

AMENDMENT FORM

Title VI: The democratic life of the Union

Suggestion for amendment of Article : 34

By Members: Mr Andrew Duff, Mr Lamberto Dini, Mr Paul Helminger, Mr Dimitrij Rupel, Mr Alain Lamassoure, Mr Matti Vanhanen, Mr Peeter Kreitzberg, Mr Algirdas Gričius, Mr Puiu Hasotti, Mr Jelko Kacin, Mr Zekeriya Akçam and Mr Eugenijus Maldeikis; and Alternate Members: Ms Lone Dybkjaer, Mr Valdo Spini, Mr Willem Van Eekelen, Lord MacLennan of Rogart, Mr Nesrin Uzun, Mr Marios Matsakis, Mrs Androula Vassiliou, Mr Istvan Szent-Ivanyi, Mr Péter Eckstein-Kovacs, Mr Ibrahim Ozal and Mr Gintautas Sivickas.

Status : Members and alternate members

Article 34: *European democracy*

1. Every citizen *is encouraged to participate in the democratic life of the Union. Citizens are directly represented in the European Parliament. Member State governments are represented in the European Council and Council, and are themselves accountable to national parliaments.*
 2. The Union institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their opinions on all areas of Union action. *Decisions shall be taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizen.*
 3. *The Union shall respect and foster the autonomy of regional and local government. Regions and local authorities are consulted in the Committee of the Regions.*
 4. *The Union recognises and promotes the involvement of the social partners, management and labour, in economic and social governance. Representatives of civil and economic society are consulted in the Economic and Social Committee.*
 5. The Union institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations, *the social partners* and civil society.
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Explanation:

We propose a change in the title to reflect the (amended) broader content of the article. The Praesidium's draft was too much concerned with only one aspect of democracy -

'participatory' - when in fact the Union is founded mainly on the principle of representative democracy. The citizen would not be much the wiser about how the Union is run if presented by the Constitution with only one, narrow definition of democracy.

1. What is the meaning of the Praesidium's statement that "Every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union"? If it means that citizens may vote and stand for election at European Parliamentary and municipal level, it is less clear than Articles 39 and 40 of the Charter, which state the same thing.

Or is it in fact a new fundamental right? If so, why is it not in the Charter?

However, if we mean merely that citizens should be encouraged to become engaged in representative democracy and civil society at a European level, we should say so. We should also tell them how they find themselves represented and consulted through the official institutions and organs of the Union.

2. We add as a second sentence the attractive phrases from Article 1 TEU. The principle of transparency is properly coupled with that of proximity.

We move old paragraph 3 to the end of the article.

3. We propose the addition of a straightforward appreciation of the importance of regional and local government, and, in the second sentence, a reference to the consultative role of the Committee of the Regions.

4. The important, formal role of the social partners should be acknowledged here in the Constitution. To reflect the above reference to the Committee of the Regions, we also refer here to the Economic and Social Committee.

New paragraph 5 (old paragraph 3) completes the article with a summary of how the Union treats its interlocutors, with the necessary addition of the social partners.