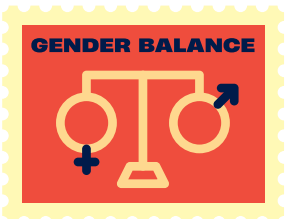
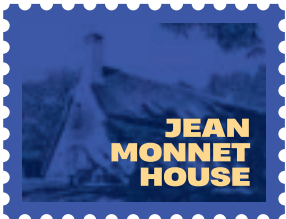
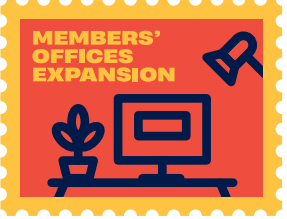


LIBER AMICORUM KLAUS WELLE





Klaus Welle was Secretary-General of the European Parliament from March 2009 to December 2022. In this set of essays in Klaus's honour, published to mark his 60th birthday, friends and former colleagues in the EU institutions write about the impact he made on the Brussels scene, and notably on the development of the European Parliament, during his tenure at the administrative helm of the Union's only directly-elected institution.

Klaus Welle was born in Beelen, Germany, in July 1964, and studied economics at Witten/Herdecke University. After training as a banker and doing military service, he became head of the CDU's European and foreign policy department in Bonn. He was appointed successively Secretary-General of the European People's Party (EPP) transnational party in 1994 and Secretary-General of the EPP Group in the European Parliament in 1999. He joined the permanent administration of the Parliament in 2004, serving as its Director-General for EU Internal Policies (DG IPOL) for three years, before becoming chef de cabinet (chief of staff) to the President of the Parliament, Hans-Gert Poettering, in 2007. Two years later, Klaus was appointed Secretary-General of the Parliament, a post he held for over 13 years, during which time he served five more Presidents of the Parliament, with major reforms undertaken within the institution on multiple fronts. He now chairs the Academic Council of the Wilfried Martens Centre in Brussels and holds visiting academic positions at KU Leuven, the London School of Economics (LSE) and the Moynihan Center in City College, New York.

Liber Amicorum

Making Europe Happen

***The politics and impact of
Klaus Welle – Essays on
his 60th birthday***

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Die Entscheidung

Alison MOONEY

Zuhören
Ohren Steif halten
leise sein
ablenkungsfrei
offenbleiben
bereit sein
Neuheit aufzunehmen.

Zeit nehmen.

In dem stillen Augenblick
atmen
gucken
richtig sehen.
Farben auseinandertrennen.

Laufen
um durch Bewegung
eine Chance geben
für den großen
bis zu den aller kleinsten Schwingungen des Pendels.
Genauigkeit der Situation
messen.

Dann
ausgleichen
mit Weisheit austarieren
vorausschauend
Entscheidung treffen.

Genau.

Introduction

Power broker in the Brussels system – Political adviser, strategist, administrator and agent of change

*Martin WESTLAKE*¹

Martin Westlake is a Visiting Professor in Practice at the European Institute at the LSE, London and a Visiting Professor at the College of Europe, Bruges. He has spent over four decades studying European integration and working in European Union government and politics. Having completed a first degree in philosophy, politics and economics at University College, Oxford, he went on to take a master's degree at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (Bologna Center) and a PhD at the European University Institute in Florence. Since beginning his professional life as a clerk to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, he has worked in the EU's Council of Ministers and the European Commission, with the European Parliament and in the European Economic and Social Committee, where he served as Secretary-General, 2008-2013. Westlake has published widely on the European institutions and on European and British politics. He is also the author of a major political biography (Kinnock, *The Biography*). He has occupied a number of visiting positions and, from 2000 to 2005, was a Visiting Professor at the College of Europe, Bruges, teaching a seminar on the European Parliament.

In 2009, shortly after Klaus was appointed as Secretary-General, a member of his close entourage confided in me that the new boss was spending a lot of time reading 'books about U.S. politics'. There are Secretaries-General and Directors-General and other high administrative office holders who do a perfectly good job of managing their administrations, putting out fires when necessary, but otherwise maintaining institutional rhythm and business as usual. Not Klaus.

There has always had to be a higher ethic and a higher logic, and the dynamics that flow from those. The higher ethic was and is, fundamentally, the European integration process. But for Klaus, that cannot be an undirected evolutionary

¹ I am grateful to my good friend, Anthony Teasdale, for having granted me a preparatory chat over an agreeable lunch before I put pen to paper and for having read an early draft of this essay once it was finished.

affair at the whim of events. It is a moral good and, as such, must be cherished and maintained on course, primarily by the European institutions, for, following in best Jean Monnet tradition, Klaus has always been aware that nothing will last without them.

Moreover, the Union that is evolving must be a democratic construct. That means it must necessarily involve a strong, democratically legitimate Parliament wielding the full panoply of its powers. Hence all those books about U.S. politics, and particularly about the U.S. Congress – that higher logic (if one is seeking inspiration, where else is a powerful legislature not controlled by government to be found?).

That is not to say that Klaus is not a very good administrator – on the contrary, as this essay and many of the other contributions in this collection will attest. But Klaus has always had a keen sense of involvement in an ulterior process that goes beyond the institution itself but of which the institution is a vital element.

Next in Klaus's quinquvirate come the political actors within the parliamentary system; the once nascent and now growing European political parties (and the political groups), and the European People's Party and the EPP Group in particular (that is, without mentioning his compendious and entirely up to date knowledge of everything that might be going on politically in each of the twenty-seven Member States!). And then there is the administration – or the administrations. For Klaus, an administration can never be a static construct. It is a fluid device in constant interaction with the other levels. It is a part of the whole.

These were, I would argue, his main reference points, and they informed everything he did as Secretary General.

A second striking aspect of Klaus's role in the Brussels system is that, for him, everything was, and remains, strategic. He would be an excellent player of three-dimensional chess (or do I mean five-dimensional?) – as close observers can attest, he is always several moves ahead of every other actor, on every level and in every dimension. This observation held both within the Parliament and vis-à-vis the other institutions and bodies.

In a sort of variation on that theme, Klaus has always been good at considering people and positions. This was not just a case of appointments to his own administration, but also of advising Presidents and Group Presidents about who might be the right person for a position. It was part of the chess game.

Given all of the above, the term, 'power broker', is perhaps a little misleading. As Secretary General, Klaus was never somebody who wanted or wielded power for power's sake. Indeed, those who met him out of context would never have immediately realised that he was such a powerful figure.² For Klaus, power was necessary, not in itself, but in order to achieve things, always with reference to the higher strategy that shimmered constantly at the back of his mind. In my years as a fellow Secretary General, I never once saw Klaus behave in unduly muscular fashion. Power was there, but it was always wielded softly and on the basis of reason.

Nowhere was this more in evidence (from my humble point of view) than in the occasional meetings of the Secretaries-General of the European Union institutions. On the 'front benches', so to speak, were the representatives of the so-called inter-institutional triangle – the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the European Parliament. As I have elsewhere argued³, two of the three – the Council and the Commission – are necessarily reactionary institutions. This is because they were born in the early days of the European integration process basically with their roles and their powers already complete. The third institution in the triangle – the European Parliament – is necessarily a revolutionary body because it was born with its role and its powers far from complete.

These roles were exaggerated in the post-Lisbon Treaty days. Internally, the Council representative (Uwe Corsepius at the time) had to deal, among other things, with the arrival of the permanent President of the European Council (who would share the Council's secretariat)⁴. The Commission (represented by Catherine Day) had a much bigger set of adjustments to undertake, and like the Council, the Commission was also losing staff and functions to the European External Action Service (another major adjustment for both institutions). For the Parliament, on the other hand (represented by Klaus), the Lisbon Treaty represented a series of gains in legislative, budgetary, institutional, and constitutional terms. A lesser political figure might have been tempted to throw her or his weight around, but Klaus was never less than respectful and reasonable, delivering his point of view in patient and measured tones.

² And in that sense, he reminds me of the late great Emile Noël, Secretary General of the European Commission for twenty-eight years.

³ Martin Westlake, 2007, 'The evolution and management of conflict within the interinstitutional triangle', *Rivista/Studi sull'integrazione europea*, Cacucci ed., Rome, Autumn.

⁴ And whose baptism of fire was to deal with the Greek sovereign debt crisis.

I am convinced that this was due in considerable part to the fact that Klaus was always informed by his broader vision about the European governance system, in which all the institutions had their roles to play and for which they deserved respect. Indeed, it was this vision that, in turn, informed his strategic thinking and his tactics. And I am convinced also that his longevity in office (almost fourteen years) gave him an advantage over his fellow Secretaries-General in enabling him to pursue and consolidate that vision from the Parliament's point of view.

In a recent article, Klaus has set out that vision and his achievements in some detail⁵. In a 'division of power' system, the executive (the Commission) makes legislative proposals, and the Parliament – a twin arm of the legislative authority together with the Council – 'can respond with a yes, no, or maybe – and hundreds, if not thousands, of amendments.' But whilst this arrangement 'demands continuous negotiations on the content of the texts', such bargaining 'never affects the stability of the system itself.' The EU operates on the federated level as a two-chamber system. This 'division of power' is, he argues, 'the appropriate form to organise a multinational democracy at a continental scale, bringing together quite diverse realities in terms of historical experiences, cultural and religious backgrounds.'

In such a system, all institutions must play their roles. The Parliament must necessarily invest in its own content sources – hence, for example, the creation of the European Parliamentary Research Service as a new parliamentary power of expertise. (Hence also, by-the-way, Klaus's continued bemusement at the way the Council of the European Union has failed to adapt to its Treaty-ordained role as a twin arm of the legislative and budgetary authority!) It is for Parliament's administration, led by its Secretary General, to focus on optimising the impact of the European Parliament in the political and legislative processes. Hence, Klaus's unflinching concentration on winning or redistributing resources, and in transforming resources into capacity. Hence his unstinting efforts to enhance the strength, resilience, capability and reach of the administration, to provide Parliament's members with institutional memory and sources of analysis, to boost effective support to Parliament's committees (massively increasing staffing) and to hone an effective vehicle to help convert the preferences of the Parliament's political groups into political and legislative reality. In such a system, Klaus believes, the Parliament should be a player like any other institution; it should be able to look the Council in the eye in trilogues, for example, or face up to the Commission in budgetary negotiations.

⁵ Klaus Welle, with Hanna Corsini and Didier Georgakakis, 'Parliamentarisation through administration? The General Secretariat of the European Parliament and its transformation (2009-2022)'. Forthcoming.

Klaus has also given thought and expended much effort to the European Parliament's image, and the democratic role behind that, and to its sheer presence. The fact that the Parliament has become a major player in the Brussels real estate market is not down to some sort of land grab; it is, in Klaus's logic, an assertion of the Parliament's presence and its identity. It is the reason why, beyond his support for the House of European History and the Parliamentarium in Brussels (and the lunchtime concerts in the Wiertz gardens), he has also supported the extension of 'Europa experience' facilities in the city centres of Member States' capitals. It is the reason why he has supported the refurbishment and extension of Jean Monnet's house in Houjarray as a conference centre. It is, in another dimension, the reason why he has supported the consolidation of the Parliament's liaison office with the U.S. Congress in Washington D.C., and why he has supported the opening of offices in New York and Addis Ababa, and soon in Jakarta.

Resources, access, presence, support; these have been constant themes of Klaus's time as Secretary General, not only as a great administrator but as somebody who could simultaneously think of the bigger strategic picture and convert that into the necessary practical steps.

Somehow, though, the massive demands of such a hungry job did not prevent Klaus from also acting as an agent of change, in particular by referring to what I have described above as his higher ethic of the European integration process. Perhaps the best example of this was the work he encouraged on plotting out the 'unused' potential in the Treaties, of cataloguing what he would describe as a 'compilation of unused opportunities'. And there could be no better example of that than his championing of the Spitzenkandidaten/lead candidate process, which I write about elsewhere in this *Liber Amicorum*, and which he likes to describe as being 'not a necessary outcome of the Lisbon Treaty, but a possible one.'

Lastly, there is Klaus the political advisor. Klaus has developed the extraordinary – at times almost uncanny – skill of being able to give his political masters convincing advice that somehow coincides with what is also best from Klaus's own strategic point of view. That he has been so successful in this regard is because his advice is invariably good advice, sage advice, based on all those years of experience in different guises and different political and administrative roles. But also because he never sees relationships as zero sum games. Moreover, Klaus knows his place in the scheme of things; he practices great humility as appropriate, happy to see his ideas take flight and not so worried about claiming authorship. We once had a chat about the advisory function in a London cab on the way to St Pancras and I was so struck by what he said that I wrote it down:

'It's the absolute responsibility of people at our level to be ready with ideas for our political masters. It is of course for them to decide whether they run with an idea or not. After all, they stand or fall. But it is simply unacceptable for us not to have ideas and suggestions. It is what Jean Monnet did with Robert Schuman. The latter had to make a speech and he didn't know what he was going to say ten days before.'

As he has put it elsewhere, 'every Monnet needs a Schuman, and every Schuman needs a Monnet.'

In the same context, it is remarkable that Klaus was able to build up a relationship of trust with all of the Presidents he served in one guise or another (not to mention his special relationships with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the former long-serving Belgian Prime Minister, Wilfried Martens), and in some cases those relationships were very close, with Klaus acting at times almost as a chief political adviser.

To conclude, Max Weber argued in 'Politics as a Vocation' (which Klaus is fond of quoting) that the politician must balance an 'ethic of moral conviction' with an 'ethic of responsibility' – put another way, s/he has to balance her/his unshakeable beliefs on the one hand against the realities and practicalities of management on the other. Klaus's long service as the European Parliament's Secretary General has been a peerless example of how a leader can keep that balance whilst considerably advancing his cause, and all for the greater good of the European integration process.

Innovation in the European Parliament

Continuous improvement by design

Susanne ALTENBERG

Before leaving active service on 1 May 2024, Susanne Altenberg was Director for Innovation and Central Services in the European Parliament. Previously, she held the position of Director of the Cabinet of Klaus Welle, Secretary-General of the European Parliament. She first joined his Cabinet as Team Leader for Resources dealing with, inter alia, finance, infrastructure and logistics, security and safety, translation, interpretation, information and communications technology (ICT) and communications.

In previous roles, Susanne was Head of Unit for Office Allocation and Moves in the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (DG INLO), Head of Unit for Multilingualism Support in the Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences (DG LINC) and Head of Unit for German and Polish interpretation.

Susanne completed her undergraduate studies in History and English Linguistics at RWTH Aachen University and her interpreting studies at the University of Applied Sciences, Cologne. She obtained a Masters of Science in Management Studies from the FernUniversität in Hagen and undertook the Cycle of Advanced European Studies (*Cycle des hautes études européennes*) at the École National de l'Administration (ENA).

What is innovation?

Most dictionaries define innovation as *'the act or process of introducing new ideas, devices, or methods'*⁶. In its policy profile on public-sector innovation, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines innovation as *'the implementation [...] of new or significantly improved process, methods or services aimed at improving a public sector unit's operations or outcomes'*⁷. The technological research and consulting firm Gartner puts a clear emphasis on the execution of new ideas that create a useful outcome⁸.

Throughout his entire career, Klaus Welle placed great emphasis on innovation in the broadest sense of these definitions. For him, innovation is not an end in itself, but is strongly linked to the immediate execution of ideas and yields a tangible and useful outcome. In my contribution, I will focus on his work as Secretary-General of the European Parliament from 2009 to 2022, with a special emphasis on 2017-2022 as I had the privilege of joining Klaus Welle's Cabinet in 2017. This contribution reflects my own personal opinion and is not an official position of the European Parliament.

Innovation by design – changing the culture

In preparation for Klaus Welle's farewell reception, the Internal Communication Unit created a video. In this context, they interviewed his three Heads of Cabinet and showed us a board with 15 stamps representing Klaus' main achievements. We were asked – in a humorous way – which achievement we would like to 'steal'. It was difficult, if not impossible, to choose. You will find a reproduction of the board with the stamps on the cover of this very book. It is a visual representation of Klaus' innovative and visionary approach. All of his achievements and more are described in this *Liber Amicorum*.

In its 2020 ranking of the 28 most powerful people in Europe, Politico dubbed Klaus Welle 'The Strategist' who continuously expanded the European Parliament's power with his innovative ideas. Klaus implemented innovation in many ways. The foundation of his approach was certainly the Strategic Execution Framework (SEF) described by Ana Cabanelas Alvarez later in this book. Klaus undoubtedly changed the culture of Parliament's administration, with a strong

⁶ The Britannica Dictionary, 'Innovation'.

⁷ OECD iLibrary, 'OECD Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2016'.

⁸ cf: Gartner, 'Want Your Marketing Innovations to Pay Off? First Define Innovation', 26 August 2021.

focus on innovation and outcomes. In 2014, he said: *'We have started our transition from a rule-based administrative culture to the management of scarce resources with a focus on outcome and client satisfaction through effective internal cooperation'*⁹.

Culture change in a public administration is complex and takes time. While the SEF served as the foundation, additional structural and horizontal measures, which may seem insignificant on their own, cumulatively made a real difference. For example, Klaus Welle introduced a new criterion in the important annual staff evaluation reports: *'Approaching situations creatively and with an innovative mindset'*. At his request, the Directorates-General (DGs) established Strategy and Innovation Units directly attached to the Directors-General. The heads of these units formed a robust network of innovation multipliers led by the Cabinet of the Secretary-General. Resource directorates were established within each DG, dealing with HR, finance and ICT, thereby also addressing administrative innovation. The Director of the Cabinet of the Secretary-General headed the network of Resource Directors and ensured two-way communication between them and the Secretary-General. Inter-DG steering groups for ICT, finance, environmental management, HR, facility management, information security, document management, organisational resilience and later also democracy support for Ukraine were created, reporting to the Resource Directors. These horizontal structures broke down the silos between DGs and introduced a weak matrix structure into the traditionally vertical structure of Parliament's administration.

Another important aspect of this culture change was the creation of 'Innovation Days' for all managers in Parliament. Between 2018 and 2022, Klaus Welle organised nine Innovation Days focusing on either administrative or policy issues. The first, in January 2018, centred on the implementation of the SEF of Parliament's 2017-2019 administration and the corresponding Parliamentary Project Portfolio¹⁰. It was a crucial step in assessing the success of the SEF and firmly anchoring it in the administration's culture. The second and third Innovation Days, in January and April 2019 respectively, prepared options for future Members and the upcoming legislative term under the topic *'Empowering the Union for a Multipolar World'*. Staying within the SEF framework, concrete projects in specific policy areas were presented and discussed. Secretary-General Klaus Welle introduced the 2019-2021 SEF, then the DGs presented their game-changing projects in small working groups.

⁹ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-secretary-general/en/secretary_general/strategic_thinking/strategic-2014-june/strategic_thinking-2014-june1.h

¹⁰ For details of the Strategic Execution Framework, see Ana Cabanelas Alvarez, 'Strategic Execution Framework', in this book.

The fourth Innovation Day presented *'A Strategic Execution Framework for the European Union in the making'*, thus taking the SEF to the next level. The aim was to have a scene-setting segment based on the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System, before looking at how to overcome structural limitations to the development of the EU and then exploring the European Commission and European Council policy agendas for the coming five years in more detail. The COVID-19 pandemic did not prevent the fifth Innovation Day from taking place in September 2020, in a hybrid format with very limited in-person attendance. *'Making teleworking a success'* was the highly topical theme for the day. As was the case for all Innovation Days, the President of Parliament made an address to all staff. The plenary meetings of each Innovation Day were webstreamed to make them accessible to all of Parliament's staff, not only the managers. On that occasion, the late Parliament President David Sassoli delivered a highly inspirational speech on *'Mastering the COVID-19 crisis'* that boosted staff motivation and confidence.

Following on from this, the sixth Innovation Day in January 2021 dealt with *'Resilience: managing a crisis after the crisis'*. It emphasised the need for the EU to devote more effort to anticipatory governance, structured contingency planning and stress-testing of policies. A risk-mapping exercise was presented with the objective of identifying the most significant and probable structural risks, discussing the capabilities of the EU and its Member States to address such risks and examining remaining gaps in policies and instruments. The seventh Innovation Day in July 2021 sought to prepare for a post-COVID-19 Parliament and develop a post-COVID-19 vision for all DGs. Improving organisational resilience, agility and the ability to innovate were the order of the day. The second half was devoted to generating complementary executive capacity as a creative way forward to help policymakers grapple with the unprecedented complexities of today's world. In March 2022, the eighth Innovation Day on *'Empowering Members through Innovation'* marked the launch of the 2022-2024 SEF. It took a closer look at the new projects and ideas supporting the administration's ambition to empower Members through innovation. Finally, the ninth Innovation Day in July 2022 examined *'The EU in the world created by the Ukraine war'*. Speakers and participants discussed the implications of Russia's war against Ukraine and delved deeper into the options for policy responses that could help the EU to achieve strategic autonomy in key areas and build resilience against future systemic shocks.

Strategic execution

In addition to mainstreaming innovation in the medium and long-term and embedding it into the culture of the administration, Klaus Welle was very quick in the short-term strategic execution of concrete projects. He was certainly not afraid to take decisions. Sometimes, it only took him a few days to progress from having the initial idea to developing a concrete proposal and preparing the corresponding decision for Parliament's Bureau. As an example, I would like to describe how we worked on the future Library of Europe.

On a misty day in early 2018, Secretary-General Klaus Welle had a business trip scheduled. For the members of his Cabinet – of which I was the Team Leader for Resources at the time – this meant we had a predictable day of scheduling work meetings with colleagues and catching up on urgent tasks without being interrupted by the boss. At around ten o'clock, his personal assistant called; the boss's flight had been cancelled and he was back in the office, looking ahead at a whole working day without any scheduled appointments – a unique opportunity. He wanted to work on the Library of Europe and requested to see me, the then Team Leader for Resources, Franck Débié, the Deputy Head of Cabinet and Team Leader for Innovation, and two colleagues from his team in his office in 10 minutes. (Yes, we had a dedicated innovation team in the Cabinet.) I quickly cancelled my next meeting and ran upstairs to Klaus Welle's office.

Well equipped with a steaming cup of tea and a muesli yoghurt, Klaus radiated enthusiasm. He explained his ideas to us for the creation of a Library of Europe in the historic building of the Solvay Library in Parc Léopold, Brussels. The basement would showcase cutting-edge technology in a digital library of the future, the ground floor would comprise a historical library and venue for events, and the first floor could be a media library. We discussed the concept and made suggestions. After roughly half an hour, Klaus gave us 45 minutes to go away, further explore the concepts and draw up plans. At that point, we understood that the day would not go as planned and that we needed to cancel the rest of our scheduled meetings for the day. After 45 minutes, we reconvened, presented the plans, discussed them, agreed on changes and were given another 45 minutes to refine our ideas. Needless to say, the discussions continued over a joint lunch and for the rest of the afternoon. We all became very creative, inspired by our visionary boss and totally focused on this one project for the entire day. Late in the afternoon, the final concept was ready and the draft of the note for Parliament's Bureau was well underway.

Let us take a closer look at the role of the Bureau in the area of innovation. Parliament's Bureau consists of the President, 14 Vice-Presidents and 5 Quaestors. It is the body responsible for financial, organisational and administrative decisions on matters concerning the internal organisation of Parliament¹¹. Therefore, the President and the Bureau members are the most important stakeholders that the Secretary-General needs to convince of his plans, also in the area of innovation. It would not be appropriate to describe the details of how the Bureau makes decisions in this book. Suffice it to say that Klaus Welle prepared all Bureau meetings in great detail. He had a knack for choosing the right moment to submit a project for decision. He also had the patience to wait for that moment, should it be necessary.

