered by the Budget Committee but no final documents were adopted. An update of the Stability Programme is also expected, which will be scrutinised by Parliament.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The Budget Committee resolution on the governance package (Doc XVIII, n. 71, adopted on 14 December 2010) calls for "*a more rigorous analytic framework of national reform programmes*".

The same document *"suggests that the introduction of Eurobonds, i.e. government bonds issued by a European Debt Agency, should be considered, in order to fund bonds issued by the Member States for development purposes"*.

Senate resolution no. 6-00044, adopted on 28 October 2010, recommends *"the introduction of a European session in Autumn on Strategy 2020, modelled after the stability session and involving the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament"*.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The discussion on the NRP was wide-ranging and exhaustive but the indicators were not specifically considered.

In general terms, the above-mentioned Budget Committee resolution on the governance package emphasised that *"in view of the dynamic nature of the process aimed at identifying economic indicators and alert thresholds, the medium-term economic performances of individual countries should be taken into account; to this purpose, consideration should be given not only to public debt indicators, but also to indicators relating to household savings, private sector indebtedness and real estate market stability, banking system stability, public spending trends in relation to population aging"*.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Budget Committee will not place the document on its agenda until the NRP and Stability Programme updates have been tabled.

However, a Bill (Atto Camera 3921, Atto Senato 2555) has recently been passed amending Law 31 December 2009, no. 196 on accounting and public finance, following the new rules adopted by the Union on the coordination of economic policies by Member States.

The new law establishes wide-ranging obligations to inform Parliament, including:

- a) forwarding *"the acts, draft acts and documents adopted by the EU institutions in the framework of the European semester"*. The two Houses of Parliament shall scrutinise such documents under their respective Rules (Art. 1(2));
- b) the Economy and Finance Minister shall report to the appropriate parliamentary committees within fifteen days of transmittal of the economic and budget policy guidelines developed by the European Council. Such report shall focus on an *"assessment of the data and measures recommended in the guidelines and their implications for Italy, also with a view to the development of the Stability Programme and the National Reform Programme"* (Art. 1(3));

- c) the Economic Development Minister is required to report on actions taken to the benefit of underutilised areas, emphasising the size of additional national funds and the outcome of such actions, including on social cohesion and environmental sustainability, and the regions where such actions took place (art. 2(7));
- d) the Economy and Finance Minister is required to table an annex showing the repercussions of measures included in the yearly budget and any other budget measures adopted during the year on public accounts – in terms both of revenue and spending. Net results are shown against forecasts and, if necessary, explanations are given on unexpected performance (Art. 2(11));
- e) the Economy and Finance Minister is required to transmit, if an update of public finance targets is necessary, the guidelines on the breakdown of planning targets (*linee guida per la ripartizione degli obiettivi programmatici*) together with the relevant opinion of the Standing Conference for the Coordination of Public Finance (Art. 10-*bis*(2) of Law 196 of 2009, added under Art. 3 of the new Law);
- f) the National Institute of Statistics is required to provide, on request and on the basis of relevant agreements, the raw and processed data necessary to scrutinise public finance documents (Art. 4(*b*));
- g) the Economy and Finance Minister is required to table a *General report on the Economic Situation of the Country in the Previous Year* by April each year (Art. 6(1)).

In addition, the new Law has added a new article to the 2009 Law, on the coordination of the national financial policy with the European semester, whereby the economic planning instruments are the following: the Economy and Finance Document (DEF), to be submitted to Parliament by 10 April each year; the DEF update (by 20 September); the stability bill (15 October); the Budget (by 15 October); adjustment measures (30 June); sectoral budget measures (*collegati*) (Art. 7).

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

See answer 2.1.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

See answer 2.1.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

See answer 2.1.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

A working group established with the Budget Committee (chaired by the committee chairperson and including of one member for each parliamentary group) has determined that the present Rules are only partly apt for this purpose.

For the purposes of revising the Senate Rules, either through new construction or amendments, two rapporteurs (one for the government and one for the opposition) have been appointed from within the Committee on Rules in October 2010 but their conclusions and proposals still await publication.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

A recommendation in this sense might emerge from the debate in Parliament, which should take place in a few weeks.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The European stability mechanism will acquire full legitimacy only if consistent policies and practices by all Member States are put in place. The Senate of the Republic is persuaded that it will be necessary:

- a) to involve national Parliaments in the highest degree possible: insofar as it is necessary to strengthen the European institutions for the purpose of the European unification process, it will also be necessary to find forms of legitimisation foreseeing a greater and more incisive role for national Parliaments, the direct representatives of the people;
- b) to achieve greater cooperation between national parliaments and the European Parliament, if common political objectives are to be pursued, through budget coordination, consistent economic policies, the development of synergies between national and European public investors.

Support is therefore expressed to the idea of convening an annual interparliamentary conference in the framework of the European semester involving the budget and finance committees of national parliaments and the appropriate committee of the European Parliament. This interparliamentary conference would also enable national Parliaments to acquire elements of knowledge and evaluation of the political and economic context of future national and European budget and economic policy decisions.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010¹⁷, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The Senate is confident that the governance package account for *"a precious opportunity to attain fiscal consolidation and overcome the structural delay of the Italian economy, through the emphasis placed on the country's competitiveness in assessing macroeconomic imbalances"* (Senate Budget Committee resolution on the governance package, 14 Dec 2010, Doc. XVIII, n. 71).

The Senate is also persuaded that Parliaments should be involved as much as possible in the definition of the European semester. Against the backdrop of a significant handing over of sovereignty from the States, only through the full participation of Parliaments can direct representation of people's sovereignty be adequately ensured. It should be noted here that failure to transmit communication COM (2010) 523 to parliaments in compliance with the Protocol on subsidiarity and proportionality was criticised, considering that such communication is an integral and essential part of the governance package.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

The Senate has not taken a position on this.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The Senate Standing Committee on European Union Policies, while welcoming a rapid and effective system of sanctions for countries in the euro area, offered that such system should be extended to include Member States from outside the euro area, to which end it might be appropriate to adopt a principle of conditionality whereby the appropriation of EU finds would be contingent on compliance with budgetary discipline (Senate EU Policies Committee resolution on the governance package, 16 Nov 2010, Doc XVIII, n. 71).

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

¹⁷ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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The Senate Budget Committee resolution on the governance package of 14 Dec 2010 (*Doc XVIII, n. 71*) supports the initiative, devised by the European Parliament, to organise, as of 2011, a yearly interparliamentary conference in the framework of the European six-month presidency and before the Spring European Council, so as to give each national Parliament insight into and knowledge of the political and economic context of the national and European fiscal and economic policy decisions.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

No debate has been held as yet.

4.2. Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

The Italian Senate believes that the COSAC conclusions and contributions account for a useful source of information on the concerns of national parliaments and their positions on European Union policies. The European Commission should give careful consideration to these documents when defining its position for the following year.

Latvia: Saeima

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

Europe 2020 Strategy is one of the priorities of the European Affairs Committee of the Saeima; therefore, the Committee closely observes the activity of government on this matter. The Committee has had several meetings devoted to the Europe 2020 Strategy. Furthermore, the Committee is paying particular attention to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme – the Committee was involved in the early stage of drafting these programmes and thus had an opportunity to contribute its ideas on the content of both programmes. Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima, before the final versions of national positions are presented at the EU institutions, the government has to receive a mandate from the European Affairs Committee. The programmes approved by the government will be reviewed by the European Affairs Committee at the end of April.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

When the European Affairs Committee was discussing how to meet the headline targets, it took into account not only the desired results but also the means to reach them within the framework of the relevant structural policy, namely, the forecast for the state budget and potential resources available from Structural Funds. Thus, it was concluded that by 2014, budget expenditures have to be cut regardless of economic growth, and after 2014 the amount of expenditures will be curbed by a balanced budget. It means that it will not be possible to achieve the targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy by significantly increasing public expenditure. The European Affairs Committee also concluded that the targets will not be achieved in a sustainable manner unless the EU takes a target-oriented approach in levelling out economic and social disparities within the European Union.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

Since the European Affairs Committee is involved in the process of assessing the European 2020 Strategy, it has discussed the targets of the Strategy and indicators proposed for their achievement. In Latvia's case, there was a broad discussion on indicators pertaining to education, and the Committee requested the government to review them.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The European Affairs Committee has not devoted a special meeting to the Annual Growth Survey; however, we have addressed this issue within the framework of discussions on economic governance.

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The Committee has concluded that the indicators reflected in the Annual Growth Survey are the same as the national indicators, and to a large extent they reflect the actual socio-economic situation in the state.

- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

In general, the European Affairs Committee is satisfied with the Annual Growth Survey. However, regarding the indicators, an opinion was voiced at the European Affairs Committee that currently all forecasts are based on the premise that the working-age population is decreasing; instead, attention on national and European level should be paid to problems that arise from negative demographic trends.

- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

Since the European Commission published the Communication in this area, the European Affairs Committee has been closely observing issues related to economic governance. The Committee has approved several national positions in this area. Furthermore, pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima, prior to presenting the budgetary strategies to EU institutions, the government will have to receive a mandate from the European Affairs Committee; thus, the European Affairs Committee is involved in the European Semester.

- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

So far parliament has had no discussions on the need to amend the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima in the context of the European Semester. The parliament will continue to be involved in the European Semester within the existing legal framework.

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

The aim of the European Semester is to ensure harmonised coordination of economic policy. The Saeima thinks that in order to achieve this goal, all EU members states should assume equal responsibility for EU's economic and financial conduct. We definitely support closer discussions and exchange of information on the European Semester among the national parliaments.

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

Specific competence is needed in order to review matters related to budget preparation; therefore, the European Affairs Committee thinks that political scrutiny of these matters should be conducted by parliamentary committees that specialise in budgetary procedures. We support the initiative to arrange annual meetings for the budget committees of the national parliaments and the European Parliament.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010¹⁸, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

As mentioned earlier, the European Affairs Committee pays particular attention to issues related to economic governance. In general, the Committee supports the draft legislative acts, as well as the European Council's Conclusions of 24 March 2011 on strengthening the stability mechanisms of the euro area, including the need to amend the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

The European Affairs Committee supports the tools of economic governance and thinks that the work should be continued on streamlining legislative acts in this area.

- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The European Affairs Committee supports a comprehensive sanction mechanism for a broad range of sectors and thus facilitates the implementation of recommendations.

- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

National parliaments and European Parliament have an opportunity to be involved in economic and fiscal coordination because despite the proposed pan-European

¹⁸ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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coordination mechanism, it is still the prerogative of national parliaments to adopt national budgets – that is, they have the final say on this matter and thus considerable opportunity to contribute to budget preparation.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

So far the European Affairs Committee has not addressed the possible content of the Commission Work Programme for 2012 or expectations related to the Programme.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

With regard to future Commission Work Programmes, COSAC (held in the first half of the year) would be the most appropriate forum for voicing national opinions on specific issues or problems that should be included in the next Commission Work Programme. Furthermore, after the new Commission Work Programme is adopted, someone from the College of Commissioners could report on it at the COSAC and thus provide feedback to proposal submitters.

Lithuania: Seimas

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania made a contribution towards developing the National Reform Programme (the national reform agenda, further referred to as the Agenda). In October and November 2010, the first draft of the document was discussed with the representatives of the Government at the Committee on European Affairs of the Seimas. The final draft was discussed at the joint hearings of the Committee on European Affairs and Economic Committee in mid-April 2011. The representatives of the Government submitted to the hearings final draft of the Agenda, the measures for the implementations were deliberated in the general discussion.

The Members of the Committee on European Affairs submitted their comments and suggestions regarding the employment policy and financial instruments as well as called on more specific measures to stimulate small and medium enterprises. Such proposals are reflected in the final draft of the Agenda.

The Committee on European Affairs debates the Convergence Programme on an annual basis. The aforementioned programme will be presented and deliberated in a joint meeting of the Committee on European Affairs and Committee on Budget and Finance in mid-April 2011.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania considers that joint efforts of the EU and Member States are needed for reaching the targets under Europe 2020 Strategy.

The Committee on European Affairs debated several times the position of the Government. Such position proposes that specific measures are necessary for reaching the following targets:

- (1) Implementation of the joint research programmes and research that benefits all EU member states in order to reach 3 % of EU's GDP to be invested in R&D;
- (2) Completion of energy infrastructure projects by 2015 to eliminate "energy islands", increased energy efficiency through renovation of the housing stock and innovation in order to implement 20/20/20 climate and energy targets;
- (3) Creation of jobs by pooling investment and creating conditions favourable for investment in order to reach 75 % employment target;
- (4) Improvement of the system of education and studies by reducing the secondary school dropout rate to 10%, whilst increasing the share of population with higher education to 40 %;
- (5) Implementation of the targeted employment policy, social security measures, pension reform in order to reduce by 25 % the number of people living in poverty.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

In April 2010, the Committee on European Affairs of the Seimas adopted the opinion regarding the Communication of the European Commission *Europe 2020: Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*. The Seimas proposes additional indicators reflecting the state of affairs in the national economy, including but not limited to innovation index and labour efficiency.

In October and November 2010, the Committee on European Affairs of the Seimas considered the first draft of the National Reform Agenda (for the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy). The Committee endorsed the following indicators:

- (1) Increasing investment in R&D to 1.9 % of GDP;
- (2) Limiting the share of population with basic education in the 18-24 age groups to 9 %;
- (3) Increasing the share of population aged 30-34 having completed higher education or equivalent to 40%;
- (4) Increasing the use of renewable energy sources to 23 %;
- (5) Reducing final energy consumption by 17 % compared to 2009 levels;
- (6) Curbing greenhouse gas emissions by 15 % compared to 2005 levels;
- (7) Increasing employment for population aged 20-64 to 72.8 %;
- (8) Reducing the number of people under risk of poverty, financial difficulties, unemployment, or very low employment to 825.000.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania has not held any debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey of the European Commission yet.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania has not considered using any other indicators for assessing the economic situation.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

See answer to question 2.1.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

The Committee on European Affairs debates the national Stability and Convergence Programme on an annual basis. The Ministry of Finance also submits to the Committee the Council opinion and recommendations regarding the Programme.

The Parliament is informed about the decisions of the Government concerning the implementation of the Council recommendations on the Programme when the Government submits the draft state budget followed, *inter alia*, by the Government Conclusion concerning the compliance of the draft state budget with the Council recommendations.

Following its decision of 2009, the Committee on European Affairs routinely debates the draft Programme instead of the Programme approved by the Government in order to be able to make proposals regarding the budgetary policy plans.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

The Committee on European Affairs held several deliberations concerning the European Semester. The first exchange of views took place in May 2010, the next one followed in September 2010, and the process was finalised by the joint decision adopted together with the Committee on Economics and Committee on Budget and Finance in December 2010.

According to the joint decision, the Seimas should be actively engaged in taking decisions concerning enhanced economic coordination. This will strengthen parliamentary oversight. The Seimas will be informed about the fiscal policy guidelines at the beginning of the semester.

The above mentioned mechanism is now pending approval at the Seimas plenary sitting.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania has not considered any weaknesses of the European Semester.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The Seimas Committee on European Affairs has highlighted on a number of occasions that there is a need to effectively use the powers of national parliaments that are justifiably extended under the Lisbon Treaty. We consider that national parliaments should actively participate in the process of enhanced economic governance at the national level by maintaining political dialogue aimed to find consensus on the key political guidelines and measures.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The Committee on European Affairs, Committee on Economics, and Committee on Budget and Finance held broad deliberations on the issue in December 2010. The joint decision of the Committees is that the Seimas should be actively engaged in decision-making on enhanced economic coordination. The Government was tasked to submit, under enhanced economic governance requirements, the timetable for drafting and adoption of the relevant legislation implementing the proposals of the European Commission on the measures for strengthening economic coordination as well as framework description of the content of the documents.

In addition, specialised committees of the Seimas looked into whether such Commission proposals are in conformity with the principle of subsidiarity. The conclusions of the committees were no in conformity with the principles.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

The Seimas of Lithuania has not expressed its opinion on the issue.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

Given that, at the initial stage, sanctions are only foreseen for member states of the euro area, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania has not expressed its opinion on the issue.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

The Seimas Committee on European Affairs has highlighted on a number of occasions that it is essential to use all the new powers of national parliaments effectively. We believe that parliaments should actively participate in the deliberations on the issue at the national level, maintain a political dialogue, and seek consensus on the key policy guidelines and measures.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

In the past, the Seimas used to deliberate routinely the Annual Policy Strategy of the European Commission. We consider this to have been a useful and important practice, as the exercise would entail our better and more detailed preparation for further consideration on the annual Legislative and Work Programme of the Commission.

