

Towards a European multi-level parliamentarism? The cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments in budgetary affairs

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Abstract

As the budget is at the core of Member States' sovereignty and the national parliaments' major competence, the question of how to legitimise the new economic governance and budgetary surveillance structures is highly salient. Due to the EU being a multi-level governance structure and the budget being the national parliaments' prerogative, the legitimacy of the new surveillance processes essentially depends on an effective multi-level cooperation between parliaments. This thesis will examine how cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments has been organised up to the present and how it can be improved in light of the current crisis. The aim is to find out how cooperation in the field of budgetary matters, and more specifically in the framework of the European Semester and Article 13 TSCG, can be set up in a way that contributes to a new legitimate and efficient budgetary architecture and a multi-level parliamentarism in the European Union.

It will be argued that while numerous fora of interparliamentary cooperation exist already, their efficiency and their political and public relevance are minimal due the following factors: their duplication; the general character of the discussions held in these frameworks; a lack of formality; and competition between the two levels. Cooperation in the specific field of budgetary affairs has the potential to improve interparliamentary cooperation in terms of efficiency, as it allows for a consolidated and specialised collaboration. Moreover, the budget is at the heart of Member States' sovereignty, which makes the topic more salient. The interparliamentary forum for fiscal coordination consequently could become more visible and might even be more influential than the existing ones.