In addition to the Bureau's monthly meetings, Klaus Welle organised 'Bureau Away Days', which were often preceded by and prepared during a senior management retreat. These away days occurred at strategic moments so as to lay the groundwork for important decisions. For example, in October 2019, Klaus presented his ideas for administrative innovation in the 2019-2024 legislative term to the then newly-elected Bureau at an away day at the Jean Monnet House in Bazoches. Using parliamentary services in national parliaments and the US as benchmarks, he presented the substantial progress achieved since 2009 and in particular from 2014 to 2019. In areas such as language services, IT software, conference services, car services for Members, childcare, political process management and most communication services, Parliament had become a global leader. In areas such as security, Members' office space, meeting facilities, IT hardware, financial services and knowledge support, Parliament had progressed from average (yellow) or below average (red) to above average (green).

Klaus understood the growing importance of clear visual presentations. Therefore, he always used the colours red, yellow and green to illustrate progress. The DGs thus had a clear overview of where they stood and engaged in healthy competition to achieve 'green' status. At the same time, Klaus made it clear that if all indicators were met, i.e. green, we would need to set new, more ambitious objectives. Although this might sound like a highly competitive environment, there was always room for trial and error in a safe space. As a boss, Klaus was very demanding, while also remaining calm and supportive, accepting that people who work hard also make errors. Learning from these mistakes was important, though.

¹¹ For more information on Parliament's Bureau, see Paolo Martinelli's article in this book.

Let us revisit the 2019 presentation. Building on the achievements of 2014 to 2019, Klaus Welle then presented his major innovation objectives for the new legislative term, which would run until 2024. These included: towards parity in gender balance on all management levels, ambitious unified environmental reduction targets based on carbon neutrality, a modern collaborative working environment for all EP staff, internalisation in all sensitive services, mainstreaming of client satisfaction and productivity indicators, tailor-made client services, openness for citizens, building a European identity, right of legislative initiative, citizen's driven policy agenda, further enhancing European political parties and foundations, and democracy promotion in third countries. By the time Klaus Welle left office at the end of 2022, most of these objectives had been achieved or were on a solid path towards achievement. You can find a more detailed description of most of them in this Liber Amicorum.

Conclusion

Secretary-General Klaus Welle not only implemented a vast array of innovative ideas, but he also succeeded in embedding innovation and transformation deeply in the culture of Parliament's administration. He did not shy away from using proven methods from the private sector. At the same time, he showed patience when he felt that more time was needed to convince essential stakeholders of the intended change. His desk always had a pile of documents with ideas still to be implemented when the right moment came. When he cleared out his desk at the end of 2022, this pile was almost gone. According to the late Henry Kissinger, whom Klaus Welle admired and had met many times, 'the task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been'. Klaus certainly got us – Parliament's staff – to many places we had not been before. Personally, I am immensely grateful to have held the best job in Parliament's administration: Head of the Cabinet of Secretary-General Klaus Welle. Thus, I was able to play a modest role during the final years of this intense innovation journey. It made me a different person. Danke Klaus!

A supranational administration

Giancarlo VILELLA

The author was Director General of ITEC in the European Parliament during the mandate of Klaus Welle as Secretary General. Previously, Giancarlo Vilella was Director of Publishing and internal communication, as well as Director General of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences. Thanks to a decision of K. Welle, the author was also EP Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence. Giancarlo Vilella has been adjunct professor at University of Milan and at Polytechnic University of Marche (Ancona). He is the author of several books and essays on European Union, European Administration, E-Democracy and other topics.

Dealing with the European Parliament Administration (from now: EPA) as a “supranational” administration seems to me the good way to pay a tribute to Klaus Welle for the importance of his role as Secretary General. In the present “contribution” to the *Liber Amicorum* I will first suggest what we mean for “supranational” administration, then I focus on the concept of Good Administration, and close with an analysis of the key importance of the management approach.

The evolution and characters of the European Administration ...

The basic inspiration of the European Administration is the « classic model as theorised by Max Weber » adopted by Prussia, then Napoleonic France and progressively imitated¹². The Weberian « classic model » means¹³: submission to the Law (Rule of Law), instrumental administration, hierarchical structure and professional service, representative democracy and political responsibility. The European Administration, however, has its own development, that I suggest

¹² ZILLER, J., De la nature de l'administration européenne, in *Revue française d'administration publique*, n. 95, 2000, p. 358. On the « role » of the European administration in the legal functioning of EU see ZILLER, J., *European Union Law*, Elgar Publishing, 2020, passim, but in particular pp. 25, 94, 97, 108, 112.

¹³ WEBER, M., *Wissenschaft als Beruf*, 1917/1919, and *Politik als Beruf*, 1919.

being in three steps¹⁴. First step: at the very beginning the European Commission was the core of the « Community » and was considered “the” administration, no way a political body. At that moment the « Community » was considered just a collaborative space amongst States and the European Civil Service was just a small machinery called upon to sustain the Commission in its daily business. Second step: when the Common market started to become a real single market, then economic, regional, social contradictions emerged, so that regulatory activities became very complex and not limited to the « market » itself. The Commission, as well as the Parliament, started to be a political actor(s) and the small machinery had to be transformed in a solid administration capable of responding to the new institutional needs. Third step, since last ten years of past century: we witnessed the building of a « new » Europe, the creation of the Union, the adoption of Treaties that expanded the scope of EU in a general interest organisation¹⁵. The Commission became a political body, the European Parliament became a real parliament, the Council, much more than a collaborative space, became the political orientation institution. During this stage the European administration and Civil Service came to a level of maturity, then it was manifest that a radical reform was needed. That was adopted at the beginning of the new century and contained the following targets¹⁶: « service culture » approach; reinforcing individual responsibility; efficiency by a better use of the skills; promoting motivation and professional prospects; strengthening the method of rewarding; improving disciplinary procedures. The reform introduced a new career model (two functions groups, one single pay scale) and great flexibility in the middle-management responsibilities. Klaus Welle, in his capacity of top level actor, made valuable the spirit of the reform, made the most of the new rules introduced by the reform and even increased the efficacy of them.

The specific evolution of the European Administration determined the specific characters of its organisation and administrators. The European Civil Servant (ECS) is an atypical civil servant because while in national, local and international organisations the State sovereignty is « inviolable », the European Union reduces the State sovereignty in favour of a “supranational” power to which the ECS is loyal and dedicated¹⁷. We came from a « Community » to a « Union », that is a true political-institutional system, integrated in a defined legal order,

¹⁴ VILELLA, G., *The European Civil Servant. An Introductory Essay*, euroEditions, 2009.

¹⁵ In chronological order we have Maastricht Treaty (1992), Amsterdam Treaty (1997), Treaty of Nice (2001) and Lisbon Treaty (2007).

¹⁶ REGULATION No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community (Consolidated TEXT: 31962R0031 — EN — 01.01.2014 (europa.eu).

¹⁷ See again VILELLA, G., *The European Civil Servant. An Introductory Essay*, etc. cit.

with political values and pursuing the “general interest” of society. Striving for the « general interest » means being at the service of the European citizens. So, an important character of the ECS is that it « serves the general interest of the Union ». It means that he/she is not f.i. an Italian at service of the EU but is a European servant who is Italian. However, an Italian, or Polish, or French etc. arrives with his/her own culture, both general and administrative culture. It means that everybody must confront with the other cultures present in the organisation in order to obtain the best result for the Union: that is very creative! Klaus Welle had always put the general interest of the Union at the centre of his action and, above all, made the most of the creative effects of the various administrative cultures present in the EP.

... and art. 41 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights¹⁸

Three concepts have been introduced by recent Treaties for consolidating the link between citizens and European Administration: Transparency (make public the internal practices), Subsidiarity (evaluate the efficiency of the level intervention) and Good Administration as a Right. Indeed, the latter is not only foreseen in the Treaties, but also (and above all) at the art. 41 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights¹⁹. The concept of Good Administration is not just “on paper” but is a principle with a concrete implementation. Thanks to the initiative of the European Parliament and of the European Ombudsman a Code of Good Administrative Behaviour has been adopted²⁰: it is an essential guide for the correct activity of the ECS. The Code clarifies the importance of the principles of proportionality, absence of abuse of power, objectivity and impartiality, and

¹⁸ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EUR-Lex - 12012P/TXT - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu).

¹⁹ 1. Every person has the right to have his or her affairs handled impartially, fairly and within a reasonable time by the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union. 2. This right includes: the right of every person to be heard, before any individual measure which would affect him or her adversely is taken; the right of every person to have access to his or her file, while respecting the legitimate interests of confidentiality and of professional and business secrecy; (c) the obligation of the administration to give reasons for its decisions. 3. Every person has the right to have the Union make good any damage caused by its institutions or by its servants in the performance of their duties, in accordance with the general principles common to the laws of the Member States. 4. Every person may write to the institutions of the Union in one of the languages of the Treaties and must have an answer in the same language.

²⁰ The European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour | Publication | European Ombudsman (europa.eu). This is a specific focused complement of the general rules and control system to which the European Administration is submitted.

points out the basis for the actions, which means ECS must act according to the law and with coherence, responding correctly to citizens, adopting correct decisions. Klaus Welle required EPA to respect the Code of good administrative behaviour and, above all, made a steady work for building up a (EPA) Good administration by focusing on management innovation.

The management approach

Indeed, under the leadership of Secretary General Klaus Welle and with the support of top management, the EPA has worked steadily over more than ten years to prepare a solid basis for administrative action and structures. This solid foundation was inspired to a very innovative approach, introduced by Klaus Welle, by following two parallel but connected paths: on the one hand, by pursuing innovation in working methods, on the other, by achieving the digitisation of the institution.

As far as working methods are concerned²¹, the EPA has built a management system step by step, based on the method of combining vision and planning, together with the approach of a joint use of a matrix and metrics. The “vision” takes into account the context (internal and external) in which the work is performed, thanks to an analysis of what is happening and what could happen. “Planning” determines the adoption of projects coordinated by sectors, with a clear indication of the objectives and responsibilities. Vision and planning together give rise to the Strategic Execution Framework, a planning document for a three-year period, which is the reference for the long-term work of the European Parliament's administration. The “matrix” approach establishes the interrelationships between the various projects and objectives, thus fostering internal cooperation, whilst the “metrics” approach allows for permanent measurement and scrutiny of the results achieved: what is interesting in the EPA's experience is that an effort is made (with difficulty, but consistently) to ensure that the two aspects (matrix/metrics) are not separated.

²¹ For an in-depth, detailed analysis of this aspect, see VILELLA, G., Working methods of the European Parliament Administration in Multi-actors World. A case-study, European Press Academic Publishing, Florence, 2019: I carried out this study pursuant to a formal mandate from Secretary General K. Welle (in agreement with the then President of Parliament, A. Tajani) and developed it during a research period at the European University Institute in Florence.

As far as the digitisation of the institution is concerned²², the EPA has succeeded in making the European Parliament a parliamentary world leader in the use of technology for its activities thanks to its awareness of the importance of that process in the future: significant financial and human resources have been made available for this purpose. Over a number of years, up to the 2019 elections, the digitisation of the institution has seen the implementation of: eCommittee, eMeeting, the Drafting Support Tool, AT4AM, Digital Signature, ICT services for constituency offices, XML, metadata and indexing, eVote. As of 2019, a new programme has been implemented, it identifies the strategic guidelines for the 9th legislature, whereby the aim was to accelerate the digital transformation of the Institution by means of a number of projects : service improvement, cybersecurity, meeting customers' needs and IT capacity building for democracy support, digital workplace (for MEPs, assistants and staff). In addition, there were two other projects, referred to as game changers: that is to say, speeding up the move towards cloud computing and artificial intelligence. These plans are a clear contribution to strengthening parliamentary democracy through a process of digital transformation.

When the Covid-19 emergency erupted in the first months of 2020, the EPA did not have to invent a new type of management to deal with it, but had to be able to adapt its solid structure - based on innovative working methods and advanced digitisation - to the new situation.

The EPA has been able to adapt to the new situation thanks (as we have seen above) to its habit which has evolved over many years of working on a strategic plan, of imagining and developing projects, not for here and now, but for the future, and of using sophisticated technological support. These are all things that have fostered a propensity for flexibility and a willingness to learn new skills. All decisions were agreed upon in advance by the Secretary General (Klaus Welle) with the President before being drawn up; they were then submitted to the Bureau for confirmation (if urgent) or for decision if deferred; lastly, top management exercised permanent scrutiny of the effects of the measures taken, whilst the Secretary General presented regularly (at least once a month, or even more frequently) a detailed report on how things were proceeding. The management, therefore, acted in permanent contact with the governance of the institution, which also meets the requirements of the relationship with the political mas-

²² See VILELLA, G., *The European Parliament Administration facing the challenge of eDemocracy*, European Press Academic Publishing, Florence, 2021, for a detailed, in-depth appraisal of this aspect: this study was also carried out on basis of a formal mandate from Secretary General K. Welle (in agreement with the then EP President D. M. Sassoli).

ter. Finally, as regards the strengthening of collaborative works, the approach already introduced by the EPA of tuning matrix and metrics has had the effect of bringing the various services into tune with each other in a truly exceptional manner. Frankly speaking, it was a strong success story!

Conclusion

Defending, strengthening and developing Democracy require different actions in several fields, but there is a pivotal pillar that is the Parliamentary institution: this is true at all governance level and it is true at the European level too. Parliament is a political institution and its political work is the foundation of Democracy. However, as Max Weber pointed out already a century ago²³, the political sphere must be able to take the most appropriate decisions, that is to say, must be able to decide having regard to all the elements necessary for the government of society. The philosopher Massimo Cacciari²⁴, reconstructing Weber's thought, tells us: "Without a technical-bureaucratic apparatus, without organisation, without skills, politics is not a profession, and will therefore necessarily be ineffective in governing a world dominated by technical/scientific powers. A political sphere which does not want or is unable to structure itself professionally internally and equip itself as a whole with powerful administrative/bureaucratic structures will simply be opting for impotence". The EPA, with Klaus Welle, has worked by taking in mind this key principle: the best way to conclude the present tribute.

²³ WEBER, M., *Politik als Beruf*, 1919, cit.

²⁴ CACCIARI, M., *Il lavoro dello spirito. Saggio su Max Weber*, Adelphi, 2020, essay on "geistige Arbeit".

Klaus Welle's major reforms in the EP administration

1

Introducing strategic planning

Strategic Execution Framework

Setting the strategic objectives for the European Parliament's administration

Ana CABANELAS ÁLVAREZ

Ana Cabanelas started her career at the European Parliament in 2005 as an assistant to one of the institution's vice-presidents. She was responsible for supporting him in his duties in Parliament's Bureau, covering the areas of communication, buildings and budget. In 2012, she became an advisor to the Director-General for Communication. She joined the Innovation Team in the Cabinet of the Secretary-General in February 2017 and became Team Leader for Strategic Planning in 2019, a role in which she assisted the Secretary-General in developing and monitoring the Strategic Execution Framework. Since February 2022, she has been the Head of the Risk, Crisis and Business Continuity Unit in the Directorate for Innovation and Central Services of Parliament's secretariat. She holds a bachelor's degree in communication and a master's degree in the law and economy of the EU.

The Strategic Execution Framework (SEF) was introduced by former Secretary-General of the European Parliament Klaus Welle in 2014 as a corporate management tool for Parliament's administration. It was developed with the aim of having a clear and effective strategic framework to guide decision-making within Parliament. The resulting corporate strategy was executed through projects – the Parliamentary Project Portfolio – that were implemented by Parliament's Directorates-General, with projects that contributed to the achievement of specific goals being grouped together in strategic programmes. The SEF was also intended as a means of breaking away from the silo structure in order to create synergies and facilitate effective communication and cooperation among Directorates-General.

The Strategic Execution Framework for Parliament's administration

The Strategic Execution Framework²⁵ for Parliament's administration was born in May 2014, at an Away Day seminar for Parliament's senior management. During the event, former Secretary-General of the European Parliament Klaus Welle introduced the model as *'our common management tool to lead organisational development through project-based work aligned with the corporate strategy'*.

Developing a strategic framework for Parliament's administration involved establishing Parliament's purpose, identity and long-term aims and determining the changes that would need to be made to the organisation's culture and structure. The next step was to translate these into a set of strategic goals and programmes. The ultimate objective was to have a clear and effective strategic framework to guide decision-making within Parliament. Most of the projects required a decision from Parliament's governing bodies, in particular the Bureau, which is the body responsible for financial, organisational and administrative decisions on matters concerning Parliament's internal organisation.

With the stated purpose of *'empowering the Members of the European Parliament for a resilient and effective European democracy'*, the SEF set out to pursue a major shift in the culture of Parliament's administration, transforming it from a rules-based administrative culture to a culture centred on the management of scarce resources, with a focus on results, innovation and client satisfaction. The primary challenge linked to the administration's structure was the need to break away from silos and develop a stronger matrix organisation in order to create synergies and facilitate effective communication and cooperation among the different Directorates-General (DGs).

The strategy was executed through projects – the Parliamentary Project Portfolio – that were implemented by the DGs, with projects that contributed to the achievement of specific goals being grouped together in strategic programmes. Each DG contributed to the SEF through projects that were integrated and aligned with the corporate strategy.

The SEF was revised every two and a half years, using a collaborative approach that involved all of Parliament's Directors-General. Moreover, Klaus Welle intro-

²⁵ Developed on the basis of the model put forward in Morgan, M., Lewitt, R. and Malek, W., *Executing your strategy: how to break it down and get it done*, Harvard Business Review Press, 7 January 2008.

duced the concept of Innovation Days for Parliament's administration. These Innovation Days were organised every year, with the Directors-General, Directors and Heads of Unit all taking part, and served to present and discuss the SEF. They also afforded an opportunity to share information, exchange best practices and update the strategic objectives of Parliament's administration.

In this way, the administration prepared the ground for the strategic decisions that would be made and endorsed by Parliament's governing bodies.



Parliament's Innovation Days in 2020

Despite internal challenges in adapting to the new model, Klaus Welle remained convinced that understanding the purpose of the organisation and the changes that needed to be made to its culture and structure was a prerequisite for major changes in Parliament's administration. Why was it so difficult to make such major changes? Was the idea too ambitious for a public administration? Was there a lack of communication about it? For real innovation to happen, change management must be implemented and a broad coalition of players must be aligned. Klaus Welle played a crucial role in this regard.

Strategic Execution Framework for 2014-2017

The first SEF put forward four strategic programmes for Parliament's administration.

The first of these, *Completing the Legislative Cycle*, was rooted in the conviction that Parliament should have an influence throughout the entire legislative process, from agenda-setting and consultation to amendments and scrutiny. Projects under this strategic programme aimed to increase the capacity of Parliament and its Members to become a relevant and respected player at every stage of the legislative process. Emphasis was placed on projects such as mapping the cost of non-Europe, increasing Parliament's capacity to contribute to the inter-institutional multiannual programming, having Parliament conduct its own ex ante and ex post impact assessments, and enhancing Parliament's scrutiny of delegated acts, the euro area and external policies.

The second strategic programme, *Building Operational Capacity*, was aimed at improving Members' working conditions, and encompassed buildings, logistics, IT tools and document management. The projects falling under this strategic programme included the completion of the Wilfried Martens and Václav Havel buildings and the development of visitors' facilities, such as the House of European History in Brussels and the mini-Parliamentarium in Strasbourg. This strategic programme also covered projects to provide additional office space for Members in Brussels and Strasbourg, along with new IT equipment and better IT support for Members in their constituencies.

Strengthening Resource Efficiency was the third strategic programme in the SEF for 2014-2017, and was developed to address budgetary restrictions and the need to reduce staff numbers by 5 %. It included projects related to allocating or reallocating staff, bringing security services in-house and digitalising Parliament's financial management system.

Strengthening Internal Cooperation was the last strategic programme in the first SEF, and was developed to improve cooperation among the DGs in a bid to overcome silos. The idea behind it was that vertical hierarchical structures had to be complemented by horizontal structures of cooperation across DGs in order to create synergies, improve communication and achieve better results. Inter-DG steering groups on policy streams and resources were created to this end, which helped to break away from the silo structure and facilitated communication and cooperation.

Strategic Execution Framework for 2017-2019

The SEF for 2017-2019 encompassed six strategic programmes: *Enhanced Services*, *Managing Efficiently*, *Innovative Working*, *Completing the Legislative Cycle*, *Linking the Levels* and *Succeeding 2019*.

The first three strategic programmes were aimed at enabling Parliament to continue addressing the increasing scarcity of resources. That said, they still included major infrastructure projects that involved large budgetary commitments and would be implemented over several years, such as the construction of the new Konrad Adenauer building in Luxembourg, the creation of additional office space for Members in Brussels and Strasbourg and the development of the Jean Monnet Academy in Bazoches (France). The mobility and contractual agents strategy and the e-Portal for Members were also part of these strategic programmes.

Completing the Legislative Cycle continued to be a key strategic programme for Parliament's administration in each successive SEF. The new projects added in 2017 included increased foresight capacities, briefings on legislation in progress and key files in trouble, and enhanced scrutiny of respect for the rule of law.

Linking the Levels was a new strategic programme introduced in 2017 with the aim of contributing to the development of a properly functioning multilevel governance system for the European Union by exchanging information with and drawing on the knowledge, experience and priorities of national and regional executives. This strategic programme covered such projects as the Ambassador School Programme in the Member States, *La Leistungsbilanz*, the Citizens' Portal and the promotion of the European Parliamentary Research Service as a research hub for national parliaments.

The SEF for 2017-2019 paid particular attention to the new strategic programme *Succeeding 2019*. The institutional communication strategy adopted by Parliament's Bureau for the 2019 European elections built on a set of projects that was part of the SEF. Parliament's administration geared all its efforts towards implementing the strategy, culminating in the election results being communicated across Europe on 26 May 2019 and a record turnout of 50.6%. The main projects covered by this strategic programme included the cultivation of a robust network of partners, intense media relations work and the development of a strong emotional advertising campaign that ended up being remarkably successful.

Strategic Execution Framework for 2019-2021

The strategic programmes *Enhanced Services and Managing Efficiently* continued to play a major role in the SEF for 2019-2021, while *Innovative Working* was replaced by a new strategic programme, *Digital Transformation*. A number of pilot projects conducted under the SEF for 2019-2021 enabled Parliament to swiftly and securely move to almost full teleworking following the COVID-19 outbreak. Parliament was able to roll out a remote participation system, including support functions, in a matter of days, allowing Members to perform their duties remotely. At the same time, a remote voting system ensured that Parliament could adopt key legislation to tackle the pandemic crisis. The quick deployment of hybrid devices to enable Members and staff to telework – another SEF project – was also key during the crisis.

Completing the Legislative Cycle and Linking the Levels continued to make an essential contribution to achieving the strategic goals of Parliament's administration. In addition, special emphasis was placed on the goal of aligning EU policies to citizens' expectations and being able to compete with other global powers in key policy areas. The projects falling under this strategic programme included legislative initiative reports, enhanced partnerships with national parliaments and regional and local organisations, scrutiny of international agreements and the strengthening of Parliament's Legal Service in support of better legislation.

Succeeding 2019 was replaced by *Succeeding Mass Communication*, which included projects such as campaigns on key legislative topics, the deployment of Europa Experience multimedia spaces in all Member States, the promotion of citizens' language, measures to counter disinformation, and a revised visitors strategy.

