



**Inter-parliamentary cooperation as a means for
reinforcing joint scrutiny in the EU:
upgrading existing mechanisms and creating new ones**

by

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Abstract

This special issue develops a contextual analysis of EU inter-parliamentary cooperation in the post Lisbon Treaty framework. Indeed, it is possible to claim that there are several sources and causes for renewed EU inter-parliamentary cooperation: first, a voluntary one, i.e. the connection with the Lisbon Treaty's intent to facilitate a wider democratisation objective; second, this time more a reaction than an initiative, the need to counterbalance the institutional outcomes of the economic and financial crisis that shook the world but particularly the eurozone; and, third, the call for an improvement in existing rules and mechanisms to develop even further democratic (read: parliamentary) input in common policies.

The special issue analyses whether current inter-parliamentary mechanisms are suited to react to these challenges. It specifically assesses the practical impact of interparliamentary cooperation on the numerous democratic gaps that still exist in the EU's multi-layered decision-making process. Its objective is to show, beyond the mere sharing of information and the comparison of best practices at a supranational and transnational level, whether existing inter-parliamentary practices contribute to joint parliamentary scrutiny by involving both the EP and the national parliaments of EU member states.

Key-words

inter-parliamentary cooperation, joint parliamentary scrutiny, EU parliamentary democracy



1. A Renewed EU inter-parliamentary cooperation in the post-Lisbon era

Inter-parliamentary cooperation is not a recent phenomenon in the European Union (EU). Since the very beginning of the integration process in Europe, structural coordination between representative assemblies has been a constitutive dimension of European integration. The original structure of the European Parliament (EP), initially composed of Member States' national parliaments' delegates, satisfied the requirement for 'dialogue' between legislatures. The EP's transformation into a directly elected assembly in 1979 did not however stifle the continuation of inter-parliamentary trends.

Indeed, the search for permanent models of inter-parliamentary cooperation started in the second half of the 1970's, with the practice of meetings of the Speakers of national parliaments. In the following decades, the development of this inter-parliamentary dimension only experienced slow progress. The establishment of Conference of the Parliamentary Committees on EU Affairs (COSAC) in 1989 represented a first attempt to provide an institutional framework for the practice of meetings between representatives of national parliaments, jointly with the EP (Rittberger 2005: 125 ff.).

The picture completely changed after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon (ToL, or Lisbon Treaty). Constitutive transformations in the shape and role of parliamentary democracy created conditions for an exceptional boost in inter-parliamentary practices.

Thus, since the implementation of the ToL, there has been more, and not less, inter-parliamentary cooperation. As Ian Cooper (2017: 1) contends, there is now 'an emerging order of interparliamentary conferences' in the EU. This new impetus has materialised through new formats, mainly inter-parliamentary conferences (IPCs), based on sectorial policies, leading to an extension in both their scope and intensity (Heffler and Gatterman, 2015; Cooper 2017). In addition, the roles of the EU parliaments Speakers' Conference and that of the Conference of the Parliamentary Committees on EU Affairs (COSAC) have equally been revitalised (Cygan 2016; see also essays in Lupo and Fasone 2016: 207-344), and, if not more important, a number of new inter-parliamentary fora have been set up. First, the IPC on CFSP/CSDP (Common Foreign and Security Policy/Common Security and Defence Policy) in 2012 (Wouters and Raube 2012; 2016; Stavridis 2014; Butler 2015);

then, the one on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance (SECG) in the European Union in 2013 (Krieling 2015; Cooper 2016; Jancic 2016); and, finally, in 2017, the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) on Europol (Kreiling 2017).

Whereas the IPC on CFSP/CSDP is a direct result of the ToL (Article 10 of Protocol 1 annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon), the one on economic and financial governance stems from the Treaty that was signed by eurozone members to ‘save’ the single currency in 2013 (Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance/TSCG). Finally, the JPSG on Europol was established by the Speakers Conference on the basis of Article 51 of the Europol Regulation which entered into force on 1 May 2017.¹

