



# The Role of National Parliaments in the European Union

Ian Thomson  
Director, Cardiff EDC

An information guide in association with the  
event at the Cardiff EDC, 20 November 2014  
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Updated February 2015

# The Role of National Parliaments in the European Union

This presentation provides hyperlinks to a selection of sources providing information on the topic of  
‘The role of national parliaments in the EU’

There is a debate across Europe as to what role national parliaments should play in policy-making in the EU – would an increased role for national parliaments enhance or reduce the democratic legitimacy of the EU?

Further information on this topic can be found through this [link](#) to European Sources Online

[Hyperlinks are embedded in *images* throughout the guide]



National Assembly for Wales  
Constitutional and Legislative  
Affairs Committee

## Wales' role in the EU decision-making process

March 2014



Cynulliad  
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Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

9th Report of Session 2013–14

# The Role of National Parliaments in the European Union

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These reports form the context of the speakers' presentations  
at the Cardiff EDC event on 20 November 2014

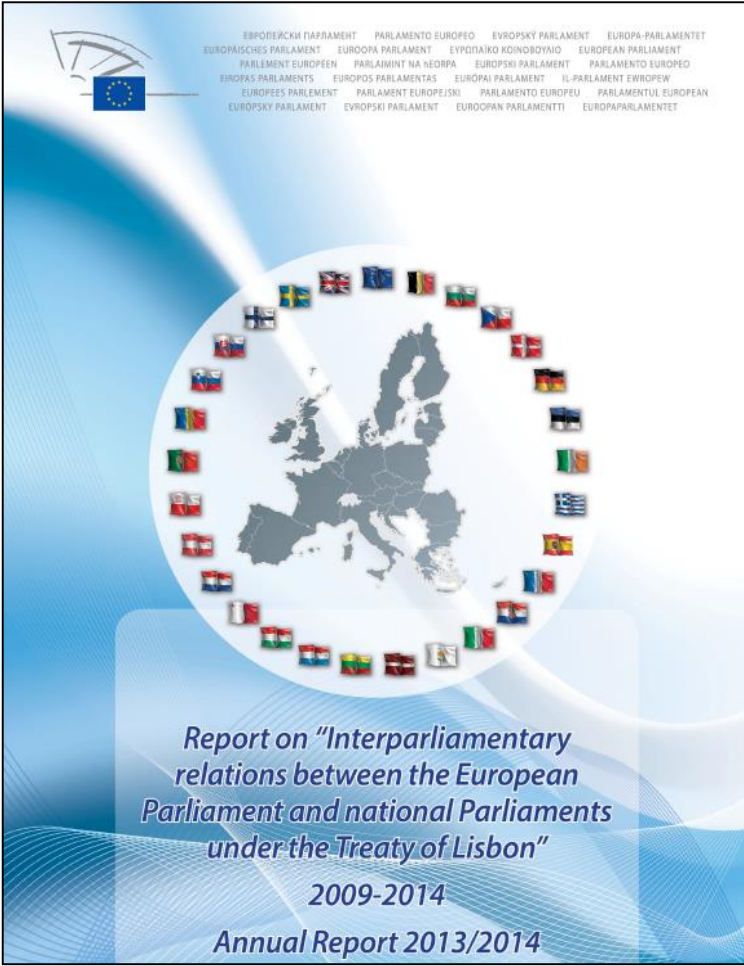


The Role of National Parliaments in the EU

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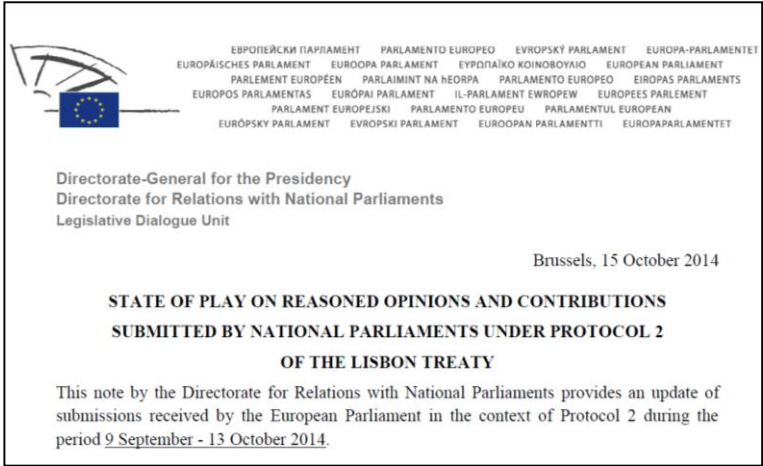

# European Parliament / Relations with National Parliaments



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*Report on "Interparliamentary relations between the European Parliament and national Parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon" 2009-2014*

**Annual Report 2013/2014**

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Directorate-General for the Presidency  
 Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments  
 Legislative Dialogue Unit

Brussels, 15 October 2014

**STATE OF PLAY ON REASONED OPINIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS  
 SUBMITTED BY NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS UNDER PROTOCOL 2  
 OF THE LISBON TREATY**

This note by the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments provides an update of submissions received by the European Parliament in the context of Protocol 2 during the period 9 September - 13 October 2014.



**What role do national Parliaments have in EU affairs?**

The Treaty of Lisbon set out for the first time the role of national Parliaments within the European Union. National Parliaments can, for instance, scrutinise draft EU laws with regards to their respect for the principle of subsidiarity, participate in the revision of EU treaties or take part in the evaluation of EU policies on freedom, security and justice. The Lisbon Treaty also specified that the European Parliament and national Parliaments shall together determine the organisation and promotion of effective and regular interparliamentary cooperation within the EU.