The SEF for 2019-2021 also included a specific strategic programme featuring different projects for measuring operations: *Game Changing Metrics*. The tools developed under the metrics strategy allowed units and services across Parliament's administration to automatically collect data about productivity and client satisfaction and served as a basis for improving performance.

Strategic Execution Framework for 2022-2024

The SEF for 2022-2024 included a number of strategic programmes focusing on post-pandemic transformation. The goal of the strategic programme *Digital Transformation* was to enable digital document workflows and complete the digitalisation of financial and human resources management. *Human Resources*

Transformation focused on developing a more agile human resources policy, while *Office Transformation* set out to provide Members and staff with excellent working conditions in modern, resource-efficient office spaces. Finally, *Ecological Transformation* was aimed at achieving environmental sustainability in all administrative activities.

The following strategic programmes were also introduced in the SEF 2022-2024:

Completing the Legislative Cycle – Reloaded pursued the same goal as in 2014, but included new projects aimed at increasing the capacity of Parliament and its Members to become a relevant player at every stage of the legislative cycle, from agenda-setting and consultation to amendments and scrutiny. *Scaling Up Parliamentary Democracy* aimed to promote the principles of parliamentary democracy in view of building alliances and networks, while *Succeeding 2024* was a follow up to the strategic programme *Succeeding 2019* and featured with new projects to maximise the reach and impact of Parliament’s communication in order to ensure the success of the June 2024 European elections.

Strategic Execution Framework for the European Union in the making

In January 2020, Klaus Welle prepared the publication *Taking the pulse – A Strategic Execution Framework for the European Union in the making* with the European Parliamentary Research Service in a bid to provide a comprehensive picture of the EU institutions’ policy agenda. The publication took stock of existing programmes and proposals in 12 policy areas, which derived almost exclusively from the strategic agenda for 2019-2024 adopted by the European Council in June 2019 and from the political guidelines put forward by the European Commission’s President, Ursula von der Leyen, in July 2019. Several publications followed in this area, including the Ideas Papers and *The EU in the world created by the Ukrainian war*.



Parliaments Innovation Days in 2020.

Legacy

Klaus Welle's ability to think strategically is his main legacy not only to Parliament, but also to the European project. Klaus Welle has a remarkable mind, with an exceptional capacity to think ahead and look for opportunities and solutions rather than problems. To him, the crises that arose during his time as the Secretary-General of the European Parliament were opportunities to make the institution more efficient and increase its impact, all for the benefit of European citizens. Under the leadership of Parliament's governing bodies, he succeeded in putting forward the right portfolio of projects to achieve the desired outcomes. Now, these projects have become standard operations for Parliament's administration, contributing to its development as a leading and relevant player among the EU institutions.

Klaus Welle's work on the Strategic Execution Framework brings to mind a Benjamin Franklin quote: *'Failing to plan is planning to fail'*. Klaus Welle's legacy confirms that he did not fail to plan!

The creation of the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) 2009-2015

Dr FRANCK Debié²⁶

Dr. Franck Debié is the Director of the EP Library and Knowledge Services (DG EPRS, Directorate C) and a Member of the *ESPAS* Steering Group. Previously, he was Deputy Head of Klaus Welle's cabinet, where he was in charge of innovation and foresight. He has taught geopolitics since 1996 and headed the department of Geography of the *École Normale Supérieure*, in Paris. He was the first Director-General of the *Fondation pour l'Innovation politique (Fondapol, Paris)* and the Policy Director of the *European Ideas Network*.

As early as 2009, a resolution of the European Parliament underlined *'the need for long-term strategic thinking on policy issues from an EU perspective'*²⁷. The European Union (EU)'s 2010 Budget provided a line for the European Commission to undertake a pilot project *'to explore the establishment of an inter-institutional system identifying long-term trends on major policy issues facing the EU'*. The pilot project launching European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) became a preparatory action in 2012, with the creation of three inter-institutional working groups (global economy, social change and international governance) and an open repository with all relevant information on long-term trends. The preparatory action came with a small budget initially managed by the European Commission. Following another resolution of the EP's Budgets Committee in July 2013, the process was further developed after 2014 as a *permanent system involving all relevant EU institutions*. ESPAS took its current form in early 2015, with a Steering Group presided by the European Commission and the secretariat provided by the European Parliament

²⁶ The author would like to thank Dr Isabelle Ioannides and Richard Freedman, both policy analysts at EPRS, for their constructive comments and editorial assistance.

²⁷ Alessandro D'Alfonso, Long-term strategic analysis for EU policy making, Brussels, European Parliament, Library briefing, October 2013. Eamon Noonan, Foresight with the EU institutions : the ESPAS process so far, Brussels, European Parliament, EPRS briefing, 2019.

A taste for strategic foresight

From the very start, Klaus Welle, Secretary-General of the European Parliament, supported this push for ESPAS, which had received large political support. He contributed to its shape and distinctive features. The key initiator of the political campaign for ESPAS was James Elles, a pro-EU British Conservative MEP in the EPP Group. He is still the honorary President of ESPAS as we write. Anthony Teasdale, the first (now former) Director-General of the new Directorate-General of European Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS), created by Klaus Welle in November 2013, is believed to have coined the name and the acronym of ESPAS. As a Member of the Task Force/ Steering Group, he played the role of Secretary for the collective leadership of ESPAS, while DG EPRS provided the Secretariat for the System from 2015 onwards under the leadership of Ann Mettler and then Stephen Quest, chairing it on behalf of the European Commission.

Klaus Welle, James Elles and Anthony Teasdale, had already been involved in the development of the European Ideas Network (EIN) and the efforts of the European People Party (EPP)'s Group under former Secretary-General Klaus Welle to establish this small strategic foresight network.

In politics, as Secretary-General of both the EPP Party and the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Klaus Welle was in a position to familiarise himself with the principles of modern strategic foresight and saw how they can help build consistency and cohesiveness within a diverse group. In the practice of strategic foresight, a repeated conversation about the future is supposed to go beyond the usual discussion of a report. It is to offer a space in which *'we talk with each other and turn ideas over together to create shared understanding and new common ground'*²⁸ One never lost sight of this principle in ESPAS: the process was always considered more important than any trend report or idea paper. Every text was always considered as a basis for a further conversation. In that sense, Klaus Welle subscribed to the description of strategic foresight advocated by one of the leading foresight experts, Angela Wilkinson: *'Making the future explicit, testable and contestable provides a way to refresh the present... It is important to engage on a regular or ongoing basis with different perspectives on the future and to forge a new shared sense through the exchange of perspectives and the process of strategic conversation. Building this new common ground is key to flexible cooperation'*²⁹.

²⁸ Angela Wilkinson, Strategic Foresight Primer, Brussels, European Commission, EPSC, November 2017, p. 9.

²⁹ Angela Wilkinson, Strategic Foresight Primer, Brussels, European Commission, EPSC, November 2017, p. 9.

In the EPP Group, strategic foresight was the task of the European Ideas Network (EIN). The mission of the EIN was to explore with think tanks, intellectuals and the business community possible futures for the EU. The work of the EIN was an attempt at a future-oriented policy conversation, on topics as diverse as demographic change, the long-term challenge for healthcare and pension systems, the sustainability of the Euro or the future of technologies. James Elles³⁰ was the founder of the network, Anthony Teasdale his deputy, and myself the policy director at a later stage. In different roles, all three, we were involved with Klaus Welle in the creation of the ESPAS System.

As Secretary-General of the European Parliament, Klaus Welle later encouraged the creation in Brussels of a genuine political foundation for each pan-European political family represented in the European Parliament. Most of these political foundations now have a strategic foresight capacity in one way or another. Their activity complements a rich ecosystem of think-tanks, research groups, lobbies, business stakeholders also involved in it³¹.

In public administration, Klaus Welle, as Secretary-General, also used strategic foresight and the specific method of **collaborative visioning** to increase cooperation between the different DGs and accelerate change³². The 2013 report *Preparing for Complexity* became the starting point of a vast consultation on the changing role of the European Parliament and its administration. It started by describing the larger number of participants in the policy process, the larger number of potential partners for policy implementation and the larger number of technological options for daily work and communication.³³ After several rounds of conversation, its output ³⁴ was *'a shared understanding and explicit description of THE preferred future, a medium-term roadmap detailing specific actions for making progress towards the vision.'* The emerging roadmap for the administration of the European Parliament became the object of further conversation and doc-

³⁰ James Elles' views on ESPAS and foresight are summarized in the last section of his book, *Fiction, Fact and Future, the Essence of EU Democracy*, London, Haus, 2019.

³¹ The role of this type of wide ecosystem of transnational, non-elected influencers and interest groups in policy making had been described a few years before by A.M. Slaughter. *A New World Order, Government Networks and the disaggregated State*, Princeton, Princeton University Press).

³² See Giancarlo Vilella, *Working Methods of the European Parliament Administration in a Multi-actors World*, Florence, European Press Academic Publishing, 2019, chapter 2.

³³ Franck Debié (ed), *Preparing for Complexity*, Brussels, European Parliament, CSG-EP 2025, March 2013.

³⁴ Klaus Welle, *Preparing for Complexity- Final Report*, Brussels, European Parliament, CSG-EP 2025, April 2013.

uments.³⁵ It used the format of the *Strategic Execution Framework*, developed in American business and engineering schools for large and rapidly innovative organisations³⁶.

In policy programming between the EU institutions, Klaus Welle saw the need for strategic foresight to paint the background for collaborative work on agenda setting with the view to reach inter-institutional agreement on initiatives and priorities. This was for him part of a larger effort to reshape the new start of the EU policy cycle, every five years after the European elections.

How to ensure that agenda setting by the European Council through its *Strategic Agenda*, the agenda setting by political forces campaigning in the European elections and the agenda setting by the new Commission and its future President are compatible, result oriented and 'future-proofed'? By ensuring that the senior collaborators that work for the leadership of the European Council, the European political parties and groups and the European Commission share a certain common vision of the mid-term future. This was to become the function of ESPAS, especially after 2014. The Secretary-Generals of the different EU institutions or their deputies would - on a regular basis - share views and reports on the future of Europe. The main ESPAS report would be made available to the Presidents of the institutions at the beginning of the new cycle and eventually 'leaked' even before, during the last phase of the electoral campaign, so that the leaders of the political forces could make explicitly or implicitly use of this background analysis.

In practice, the role of Klaus Welle in the ESPAS steering group has been to secure Parliament's participation at the highest level, together with officials in direct contact with their political leadership. They were the ones having a say of the definition and wording of strategic priorities: Jim Cloos, and later Didier Seeuws in the Secretariat of the Council, Jean-Claude Thébault, Margaritis Schinas, and later Ann Mettler and Pascal Leardini in the European Commission. At a later stage, Klaus Welle welcomed as a very positive development: the creation of a Vice-President in charge of foresight in the European Commission - Maroš

³⁵ Klaus Welle (ed), *Administrative Work Programme*, January 2014 Update, Brussels, CSG-EP 2025, European Parliament, January 2024. Klaus Welle (ed), *One Hundred Steps Forward*, The European Parliament and the Upgrading of European Democracy since the Lisbon Treaty, Brussels, European Parliament, CSG-EP 2025, April 2014.

³⁶ Klaus Welle (ed), *Parliamentary Project Portfolio within the Strategic Execution Framework of the European Parliament*, Brussels, European Parliament, CSG-EP 2025, October 2014. The book of M. Morgan, R.E. Levitt, W. Malek, *Executing your Strategy*, Boston, Harvard Business School, 2007 was the basis of a senior management seminar of the EP administration, taught by Professor John Warren of the Stanford School of Engineering in 2014.

Šefčovič, supported by the vast capability of the Joint Research Centre, headed by Stephen Quest. This move was followed by the creation of a Vice-President in charge of ESPAS in the Parliament - currently Marc Angel MEP. In addition to the regular meetings of the Steering Group, Klaus Welle supported the organisation of ESPAS meetings in Brussels, Florence, New York or the Jean Monnet's House in France. Colleagues involved in ESPAS could discuss substance. Some of the issues debated with leading intellectuals included sustainability, social disruption, trends in the USA and China, the future of the digital economy or the conditions of possibility for strategic autonomy, to name but a few. This defined a role for strategic foresight in the EU policy cycle close to the one of strategic foresight in the US policy cycle.

The model of the National Intelligence Council (NIC)

In the United States, the 'Imperial presidency' that emerged after WWII has devoted part of the task of strategic foresight to its large intelligence community. The Global Trends reports published by the US National Intelligence Council (NIC) - under the careful supervision of Mathew Burrows for many years - became a benchmark in the early days of the ESPAS process.

ESPAS was to have a similar focus on long-term trends, a similar intention to address issues from a global point of view and to 'listen' to the global South. Its aim would also mirror that of the NIC Global Trends report that was prepared for the incoming US administration, in that it would aim at providing a background for strategic choices for the incoming College of Commissioners and the leaders of the other EU institutions. The parallelism with the NIC was explicit in the initial EP resolution of 2009 underlining the *'need for long-term strategic thinking on policy issues from a European perspective and calling for a system of analysis similar to the NIC'*.³⁷ The specificity of ESPAS is the strong involvement of the legislative branch into this type of activity, usually organised around the executive. The specificity of ESPAS was to provide strategic foresight analysis and input to the incoming President of the European Commission, but also to the incoming Presidents of the European Council, the European Parliament and to the rotating presidency of the Council of EU.

³⁷ Angela Wilkinson, Strategic Foresight Primer, Brussels, European Commission, November 2017, page 19.

The choice of megatrends analysis with some scenario building at the end rather than other types of strategic foresight methodology was also pragmatic: forecasting would have been too short-term (and requiring too many data), horizon scanning and mapping would have been too systematic, back-casting would have been too normative, policy gaming too time-consuming and too formal, designing future too premature. Focusing on megatrends had the advantage of developing easily *'a shared sense of future outcomes enabling to design new policy options'*. But the method also had its usual disadvantages: no clarity on which futures should be considered and why, and limited ability to challenge 'business as usual' thinking. Of course, ESPAS would not have in a foreseeable future resources similar to the ones of the NIC.

ESPAS: born poor at a time of financial crisis

The obvious element of context for the creation of ESPAS was the 2008-2012 financial crisis, which largely took the EU institutions by surprise. At the time when the ESPAS pilot project became a preparatory action (2012), the financial crisis had transformed into a dangerous debt and monetary crisis, challenging EU Member States and the EU institutions to exit their comfort zones. This was the time of the *'Whatever it takes'* speech given by then ECB President Mario Draghi. This was also the time of the launching of the Fiscal Compact Treaty and of the complete overhaul of banking supervision and banking resolution. The debate was quite daring compared to what was available in the Lisbon Treaties, signed only a few years earlier. One started to speak about 'Blue Bonds' and 'common debt issuance'. If there was a high level of divergence on the exit strategy, there was a common agreement that EU leaders and institutions had not had a proper early warning mechanism, that the investment in foresight was much too limited and not shared properly between the institutions. While the Commission already had a foresight team, BEPA - a legacy of the forward-looking period of Jacques Delors - the other EU institutions did not. Instead, they had to rely on national sources or external studies. The idea of an inter-institutional system was therefore a way to remedy this lack of a common instrument and, in turn, the lack of a common knowledge basis when it came to long-term trends.

Together with Jim Cloos, Klaus Welle tried his best to avoid the immediate 'bureaucratisation' of the intention. This could have happened with the creation of a dedicated unit lost somewhere in the machinery of the European Commission, managing a small budget to outsource studies under stringent rules, and finally publishing each year a few foresight reports for all the other institutions that few people would read. This would have been the opposite of the regular conversation on the future that the textbooks on strategic foresight advocate for.

As with the Strategic Execution Framework developed for the administration of the European Parliament, Klaus Welle saw the potential of a long-term approach based on a slow and progressive culture change more broadly within the EU institutions themselves. Through a series of almost invisible moves and low-cost initiatives, one could very likely generate and keep up an active culture of strategic foresight at different levels, in all institutions and bodies, especially the ones with ‘unused potential’, having or various reasons at the periphery of the EU system.

ESPAS could encourage the development of a common culture by *‘promoting closer working cooperation between the research departments of the various institutions and bodies which are devoted to the analysis of medium- and long-term policy trends (...) reaching out to academics, think-tanks and other stakeholders (...) developing links with other countries and organisations undertaking global trends work’*. ESPAS could function at the same time as a common training programme - with a foresight club, a young talent network, many young ‘writers’ involved in the drafting of think pieces and sections of the various reports -, a joint procurement of foresight studies and a joint conference organiser. It soon had its editorial/working group, its joint lunch talks, seminars and visits, as well as its virtual library. At its higher level, the global trends and their impact on the future of the EU became at least a quarterly conversation between the administrative leaders of the EU institutions, the ones closest to the political leaders who are able to influence the wording of leaders’ decisions. Hence, ESPAS became a fluid two-layer system to share new ideas, new publications and weak signals about the change of pace in key trends.

This modesty in the functioning of ESPAS went very likely even beyond the expectations of the European Parliament’s Budgets Committee. The Committee recommended in July 2013 that the process started with the ESPAS pilot project and its preparatory action *‘be pursued in a budgetary neutral way’*. It had envisaged the secondment of experts from the staff of all relevant EU institutions to an *‘effective capacity for the provision of independent, high-quality, inter-institutional analysis and advice on key trends confronting policy-makers within the EU system’*.³⁸ This capacity would even provide the two co-legislators with specific input for their work on the Multiannual Financial Framework (mid-term revision and preparation of the next programming period). Following the growing interest in strategic foresight partly generated by ESPAS, a higher level of institutionalisation occurred in 2019 with the establishment of Vice-Presidents in charge of Foresight in the European Commission and the European Parliament. This move was accompanied by the

³⁸ Eamon Noonan, *Foresight with the EU institutions : the ESPAS process so far*, Brussels, European Parliament, EPRS briefing, 2019.

creation of strategic foresight units working (more or less) together on ESPAS in almost every EU institution.

A wake-up call on immediate geopolitical threats

Conscious of the limitations associated with the focus on megatrends, which implied a lack of prioritising possible challenges and a risk of engaging in 'business as usual' thinking, Klaus Welle wanted to contribute himself to the debate on long-term trends that he considered relevant for the current generation of EU decision-makers. Against the background of a detailed academic description of geopolitical changes, Klaus Welle highlighted the imminence of geopolitical threats for a disarmed EU. These external threats were coupled with the political risks associated with the rise of a new 'social nationalism' encouraged by a lasting pattern of slow growth. His more detailed contribution was for the ESPAS steering group seminar in the European University Institute, called *Preparing for the next twenty-Five years* in 2017.³⁹

The final part of the ESPAS Report 2014, based on a study by Chatham House, already signalled a 'geopolitical revolution' at the end of the post-Cold War period and the return of power politics and potential conflicts in the EU's extended neighbourhood. Klaus Welle wanted to be bolder and pinpoint the specific geopolitical threats.

For him, in the East, a resurgent Russia would likely continue to disrespect the sovereignty of its neighbours. Russia had drawn a red line on the continuation of the EU integration process. The rapid military build-up there left no doubt on the intention to use force.

In the South, radical Islam - the new face of totalitarianism - would continue to accelerate the collapse of weak states and regimes, enhancing stress on the EU borders and opportunities for power politics by non-Western actors in the Sahel, the Maghreb and the Middle East.

A rising China was likely to have more and more aggressive claims, *inter alia* in the South China Sea. In the context of an absence of a regional order, this was to fuel tensions and an arm race in the region, as well as increase the threat of a serious conflict that would have global impact.

³⁹ Klaus Welle, Europe today and tomorrow: preparing for the next 25 years, European Parliament, 2017 9 <https://espas.secure.europarl.europa.eu/orbis/system/files/generated/document/en/ESPAS-PreparingEurope-EN%2520DEF.pdf>

These increasing threats contrasted with one well established long-term trend in the EU and its Member States: structural disarmament. This was a trend that would be quite difficult to reverse. And this inability of the EU and its Member States to organise its own defence was, for some, another pretext for an exhausted and over-stretched United States to take back the lead.

On the economy, he launched the reflection on the risk of long-term trend of EU de-industrialisation and the danger of an extended period of debt without growth. Such an economic context would have immediate social and political consequences, potentially leading to the lasting success of a new offer combining protectionism, nationalism and authoritarianism - a dangerous mix that Klaus Welle called 'social nationalism'. One could understand Brexit as a large-scale example of this reactionary ideology.

Therefore the key policy questions that remained with us for a generation were for him, as early as 2017, how to unlock all of the growth potential of the Single Market and how to make the most of every opportunity offered by new technologies, while securing a high level of labour participation. One needed to work at the same time on the modernisation of the giant public sector in the EU and its Member States, which is equivalent to half of the value of the EU economy, while preparing to reduce the impact of a next - almost unavoidable - financial crisis.

This meant a proper budget for the EU that should go beyond its traditional role of legislative machinery in order to provide a complementary executive capacity when Member States fail. The EU had therefore to decide urgently how to activate unused treaty potential on security and defence cooperation. In its sub-region, it would also have to redefine over the years a pragmatic partnership with Turkey, offer a European perspective to the countries in the Western Balkans and show credibility when it came to offering stability guarantees to threatened democracies East of the EU border: Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia. The complementarity between NATO and the EU would have to be completely re-visited and reorganised.

Klaus Welle did not create the ESPAS system, which emerged from the political activism of Parliament and the already established culture of foresight of the European Commission's BEPA. Nevertheless, he largely contributed to shape the ESPAS system into an inclusive, efficient two-layered process, creating a community of foresight experts in the EU institutions and a documented discussion about the future among the immediate advisors of EU political leaders. He made sure that officials engaged in key phases of the policy-making process, saw the

future of the EU as a common challenge and a reason to align on the long-term strategy. His most lasting contribution to the EU foresight culture may be his wake-up call for geopolitical realism in what were maybe the last years of EU

European added value and the Cost of Non-Europe

Lauro PANELLA

Lauro Panella, economist with postgraduate studies at Bocconi University. He entered the European Commission in 2005 covering roles and tasks in different DGs and Cabinets. In 2017 he joined the cabinet of the President of the European Parliament as economic adviser to the President. From July 2019 he is head of the European Added Value Unit within the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS).

'Taken as a whole, the work set out here could helpfully contribute to the process of evolving a broadly-based policy agenda', Klaus Welle, Introduction to the Mapping the Cost of non-Europe, 2014-2019, March 2014.

The origins

The cost of non-Europe concept, together with the one of EU added value, has returned to the centre of the political debate and gained renewed relevance in light of recent crises - Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation - which have led to further EU integration. But it has deep roots starting from the beginning of European integration.

The 1957 Rome Treaty (EEC) laid the foundation for European integration as a peace and economic project, aiming for *'an ever closer union among the European people'*. This drive for economic integration gained further momentum with the successful establishment of the common customs area in 1968.

The concept of 'non-Europe' was originally pioneered by the European Parliament in a report⁴⁰ by Albert and Ball in 1983, a time of high inflation and economic insecurity, to spur European economic integration. The two economists suggested that the *'absence of a genuine common market (...) and all the other obsta-*

⁴⁰ M. Albert and J. Ball; Towards European economic recovery in the 1980s. Report presented to the European Parliament. Working Documents 1983-1984; European Parliament; 1984.

cles to trade are equivalent to a financial surcharge that could represent approximately one week's work per year on average for every family in Europe'. In other words, workers in Europe worked 'one week every year to pay for non-Europe, equivalent to a cost of the order of two percent of gross national product (GNP)'.