The boost in inter-parliamentary cooperation may seem paradoxical given the reputation that this practice actually has, both in the literature and in parliamentary practice. Inter-parliamentary cooperation in the EU is often depicted as inefficient, dominated by disputes between the EP and the national parliaments (NPs) of EU member states (Neunreither 2005; Rittberger 2007; O’Brennan and Raunio 2007; Raunio 2009). Some analysts have even talked of the existence of an inter-parliamentary (dis-)order (Fasone 2016), or even, somewhat exaggeratedly, of a parliamentary ‘battlefield’, especially in CFSP/CSDP matters (Herranz Surrallés 2014). Scholars have particularly deplored the lack of real decision-making, and hence the inefficiency of inter-parliamentary dialogue (Rittberger 2007: 197 ff.; O’Brennan and Raunio 2007: 272 ff.). From a normative perspective, it has been assumed that more coordination between national parliaments and the EP ‘should be considered as secondary and will not significantly improve either the delivery or the legitimacy of economic governance’ (Cygan 2017: 715).

2. Contextualising recent developments

Against these recurring arguments, it is possible to claim that there are several sources and causes for renewed EU inter-parliamentary cooperation: first, a voluntary one, i.e. the connection with the Lisbon Treaty’s intent to facilitate a wider democratisation objective; second, this time more a reaction than an initiative, the need to counterbalance the institutional outcomes of the economic and financial crisis that shook the world but particularly the eurozone (possibility of a Grexit, etc.); and, third, the call for an



improvement in existing rules and mechanisms to develop even further democratic (read: parliamentary) input in common policies.

It is the combination of these three arguments that the Special Issue addresses. This combination offers a contextualisation that is needed to better understand each of the contributions that will follow.

On the one hand, the new search for more democracy reflects an ongoing effort in the EU to address its numerous democratic deficits, (Chryssochoou 1998; Warleigh 2003; Moravcsik 2004; Hix and Follesdal 2006), also described as ‘democratic disconnect’ (Lindseth 2010). In addition, more recently, the wider uncertainty that has also characterised the international system (2008 financial and economic crisis, 2016 Brexit referendum result, election in the USA of a populist President, and similar developments in Europe, most recently in Italy), all mean that world affairs, including the European integration process, are now under increased public scrutiny that demands more democratic accountability and transparency.

It is important to differentiate between, on the one hand, fair criticisms of how the EU works, and in particular the well documented literature on the existence of democratic deficits (see above), and, on the other, different approaches that range from the Euro-sceptical to the Euro-phobic: these are basically anti-system and anti-democratic in nature and in form – even if they use democratic means to promote their goals and ideals (on populist parties and the EP, especially since the 2014 elections, see Brack 2015; Vasilopoulou 2013). This differentiation is important because, for the former, the way the EU works (or should work) is a question of constantly improving, correcting, and developing it further; for the latter, the main objective is to render it obsolete and, if this is not possible, to leave it – as the UKIP successfully proposed in the Brexit referendum in 2016. From the non-populist and non-extremist perspectives, all of the points above mean that further research is required on EU inter-parliamentary cooperation as a key instrument in achieving the goals of a more democratic, legitimate and effective Union.

And, on the other hand, there is another important reason for this special issue: the wider context of the parliamentarisation of world affairs. As substantiated in the expanding literatures on parliamentary diplomacy and on international parliamentary institutions (IPIs), it is possible to speak now of a multi-layered parliamentary field in world affairs, including in Europe (Crum and Fossum 2009; 2013; Cofelice 2012; Costa, Dri and Stavridis



2013; Jancic 2015c – see also De Puig 2008; Kissling 2011). The post-Cold War era has been characterised by globalisation and new types of (inter-)regionalisms, sometimes leading to multi-level forms of governance (MLG) (see Hooge and Marks 2001; Morata 2011). In turn, both global (Beetham 2006) and (inter-)regional governance (on the latter, see Warleigh-Lack, Robinson and Rosamond 2011; Telò, Fawcett and Ponjaert 2015) have raised a number of issues over how democratic legitimacy and control can (and should) be achieved. The EU is often presented as a model, if not a precursor for regional integration (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Marchetti 2010; Morata 2011). But there is also a need to discuss those issues further, not only in other (inter-) regional constructs, but also at the global level, including the possibility of the need for a parliamentary dimension to the UN (see Falk and Strauss 2011; Schwartzberg 2012; Cabrera 2015). Hence, the question of EU inter-parliamentary cooperation falls within that wider context: it both draws from and contributes to it.^{II} Although this Special Issue only focuses on the EU.