In order to ensure constructive and effective results of any discussion, it is crucial to first of all define the scope of issues to be covered and the methods to be employed. We are convinced that

it would be difficult to debate on a subject, should its scope prove to be excessively large, especially when there is no clarity about the method to be used. We call on the European Commission to continue maintaining its political dialogue with the national parliaments. It would be relevant to consider submitting the coming year priority guidelines or other comparable document for discussion on an annual basis.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

See answer to 4.1.

Luxembourg: Chambre des Députés

1. Stratégie Europe 2020

- 1.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle contribué au programme national de réforme et au programme de stabilité et de convergence de votre pays et, dans l'affirmative, de quelle façon?

Réponse : La Chambre des Députés a contribué au programme national de réforme (PNR) et au programme de stabilité et de convergence (PSC) tant lors de travaux en commission parlementaire qu'en séance publique.

Ainsi, lors de la séance publique du 8 mars 2011, la Chambre des Députés a organisé un débat d'orientation sur la gouvernance économique au sein de l'UE et sur le pacte de convergence et de compétitivité projeté.

Dans le cadre de la séance publique du 9 mars 2011, un débat d'orientation a été mené sur le projet de programme national de réforme du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg dans le cadre de la stratégie « Europe 2020 ».

En date du 5 avril 2011, le Président de la Chambre des Députés a par ailleurs informé le Ministre de l'Economie des prises de position de 13 commissions parlementaires sur le projet de PNR.

La séance publique du 6 avril 2011 était consacrée au discours du Premier Ministre sur l'état de la nation, suivi d'un débat en date du 7 avril, où des questions liées aux réformes dans le cadre de la stratégie européenne de sortie de crise ont été abordées.

Le 29 avril 2011, la version finale du programme national de réforme du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg a été présentée par le Ministre de l'Economie aux membres de la Commission de l'Economie, du Commerce extérieur et de l'Economie solidaire, de la Commission des Finances et du Budget et de la Commission de Contrôle de l'exécution budgétaire. Lors de la même réunion, le Ministre des Finances a présenté les grandes orientations du programme de stabilité couvrant la période 2011 – 2014.

Les députés envisagent par ailleurs d'organiser un débat sur les recommandations que la Commission européenne communiquera au mois de juin.

- 1.2 Quelles mesures estimez-vous nécessaires aux niveaux national et européen pour répondre aux cinq objectifs principaux de l'UE d'ici à 2020?

Réponse : Le PNR du Luxembourg pose les objectifs suivants pour 2020 :

- un taux d'emploi de 73 %
- un taux d'intensité de R & D se situant dans un intervalle de 2,3 à 2,6 % du PIB,
- un maintien du décrochage scolaire en-dessous de 10 %
- 40 % des personnes âgées de 30 à 34 ans résidant au Luxembourg qui auront obtenu un diplôme de l'enseignement supérieur ou atteint un niveau d'études équivalent

- faire diminuer le risque de pauvreté et d'exclusion sociale
- une réduction des émissions de CO₂ de 20 % par rapport à 2005 dans le secteur non-ETS (système d'échange de quotas d'émission)
- faire passer à 11 % les sources d'énergies renouvelables
- 10 % de carburants renouvelables de sa consommation finale d'énergie dans le secteur des transports
- un objectif national indicatif en matière d'efficacité énergétique dans les utilisations finales d'énergie de 10,38 % à l'horizon 2016 et l'étude de la faisabilité d'un objectif global de 13 % à l'horizon 2020

1.3 Les indicateurs nationaux énoncés par le gouvernement pour mesurer l'état de l'économie nationale ont-ils été examinés, débattus par votre Parlement/Chambre ou y a-t-il/elle apporté sa contribution ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser de quelle façon.

Réponse : La Commission des Finances et du Budget et la Commission de l'Economie, du Commerce extérieur et de l'Economie solidaire sont informées régulièrement par le Gouvernement sur l'état de l'économie nationale.

2. Le semestre européen et l'Examen annuel de la croissance

2.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle débattu ou entend-il/elle débattre des conclusions de l'Examen annuel de la croissance ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer la procédure et les conclusions.

Réponse : Le document COM (2011) 11 – communication de la Commission au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des Régions, Examen annuel de la croissance, avancer dans la réponse globale apportée par l'Union européenne à la crise – a été communiqué à la Commission de l'Economie, du Commerce extérieur et de l'Economie solidaire, à la Commission des Finances et du Budget ainsi qu'à la Commission du Travail et de l'Emploi.

2.2 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que les indicateurs de l'Examen annuel de la croissance correspondent aux indicateurs nationaux (ceux qui sont utilisés dans votre pays) ? Les différents indicateurs sont-ils considérés comme étant suffisamment cohérents pour donner une image réelle de l'état actuel de l'économie de l'UE?

Réponse : Les membres de la Commission des Finances et du Budget ont souligné lors de leur réunion du 17 février 2011 que l'Examen annuel de la croissance peut être assimilé à une analyse économique qui pourrait constituer une base pour les prévisions économiques.

2.3 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis qu'il conviendrait de modifier certains aspects des futurs Examens annuels de la croissance ? Dans l'affirmative, le(s)quel(s) et pour quelle(s) raison(s)?

Réponse :---

2.4 Votre Parlement/Chambre apporte-t-il/elle sa contribution à l'action du gouvernement relative au semestre européen? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer laquelle et de quelle manière.

Réponse : Un débat général au sujet de l'état des finances publiques et leur évolution a eu lieu en décembre 2010 lors des débats budgétaires au Parlement.

La Commission des Finances et du Budget a discuté sur le semestre européen au cours de la réunion du 17 février 2011. Le Ministre des Finances y a informé la commission sur les implications du « semestre européen ».

2.5 Avez-vous l'intention de mettre en œuvre une procédure spéciale dans votre Parlement/Chambre concernant le semestre européen ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez la préciser.

Réponse : Il n'y a pour le moment pas de procédure spéciale relative au semestre européen, mais d'aucuns estiment qu'il serait opportun d'adapter la procédure budgétaire. A titre d'exemple, en 2011, le rapporteur du budget a été désigné beaucoup plus tôt que par le passé (en mars plutôt qu'au mois de septembre), et le discours du Premier Ministre sur l'état de la nation a été organisé au mois d'avril plutôt qu'au mois de mai comme c'était le cas les années précédentes.

2.6 Votre Parlement/Chambre a-t-il/elle identifié des faiblesses relatives au semestre européen ? Si oui, quelles sont les principales modifications que votre Parlement/Chambre recommande d'y apporter en vue d'assurer le succès de sa mise en œuvre à l'avenir ?

Réponse : Un bilan de l'application des règles du semestre européen se fera normalement au moment des débats budgétaires à la fin de l'année.

2.7 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que tous les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen doivent être impliqués au déroulement du semestre européen ? Si oui, veuillez en indiquer les modalités possibles (p. ex. conférence parlementaire annuelle sur le budget).

Réponse : Il serait opportun d'organiser une réunion annuelle entre des représentants des Commissions des Finances, sans pour autant créer de nouvel organe ou de nouvelle institution interparlementaire.

3. Gouvernance économique et réglementation financière en général

3.1 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que le paquet de surveillance financière et le paquet de propositions visant à renforcer les outils de la gouvernance économique présentés par la Commission le 29 septembre 2010¹⁹ soit adéquat et suffisant pour une bonne reprise de l'économie européenne ? Devrait-il y avoir un débat parlementaire à ce sujet ? Si oui, veuillez détailler votre réponse.

Réponse : En date du 24 novembre 2010, la Commission des Finances et du Budget a préparé un avis politique sur les documents COM (2010) 522, COM (2010) 523, COM (2010) 524 et COM

¹⁹ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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(2010) 526, qui a été approuvé à l'unanimité lors de la séance publique du 30 novembre 2010 et communiqué à la Commission européenne.

Il ressort dudit avis que « La Commission des Finances et du Budget, tout en marquant son accord avec l'approche globale reflétée par les propositions sous rubrique, exprime ses réserves pour les raisons suivantes :

- Les éléments correctifs envisagés risquent de rester lettre morte tant que les sanctions prévues ne sont pas déclenchées de façon automatique selon une procédure précise fixée d'avance ;
- L'implication des Parlements nationaux dans le processus décisionnel en matière d'établissement de l'objectif budgétaire à moyen terme (OMT) devrait se faire à un stade précoce de la procédure afin que l'exercice des prérogatives constitutionnelles en matière budgétaire soit assuré.

Pour les raisons reprises ci-dessus, la Commission des Finances et du Budget est d'avis qu'il faudrait clarifier les propositions dont question, y apporter les ajustements qui s'imposent et veiller à un équilibre aussi judicieux qu'efficace entre les différents intervenants dans la procédure budgétaire conformément à leurs prérogatives respectives. »

3.2 Votre Parlement/Chambre est-il/elle d'avis que la justification légale du triple contrôle prévu par le paquet de gouvernance économique devrait être complétée davantage?

Réponse : ---

3.3 Avez-vous des recommandations concernant l'application graduelle des sanctions et incitations des mécanismes d'application prévus pour assurer le fonctionnement du système de surveillance économique ?

Réponse : Voir question 3.1.

3.4 A votre avis, quel serait le meilleur moyen pour les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen de suivre les développements politiques actuels en matière de coordination des politiques économiques et fiscales ? Considérez-vous que les parlements disposent des outils adéquats pour répondre rapidement à ces développements ? Avez-vous des suggestions sur la façon d'améliorer cet aspect du travail parlementaire?

Réponse : Au niveau national, le meilleur moyen reste d'inviter les Ministres nationaux en charge de la politique économique et de la politique fiscale devant les commissions parlementaires pour demander des explications et pour être informés régulièrement de l'évolution de ces dossiers.

4. Programme de travail de la Commission pour 2012

4.1 Y a-t-il eu ou est-il prévu un débat dans votre Parlement/Chambre en vue d'apporter une contribution parlementaire au programme de travail pour 2012, avant sa publication par la Commission ? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez en indiquer les modalités et les résultats.

Réponse : Aucune discussion n'est encore prévue. Le programme de travail de 2011 avait été discuté en séance publique, mais il est improbable que tel sera aussi le cas pour le cas pour le programme de travail de 2012.

- 4.2 Avez-vous des suggestions pour un débat ex-ante coordonné au sein de la COSAC sur le programme de travail de la Commission permettant d'influer le plus tôt possible sur le processus de planification stratégique de l'UE ?

Réponse : La contribution adoptée lors de la dernière réunion ordinaire de la COSAC énonce à juste titre « qu'un débat approfondi sur le Programme de travail de la Commission européenne devrait être un élément essentiel et récurrent de ses travaux. » Il est opportun de maintenir un contact régulier et étroit avec la Commission européenne et d'inviter le Président de la Commission européenne ou en son absence un Vice-Président à donner des explications aux parlementaires au stade le plus précoce possible.

Malta: Kamra-tad-Deputati

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The Maltese Parliament has not yet had the opportunity to contribute to the NRP or SCP.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The Commission Communication on the EU2020 Strategy has been referred to the Foreign and European Affairs Committee for scrutiny. It is expected that the Minister responsible for the dossier participate in the Committee meeting debating the said document. As such, Parliament is yet to express its position on what is required for the EU to reach these targets.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The Parliament has so far not been involved in the measuring the condition of the national economy.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Parliament will consider this document once the Government position thereon is received from Government, i.e. following the ordinary scrutiny procedure.

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

Since the Parliament has not yet considered this document no position thereon has been expressed. (See question 2.1)

- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

Since the Parliament has not yet considered this document no position thereon has been expressed. (See question 2.1)

- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

Since this is the first European Semester cycle, it is a new situation for both Government and Parliament, and as such both are still in the beginning of the learning curve. However, with regard to the involvement of the Maltese Parliament in the new European Semester architecture, the Minister of Finance, the Economy and Investment has proposed to hold a debate in the Parliament's Foreign and European Affairs Committee, on both the Stability Programme as well as the National Reform Programme.

- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No new procedures are envisaged at this stage.

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

The Maltese Parliament has not yet debated the European Semester initiative thus does not have any recommendations at this stage.

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

By involving national parliaments at an earlier stage in its preparation rather than just approving it after being finalised by Government, parliaments have the opportunity to give input at a stage where it can be effective.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010²⁰, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The package of Proposals still has to be scrutinised by the Maltese Parliament.

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

See Question 3.1.

²⁰ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
29.9.2010

- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

See Question 3.1.

- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

See Question 3.1.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

The Parliament will consider this document once the Government position thereon is received from Government, i.e. following the ordinary scrutiny procedure.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

Debates on Commission work programmes have not been considered at either parliament or inter-parliamentary level, hence no official position exists thereon. However, the Maltese Parliament would support proposals for ex-ante debates in COSAC as long as these do not result in additional meetings. An option would be for the discussion to feature as a regular agenda item at the COSAC Chairpersons meeting in February, which is the first COSAC of the year.

The Netherlands: Tweede Kamer

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

Yes, the draft National Reform Programme was sent to the Dutch House of Representatives in November 2010 for consultation. The standing committee for Economic affairs, agriculture and innovation has given its written reaction. The final National Reform Programme will be sent to the Parliament as well, before the government will send it to the European Commission. The National Reform Programme will be discussed with the government in a meeting of the standing committee for Economic affairs, agriculture and innovation.

The House of Representatives has no direct input to the Stability and Convergence Programme as it is sent in copy to the Parliament when it is sent to the European Commission. This is fine because the SCP should not contain any policy objectives that are new to the Parliament.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

Different parties in the Dutch House of Representatives have different ideas about the necessary measures.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The national indicators were not part of the written reaction to the draft, but the Parliament could have given a reaction.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

Yes, the findings of the Annual Growth Survey were briefly discussed during the debates with the Government in preparation of the relevant Council meetings (the Council meetings preparing for the European Council - Annual economic & social summit on 24-25 March).

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The Annual Growth Survey is not discussed in such detail.

- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The Annual Growth Survey is not discussed in such detail.

- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

Yes. Firstly the relevant committees have a debate on the governments position in preparation of each Council meeting with on the agenda a debate or orientation in the field of the European Semester. Secondly the House of Representatives has a debate with the government in preparation of the relevant European Council meetings in March (Annual economic & social summit) and July (endorsement of guidance). Thirdly via a debate on or written reaction to the draft of the National Reform Programme.

- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No, this is part of the ordinary scrutiny work of the Dutch House of Representatives with regard to European affairs.

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

No, the House of Representatives has not debated the procedure of the European Semester initiative in detail. The House of Representatives does believe that it is important that existing national budgetary processes and procedures are respected.

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The House of Representatives believes that national parliaments should be involved in the running of the European Semester. It therefore does not oppose to a parliamentary conference on “the consequences of the European Semester and the role of national parliaments” that is convened under the auspices of the parliaments of the relevant troika countries and held on an ad hoc basis.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the

Commission on 29 September 2010²¹, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

Different parties in the Dutch House of Representatives have different ideas about the adequacy and sufficiency of the Economic Governance package. The matters of financial stability, financial supervision and economic governance are continuously subject of parliamentary debate.

*For a more detailed and specific answer to questions related to the financial crisis we refer to (this [English summary](#) of) the **Report of the Parliamentary Committee Inquiry Financial System** that was adopted unanimously by the House of Representatives in September 2010.*

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

See answer 3.1

- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

See answer 3.1

- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

The House of Representatives is content with the extensive cycle that it has set up around the meetings of the Council. The Government provides the House with information on a regular basis in public sessions. The Government sends the House a written position before every Council meeting and a report after every Council meeting. The written position is debated (and if necessary amended) by the House before the relevant Council (ex ante control of the government) and the report afterwards (ex-post control).

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

²¹ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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No debate takes place before the publication of the new Work Programme. Instead, our House prefers to place the Work Programme on the agenda after its publication, in order to accommodate the priority selection process, on the basis of which the House will scrutinise the (selected) Commission proposals.
All standing committees are involved in the selection process. The committee on European Affairs exchanges views with the government about its intended priorities.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

We support the initiative to have such a debate, but we think it is also important to use COSAC meetings to focus on the exchange of information on selected priorities to enhance the scrutiny process in the framework of the Protocol on the subsidiarity and proportionality principle, which could possibly result in a yellow or orange card.

The Netherlands: Eerste Kamer

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

No.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

Political parties hold diverging views on this matter.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

No

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

No such debate has taken place; the subject will be discussed during the annual 'State of the Union' debate on 19 April 2011.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The Dutch Senate has not (yet) taken a specific position on this question.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The Dutch Senate has not (yet) taken a specific position on this question.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

The Dutch Senate has to date not given specific input in the context of the European Semester.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

There are as of yet no concrete plans.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

No, the Senate has not debated the procedure of the European Semester in detail. The Senate does believe that it is important that existing national budgetary processes and procedures are respected.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The Senate believes that budgetary scrutiny within the respective member states is first and foremost a prerogative of national parliaments. It is reluctant about the creation of new interparliamentary conferences, without prior discussion as to how existing fora could be utilised.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010²², are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

Political parties hold diverging views on this matter.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

The Senate has not explored this question in much depth.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

Political parties hold diverging views on this matter.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and

²² COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

The Senate has not (yet) identified any specific deficiencies in its procedures and instruments.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

No debate takes place before the publication of the new Work Programme. Instead, the standing committees of the Senate debate a newly published Work Programme in order to pre-select dossiers for scrutiny (so called priority dossiers). The Senate's priorities for the year are shared both with the government as well as with other parliaments through IPEX.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

The Senate would not be opposed to some form of ex ante coordination. It is however equally important to share information on other proposals under scrutiny in a timely and effective manner.