Subsequently, the cost of non-Europe (CoNE) emerged as a key concept for the Cecchini report⁴¹ in 1988. This report defined CoNE as the untapped potential of a single market for goods and services among Member States of the European Community, and estimated that it could reach at least 4.5 % of EU GDP. These efforts resulted in the introduction of the goal to progressively achieve an 'internal market' – *'an area without internal borders, in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured'* by the Single European Act, adopted in January 1993.

Following these reports, the discussion about the CoNE and the distribution of competences advanced further, culminating in the Lisbon Treaty of 2009. This Treaty conferred upon the European Parliament a co-legislative role alongside the Council in most policy areas, influencing legislation, policy effectiveness, and the quality of proposals.

A tool for agenda-setting in EU policymaking

In 2016, the Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIA) on better law making between the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Council⁴² stated that, *'the potential EU added value of any proposed Union action, as well as an assessment of the Cost of non-Europe in the absence of action at Union level, should be fully taken into account when setting the legislative agenda.'*

In the meantime, at the initiative of Klaus Welle, Secretary General of the European Parliament at that time, a dedicated Unit dealing with the Cost of non-Europe analysis - the European Added Value Unit (EAVA) - was established in the European Parliament (see Figure 1) in 2012.

On 1 November 2013, the Unit was moved to a new Directorate-General: the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). Since its creation, the mission of the European Added Value Unit has been to analyse the potential benefits

⁴¹ P. Cecchini et al.; Europe 1992: The Overall Challenge; Commission of the European Communities; 1988.

⁴² Interinstitutional Agreement on better law-making; O.J.; 12 May 2016.

of future EU action. It has offered support to the committees of the European Parliament by providing:

- European added value assessments (EAVAs), aimed at identify and evaluate the advantages and potential impacts of proposals made by the Parliament in legislative own-initiative reports, based on Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).
- Cost of non-Europe reports (CoNEs), to focus on policy areas where there is significant potential for greater efficiency and/or the realisation of a public good through common action at EU level, and where such action is currently absent.

Figure 1 - EAVA's (with IMPA, another newly established Unit) first meeting with Klaus Welle



Source: EAVA. Picture taken in October 2012 of a meeting led by Klaus Welle and Anthony Teasdale with the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value.

During the ninth legislature, CoNE reports and EAVA assessments have covered some of the most discussed topics of our decade, such as COVID-19 pandemic, twin transitions, rule of law, gender inequalities and more. The analyses have garnered high interest not only from the European Parliament, but also the European Commission, NGOs and interest groups. This is because the analyses balance academic merit and relevance for the political debate.

The technical foundations

The technical foundation of the cost of non-Europe analysis can be found in the cost-benefit analytical framework. However, in the case of the evaluation of EU added value, the analysis goes a step further, as it does not simply compare costs and benefits, but also considers the scenario of other levels of responsibility acting in that area, without beneficial EU coordination. The absence of action at European level may mean that, in some areas, there is a loss that restricts the potential of the overall economy. In certain cases, EU action could allow for the provision of public goods, (as in the case of defence or public health), realisation of efficiency gains, reduction of administrative costs and integration of the impact of externalities and spillovers.

The 'Cost of non-Europe' (CoNE) can be understood as the cost of not setting an ambitious policy agenda at the EU level. More coordinated and common European action in specific areas can reduce these costs and bring added value for society.

Key to the measurement of CoNE is the concept of European added value. It refers to the long-term net additional potential benefit of increased EU competences versus a situation of status quo where the repartition of competences is kept unchanged and primary action occurs in a more fragmented way at other levels of administration, i.e. national, regional and local.

In the context of increased multipolarity, the benefits of EU action can be greatest and more sustainable with a holistic approach rather than uncoordinated, fragmented or isolated actions across the Member States. In line with the principle of 'subsidiarity', the EU and its Member States have to identify the best level of decision-making to overcome the challenges they are facing, considering both the current state of EU integration and how it has developed in recent decades. In practice, the key question is if and to what extent the aggregation and coordination of budgets, oversight and competences at EU level generate added value and higher benefits, compared to the action considered by Member States at national level.

A more coordinated approach at EU level does not mean that in every policy area a common integration would better 'per se'. The European Union is not built in such a way that the transfer of competences from national to EU level leads to a reduction in the benefits for its Member States. There are cases where actions at the national, regional and local levels would generate more benefits and respond more effectively to citizens' needs.

Based on analytical models, evaluation and impact assessment methods (e.g. general equilibrium model, regressions, cost-benefit analysis, data envelopment analysis), EAVA studies have contributed to spark debate and ideas for the setting of priorities and the political agenda, encompassing numerous policy areas.

The methodology has evolved over time with the increased competences of the EU and the consideration of other impacts beyond economic impacts in particular, social impacts and impacts on fundamental rights as well as impacts on the environment. On the 10th year anniversary of the European Added Value Unit, the EPRS published a 'methodology paper' that reflects on the evolution of Cost of non-Europe and Added Value analyses.⁴³

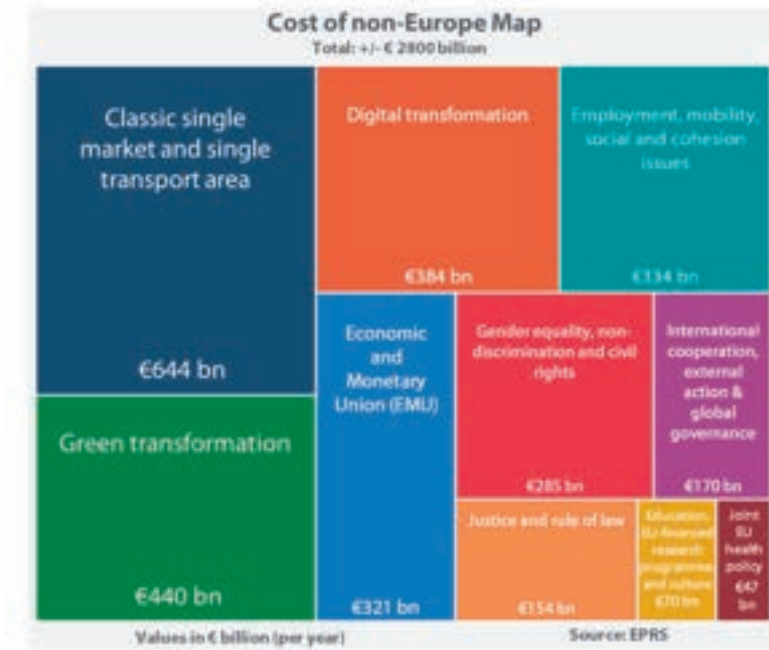
Mapping the cost of non-Europe

The main results of all these analyses have been gathered in the Mapping publications. In the first edition, published in March 2014, an initial figure for the cumulative potential GDP gain was cited as over €800 billion. By the time of the sixth edition, which was published in February 2023, this figure rose to €2.8 trillion (see Figure 2). This amount has increased over the years due to new economic evidence and the inclusion of new policy areas in the analysis.

Figure 2 - Graphical comparison between the figures from the first (2014, left) and the last (2023, right) edition of the Mapping



⁴³ L. Panella et al, Mapping the cost of non-Europe report: Theoretical foundations and practical considerations; EPRS; October 2023.



Source: EAVA.

The latest edition of the study, named *'Increasing European added value in an age of global challenges: Mapping the cost of non-Europe (2022-2032)'*⁴⁴, includes 50 policy areas and shows how ambitious common EU action has the potential to improve the daily lives of citizens by fostering economic growth, stepping up efforts of the green transformation, empowering SMEs to go digital and reducing inequalities. The realisation of these benefits, which could be achieved in 10 years, depends on the pace at which EU action is adopted and implemented.

During 2023, the European Added Value Unit participated in a series of high-level events to disseminate the findings of its flagship study in Brussels and the Member States. The study was launched at a high-level conference in the European Parliament back in March (see Figure 3), followed by several presentations at the European Commission and in EPLO offices in Rome, Helsinki, Berlin and Warsaw.

⁴⁴ L. Panella et al.; *Increasing European added value in an age of global challenges: Mapping the cost of non-Europe (2022-2032)*; EPRS; February 2023.

These events received widespread media coverage⁴⁵ and generated a number of invitations to present the study to a larger audience including professors and students from universities, as well as businesses and researchers from different think tanks.

Figure 3 - Roundtable discussion at EPRS High level conference: Increasing European added value in an age of global challenges



Source: EAVA. Photo taken on 7 March 2023 in the European Parliament Library Reading Room. From left to right: Lauro PANELLA, Head of European Added Value Unit EPRS; Massimo BORDIGNON, professor of Public Economics at the Catholic University of Milan, Member of the European Fiscal Board; Lina GÁLVEZ MUÑOZ, MEP, Vice Chair, EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy; Janusz LEWANDOWSKI, MEP, Vice-Chair, EP Committee on Budgets; Dubravka SUJICA, Vice-President of the European Commission for Democracy and Demography; and Michal ŠIMEČKA, MEP, Vice President of the European Parliament

Looking ahead

During the current ninth parliamentary legislature, the EU has overcome many challenges, ranging from being the first continent to define the goal of climate neutrality by 2050 to mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and taking unprecedented action in support of Ukraine following Russia's war of

⁴⁵ See for example M. Gabanelli and P. Valentino; *Crescita economica: perché sbaglia chi non crede nella forza dell'Europa*; Dataroom - *Corriere della Sera*; April 2023 and Ł. Osiński; *Raport PE: dalsza integracja UE mogłaby przynieść dodatkowe ponad 2,8 bln euro rocznie*; *Bankier*; December 2023.

aggression. Still, Europe can offer more to ensure an effective response to the challenges that transcend borders and are threatening the well-being of citizens.

The high interest generated over the years by the Mapping has demonstrated that the intuition to investigate the potential added value of the EU has proven successful. More presentations in national settings are being planned for the first quarter of 2024 and a new edition of the Mapping will be published in early 2024.

Creating a strategic foresight culture

Eamonn NOONAN

Dr. Eamonn Noonan has worked on strategic foresight since 2015, as part of the EPRS Policy Foresight Unit and the inter-institutional ESPAS network. He previously served in the EP Human Rights Unit and the Foreign Affairs Secretariat. As an Irish diplomat he had postings in Luxembourg and Oslo, where he set up a new Embassy. At the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services, he headed a new unit promoting evidence-based social policy. Dr. Noonan holds a doctorate in history from the EUI Florence, and has studied in Cork and Mainz. In 2022/23 he was an EU Visiting Fellow at St. Antony's College Oxford researching the European Parliament's work to promote human rights. He has published on topics ranging from foresight and social policy to interwar history and medieval Ireland.

Introduction

Klaus Welle is a strategic thinker with a deep interest in the dynamics of EU governance and a strong commitment to the success of the EU. This led him to champion both the creation of foresight capacity within the European Parliament's services and the consolidation of the inter-institutional European Strategic Policy and Analysis System (ESPAS) network. This essay traces this development and comments on its significance.

Foresight capacity and the policy cycle

The origins of the European Strategic Policy and Analysis System lie in a provision adopted by the EP Budget Committee as far back as 2010.⁴⁶ This created funding for a series of forward-looking studies conducted under the auspices of a new, but informal inter-institutional framework. It was the brainchild of the UK Conservative MEP James Elles. He in turn was inspired not least by a US fore-

⁴⁶ Eamonn Noonan, *Foresight within the EU institutions: The ESPAS process so far*, EPRS 2020.

sight initiative - the Global Trends Report presented by the National Intelligence Council at the start of every Presidential term.

In the wake of the 2008 Great Financial Crisis, one question was often asked: why did we not see this coming? The purpose of ESPAS was just this: to improve the EU's ability to identify problems early. This is not a new idea; in *The Prince*, Machiavelli noted how useful it was to be able to spot troubles before they hatched - and how few had this ability.

ESPAS was conceived as an inter-institutional system to identify long-term trends on major policy issues facing the EU. The approach was to encourage the individual institutions to share their analytical insights. It also provided a framework for developing foresight analysis in common. Conducting strategic conversations could then contribute to a common understanding of approaching challenges. This in turn could make it easier to reach consensus on what to do - and allow faster adoption of new strategies.

In its early phase, ESPAS delivered several studies and reports surveying the international scene, culminating in its 2015 Global Trends report. It was widely admired, but it had not been underpinned by an Inter-institutional Agreement or provided its own budget allocation. Klaus Welle's decision to create a Global Trends Unit within EPRS was critical to its continuation. It set the stage for a consistent expansion of strategic foresight work within both the Parliament and the wider ESPAS network.

The new unit worked to further strategic foresight on several tracks. It provided analysis of global trends, looking to the medium- and long-term horizons, in a series dubbed the Global Trendometer. The analytical framework established in the 2015 ESPAS report was the starting point for this work. The Unit also contributed to a series of Ideas Papers bearing the ESPAS imprint.

EPRS was in a good position to reach out to academics, think tanks and other stakeholders. This was a matter of building on and adding to contacts already cultivated under the leadership of Anthony Teasdale. Links were quickly forged with foresight networks in the OECD, the UN, NATO, and more widely.

Through its role as a secretariat for ESPAS, the unit facilitated closer cooperation between the various EU entities. The ESPAS Steering Group regularly brought high officials of the participating bodies together, while meetings at a lower level strengthened contacts and exchanges between the respective strategic and trend analysis services. The Jean Monnet House at Bazoches became the

venue for annual Away Days that further built a sense of common purpose. This venue was of course another project championed by Welle.

A key object of foresight work, quite apart from the provision of analysis, is the development of the habit of thinking strategically about possible futures. The creation of a foresight culture is an objective in its own right. The Global Trends Unit and its successors have acted as a lightning rod for training and mainstreaming activities around foresight.

This effort included the development of in-house training modules, notably in cooperation with Lieve van Woensel, then a senior official in the STOA unit. One analytic technique, a Key Assumptions Check, was indeed inaugurated with members of the ESPAS Steering Group. This involves the structured interrogation of assumptions about issues such as China or migration, to cite two examples.

The EPRS Foresight Club became an important channel for familiarising colleagues with foresight methods and techniques. This is a monthly informal, hour-long meeting dedicated to open discussions. There have been over 80 sessions since it began in February 2016. Due to the pandemic it transformed from a coffee-table gathering to an online meeting. A typical session now gathers upwards of thirty colleagues online, and the attendance has grown more diverse over time. The largest contingent comprises EPRS colleagues, but there is regular participation from other EU bodies, and indeed from further afield. Guests have included specialists from national administrations, the OECD, the UN's Global Hub, the Millennium Project and several think tanks.

On the initiative of Klaus Welle, a module on foresight, centred on ESPAS, was added to the training programme for EP officials offered by the Jean Monnet Academy. The present author had the privilege of elaborating this model and presenting it on several occasions. The effort to spread familiarity with strategic foresight included its integration into the Innovation Day series, another Welle innovation. Foresight-oriented panels featured regularly, accompanied in 2019 by a stand promoting the work of ESPAS.

A lot happened with foresight in the EU from 2015 to 2019. The incoming Van der Leyen Commission then designated an Executive Vice President with responsibility for strategic foresight. It was also decided that the Commission would issue an annual strategic foresight report, which would draw on an extensive study by the Joint Research Centre. The future of future-focused work seemed assured.

Foresight and the pandemic

Then, in March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic struck; a crisis unlike any other raised. It fundamental questions. Was this a failure of foresight? Futurists insist that foresight is about shaping the future, not predicting it. They also acknowledge that it is far harder to pinpoint when something might happen than it is to discern what might happen. In truth, several reports had stressed the risk of global epidemics - including the 2019 ESPAS report.⁴⁷

The pandemic suggested several lessons on foresight. Contingency plans needed to be taken seriously. Crisis preparation needed to be properly resourced. Mechanisms to trigger decisions from the highest level, based on early and professional input on an imminent crisis, needed to be strengthened. If anything, this reinforced the need for strategic foresight capacity located close to decision makers - which was precisely the rationale behind both ESPAS and the Global Trends Unit.

In lockdown, EPRS embarked on a large scale foresight exercise dedicated to increasing Europe's resilience to future crises. The key publications included a risk mapping, a mapping of capabilities and gaps, and two reports seeking to link EU capabilities to potential risks. The first of this series included a probability-impact matrix, designed to help prioritise between risks.⁴⁸ In mid 2020, the near term focus was social and health risks, but economic, digital and geo-political risks were also on the radar screen.

The next report cross-referenced perceived risks with the existing regulatory and financial capacities of the EU.⁴⁹ This identified several worrying gaps. On the economic front, the ability to mitigate financial instability and to avoid investment gaps were noted. On the social side, the capacity to ensure the sustainability of social protection systems and the means to tackle social unrest and the rise of racism and hate speech were a concern. The lack of a defence instrument was also highlighted - a geopolitical vulnerability which soon became took centre stage.

⁴⁷ ESPAS, *Global Trends to 2030: Challenges and Choices for Europe*, ESPAS 2019, p. 18.

⁴⁸ EPRS, *Towards a more resilient Europe post-coronavirus: Capabilities and gaps in the EU's capacity to address structural risks*. EPRS 2020.

⁴⁹ EPRS, *Towards a more resilient Europe post-coronavirus: An initial mapping of structural risks facing the EU*. EPRS 2020.

Two Future Shocks reports built on this work. The 2022 edition began with a wide-ranging summary of external risk analyses.⁵⁰ This was an exercise in gathering expertise from professionals whose job was pricing risks and communicating it to those who could do something with it - the members of the European Parliament. The 2022 report also sought to differentiate between short- and long-term risks. This allowed more nuanced perspectives to emerge. For instance, while the linked threats of Russian aggression and energy price rises dominated the near-term agenda, there was clear recognition that extreme weather events would become more important over time.

The 2023 edition highlighted the question of executive capacity with a redesigned series of “pyramid” graphs.⁵¹ These categorised instruments available to the EU and its Member State in different sectors by two criteria: the level of government involved, and the status of the measures identified. These graphics were a visual representation of a core message of the entire series: the need for executive capacity.

Figure: EU and Member State Instruments for Safeguarding our Natural Capital



Source: EPRS

⁵⁰ EPRS, Future Shocks 2022: Monitoring risks and addressing capabilities for Europe in a contested world, EPRS 2022.

⁵¹ EPRS, Future Shocks 2023: Anticipating and weathering the next storms, EPRS 2023.

The case of environmental protection can serve as an example (see Figure). The level of governance involved is indicated by the tiers of the pyramid, while the status of individual measures - adopted, in need of improvement, or absent - is colour coded.

This graph could be said to represent a separate triad: core elements of Klaus Welle's approach to public service. He is a strong proponent of clear-eyed analysis of what is to be done. He is committed to clear communication of ideas (a point repeatedly stressed in his talks to EPRS general meetings). Last not least, he is dedicated to the idea that the EU can and should be more than the sum of its component parts. In his preface to the July 2020 report, he wrote

For some risks – particularly those which are both highly probable and with potentially large impact – we may have no instruments immediately available at EU level, in other words, there may be no complementary executive capacity in case the Member States are unable to cope by themselves.

Complementary executive capacity is the key expression. The EU system has access to tools of governance that can deliver more than the corresponding national measures; it is in the common interest to avail of this potential. Devotees of highly atomised societies might regard this sentiment as Orwellian; around Brussels, it could accurately be termed Wellean.

Outlook

Over the past ten years, strategic foresight has prospered in the EU. A day-long workshop on the eve of the most recent ESPAS conference is testimony to this. It attracted no fewer than 70 EU officials, all involved in foresight in one way or another. This was a snapshot of the breadth and depth of engagement with strategic foresight across EU institutions and agencies. It was also a significant step in building lines of communication across institutional boundaries. There remains plenty of future to explore, but the EU is now better placed to do so than before. A large measure of the credit for this accrues to early adopters of the ideas of anticipatory governance, with Klaus Welle prominent among them.

2

Optimising the allocation and management of resources

Monitoring progress in the administration

Through indicators & client satisfaction

By the Corporate Strategy and Innovation Office

KLAUS WELLE'S CONTRIBUTION TO METROLOGY

Our ability to measure the world around us has enabled trade between continents, the crossing of oceans, the building of cities and the exploration of space. The earliest systems of weights and measures date to the third and fourth millennium BC. Even the very earliest civilisations needed measurements for the purposes of agriculture, construction and trade.

If there is one thing that separates humans from the animal kingdom, it is the quantitative approach to conceptualising the world around us. Through observation, we can capture momentary difference-point values or single-point values on any subject we are interested in, and visualise them using graphs. The collection and visualisation of data in this way also invariably reveals information we could not have predicted and can open up whole new fields of interest and study.

The European Parliament is the first public institution in the world to have implemented a centralised corporate system enabling it to measure quantitative and qualitative values for all units' key activities, in-house products and services.

In April 2019, Klaus WELLE announced his decision to measure unit productivity and client satisfaction by seeking feedback on products and services provided in-house. After a first preparatory 'Metrics Tour' of the Directorates-General, which was both technical (creation of the database, dedicated interface and related tools) and diplomatic (seeking buy-in from the approximately 370 units of the European Parliament), the first satisfaction survey was launched in January 2020.

It marked the starting point for the measuring of all essential activities across the administration.

The aim of the exercise, which is closely linked with the Strategic Execution Framework, is to move the European Parliament away from a rules-based administrative culture to one in which scarce resources are managed with a focus on outcomes, innovation and client satisfaction.

Measurable objectives and goals for continuous improvement

The European Parliament's administration must find ways of working effectively and efficiently, constantly adapting to a changing environment and making the best use of innovation and technology to achieve the expected results.

Quantitative and qualitative measures based on relevant indicators are essential to achieve the European Parliament's objectives. The metrics exercise encourages units to clearly identify their activities, clients, services and products.

Measurement is not a goal in itself. Indicators are helpful tools to:

- monitor progress and measure the achievement of strategic and operational objectives;
- obtain reliable data that allows us to draw valid conclusions;
- identify areas for improvement and provide evidence for the development of future strategies;
- ensure accountability in the use of public funds.

Regular and continuous measurement ensures an objective and consistent understanding of the situation at all levels of the organisation. The analysis of this data helps us to make decisions based on objective data.

By measuring key outcomes and client satisfaction, we are able to provide a complete and instant picture of how all of Parliament's services are performing at any given time. The results can be read at a glance thanks to the green, amber or red colour coding. The measurement of activities and satisfaction surveys is a monthly exercise and the feedback is available in real time on the dashboards of the Directorates-General. It is an ongoing process that identifies key success factors and drives continuous service improvements.



Deal with resistance to change

Tool use is widespread throughout the animal kingdom. Humans naturally build hybrid systems with a variety of complex technological artefacts that are deeply embedded in our motor, perceptual, cognitive and affective systems.

Implementing change is challenging. The human brain is hardwired to prefer consistency over new routines. The introduction of productivity and client satisfaction measurement was no exception, and the reluctance of staff to adapt to this new metrics culture had to be overcome.

The problem was not so much the technical change as the lack of knowledge about what it entailed, the fear of the unknown and the human change that often accompanies technical innovation.

The data gathered from measurement is transparent and confirms facts, but can reveal the unexpected. This uncontrollable aspect is what sometimes led to resistance at the start of the performance measuring process. Indicators measure activities performed by individuals but do not measure individual personal behaviour. Some teams may successfully perform simple activities even though some of their members are not very productive; conversely, high-performing

teams may have results that seem disappointing due to external factors. The measurement focuses only on activities linked to previously defined objectives.

A war of words: raw data vs. indicators vs. metrics

The performance of the European Parliament's administration is measured using different levels of objectives and indicators. Each Directorate-General sets strategic objectives every year, and measures its performance in achieving them using key indicators. Operational objectives, each with its own indicators to measure results or performance, break down the strategic objectives and serve as a roadmap towards achieving them.