From the above, a **first** point is that the ToL, appropriately dubbed the ‘Treaty of Parliaments’ (see also Barón Crespo 2012), has greatly added to the parliamentarisation of the EU integration process. This development falls within the EP’s incremental evolution as it has consistently and continuously gained more powers (Elles 1990; Attinà 1992; Keukeleire and MacNaughtan 2008; Stavridis and Irrera 2015). What Thomas Winzen, Chrstilla Roederer-Rynning and Franck Schimmerlfennig (2015) have recently described as ‘parliamentary co-evolution’: a connection between simultaneous and mutually reinforcing national and European arenas of parliamentarization.

On internal integration issues, the ToL has clearly recognised the dual structure of parliamentary representation in the EU^{III} through the two channels set by Article 10 TEU, one embodied by the EP and the other centred on national parliaments (Besselink 2007; Micossi 2008; Lindseth 2010). These two channels are meant to satisfy the principle of accountability as a fundamental component of democratic government. Parliamentary involvement in areas of multi-tier integration show manifold variations (Wessels 2013: 108). However, a number of factors contribute to make the existing accountability mechanisms unfit for satisfying legitimacy pushes. Since neither channel of parliamentary representation is capable of fulfilling accountability expectations alone,^{IV} the issue of interconnections and mutual support becomes crucial.



Continuing from the above, a **second** implication is that the onset of the world financial and economic crises after 2008 has led to ‘a massive transfer of powers to the EU level’ (Dullien and Torreblanca 2012: 2), which has in turn mobilised national parliaments over the same issues. This is in itself an important development for democratic accountability (see Jancic 2015a; 2015b; 2016; 2017; Kreiling 2015; Gattermann, Högenauer and Huff 2015). As Davor Jancic (2013) has shown with the French Parliament, it is both a ‘European scrutiniser’ and a ‘national actor’ in France. He also presented a similar case for Portugal, where he argued that its Parliament can no longer be accused of being a ‘laggard’ over EU affairs (Jancic 2011). Of course, not all national parliaments have necessarily responded in the same way (see the case of Greece, Sotiropoulos 2015).

Similarly, EU officials now also attend sessions of national parliaments: thus, to cite but one example, European Central Bank President Mario Draghi explained its policies to the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union of the German *Bundesbank* in September 2016.^V In the same vein, national EU leaders address the EP if they so wish, as did Greek Premier Alexis Tsipras in July 2015.^{VI} It is worth noting that as there are more than one European-wide international organisation involved, sometimes this overlap of layers concerns other such institutions extending not only to non-financial and economic issues: for instance, over security and defence issues: the NATO Secretary General often briefs the EP’s Foreign Affairs Committee.^{VII}

It is equally important to note that President Emmanuel Macron of France has recently revitalised a call for the setting up of a parliamentary chamber covering the euro currency and such related governance in the EU.^{VIII} This is not a new idea as similar debates took place with the setting up of the euro (Magnette 2000), but it is particularly striking that they come back to the fore now. Yet even more flexibility is undoubtedly needed as only 19 EU states use the euro and another 6 countries^{IX} utilise it without being EU members. Not everyone of course agrees (see Schäfer and Schulz 2013: 3; Lupo 2018), but the mere fact that there is a debate shows that the question remains a topical issue. As the President of the *Assemblée Nationale* has declared recently, both a strengthening of the EP and the need to create a euro-dedicated parliamentary assembly are needed because ‘the heart of European democracy beats’ in both European and national parliaments.^X



This new situation means that, *de facto*, national parliaments have begun to play a role in EU economic and financial governance that was not foreseen by the ToL and, perhaps more importantly, that no longer fits in the traditional ‘supranational versus intergovernmental’ dichotomy in integration studies.

Whereas in the past, European Political Cooperation (EPC) and the external relations of the European Economic Community (EEC), and later the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Pillar and the 1st Pillar of the Maastricht Treaty, were seen as antithetical (at least in that they represented two extreme and opposed cases), nowadays ‘differentiated integration’ (see also below) appears to be the norm. Previous terms used included ‘variable geometry’, ‘multi-speed’, or ‘à la carte’ – but they were all seen as paradoxical as they did not fit the ‘federalist’ path as announced by the founding fathers and as explained by the neo-functionalists, respectively in the 1950s and the 1970s. What was an exception has not become the rule *per se*, but it no longer comes as a surprise, because there are many such exceptions, and in fact, they are becoming ‘more normal’ and are even institutionalised in one form or other. The current state of affairs has led some observers to argue that ‘[t]he economic and financial crisis which began in 2008 has undoubtedly favoured the pre-existing EU inclination to undertake forms of differentiated integration’ (Griglio and Lupo 2014: 6). Thus, hybrid integration (see also Taylor 1983 on that question) reflects nowadays not only the reality of the EU but also its complexity, let alone its sophistication (Innerarity 2017).