Poland: Sejm

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

No debate on this subject has been held yet. The Government has sent the principles of the NRP to the EC. They are to be discussed with the Commission in April.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The primary aim is to reduce the public deficit and, at the same time, to sustain growth. Among the measures to serve this purpose are the rule of spending money as applied to budget drafting, increased efficiency, more efficient public resource allocation and rise in employment.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The Sejm has not debated this issue yet.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The European Semester (ES) was the subject of the European Union Affairs Committee meeting on 3 February 2011. The Committee discussed then the operating rules of the new mechanism of coordinating budget policies within the EU. Among the presented elements of the new system was the European Commission Communiqué: Annual Growth Survey. The European Union Affairs Committee plans to attend to this document this month. This procedure results from the Act of 8 October 2010 on the cooperation of the Council of Ministers with the Sejm and the Senate in matters relating to the Republic of Poland's membership of the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the Cooperation Act). The Committee has asked the government for the relevant information on the subject of the EC Communication.

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The Sejm European Union Affairs Committee shall discuss the Commission Communication: Annual Growth Survey this month.

- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The Sejm European Union Affairs Committee shall discuss the Commission Communiqué: Annual Growth Survey this month.

- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

Last February the Sejm European Union Affairs Committee discussed and gave a positive opinion on the government information on the coordination of budget policies of the EU member states in the European Semester (ES) cycle. On 14 this month, during the meeting held jointly with the Public Finance and Economic Committees, the European Union Affairs Committee will consider comprehensive government information on economic governance in the EU, of which ES is one of the main tools. The Committees will give their opinion on the government hitherto performance.

- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

At the present stage, no special procedures related to the European Semester are planned. The European Union Affairs Committee, pursuant to the Cooperation Act, gives an opinion on documents related to the coordination of economic policies within the EU. On the basis of The Standing Orders of the Sejm, the national budget is examined by the Public Finance Committee, while the European Union Affairs Committee gives an opinion on the parts related to European integration.

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

The European Union Affairs Committee observes with attention the new mechanism of coordinating budget policies within the EU. It will present its contingent motions when the first European Semester ends.

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The European Union Affairs Committee takes the view that all national parliaments should commit themselves to the European Semester's functioning. Rules of interparliamentary cooperation in this area remain an open question.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010²³, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The Sejm of the Republic of Poland has been holding an permanent debate on EU economic governance. On 5 and 19 November 2010 the Sejm European Union Affairs Committee debated the European Commission's legislative package of six regulatory legislative proposals put forward on 29 September. The Committee gave a negative opinion on the proposal for an amendment to the regulation on the excessive deficit procedure. The Committee agreed with the arguments of the government that the proposal did not give enough consideration to the requirement of giving heed to the costs of pension reform in calculating public debt. The Deputies had no reservations about the other five proposals. What is more, the Committee debated the package before every meeting of the Ecofin Council where the package was discussed. On 14 this month, the European Union Affairs Committee, the Public Finance and Economic Committees will together study comprehensive government information on EU economic governance. The question of interparliamentary debate remains open, particularly as regards its formula.

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

The European Union Affairs Committee has tabled no such comments. The Committee has given a positive opinion on the European Union's legislative package put forward on 29 September 2010, except on the proposal for an amendment to the regulation on the excessive deficit procedure. The Committee has argued against the rules that give no heed to the costs of pension reform in calculating public debt.

- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The European Union Affairs Committee promotes the mechanisms of sanctions and incentives to ensure the proper functioning of economic supervision in the EU. In November last year, the Committee had no reservations about the sanctions for the failure to abide by the Stability and Growth Pact, envisaged by the European Commission within the framework of the September legislative package.

- 3.4. In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their

²³ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

The European Union Affairs Committee in cooperation with the Public Finance Committee take part in and keep trace of the course of events involving the coordination of the economic and fiscal policies in the European Union. In April, the two committees will hold a joint meeting to get the gist of the government information on the comprehensive strategy of EU economic governance. The instruments at the Sejm's disposal are based on: First, the Constitution (the supervisory and legislative role of the Sejm), the Cooperation Act and The Standing Orders of the Sejm, the latter defining the government's duties vis-à-vis the Sejm and its organs. Second, on the relevant Treaties which give national parliaments extra prerogatives, including control of EU legislative acts from the point of view of their compatibility with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. Interparliamentary cooperation plays an important role, too.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

The Sejm does not conduct discussions on the Polish parliament's input into the Commission work programmes. All the same, the European Union Affairs Committee does take into consideration the possibility of organizing a discussion on the European Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

If the European Commission's work programme crops up every autumn, then, before its publication, at a "small COSAC" meeting at the beginning of the year, national parliaments (particular chambers) could propose issues the European Commission should include in the work programme it would be preparing. Such list would be supplied to COSAC chairmen at the beginning of each year. Then, until the opening of the "large COSAC" in spring, national parliaments would have an opportunity to voice their reservations about the list compiled. At the "large COSAC", participants in the conference will be able to accept the list as COSAC's and all other national parliaments' contribution to the EU strategic planning process.

The Committee Chairman

/-/ Stanisław Rakoczy

Poland: Senat

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The National Reform Programme as well as the Stability and Convergence Programme are considered as the most important means of achieving domestic development and national welfare. To tackle the ongoing challenges, from the very beginning all the proper committees of the Polish Senate, including the most powerful ones like the European Union Affairs Committee, the National Economy Committee and the Budget and Public Finance Committee, have closely cooperated with the Polish government. In the course of regular and ad-hoc consultations, the government have learnt about the committees' positions on discussed problems. This is the base for working out an action plan for the future.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

Although agreeing with the legislative package of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Semester, the proper committees draw attention to the threat that new targets, criteria and methods, promoted by the European Commission, would replace the old ones with the harm to the solidarity principle of the European Union.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

In the course of the mutual negotiations it has been agreed that the adoption of the rigid benchmarks indicated by the European Commission might generate unnecessary inequalities and other adverse effects. The member states should have the right to reach the Commission's targets at their own pace.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

In the mid-2010 and at the beginning of 2011 there were two joint meetings of the committees for the European Union Affairs, the National Economy and the Budget and Public Finance on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey and the European Semester. At the moment, there is no need to hold the plenary debate, except when the Commission legislative proposals seem to breach the principle of subsidiarity.

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators

considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

In principle, the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey are in line with the national ones. However, we are anxious about the timing proposed by the Commission because, in our opinion, the time framework should be adequate to the external circumstances and capabilities of each member state.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

We are at the very beginning of the European Semester and it seems too early to predict any changes in the current program which hasn't been fully implemented yet.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

See point 2.1

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No, see point 2.1

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

In our opinion, the procedure of the European Semester is stretching over too long a period of time. In view of any turmoil, there is no guarantee that necessary adjustment of action plan would be possible.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

Theoretically, there is some room for participation of the national Parliaments in the ongoing European Semester. However, the effectiveness of such involvement depends on good will of national governments and the European institutions, including the European Parliament. To avoid any disputes over parliamentary entitlements, the more formal approach would be desirable.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the

Commission on 29 September 2010²⁴, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

Since 2009, the European Commission has launched many proposals on anti-crisis measures, including the initiatives of 29 September 2010. Looking at the results of its activities the progress in a recovery of the European economy seems disproportionate to the efforts. Consequently, some member states have assumed the initiative in this area. It leads to a dangerous situation when some decisions of the utmost importance for the entire European Union are undertaken at the inter-governmental level. In our opinion, the European Parliament should have a key part in organizing an inter-parliamentary debate on that subject.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

The legal aspects of the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be discussed at the European Parliament level.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

In our opinion, the key question is a modus operandi of the proposed coercive measures. The sanctions should be applied with a respect for the transparency, inevitability and non-discretionary principles.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

Due to the complexity and dynamics of the political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination, room for parliamentary manoeuvre is rather limited. The European Parliament and national parliaments should work out a common position and speak with one voice vis-a-vis the Commission and the European Council. It needs regular and more frequent consultations between the EP and national parliaments which should be mandatory ended with joint declarations.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

²⁴ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
29.9.2010

No

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

National parliaments examine and issue opinions on the Commission's white and green papers and thus have an opportunity to get a first-hand, inside knowledge of and an influence on the Commission's future legislative proposals. This is the more so important as there are very few other possibilities for national parliaments to have an impact on the Commission's legislative plans. In the Polish Senate the green and white papers are dealt with by the sectoral committees which forward their opinions to the European Commission. In this context, it would be difficult to have the ex-ante debate on COSAC on Commission Work Programmes.

Accepted by:

Edmund Wittbrodt
Chairman
EU Affairs Committee
Senate of the Republic of Poland

Portugal: Assembleia da República

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

There was not a direct contribution from the Portuguese Parliament to the National Reforms Programme presented by the Government, however, the Assembleia da República has followed European initiatives related to the Europe 2020 Strategy and it has kept the Government informed of its opinions. The initiatives scrutinised by the Portuguese Parliament are listed in the table below.

Moreover, the European Affairs Committee organized a seminar, open to the public, on “Europe 2020 – Strategy for an intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth and the National Reforms Programme”, in which the Government presented the National Reforms Programme which sparked debate, with the participation of Members of Parliament, guest speakers and the audience itself.

In what concerns the Stability and Growth Programme (SGP) 2010-2013, it was debated and approved in the parliamentary plenary sitting on 25 March 2010. On 21 March 2011, the Government presented a revision of the above mentioned Programme for 2011-2014, which was also debated in plenary sitting. Nevertheless, this time, it was rejected, which led to the resignation of the Prime Minister and subsequent calling of early elections by the President of the Republic.

Reference	Title of Document
COM(2010)546 Final	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative: Innovation Union
COM(2010)2020 Final	Communication from the Commission Europe 2020 – A strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth
COM(2011)31	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL: Renewable energy: Progressing towards the 2020 target
COM(2011)18	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda
COM(2011)21	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: A resource-efficient Europe – Flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 Strategy
COM(2011)17	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: REGIONAL POLICY CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN EUROPE 2020
COM(2010)677 Final	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Priorities in energy infrastructure for 2020 and beyond – Blueprint for a European integrated energy network
COM(2010)639 Final	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: Energy 2020 – A strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure energy

COM(2010)612 Final	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: Trade, Growth and World Affairs – Trade policy as a core component of the EU’s 2020 strategy
COM(2010)553 Final	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020
COM(2010)477 Final	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: Youth on the Move – An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union
COM(2010)461 Final	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL – MARINE KNOWLEDGE 2020: marine data and observation for smart and sustainable growth
COM(2010)355 Final	REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS: Retail market monitoring report – “Towards more efficient and fairer retail services in the internal market for 2020”
COM(2010)296 Final	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A NEW IMPETUS FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO SUPPORT THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY
COM(2010)193 Final	Proposal for a Council Decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States – Part II of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at national and EU levels to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The Europe 2020 Strategy establishes five headline targets which are directed by the idea of a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and which are translated into seven flagship measures.

In order to achieve these targets, it is considered fundamental to pursue the negotiations of measures to: (1) improve the general conditions and the access to research and innovation financing; (2) ensure the transformation of innovative ideas into products and services which create growth; (3) contribute to adapting the use of resources to the promotion of economic growth; (4) ensure the transition to a low carbon economy; (5) increase the use of sources of renewable energy and promote energy efficiency; (6) improve the entrepreneurial environment, particularly for SMEs; and (7) support the development of a strong and sustainable industrial base, which is able to confront global competition.

It is considered that these targets will be best met at a national level if they are framed by measures at a European level, which strengthen the internal market and cooperate with national efforts. Within this framework, the future Multiannual Financial Framework debate will provide an important opportunity to combine national and European levels.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of national economies? If so, please specify how.

The Portuguese Parliament has not influenced, at least not directly or through an official position, the definition, by the Government, of national indicators. However, there have been meetings at the European Affairs Committee and the Committee on Economic Affairs, Innovation and Energy, with the Secretary of State for Energy and Innovation, who is the

member of the Government responsible for drawing up the National Reforms Programme. At those meetings, points of views were exchanged on the ideas that each Parliamentary Group had about the factors that should be taken into consideration and on the solutions that should be sustained.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Portuguese Parliament has scrutinised the Annual Growth Survey (COM (2011) 11), through sectoral debates in the competent committees: the Budget and Finance Committee, the Committee on Economic Affairs, Innovation and Energy and the Committee on Labour, Social Security and Public Administration.

At the end of the sectoral debates, it fell to the European Affairs Committee to discuss the contributions of the three Committees and produce a final written opinion, which concluded that the procedure regarding the European Semester should be followed in strict tandem with the competent committees and the Portuguese Parliament should perform a continuous oversight of the Government. Moreover, the need for the Government to work alongside the Parliament was reiterated, so that the best solutions could be found for some of the structural difficulties and to meet the objectives outlined.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give a realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The Portuguese Parliament considered, as laid down in the final report, that although this first Annual Growth Survey had been conceived to be applicable in the EU as a whole, it should be adapted to the specific situation of each Member State. In fact, although the indicators used were not very different from those used internally, they should have taken into consideration a raft of suitable and multidisciplinary indicators, which characterised the national reality (apart from the usual macroeconomic indicators), such as indicators in the areas of education, higher education, health, the labour market, innovation, among others, also highlighting the indicators regarding the evolution of rates of saving.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

Despite the debate which took place on this subject, it was not possible to carry out an evaluation of this instrument and its eventual degree of importance. In fact, it is considered that the opportune moment for that would be after the presentation by the Member States of their National Reform Programmes.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

In what concerns the European Semester, it is considered that it will allow a greater coordination ex-ante between the Member States and the European Union at the level of budget policies, without questioning the sovereignty of the Member States in managing their budgetary policy. In terms of economic coordination and its inherent dynamics, namely as regards the European Semester, the community institutions should also remember the importance of the National Parliaments and their fundamental role in matters of State Budgets.

In this sense, we should follow the proposal of the European Commission, part of the aforementioned initiative COM (2010) 250, of May 2010, which, regarding the institution of the European Semester, notes that “*Member-States will also be encouraged in total respect for national rules and procedures to involve their national parliaments in this process prior to presenting the PEC and the PNR for purposes of multilateral supervision at the EU level*”. This proposal was subsequently seconded in the orientations issued by the European Council of June 2010 to the Member States, in particular on the “*presentation to the Commission, in the Spring, of the Programme of Stability and Convergence for the coming years, taking into account the national budget procedures*”.

Finally, it should be stated that within the scope of the legal and constitutional framework in force in Portugal, regardless of the debates that may occur, and which are desirable, with members of the Government with responsibilities in economic and budgetary areas, the Parliament always has the last word with respect to solutions set out in the State Budget.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

The Portuguese Budgetary Framework Law is currently under revision and its initial draft contains a new chapter dedicated to the budgetary procedure. The relation with the Stability and Growth Programme is established under this chapter, which should be considered as the beginning of the national budgetary process and should include the economic and budgetary policy measures, their respective effects and the timetable for their implementation. However, it is important to state that the discussion on the Stability and Growth Programme in plenary sitting is mandatory.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses in the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

It is the Portuguese Parliament’s understanding that it is important to fight the perceived risk that the mechanisms for economic coordination may be excessively centered on the analysis of Programmes of Stability and Convergence and on the Budgets of the Member States, relegating to a second level the monitoring of trajectories of progress in matters of economic growth and territorial cohesion. A dominant attention on the public finances of the Member States, with subordinate concerns centered on economic growth, trade balance or territorial cohesion, may translate into an inability to realize the European project.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on the budget).

The Portuguese Parliament considers it to be fundamental that National Parliaments are involved in the European Semester. The involvement of these institutions could be done, apart from the usual scrutiny exercised at a national and European level, by carrying out an annual inter-parliamentary conference/meeting, involving delegations from National Parliaments and the European Parliament, with Members of the relevant committees in this matter. This inter-parliamentary conference/meeting could be organized annually, on a date that is relevant within the context of the European Semester, for example, after the presentation of the Annual Growth Survey and certainly before April.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010²⁵, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The Assembleia da República has considered that the debate which occurred between March and September 2010 within the Task Force chaired by the President of the European Council, which resulted in a group of decisions and guidelines and had its conclusion, mainly, with the adoption by the European Commission of the Legislative Package on Economic Governance, took place in a deeply insufficient way, without the participation or with the very limited participation of public opinion and citizens.