Whenever possible, indicators should be accompanied by targets. A target is a quantifiable benchmark that allows the Directorates-General to measure the progress of the actions they take towards their objectives.

For the purpose of the Annual Work Programme, the Directorates-General are required to link each strategic objective to at least one key indicator, and should ideally link each operational objective to result or performance indicators. Lead indicators, measuring the most important success factor of the DG, should be considered as one of the Directorate-General's key indicators. These indicators serve as a basis for reporting on the achievement of objectives in the Annual Activity Report.

To the extent possible, indicators should fulfil the RACER criteria. They should be:

- **Relevant** – i.e. closely linked to the objectives to be achieved
- **Accepted** – e.g. by staff or other stakeholders
- **Credible** – unambiguous and easy for non-experts to interpret
- **Easy to monitor** – e.g. through low-cost data collection
- **Robust** – i.e. resistant to manipulation

Klaus WELLE adopted the good practice of defining simple indicators at the European Parliament with the exercise 'Back to Raw Data'. His intention was to take indicators back to their fundamentals and avoid complex formulas. Instead, preference is given to basic formulas that combine raw data and measure only one aspect of an activity. This approach facilitates management, analysis and

decision-making because these indicators are easy to analyse and can be interpreted unambiguously.

Klaus WELLE defined five simple principles to guide the initial adoption of this new exercise:

- **Monthly** assessment of operations/activities against game-changing metrics
- Measurement of **productivity** (quantitative data)
- Measurement of **client satisfaction** (qualitative data)
- Measurement on **a unit by unit** basis
- Use of **automatically** generated data

Different types of measurements and indicators exist but all are defined to measure objectives, outcomes, performance, changes or workload.

Volumetrics, certain raw data and directly associated metrics, 'only' measure the volume of products or services. Examples of volumetrics include numbers of documents, events, meetings, tickets, etc. This information is very valuable for understanding resource needs, even if the related workload is not dependent on the activity provider. Measuring this data over time and in combination with other types of metrics allows the organisation to detect trends and forecast future needs.

Star wars - The rise of quality rating

Qualitative measures are used to assess clients' feelings, attitudes and perceptions about a product or service. This type of data is usually collected through surveys, interviews or focus groups. Qualitative measures also track changes over time, which can be helpful in identifying trends.

Under the guidance of Klaus WELLE, the European Parliament standardised the surveys, allowing for results to be compared between similar activities and units. To support this standardisation, four categories of questions were defined – service quality, delivery time, the care with which services were provided, and the degree of innovation. The innovation aspect is to be understood in its broad sense of trying to promote change and improvement. Klaus WELLE was well aware that even the longest innovation journeys consist of small steps.

The Corporate Strategy and Innovation Office provided guidance on how to define the questionnaire. This is now de facto standard practice in the European Parliament and allows units to write their own questionnaires without the help of experts.

Typically, satisfaction surveys are designed to calculate precise values at a particular point in time. However, it is more valuable to capture information related to the evolution of satisfaction in order to measure change and improvement.

To reach as many clients as possible, satisfaction surveys are sent out in various formats. The most traditional takes the form of an email message. Others involve a QR code (on a poster, for example) or a link embedded in a message.

It is important to ask for information on client satisfaction as soon as possible after the product or service is delivered. The more time that passes, the lower the response rate.

For the overall rating, respondents can give 0 to 5 stars and leave a comment if they wish. Positive feedback is always good for the soul, but it is constructive criticism that improves the quality of service more than anything else.

The average response rate of 20 % is exceptional for this type of exercise. One in five users gives feedback. Their 'average satisfaction rate' continues to rise and currently stands at 3.5 out of 5 stars. Of course, the figures vary from unit to unit and from activity to activity.

Outlook: Visualising progress and satisfaction with Artificial Intelligence, opinion mining and sentiment analysis

The implementation of a user-friendly interface with an attractive design to visualise results and report data was essential for the adoption of this new metrics culture. The metrics dashboard was carefully designed, developed and tested before being launched in 2020.

Through the use of a variety of screens and graphics, the dashboard provides insights into the metrics from different perspectives. This helps users to better understand the data and ultimately use it to make sound decisions.

Staff can consult and manage the metrics of their unit and have a clear view of their unit's performance. Middle management has access to more detailed dashboards, a bubble chart of all units and a chart categorised by activity. Finally, a horizontal dashboard summarising similar activities (e.g. financial activities or human resources activities) is also available.

Currently, artificial Intelligence techniques are being used to analyse the feedback received from surveys. The aim is to generate a summary of opinions based solely on the overall feedback, independent of the direct answers to the specific survey questions. The intention is then to compare this feedback summary with the results obtained from the direct answers. If these results are very different, the survey should be analysed to reveal any questions that might be biased or be designed to hide information. If examples of such questions are found, new questions should be added to address the issues identified.

In surveys addressed to citizens, most of the differences that arose were due to comments not related to the subject of the survey or related to political views on the activities of the European Parliament, rather than to issues with the wording of the questions.

Experience has shown that this analysis can be repeated regularly only if there is sufficient feedback with a minimum amount of words. Short comments are discarded in this exercise.

Done is better than perfect: Room for improvement and simplification

The metrics exercise was initiated in May 2019 and the first version of the metrics platform was available in January 2020, enabling the launch of client satisfaction surveys and the reporting of data. During this period, most of the effort was put into inventorising and categorising activities.

Klaus WELLE had a very interesting view on the categorisation of activities. Similar activities, including similar qualitative and quantitative metrics, should be grouped together. Categorisation provides a horizontal view on the European Parliament's performance and helps to break down silos. It makes it possible to identify the strengths of the administration, as well as the areas where efforts towards improvement are needed.

A revision exercise was carried out during the summer of 2023 with the aim of simplifying the process and improving the alignment between operational objectives and the metrics which make it possible to evaluate progress. A new approach to the categorisation of activities has also been proposed with the support of the Secretary-General's Cabinet. Essential activities are currently grouped into three main categories: core, steering and enabling.

The battle against silos and sterile complexity is a never-ending process... All the progress made in this battle has been made possible thanks to the unfailing support of Klaus WELLE and his Head of Cabinet Susanne ALTENBERG, as well as the energy and constant efforts of Brigitte BOONEN, Jesus CERRO GINES, Dominique COLLARD, Johan DUMAS, Werner GEIER, Fanny LETROYE, François RENUIT and Christophe SAUDADIER.

DONE IS BETTER THAN PERFECT BECAUSE PERFECT IS NEVER DONE.

Making the EP more secure

The security of the European Parliament and its institutional relevance

María JOSÉ MARTÍNEZ IGLESIAS

An official at the European Parliament since 1991, her first assignment was to the secretariat of the Regional Affairs Committee. Subsequently, as a member of the secretariat of the Constitutional Affairs Committee, she was in charge of assisting the EP negotiating team at the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) leading to the Treaty of Nice.

In 2002, she joined the secretariat of the European Convention, which drafted the European Constitution and eventually she assisted the EP negotiating team at the IGC on the Constitutional Treaty.

During her assignment as Head of Unit of the Legal Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, she was also in charge of assisting the EP negotiating teams at the Intergovernmental Conference leading to the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon and at the Intergovernmental Conference that drafted the Treaty on Stability, Cooperation and Governance.

After serving as senior adviser to the President of the European Parliament and as Director for Legislative Affairs in the Legal Service, in 2021, she became Director-General for Security and Safety of the European Parliament.

Since 2017, she is a visiting professor at the College of Europe (Bruges).

Introduction

Allow me to start on a personal note: when, under Klaus Welle as Parliament's Secretary General, I took over responsibility for the European Parliament's Directorate-General for Security and Safety, more than a few friends and colleagues expressed surprise at my boldness. Indeed, my professional background had so far focused on EU constitutional law. Several years after my appointment, I confirm that it is precisely this background that has allowed me to grasp in all its depth and complexity the scope of the mission of those responsible for security in the European Institutions.

This essay sets out to explore the institutional significance of security within the European Institutions, not only as an operational imperative but also as a reflection of the principles and challenges inherent to the European integration. Security is far from being merely a purely technical or administrative matter. It lies at the core of the European institutions' ability to preserve their integrity and the democratic and ethical values they represent.

In the pages that follow, I will address the unique challenges of protecting such a diverse and dynamic environment. For this, I will highlight specific cases that illustrate the complexity of the threats our Institutions are confronted with and explore the strategies put in place to meet these challenges, which range from the internalisation of security services and cooperation with the other institutions and Member States to the promotion of ethics and transparency.

The security of the European Institutions goes well beyond physical protection, defence against cyber-attacks or counter-intelligence measures. It is an ongoing commitment to safeguarding democratic processes, promoting stability and fostering a culture of accountability and transparency. Only by means of cooperation, vigilance and commitment to our democratic ideals, it is possible to guarantee the security and integrity of the European Parliament and, by extension, of the entire set of European Institutions.

The mission being no other than to protect the integrity of the European decision-making processes. What lies behind every security action - whether it is ensuring the maintenance of order or the physical protection of people and buildings, or the prevention of and reaction to new forms of hybrid threats - is to enable Parliament to fulfil its competence as legislator in full calm and serenity. This is a mission the institutional relevance of which is only just beginning to be glimpsed.

The security of the European institutions in the perspective of the decision-making process

The security of Parliament can only be rightly appreciated in the wider context of the protection of the European Institutions.

The process of the European integration corresponds to a steadily and vast transfer of competences from the Member States to the Union by means of successive reforms of the Treaties.

These competences are exercised within an institutional framework consisting essentially of the European Parliament, the Council of the Union and the European Commission. The consecutive reforms of the Treaties have progressively strengthened the institutional framework and improved decision-making processes.

The decisions taken by the European Institutions directly affect the daily lives of 400 million citizens. They influence their future, determine their employment prospects and regulate important areas of activity: health, justice, security, and even govern the quality of the air they breathe. Yet the magnitude of these powers is not always fully realised, even though, paradoxically, they are broader in many areas than those exercised by the federal institutions in the United States, for example.

Protecting the integrity of the decision-making process of the European Institutions, which is, at the end of the day, the mission of their security departments, is a difficult and crucial task.

In any State, government institutions are fully supported by national security services, be they police, military or intelligence services. The European Institutions, instead, are located on foreign soil (in the case of the European Parliament, in three foreign countries) and the vast majority of their Members and staff are foreigners from 27 different countries who carry out their mandate or duties on foreign soil. This situation in which mighty institutions exercising public power in many areas are left to themselves, in a no man's land, without the operational support of national security and enforcement authorities, poses unique security challenges.

The growing responsibilities placed on the European Institution in an increasingly interconnected and digitised world, have transformed the security challenges they encounter. The risk goes well beyond physical security to encompass the evolving landscape of hybrid threats. These threats have intensified with the rapid advancement of technology and include phenomena such as disinformation, cyber-attacks, fake news, deep fakes and illegitimate interference in decision-making processes. Consequently, protecting the integrity of decision-making processes acquires a critical institutional relevance, the implications of which we have started to understand only recently.

Although the European Council recognised in its December 2019 Conclusions the importance of these challenges and committed to improving the protection of European Institutions, particularly through cooperation with national services, the present situation is still far from the fulfilment of that commitment.

The European Parliament: the challenge of protecting democracy

In the context described above, the European Parliament is particularly vulnerable because of its nature as an open institution.

Parliament welcomes around one million visitors a year to its premises and does so in three different countries. It is an open and publicly accessible institution that embodies the values of transparency and democratic participation. Parliament's openness, however, has the downside of making the Institution vulnerable to physical threats, which may include violent protests and acts of terrorism. Managing security in this particular context requires that a delicate balance be struck between protecting the Institution and preserving its accessibility and openness.

The freedom of mandate, which is the foundation principle of the Statute of the Members of the European Parliament, makes the protection of the Institution further difficult. An exquisite respect for the independence of Members' mandate, one of our core democratic values, brings along unique security challenges.

In Parliament, whether we talk about Members, staff or visitors, nationals of 27 Member States are present, which also means 27 different legal cultures, 27 security mindsets and the use of 23 languages. Each nationality brings along

different perceptions and expectations in terms of security. This plurality requires a flexible approach that can cater for these diverse sensitivities.

In response to these challenges, Parliament decided to internalise the operational security services. This was a controversial decision at the time but a necessary one, which was taken in order to provide the institution with an autonomous and specialised operational capacity. Security officers are now employees of the institution. This ensures their quality both in terms of technical aspects and of professionalism, training, cultural and linguistic diversity. It also ensures loyalty to the Institution and the Union. This approach is particularly important when operating on foreign soil and guarantees that the security strategy is coherent with the Institution's internal values and procedures.

The emerging challenge: hybrid threats

Hybrid threats currently represent one of the greatest challenges to the European Union's security and political stability, especially at election time. These threats, which combine military and non-military, cyber and disinformation tactics, have become crucial tools for malign state and non-state actors that seek to illegitimately influence or destabilise democratic processes in Europe.

Hybrid threats are not a new phenomenon, but they have acquired renewed relevance and complexity in the digital age and in a changing and volatile geopolitical context. Historically, hybrid strategies have been used to influence, destabilise or gain advantage over an adversary without resorting directly to armed conflict. Today, the war in Ukraine, as well as the conflict in Gaza, demonstrate how hybrid operations can play a critical role in modern conflicts, combining military and cyber tactics, disinformation campaigns and other forms of psychological and economic warfare. The war in Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza show how hybrid operations can destabilise entire regions, influence public opinion and undermine confidence in democratic institutions.

These conflicts underline the interconnectedness between geopolitical conflicts and EU Member States' internal political stability, highlighting how external dynamics can influence European political discourse and, potentially, electoral outcomes.

Technological developments have facilitated the proliferation of tools capable of carrying out sophisticated cyber attacks, large-scale disinformation campaigns

and other influence operations, which pose unprecedented challenges to the security and integrity of European democracies.

In this context, the European Parliament is confronted with the difficult task of identifying, preventing and countering these threats. Parliament governing bodies considered that for this task it was poorly equipped and decided that it was necessary to improve its capabilities by the creation of a dedicated structure within its administration in charge of carrying out counter intelligence and information security activities, which brought to a profound reform of the Directorate General for Security and Safety.

The growing power of the European Parliament, including its influence on foreign policy, has made it a target for a variety of malicious actors. For instance, in November 2022, the Parliament was the victim of a sophisticated cyber-attack and disinformation campaign that took place immediately after the adoption of a resolution denouncing Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. This attack, which involved the use of advanced techniques, including deep fakes, highlighted the vulnerability of Institutions to disinformation campaigns and illegitimate interference.

Another significant example has been the so-called « Qatargate scandal », a corruption case that came to light in December 2021, involving allegations that Members, former Members and staff of the European Parliament were co-opted by Qatari and Moroccan agents in order to influence parliamentary decisions. This case not only highlighted the vulnerability of the European Institutions to corruption and foreign influence, but also underlined the importance of integrity and transparency in their way of working.

The response of the European Parliament to the « Qatargate scandal» has been strong, with a call from Parliament's bodies to strengthen ethics and transparency measures. Subsequently to this case, the rules on lobbying activities and interaction between Members of Parliament and external actors have been reviewed, emphasising the need for a more rigorous approach to preventing corruption and ensuring the integrity of the legislative process.

Which priorities for European Parliament's security?

The security challenges faced by the European Institutions, including the European Parliament are vast and multifaceted. They range from physical and cyber threats to ethical and transparency challenges. The institutional significance of security is not limited to protection against physical attacks, but extends to safeguarding democratic processes, promoting ethics and transparency, and strengthening citizens' trust in the European project.

The security of the European Parliament cannot be considered - nor conceived - in isolation but as a part of the European Union's Institutional landscape. Cooperation between Institutions and with Member States' security and intelligence services is essential. It is crucial that we share information but also that we are able to coordinate responses to security incidents.

Taken together, the aforementioned challenges call for a comprehensive and adaptable security strategy which is capable of protecting the European Institutions against a wide range of threats. The task of ensuring this level of security is complex, but it is indispensable for maintaining the integrity and trust in the European democratic process.

As already mentioned above, the European Council has recognised the seriousness of these threats and has committed itself to improving the protection of the Institutions through cooperation with national intelligence and security services. The European Parliament, in turn, has expressed a similar view in its resolutions of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation ([2020/2268\(INI\)](#)), of 1 June 2023 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation ([2022/2075\(INI\)](#)), and of 13 July 2023 on recommendations for reform of European Parliament's rules on transparency, integrity, accountability and anti-corruption ([2023/2034\(INI\)](#)).

If cooperation between the European Institutions and with the security and intelligence services of the Member States is crucial, the consolidation of Parliament's own counter-intelligence and information security capabilities will enable it to become a more reliable partner and make this cooperation fully effective.

The security of Parliament also requires protecting the integrity of the decision-making process by preventing undue influence to ensure that actions and

decisions are taken in the best interests of European citizens. It is therefore vital to improve ethics in political activity. It is essential to promote transparency of lobbying activities, of the activities of Members and staff, and of the handling of gifts and invitations. The « Qatargate scandal » has served as a stark reminder of the imperative need to adhere to the highest ethical and transparency standards, and the European Parliament has not missed the opportunity to make progress also in this area. In particular, as far as security is concerned, it has enhanced the regulation of lobbyist activities increasing transparency in this field. Parliament has struck a new balance between the lobbyists' right to represent their interests and the need to protect the legislative process from undeclared external influence.

Raising the awareness of Members, their assistants, political groups and staff of Parliament about the threats the Institution is confronted with is key to fight hybrid threats. An ambitious security strategy must include training of all these actors on how to identify and react to these threats and encourage them to share information. This training effort ensures that power at the political level is accompanied by the means to make a responsible use thereof.

To sum up, the challenges we face in protecting the European democracy are wide-ranging and multi-faceted. The security of the Institutions is not just a matter of protocols and operational measures; it is an expression of commitment to the values and principles that define and shape the European Union. Ensuring EU security and integrity is a shared challenge we must meet with determination and resolve, with a spirit of cooperation, for the sake of the European citizens and the future of Europe.

Promoting gender balance

Practicing what we preach

Olga KOSMIDOU

Olga Kosmidou was Director-General for Interpretation and Conferences at the European Parliament since the creation of the Directorate-General on 1 January 2008 until her retirement on 31 December 2014. She was Director of the same service for 13 years (1994 to 2007) and before that Head of the Greek Interpretation Unit (1980 to 1994). She was the co-founder of the European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) and of the worldwide network of Heads of Interpretation Services (HINTS). Prior to joining European Parliament, she was a lecturer in interpretation and translation at the University of Corfu from 1978 to 1980. She worked as translator, interpreter, language teacher, and presenter of news in French language on Greek radio and television. She has studied law, Greek and French literature at the University of Athens, interpretation at the University of Geneva and International Relations at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Ms Kosmidou holds an honorary doctorate of the University of Geneva and is a recipient of the French Legion of Honour.

The European Parliament has been always actively pursuing gender equality policies. It has a standing Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and is regularly adopting own initiative reports calling on the Members States and the society for more efforts to improve on all aspects related to equality between women and men. Beyond the actions at political level, Parliament governing bodies have been increasingly committed to make the European Parliament a leader among the EU Institutions when it comes to closing the gender gap.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that Klaus Welle, Parliament's Secretary-General and thus the head of the administration, was a pioneer in addressing this challenge. He has made gender equality an integral part of the Human Resources policy of Parliament's Secretariat. This might not strike us nowadays, because there is a broad consensus about the fact that a modern administration

needs to be gender balanced, but back in 2009, this was not as obvious as it is the case nowadays.

The gender equality policy of Parliament's Secretariat is based on two pillars:

- The Gender Action Plan and Roadmap, which outline measures to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed in all administrative policies of the House. It covers areas such as learning and development, harassment prevention, work-life balance measures and gender-sensitive language, among many other topics.
- Improving gender balance in management positions.

Particular efforts within Parliament's administration⁵² under the guidance of Klaus Welle have been concentrated on increasing the number of women in management positions. In January 2020, following his proposal, Parliament's Bureau - the governing body deciding on internal administrative and organisational matters - set new ambitious targets regarding women representation in management positions in Parliament's Secretariat. These targets to be achieved by 2024 are:

- 40% of women Directors-General
- 50% of women Directors
- 50% of women Heads of Unit

It was not the first time such targets were set, however these were the most ambitious ones to date, as gradual progress over the recent years allowed to set the bar higher. Previous targets, adopted by the Bureau in January 2017, foresaw to reach by 2019 40% of women at Head of Unit level, 35% at Director level, and 30% at Director-General level.

Let us look at some figures, which demonstrate the long way we have come from the year 2009, when Klaus Welle started his mandate as the Secretary-General, until 2022.

⁵² Staff in the Secretariat of the European Parliament, without taking into account personnel of the Political Groups or Parliamentary Assistants to Members, which do not fall under the responsibility of the Secretary-General.

Figure 1 - Secretariat staff by function group

Group	Women		Men	
AST/SC	149	65.6%	34.4%	78
AST	1470	65.8%	34.2%	764
AD	1493	55.0%	45.0%	1224
All staff	3112	60.1%	39.9%	2066

Source: Women in the European Parliament; Directorate-General for Personnel;
16 January 2023

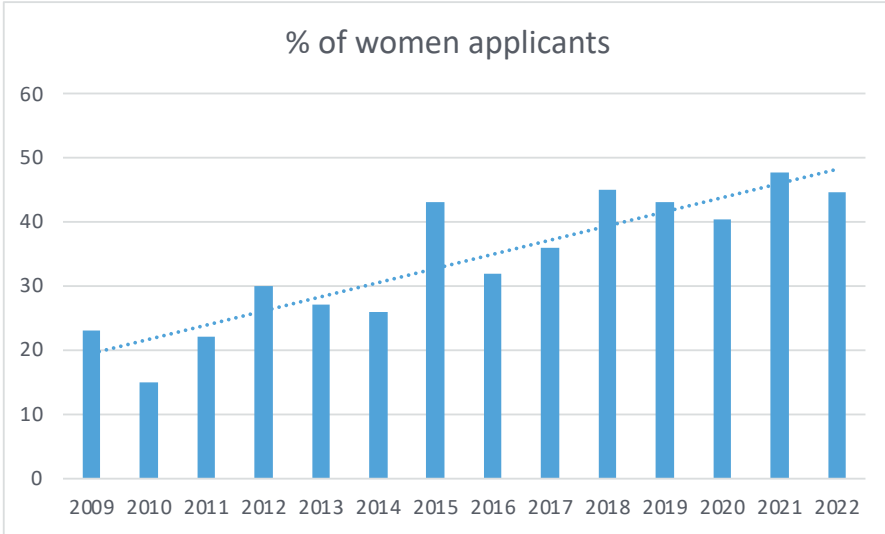
Women account for around 60% of staff of Parliament’s Secretariat and outnumber men in all function groups. This trend can be observed for many years now. One must add that the high number of women in the administrator function group (55%) can be partially attributed to the high number of linguists (translators and interpreters), professions where women are traditionally far more numerous than men. Nevertheless, we could expect that this gender repartition among staff will translate in approximately the same percentages of women and men in middle management positions, as the Heads of Units are “sourced” from the pool of administrators.

At the level of Heads of Unit, women accounted for 43% at the end of 2022, which represents double the 2009 figures (21%). This is indisputably a huge success, even though we are not yet at full parity. In nine Directorates-General (DG) out of thirteen, women accounted for 40% or more of the total middle management posts, with three DGs reaching full parity. This increase was not only due to the Bureau targets being systematically taken into account in selection procedures for Heads of Unit, but also the result of a well-thought set of measures on work-life balance, such as flexible working patterns and teleworking, applying also to all levels of management. A special training programmes for female staff with management potential contributed to the positive development as well.

