

2012 European semester

MEPs push for greater involvement

By Gaspard Sebag | Friday 26 October 2012

One of the shortcomings identified by the European Parliament in the coordination of national budgetary and economic policies at European level via the 2012 'European semester' is the lack of political debate surrounding it. In an opinion drafted by Jean-Paul Gauzès (EPP, France) and backed by 430 votes in plenary, on 26 October, MEPs therefore call for greater involvement of both the EP and national parliaments. Deputies also urge the European Commission to check that countries put its recommendations into effect.

The Council is also proceeding, in different formations, with an evaluation of the 2012 exercise. Time constraints - with ministers pushing for a more flexible calendar - increasing the sense of ownership by member states and pushing for more concrete policy recommendations are amongst the issues member states want to address. The review is to be concluded in December, when the 2013 'European semester' will be launched.

TOO BUREAUCRATIC

'European semester' arrangements are too bureaucratic and insufficiently political, says Gauzès' resolution. The document contrasts the lack of debate on EU-wide economic policy coordination with the open and democratic debates that help to shape national economic policy making in each member state.

To address the shortcomings, MEPs ask to be more extensively involved in the next semester cycle and notably at the early stages. The resolution also notes that in many member states national parliaments, the social partners and civil society were not involved in the 'European semester' and asks the Commission to remedy this in 2013. It also asks the Commission to keep a closer eye on how each country implements its recommendations, and the Council to explain why it sees fit to modify country-specific ones.