Regarding the package proposed, it should be emphasized that the economic and financial crisis in the past three years has made it clear that there is a need to profoundly alter the coordination of the economic policies of the European Union, placing in evidence the need to review the Pact for Stability and Growth, complementing it with instruments that respond to macroeconomic imbalances, introducing financial mechanisms capable of correcting them. Within this context of crisis, it is important to discuss alternative measures of financing, such as the creation of the so-called “Euro-bonds”.

On the other hand, the detection and prevention of imbalances implies not only the reinforcement of the mechanisms of supervision and correction, but also the reinforcement, at the European level, of instruments of a budgetary and fiscal nature, without which, it is impossible to have an adequate Economic Governance outside the strictly national context.

In addition, economic coordination in its most global concept should not only include control measures, supervision and counseling to the countries not complying with the principles defined in the SGP, but also keep in mind the reality of all countries and strive for real Economic Coordination and not just economic control.

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-fold control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

²⁵ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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Within the scope of the debate occurring at the European Affairs Committee, some doubts were raised about the justification for the three levels of control: deficit, debt and budgetary markers. However, particularly with regards to this last level, the debate was not expanded later due to the current national political situation (please, refer to the last paragraph of answer to question 1.1).

- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The Portuguese Parliament presented some reservations on the general nature of sanctions as a form of increasing fulfilment of obligations in the sphere of economic and financial policy. In fact, it is considered that more important than the wholesale review of sanctions, regardless of the terms in which they may occur, it would be to detect which problems, of a possible structural nature, prevent the fulfilment of objectives and the cooperation of European institutions in solving these problems. Within this scope, the European Semester is considered more positive than the Economic Governance package.

- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the best way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

Inter-parliamentary meetings should be held on a regular basis, so that National Parliaments and the European Parliament could cooperate on evaluating the policies and solutions proposed in these areas. Nevertheless, through the political dialogue with the European Commission, it is possible that National Parliaments issue their opinions regarding European Commission initiatives in this respect.

The problem has arisen recently in the form of how these proposals have been produced, no longer at the Commission level, which has the competence, but through procedures which are short on transparency and democratic debate, at the European Council level. These new procedures make the new instruments (few but existing) implemented by the Treaty of Lisbon, unworkable given the alteration in the decision-making procedure originated by the recent European Council practices.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

Despite this idea having been debated at the European Affairs Committee, considering the dissolution of the Portuguese Parliament on 7 April 2011 and, as a consequence, the holding of early legislative elections, in June of the same year, the Portuguese Parliament does not expect to promote a debate with this objective this year. However, it considers it an idea to be developed in the future, within the framework of the growing participation of the Portuguese Parliament in the political dialogue with the European Commission.

It should be noted on this matter that the Portuguese Parliament has maintained a tradition of debating the Work Programme of the European Commission, following its presentation, with the Government, the European Commission, the MEPs elected by Portugal and the MPs of the Regional Legislative Assemblies of the Azores and Madeira. Finally, from this debate and consultation with all the parliamentary committees, the Parliament has selected six initiatives with the effect of carrying out an ‘enhanced scrutiny’ throughout the year.

By carrying out this work, *ex post*, the Portuguese Parliament figures as one of the Parliaments, which are interested in the possibility of an approach *ex ante* of the Work Programme of the European Commission.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

The Portuguese Parliament considers all exchanges of information and the carrying out of joint debates on the theme in hand as being of great use, namely in COSAC. However, it considers that it falls to each parliamentary chamber to formulate and present its position to the European Commission within the framework of the political dialogue, which, evidently, may be coincidental with other chambers.

Furthermore, the Parliament that holds the Presidency of COSAC in the first semester will be able to include the topic on the COSAC agenda for debate and to reflect the positions expressed in this debate in the contribution to be sent to the European institutions.

Romania: Camera Deputatilor

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

Yes.

The European Affairs Department of the Romanian Government, has initiated meetings with the chairman and members of the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament, to reach an agreement on the Romanian NRP.

In the same time, the European Affairs Department of the Romanian Government and the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament have organised a series of meetings opened to all interested parties, both in the public authority and the civil society area:

- June 10, 2010, conference "*Romania and Europe 2020: vision, challenges and strategic priorities*";
- March 10, 2011, conference "*Europe 2020 Strategy: objectives and national reform priorities*".

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The achievement of the headline targets depend on the achievement of the new Economic Governance concept, in general.

The 24-25 March European Council set forward the European Stability Mechanism, joined by Romania.

The decision to join the "euro-plus pact" pact has been influenced by the fact that some key objectives were already tackled by the Romanian authorities.

Modifications have been made to the Law on Pensions, the Labour Code and the Law on Education, all in connection with measures presented in the Conclusions of the latest European Council, as commitments to the Europe 2020 Strategy (namely, making work more attractive, helping the unemployed get back to work, balancing security and flexibility, reforming pension systems, attracting private capital to finance growth).

Romania has also an agreement with the European Commission and the IMF, encouraging fiscal discipline and avoiding excessive macroeconomic imbalances. The public debt is not high, the banking system is stable and the overall financial stability has been reinforced.

Drawbacks persist however in financing the research and education, and reducing the poverty rate, due to the effects of the recent economic crisis and the precarious starting point of our economy, back in 1990.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The national indicators were informally agreed upon; formal talks were no longer organised as the indicators were considered adequate.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The change of the procedures regarding the scrutiny system in the Chamber of Deputies is in progress. At the same time a resolution is to be decided in the next week regarding establishing of two separate European Affairs Committees, one for each Chamber, which will replace the current joint European Affairs Committee of the Parliament. These transformations have caused delays in the examination process. A thorough debate on Annual Growth Survey is planned for April and May when new procedures would be in force.

In the meantime, the MP's have been kept informed on the developments concerning the AGS. Written information from the Government on these developments, including the Government's position has been transmitted to the Chamber of Deputies. Certain analyses and evaluations have been elaborated by services of the Chamber of Deputies, in particular by the EU Law Directorate.

The MP's also participated in the meetings organised by committees in the European Parliament on European Semester.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

While the examination is being delayed for the reasons mentioned in point 2.1., some preliminary evaluations suggest that the issue of indicators is quite controversial, in particular those for macroeconomic imbalances (e. g. the real effective exchange rate) and financial markets (e. g. the lack of an indicator as the bank exposure on euro denomination credits for a country as Romania with its own currency). New indicators could be added and the weights of the indicators should be customised for each country. Further work is necessary, aimed at designing the proper indicators for giving not only a realistic picture of the current situation, but a reliable anticipation of the future situation.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

As methodology the AGS has brought a useful innovation which enables a long desired ex ante coordination of the economic policies in the EU. As far as the content is concerned, preliminary analysis suggests that some of the conclusions need a more sound economic justification, including the issue of the right time for the fiscal consolidation.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

As mentioned at point 2.1. the input will come on the occasion of the debate on Annual Growth Survey planned for April and May when new procedures would be in force.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

The draft resolution which provides the new scrutiny procedure in the Chamber of Deputies allows a thorough scrutiny of the European Semester. Therefore, no special procedure is envisaged at this moment.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

Until now, no weakness has been identified.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

Yes. As far as the possible format is concerned, the current meetings organised by the specialised committees in the European Parliament and by the specialised committees of the national Parliaments whose countries hold the EU presidency, represent an excellent opportunity for exchanging best practices concerning national procedures and for exchanging opinions on the content of the proposals.

A new parliamentary structure is not likely to enhance the efficiency of the debate.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010²⁶, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The compromise that led to the final outcome of the financial supervision package represented an important phase in the process of the financial markets regulation. However, further regulation of the financial market should continue by extending the powers of the new European authorities, and by the future secondary legislation, notably regarding the cross borders entities, as rating agencies, clearing houses and big banks.

On the package concerning economic governance, the preliminary analysis suggests that, while in principle the proposals may improve the economic governance in the EU, some aspects related to the asymmetric treatment of the deficits and surpluses and the treatment of

²⁶ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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the costs of the reformed pension schemes, notably the second pillar, could be further discussed to reach a better compromise.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

The issue has not been yet debated.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The issue will be further analysed and debated. Until now, there is no recommendation.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

The most efficient way for the national parliaments to keep the pace with the developments is assured by a timely and strong parliamentary control of their own governments. The exchange of views in different parliamentary fora contributes to a better understanding of the developments in the area of economic and fiscal consolidation.

By enhancing the informal connections between MP's and officials of the national parliaments the parliamentary work could be improved.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

Ongoing modifications in the Romanian Parliamentary scrutiny system are leading to the establishment of two European Affairs Committees, one for each Chamber, instead of one EAC for both Chambers. Scrutiny procedures will be different. Examination by the Chamber of Deputies of the Commission Work Programmes is provided for in a special section of the Chamber's procedure.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

Since examining "just proposals' titles" may be less relevant, we have in mind connecting the results of former examination of consultation documents, of contributions to public consultation organised by the European Commission and informal dialogue with the Commission, with proposals in the Work Programme.

Romania: *Senatul*

1.

A présent, le Programme National de Reforme (PNR) ainsi que le Programme de Stabilité et de Convergence font l'objet d'une ample analyse au niveau gouvernemental portant sur une adaptation cohérente, censée assurer une meilleure participation de la Roumanie dans le cadre de la Stratégie Europe 2020 et de PSC.

S'agissant du Senat roumain, il a été procédé à un examen attentif dans le cadre du contrôle de subsidiarité des documents européens. Il convient de mentionner que l'examen des documents a été effectuée au sein des commissions responsables-commission économique et Commission du Budget et des finances publiques, les rapports étant soumis au débat et au vote en séance plénière du Senat.

2.

Force est de constater que, jusqu'au présent, aucun débat a caractère général n'a pas eu lieu dans le cadre du Senat. Néanmoins, à travers les liens institutionnels Parlement-Gouvernement, les commissions parlementaires responsables ont manifesté leur volonté d'observer plus activement les actions en matière de l'Exécutif.

3.

Les commissions parlementaires responsables et le Senat en séance plénière ont travaillé sur les documents européens relatifs à la gouvernance économique dans le cadre du contrôle de subsidiarité. A cette occasion, il a été souligné la valeur ajoutée de ces mesures visant à mettre en œuvre les réformes nécessaires au renforcement de la coordination économique et financière.

Un premier pas en vue du suivi des développements actuels en matière serait de mettre en place une Conférence budgétaire au niveau des parlements nationaux et du Parlement Européen :

Slovak Republic: Národná rada

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The National Council of the Slovak Republic – represented by the Committee on European Affairs - discussed the draft National Reform Programme in November 2010.

In October 2010 the Commission for Europe 2020 Strategy was created by the Committee on European Affairs. The Commission's negotiations are concentrated on the implementation of the Strategy on the national level.

On the 7th of April 2011 the Committee on European Affairs will discuss the full National Reform Programme. The Committee on European Affairs is the main responsible and coordination body for Europe 2020 Strategy which coordinates the cooperation with other standing committees (the Committee on Finance and National Budget, the Committee on Education, Youth, Science and Sport, the Committee on Social Affairs, and the Committee on Economy, Construction and Transport). These will discuss the implementation of the Europa 2020 Strategy on national level in the form of the National Reform Programme.

The Stability Programme has not been discussed yet.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The Committee on European Affairs did not, so far, pay a specific attention to an analysis of the measures necessary to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The Committee on European Affairs debated the national indicators set out by the Slovak Government during the debate on the draft National Reform Programme in November 2010 and took cognisance of it.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

Slovak Republic responds to the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) proposals in individual chapters of the National Reform Programme 2011 (NRP) and the Stability Programme for 2011-2014

(SP). National Council of the Slovak Republic shall participate in the discussion regarding the results of the AGS within the scope of NRP and SP meetings.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The AGS provided a background material for the spring European Council meeting during which the present countries (including Slovak Republic) agreed that the AGS conclusions will be taken into account in respect to their policies and national budgets. Major AGS recommendations prepared on the basis of horizontal (thematic) evaluation of the NRP proposals/suggestions in all 10 areas for EU are followed by the Slovak Republic in the NRP 2011 and SP 2011-2014.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

By now the National Council of the Slovak Republic did not consider that any aspect of the AGS should be changed.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

During the Summit on 24/25 March 2011 European Council endorsed the priorities for fiscal consolidation and structural reform within the new framework of the European semester and all Member States are translating these priorities into concrete measures to be included in their SP and NRP. In implementing these policies is maintained deep cooperation within the Government of the Slovak Republic (SR)/Ministry of Finance of the SR, the National Council of the SR, national institutions, advisory bodies, stakeholders and regions.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

In accordance with the integrated supervision during the European Semester European Commission shall evaluate fiscal and structural policies of the individual countries in June 2011. The NRP and SP dispatched by all member states (including Slovak Republic) in the middle of April 2011 will provide the basic documentation for this evaluation. Working on these documents, European Commission will prepare the proposal of specific recommendations for each country at the beginning of June 2011 and these shall be consequently approved by ECOFIN.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

New European semester was launched by publication of the AGS conducted by the European Commission as a part of the Europe 2020 strategy. Starting in 2011 EC will annually publish the survey in order to review major economic challenges of the EU as well as it will assess priority measures for their resolution. Member States need to make clear national commitments in their medium term budgetary strategies and in their NRP and the Commission will then propose country specific recommendations for each Member State which they should take into account when preparing their budgets for 2012 – estimate NRP (autumn 2010) of respective Member States pointed out relatively low risk of ambitions in setting national targets and an excessive concentration on short-term time period (presumably caused by unsustainable debt, disruption in the financial markets and low economic growth).

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

European semester was established by the European Council with the aim of ensuring that harmonized coordination of economic policies in fact begins in advance of national budgetary procedures. The contribution of national parliaments must lead onwards to an extensive dialogue with the European Parliament, whose competence regarding budgetary matters was significantly enforced by the Lisbon Treaty and who is examining the Economic Governance reform package at the moment in order to promote the cumulative coherence of national budgetary policies. With a view to realize the efficiency budgetary dialogue within the European Parliament and the national parliaments the common involvement in the running of the European Semester shall support specialized interparliamentary meetings for purpose of strengthened coordination at the European level that must closely involve the national parliaments.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010²⁷, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

²⁷ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on European Affairs discussed the package of legislation to significantly strengthen the supervision of the financial sector in Europe in December 2009 and the package of measures intended to strengthen economic governance in the European Union, and more specifically in the euro area repeatedly on 10th February, 14th March, 22nd March 2011. Committee supports this package of legislative proposals, notably the reform of the preventive and corrective part of the Stability and Growth Pact, as well as proposals target macroeconomic imbalances within the EU. Committee during its sessions approved current positions of the Slovak Republic to legislative package aimed at strengthening economic governance.

According to the Amended Rules of Procedure the Committee on European Affairs shall have the opinion to request specialized committees of the National Council of the Slovak Republic to submit their suggested opinions to the drafts of legally binding acts and other acts of the European Union. In case of the financial supervision package Committee on European Affairs didn't use its power vis-à-vis specialized committees of NC SR. The package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance was discussed by the Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on Finance and Budget and adopted the position of the Slovak Republic during its session on 26th November 2010.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

There was not discussion about this question during the Committee meetings.

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The special Task Force on economic governance in its final report proposed for increasing effectiveness of new rules of economic governance in the EU wider range of sanctions and measures (financial and political). Heads of State or Government agreed on it at the European Council meeting. Committee NC SR on European Affairs approved the position of the Slovak Republic and supported implementation of clear and strict sanctions in line with greater fiscal discipline and a stronger Stability and Growth Pact.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

Lisbon Treaty equipped the national parliaments collectively with a de facto power to veto European Commission legislative proposals before they are subject to adoption by the

European Parliament and the Council Ministers. The new yellow and orange card procedure focuses on the respect of the subsidiary principle. Depending on how the new yellow and orange card procedure would national parliaments used, it can bring the effect of strengthening the European Union's democratic legitimacy. It is still the question if this procedure is the faster option for national parliaments to influence development in the area of economic and fiscal coordination.

As useful it seems to be inter-parliamentary meetings with specialized EP Committees on current economic and financial topics.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

The debate took place on 24th March 2011 and then on 29th March 2011 in occasion of hearing of the European Commission Vice-president Mr. Maroš Šefčovič in the National Council of the Slovak Republic and also in the joint meeting of the Committee on European Affairs and Foreign Affairs Committee. The Committee on European Affairs selected legislative acts which suggested to be sensitive and strategic not only because of political priorities of the Slovak Republic but also because of the principle of subsidiarity. The Committee also adopted a resolution in order to take in account those acts.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

First of all, the National Parliaments must be given enough time to discuss the CWP. The debate should take place not only in the respective committees but also in the plenary/chambers. The NPs should select legislative proposals according to the political vulnerability and also according to the matter of principle of subsidiarity. The NPs should select the most sensitive/problematic legislative act and then discuss it together at COSAC meetings.