As a consequence of the above described policies and measures put in place by the Secretary-General as responsible Appointing Authority, gender parity was reached within the group of newly appointed Heads of Unit and since 2016 the gender balance has even shifted in favour of women, reaching a maximum of 64,3% in 2021. A broad base of female Heads of Unit is the precondition for a better gender balance among Directors, and ultimately Directors -General. Another

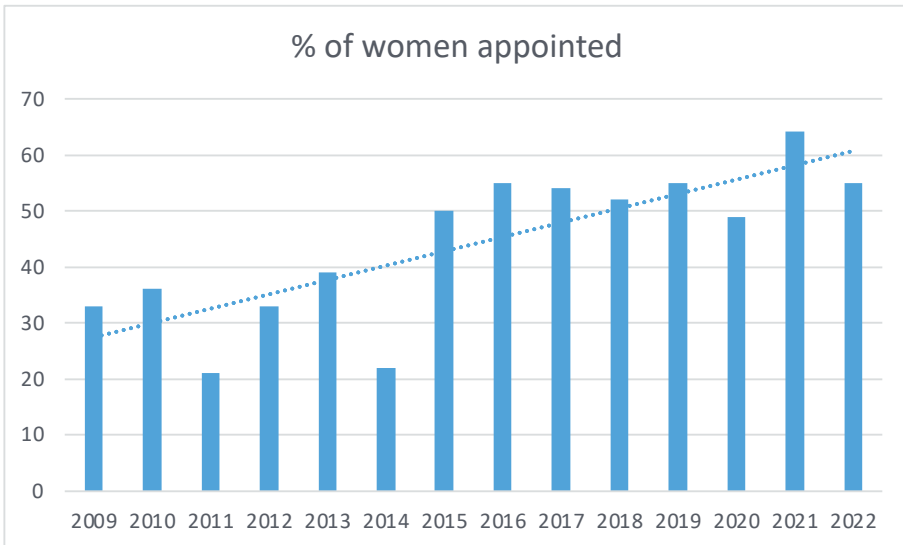
important indicator to be considered concerns the increase in the number of women applying for Heads of Unit posts. While still more male colleagues apply for management positions, a steady upwards trend can be observed for females.

Figure 2 - Percentage of women applying for Head of Unit posts



Source: Directorate-General for Personnel.

Figure 3 - Percentage of women appointed to Head of Unit posts



Source: Directorate-General for Personnel.

In spite of significant progress over the years, a gender balance issue is persisting in more technical services, like information technology, security or logistics. This situation is not specific to the European Parliament, but a general tendency in private and public sector worldwide. This gender gap starts at school, as girls are less likely to pursue technology or engineering studies. The discussion of the reasons underlying this situation would go beyond the purpose of this paper. What Parliament's decision makers can do, is to put an even stronger focus on female appointments in those sectors, encouraging women to develop their skills in order to take up more technical positions, for example in IT. An overall better representation of women in the technical professions would create the basis for future Head of Unit appointments.

Concerning senior management positions, the past ten years saw an overall increase in the number of women at Director level, i.e. from 32% in 2009 to 50% today. This positive development has allowed Parliament, and the Bureau as the responsible Appointing Authority, to reach the target set for 2024 ahead of time.

In order to give highly qualified female Heads of Unit the possibility to gain relevant experience and accede to senior management positions, the Secretary-General has entrusted acting Directors' positions systematically to outstanding female candidates. A broad base of female Directors is also the precondition for a better gender balance among Directors-General.

The picture is unfortunately grimmer when it comes to the highest echelon, the posts of Directors-General. Compared to the situation in 2009, the current rate of female Directors-General has only slightly increased from 27% to 29%. Consequently, Parliament still falls far short of the objective of 40% set by the Bureau in this respect.

It must be underlined that in case of Directors and Directors-General the responsible Appointing Authority is Parliament's Bureau. Furthermore, for senior management positions additional parameters (such as geographical balance) plays a role as well, which adds to the complexity of the process.

Concerning gender balance in management positions, the situation in 2022 compared to the situation in 2009 can thus be summarised as follows:

	<i>Female Heads of Unit</i>	<i>Female Directors</i>	<i>Female Directors-General</i>
<i>Situation in 2009</i>	21%	32%	27%
<i>Situation at the end of 2022</i>	43%	51%	29%
<i>Bureau targets for 2024</i>	50%	50%	40%

Source: Directorate-General for Personnel.

Klaus Welle pursued the goal of establishing gender equality not only for administrative reasons, but - I could guess- for political reasons as well. A somewhat higher number of women than men composes the electorate of Members. This factor cannot be ignored for an elected assembly. Being an economist by profession, he certainly also knew that diverse organisations are more efficient and are producing better results. Recent research confirms a strong positive link between diversity of executive teams and performance of companies⁵³. What is true for the private sector, in this case applies also to public administrations.

I had the privilege to work under Klaus Welle’s guidance for 6 years and I strongly believe that tribute should be paid to this visionary Secretary-General who was inspired and not hesitant to take the necessary steps to modernise Parliament’s Secretariat. In the almost 14 years he was at the helm of the administration, he left a substantial mark on the Institution.

⁵³ Sundiatu Dixon-Fyle, Kevin Dolan, Dame Vivian Hunt, and Sara Prince; Diversity wins: How inclusion matters; McKinsey Report; 2020.

Green Parliament and EMAS

EMAS: The environmental management system of the European Parliament

Anna SCHADE

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EMAS Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, the European Parliament's environmental management system, is widely acknowledged as the most stringent environmental management system in the world. The European Parliament is globally recognised for the environmental management of its own organisation and is seen as a reference point, role model and standard setter that guides other public institutions in Brussels and beyond. Europe's citizens and elected representatives can rely on the European Parliament openly complying with all existing environmental legislation in its organisation and parliamentary activities, using resources efficiently and working transparently to ensure the significant reduction in any negative impact of its activities on the environment.

Walking the talk on the environment

The European Parliament's own environmental management system became much more important during the ninth legislative period. Since 2019, as co-legislator, the European Parliament has adopted more than twenty far-reaching Regulations and Directives in the areas of climate, environment and energy efficiency[1]. The EU and its Member States have set the transition to a greener and digital society as a key objective for this decade[2], aligning the EU's multi-annual financial framework with these two transitions[3]. The EU's Green Deal legislation marks the ambitious global programme to combat global warming and its consequences. The EU measures require companies and citizens across Europe to make major adjustments. Economic operators must report on how they comply with environmental legislation. In surveys during the last five years, the fight against climate change has regularly emerged as one of the top three

areas where EU citizens expect to see concrete action from the European Parliament[4]. Effective environmental management of its own affairs is an indispensable contribution to the credibility and reputation of an institution that is in the process of expanding parliamentary control vis-à-vis other institutions, notably, the European Commission.

Ambitious environmental management in the European Parliament has become mainstream. A number of landmark decisions led to the timely establishment of an effective EMAS environmental management system. It is now worth considering what will be key in the years ahead for the environmental management of an organisation such as the European Parliament.

Steps towards a successful environmental management system

The European Parliament's decision to introduce EMAS as an environmental management system[5] meant opting for a system that had more demanding requirements than alternative voluntary instruments like the international ISO 14001 standard. EMAS requires transparency, stakeholder involvement and independent verification of compliance with environmental legislation plus adherence to the objective of continuous improvement in environmental performance[6]. In short, EMAS achieves better results for the environment than other environmental management systems[7]. The decision to adopt EMAS was a logical step, since the European Parliament and the Council created the EMAS Regulation as the European standard for environmental management systems for European companies and organisations, and in 2001 extended the standard to public sector organisations[8]. The Parliament's EMAS decision came at a time when the Commission had decided to submit a revised EMAS Regulation to the European Parliament and Council. When the plenary of the European Parliament adopted the current, reformed EMAS Regulation (EMAS III) on 2 April 2009[9], the Parliament was able to show that its main offices in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg were already registered in the official EMAS register. It was among the first EU institutions to be EMAS-registered and the very first parliament. To this day, EMAS is recognised as a highly credible standard for environmental management.



23 April 2009 Parliament President Hans-Gert PÖTTERING unveils solemnly the EMAS logo on the Louise WEISS building of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, marking the successful entry in the EMAS register in December 2007, in the presence of Gerard ONESTA, Vice-President of the European Parliament and responsible for the EMAS environmental management, Mia DE FITS and Szabolcs FAZAKAS, Quaestors, and Klaus WELLE, Secretary-General of the European Parliament.



Since its introduction an important factor in the successful implementation of the EMAS environmental management system in the European Parliament is that Parliament's top management always attaches importance to the issue at an early stage. Supervision of and decisions on the Parliament's environmental policy are directly linked to the Parliament's Bureau, as the political governing body. At the outset a Vice-President was formally assigned to oversee the horizontal dossier.

In the newly created EMAS system, the administration and the Bureau established a number of environmental measures during the 2009-2014 legislative period, such as the opening of a "Mobility Point" for sustainable mobility, the introduction of co-financing for annual public transport passes, the gradual introduction of a paperless working programme, and measures to increase waste sorting and recycling rates. A key decision for the European Parliament with regard to the public debate about the seat of Parliament in Strasbourg was the decision in 2012 to largely replace charter flights with chartered trains for travel from Brussels to the plenary sessions in Strasbourg so as to lower significantly the associated CO₂ emissions.

In addition to such specific environmental measures, an important decision taken by the Bureau in 2013^[10] was to adapt the procedures and strengthen the governance structure of the environmental management system. The Bureau

remained the political decision-making body. With the new "Steering Committee for Environmental Management", chaired by the Secretary General and comprising Deputy Secretaries-General, the Directors-General and the Jurisconsult, it set up a centralised body at the highest administrative level to converge environmental policy with its practical implementation in the system and ensure annual EMAS action plans. In 2014, the "EMAS Coordination Team" was established as a central service under the Secretary-General and became a coordinating "EMAS Unit" of the Parliament.

In the legislative period 2014 to 2019, the administration submitted forward-looking proposals to the Bureau that put Parliament in a pioneering role in environmental management. In 2016, the European Parliament became the first EU institution to offset 100% of its non-reducible emissions after making every possible effort to reduce its CO₂ emissions. The Parliament was also the first EU institution to launch a comprehensive food donation programme, in which unsold food was donated to charity.

With the External Exchange Network, the European Parliament established a regular exchange of best practice with the relevant units of national European parliaments responsible for environmental management. In 2017, the Bureau decided to gradually electrify Parliament's fleet of official vehicles. It was the first EU institution to fully implement a systematic institution-wide approach to green public procurement for its procurement system in order to convert systematically third-party products or services, such as the cleaning of buildings, to environment-friendly approaches. Since around one million plastic water bottles were still being used in Parliament in 2017, the Bureau and the Quaestors^[11] decided to introduce a package of measures to ensure, among other things, that water dispensers were installed. The use of plastic bottles in all official meetings and major events was discontinued by 2019. The Parliament's Wilfried Martens Building in Brussels, which was opened on 26 June 2018, is an example of the sustainable building strategy pursued by the European Parliament in its eighth legislative term.

At the start of the ninth legislative term from 2019 to 2024, the Bureau decided to align EMAS environmental management with the European Parliament's five-year legislative term for accountability and setting objectives. In autumn 2019, the Bureau adopted Parliament's environmental policy for the parliamentary term, which was signed by the President and Secretary-General, and set medium-term environmental targets for regular and final review in 2024. As the environmental measures taken by the Bureau also affect the Members of

the European Parliament who elect their Bureau for the parliamentary term, this was an important step for the functioning of environmental management.

Towards the end of the parliamentary term, Parliament's services made significant progress in reducing negative environmental impacts, achieving ten of the eleven ambitious environmental targets set in 2023. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a sharp increase in digitalisation, teleworking and videoconferencing technology in the European Parliament. This increased efficient working and led to a significant reduction in commuting, travel between places of work, paper consumption and office supplies, thus improving the European Parliament's environmental performance. In key environmental areas, such as the reduction of CO2 emissions and energy efficiency, the Bureau mandated the services to implement steering measures[12]. The Bureau also decided to renovate the SPAAK building in Brussels[13], which houses the plenary chamber, from an environmental point of view, similar to the ADENAUER II building, formally opened in 2022, in order to minimise the environmental impact of its buildings. The EMAS environmental audit by independent auditors in 2023 showed that Parliament was able to further strengthen its internal environmental audit systems and has a very well-functioning environmental management system[14].



7 December 2022: Celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the EMAS environmental management system in the European Parliament in the presence of Heidi HAUTALA, Vice-President of the European Parliament responsible for the EMAS environmental management, Klaus WELLE, Secretary-General of the Parliament, and the members of the Environmental Management Steering Committee.

Advantages of further developing environmental management

A well-functioning, reliable environmental management system will continue to play a central role for the institution in the coming years. Even if other issues move climate policy lower on the agenda in the short term, the risks associated with climate change for the EU and the world over the next ten years will be enormous. The EU will continue to be called upon by its citizens to further strengthen its climate and climate adaptation policies[15].

Successful environmental management that supports the European Parliament's reputation depends on the Parliament continuing to adapt in good time and with foresight to the changing social, legal and political requirements, recognising challenges as opportunities. Some of the measures it has enacted as a political institution and co-legislator, particularly in the context of the Green Deal and Fit-for-55 legislation.

The changing legal and political requirements lie specifically in stricter regulations for building management, which directly impact the European Parliament as the owner of around 1.2 million square metres of office building space. One example of this is the European energy efficiency targets set by the Council and Parliament for public buildings during the next few years, which must be complied with as part of the legal standards conformity requirement of EMAS environmental management[16]. The necessary building adaptations require timely, long-term planning and investment, but are a sensible investment in the future to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, improve accessibility, usability, working environment and health and well-being.

With global warming intensifying in the coming decade and the important European goal of climate neutrality in 2055 and the emissions reduction target of 55% in 2030, the environmental indicator of greenhouse gas reduction will be of particular importance in the coming electoral periods. The European Parliament could be judged by the European public on the extent to which it aligns its own environmental targets with the European emission reduction targets. The Parliament is technically prepared for this challenge with the existing EMAS environmental management system, which enables the institution to make calculations and identify measures that have the same service value with less environmental impact. These adjustments require conviction, active participation and clear targets from top management and the Bureau, as well

as investment, planning and communication, strengthening the efficiency and credibility of the institution.

As co-legislator, the European Parliament enacted legislation in the ninth parliamentary term that imposes reporting and adaptation obligations on European business and industrial companies that go beyond environmental issues. Since 1 January 2024, leading European companies have been reporting in accordance with the strict requirements of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive^[17]. Business and industry, which have so far been less rigorous in their environmental reporting with ISO standards, will thus be scrutinised more extensively in certain areas than the players under the EMAS Regulation. In view of the new accountability obligations, the European Parliament itself can make long-term system adjustments in the direction of sustainability. The European Parliament has already published its first sustainability report internally in 2022 in accordance with the GRI standard^[18]. With the structures established for its environmental management, it has the opportunity to expand its ambitious environmental management system in a resource-efficient manner towards sustainability in line with current standards, highlighting its pioneering role as an EU institution in this important area.

[1] European Parliament Legislative Observatory; Climate Change Laws of the World database by the Grantham Research Institute at LSE and the Sabin Center at Columbia Law School.

[2] European Council conclusions of 10 and 11 December 2020; “European Climate Law” Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality entered into force on 29 July 2021.

[3] Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 (OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020, pp. 11-22).

[4] <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/browse/all/ep>.

[5] European Parliament’s Bureau decisions of 13 December 2005 and 18 June 2007.

[6] Commission Decision of 3 November 2023 (EU) 2023/2463 on the publication of the user’s guide setting out the steps needed to participate in the EU eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

[7] Report from the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the review of implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on 25 November 2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) and the Regulation (EC) No 66/2010 of the parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the EU Ecolabel SWD(2017) 252 final.

[8] Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2001 allowing voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS).

- [9] 2008/0154(COD) Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS): voluntary participation by organisations, adoption in plenary by 633 to 13 votes.
- [10] Decision of the European Parliament's Bureau of 20 May 2013.
- [11] Decisions of 11 June 2018 and 17 April 2018 respectively, in line with Directive 2019/904 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment.
- [12] Bureau decision of 16 October 2023 on improving Parliament's environmental performance.
- [13] Decision of the European Parliament's Bureau of 12 June 2023 and 11 December 2023.
- [14] European Parliament Environmental Statement 2023.
- [15] Future Shocks 2023 - Anticipating and weathering the next storms, study of the European Parliamentary Research Service with the Directorates-General for Internal Policies (IPOL) and External Policies (EXPO), July 2023, World Economic Forum The Global Risks Report January 2024; Ten Issues to watch, publication by the European Parliamentary Research Service, January 2024.
- [16] i.a. Proposal for a Directive on the energy performance of buildings (recast) 2021/0426(COD); Directive (EU) 2023/1791 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 on energy efficiency and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 (recast).
- [17] Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (EU) 2022/2464 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 amending Regulation (EU) No 537/2014, Directive 2004/109/EC, Directive 2006/43/EC and Directive 2013/34/EU, as regards corporate sustainability reporting entered into force on 5 January 2023.
- [18] European Parliament Sustainability Report published internally on 21 December 2022 according to Global standards for sustainability impacts by the Global Reporting Initiative.

Towards a New World of Work

“Never let a good crisis go to waste” Parliament’s institutional development via ... buildings!

Leena MARIA LINNUS

In 2012, the Bureau appointed me - a communications specialist with a Finnish nationality, in the Parliament’s administration since 1996 - as Director for Logistics, with a mandate to reform the different services offered to Members and staff. As of 2015, I have had the honour to work as the Director-General for Infrastructure and Logistics, in charge of 650 staff members, with the aim to provide Members and staff of the European Parliament with appropriate, safe and secure, environmentally friendlier, accessible to all, creative and modern working conditions in a period of budgetary scarcity. As a committed European, I have seen these internal reforms as part of defending our wider European project. In the context of these reforms, I have worked directly with the Secretary-General and under the political guidance of several Presidents of the Parliament, as well as the two Vice-Presidents co-responsible for Parliament’s buildings and budget.

The European Parliament has always been lucky with its Secretaries-General: its top administration has always found ways of supporting the institutional aims of the political leadership via even the most unlikely administrative policies. This chapter tells you of Klaus Welle’s visions in the field of buildings, supporting all other Institutional goals.

What? No strategy at all?

The old saying “*Never let a good crisis go to waste*” - reputed to have first been voiced by Winston Churchill close to the end of the WWII - has been quoted on numerous occasions in politics. We have all read, time and again, how the European Union has developed through crises and have indeed observed it

to be true over the past 50 years. However, rare are those leaders who have in reality dared to take this guideline to a strategic level and using it in almost every aspect of his or her leadership.

When Klaus Welle was appointed the Secretary-General of the European Parliament in 2009, with his shrewd political background and visions for reinforcing the powers of the Parliament as the seat of European level democracy, I was observing him from close as the (then) Head of Parliament's Bureau Secretariat, and can swear that he certainly wasn't thinking of the Institution's building policy, then almost non-existent. His background was in European politics, Europe's reunification and reflections on Parliament's institutional powers. For him, as for the majority of the political leaders of our time, buildings were a necessity; they were premises, they were simply bricks and mortar.

Indeed, European Parliament's buildings policy had developed until 2010 in a sporadic manner. Its original building in Strasbourg had been on loan for the plenary sessions from the Council of Europe since the 1950's until the end of 1990's, and although the issue of the location of its Seat had caused a recurrent public debate, no real vision for the way its buildings were to be managed had emerged. Some reflections were held in early 1990's when the Institution started to grow the presence of its administrative and political support services in Brussels, but the real strategy for Parliament's buildings was not approached properly before the first crisis in this area hit the Institution. The only guideline was from a decision of the Bureau in mid-90's, whereby it indicated favouring purchase of buildings over renting as a tool of managing public funds in a responsible manner.

The first building crisis within the European Parliament happened on the same day that Russia attacked Georgia - 080808 was a day that saw the false ceiling of the WEISS building in Strasbourg come partially down, on a sunny Friday afternoon in the middle of the summer holidays. The cleaning up of this crisis was done by Welle's predecessor, Harald Rømer, but as the Head of the then President's Cabinet, Welle followed the process closely, observing and learning how casually this administrative area had been approached in the past decades, prior to Rømer's term.

A year after taking over the leadership of the Parliament's administration, Welle presented to the Bureau its first ever Building Strategy. This document referred to the way the buildings were to be financed, their administrative maintenance and oversight reinforced, and their environmental impact reduced. This document was a solid basis for the future, but it was nothing revolutionary - yet. It

was a reaction to 080808, a risk mitigation measure, and as such, a responsible answer from a new Secretary-General.

The second crisis did not take long to wait. Again, on a sunny Friday afternoon in August 2012, when inspecting the condition of Parliament's buildings, the technical services noticed that the roof of the SPAAK building in Brussels - not the ceiling but the *real* structure of the roof itself - was in a process called "progressive collapse". A physical collapse of the roof, and consequently of a part of the building, could have happened any day, putting several hundreds of lives in danger. President Schulz, following Welle's advice, declared an immediate partial emergency closure of the SPAAK building. Hundreds of staff were evacuated from their offices for 1.5 years while the repair works took place.

Having experienced - or rather avoided - two potentially fatal disasters relating to buildings, Welle decided to get serious on the matter. Audits were ordered, management of buildings reorganised, strategy re-reflected. It became clear that a lot could be improved.

Knowing that nothing could be done without competent staff, Welle started the reinforcement of the personnel in the administrative services responsible for buildings. At the beginning of 2010's, new posts were allocated to DG INLO, and via specialised open competitions several highly capable building engineers, architects and public procurement lawyers were recruited to the DG. Its senior and middle management was gradually renewed, with a mixture of different background colleagues entering into the DG. The same diversification applied to nationalities: today, the staff and management of DG INLO come from 24 EU nationalities unlike in 2009 when staff responsible for buildings and logistics was mainly locally recruited. In addition, DG INLO has recruited building and communication specialists from Ukraine and Syria as a special inclusion measure for refugees from these two countries.

As regards equality and diversity policy in a traditionally male-dominated area, Welle put emphasis on diversifying both the management and staff. A significant increase of female AD officials and managers in DG INLO happened after 2011, with several women having today important financial, technical and policy related responsibilities: today, 46% of the middle and senior management are women in comparison to 6% in 2011; and today, 40% of AD officials are women in comparison to 16% in 2011. This change was the result of a determined understanding that diversified backgrounds would allow diversified opinions to be voiced, and subsequently mitigate the risks that are inherent in a homogenously established organisational culture where different voices are rather seen as a

threat. According to Welle, this diversification could only be seen as an advantage in a risky area such as buildings' management.

An opportunity to improve Parliament's standing in Europe

However, the most important lesson which Welle learned from the two almost fatal incidents, was not the actual need for an improved management of buildings but the understanding that buildings themselves are symbols, they are tools for communication and management - they are vehicles via which other strategies can be achieved. During the years that followed, Parliament was faced with several challenges and crises in the area of buildings. However, none was neglected as a strategic opportunity to improve the Institution's standing in Europe: every building crisis or problem was turned into an opportunity to address another Institutional challenge; many Institutional challenges were supported by actions linked to buildings strategy.

