

WIKI n°1: Governance According to the European Commission¹

In the wake of elaborating the “White Paper on European Governance” in July 2001, the European Commission launched an eight-month public consultation, calling on all interested parties to respond to document recommendations.

The public largely favored the principles outlined in the White Paper, emphasizing openness, participation, responsibility, efficiency, and coherence. Many respondents also urged the Commission to integrate principles like democratic legitimacy and subsidiarity.

Key Highlights from the Consultation:

- **Enhancing “Bottom-Up” participation in European Union policy design and implementation:** White Paper proposals to bolster participation and civil society engagement generated the highest levels of interest. A number of contributions confirmed low levels of citizen participation within the European Union, as highlighted in the White Paper, and emphasized a fundamental desire to engage in the consultation and development of European Union policies.

Reactions underscored the need for European Union governance to transition toward a more open and participatory model. Bolstering the role of national and subnational authorities, as well as civil society, in policymaking could enhance the European Union's legitimacy and effectiveness. Improved coordination between European institutions and national actors was also deemed essential.

- **Expanding the palette of instruments to face the new challenges to governance** via a more comprehensive approach to regulation-combining legislation, co-regulation, and a more open method of coordination- would increase policy effectiveness. The Commission also stressed the importance of basing policy decisions on robust evidence advocating for a systematic evaluation of the impacts of policies and greater transparency in decision-making processes, enabling better public and stakeholder involvement.

¹ European Commission (2003). Commission Report on European Governance. [comm_rapport_fr.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

- **The focus was on European institutions with clearer responsibilities.** The public consultation revealed a need for greater transparency in the distribution of competencies among these institutions. Citizens called for a clearer definition of each institution's role, particularly regarding legislative and executive powers. In response to requests for clarification, the Commission suggested adjustments to the treaty and existing procedures, notably those involving committees and regulatory agencies, to improve the Union's governance.
- The Commission proposed the following six measures in support of global governance:
 - Reforming the Commission's internal governance to ensure credibility when advocating for global change.
 - Upholding the rights and principles of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights, focusing on a global partnership for sustainable development, more solidarity-based globalization, and corporate social responsibility.
 - Strengthening exchanges with governmental and non-governmental actors in third countries on the use of new instruments at the global level, with the aim of supplementing binding international legislation and contributing to a global reform of multilateral organizations.
 - Examining approaches to non-binding international legislation and their application, recognizing that the less secure and less transparent global environment will require these tools in addition to binding legislation.
 - Establishing systematic coordination and more effective European Union representation within the United Nations system, particularly within the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.
 - Promoting coherent communication to ensure the EU speaks with a unified voice.