Consequently, there is today a common public space of governance, with several, often overlapping, layers that existing individual accountability mechanisms cannot fully satisfy; this therefore establishes the justification for a collective space of action where different multilateral and multilevel arrangements of parliamentary democracy can be tested.

3. Inter-parliamentary cooperation and joint parliamentary scrutiny: what next?

As noted, in light of the above developments, there is now emerging literature on EU inter-parliamentary cooperation (Wouters and Raube 2012; Kreiling 2013; Crum and Fossum 2013; Herranz Surallés 2014; Butler 2015, Heffler and Gattermann 2015; Fromage



2016; Lupo and Fasone 2016; Jančić 2017; Cooper 2017).^{XI} But there remain a number of important points that have yet to be addressed fully.

One **first concern** is on the supranational or international nature of the inter-parliamentary phenomenon in the EU. Some articles of the Special Issue (see in particular Griglio and Lupo, and Raube and Fonck) aim at assessing whether current practices of EU inter-parliamentary cooperation have reinforced a more supranational ('federal') system of EU governance; or whether they have instead further strengthened intergovernmentalism; emphasised the dimension of a technocratic EU (Högenauer et al. 2016); or, even, if they are facilitating a new post-Brexit approach that favours 'differentiated integration' (Griglio and Lupo 2014; Bertoncini 2017)?² The picture that emerges from this analysis is nuanced. Inter-parliamentary cooperation suffers strongly from ongoing ambiguities in the integration process that is facing federal pressures and international demands and is also deeply affected by existing variable geometry patterns. On the one hand, the inter-parliamentary dimension of the EU still owes many features to international parliamentary experiences. Nonetheless, it can be considered a *sui generis* model (Griglio and Lupo, this issue). On the other hand, due to the setting and non-binding format of its inter-parliamentary forums, the EU often fails to developing transnational schemes of interaction (Raube and Fonck, this issue). However, some forums are clearly pursuing rather ambitious goals that directly address the accountability challenges of the EU's architecture (Fromage, Kreilinger, Cooper, all in this issue). It is these often-unattained goals that many articles of the Special Issue address from a normative perspective, with the aim of reinforcing the peculiar contribution that inter-parliamentary cooperation can and does offer to the supranational dynamics of EU decision-making.

A **second issue** relates to the place reserved for inter-parliamentary cooperation in the wider set of interinstitutional relations within the EU, following on from the integration of European and national actors, procedures and rules (Manzella and Lupo 2014). The inter-parliamentary dimension is permeated by two parallel relationships. On the one hand, this builds on the relationship between executive and legislative actors in the EU. Originally thought of as a sort of 'parallel' parliamentary diplomacy, it is expected to discuss and potentially challenge EU public policies adopted by the executives (Griglio and Lupo, Raube and Fonck, both in this issue). On the other hand, inter-parliamentary cooperation is deeply affected by the relationship between national parliaments and the EP (Fromage,



Fasone, Pinheiro, Kreiling, Cooper, all in this issue). The national parliaments insist on the interaction of inter-parliamentary cooperation with the transnational logic that asks for the settlement of cross-border connections that go beyond the mere parliamentary dimension to generate impact on both domestic and foreign governments (Raube and Fonck, this issue). The EP addresses the capacity of EU inter-parliamentary cooperation to cope with one of its distinctive features: the reliance on two fully fledged channels of parliamentary representation (Griglio and Lupo, this issue). The articles of the Special Issue portray different ways of tackling these relationships in the inter-parliamentary dimension. They highlight the unresolved issues still at stake, thus confirming that most of the weaknesses and constraints of the inter-parliamentary dimension originate from the failure to address these issues in an intelligent and sophisticated way. In many cases, the EU inter-parliamentary framework merely mirrors both the intergovernmental and federal dimensions in an effort to capture the complex and multifaceted requirements of collective actorness (Knutelská 2013: 35). One main inhibiting factor is the difficulty faced by parliaments in bridging from the ‘domestic’ (either national or European) to the ‘collective’ dimension as due premise for playing a proactive role in the EU decision-making.