**What does the EP's Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments do?**

The Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments advises the political bodies, Members and the secretariat of the EP in their institutional cooperation and legislative dialogue with the national Parliaments. It provides support for inter-parliamentary activities, contributes to the implementation of the Treaty provisions on interparliamentary cooperation in the EP and provides expertise throughout the legislative cycle and other EP political competences.

Are you looking for the latest EU-related documents from national Parliaments?

Would you like to **GET IN TOUCH** with national Parliamentarians working on a specific topic?

Would you like to know **WHICH TOOLS** you can use to cooperate with national Parliaments?

**WE ARE AT YOUR SERVICE!**

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 CONTACT | epom - direct@ec.europa.eu  
 www.europarl.europa.eu/relations





InterParliamentary EU information eXchange allows access to reports from national parliaments concerning EU legislative proposals and initiatives



COSAC is the Conference of the Committees of the National Parliaments of the European Union Member States



European Commission

## Relations with national Parliaments

European Commission > Secretariat-General > National parliaments > United\_kingdom

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United Kingdom

- 2013
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- 2009
- 2008
- 2007

Document No	Title	Opinion of the national Parliament	Reply from the Commission
COM/2013/0071	<a href="#">Proposal for a COUNCIL DIRECTIVE implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of financial transaction tax</a>	<a href="#">Statement from the House of Lords</a> [252 KB] <a href="#">Statement from the House of Lords</a> [107 KB]	<a href="#">Reply from the Commission</a> [417 KB]



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EUROPE

# Why the EU must boost the powers of national MPs

Published on February 24 2014, Spring 2014

Danish politician **Eva Kjer Hansen** sets out her plan for addressing the EU's democratic legitimacy shortcomings by giving more say to Europe's national parliaments

WRITTEN BY

 **Eva Kjer Hansen**  
Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament and formerly agriculture minister and social affairs minister  
[Other articles by Eva Kjer Hansen](#)

COMMENTARY BY

 **Adriaan Schout**  
Researcher at the Netherlands Institute for International Relations 'Clingendael'



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EuropeanVoice  
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## Legitimising EU Policymaking: What Role for National Parliaments?

