

Miriam Ronzoni: The European Parliament should be elected on transnational lists

Background information on existing regulations/policy issues/initiatives

Keywords: *electoral process of the European Parliament; electoral reform European Parliament; introduction of transnational lists; reform of the electoral process in the European Parliament; transnational lists; vote on transnational lists; vote on electoral reform*

Topic: The European Parliament should in the future be elected on transnational lists

Overview

- Even though there is no uniform voting system for the election of members of the European Parliament and each member state is free to choose its own system, certain official restrictions apply¹
 - Most notably, a form of proportional representation under either the party list or the single transferable vote system must be guaranteed
- Generally, most of the member states elect their Members of the European Parliament with a single constituency covering the entire state, using party-list proportional representation²
- The idea of transnational lists already dates back to the 1990s, when European Parliament reports mentioned the possibilities of such an electoral process, in which political parties should be entitled to present transnational lists. This would entail that European political parties, irrespective of their national roots, present one political manifesto and one list of candidates to all EU citizens across the territory of the whole Union³
 - With the necessary restructuring of the European Parliament after Brexit and the recent support of transnational lists by high level politicians such as Emmanuel Macron, the idea itself has gained traction again

In detail

- The voting procedure for members of the European Parliament is set down in a number of directives, most notably in:
 - The Treaty of Rome – Articles 20, 22 and 223
Content: Stated that Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) would initially be appointed by the national parliaments, but made provision for election by direct universal suffrage. This provision was implemented by the Council before the first direct elections of 1979 through the Act of 20 September 1976 concerning the

¹http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government_in_ireland/elections_and_referenda/european_elections/nomination_of_candidates_for_membership_of_the_european_parliament.html

²<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/21/the-european-parliament-electoral-procedures>

³<https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Transnationallists-Verger-Feb18.pdf>

election of the representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage

Full document: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=legisum:xy0023>

- The Treaty of Maastricht (TEU) – Article 14
Content: Provided that elections must be held in accordance with a uniform procedure and that the European Parliament should draw up a proposal to this effect, for unanimous adoption by the Council. However, since the Council was unable to agree on any of the proposals, the Treaty of Amsterdam introduced the possibility of adopting “common principles”
Full document: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012M%2FTXT>
- Council Decision 2002/772/EC
Content: Introduced the principles of proportional representation and incompatibility between national and European mandates
Full document: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32002D0772>
- The idea of reforming the electoral process for MEPs by allowing for their election on transnational lists has recently been brought back to discussion due to Brexit and the support of the idea by prominent politicians within the EU
 - Most prominently, French President Emmanuel Macron proposed that some of the 73 seats freed up by Britain's departure with Brexit should go to Europe-wide constituencies instead of national ones⁴
 - Moreover, the Democracy in Europe Movement (DiEM2025) has recently supported the idea of a reform of European elections
 - One instance of where a reformed electoral process (in line with a more European voting spirit) already took hold were the 2014 European Parliament Elections, in which European political parties endorsed common candidates for the post of the EU Commission President⁵
- However, the concrete proposal to introduce transnational lists was rejected in February 2018 by the European Parliament with 368 votes against, 274 in favor and 34 abstentions⁶
 - Amongst others, the biggest party in the European Parliament, the EPP, opposed the idea, stating that “idea of transnational lists, where MEPs are elected without constituencies and without responsibility, rejects true Europe. Therefore, the #TransnationalLists should be rejected”⁷
- Still, the introduction of transnational lists is advocated by a significant number of political institutions and organizations (see below)
 - Likewise, Emmanuel Macron stated that France would „continue to defend this idea in months and years to come because it would contribute to strengthening

⁴ <https://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/macrons-party-sticks-to-transnational-list-proposal/>

⁵ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-215_en.htm

⁶ <http://www.euronews.com/2018/02/07/eu-parliament-rejects-transnational-lists>

⁷ <http://www.eppgroup.eu/news/Why-transnational-lists-are-neither-European-nor-democratic>

European democracy by creating debates on European challenges and not strictly national ones during EU elections”⁸

Topic: NGOs/political groups/organizations in favor of introducing election procedures based on transnational lists

The Greens / European Free Alliance

<https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/article/news/transnational-lists-for-the-european-elections/>

The Spinelli Group

<http://www.spinelligroup.eu/de/article/support-transnational-lists-make-ep-elections-truly-european>

European Citizen Action Service

<https://ecas.org/transnational-lists-petition/>

Further Reading

- <https://euobserver.com/opinion/140843>
- <https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Transnationallists-Verger-Feb18.pdf>
- <https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/article/news/transnational-lists-for-the-european-elections/>
- <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/jo-leinen-defends-transnational-lists-despite-eu-parliament-rejection>
- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20180123IPR92301/eu-elections-2019-meps-pave-way-for-pan-european-constituency-post-brexit>

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-france/frances-macron-to-push-for-pan-eu-parliament-lists-despite-setback-idUSKBN1FR1VJ>