Slovenia: Državni zbor

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1. Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

Before being adopted by the Government, the National Assembly had not made any inputs or recommendations to the two mentioned programmes. At its meeting in January 2011, the Committee on EU Affairs called upon the Government to submit to the Committee the National Reform Programme for discussion, prior being sent to the European Commission. Due to a very long procedure for the adoption of the mentioned programme by the Government, the Committee on EU Affairs has not discussed the National Programme so far (15 April 2011). We expect the Committee on EU Affairs to discuss the programme subsequently.

1.2. Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The Committee on EU Affairs has not discussed measures considered necessary at the national and EU level to meet the EU headline targets for the 2020 Strategy until now.

1.3. Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The National Assembly did not consider, debate or give its input to the mentioned indicators.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1. Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The National Assembly (the Committee on EU Affairs) has not held any separate debate on the Annual Growth Survey. It discussed it, however, in the framework of the grounds for the participation of the delegation of the Republic of Slovenia at the meetings of the Council of the European Union in various formations (for example, the Competitiveness Council, the General Affairs Council). The Committee on EU Affairs took note of these grounds and supported them, but it did not adopt any special decisions or recommendations related to the Annual Growth Survey.

2.2. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)?

Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

So far, the National Assembly (the Committee on EU Affairs) has not particularly discussed the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey and the coherence with the national ones.

2.3. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

Since the National Assembly has not held any special discussion on this topic, no proposals for changes have been given. According to the Government material, of which the Committee took note and supported it, it would be welcome if the document paid more attention also to the role and importance of innovation and research for sustainable growth. However, the Committee has not held any debate on this topic, nor have any decisions and recommendations thereon been adopted.

2.4. Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

The Committee on EU Affairs took note of the governmental activities concerning the European Semester in the framework of the grounds for the participation of the delegation of the Republic of Slovenia at the meetings of the Council of the European Union in its various formations and in the framework of the grounds for the participation of the Prime Minister at the European Council meeting. However, the Committee has not held any debate on this topic, nor have any decisions and recommendations thereon been adopted.

2.5. Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No changes are currently planned at the National Assembly in relation to any special procedure regarding the monitoring and reporting the work of the Government related to the European Semester. Procedures to discuss documents related to the European Semester will most probably remain the same.

2.6. Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

So far, we have not identified any weaknesses of the European Semester.

2.7. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

We believe that the cooperation between the National Assembly and the Government, as well as the possibility to discuss the topic in COSAC, sufficiently provide for the involvement of the parliament in the running of the European Semester.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

In December 2010, the Committee on EU Affairs discussed draft positions of the Republic of Slovenia on legislative proposals to strengthen the macroeconomic and financial supervision in Member States. At the session, the Minister of Finance presented the subject matter of the draft legislative acts and the draft positions. The Committee did not discuss the eligibility and sufficiency of the mentioned measures, nor did any of the deputies express an objection or impediment to the subject matter of the mentioned legislative proposals or draft positions of the Republic of Slovenia.

3.2. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

So far, there have been no discussions on the mentioned issue at the National Assembly.

3.3. Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

At the National Assembly, there have been no discussions on the application of the mentioned sanctions and incentives.

3.4. In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

We believe that the current way to follow mentioned events is appropriate and that parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond. We consider that parliamentary work in this area is appropriate.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1. Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

Prior to its publication, no debate has taken place on the mentioned programme at the National Assembly, nor has been foreseen. The National Assembly will probably discuss the Commission Work Programme for 2012 as thus far. Following its publication, deputies are to get acquainted with the programme and to debate thereon.

4.2. Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

We believe that any coordination of ex-ante debates in COSAC would present a big challenge. In case of such ex-ante debate, the following question arises: On the basis of which document a debate in COSAC would proceed if the discussion were held prior to the publication of the Commission Work Programme? We consider that a debate on the programme in COSAC following its publication or coordination among parliaments through other channels (representatives in the European Parliament etc.) is more suitable.

CHAPTER 1: Europe 2020 Strategy

Questions:

1. Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The Commission for International Relations and European Affairs discussed the National Reform Programme 2011 -2012, which was adopted by the Government. The National Council will discuss the National Reform Programme 2011- 2012 at its meeting in May.

2. Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The National Council (Commission for International Relations and European Affairs) thinks that the necessary measures at the national level to meet the EU headline targets by 2020 are economic policy measures, structural measures and institutional adjustments which are included in the National Reform Programme.

3. Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

Commission members considered that the National Reform Programme is well written, with well-structured content. Commission members agreed with the goals which the Government intends to achieve with the Programme, following the economic policy measures, structural measures and institutional adjustments. Objectives and implementation of policies or measures in practice, according to the commission require a high degree of social consensus and good coordination of actions and policies in all areas. It is alarming that during the current crisis, any proposed reforms should be implemented in the planned scope and timing.

The discussion highlighted the following areas:

- The Commission notes that in the education field is not given sufficient attention to measures to reduce dropout rates in secondary schools. In particular, it lacks measures to raise quality in secondary schools.

- The need for harmonization of labor market needs and expertise would have to change and adapt effective system of tertiary education. Worrying is the ratio between the number of students in the fields of science and technology compared with humanistic tendencies. Measures should encourage the increase of enrollment in science and technical sciences. Appropriate measures should allow for deregulation of professions.

- Management policy of state owned companies for further development of Slovenia is crucial. The process of managing the state property must be based on transparency, efficiency and accountability.

- In line with its objectives in the context of promoting smart growth in research and development invested 3% of gross domestic product. However for our situation and faster economic growth was more important indicator of the effectiveness of innovation activities.

- In the area of sustainable growth The Commission is critical of the direction in energy policy. The problem remains on the dangers of CO2 emissions and influence in the further development planning. Deserve support measures for the use of biomass for energy purposes.

CHAPTER 2: European Semester and Annual Growth Survey

Questions:

1. Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The National Council did not hold any particular debate on the Annual Growth Survey.

2. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

Up till now the Commission for International Relations and European Affairs and the National Council has not discussed the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey and their coherence with the national ones.

3. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

Since the National Council did not hold any special discussion on this topic, no proposals for changes have been given.

4. Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

The National Council did not consider debate or have any input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester.

5. Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

The National Council has no intention to implement any special procedure regarding the European Semester.

6. Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

We have not identified any weaknesses of the European Semester.

7. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The decision has not yet been taken.

CHAPTER 3: Economic governance and financial regulation in general

Questions:

1. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010²⁸, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

Thus far, there have been no discussions on the mentioned issue in the National Council.

2. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

Thus far, there have been no discussions on the matter in the National Council.

3. Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

In the National Council there have been no discussions on the application of the mentioned sanctions and incentives.

4. In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the

²⁸ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

It is our believe that the current way to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination is appropriate and that parliaments have right tools at their disposal to respond in time. We consider that parliamentary work in this area is appropriate.

CHAPTER 4: Evaluation of COSAC Bi-annual Reports

Questions:

1. Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

Currently, no such debate has taken place.

2. Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

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Spain: Cortes Generales

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The National Reform Program is being currently drafted by the Government. The Joint Committee for the European Union of the Spanish Parliament will hold a hearing of the competent Government Minister on the issues mentioned prior to the June ECOFIN meeting. This hearing is scheduled for 14th June.

- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?
- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

At the present moment in time, Parliament has not yet debated the issue but will do so after the hearing of the competent Government Minister on the National Reform Program and the Stability and Convergence Program due prior to the June ECOFIN meeting.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

There are currently no plans to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey.

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?
- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?
- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

Parliament has not had at the present moment in time any input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester.

- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

There are no plans to implement, at the present moment in time, any special procedure regarding the European Semester.

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?
- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010²⁹, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The package of proposal were examined by the Joint Committee on EU Affairs of the Spanish Cortes and considered to be in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity. No further debate on the issue is expected at the current moment in time.

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?
- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?
- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

At the present moment in time, no debate is foreseen on the issue. It should be noted that the position of the Joint Committee for the European Union is to use the Commission Work

²⁹ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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Program, after its adoption, as a means to identify future draft legislative acts that will be scrutinised by the Committee in compliance with Protocol 2.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

Sweden: Riksdag

The response to the 15th bi-annual report has been prepared by officials and must not be understood in any way to represent an official view of the Riksdag.

The 15th Bi-annual Report will be based on replies to the following questions:

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

In addition to the answers given below, the following may be noted. The Europe 2020 Strategy is also dealt with in the Committee on EU Affairs ahead of Council meetings.

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

When the National Reform Programme and the Stability Convergence Programme are presented at the end of April, the Riksdag's Committee on Finance intends to follow up these issues at a hearing on 26 April 2011, with the two state secretaries responsible, i.e. from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance.

The Committee on Finance also considered the Commission's Communication *Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* in a statement in March 2010 (2009/10:FiU29). In the statement the Committee notes that a strategy for the future should have a more general focus and be oriented towards long-term structural growth. The strategy should contribute to sustainable public finances and promote a competitive, green economy and an efficient use of resources. Furthermore, the Committee on Finance points out that the issue of greater participation by women in the labour market will need such sharp focus in the ongoing work that a clearly specified employment ratio target for women is highly desirable. It is the view of the Committee on Finance that this circumstance should be reflected in the overall targets of the EU 2020 strategy, as well as in future integrated guidelines and employment guidelines.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

a) The employment target:

When it comes to the headline target of a European employment rate of 75 per cent there is fairly broad consensus in the Riksdag on the benefits of measures such as increasing labour market participation in underemployed groups (particularly women and migrants), maintaining active labour market policies and developing the single market, while ensuring high levels of social protection for employees. The Riksdag highly appreciates the open method of coordination as a tool for exchanging best practices at the European level, but underscores that employment policy must remain a national competence. In this context the Riksdag also stresses the need for policies and regulation at the European level that respect and make room for differences between the labour market models of member states, and which are well adapted to the needs of the national economies.

b) The research target:

The Riksdag has approved an increase in public investment in research and research-based innovation by an additional SEK 5 billion in 2012, compared with 2008. This investment represents an increase of 20 per cent in government funding of research.

(For further information, please see the booklet “A Boost to Research and Innovation - A summary of Government Bill 2008/09:50” at <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/108/a/130765>)

c i) The climate target: (To be seen in combination with the answer related to the energy target.)

The Swedish Government, with the support of the Riksdag, has stated that EU must reduce its emissions by 30 per cent by 2020 compared with the 1990 level, within the framework of an international agreement in which other developed countries make equivalent commitments. It is important that rich countries take the lead when it comes to climate change. Sweden and the EU should therefore act as driving force to bring about an international agreement that limits climate change to 2°C, covering more countries and greenhouse gases and with stronger emission reductions. The Riksdag’s Committee on Environment and Agriculture has also expressed a wish to see more sectors covered by the emissions trading system, and that links are made to other developing systems. Emissions from aviation as well as shipping have to be included in an international emissions reductions scheme and international measures should be taken in order to reduce emissions from these sectors. In the light of experience and the global reductions needed for the future, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) must be improved and strengthened and other complementary mechanisms need to be developed.

Sweden has to carry its share of the global responsibility to avoid climate change caused by human activity. Therefore, Sweden has set the national targets outlined below with the support of the Riksdag and its committees. Emissions of greenhouse gases should be 40 per cent below the 1990 level by 2020. This target applies for activities not included in the emissions trading system, which means that emissions from the non-trading sector must decrease by 20 million tons of CO₂ equivalent compared with the 1990 level. This reduction will be possible through emissions reductions in Sweden, investments in other EU member states and through flexible mechanisms such as CDM. The long-term goal is for Sweden to have no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. All sectors of society need, to a larger extent, to bear their share of the cost for greenhouse gas emissions. All sectors also need to contribute to achievement of the targets, for example for the energy sector, road and waterway transport, agriculture, forestry, waste management, industry and construction sector. In this context, it may also be mentioned that Sweden has set the targets of having a non-fossil fuel dependent vehicle stock by 2030 and of having phased out the use of fossil fuel for heating by 2020.

In order to achieve these targets, economic instruments will of course be of great importance. Existing instruments such as the carbon dioxide tax will continue to be used and a strategy has been developed for a coherent taxation change in the areas of energy and the environment. Legislative measures, information, education and public procurement are other examples of important tools to be used in the work ahead. The Committee on Environment and Agriculture has also stated that it is important to use a combination of measures that will enable the achievement of long-term goals at the lowest possible cost. Needless to say, research, development, marketing and diffusion of new technology are all important factors in achieving the ambitious targets and goals set.

c ii) The energy target:

In June 2009 a Government bill on energy policy was approved by the Riksdag. Sweden's energy policy builds on the same three pillars as EU energy cooperation. The policy therefore aims to combine:

- ecological sustainability
- competitiveness
- security of supply

Objectives

Sweden's national energy policy objectives for the year 2020 are

- 50 per cent renewable energy
- 10 per cent renewable energy in the transport sector
- 20 per cent more efficient energy use

Long-term priorities

Heating

The use of fossil fuels for heating will be phased out by 2020. Significant improvements in energy efficiency should be made both in households and industry. District heating and cogeneration enable the use of energy that would otherwise be lost, and as efficient use as possible of society's energy resources.

The transport system

The policy focuses on successively increasing energy efficiency in the transport system, breaking dependence on fossil fuels and reducing climate impact. By 2030, Sweden should have a vehicle stock that is independent of fossil fuels.

Electricity

Swedish electricity production today is essentially based on just two sources – hydropower and nuclear power. Climate change is now in focus and nuclear power will thus remain an important source of Swedish electricity production for the foreseeable future. To reduce vulnerability and increase security of electricity supply, a third pillar that reduces dependence on nuclear power and hydropower should be developed. To achieve this, cogeneration, wind power and other renewable power production must together account for a significant proportion of electricity production.

Vision

By 2050, Sweden will have a sustainable and resource-efficient energy supply and no net emissions of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Supply

Fossil energy

Natural gas, which is a finite fossil fuel, may be important for a transitional period – primarily in industry and cogeneration – thus coming under the European Emission Trading System (ETS). The infrastructure for natural gas can thus be developed on a commercial basis and in a manner that supports the gradual introduction of biogas. Sweden should act to link one of the planned EU-funded pilot plants for Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) to Swedish primary industries.

Renewable energy

The certificate system for renewable electricity production will be further developed. In April 2010 a new target for 2020, on the level of 25 TWh, was approved by the Riksdag. The long-term direction for the subsequent period is a continued gradual increase of renewable electricity production. There is an bilateral agreement to extend the certificate system to Norway by January 2012.

Sweden will make use of the opportunities under the Directive on the Promotion of Electricity produced from Renewable Energy Sources to allow other countries to fund investments in renewable electricity production. Practical models to enable such cooperation projects will be rapidly developed.

The Riksdag has approved a new planning framework of 30 TWh for wind power by 2020. 20 TWh of these will be on land and 10 TWh offshore. The conditions for the development of offshore wind farms should be particularly studied. This will include looking at network connection regulations, the competing support systems of various coastal states, the conditions for joint projects under the Directive on the Promotion of Electricity produced from Renewable Energy Sources, etc.

The large rivers in the north of Sweden and other waterways specified by law will continue to be protected from development.

Nuclear power

Applications for increasing power capacity will be assessed as previously. According to a Riksdag decision of June 2010, the transitional period during which nuclear power will be in use has been extended by allowing new construction at existing sites within the framework of a maximum of ten reactors. It will be possible to grant permits for successively replacing current reactors as they reach the end of their technological and economic life.

More efficient energy use

A five-year programme for more efficient energy is being implemented. The programme will be allocated an additional SEK 300 million per year, and will be funded within the framework of energy tax revenue.

Efficient markets

Sweden is to help complete the development of an efficient Nordic end-customer market and increasingly closer northern European cooperation on network investments. The bottlenecks in the Nordic electricity network and between the Nordic countries and the rest of Europe will be removed. Better conditions for the economically efficient development of offshore wind farms will be created through improved coordination of electricity networks between the Baltic Rim countries. The heating market will continue to be developed, based on sound competition between different types of heating. Electricity networks will be developed to enable economically viable investments in new electricity production. Sweden will pursue a market-based international energy policy based on solidarity, and will take action to ensure the continued integration of the European market.

Policy instruments

General economic policy instruments are fundamental for long-term energy policy; these include carbon dioxide tax, international emissions trading and certificates for renewable electricity. Economic policy instruments should be gradually developed and exemptions restricted as far as possible, taking into account the risk of carbon leakage and the competitiveness of the Swedish

business sector. These policy instruments must be supplemented both by investments in technological development and information and measures to remove institutional barriers to renewal.