Discussion Papers

for Session 1 of the BTTD 2014

jointly organised by the Bertelsmann Stiftung, the European Policy Centre (EPC) and the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

The debate is not confined to the UK – the topic is discussed across the EU



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## The relationship between national parliaments and the European Parliament remains contested in the area of economic governance



*The Fiscal Compact, which was signed by 25 of the EU's member states in 2012, foresaw the creation of an inter-parliamentary conference to enable national parliaments to discuss major issues of economic and financial governance. The third meeting of this 'Inter-parliamentary Conference for Economic and Financial Governance' will be held on 29 and 30 September. Valentin Kreilinger writes that diverging views on the internal organisation of the conference have so far prevented it from meeting the aims originally envisaged in the Fiscal Compact Treaty.*

**open europe blog**  
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Monday, November 10, 2014

## The UK government is desperate to strengthen the role of national Parliaments in Europe - but can't get its own house in order

The Government - particularly the Tory wing of it - talks a very good game on the urgent need to strengthen the role of national parliaments in EU decision-making.



The UK Government (rightly) wants to negotiate a "red card" for national parliaments for example, giving them a chance to pull the democratic brake on EU proposals that go too far or aren't proportionate. It has also talked about various other ways to strengthen the role of national parliaments and boosting scrutiny of EU laws in Westminster.

In his Bloomberg speech, David Cameron called for a "bigger and more significant role for national Parliaments" adding:

**euobserver**

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OPINION

## The struggle for democratic oversight in the EU

29.09.14 @ 09:18

RELATED » National parliaments eclipsed by EU powers » Russia sanctions and the EU: What went wrong?

BY IAN COOPER

BRUSSELS - Hundreds of parliamentarians from across Europe, both from national parliaments and the European Parliament (EP), are gathering in Rome on Monday (29 September) in a bid to improve parliamentary oversight of EU policy making.

Deutsche Bank Research

Research Briefing  
European integration

## Referees or spectators?

National Parliaments and subsidiarity in the VIII<sup>th</sup> European Parliament

September 26, 2014

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The interest for a higher democratic accountability in the EU is stronger than ever. Simultaneously, the competences of the EU have been widened considerably following the Euro crisis. Today, governments face growing public pressure to enhance accountability of EU policies, or even to repatriate powers to the national level.

At the national level, parliaments use different techniques to scrutinise the EU. These include increasing the number of MPs involved in scrutiny, the role of committees, the use of scrutiny reserves, information rights, and the ability to table plenary debates. On balance, there is no single recipe for effective scrutiny.

A selection of recent articles and blogs

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## Strengthening the role of national parliaments in EU decision-making is not the way to improve the EU's legitimacy



*Turnout at European Parliament elections has fallen significantly since the first elections in 1979. This has led some politicians and commentators to suggest that integrating national parliaments into the EU's legislative process may be a more effective method for improving the EU's legitimacy. **Jon Worth** argues that the logic underpinning such arguments is undermined by the fact that national elections have also witnessed a substantial drop in turnout over the same period. Moreover, in most EU countries citizens actually trust their own parliament less than the European Parliament, raising doubts over the ability of national parliaments to confer a greater degree of legitimacy.*

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## The European Parliament is a failed experiment in pan-European democracy – national parliaments are the key to solving the democratic deficit



*Strengthening the European Parliament has often been viewed as the best method of addressing the EU's alleged 'democratic deficit'. **Stephen Booth** writes that while this perspective has led to the Parliament's powers being increased successively over recent decades, the effect of these reforms on democratic engagement among EU citizens has been limited. He argues that boosting the role of national parliaments in the EU legislative process would offer a far better route for returning democratic accountability closer to voters.*

**openeurope**



## The European Parliament: A failed experiment in pan-European democracy?

6 November 2013

**the euroblog**  
comment from the European Movement




EUROPEAN MOVEMENT

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### What role for national parliaments in EU law making?

