

## Richard Bellamy: National parliaments should have a greater role in EU decision-Making

Background information on existing regulations/policy issues/initiatives

**Keywords:** *assembly of national parliamentarians, European parliament and national parliaments, European parliament mandate, Eurozone parliaments, joint parliamentary meetings EU, parliamentary committees, parliamentary assemblies, parliamentary assemblies in the European Union*

### TOPIC: THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED OR REPLACED BY A EUROPEAN ASSEMBLY OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARIANS

#### Overview

- Initially, the role of national parliaments within the European has been diminished as European integration progressed. The European Union's powers have expanded and its areas of competence have widened<sup>1</sup>
  - At the same time, the mandate of the European Parliament has grown stronger with time<sup>2</sup>
- More recently, national parliaments have however acquired at least some powers of scrutiny over their governments' EU activities as a result of constitutional reforms, government undertakings, changes to their own operating methods and interpretations of national constitutional rules<sup>3</sup>
- The idea of introducing an alternative to the European Parliament or amending the European Parliament in any shape of form by introducing an assembly of national parliamentarians has not yet been officially discussed on EU-level
  - In fact, even innovations like a Eurozone parliament have been rebuked by EU officials in recent years<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.coleurope.eu/system/files\\_force/research-paper/wp28\\_zalewskagstrein.pdf?download=1](https://www.coleurope.eu/system/files_force/research-paper/wp28_zalewskagstrein.pdf?download=1)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/the-continuously-growing-power-of-european-parliament-a-968365.html>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/pb\\_parliaments\\_6june16.pdf](http://www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/pb_parliaments_6june16.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/608693/EPRS\\_BRI\(2017\)608693\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/608693/EPRS_BRI(2017)608693_EN.pdf)

## In detail

- Until 1979 the European Parliament and national parliaments were in fact linked closer to each other as Members of the European Parliament were appointed from the ranks of national parliaments<sup>5</sup>
  - Only with the introduction of direct elections for the European Parliament did these ties grow weaker
- Since then, the role of national parliaments within the European Union has been detailed in a number of declaration, protocols and treaty texts, most notably:
  - The Maastricht Treaty (especially declarations 13 and 14)  
**Content:** The treaty acknowledges the role of national parliaments in the functioning of the European Union (their respective governments must inform them ‘in good time’ of European legislative proposals and joint conferences must be held where necessary) and calls for closer cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments, in the form of more systematic liaison, exchanges of information and regular meetings  
**Full document:** <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:12007L/TXT>
  - The Lisbon Treaty (Article 12)  
**Content:** Most importantly, the treaty states that “National Parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union”, especially “by seeing to it that the principle of subsidiarity is respected in accordance with the procedures provided for in the Protocol on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality”<sup>6</sup>  
**Full document:** <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:12007L/TXT>
  - Protocol 1 on the Role of National Parliaments in the European Union  
**Content:** Encourages greater involvement of national Parliaments in the activities of the European Union and asks to enhance their ability to express their views on draft legislative acts of the Union as well as on other matters which may be of particular interest to them  
**Full document:** <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016E%2FPRO%2F01>
- At the same time, a number of instruments have been set up to facilitate cooperation between national and European parliamentarians, most notably:
  - The Conferences of speakers of the parliamentary assemblies of the European Union<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/pb\\_parliaments\\_6june16.pdf](http://www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/pb_parliaments_6june16.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-european-union-and-comments/title-2-provisions-on-democratic-principles/74-article-12.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl/en/conferences.html>

- The European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD)<sup>8</sup>
  - The Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of the Parliaments of the European Union – COSAC<sup>9</sup>
  - Joint Parliamentary Meetings<sup>10</sup>
- Apart from cooperation with national parliaments, no official EU documentation suggests that EU officials are concerned with a potential replacement of or addition to the European parliament by introducing a European Assembly of National Parliamentarians or similar institutions

### Further reading

- [http://www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/pb\\_parliaments\\_6june16.pdf](http://www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/pb_parliaments_6june16.pdf)
- [https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt\\_papiere/070829marschall\\_ks.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt_papiere/070829marschall_ks.pdf)
- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/events-nationalparl.html>
- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/22/european-parliament-relations-with-the-national-parliaments>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://ecprd.secure.europarl.europa.eu/ecprd/public/page/about>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl/en/conferences/cosac.html>

<sup>10</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint\\_parliamentary\\_meeting\\_on\\_the\\_Future\\_of\\_Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_parliamentary_meeting_on_the_Future_of_Europe)