In 2013, Welle started a process, which would lead in the coming six years into real improvement regarding Members' working conditions. Until that time, in Brussels, Members had always had one office for themselves and a second one for their staff. This meant working in cramped conditions, overhearing confidential discussions - and for the new Secretary-General, this meant Parliament's administration was not providing the representatives of the European level democracy adequate working conditions to fulfil their free mandate. Therefore, at the electoral break 2014, some of Parliament's administration moved outside from the central connected buildings making space for half of the Members to get a third office. This operation was continued at the electoral break in 2019 when all Members received a third office, renovated and with new, environmentally and functionally better furniture put at their disposal. The furniture was not luxury, but it was modern, functional and flexible, and the ordering mechanism put in place allowed Members - to a limited extent - to configure their offices according to their needs while keeping the Institutional look dignified and coherent. This was possible due to an innovative furniture contract which was based on leasing, making sure Members from (then) 28 Member States and cultures, could adjust the furniture to the way their own offices worked. Without sounding stereotypic, a female Member from - say, Denmark - would not necessarily furnish her office in the same manner a Southern European male Member would do. This process brought Members both the Institutional dignity as well as the freedom to manage the space put at their disposal more independently.

Also in Strasbourg, Welle started an impressive operation in 2019, reducing the office space for the administration and the secretariats of the political groups, and while doing so, giving an additional office for the staff of Members. This has greatly improved the working conditions of Members, allowing them, for the first time, an office of their own during plenary sessions. Whilst Strasbourg upgrading process is still ongoing - more improvements are on the way with the acquisition and fitting out of the new VEIL building - Members are finally able to profit of their Institutional role fully during parliamentary sessions.

A second example on how Welle used a sudden crisis relating to buildings with an unforeseen determination to improve Parliament's institutional standing was linked to the Institution's security and safety. The global, and in particular the European, security context having changed after the emergence of terrorism, Parliament's SPINELLI building was invaded in September 2014 by approximately 120 Kurdish demonstrators with an easy access that shocked the political and administrative leadership. This forewarning was a blessing-in-disguise as it sparked a change in buildings' security and operational safety 18 months prior to the Brussels terrorist attacks. Parliament was already in the process of reinforcing its security and safety, putting invisible and visible barriers in place in all places of work, when the explosions at the Maelbeek metro station, 300 metres away from Parliament, and at the Zaventem airport took place, killing and wounding hundreds of innocent victims in March 2016. The visible changes are clear - revolving doors, bulletproof areas - but also a significant amount of invisible modifications to building structures and running of the facilities have been installed, making sure all Parliament's buildings have the best possible protection against unfriendly attempts. Today, other global organisations visit Parliament to learn how to improve their security against harmful incidents.

During his term, Welle also invested a lot of resources, both human and financial, into the communication policy of the Institution. Again, buildings strategy came to help: several building projects acted as a support to communicate better with citizens and media. The most famous, and demanding, joint communication and building project is the establishment of the so-called "*Europa Experience*" visitors' centres in all capitals of the Member States. These centres have been visited - even with the limiting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic - by more than three million citizens in the 12-15 centres open to citizens by now (and by the end of 2024, additional five new centres will be open to public). The first of the "*Europa Experiences*" was opened in Berlin in 2017 after the success of the "*mother*" of all of them in Brussels, the "*Parlamentarium*", had proven to be the top visitors' attraction in the whole city. Other joint communication and building projects were the "*House of European History*", the new visitors' seminar centre in the ZWEIG

building in Brussels, the renovation of the *“Jean Monnet House”* in Bazoches close to Paris, improvements of the media facilities both in Strasbourg and in Brussels and the establishment of the *“Station Europe”* in Brussels.

The use of office space - something that has become very fashionable as a subject during and after the COVID-19 pandemic - was a project, which Welle saw already in 2013 as a key towards changing the way the Institution’s various DG were working. Using three building renovations as a tool - MARTENS building in Brussels, HAVEL building in Strasbourg and ADENAUER building in Luxembourg - Welle started a dialogue with the future building users aiming at establishing a so-called *“New World of Work”* in these buildings. His reasoning was clear: the use of individual offices for staff was creating communication barriers, stopping natural information flows, it was costly and the new millennials would no longer wish to work in such old-style conditions, preventing Parliament to attract the best of the future generations. This new model would have brought flexibility to the use of office space to all occupants and introduced a certain level of hot-desking. After a strong resistance by Parliament’s (older) trade unions, the project was stopped in June 2015. However, several attributes linked to the project carried on, such as the introduction of kitchenettes, social areas, more flexible office furniture and the introduction of shared office spaces for two and four persons. Today, these are globally recognised attractive features that everyone is creating, be they in shared office concepts or more traditional set-ups, drawing staff back into the offices after the COVID-19 teleworking boom.

Yet another area where Welle had a tangible impact, was his commitment to Parliament’s environmental performance. During his term, Welle guided the administration to reduce, with an impressive determination, Parliament’s environmental impact. The majority of the achievements were again done via Parliament’s buildings strategy. In 2022 the consumption of gas for heating has been reduced by 31.1% when compared to the baseline year 2012. Electricity consumption has decreased by 30.7% between 2012 and 2022, a remarkable achievement considering the electrification of heating, increased buildings’ portfolio and additional electric vehicles. With the deployment of renewable energy by the installation of photovoltaic panels and heat pumps, Parliament is gradually meeting its targets for renewable energy. Overall, the photovoltaic panels cover now nearly 5500 m² of roofs in Brussels and Luxembourg. In Strasbourg, there are ongoing installation works for 1500 m² and studies are on the way for further installations. Today, Parliament’s mobility service, comprising of electric cars and minivans, runs a fleet of 85% full battery- or hydrogen electric vehicles, and the rest 15% consists of latest generation plug-in hybrid or combustion engine vehicles. The regular shuttle service between Brussels

and Luxembourg is primarily operated with full electric minivans. In addition, Parliament has progressively installed electric charging in the car parking areas, and modernised and extended its bike infrastructure and facilities.

The most touching and heart-warming example of using buildings - and also logistics services - for other Institutional goals, was when during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, Parliament's late President David Maria Sassoli asked Welle to find ways to support the citizens in Parliament's three places of work. Due to the various rules on social distancing, many shelters for homeless people had closed down and charities supporting people in need were in trouble as their kitchens were too small for operating in line with the social distancing rules. Parliament started - with the unanimous support of the Bureau - to cook and provide 1000 meals per day in Brussels, 500 in Strasbourg and Luxembourg each, and most remarkably, it gave a wing of one of its office buildings in Brussels as a shelter for homeless women. Almost 400 women - victims of violence, refugees and persons with addiction issues - passed through Parliament's shelter in the five months that it was operational. Several found a way forward in their lives during these months. This project was conducted in co-operation with a Brussels based charitable organisation "*New Samusocial*" and mainly DG INLO's staff, who later told me that this had been the most rewarding project of their professional careers. Further ideas on how to help the less fortunate in the society, based on this project, are under development, including several initiatives on circular economy and co-operation with people with special needs.

Time for consolidation and for supporting the environmental paradigm shift

Since the early 2000's, the European Parliament has, in all its three places of work, acquired and upgraded a solid buildings portfolio. This has allowed the Institution to save an approximate amount of EUR 2.5 billion in rent over the past 20 years.

Today, a majority of the policies and actions referred to in the second Buildings Strategy, which Welle presented to the Bureau in April 2018, are either firmly established, completed or well under way. Major improvements in the security of buildings will be completed with the construction of the security and visitors' pavilion in Strasbourg and the future renovation of the SPAAK building in Brussels. The gaps between the Institution's buildings stock have been addressed by the acquisition of new buildings in Brussels and Strasbourg; and the necessary

renewal of Parliament's meeting facilities will be addressed in Brussels through the renovation of the SPAAK building, and in Strasbourg through the long-term renting of the VEIL building and the subsequent reorganization of spaces in the central buildings.

At the time the second Building Strategy was adopted, the global context was very different than it is today. The many consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the economic and societal follow-up changes of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rising political polarization in Europe, the tightening budgetary situation in the European Union, and the consequences of the actions to combat climate change, have changed the global picture in a profound manner in the last five years.

When assessing Parliament's future Building Strategy challenges, it is clear that we are entering a new area of consolidation and environmental improvements. This can, yet again, be seen as a paradigm shift from the previous Buildings Strategies in a context where both the budgetary and HR-resources will become scarce. The obligations deriving from the future European environmental legislation will be our main guidelines. This would not be possible had we not already improved, for the last 15 years, the performance and usability of our buildings in all three working places. In addition, in a policy area that is as risky as buildings and logistics services, entailing a significant amount of public procurement, legal and reputational risks, a close co-operation between the political and administrative leadership is of utmost importance. The fruitful dialogue between the members of the Bureau and its Working Group, the President, the Secretary-General and the senior leadership of DG INLO, has been essential in bringing the implementation of Parliament's Buildings Strategies to its professionally high-level quality of today.

When I was appointed the Director-General responsible for the Buildings Strategy in 2015, no one could have prepared me for the magnitude of the job. However, I was lucky to have a Boss who was courageous in this field, a German male economist who dared to support a Finnish female communications specialist, unexperienced in the field of buildings strategy, to take over a highly specialised DG, with staff mainly from the Central or Southern European Member States, a visionary European who was never content with the attitude *"on a toujours fait comme ça"*. My time in the DG has been challenging but also the best, the most inspirational and the most enriching part of my professional life - and full of communication challenges.

Vielen Dank, lieber Klaus, für alles!

Transforming translation

How Parliament's translation service is striving for excellence in a changing language industry

Valter MAVRIČ

Valter Mavrič has been Director-General of the Translation Service (DG TRAD) at the European Parliament since 2016. He was previously acting Director-General (from 2014), Director (from 2010) and Head of the Slovenian Translation Unit (from 2004). With an MA in applied linguistics and further training in translation, interpretation, linguistics and management, he has considerable experience as a manager, translator, interpreter and language teacher. He works in Slovenian, Italian, English, French and Croatian and is currently preparing a PhD in strategic communication.



'The European Parliament is the only directly elected multilingual Parliament in the world. Its Members owe their mandate to the people who have elected them. The conversations and the works of our House of democracy must be accessible to all European citizens, in all European Union official languages. This is an essential part of what the European Parliament stands for.'

European Parliament President Roberta Metsola, at the opening of the 2022 Citizens' Language Day.

'I am proud to see that DG TRAD is actively engaged in shaping the future. Not just during your conference, but more widely within your work you seek to innovate, try new ways of working and evaluate how the latest technologies can assist your mission to deliver multilingualism. You are a world leader in your field, and when it comes to designing the profiles of the language professionals of tomorrow, your vision is both innovative and forward thinking.'

Secretary-General Klaus Welle, at the 2021 DG TRAD Conference 'Machine Translation: driven by humans, powered by technology'.

'The first audience that we work for in this institution are the European citizens.'

Secretary-General Klaus Welle, at the opening of the 2022 Citizens' Language Day.

Multilingualism through the eyes of translation

Multilingualism is part of the DNA of the European Union (EU) and is a core value of the EU's institutions. As the only directly elected EU institution, the European Parliament places particular emphasis on multilingualism. It plays a crucial role promoting transparency, accountability and democracy within the EU. The Members of the European Parliament have the right to speak, listen, read and write in any of the official EU languages. To guarantee this, the European Parliament's translation service ensures that parliamentary documents are available in all 24 official EU languages.

The way Parliament's translation service – the Directorate-General for Translation (DG TRAD) – ensures the multilingual character of the European Parliament has undergone significant changes over the past 20 years. This has been driven by a variety of factors. The 2004 EU enlargement saw the accession of 10 countries, as well as an increase from 11 to 20 official languages. This number further increased in 2007 and in 2013 to 24 languages. In parallel, technological progress has been reshaping the language industry, continuously improving efficiency and productivity, with automated working processes, advanced translation memories, neural machine translation and ultimately artificial intelligence (AI) coming on the scene.

These developments soon led to greater interest in controlling the cost of translation. In 2006, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a Special Report on the translation expenditure incurred by the three major European institutions: the Commission, Parliament and the Council⁵⁴. Its aim was to assess the efficiency, adequacy, timeliness and costs of translations. The following year, Parliament also adopted its own resolution on the Special Report, proposed by Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control and commonly named after its rapporteur, Finnish MEP Alexander Stubb.

Together, the ECA's Special Report and Parliament's Stubb Report underlined the importance of multilingualism in the EU institutions, but also steered their translation services towards a more efficient use of resources. Even though the quality and timeliness were generally found to be appropriate, the message expressed in the reports was nevertheless clear: translation services had to implement more efficient management, reduce costs and streamline processes.

Resource-efficient translation

In response to the requests and recommendations made in the two reports, DG TRAD implemented a series of organisational, technological and managerial changes. One of the first initiatives taken was a reform project implemented as of 2011 to streamline working methods. This reform included a broad array of measures:

- Better planning and forecasting were implemented, allowing DG TRAD to follow Parliament's legislative cycle more closely throughout the committee stage and plenary part-sessions.
- The organisation of translation work was harmonised across translation units and aligned with Parliament's political structure. Teamwork was organised in thematic groups across all translation units to pool and hone domain-specific expertise. This matrix organisation allowed linguists to acquire a higher degree of specialisation in the subject matter of the parliamentary committees and ensure the high quality of EP texts from both a linguistic and a terminological point of view. Thematic groups started to work closely with a new dedicated Client Liaison Service, to obtain first-hand information on translation needs from the parliamentary committees.

⁵⁴ Special Report No 9/2006 concerning translation expenditure incurred by the Commission, the Parliament and the Council together with the institutions' replies.

- The role of translation assistants was enhanced and expanded, introducing more comprehensive involvement in the pre- and post-processing of translation assignments.
- Simultaneously, technological changes were introduced, such as a new workflow tool that allowed every document to be tracked throughout the entire translation process.

Following this first initiative, a working group was created in 2012 to provide a framework for more resource-efficient translation. The discussions explored ways to boost efficiency and implement a series of changes in DG TRAD's workflows. They focused on three topics:

- defining the capacity to receive and deliver translations in the Parliament;
- looking at the implications of non-translation (translation on demand and reducing translation volumes by defining an order of priorities); and
- suggesting improvements to work programming to implement a resource-efficient translation workflow.

Defining DG TRAD's capacity meant establishing qualitative and quantitative performance indicators. To do so, DG TRAD identified and selected a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) based on its strategic objectives. These were intended to give a high-level overview of the DG combining different aspects, including output, cost, capacity and absences. To give an example, DG TRAD measures the output of the whole Directorate-General and of its individual units against their capacity. Another KPI monitors the average cost per page, both outsourced and delivered internally. In addition, DG TRAD's statistics team monitors and contributes to an interinstitutional metrics model, enabling translation statistics to be compared across European institutions.

Perhaps most importantly, the measures taken in response to the two reports aimed at introducing a new mindset in the translation service. DG TRAD's management took steps to foster a culture of excellence in the provision of language services. Parliament's translation service consolidated its reputation as a leading player in the global language industry, and despite rapid change in the translation landscape, it showed no signs of yielding its position.

Organisational changes

Over the last two decades, DG TRAD's commitment to providing high-quality translations based on resource-efficient multilingualism has led to a number of organisational changes in DG TRAD. Today, its innovative structure encompasses procedural translation, support to the translation process, clear language, audio-visual translation and resources. The focus is on the following aspects:

1. Parliament's core-business

All content that is a result of parliamentary activities is considered to be part of DG TRAD's multilingual core business. Translation focuses primarily on legislative, budgetary discharge and scrutiny processes, plenary, external relations and communication. A team of more than 1 100 people divided into language communities, sometimes in a matrix organisation across units and directorates, sometimes in policy sectors, covers all steps of the translation process from original texts, video or audio to a multilingual product.

2. A stronger technological focus

As well as offering standardised support to translation, such as terminology and outsourcing, technology has become a new focal point in its own right. New technological units have played a key role in DG TRAD's transformation. In a nutshell: DG TRAD adapts translation tools or develops in-house tools; it has streamlined the translation workflow through automatic document pre-treatment and the maintenance of interinstitutional databases for translation re-use; and it focuses on how to translate its requirements into IT solutions.

Today, DG TRAD is not simply following industry trends, but is also itself setting trends. This is evident from the number of invitations that DG TRAD receives to showcase its working methods and innovations at various translation conferences.

3. Visionary horizontal support

In order to reflect the importance of high-quality translation, and to apply a strategic approach to multilingualism, four horizontal services were set up to

deal with strategic policies for multilingualism, quality, innovation and non-EU and enlargement languages.

*With regard to promoting **multilingualism**, DG TRAD has been playing a highly active role in Parliament's outreach activities, such as Europe Days events, since 2006. Since 2017, the translation, interpretation and communication services have been joining forces every September to organise Multilingualism Day, a European Parliament initiative.*

The increasingly complex context of the European Parliament's administration also raised the need for a coordinated approach to **quality assurance**. To this end, quality coordinators were introduced in each translation unit and they started collaborating through a dedicated Quality Coordination Network. In addition, DG TRAD began actively participating in the work of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), most recently concerning the ISO standard on plain language⁵⁵.

***Strategy and innovation** is coordinated at the horizontal level in DG TRAD, in alignment with the objectives of the Strategic Execution Framework⁵⁶.*

*Finally, since 2023 DG TRAD has been responding to Parliament's efforts to enhance the impact of its activities in the field of external relations and to encourage communication with citizens beyond the EU's borders by setting up policies and activities for **enlargement and non-EU languages**.*

4. Citizens' Language

After years of streamlining the core-business translation processes and aligning them better with Parliament's legislative and budgetary activities, the end of the eighth parliamentary term was marked by a focus on an entirely new horizon. Parliament's wish to close the perceived gap between the EU institutions and citizens was expressed in the 2019-2022 Strategic Execution Framework. Simultaneously, the rise of new forms of communication had started shifting the focus of the translation industry towards audiovisual translation. New approaches to translation, such as localisation, transcreation, and adaptation began to dominate professional discussions.

⁵⁵ ISO 24495-1:2023.

⁵⁶ The Strategic Execution Framework is a programme that sets long-term goals and the strategy to accomplish them (<https://sef.secure.ep.parl.union.eu/sef/home>).

This shift inspired DG TRAD's game-changing **Citizens' Language policy**, which aimed to make Parliament's texts more understandable and accessible through a multilingual approach to clear language. The Bureau's endorsement in July 2020 of a Citizens' Language policy for all writers in the European Parliament officially confirmed the strategic importance of plain language.

The Citizens' Language policy and its focus on creating clear and accessible multilingual content paved the way for an exciting diversification of professional roles in DG TRAD. In an age where technology was constantly improving to take over the mostly repetitive, non-linguistic parts of the translation process, many translators were keen to move with the times and expand their linguistic expertise and skill set. Ultimately, a new entity was created to bring together translation services for new forms of communication, such as text localisation, subtitling and voice-over.

New job profiles

The changing dynamics in the professional environment of Parliament's translation staff created the need to adapt their job profiles to new realities. Their existing profiles no longer reflected the broad variety of linguistic products and services delivered by DG TRAD in text, audio and video formats. To accommodate the diversification of translators' tasks and roles, which span the entire translation process from end to end, DG TRAD developed a new family of five job profiles for language professionals.

Intercultural and language professionals, who are gradually replacing the translator profiles, do not simply translate a text from one language into another, but they transpose a message or a piece of information into a different cultural context. Therefore, intercultural and language professionals need not only to possess excellent language skills, but also a very solid knowledge of relevant cultural specificities. The tasks of intercultural and language professionals focus on translating, adapting, transcreating and revising all types of content in text, audio and video format.

Legal language professionals need to have obtained a law degree in their mother tongue. They are therefore experts in legal terminology and have an in-depth knowledge of their Member State's legal system. In conjunction with their linguistic skills, this means they are well equipped to perform tasks that require both legal and linguistic expertise. Legal language professionals are therefore consulted by fellow language professionals in their translation unit and

beyond for advice on legal terminology and concepts in their Member State's legal system.

Proofreader language professionals facilitate translators' work by performing a broad range of tasks. They play an important role in ensuring consistent terminology and performing linguistic checks on translations. In this way, they contribute to the high quality of translated texts. For the performance of their tasks, proofreader language professionals need to have an excellent knowledge of spelling and grammar in their native language. The proofreader language professional profile is an extension of the former translator assistant profile.

Clear language professionals play a significant role in implementing the European Parliament's Citizens' Language policy. As experts in clear language in their mother tongue, they help ensure that Parliament's texts are clear and understandable for their intended target audience. Their tasks include revising, adapting, transcreating, summarising and performing linguistic editing of a variety of non-legislative texts, mainly in English.

Innovation language professionals combine good linguistic skills with strong IT knowledge and technological expertise. Therefore, they play an important role in driving technological progress in DG TRAD's translation processes. Innovation language professionals are involved in all steps of introducing technological change and they help harness the full potential of available technological solutions for a more efficient translation process.

Multilingualism as a value

The way Parliament's translation service has evolved over the last 20 years has been marked profoundly by changes in the language industry. Since the Court of Auditors' 2006 Special Report on translation expenditure and Parliament's 2007 resolution on the same topic, DG TRAD has carefully considered its translation processes, its organisation and how to make more efficient use of resources, in line with Parliament's core political priorities: legislative, budgetary and discharge procedures, scrutiny activities, the plenary and external relations. Technology has played a big part in this, and it continues to do so today. Artificial intelligence is developing rapidly. The implementation of large language models is enhancing the work of language professionals and eliminating monotonous non-linguistic tasks from the translation workflow.

At the same time, DG TRAD has upgraded the skills of its language professionals and leveraged their existing expertise in Parliament's multilingual communication with citizens, highlighting the benefits of having an in-house translation service. With new skills in the field of audiovisual translation, DG TRAD's language experts can now help Members of Parliament and Parliament's services make the institution's work more visible and comprehensible to people anywhere around the world. With a focus on clear language and tailor-made services for people with disabilities, DG TRAD is committed to providing improved access to the European Parliament's information for everyone.

DG TRAD considers itself to be one of the guardians of multilingualism in the European Parliament and as a centre of excellence for professional standards in the field of translation. It champions multilingualism as a core value of the European Union, as it ensures that democratic processes can take place smoothly and transparently, and are equally accessible for all. Over the past 15 years, DG TRAD has dedicated significant efforts to reshaping its organisation to better serve multilingualism. Today, its working methods truly reflect the needs of the European Parliament and help deliver its core business, which is providing Members of the European Parliament and citizens with the best possible service, while always striving to innovate.

Multilingualism is not just a crucial aspect of democracy, but also a right of all European citizens. As such, it is enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union⁵⁷. Thanks to DG TRAD's transformation and to its focus on clear language and accessibility, we are now better equipped to ensure the application of multilingualism, reaching all sectors of the population without neglecting citizens with disabilities or special needs.

That is what multilingualism is about: making sure that every EU citizen can listen, speak, read, or write, – in other words: communicate – with the Parliament in any of the 24 official EU languages, and that all these 24 languages receive equal treatment.

⁵⁷ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Article 41(4).

From desktop to laptop

A workplace transformation journey in the European Parliament

Walter PETRUCCI

Retired EP director-general since September 2023. Born on 21/05/1959 in Brussels (B). Nationality: Italian. Degree in Information Technology (1981), Institut Supérieur Industriel de Bruxelles (ISIB). 1982-1986: started working in the private sector as IT expert for engineering companies and banks; 8/1986: started career in the European Parliament as IT specialist; 05/1990: seconded official in a political group; 07/2004: head of IT unit in a political group; 12/2011: director for Innovation and Resources at DG ITEC; 09/2018: acting director-general of DG ITEC; 07/2019: chair of the CERT-EU steering board (EU inter-institutional steering board for Cybersecurity); 01/2021: Director-general of DG ITEC (Directorate-General for Innovation and TEchnical support).