by Richard Corbett

Reforms over the last two decades, culminating in the Treaty of Lisbon, have established a dual accountability, as the basic mode of EU accountability. It requires that proposals are:

- approved by a large majority (QMV = 74% of the votes) in the Council, composed of national ministers accountable to national parliaments
- also approved by the European Parliament, composed of directly elected MEPs

This applies notably in the EU's ordinary legislative procedure, budget procedure and for the approval of significant international agreements entered into by the Union. There are exceptions, in which the European Parliament has a lesser role and/or where unanimity is required in the Council, but in all cases, ministerial approval in the Council is required (1).

It is therefore natural that a national parliament's main opportunity to shape or reject European legislation rests with its ability to determine its minister's position and hold him or her to account (2).

# A selection of recent articles and blogs

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**Tweede Kamer**  
 DER STATEN-GENERAAL




## Ahead in Europe

On the role of the Dutch House of Representatives and national parliaments in the European Union

FOLKETINGET



# FACT SHEET

NOVEMBER 2011



## The Danish Parliament and the European Union

**TRANSPARENCY IN THE WORK OF THE EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Since 2006, most meetings of the European Affairs Committee have been open to the public, and since 2007 it has also been possible to watch the open meetings on the Internet via the Danish Parliament's website: [www.ft.dk](http://www.ft.dk). The meetings can also be seen on the Danish Parliament's TV channel.

Most documents related to the work of the European Affairs Committee, including government minutes, are published on the Danish Parliament's EU Information Centre website: [www.eu.dk](http://www.eu.dk).

**The Danish Parliament in brief**

The Danish Parliament is called the Folketing, it is located at Christiansborg Palace in the heart of Copenhagen.

The Danish Parliament, which has been unicameral since the last revision of the Constitutional Act in 1953, consists of 179 Members. As part of the Danish Realm, the two self-governing regions, Greenland and the Faeroe Islands, each elect two Members.

**European policy in the Danish Parliament**

The basic principles governing the Danish Parliament's scrutiny of European policy are laid down in the Danish Accession Act from 1972 and in agreements between the European Affairs Committee and the Danish Government.

These documents state that the European Affairs Committee and the Sectoral Committees, within their respective fields of competence, are at the centre of the parliamentary scrutiny of the Government's EU policy.

European debates during the Danish Parliament's plenary sittings are chiefly reserved for the adoption of Bills and parliamentary resolutions on European issues, including the ratification of new treaties.

**The European Affairs Committee – central to the scrutiny of EU policy**

The European Affairs Committee was established on a permanent basis following the Danish accession to the EEC in 1973. It is one of the Danish Parliament's 26 Standing Committees.

The most important task of the European Affairs Committee is to scrutinise the Danish Government's EU policy. The importance of the Committee is underlined by its ability to speak on behalf of Parliament as a whole on most EU issues.

The working procedures and competences of the European Affairs Committee are regulated on an ongoing basis by a series of reports embodying political agreements between the Committee and the Government.

