

*These notes refer to the European Parliament (Representation)  
Act 2003 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 8 May 2003*

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (REPRESENTATION) ACT 2003

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

#### **Part 1: Changes in total number of United Kingdom MEPs**

#### ***Section 3: Recommendations by Electoral Commission relating to changes in number of United Kingdom MEPs***

15. *Section 3* establishes a mechanism for reviews of the distribution of MEPs in the UK to take place when a change to the numbers under EC law has been agreed or is anticipated. The UK must take action to make sure that no more than the agreed number of MEPs are elected for the UK as a whole, though their distribution between the UK electoral regions is a matter for the UK alone.
16. *Subsections (1) and (3)* therefore give the Lord Chancellor the power to require the Electoral Commission to make recommendations within a specified period about the distribution of MEPs according to a total number specified by him. That number will be the number agreed at European level, or one the Lord Chancellor anticipates will be agreed. It is possible that the timing of the accession ratification process will be such that the Lord Chancellor will need to ask the Electoral Commission to begin work on calculations before a final number has been agreed. Provision has therefore been made for him to ask for calculations to be made for one or more different numbers.
17. *Subsection (4)* sets out the objectives which the Electoral Commission must achieve when making their recommendations. Each region is entitled to a minimum of 3 MEPs and subject to that the Commission must ensure that as nearly as possible the ratio of electors to MEPs is the same in each region.