

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Workshop in Ljubljana, 16 October 2015.

Call for papers

The many challenges the contemporary international community witnesses today can arguably be compared only to the interwar period. Global economic crisis, with recession not showing signs of withdrawing places an enormous challenge to the governments and especially their people. Further, the rebalancing of powers is under way. We are facing increasing challenges from non-state actors, in particular various terrorist groups. There are topics on the global agenda where progress is modest at best, as is the case with policies aimed at mitigating climate change. Basic human rights remain to be at risk as always. Poverty continues to batter most parts of the world. The European Union is in the middle of these challenges.

While most of the contemporary literature focuses and expresses hope in the European Parliament as *the* integrating force in the European Union it tends to neglect its role beyond the EU borders. In other words, there is an abundant literature about the European Union as a global actor. Yet this literature pays relatively scant attention to the role and contribution of individual European institutions to the 'actorness' of the EU in international affairs. This is particularly true for the European Parliament. In the world of international parliamentary institutions (IPIs), referred to as institutions in which parliamentarians from different countries co-operate with a view to formulating their interests, adopting decisions, strategies or programmes, which they implement or promote, formally and/or informally, in interactions with other actors, by various means such as persuasion, advocacy or institutional pressure, the European Parliament stands out as the most powerful, directly-elected organ of the EU, with widest co-decision-making powers. As such, the European Parliament has a special role to play in the European institutional architecture. By virtue of EU ambitions to be a global actor on the one hand, and to control its own backyard, the Euro-Mediterranean, on the other, the European Parliament must play a tangible role in the EU's international affairs as well, in its own right and in co-operation with national parliaments of EU member states, and in particular through interaction with parliaments of countries that determine the course of international politics, such as the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

The aim of this workshop is therefore to look at the extent to which the European Parliament uses its potential to set or implement policies by co-operating with IPIs, but also with national parliaments as indicated above, to address regional and global issues of importance to Europe. In this way, it will be able to gather enough knowledge to position the role of the European Parliament in the world of international affairs from the inter-parliamentary perspective.

The workshop is projected to have the following segments.

I. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND ITS RELATIONS WITH IPIs IN EUROPE

For this segment of the workshop, we invite papers dealing with relations between the European Parliament and other IPIs in Europe. In this context, our focuses would be the

following. 1) the historical development of IPIs in Europe – a tribute to the fact that, bar the creation of the Inter-parliamentary Union in 1889, the early and still dominant development of ‘parliamentary assembly’ actually happened on the soil of the ‘old continent’. 2) Analysis of relations between the European Parliament and other IPIs in Europe, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Nordic Council and subregional interparliamentary initiatives, as well as inter-parliamentary networks. 3) A critical evaluation of outcomes of these relations – how do they contribute to the impact of the European Parliament in the development of norms and values in Europe, as well as to international parliamentary relations in Europe overall.

II. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND TRANSATLANTIC AND EURASIAN RELATIONS

In this segment, we will look at papers that address the role of the European Parliament and collaboration with two key IPIs – the North Atlantic Parliamentary Assembly and the OSCE Assembly. Furthermore, given the increasing tensions between the United States and the Russian Federation we are interested in interactions between the European Parliament on one side, and the US Congress and the Russian Duma on the other. Again the issue that will be brought to the fore concerns the frequency of events and processes in which IPIs and two key national parliaments are involved, the analysis of the content of the meetings and a critical evaluation of the outcomes of these interactions. Issue-specific case studies, such as human rights, the crisis in Ukraine, or frozen conflicts, are also encouraged.

III. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

In this segment, we invite papers that look at: (1) the European Parliament’s role in the Mediterranean region both from an institutional perspective and an issue-area basis. What particular EP input there is on several issues such as the Middle East Conflict or the Arab Spring? Has the EP adapted over the years its own policy instruments to respond to developments in both the Northern (EU enlargement) and the Southern shores of the Mare Nostrum? (2) the role of other IPIs in the region (PAM, PACE, NATO PA, OSCE PA). (3) How do national and sub-states parliaments interact in the Mediterranean? (4) the role of parliamentary entities in the multi-level and multi-layer “governance” of Euro-Mediterranean relations. (5) what links between parliamentary bodies and civil society actors in the Mediterranean? (6) what lessons for parliamentary diplomacy can be drawn from Mediterranean experiences?

Up to 10 papers will be selected. Participants will enjoy the hospitality of Ljubljana, Slovenia. The accommodation for one night will be covered, as well as the transport to and from the airport for those who choose to come by plane. In addition to that, up to 250 EUR will be available for reimbursement for each paper giver’s travel costs.

Papers will be considered for publication in workshop proceedings and, in their final form, in an edited book.

Those interested in participating please apply with a short, 250 words proposal to the Convener of the Workshop, Professor Zlatko Šabič, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences – zlatko.sabic@fdv.uni-lj.si, by 20th of June, 2015. *Note that when ready for the workshop, papers need to be in an advanced draft form.*