Research, development and demonstration

The Government has strengthened measures for the development of new energy technology. These measures focus on areas that contribute to the achievement of the 2020 targets, where Sweden has a national position of strength, and where export potential exists. Three strategic priorities were approved in the Government Research Bill 2008/09:50 (see reference in answer to 1.2b):

- large-scale renewable electricity production and the development of electricity networks; this includes – in addition to wind power now being produced on an industrial scale – investments in new technology such as wave power, solar power and gasification of biomass
- electric drive systems and hybrid vehicles combined bioenergy plants for environment- and climate-adapted production of fuel and other products.
- Combined bioenergy plants for environment- and climate-adapted production and more efficient energy use.

d) The education target:

The Government has initiated a major reform agenda for the Swedish school system. The objective is to improve pupils' results and well-being and to provide the conditions for school heads and teachers to once again make the Swedish school system world-class.

On 23 March 2010, the Government presented the bill “The new Education Act - for knowledge, choice and security” (Govt. bill 2009/10:165) to the Riksdag. The Riksdag has processed and approved the bill and the new Education Act will enter into force on 1 July 2011.

New teacher training and accreditation for teachers

This autumn 2011 sees the start of the new teacher training programme. Improved quality, greater specialisation and more in-depth subject study than previously will raise the status of the training programme and the teaching profession. At the same time, the new Boost for Teachers will carry on providing continuing professional development for teachers wishing to complement and broaden their knowledge.

The Government has also proposed the introduction of a new teacher accreditation. It will be proof that the teacher has completed a teacher training programme and that the teacher has shown during an induction period that he or she is suited to teaching. The new legislation enters into force on 1 July 2012.

For further information, please see the Government website “Sweden’s Schools get a Boost” at link: <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/14471/a/161842>

e) The social inclusion target:

At the moment, the Riksdag has not taken a position on any measures of priority.

- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

During the autumn – in October, November and December – the Committee on Finance has given its input through information from, and deliberations with, the Minister for Finance. In addition, the Government also consults the Riksdag through the Committee on EU Affairs ahead of every Ecofin decision. The issue of national indicators has also been dealt with there.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

In addition to the answers given below, the following may be noted. The European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey are also dealt with in the Committee on EU Affairs ahead of Council meetings.

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Minister for Finance informed the Riksdag's Committee on Finance about the Annual Growth Survey on 3 February 2011. The Riksdag does not intend to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The issue has not been dealt with by the Riksdag in a way that would make it possible to answer this specific question.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The issue has not been dealt with by the Riksdag in a way that would make it possible to answer this specific question.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

As mentioned above (Q 1.1), the Committee on Finance intends to hold a hearing on 26 April 2011 with the two state secretaries responsible for the National Reform Programme and the Convergence Programme. Before the issue is dealt with in the Ecofin Council the Government is also obliged to consult the Committee on EU Affairs.

When the Committee on Finance considered the Commission's Communication *Reinforcing Economic Policy Coordination*, COM(2010)250 in June 2010, the Committee wished to stress that it is not appropriate for the Budget Bill to be examined in advance in the EU before it is presented to the Riksdag. It is the Riksdag that decides on the budget, both expenditure and revenue, and the proposal for the central government budget must therefore be presented to the Riksdag first.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

See the answer to Q 1.1. The Committee on Finance intends to hold a hearing on 26 April 2011 with the two state secretaries responsible for the National Reform Programme and the Convergence Programme.

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

The issue has not been dealt with by the Riksdag in a way that would make it possible to answer this specific question.

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The issue has not been dealt with by the Riksdag in a way that would make it possible to answer this specific question.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

In addition to the answers given below, the following may be noted. Economic governance and financial regulation in general are also dealt with in the Committee on EU Affairs ahead of Council meetings.

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010³⁰, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The issue has not been dealt with by the Riksdag in a way that would make it possible to answer this specific question.

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

The issue has not been dealt with by the Riksdag in a way that would make it possible to answer this specific question.

- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The issue has not been dealt with by the Riksdag in a way that would make it possible to answer this specific question.

³⁰ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
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- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

The issue has not been dealt with by the Riksdag in a way that would make it possible to answer this specific question.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

So far, there has not been any debate, or consideration of a debate, in the Riksdag on the specific purpose of submitting opinions ahead of the presentation by the Commission of its Work Programme for the year 2012.

The statements of the Riksdag's committees concerning their examination of Commission documents, often includes opinions that should be taken into consideration not only in the short term, but also in forthcoming Work Programmes from the Commission. The statements are debated and decided on by the Chamber

The annex to the statement of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the Commission's Work Programme 2011 (statement 2010/11:UU11), includes a complete list of all statements decided on by the Riksdag's committees since the spring of 2010, when the Committee on Foreign Affairs approved its statement on the Commission's Work Programme 2010. All statements are submitted to the Commission, and a summary in English of all statements is available on IPEX.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

We do not have any concrete suggestions regarding a future ex-ante debate. As far as we can see, a meaningful debate would require some sort of common point of reference, such as the Commission's Annual Policy Strategy.

United Kingdom: House of Commons

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

- 1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?
- 1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?
- 1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

The Europe 2020 Strategy integrated guidelines were debated on 10 January 2011 in European Committee B: see

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmgeneral/euro/110110/110110s01.htm>

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

- 2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Annual Growth Survey was debated on 29 March 2011 in European Committee B: see

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmgeneral/euro/110329/110329s01.htm>

- 2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?
- 2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?
- 2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

Only through discussions on economic governance. The European Scrutiny Committee recommended the economic governance package for a debate on the Floor of the House on 27 October 2010

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmeuleg/428-v/428v03.htm>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmeuleg/428-v/428v04.htm>

The debate on the Floor of the House took place on 10 November 2010:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101110/debtext/101110-0003.htm#10111043000001>

- 2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No

- 2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

The House of Commons has not expressed a view on this.

- 2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The Government's annual budget will always be presented to Parliament before being sent to the Commission.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010³¹, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.
- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?
- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?
- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

The financial supervision package was debated on 1 December 2009 on the Floor of the House: *see*

³¹ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
29.9.2010

http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm091201/debtext/91201-0006.htm#column_989

Various other proposals on aspects of financial services regulation have been debated in European Committee B

The economic governance package was debated on the Floor of the House on 10 November 2010: *see*

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101110/debtext/101110-0003.htm#10111043000001>

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

- 4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

No. The Commission's Work Programme will be scrutinised by the European Scrutiny Committee following its deposit in Parliament and receipt of the UK Government's Explanatory Memorandum on the document.

- 4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

The suggestion of an ex-ante debate would not fit easily with the system of scrutiny adopted by the House of Commons. However the debate could provide useful information on where other parliaments see important/controversial issues, or those giving rise to potential subsidiarity concerns, arising in the coming year.

European Scrutiny Committee
House of Commons
United Kingdom

1 April 2011

United Kingdom: House of Lords

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

The Committee discussed the appropriate form of parliamentary engagement with the process with the Minister in a report published on 25 January³². The Government made the point in correspondence with the Committee that the NRP was based on Government financial plans which are already debated without explicit reference to the NRP, for instance the annual Budget and Pre-Budget report, and, in 2010, the Comprehensive Spending Review. There is already an annual debate in the Lords on the Convergence Programme, under the European Communities (Amendment) Act 1993, and this Committee recommended that a debate on the NRP should take place at the same time as this. The Government have accepted this recommendation, and the first combined debate is expected to take place on 12 May.

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at the national and the EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

We have not examined the targets in that degree of detail, but note that they are ambitious. In scrutiny of the Annual Growth Survey, conducted by Sub-Committee B, we noted that the Commission's assessment, based on the interim NRPs submitted by Member State governments, was that the targets would not be met. The AGS was based on draft NRPs produced in the autumn. It will be interesting to see how the final NRPs compare, and whether they will indicate that the EU will meet its overall targets. We look forward to seeing how the European Semester is embedded, and what effect this will have on NRPs.

*We have particularly welcomed the Commission's flagship initiatives, in particular the Digital Agenda for Europe. We discuss ways in which the digital Single Market can be improved in order to boost European growth in our report *Re-launching the Single Market* (15th Report 2010-11, HL Paper 129). We especially welcome plans to review the e-Commerce Directive, to produce a Code of EU online rights, and to update the application of copyright to cover cross-border online sales more effectively. We were concerned at the failure rate for so many cross-border transactions and believe the Digital Single Market is an important opportunity for the EU to boost growth.*

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered it, debated or given its input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

See above.

³² *The EU Strategy for economic growth and the UK National Reform Programme*, 5th Report 2010-11, HL Paper 81.

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or intends to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Internal Market Sub-Committee considered the Annual Growth Survey in its routine scrutiny of EU documents. In a letter to the responsible UK Minister, the Chairman of the Select Committee expressed the Committee's view that it was disappointing that the targets appeared unlikely to be met. As part of the European Semester, the Annual Growth Survey would form part of any debate on the NRP and Convergence Programme.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The UK Government have adopted a different approach in the production of their NRP, in that they have not set national targets, but have provided a list of key indicators against which the UK's progress can be monitored. It would appear to be difficult to compare these to the EU-wide targets.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

Subsequent Annual Growth Surveys will be based on actual NRPs rather than interim ones.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

See 2.1 above.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

No

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

No.

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

The Committee has not taken a view on this issue. Approval of the UK budget is primarily a matter for the House of Commons.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

- 3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010³³, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

The Economic and Financial Affairs and International Trade Sub-Committee has considered proposals for improved economic governance in detail in its report, The future of economic governance in the EU, published at the end of March. Detailed conclusions are in the report – but overall the Committee concluded that the design of the proposals was a step in the right direction. The Committee’s greatest worry was the implementation of the proposals. EU governments, and euro area ones in particular, must ensure that the rules set out in these proposals are adhered to. This means that the Council must ensure that sanctions for breaches of the SGP and the EIP are a realistic deterrent.

- 3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

We did not have any concerns about the legal base for these proposals.

- 3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

See paragraphs 83-114 in the report mentioned in 3.1 above. In the context of the stability and growth pact the Committee supports the use of more graduated sanctions, as well as the introduction of reverse majority voting; both of these changes will make it more likely that sanctions will actually be imposed by the Council (and therefore will be a real deterrent to irresponsible fiscal behaviour). We do not support the withdrawal of voting rights in Council as a sanction – it would raise significant questions about legitimacy and sovereignty, not to mention requiring a Treaty change to achieve. We are also sceptical about incentives – the overriding incentive should be maintaining a stable and prosperous euro area; we do not believe other incentives should be necessary.

We have strong reservations about the use of sanctions in relation to the excessive imbalance procedure given the difficulty in determining what exactly constitutes an “excessive” imbalance.

- 3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

³³ COM(2010) 522, COM(2010) 523, COM(2010) 524, COM(2010) 525, COM(2010) 526, COM(2010) 527
29.9.2010

The scope for parliamentary involvement in the running of economic governance measures is limited by two main factors: 1) the shortness of the timescales involved, and 2) the fact that documents related to excessive deficit procedure decisions are confidential, and cannot be scrutinised by parliaments until after decisions have already been taken by Council.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

No debate is planned. The Work Programme has been considered by each of our seven EU sub-committees and their views have been discussed by the Select Committee. As a result of this work a number of dossiers have been identified which will be scrutinised closely for their compliance with subsidiarity. This list has been communicated to other national parliaments. It is available online here <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-select/subsidiarity/Subsidiarity%20Scrutiny.pdf>

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

The approach outlined above could easily be adapted to enable us to contribute to an ex-ante debate at COSAC on the Work Programme, for example, highlighting dossiers that we intend to scrutinise closely for their compliance with subsidiarity and identifying items likely to be of particular interest to our committees as they come forward. However, it may be difficult to provide more in-depth analysis of the areas outlined in the Work Programme without further information from the Commission.

8 April 2011

European Parliament (replies in English)

1. Europe 2020 Strategy

1.1 Did your Parliament/Chamber have an input to the National Reform Programme and the Stability and Convergence Programme of your country and if so, how?

Not applicable

1.2 Which measures do you consider necessary at national and EU level to meet the five EU headline targets by 2020?

The view of the European Parliament was expressed in its Resolution of 17 February 2011 on Europe 2020³⁴. The European Parliament raised the following issues:

- underlined its concerns about the weak governance structure, urged the Council to strengthen the Community method and called for integration of the EU 2020 goals into the economic governance framework and for the European Semester to be part of the legislative governance package, moreover, national parliaments and social partners should be included at an early stage in order to foster democratic accountability, ownership and legitimacy;
- the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) should reflect the ambitions of the Europe 2020 strategy; the Commission should clarify the budgetary dimension of the Flagship Initiatives and make proposals on the establishment of new own resources so as to provide the Union with real and autonomous financial resources; furthermore, private-sector funding is indispensable;
- a strong and well-financed cohesion policy must be a key complementary element of the Europe 2020 strategy; furthermore, synergies between structural funding and FP funding must be created;
- a bold action aiming to relaunch the Single Market and Small Business Act is needed to create jobs;
- the current content of the Europe 2020 strategy (such as the headline targets, flagship proposals, bottlenecks and indicators) remains of a very general nature; concrete commitments from Member States through their National Reform Programmes and concrete and consistent legislative proposals are needed;
- As regards the Flagship on "Innovation Union": there are still particular shortcomings in the field of private research spending, hence an adaptation of the regulatory environment for companies is needed, including SMEs; the financing of research, innovation and development in the EU must be further stimulated and enhanced via a significant increase in relevant expenditure post-2013;
- As regards the Flagship on "Youth on the move": the Commission should continue to adequately fund existing mobility and youth programmes such as Lifelong Learning (Erasmus, Leonardo, Comenius, Grundtwig), Youth in Action and Marie Curie, as this would make an important contribution to the fight against youth unemployment and towards reaching a 75% employment rate;

³⁴ Document No. P7_TA-PROV(2011)0068 is available at:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0068+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

- As regards the Flagship on "A Digital agenda for Europe": the Commission should speed up the adoption of proposals related to the digital single market, such as e-commerce, intellectual property, online trust and security, roaming and e-authentication; investigations into the first radio spectrum policy should also be advanced; developing the free circulation of content and knowledge (the 'fifth freedom') and safeguarding media pluralism are key, as is protecting privacy - in this respect, the Data Protection Directive should be adapted to the current digital environment to make sure that all citizens have control of their personal data;
- As regards the Flagship on "Resource efficient Europe": the Commission should develop concrete benchmarks and ensure the monitoring and attainment of targets within the framework of the Europe 2020 European Semester of policy coordination; European energy infrastructure must be modernised and upgraded, smart grids and interconnections which are necessary for realising the internal energy market should be built in order to enhance security of supply, meet energy and climate targets, and speed up authorisation procedures;
- As regards the Flagship on "An Industrial policy for the globalisation era": the EU transport and energy policies covering infrastructure and services play an important role in achieving the Europe 2020 objectives; the transport sector will ensure that the EU market keeps its position as a highly qualified production area, through the decarbonisation of all transport modes, the implementation of the Single European Railway Area and the completion of the Single European Sky. An effective European Raw Materials Strategy would improve accessibility, energy and resource use efficiency, while securing critical materials through the development of FTAs and strategic partnerships; moreover access to finance in innovation and infrastructures, notably for smart grids, green technologies, e-health, the Trans-European Networks (TEN) and projects with proven added value which cannot be financed by the market need to be significantly improved; in this respect, opportunities offered by Project Bonds should be explored;
- As regards the Flagship on "An Agenda for new skills and jobs": investment in active labour market policies, education and training opportunities for all to acquire new skills are essential to reduce unemployment; so are, in this respect, SMEs and the relaunch of the Single Market, the implementation of the European qualifications framework and the planned legislative initiative reforming professional qualifications to ensure their mutual recognition;
- As regards the Flagship on "European platform against Poverty": more concrete actions are necessary to deliver social inclusion, in particular by strengthening the Social Open Method of Coordination as part of an integrated strategy involving national and local stakeholders, and including people experiencing poverty and social exclusion; also a broader agenda is needed to promote decent work, ensure workers' rights throughout Europe and improve working conditions, tackle inequality and discrimination, and combat in-work poverty.

1.3 Has your Parliament/Chamber considered, debated or given input to the national indicators set out by the Government for measuring the condition of the national economies? If so, please specify how.

Not applicable

2. European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey

2.1 Has your Parliament/Chamber held or does it intend to hold a debate on the findings of the Annual Growth Survey? If so, please indicate the procedure and the findings.

The Council on 7 September in its conclusions establishing the European Semester foresaw as a role for the European Parliament that it should hold a debate and give orientations to the Annual Growth Survey ('AGS') provided by the European Commission in January of each year. This was also the only role given to the European Parliament. However, and also in the framework of the adoption of the legislative package on economic governance, the European Parliament is reflecting on the most appropriate modalities to monitor the process".

