

Rising despite the polycrisis?

The European Parliament's strategies of self-empowerment after Lisbon

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Online supplement

Table 1: Post-Lisbon empowerment of the EP

	Economic governance	Trade agreements
Accountability		
Reporting and scrutiny tools	Enhanced information duties for Commission Economic Dialogue Reporting duties for President of Euro Summit	Enhanced information duties for Commission
Access to documents and data	Access to Commission's country-specific assessments	Access to <i>all</i> negotiation documents, including negotiation mandate and texts authored by negotiation partners
Decision-making		
Participation in decision-making fora	<i>De facto</i> co-decision rights under consultation procedure Full inclusion in Fiscal Compact negotiations Invitation of EP President to Euro Summits Delegated legislation (= veto right for EP) regarding reporting requirements for member states under excessive deficit procedure	
Involvement in venues outside the usual fora	Hearings and recommendations in appointment procedures Inter-parliamentary conference	Direct negotiations with EU negotiation partner

Source: own illustration

Outcome: Types of EP empowerment

Within the areas of economic governance and the shaping of trade agreements, we identified all formal and informal rights that deviate from the formal provisions laid out in the Lisbon Treaty. In doing so, we relied on four types of empowerment that we categorized in the following way: 1a) enhancement of reporting and scrutiny tools as well as 1b) access to documents and data as accountability rights; 2a) participation in decision-making fora as well as 2b) involvement in venues outside the usual fora as decision-making rights.

In order to identify new formal rights (formal institutional change), we relied on legislative texts in the respective policy area, while we drew primarily on interview material in order to single out additional informal rights for the EP (informal institutional change). We used the following interview questions to gather information about accountability rights and involvement in decision-making. “To what extent did the European Commission inform the EP about the negotiation mandate/bargaining rounds?” (type 1a and 1b concerning the shaping of trade agreements); “How have you been involved in the shaping of the regulations and directives of the six-pack/of the two-pack regulations/in the issue of Eurobonds/the Fiscal Compact?” (types 1a, 1b and 2a concerning economic governance); “In the case of the two-pack regulations/Eurobonds/Fiscal Compact, what were the EP’s channels of influence?” (type 2b concerning economic governance); “What channels did the EP use to influence the negotiations besides plenary and committee meetings?” (type 2b concerning the shaping of trade agreements). Where appropriate, we extended these general questions with more specific follow-up questions based on the interviewees’ respective answers.

Assessment of strategies

In order to obtain information on the strategies used by the EP, we primarily relied on interview material. First, in the context of our semi-structured interviews, we asked in an open question about strategies the EP used on a specific institutional issue, while making sure not to suggest any particular strategy or causal mechanism. More specifically, we asked “which strategies did the EP use in order to influence” a specific issue? Second, based on our interview material, we inductively created a list of entries regarding these strategies mentioned by the interviewees. Third, we coded and categorized the empirical material according to strategies we had deduced previously from literature on the EP’s empowerment. These strategies were delaying, issue-linkage, arena-linkage, alliances with member states or non-majoritarian actors, moving first, sanctioning, providing expertise, shaming, and mobilizing public opinion. Five of these strategies were relevant for the cases we report in the main body of the text. Fourth, as part of a broader research project, we discussed our categorization extensively with two colleagues in order to ensure reliability.

Our empirical assessment in the main body of the text focuses on five strategies: 1) obstructing, including a) delaying and b) sanctioning; 2) issue-linking a) within and b) across arenas (arena-linking); 3) allying with member states; 4) moving first; 5) mobilizing public opinion. In the table below, we explain the rationale of each strategy and their empirical assessment in economic governance and the shaping of trade agreements.

Table 2: Assessment of EP bargaining strategies

Strategy	Rationale	Assessment in economic governance	Assessment in the shaping of trade agreements
1a) Delaying	EP withholds approval until actor B compromises to a request made by EP	EP withholds consent in inter-institutional negotiations and makes institutional requests	EP delays consent to trade agreement and makes institutional requests
1b) Sanctioning	EP blocks a decision at t1 because of a restrictive interpretation of its competences by actor B, and reminds actor B on the occasion of another decision at t2	Using formal right to vote down an issue in multilateral surveillance by referring to a restrictive interpretation of EP competences	Using formal right to reject ratification by referring to a restrictive interpretation of EP competences
2a) Issue-linking	EP trades off an issue that is of value for actor B for an increase of institutional power within the same decision-making arena	Using co-decision rights in multilateral surveillance to obtain more competences in the same arena	Conditional ratification of trade agreement depending on requests on the same agreement
2b) Arena-linking	EP withholds approval in a decision-making arena where it has veto powers until it gets institutional powers in another decision-making arena where it has no formal powers in case these two decisions are close in time	Using rights of co-decision or consent in economic governance or treaty revision procedures to obtain more rights in an arena where the EP has no such competences	N/A
3) Allying with member states	EP lobbies at least one member state in order to strengthen its institutional powers	Contacts between the EP and national governments in order to muster support for EP institutional requests in the context of inter-institutional negotiations	
4) Moving first	EP unilaterally invents a new institutional rule and hampers behavioral options for actor B to re-establish status quo	Unilateral action of EP to introduce a new institutional rule with no corresponding legal basis	
5) Mobilizing public opinion	EP mobilizes like-minded external actors in order to create public pressure	<p>EP increases public salience of an issue area where it forwards institutional demands via the press or social media (press releases, interviews and media contributions of MEPs or EP (vice) President, public declarations, tweets)</p> <p>EP collaborates with like-minded third actors such as interest groups or non-governmental organizations in order to obtain their public support</p>	

Source: own illustration