

Brussels, 25. 10. 2022

Dear Madam President Metsola,

We would like to draw your attention to the, at times, chaotic and confusing voting process we witness in the Committees and Plenary. The latter is especially problematic, as we gather every day in the Plenary room to take numerous votes within a two-hour timeframe and voting by the show of hands often creates chaos, which leads to mistakes, which can lead to different voting outcomes.

However, the biggest issue with such a voting system is the lack of transparency.

The European Parliament as an institution is committed to assuring the highest level of transparency, and as the only directly elected representatives in the Union, we pride ourselves on the level of transparency we provide, as it carries great importance in a democratic system. However, we only partially follow this crucial value when it comes to our votes taken in the Committees and the Plenary.

In our work, we represent all EU citizens, which means we must actualize the legitimacy of our work by being accountable to them. As we know, accountability derives from transparency. We do not deny the important progress made in the last few years in improving the tools for assuring transparency in the European Parliament, mainly through amending our Rules of procedures.

To amend Rules of procedure is not an uncommon manoeuvre and should be done when needed. In fact, there was an adaptation of the voting system we have in place in 2014, when the Parliament adopted a modification of the Rules of procedures – current Rule 188, with the requirement of the roll-call system for all final votes in committees on both resolutions and legislation. Furthermore, we firmly believe that it must be further adapted.

We strongly disagree with Rule 187 (1), which states: "As a general rule, Parliament shall vote by show of hands". While Rule 190 of the Rules of procedure does allow political groups or a group of Members to table requests for roll call votes, the amount of such votes is limited. By having a vote by show of hands as a general rule, we permit MEPs as the elected representatives to have a safety net for hiding or dodging their position being known to the citizens by not having any records that can hold them accountable for their voting behaviour.

Furthermore, all of us have witnessed first-hand how inefficient our voting system is. The vice-president chairing the voting session often gets lost in the voting lists because of the constant switches between roll call votes and voting by show of hands, while the latter is often followed by a request to check the vote. Even though our translators do tremendous work, there is a level of confusion created throughout the voting because of a slight delay in the translation.

Let us not forget the lessons learnt during the pandemic. For two years, we have been voting remotely, thus all our votes were taken by RCV. The implemented system has proven to be very efficient; let us use this knowledge and make every vote taken as a registered one.

As Members of the European Parliament, our given fundamental role in our functioning democracy is to act transparently and with accountability to our citizens, which is directly ensured by informing our citizens with decisions and votes taken, and not only final votes, but also all votes taken in the Committees and Plenary.

Therefore, Madam President, for the outlined reasons and for the sake of transparency we owe to our constituents as elected officials, we are asking you to consider implementing the change to the voting procedure and instead of the raise of hands, to have all votes taken by roll call vote (RCV).

Sincerely yours,

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