Press release | 13.03.2013

European Parliament composition

Clear rules on seat distribution instead of perpetual horse-trading

The European Parliament today adopted proposals on its composition following the accession of Croatia on 1 July 2013 and the 2014 European elections (1). In addition to a compromise solution on the distribution from 2014 on, MEPs endorsed a proposal put forward by the Greens to establish a clear and permanent formula for the allocation of seats in the long term, which would end the recurring haggling over parliament seats (2). After the vote, Green constitutional affairs spokesperson **Gerald Häfner** (MEP, Germany) stated:

"MEPs have today voted in favour of proposals, which would end the perpetual cycle of horse-trading on seat distribution in the European Parliament if they were made law. Instead of recurrent haggling over seats and representation by individual member states each time the overall composition of the EP changes, the Green proposals adopted today would fix a clear formula for seat distribution, based on population and digressive proportion. This would ensure clear and transparent rules, thereby strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the EP. In order for these proposals to be enacted, they would have to be included in the EU Treaty and we hope this fair and transparent proposal can be made permanent, with adoption by a European Convention following the 2014 elections."

(1) The number of seats in the European Parliament is set to increase to 766 following Croatian accession, far beyond the composition of 751 members, as set out in the Lisbon Treaty. MEPs today endorsed a pragmatic proposal, preventing that any one country from losing more than one seat.

(2) The report adopted today also included a Green proposal for a more permanent solution to seat distribution, with a population-based, digressive-proportional formula. This proposal would have to be adopted by a European Convention (composed of delegates from the European Council, Commission, European and national Parliaments), which the Greens hope will be convened after the European elections in 2014.

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