**First negotiating mandate system in Europe**

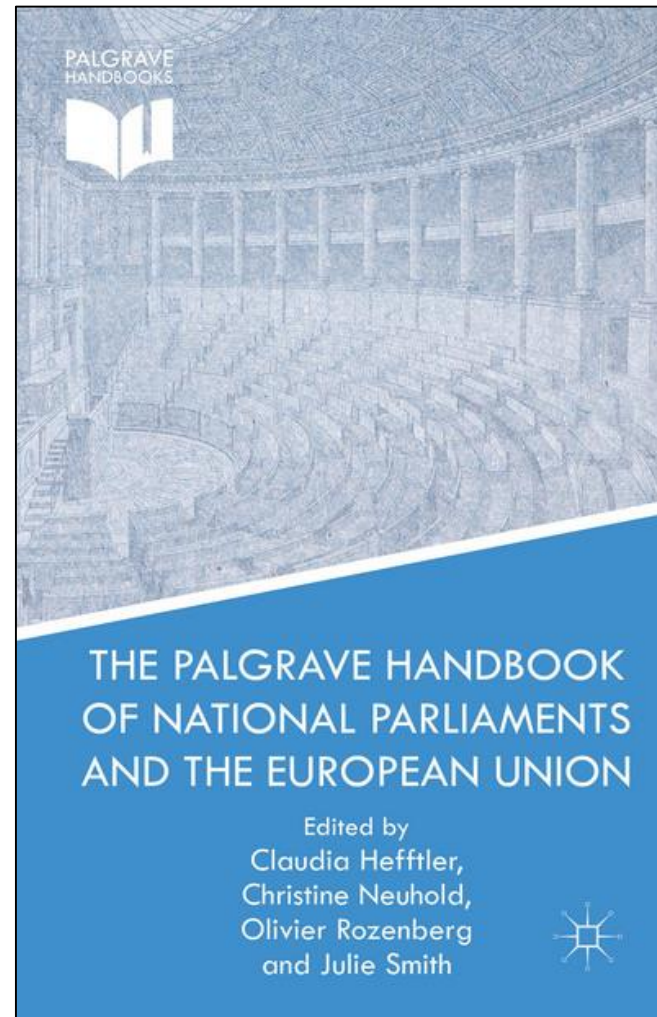
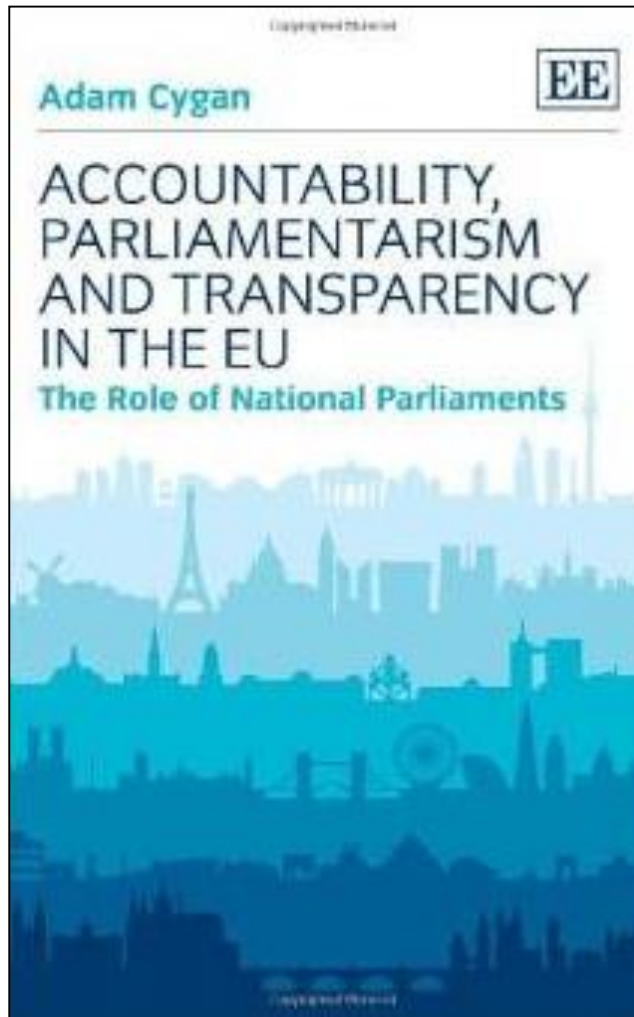
The Danish Parliament was the first national parliament in Europe to set up a negotiating

# Scrutiny of the EU by national parliaments

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**Special Issue: After Lisbon: National  
Parliaments in the European Union**





Further information can be found in the Cardiff EDC's electronic information service *European Sources Online (ESO)*:

- [The role of national parliaments in the European Union](#)
- [Where does power lie in the European Union?](#)





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