While the first European Semester in 2011 is very much a 'pilot' exercise, the ambition is that, once properly established, it will integrate all relevant economic policy cycles in the EU under its framework umbrella; including fiscal coordination (in the Stability and Growth Pact, 'SGP'), the new macroeconomic imbalance procedures and structural policies within EU2020. The European Parliament *'calls on the Commission to present a Communication bringing together the broad guidelines of the economic policies (Article 121(2) TFEU) as well as the guidelines on employment policies (Article 148(2) TFEU) for consideration in the debate on the 'European Semester' to reduce meaningless and endless discussions'*.³⁵

While the AGS is supposed to become a review tool in future European Semesters, in the first AGS the Commission focused on an integrated approach to economic recovery, concentrating on key measures in the context of Europe 2020. However, it will take a few years before the process is fully in place, since the first year of the European Semester (i.e. 2011) can only be evaluated in 2012, when recommendations would be given for 2013; meaning that the European Semester should be fully established by the summer of 2012.

Consequently, in 2011 the European Parliament has been holding debates on economic governance and EU2020 targets in general. Intense work is equally ongoing to reform economic governance. In subsequent years, the Parliament's reaction to the AGS will certainly take place within a more structured framework, which will be decided during 2011.

2.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider the indicators of the Annual Growth Survey to be in line with the national ones (used in your country)? Are the different indicators considered to be coherent enough to give realistic picture on the actual situation of the EU economy?

The European Parliament has not formally reacted on the AGS.

2.3 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that any aspect of the subsequent Annual Growth Surveys should be changed? If so, which aspect(s) and why?

The European Parliament's position on this will be established in 2011.

Nonetheless, the first AGS should not be taken as a perfect prediction of the subsequent ones. The AGS should become a review tool of past European Semesters in future European

³⁵ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0491+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

Semesters. It will take a few years before the process is fully in place; as the first year of the Semester, 2011, can only be evaluated in 2012, when recommendations would be given for 2013; meaning that the European Semester should be fully established by the summer of 2012.

2.4 Does your Parliament/Chamber have an input into the governmental activities concerning the European Semester? If so, please specify what input and in what way.

In its Resolution of 17 February 2011, the European Parliament supported the AGS and the European Semester as being tools for enhanced coordination of economic policies. However, the existing tools of Member States' broad economic policy guidelines and employment guidelines, which are based on the Treaty, should not be replaced nor their importance be diminished. On these tools, the European Parliament is strongly involved and consulted.

The European Parliament fears that the EU 2020 strategy will not be able to meet its targets³⁶ due to its weak governance structure. The European Parliament therefore not only asks the Council to strengthen the Community method, but also proposes to integrate the EU 2020 goals and the European Semester into the legislative package of the economic governance framework.

2.5 Do you plan to implement any special procedure in your Parliament/Chamber related to the European Semester? If so, please elaborate.

Relevant provisions on the European Semester have been incorporated in the ongoing economic governance package; e.g. a request for an inter-institutional procedural agreement on the European Semester that is to be reviewed every three years (Wortmann-Kool report). This aims to give it a legal base, rather than it remaining an international agreement.

In parallel, work in the European Parliament has started with an own initiative report on the European Semester (Rapporteur: P. Berès (S&D, FR)). The first INI Report should define the role and main guidelines for the Parliament's involvement in the European Semester, and what the European Parliament expects from other institutions. It should also define the exercise as a systematic annual follow up, with specific dates and activities, i.e. the calendar, date of nominations, the composition of a working group, and an annual vote. INI reports in the future could review this procedure, next to evaluating the performance of the European Semester in any specific year.

Important elements of this INI report also include in proposals on how to ensure the most effective collaboration between the European Parliament and national parliaments, e.g. the best timing for inter-parliamentary meetings and accountability hearings with the Council or Commission.

2.6 Has your Parliament/Chamber identified any weaknesses of the European Semester initiative? If so, which would be the main modifications that your Parliament/Chamber would recommend introducing for its successful implementation in the future?

³⁶ Based on five EU headline targets: (1) employment; (2) improving the conditions for innovation; (3) research and development; (4) meeting EU climate change and energy objectives; and (5) improving education levels and promoting social inclusion, in particular by reducing poverty.

Unfortunately, the European Commission and Council granted the European Parliament only a very marginal role in the European Semester, which the European Parliament is not satisfied with. At the moment, the European Semester is based on an intergovernmental agreement only (Ecofin Council, 7 September 2010). It would be more beneficial, if it were to have a more solid legislative basis rather than that of an intergovernmental agreement: the European Parliament is to make proposals in this respect (Wortmann-Kool report, Berès INI, see above).

2.7 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that all national Parliaments and the European Parliament need to be involved in the running of the European Semester? If so, please indicate the possible format (e.g. annual parliamentary conference on budget).

National parliaments are crucial to the success of the European Semester. They now have an enhanced role in the European Semester, as they should act as the watchdogs of EU level commitments of their governments in their national budgetary process. This applies especially for the approval of the Stability and Convergence Programmes (SCP) and the National Reform Programmes (NRP). Also, flexibility may be required in some legislatures as regards the timing of the budgetary process.

It is important to find the appropriate level of engagement for cooperation between national parliaments and the European Parliament in the framework of the European Semester. A balance needs to be struck between contributing to dialogue, transparency and ownership on the one hand, but without causing unnecessary delays in the process on the other hand. An important request from the European Parliament to national parliaments could be to ask for their ideas as regards the best timing for inter-parliamentary meetings in future years. Next to a Speakers' Conference and Committee Chairs conferences and next to the traditional resolution of the European Parliament in February ahead of the Spring Summit, a joint inter-parliamentary debate could be organised at Committee level; e.g. in early June before the endorsement of the European Council's country-specific guidance (June-July), but after the Commission's country-specific recommendations, thereby guaranteeing an EU dimension and enhanced interest by national parliamentarians.

Inter-parliamentary meetings have already taken place in early 2011, organised by individual Committees (ECON in March and BUDG in April). However, for future years it may be useful to establish these types of meetings as a regular event and to decide upon a commonly agreed and strategic timing for them in the framework of the European Semester. This could be done by cooperation among relevant Committees in both the European and national Parliaments, rather than a multitude of uncoordinated meetings.

3. Economic governance and financial regulation in general

3.1 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the financial supervision package and the package of proposals to strengthen the tools of economic governance, presented by the Commission on 29 September 2010³⁷, are adequate and sufficient for a healthy recovery of the European economy? Should there be a parliamentary debate on the subject? If so, please give detailed answers.

³⁷ COM(2010)0522, COM(2010)0523, COM(2010)0524, COM(2010)0525, COM(2010)0526, COM(2010)0527 of 29.9.2010

The European Parliament considers the financial supervision package to be an adequate tool for establishing a European approach in supervision and ensuring that problems with a cross-border dimension and systemic risk can be dealt with by a joint college of competent supervisors. Any shortcomings of the current package will be examined in a review procedure.

The economic governance package, as proposed by the European Commission, will be improved primarily during the current ordinary legislative procedure by the co-legislators European Parliament and Council. While the general position of the Council was adopted in mid-March, the European Parliament hopes to adopt its Committee position in mid-April 2011, followed by informal trilogues.

3.2 Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that the legal justification for the three-folded control under the economic governance package should be further complemented?

Not applicable

3.3 Do you have any recommendations regarding the gradual application of the sanctions and incentives of the enforcement mechanisms, which were designed to ensure the functioning of the economic surveillance framework?

The main results of the General Approach by the Council provides for a strengthening of the corrective arm of the Stability and Growth Pact. A new set of financial sanctions would be introduced for euro area Member States; these would apply earlier on in the excessive deficit procedure, and using a graduated approach. A non-interest-bearing deposit amounting to 0.2% of GDP may be imposed already when a decision has been taken to subject a country to the excessive deficit procedure. If the Council's recommendation for correcting the deficit is not followed, a fine will be imposed. Further non-compliance would result in the sanction being stepped up, in line with the existing provisions in the Stability and Growth Pact.

To trigger the sanction more automatically than at present, a so-called reverse majority rule would be introduced, whereby the Commission's proposal for imposing a deposit or a fine would be considered to be adopted, unless turned down by the Council with a qualified majority ('QMV').

Alongside the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, the draft directive aims to ensure that the objectives of EU budgetary coordination are reflected in the Member States' budgetary frameworks. Accounting, statistical and forecasting practices will be brought into line with EU standards. Member States will adopt multi-annual fiscal planning to ensure that the medium-term objectives set at EU level are achieved. They will also introduce rules to promote compliance with the deficit and debt thresholds.

The European Parliament's position has not yet been formulated: under discussion are, inter alia, the decision making procedures, sanctions and an expenditure benchmark.

3.4 In your opinion, what would be the optimal way for national Parliaments and the European Parliament to follow current political developments in the area of economic and fiscal coordination? Do you consider that Parliaments have the right tools at their disposal to respond rapidly to these developments? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this aspect of parliamentary work?

Prompt and concise information from national governments and the Council respectively is essential for the national parliaments and the European Parliament to be able to articulate their positions.

4. European Commission Work Programme for 2012

4.1 Has any debate taken place or has been foreseen in your Parliament/Chamber with the objective to give parliamentary input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012 before its publication by the European Commission? If so, please specify the method and the results.

Yes, as usual, the European Parliament will give input into the Commission Work Programme for 2012. The relevant procedure is defined in Annex IV to the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission, which was modified in October 2010 (Official Journal of the European Union, OJ 2010 L 304, p. 47). 2011 is thus the first year in which the revised system of an inter-institutional dialogue on priorities for the Commission Work Programme is fully applied.

In the first semester of the year, the parliamentary committees hold a dialogue with the corresponding Commissioners on the implementation of the current Work Programme and on the preparation of the future Commission Work Programme. The committees then report to the Conference of Committee Chairs, indicating their priorities for the next Work Programme. The Conference of Committee Chairs compiles these demands in a so-called "Summary Report" in June and on the basis of this report the political groups can prepare a resolution for the July plenary session.

In early September, the European Parliament organises a "State of the Union" debate in which the President of the Commission delivers an address, looking ahead to the priorities for the following year.

From the start of September, the parliamentary committees and the Commissioners may meet for more detailed exchanges of views on future priorities. Thereafter, in early October, the Conference of Committee Chairs meets with the College of Commissioners for final talks before the Commission adopts its Work Programme for the next year. In addition, the Conference of Presidents of political groups can meet with the President of the Commission. After adoption of the Commission Work Programme, the European Parliament may hold a debate in December.

4.2 Do you have any suggestions for a future coordinated ex-ante debate in COSAC on Commission Work Programmes in order to use the possibility to influence the EU strategic planning process at the earliest stage possible?

Not applicable to the European Parliament, due to the specific procedure and calendar defined in the Framework Agreement with the Commission as outlined above.

European Parliament (réponses en français)

1. La stratégie «Europe 2020»

1.1 Votre parlement/chambre a-t-il/elle participé au programme national de réforme et au programme de stabilité et de convergence de votre pays et, le cas échéant, de quelle manière?

Sans objet

1.2 Quelles mesures considérez-vous comme nécessaires au niveau national et européen pour atteindre les cinq grands objectifs de l'UE d'ici à 2020?

Le Parlement européen a fait connaître son opinion dans sa résolution du 17 février 2011 sur la stratégie «Europe 2020»³⁸. Le Parlement européen a soulevé à cet égard les points suivants:

- il a fait état de ses craintes quant à la faiblesse de sa structure de gouvernance, a demandé instamment au Conseil de renforcer la méthode communautaire et a appelé à l'intégration des objectifs de la stratégie UE 2020 dans le cadre de gouvernance économique et a demandé l'inscription du semestre européen dans le dispositif de gouvernance législative, tout en y associant très tôt les parlements nationaux et les partenaires sociaux afin de favoriser la responsabilité, l'appropriation et la légitimité démocratiques;
- il a demandé que le prochain cadre financier pluriannuel (CFP) reflète les ambitions de cette stratégie; il a invité la Commission à fournir des éclaircissements sur la dimension budgétaire des initiatives phares et à présenter des propositions visant à créer de nouvelles ressources propres pour l'Union afin de la doter de moyens financiers réels et autonomes; il a indiqué en outre que le secteur privé devrait apporter sa part de moyens financiers;
- il a insisté sur le fait qu'une politique de cohésion forte et bien financée doit être un élément complémentaire clé de la stratégie UE 2020; il a souligné, par ailleurs, la nécessité de créer des synergies entre les financements structurels et les financements au titre du programme-cadre;
- il a rappelé la nécessité de mesures résolues pour relancer le marché unique et l'initiative pour les petites entreprises (*Small Business Act*) afin de créer de l'emploi;
- il a souligné que le contenu actuel de la stratégie Europe 2020, où il est question de grands objectifs, de propositions phares, de blocages et d'indicateurs, reste extrêmement général; il a souligné la nécessité d'engagements tangibles de la part des États membres dans leurs programmes nationaux de réforme et de propositions législatives concrètes et cohérentes;

³⁸ Le document n° P7_TA-PROV(2011)0068 est disponible sur:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0068+0+DOC+XML+V0//FR&language=FR>

- concernant l'initiative phare sur «Une Union pour l'innovation»: les dépenses de recherche du secteur privé présentent encore de notables déficiences, auquel il ne peut être remédié que par une adaptation de l'environnement réglementaire des entreprises, notamment des PME; il est nécessaire d'accroître et d'encourager davantage le financement de la recherche, de l'innovation et du développement dans l'Union européenne au moyen d'une augmentation sensible des dépenses dans ce secteur après 2013;
- concernant l'initiative phare «Jeunesse en mouvement»: il y a lieu que la Commission continue à financer comme il se doit les programmes pour la mobilité et la jeunesse, comme les programmes pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie (Erasmus, Leonardo, Comenius, Grundtvig), Jeunesse en action et Marie Curie, car une décision en ce sens contribuerait notablement à la lutte contre le chômage des jeunes et à la réalisation de l'objectif d'un taux d'emploi de 75 %;
- concernant l'initiative phare sur «Une stratégie numérique pour l'Europe»: il convient que la Commission accélère l'adoption des propositions relatives au marché unique du numérique (commerce électronique, propriété intellectuelle, confiance et sécurité en ligne, itinérance, authentification en ligne, etc.); il y a lieu de poursuivre les études sur la première politique du spectre radioélectrique; il est essentiel de favoriser la libre circulation des contenus et des connaissances (la «cinquième liberté») et de préserver le pluralisme des médias, comme de protéger la vie privée. À cet égard, il convient d'adapter la directive sur la protection des données à l'environnement numérique actuel, afin que tous les citoyens puissent contrôler leurs données personnelles;
- concernant l'initiative phare sur «Une Europe efficace dans l'utilisation des ressources»: il y a lieu que la Commission conçoive des indicateurs concrets et qu'elle veille à ce que les objectifs fixés soient atteints et à ce qu'ils puissent être contrôlés dans le cadre de la stratégie «Europe 2020» et du semestre européen de coordination politique; il convient de moderniser et de mettre à niveau l'infrastructure européenne dans le domaine de l'énergie, de créer des réseaux intelligents et d'établir des interconnexions, qui sont indispensables pour réaliser le marché intérieur de l'énergie, améliorer la sécurité des approvisionnements et atteindre nos objectifs en matière d'énergie et de climat, ainsi que d'accélérer les procédures d'autorisation;
- concernant l'initiative phare «Une politique industrielle à l'ère de la mondialisation»: les politiques de l'Union qui couvrent les infrastructures et les services dans les domaines du transport et de l'énergie jouent un rôle capital pour atteindre les objectifs de la stratégie «Europe 2020»; le secteur des transports veillera à ce que le marché de l'UE conserve sa place en tant que zone de production hautement qualifiée, par la décarbonisation de tous les modes de transport, la mise en œuvre d'un espace ferroviaire unique européen et la réalisation du ciel unique européen; il convient de mettre en place une stratégie européenne efficace dans le secteur des matières premières, afin d'améliorer leur accessibilité et l'utilisation efficace de l'énergie et des ressources, tout en garantissant l'approvisionnement en matières premières essentielles à travers le développement d'accords de libre-échange et de partenariats stratégiques; il y a lieu d'améliorer nettement l'accès aux moyens de financement dans les domaines de l'innovation et des infrastructures, en particulier pour les réseaux intelligents, les technologies vertes, les applications de santé en ligne, les réseaux transeuropéens (RTE) et les projets dont la valeur ajoutée est avérée mais que le

marché ne peut pas financer; à cet égard, il convient d'explorer les possibilités que présente l'émission d'emprunts obligataires;

- concernant l'initiative phare sur «Une stratégie pour les nouvelles compétences et les nouveaux emplois»: des investissements dans des politiques d'activation du marché du travail et des perspectives d'enseignement et de formation pour tous sont essentiels pour réduire le chômage; comme le sont, à cet égard, les PME et la relance du marché unique, la mise en œuvre du cadre européen des certifications et l'initiative législative planifiée en vue de réformer les qualifications professionnelles afin de garantir la reconnaissance mutuelle de celles-ci;
- concernant l'initiative phare sur «Une plateforme européenne contre la pauvreté»: il est nécessaire de mener des actions concrètes dans le sens de l'inclusion sociale, en particulier en renforçant la méthode ouverte de coordination dans le domaine social, sous la forme d'une stratégie intégrée qui engage les acteurs nationaux et locaux, notamment des personnes frappées par la pauvreté et l'exclusion; il convient également de mettre en place un vaste programme de promotion du travail décent, de défense des droits des travailleurs dans l'ensemble de l'Europe, d'amélioration des conditions de travail, et de lutte contre les inégalités et les discriminations et contre le phénomène de la pauvreté des travailleurs.