A **third issue** deals with the goals pursued through the inter-parliamentary dimension. Is this ‘dialogue’ only a means for sharing information and best practices, supporting the effective exercise of national parliamentary competences in EU affairs and promoting partnerships with parliaments of third countries (Esposito 2014, 153 ff.)? Or is it supposed to go beyond the traditional aims of international inter-parliamentary cooperation? In assessing the aims of the new formats of inter-parliamentary cooperation in the EU, some scholars have clearly highlighted that, in addition to traditional objectives, these goals also give national governments the right to evaluate mechanisms implementing EU policies in those policy areas where the influence of the executive branch is overwhelming (Wouters and Raube 2012). In other words, the goals might be expected to strengthen the capacity of parliaments to fulfil the oversight function over their own executives and consequently to improve the democratic legitimacy of the European Union as a whole (Cooper 2014; Heffler and Gattermann 2015). On this basis, existing gaps in the accountability circuit of the European Union demonstrate that there is a potential for new forms of ‘joint’ parliamentary scrutiny resulting from the collective action of national parliaments and the EP, activated through inter-parliamentary cooperation. Inter-parliamentary cooperation has



specifically been described as a dimension that is not expected to act as an autonomous channel for representation and oversight but rather as an instrumental dimension that could help the two ordinary channels for parliamentary representation – the EP and national parliaments – to strengthen their oversight capacity, in their respective spheres of action (Lupo and Griglio 2018: 358 ff.)

In fact, existing weaknesses in inter-parliamentary cooperation show that the post-ToL goals may sound too ambitious if compared with current practices. It is this issue that several articles (Fromage, Griglio and Lupo, Pinheiro, Kreiling, Cooper, all in this issue) specifically address. The answer they provide is rather nuanced. The lack of effectiveness in the implementation of the joint scrutiny function is a product of multiple causes. These stem from both the procedural and organisational constraints undermining the scrutiny potential of the inter-parliamentary forums, and the lack of motivation and capacity that prevents parliamentary actors from a proactive engagement. Many proposals are therefore debated in the Issue to offer ways to overcome this situation. They deal both with the reform of the internal proceedings of single inter-parliamentary forums and with the rationalisation of the mutual relationship between them.

Within the latter set of hypotheses, alternative solutions are advanced in the Special Issue, comprising either the creation of a permanent Secretariat for all existing permanent Conferences (Fromage, this issue), or the standing invitation between the forums to host a representative from each other as to build mutual confidence and facilitate dialogue (Pinheiro, this issue). As for the role of ‘coordinator’ among existing forums, this is apparently only applicable to the Speakers’ Conference (Fasone, this issue), although COSAC, in its capacity as Conference with a ‘global picture’ of inter-parliamentary cooperation, could also offer a strategic contribution (Pinheiro, this issue).

4. The Special Issue Contents

As a result, the Special Issue analyses and assesses with insights from both the theory and the practice of how inter-parliamentary cooperation deals with the democratic challenges mentioned above, featuring the EU’s multi-layered decision-making process. The Issue is divided into two parts. The **First Part** offers a general overview of the state-of-the-art of inter-parliamentary cooperation in the EU. The **Second Part** focuses on each



permanent forum for inter-parliamentary cooperation, thus analysing the specific features and practices of the pre- and post-Lisbon Conferences and of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol. What follows presents a summary of the main points made by each contribution.

Diane Fromage describes and assesses the ‘blossoming’ of inter-parliamentary conferences and other permanent forums in the EU. This process has led to the creation of several formalised permanent forums for inter-parliamentary cooperation that share both commonalities and differences. The large variety in the forums is perceived as a problematic factor insofar it creates complexity, reduces efficiency and transparency, and fosters institutional discontinuity. The recent establishment of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol is another index of the trend towards the multiplication of both forums and formats for inter-parliamentary cooperation. The creation of a Group rather than a Conference confirms that a new arrangement is being pursued, but the JPSG’s capacity to depart from previous experiences will have to be assessed in its practice, beyond the formal rules of procedure. To overcome the risk of overlaps, a rationalisation of inter-parliamentary cooperation initiatives is advocated through the creation of a stronger, common, permanent secretariat.