1.3 Votre parlement/chambre a-t-il/elle tenu compte, débattu des indicateurs nationaux établis par le gouvernement, et participé à leur élaboration, dans le cadre de l'évaluation de l'état des économies nationales? Dans l'affirmative, prière de préciser.

Sans objet

2. Le semestre européen et l'analyse annuelle de la croissance

2.1 Votre parlement/chambre a-t-il/elle mené, ou l'intention de mener, un débat sur les résultats de l'analyse annuelle de la croissance? Le cas échéant, veuillez indiquer la procédure employée et les résultats.

Le Conseil du 7 Septembre dernier dans ses conclusions établissant le semestre européen prévoyait que le rôle du Parlement européen serait d'organiser un débat et de proposer des orientations à partir de l'analyse annuelle de la croissance (AAC) présentée par la Commission européenne en janvier de chaque année. Ceci fut également l'unique rôle donné au Parlement européen. Cependant, également dans le cadre de l'adoption du paquet législatif sur la gouvernance économique, le Parlement européen a réfléchi aux modalités les plus appropriées pour monitorer le processus.

Alors que le premier semestre européen en 2011 relève beaucoup de l'exercice «pilote», l'ambition est qu'une fois mis en place correctement, il intégrera tous les cycles de politique économique de l'UE en la matière dans son cadre d'application, et notamment la coordination fiscale (dans le pacte de stabilité et de croissance, PSC), les nouvelles procédures pour lutter contre le déséquilibre macroéconomique et les politiques structurelles dans la stratégie UE 2020. Le Parlement européen «invite la Commission à présenter une communication regroupant les grandes orientations de politique économique (article 121, paragraphe 2, du traité FUE) et les orientations relatives à la politique de l'emploi

(article 148, paragraphe 2, du traité FUE) dans le débat du "semestre européen" afin de réduire les discussions oiseuses et sans fin». ³⁹

Alors que l'AAC devrait se muer en un outil d'examen lors des prochains semestres européens, dans la première AAC, la Commission s'est concentrée sur une approche intégrée de la relance économique, en se focalisant sur des mesures clés dans le contexte de la stratégie Europe 2020. Cependant, il faudra quelques années avant que le processus ne soit complètement déployé, car la première année du semestre européen (à savoir, 2011) ne pourra être évaluée qu'en 2012, tandis que les recommandations seront présentées en 2013; ce qui signifie que le semestre européen devrait être complètement en place à l'été 2012.

En conséquence, le Parlement a mené en 2011 des débats sur la gouvernance économique et les objectifs de la stratégie UE 2020 en général. La réforme de la gouvernance économique fait également l'objet d'un travail intense. Pour les années suivantes, la réponse du Parlement à l'AAC aura certainement lieu dans un cadre plus structuré, qui sera décidé en 2011.

2.2 Votre parlement/chambre considère-t-il/elle que les indicateurs de l'analyse annuelle de la croissance correspondent aux indicateurs nationaux (utilisés dans votre pays)? Les différents indicateurs sont-ils considérés comme suffisamment cohérents pour refléter de manière réaliste la situation réelle de l'économie de l'UE?

Le Parlement européen n'a pas officiellement réagi à l'AAC.

2.3 Votre parlement/chambre considère-t-il/elle qu'il y a lieu de changer un des aspects des prochaines analyses annuelles de la croissance? Le cas échéant, quel(s) aspect(s) et pourquoi?

La position du Parlement européen à ce sujet sera précisée en 2011.

Néanmoins, la première AAC ne doit pas être vue comme une prédiction parfaite des prochaines analyses. L'AAC doit devenir un outil d'examen des précédents semestres européens lors des prochains semestres européens. Il faudra plusieurs années avant que le processus ne soit complètement déployé; car la première année du semestre, 2011, ne pourra être évaluée qu'en 2012, tandis que les recommandations seront présentées en 2013; ce qui signifie que le semestre européen devrait être complètement en place à l'été 2012.

2.4 Votre parlement/chambre participe-t-il/elle aux activités du gouvernement liées au semestre européen? Le cas échéant, veuillez préciser la nature de sa contribution et comment elle s'exprime.

Dans sa résolution du 17 février 2011, le Parlement européen a soutenu l'AAC et le semestre européen en tant qu'outils permettant d'améliorer la coordination des politiques économiques. Toutefois, les vastes orientations des outils actuels des États membres en matière de politique économique et d'emploi, basées sur le traité, ne doivent pas être remplacées et leur importance ne doit pas être réduite. Le Parlement européen est fortement impliqué et consulté au sujet de ces outils.

³⁹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0491+0+DOC+XML+V0//FR&language=FR>.

Le Parlement européen craint que la stratégie UE 2020 ne soit pas en mesure d'atteindre ses objectifs⁴⁰ en raison de la faiblesse de sa structure de gouvernance. Le Parlement européen ne demande dès lors pas seulement au Conseil de renforcer la méthode communautaire, mais il propose également d'intégrer les objectifs de la stratégie UE 2020 et le semestre européen dans le dispositif législatif du cadre de gouvernance économique.

2.5 Prévoyez-vous de mettre en œuvre une procédure spéciale dans votre parlement/chambre dans le cadre du semestre européen? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez en préciser les modalités.

Les dispositions relatives au semestre européen ont été intégrées au dispositif actuel de la gouvernance économique; par exemple, une demande d'accord de procédure interinstitutionnel sur le semestre européen, qui doit être examiné tous les trois ans (rapport Wortmann-Kool). L'objectif est de doter cet accord d'une base juridique, pour qu'il ne demeure pas un accord international.

Parallèlement, au Parlement européen, le travail a commencé par un rapport d'initiative sur le semestre européen (rapporteur: P. Berès (S&D, FR)). Le premier rapport INI devrait préciser le rôle et les principales lignes directrices de l'implication du Parlement dans le semestre européen, et ce que le Parlement européen attend des autres institutions. Il devrait également définir l'exercice comme un suivi annuel systématique, avec des dates et des activités spécifiques, à savoir, le calendrier, la date des nominations, la composition d'un groupe de travail, ainsi qu'un vote annuel. À l'avenir, des rapports INI pourraient revoir cette procédure et évaluer la performance du semestre européen d'une année en particulier. Parmi les éléments importants de ce rapport INI, figurent également des propositions sur la manière de garantir la collaboration la plus efficace entre le Parlement européen et les parlements nationaux, par exemple, la fréquence la plus appropriée des réunions interparlementaires et des audiences en responsabilité avec le Conseil ou la Commission.

2.6 Votre parlement/chambre a-t-il/elle constaté des faiblesses dans l'initiative «semestre européen»? Le cas échéant, quelles seraient les principales modifications que votre parlement/chambre recommanderait d'apporter pour réussir sa mise en œuvre à l'avenir?

Malheureusement, la Commission européenne et le Conseil n'ont accordé au Parlement européen qu'un rôle très marginal dans le semestre européen, ce qui ne satisfait pas le Parlement européen. Pour l'instant, le semestre européen se base uniquement sur un accord intergouvernemental (Conseil Ecofin, 7 septembre 2010). Il serait plus avantageux de disposer d'une base juridique plus solide au lieu de celle d'un accord intergouvernemental: le Parlement européen doit émettre des propositions à cet égard (rapport Wortmann-Kool, Berès INI, voir ci-dessus).

2.7 Votre parlement/chambre considère-t-il/elle que tous les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen doivent être impliqués dans le fonctionnement du semestre européen? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez indiquer le format possible (par ex., conférence parlementaire annuelle sur le budget).

⁴⁰ Compte tenu des cinq grands objectifs de l'UE: (1) l'emploi; (2) améliorer les conditions de l'innovation; (3) la recherche et le développement; (4) la concrétisation de nos ambitions dans le domaine du changement climatique et de l'énergie; et (5) l'amélioration des niveaux d'éducation et la promotion de l'inclusion sociale, notamment par la réduction de la pauvreté.

Les parlements nationaux sont essentiels à la réussite du semestre européen. Ils jouent désormais un plus grand rôle dans le semestre européen, car ils doivent agir en tant que gardiens des engagements au niveau européen de leurs gouvernements dans leur processus budgétaire national. Cela s'applique en particulier à l'approbation des programmes de stabilité et de convergence (PSC) et aux programmes nationaux de réformes (PNR). De même, au cours de certaines législatures, la flexibilité peut s'avérer nécessaire au niveau du rythme du processus budgétaire.

Il est important de trouver le niveau d'engagement approprié pour la coopération entre les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen dans le cadre du semestre européen. Il convient de trouver un équilibre entre la contribution au dialogue, la transparence et l'appropriation, d'une part, sans provoquer, d'autre part, des retards inutiles dans le processus.

Il pourrait se révéler prépondérant que le Parlement européen demande aux parlements nationaux ce qu'ils pensent être la meilleure fréquence pour les réunions interparlementaires. Outre une Conférence des Présidents et des Conférences des présidents de commission, et outre la traditionnelle résolution de février du Parlement européen avant le sommet de printemps, un débat interparlementaire conjoint pourrait être organisé au niveau des commissions; début juin, par exemple, avant l'inscription des orientations pour chaque pays du Conseil européen (juin-juillet), mais après les recommandations pour chaque pays de la Commission, garantissant dès lors une dimension européenne et un plus grand intérêt de la part des parlementaires nationaux.

Des réunions inter-parlementaires ont d'ores et déjà eu lieu début 2011, organisées par des commissions parlementaires singulières (ECON en mars et BUDG en Avril). Toutefois, pour les prochaines années, il pourrait être utile d'établir ce type de réunions en tant qu'événement régulier et de convenir d'un accord sur un calendrier commun et stratégique pour ces réunions dans le cadre du semestre européen. Plutôt qu'une multitude de réunions non-coordonnées, cela pourrait se faire en coopération entre les Commissions concernées dans les Parlements nationaux et européen.

3. GOUVERNANCE ÉCONOMIQUE ET RÉGULATION FINANCIÈRE EN GÉNÉRAL

3.1 Votre parlement/chambre considère-t-il/elle que la batterie de mesures de supervision financière et l'ensemble des propositions visant à renforcer les outils de gouvernance économique, présentées par la Commission le 29 septembre 2010⁴¹, sont appropriés et suffisent pour relancer sainement l'économie européenne? Y a-t-il lieu de tenir un débat parlementaire à ce sujet? Le cas échéant, veuillez répondre de manière détaillée.

Le Parlement européen considère que la batterie de mesures de supervision financière constitue un outil adéquat pour mettre en place une approche européenne de la supervision et pour veiller à ce que les problèmes à dimension transfrontalière et le risque systémique puissent être examinés par un collège conjoint de superviseurs compétents. Toute lacune relevée dans les mesures actuelles fera l'objet d'un examen.

⁴¹ COM(2010)0522, COM(2010)0523, COM(2010)0524, COM(2010)0525, COM(2010)0526, COM(2010)0527 du 29.9.2010

Le paquet «gouvernance économique», tel que proposé par la Commission européenne, sera principalement amélioré au cours de la procédure législative ordinaire par les colégislateurs, le Parlement européen et le Conseil. Alors que la position générale du Conseil a été adoptée à la mi-mars, le Parlement européen espère quant à lui adopter sa position de commission à la mi-avril 2011, avant les trilogues informels.

3.2 Votre parlement/chambre considère-t-il/elle que la justification juridique du triple contrôle prévu par le paquet «gouvernance économique» doit être complétée?

Sans objet

3.3 Quelles seraient vos recommandations concernant l'application graduelle des sanctions et des mesures d'encouragement des mécanismes d'application, qui ont été conçues pour assurer le fonctionnement du cadre de surveillance économique?

Les résultats principaux de l'approche générale du Conseil proposent un renforcement du volet correctif du pacte de stabilité et de croissance. De nouvelles sanctions financières seraient introduites pour les États membres de la zone euro; elles s'appliqueraient plus tôt ou au cours de la procédure concernant les déficits excessifs, et à l'aide d'une approche graduelle. Un dépôt ne portant pas intérêt, équivalant à 0,2 % du PIB, pourrait être imposé dès qu'il aura été décidé de soumettre un pays à la procédure concernant les déficits excessifs. Si la recommandation du Conseil demandant de corriger le déficit n'est pas respectée, une amende sera imposée. Si le non-respect devait se poursuivre, la sanction serait augmentée, conformément aux dispositions en vigueur du pacte de stabilité et de croissance;

Afin de déclencher la sanction de façon plus automatique qu'à l'heure actuelle, la règle de la majorité inversée serait introduite, en vertu de laquelle la proposition de la Commission d'imposer un dépôt ou une amende serait considérée comme adoptée sauf si elle est rejetée par le Conseil à la majorité qualifiée.

Outre la réforme du pacte de stabilité et de croissance, le projet de directive vise à garantir que les objectifs de la coordination budgétaire de l'UE se reflètent dans les cadres budgétaires des États membres. Les pratiques comptables, statistiques et en matière de prévision seront alignées sur les normes de l'UE. Les États membres adopteront une planification budgétaire pluriannuelle afin d'assurer la réalisation des objectifs à moyen terme fixés au niveau de l'UE. Ils introduiront également des règles allant dans le sens du respect des seuils de déficit et d'endettement.

La position du Parlement européen n'a pas encore été formulée: les points discutés concernent, entre autres, les procédures décisionnelles, les sanctions et un instrument de référence pour les dépenses.

3.4 Selon vous, comment les parlements nationaux et le Parlement européen pourraient-ils suivre, de manière optimale, les développements politiques actuels dans le domaine de la coordination économique et fiscale? Considérez-vous que les parlements disposent des bons outils pour répondre rapidement à ces évolutions? Quelles sont vos suggestions pour améliorer cet aspect du travail parlementaire?

Il est essentiel que les gouvernements nationaux et le Conseil fournissent des informations rapides et concises respectivement aux parlements nationaux et au Parlement européen, pour qu'ils soient en mesure d'exprimer leur position.

4. Programme de travail de la Commission pour 2012

4.1 Un débat a-t-il eu lieu ou est-il prévu au sein de votre parlement/chambre en vue d'offrir une contribution parlementaire au programme de travail de la Commission pour 2012 avant sa publication par la Commission européenne? Le cas échéant, veuillez indiquer la procédure employée et les résultats.

Oui, comme toujours, le Parlement européen participera à l'élaboration du programme de travail de la Commission pour 2012. La procédure en la matière est précisée à l'annexe IV de l'accord-cadre sur les relations entre le Parlement européen et la Commission européenne, qui a été modifié en octobre 2010 (Journal officiel de l'Union européenne, JO 2010 L 304, p. 47). 2011 est donc la première année où le système révisé de dialogue interinstitutionnel sur les priorités du programme de travail de la Commission est entièrement appliqué.

Au cours du premier semestre de l'année, les commissions parlementaires tiennent un dialogue avec les commissaires correspondants au sujet de la mise en œuvre du programme de travail actuel et sur la préparation du prochain programme de travail de la Commission. Les commissions remettent ensuite un rapport à la Conférence des présidents de commission, en indiquant leurs priorités pour le prochain programme de travail. La Conférence des présidents de commission rassemble ces demandes dans un «rapport de synthèse» en juin et, sur la base de ce rapport, les groupes politiques peuvent élaborer une résolution pour la session plénière de juillet.

Début septembre, le Parlement européen organise un débat sur l'«état de l'Union» au cours duquel le Président de la Commission s'exprime au sujet des priorités de l'année suivante. Dès le début du mois de septembre, les commissions parlementaires et les commissaires peuvent se rencontrer pour des échanges de vues plus approfondis sur les futures priorités. Ensuite, début octobre, la Conférence des présidents de commission se réunit avec le Collège des commissaires pour les discussions finales avant que la Commission adopte son programme de travail pour l'année suivante. En outre, la Conférence des présidents de groupes politiques peut se réunir avec le Président de la Commission.

Après l'adoption du programme de travail de la Commission, le Parlement européen peut organiser un débat en décembre.

4.2 Quelles sont vos suggestions pour un futur débat préalable coordonné à la COSAC sur les programmes de travail de la Commission afin d'user de la possibilité d'influencer dès que possible le processus de planification stratégique de l'UE?

Sans objet au Parlement européen, en raison de la procédure et du calendrier spécifiques définis dans l'accord-cadre avec la Commission, comme précisé ci-dessus.