Fotis Fitsilis unpacks the role played by parliamentary administrations as facilitators of inter-parliamentary cooperation. Parliamentary administrations are not isolated actors in this field, as they also act in several networks, such as IPEX or the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation. Acting as a structural component of the inter-parliamentary dimension, parliamentary administrative actors and their networks exercise pre-defined roles for a given set of tasks. In addition to the functions of coordination, information management and pre-selection, Fitsilis stresses that the ‘new’ role of the *researcher* has the potential to re-shape operations of parliamentary administrators in the context of inter-parliamentary cooperation. In order to enhance the contribution that researchers among parliamentary administrations may offer to the inter-parliamentary dialogue, some hypotheses are advocated, including the creation of guidelines for administrators specialised in EU affairs and the development of an EU Network of EU affairs parliamentary specialists.

Elena Griglio and **Nicola Lupo** draw a comparison between the inter-parliamentary cooperation framework in the European Union and those existing at the international level.



Notwithstanding a strong international imprint, inter-parliamentary relations in the EU have gradually evolved into a somewhat distinctive model, deeply embedded in the unique constitutional arrangement of the Union. What characterises inter-parliamentary cooperation in the EU is the combination of two distinctive organisational and functional features: the multi-layered nature of inter-parliamentary arrangements, consisting of a large variety of vertical formats; and the purposes attached to the most ‘advanced’ forums. Inter-parliamentary cooperation in the EU represents a *sui generis* model if compared to apparently similar experiences featuring transnational dialogue amongst parliaments. In theory, it is expected to find the ideal conditions for fulfilling an authentic collective dimension, instrumental to the democratic oversight of the executives. In fact, focusing on the practice, the *sui generis* nature of the EU inter-parliamentary model is not yet fulfilled due to two set of reasons: the unresolved ambiguities concerning its contribution to parliamentary democracy, and the lack of a real capacity to depart from the formats of international parliamentary institutions.

Cristina Fasone describes the ‘second youth’ experienced by the EU Speakers’ Conference after the entry into force of the ToL. The Conference has *de facto* assumed the role of coordinator in the eyes of other EU inter-parliamentary forums by defining common guidelines and, in some cases, even by adopting their rules of procedure. The Conference does exhibit some deficiencies and gaps in fulfilling this ‘quasi-constitutional’ role; this is mostly explained by the structural variations in the powers and qualities of the Speakers of national parliaments. However, there are no valid alternatives to such empowerment; neither the EP nor COSAC could play such a role. From a normative perspective, the coordinating role of the Speakers’ Conference is therefore primarily seen as a means for easing the relationship among the many inter-parliamentary forums in terms of timing, consistency of the respective agendas and *ex-post* supervision of the results. Although the Speakers’ Conference is not directly involved in the exercise of a joint parliamentary scrutiny, this perspective could positively contribute to its fulfilment.

Bruno Pinehiro discusses COSAC as a pioneer in inter-parliamentary cooperation. COSAC is deemed to occupy a central role in inter-parliamentary cooperation because it is based on a governance model that mainstreams the importance of national parliaments as actors endowed with decisive democratic qualities and responsibilities in the EU. Through COSAC, national parliaments have been allowed to play a more effective role in the



oversight and monitoring of a system of EU governance with increasing features of intergovernmentalism. The Conference is now facing an identity crisis, due to the empowerment of other forums that have come to play the role of transmission belts between national parliaments. To maximise COSAC's unique position with the 'global picture', some proposals for reform are debated: a reconsideration of the proceedings of COSAC meetings to bring direct added-value to the scrutiny performed by national parliaments and promote coordinated assessment of different policy dossiers.

Kolja Raube and **Daan Fonck** focus on the inter-parliamentary conference on CFSP/CSDP from the point of view of transnational parliamentarism. The main question is whether the Conference's functioning reflects its constitutive intergovernmental logic or whether it is guided by a transnational logic; the latter implies an inter-parliamentary cooperation framework that does not merely support intergovernmental activity, but is capable of promoting competitive forms of interaction among parliaments. The question is approached by applying three functions to the CFSP/CSDP Conference, as promoted by transnational parliamentarism: policy making, collective accountability and cooperation. The outcome of this experiment proves that the record of the Conference on CFSP/CSDP is nuanced. On the one hand, due to the setting and non-binding format of the Conference, the transnational effects are rather limited in the fields of policy-making and accountability. However, some transnational interactions are detected in the Conference's effects on the EP's capacity to strengthen a security culture around the common foreign, security and defence policy, in cooperation with national parliaments.

Valentin Kreilinger describes the establishment and the recent activity of the Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance (SECG) as torn between three competing models of inter-parliamentary cooperation. The first model is based on the leadership of the EP, the second interprets the Conference as a COSAC-style venue and the third advocates the creation of a real collective parliamentary counterweight. The standard 'COSAC' model is the one that has prevailed in the end, thus reflecting a lowest common denominator compromise. However, two institutional peculiarities were added. First, the linkage to the European Parliamentary Week at the first annual meeting has contributed to giving the EP some additional leverage. Second, the size of the delegations is not fixed, as in the COSAC model, but attendance rates have anyway remained stable over time.



Ian Cooper chronicles the process of creation of a new Joint Parliamentary Group, highlighting that this model was introduced to enable members of national parliaments and the EP to exercise joint oversight of Europol, the EU agency for police cooperation. The comparison with the three EU inter-parliamentary conferences, with competence, respectively, on EU affairs, foreign policy and economic governance, demonstrates that there are many similarities between these forums. However, one peculiar feature of the JPSG lies in its mandate to scrutinise and in the targeted scope of scrutiny activity that does not correspond to a whole policy field. Other distinctive features include a stronger legal basis, more restrictive membership and participation rules, greater continuity of membership, stronger access to EU officials and documents, a seat on the Europol Management Board and an explicit right to ask oral and written questions. All these attributes indicate that the JPSG has a stronger mandate to act as an oversight body, rather than merely as a discussion forum.

All of the above shows that, following the ToL, a brand-new era for inter-parliamentary cooperation has (re-)emerged: in particular over its role in joint scrutiny which remains a key function for parliamentary bodies in any democratic set up. As a result, this Special Issue shows important developments as illustrated and analysed in detail here. But this publication also confirms that even more research is needed on this crucial area of European integration. It is also one of the Special Issue's objectives to spark more interest in this important question.

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ⁱ <https://www.parlament.gv.at/ENGL/EU2018/EUROPOL/>.

ⁱⁱ Furthermore, there is a growth, and a consolidation, of the literature on parliamentary diplomacy: see Stavridis and Jancic (2016). On traditional international democratic theory and on its more recent expressions, such as Cosmopolitanism, see Held and Koenig-Archibugi (2005); Marchetti (2006).

ⁱⁱⁱ Of course there are further layers of parliamentary representation especially among federal and decentralised EU member states but this Special Issue does not cover this dimension (see Abels and Epler 2016).

^{iv} No representative institution in the EU structure is endowed with the authority to adopt corrective actions or measures. Crum and Curtin (2015: 72).



^v https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/key/date/2016/html/sp160928_1.en.html. See also Thomas Weider, 'Le Bundestag accueille fraîchement M. Draghi', *Le Monde*, 30 September 2016.

^{vi} <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-eurozone-greece-parliament/tsipras-pledges-reform-to-divided-european-parliament-idUKKCN0PI0WO20150708>.

^{vii} For instance, see 'Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Sub-Committee on Security and Defence' (www.nato.int), 3 May 2017.

^{viii} See Cécile Ducourtieux, 'Le nécessaire débat de la démocratisation – La piste française d'un Parlement spécifique à la zone euro ne remporte que peu de suffrages à Bruxelles, ou l'on souligne le manque d'implication des députés hexagonaux', *Le Monde*, 27 September 2017. See also, Éditorial, 'La difficile quête démocratique de l'eurogroupe', *Le Monde*, 3-4 December 2017; Collectif, 'Pour un renouveau démocratique de l'euro', *Le Monde*, 3 March 2018.

^{ix} The euro is official currency in the Principality of Monaco, the Republic of San Marino, the Vatican City State, and the Principality of Andorra. It is also used de facto in Kosovo and Montenegro.

^x *Le Monde* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* joint interview with François de Rugy and with the German Bundestag President Wolfgang Schäuble, in *Le Monde*, 25 January 2018.

^{xi} The website of the IPC on CFSP/CSDP as well as other such fora is available on-line via the IPEX site: <http://www.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/home/home.do>.

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