The project “From Desktop to Laptop” represented one of the key enablers in Parliament’s workplace transformation. Far from being a simple hardware replacement, this project entailed a deep rethinking of the Members and Staff mobile work experience.

From the origins to the covid-19 Pandemic

The 2019-2024 legislative term initiated with a bold IT strategy in support of the digital transformation efforts carried out through the Strategic Execution Framework (SEF). The strategy was based on two pillars: the Cloud and Big Data.

The integration of Cloud technologies into the Parliament’s IT landscape was meant to pave the way for better services, faster delivery of IT solutions but also

Far from being a simple hardware replacement, this project entailed a deep rethinking of the Members and Staff mobile work experience.

for a more open and adaptable IT environment. Harnessing the potential of Data aimed at create valuable insights for Members and the administration, through the use of Cloud cognitive services and customised data analytics solutions.

In the spirit of the SEF initiated by the Secretary-General five years before, Directorate-Generals were encouraged to define their contribution to the overall strategy in an holistic way. More than a sum of activities and projects, our aim was to seek for the interdependencies, necessary conditions and opportunities that would support the implementation of the strategy.

For DG ITEC, this meant bringing together foundational changes in the IT operating model (such as the Cloud) with accelerators and enabler initiatives. In other words, projects that were still in an implementation phase while the new strategic cycle was starting. One of the projects of the previous SEF (2017-2019) was indeed the first phase of the “Desktop to Laptop” initiative. As the presentation of the project on the 2017-2019 SEF portal states, the initial project aimed at *a realistic, cost-effective, large-phased deployment plan of laptops throughout the Parliament to replace desktops.*

From a technical point of view, the biggest challenge was to find a way to preserve the - then -isolated nature of the Parliament’s IT ecosystem. A portable device to be connected from home represented a threat to the traditional view of Cybersecurity. From a cultural point of view, the emergence of a tool that could make structural teleworking a “normality” was not always welcomed with great enthusiasm.

To win scepticism over, one needs to be patient and shows the value of the proposal. For that reason, the deployment of hybrid laptops started relatively slow, in DG ITEC first, and was carefully assessed as the return of experience started to come in.

At the start of the 2019-2021 strategic cycle, the approach to the deployment of the laptops changed. We had a well thought out plan, that was viewed *as an important technical step towards structural teleworking* by using a more open standard configuration. The plan aimed at gradually replacing the desktops throughout the legislative term. It was a 4 years deployment plan, including approximately 8.000 hybrid laptops, that was both culturally and financially sustainable.

The innovative drive towards the digital workplace, that was powered by the game-changer Cloud project, reinforced the key role of laptops. In this new cycle,

it was not just about structural teleworking: it was about mobility at the work place and beyond the perimeter of the EP premises. The envisioning of a dynamic, interactive and cooperative administration would find in the laptop a trusted and effective companion.

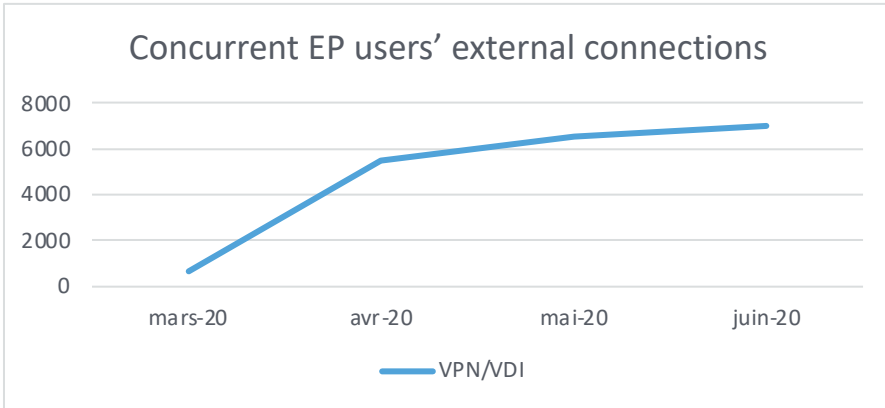
Such vision would take a drastic acceleration with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our gradual deployment plan was rendered useless by the reality of the lock-down. The laptop that was once viewed - by some - as a luxury, became a necessity overnight. And what should have been deployed in four years became a six-month plan, taking into account the supply chain disruptions and the lack of available laptops across the continent. By the end of summer 2020, DG ITEC had deployed more than 10.000 hybrid laptops.

The laptop that was once viewed - by some - as a luxury, became a necessity overnight.

The availability of such devices for Staff and Members paved the way for tackling key questions related to the development of the Digital Workplace.

First of all, the swift deployment of online cloud-based collaborative tools made it possible for everyone to continue working and support the parliamentary activities. Second, making key business applications available outside of the Parliament's IT perimeter was made possible through specific protocols that ensured IT security. In less than six months, more than a thousand protocols were changed/implemented. Third, the IT Infrastructure had to be reinforced to support such a vast amount of concurrent external connections to its resources. Before COVID-19, structural teleworking was designed to allow for a very limited number of external connections at the same time. Now, it had to be for everybody and the laptop enabled this necessity.

Figure 1 Concurrent EP users' external connections



A post-Covid vision

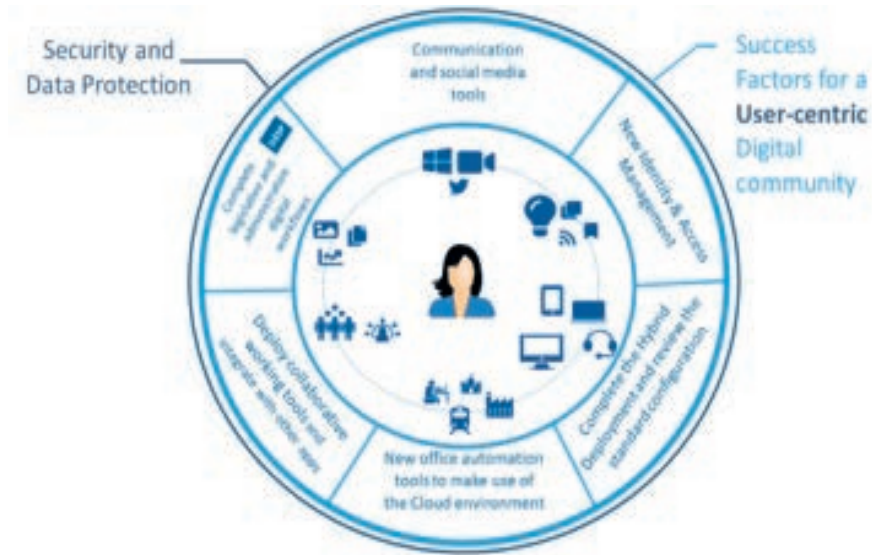
By the end of 2020, the Secretary General initiated a reflection on “what’s next”, meaning how would Parliament services evolve towards a structural resilience to disruptive events such as COVID-19. For DG ITEC, this exercise called “a post-Covid vision” paved the way for what has become the IT strategy for the Parliament of the future. In that vision, the laptop and other mobile devices would play a major enabling role. DG ITEC contribution to the post-covid vision had three pillars:

- A **hybrid** Parliament, where users would transition seamlessly from physical to digital environments, according to the needs. This required of course a series of infrastructure reinforcements, such as Wireless service across buildings, but first and foremost devices that would allow such transitions: the laptop, the tablet and the smartphone.
- An **agile and secure** IT environment, adaptable to the needs and changes but putting IT security at the heart of the design of new IT solutions.
- An **intelligent** IT environment, where automation and self-services would release resources for more tailored-made and personalised services where relevant.

With the Pandemic, the “contact surface” between Parliament users and the Internet increased through massive teleworking and so did the cybersecurity risks. These risks were amplified by the critical geopolitical context following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. A decisive reinforcement of our cybersecurity capabilities was required in order to ensure that parliamentary activities would

be sufficiently protected while the new ways of working would be preserved. The establishment of a dedicated directorate, and a new approach to cybersecurity were the highlights. In a post-covid Parliament, Cybersecurity by design would be a key requirement of the IT environment, supporting a digital community that would communicate, collaborate, participate from anywhere, and at any time.

Figure 2 A user-centric digital community



The gradual return to office of colleagues and the return of all Members to the Plenary and committee rooms made it possible to deal with the “other side of the medal”, i.e. the removal of desktops. Indeed, as the offices were closed during Covid, and the support teams in charge of implementing the removal were not onsite, the removal was postponed.

This is of course a less fancy side of the story, but it actually sparked an important reflexion on the evolution of the needs of users, that was indeed a testimony of how much the habits and expectations had evolved after the pandemic. A clear advantage of the replacement of desktops by laptops was that a single laptop would replace two, some times even three desktops in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. However, that argument alone could not be enough in view of the needs of Parliament’s users that had grown to use the digital workplace tools extensively.

In our vision, there was not a “new normal”, but a “better normal”

Several consultations have been carried out both with Members⁵⁸ and Staff on their experience with the laptop. The overall conclusion of these discussions was that the overall experience allowing a variety of working configurations was considered very positive. However, there were key elements that prevented the current laptop model used by Parliament to replace fully a desktop experience.

The size of the screen and a still too restricted corporate configuration were amongst the top blockers. The hybrid laptop (a device capable of being both a laptop and a tablet) that was chosen reflected the needs of an occasional use while teleworking from home, in a scheme where only 30 days of teleworking per year were allowed. If the laptop had to become the only device that Parliament users (staff and Members alike) would receive, important evolutions had to be implemented.

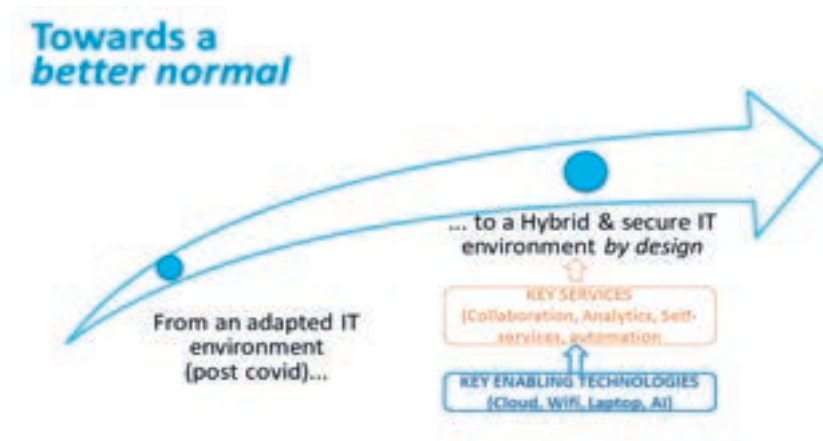
The use of the laptop as a pivotal device made it necessary to review completely the requirements of the WIFI network across Parliament’s buildings. It was unconceivable that users would be provided with a laptop and required to wire it to the EP network. As a note to the Bureau on the state of play of the WIFI improvement recalls, *the infrastructure was designed in 2010 as a complement to the existing cabled network to allow Members, staff and visitors to (occasionally) access their key applications such as emails and messaging apps. This meant that coverage and performance was also massively adapted to such use.*

The challenges to the IT Infrastructure in the post-Covid context were numerous, and they were captured in the figure below that summarises DG ITEC understanding of the Parliament’s digital transformation challenge after Covid.

In our vision, there was not a “new normal”, but a “better normal” where the changes made during the crisis would not only continue to exist, but would require a profound redesign to really support the IT needs of the Parliament.

⁵⁸ The discussions with Members were held in the context of the Focus Groups of President Sassoli and at the Bureau Working group on ICT Innovation.

Figure 3 A user-centric digital community



The maturity phase

At the time of my retirement, the elements for the maturity phase of the Desktop to Laptop project were either in place or ongoing. The reflection on the review of the teleworking rules was announced, and the replacement of the first generation laptops by bigger, more powerful ones was ongoing. The definition of a brand new standard configuration was at its proof of concept stage. Such open configuration would enable more features on the laptop, such as an app store, and indeed less constraints for the user thanks to the unified Identity and Access management system.

The online collaboration tools had reached a high maturity use, thanks also to the relentless championing program put in place by DG ITEC. The return of experience on the new laptop was extremely positive, and more and more staff adhered to the desktop removal program.

We were confident that what was in place would in any case support the future teleworking rules, and indeed support the Parliament when facing disruptive events. The tragic events in Brussels on 16 October showed how resilient the hybrid Parliament was. A decision to "close" the Parliament could be taken last minute, with no disruption of work thanks to the technologies in place, including the laptops.

It is with great satisfaction that I look back at this “Desktop to Laptop” project, because it illustrates:

- the contributions and values we were able to implement under Klaus Welle’s leadership and vision
- the drive for innovation and the constant research for new ways of working that would render the Parliament a resilient and modern workplace
- the capability to adapt to new situations and redirect our efforts to make things happen

You can all see this in this paper: What could have been just a “simple” migration of device turned out to be the cornerstone of an advanced workplace transformation.

Professional training

Karine AURIOL

Diplômée de Sciences Po Lyon et du Master Politiques Publiques en Europe de Sciences Po Strasbourg, Karine Auriol a commencé sa carrière au Centre d'Informations sur les Institutions européennes en tant que Médiateur euro pour faire de la vulgarisation de l'UEM au moment de l'arrivée de l'Euro. Après avoir été chef adjointe de projet de l'Université Robert Schuman pour la création d'un Pôle européen d'Administration Publique, elle a rejoint la Direction Europe de l'Ecole Nationale d'Administration. En 2007, Karine Auriol quitte l'ENA pour l'EUSA (l'Ecole européenne d'Administration) office de la Commission européenne en charge de la formation interinstitutionnelle. En 2018, elle intègre la DG PERS du Parlement européen pour la création de l'Académie Jean Monnet.

Créée dans l'urgence, la fonction publique européenne est formée aux compétences individuelles nécessaires (« la formation tout au long de la vie ») sans la dimension institutionnelle basée sur l'histoire, les valeurs et le sens du Service Public (« la formation initiale »).

Dans les années 90s, le New Public Management s'impose. Il instaure jusque dans les formations une supériorité du secteur privé sur le public. Ce modèle a un lourd impact sur le sentiment d'appartenance à une fonction publique et la compréhension du sens du projet servi.

Le renversement viendra des crises, ce qui est vrai pour l'Histoire de l'Union européenne s'applique jusqu'à sa fonction publique. A partir de 2008 les crises s'enchaînent sans interruption entraînant une forte demande d'intervention publique et européenne. Le mépris de la chose publique ne tient plus et le niveau européen est devenu indispensable.

Une fonction publique face aux États membres

Un peu d'histoire de la formation dans les institutions européennes montre que dès l'origine elle n'est pas utilisée, comme dans les États membres, dans une logique de constitution de la fonction publique mais immédiatement comme d'acquisition de compétences individuelles nécessaires, d'adaptation rapide et de cadrage des comportements.

L'une des raisons à cela est le contexte de crise absolue dans lequel ces Institutions sont créées. Sur les 200 dernières années, une partie de l'Europe n'a pas eu une seule génération qui n'a pas connu la guerre. Ces nouvelles Institutions sont chargées d'unir les ex-belligérants dans des secteurs cruciaux (énergie et ressources industrielles) souvent contre leur gré. A cela s'ajoute la défiance vis-à-vis d'appareils d'États qui se sont compromis moralement.

Jean Monnet et les fondateurs du statut sont conscients que si la fonction publique servant les Institutions européennes doit avoir une quelconque chance de résister face aux intérêts représentés et corps constitués il faut la doter d'une structure à la hauteur des enjeux. Les agents doivent être indépendants des États membres, leur niveau de salaires ne doit pas être trop inférieur par rapport au secteur qu'ils doivent réguler (la sidérurgie) et permettre leur expatriation.

Si Jean Monnet souhaite une armée mexicaine, avec beaucoup de managers et peu de troupes, Walter Hallstein voit les choses différemment et dit par exemple « Je vais faire du Frédéric II, car à la longue, seuls gagnent les gros bataillons ». Outre une différence de conception de la fonction publique, la phrase reflète bien le fait que la fonction publique doit livrer une bataille.

Avec le temps, le positionnement a changé, il s'agissait de se positionner quasiment contre les États membres, aujourd'hui il s'agit davantage de les servir et les aider à faire face à des crises. Il reste que ce début dans l'urgence et la tension n'a permis de se concentrer que sur les compétences opérationnelles des personnels de ces nouvelles institutions.

Évolutions et changements dans une courte existence

La fonction publique européenne est une fonction publique jeune, à peine 70 ans d'existence, sa structuration sur cette période montre une évolution, des défis et au moins deux renversements.

Les débuts dans l'urgence évoqués plus haut ont pour conséquence que les systèmes (paie, RH, droits) sont développés en marche. Dans les premiers temps un agent muni d'un seau rempli de l'argent nécessaire distribue la paie à la fin de la semaine, des statuts embryonnaires sont publiés au sein des communautés (CECA, CEE, CEEA), les pratiques RH se développent (contrairement à une idée reçue les évaluations du personnel et rapports datent des origines). Le Traité de Fusion sera un moment difficile car il s'agit de la fusion des organigrammes et non de leur juxtaposition. Dans ce contexte des débuts il n'y a pas de formation initiale comme dans les autres fonctions publiques, les formations sont centrées les compétences *ad hoc* nécessaires et les comportements pour pouvoir travailler ensemble.

A partir des années 80, se développe dans une partie du monde (Nouvelle-Zélande, Australie, Etats-Unis et progressivement en Europe), le modèle du New Public Management promu notamment par R. Reagan et M. Thatcher. Il proclame que le gouvernement n'est pas la solution mais le problème, que le secteur public et privé sont identiques et que par conséquent le secteur public pourrait adopter les méthodes du privé, tout en restant inférieur⁵⁹ et enfin qu'il n'y a pas besoin de valeurs dans le secteur public.

Ce modèle qui frappait à la porte des Institutions fera une entrée fracassante au moment de la chute de la Commission Santer. En quelques années s'installe une culture où le secteur privé est considéré supérieur, un déni de la dimension politique des choix, une ringardisation de l'expression « fonction publique européenne » qu'il convient d'éviter d'utiliser en raison du mot « publique ». Les formations se concentrent sur les compétences les plus décontextualisées, individualisées et pauvres en connaissances possibles.

⁵⁹ Le Professeur Arthur Ringeling de l'Université de Rotterdam fait remarquer la contradiction, les mathématiques ayant démontré qu'une chose ne peut pas être identique et inférieure à la fois.

En favorisant la déconnexion, la fragmentation et l'hyper individualisation, ce modèle a un lourd impact sur le sentiment d'appartenance et la compréhension du sens du projet servi.

Le renversement viendra des crises, ce qui est vrai pour l'Histoire de l'Union européenne s'applique jusqu'à sa fonction publique. A partir de 2008 les crises s'enchaînent sans interruption (subprimes, Brexit, dette, migration, Covid, guerre) entraînant une forte demande d'intervention publique et européenne. Le Traité de Lisbonne prévoit que le Conseil européen doit se réunir 4 fois par an. En réalité, depuis 2008 les Etats ont besoin de se réunir entre 12 et 20 fois par an. Le mépris de la chose publique ne tient plus et le niveau européen est devenu indispensable.

Des compétences centrées sur l'individu à la possibilité d'incarner une Institution

L'agenda européen a ceci de particulier qu'il concentre une diversité considérable de sujets dans un nombre restreint d'Institutions européennes, cela a toujours été le cas et il faut ajouter une nette accélération où apparaissent des sujets dont on aurait juré peu de temps auparavant qu'ils ne viendraient pas au niveau européen.

Dans ce contexte, et avec un modèle administratif tel que le NPM qui encourage la fragmentation et augmente l'effet de silos, on aboutit à une difficulté de compréhension de la légitimité de l'action d'une politique publique (ou Direction Générale) à l'autre pourtant rassemblées dans la même entité.

Pour ces raisons, liées à la nécessité de comprendre un projet pour le servir sur le long terme (grâce au sentiment d'appartenance) et au présent (grâce au partage de ses enjeux), la formation devait ajouter à l'efficacité personnelle existant jusque-là, une seconde dimension institutionnelle.

Les Institutions européennes le feront à leur rythme et manière, pour le Parlement européen ce sera la création d'un instrument spécifique et audacieux, une Académie Jean Monnet, qu'il faut remettre dans son contexte.

L'histoire du Parlement a ceci de particulier qu'elle a une courbe exponentielle d'augmentation de ses pouvoirs (budgétaires dans les années 70, législatifs dans les années 80 et 90, sur les actes délégués et d'exécution, dans le proces-

sus de nomination et d'élection à la Commission européenne...). Aucune autre Institution européenne n'a connu une telle pente. Face à ce mouvement, on en observe un second, à partir des années 2010, sous le leadership de Klaus Welle où la machine travaille à consolider ses propres capacités pour servir à la hauteur de ces compétences et nouvelle importance.

La liste des instruments et projets politiques, stratégiques, administratifs issus de ce changement majeur dans l'administration et finalement de l'Institution elle-même, ressort des pages de ce *Liber Amicorum* dans lesquelles l'Académie se trouve au côté d'innovations bien plus grandes.

Elle consiste à organiser de la formation obligatoire pour les agents à des moments clés, au moment de l'entrée en fonction puis à deux tournants de la carrière (première mobilité et vingtième année de service).

Les programmes ont en commun d'apporter des connaissances, d'élargir la compréhension du projet européen et de son Parlement. Le lieu, le campus de la Maison Jean Monnet, porteur en lui-même d'une partie des racines de l'aventure européenne, est un démultiplicateur des contenus qu'aucun hôtel ou centre de formation ne permettrait. C'est enfin dans chaque édition l'occasion d'aller dans la forêt avec ses pairs pour des « marches-debriefs » dans les pas du père fondateur.

Ce cadre permet les trois conditions pour qu'une formation initiale remplisse son rôle, à savoir de contribuer à la transformation de citoyens en fonctionnaires

capables d'incarner leur Institution : avoir appris en commun à propos de l'Institution, avoir vécu une expérience ensemble et s'être sentis consacrés.



Enfin si le lieu est une chance unique pour la formation de la fonction publique, il convient d'ajouter qu'une nouveauté de taille est venue augmenter l'expérience du temps et de l'espace partagés entre pairs : une structure de 32 petites chambres, dans un bâtiment certifié passif qui permet des conditions de logement adaptées à son ethos.

Un futur de la formation professionnelle

Cette dernière partie est l'occasion d'aborder l'un des futurs de la formation professionnelle. Pour l'expliquer il faut rappeler trois éléments :

- Il est fréquent d'entendre critiquer les connaissances théoriques acquises à l'Université ou dans les Ecoles supérieures, jugées sur leur valeur faciale ou leur utilité. C'est oublier qu'outre des apprentissages essentiels, l'enseignement supérieur sert surtout pour « apprendre à apprendre » dans un domaine.
- La fascination pour le secteur privé décrite plus haut s'était également accompagnée d'une croyance d'un nécessaire renouvellement permanent du personnel (qu'empêchait le statut de fonctionnaires).
- Le changement est si rapide qu'aujourd'hui une compétence ou une connaissance sont obsolètes en 2,5 années.

Comme d'autres grandes organisations le Parlement européen dispose d'un personnel hautement formé et qualifié. A l'opposé du mythe de devoir organiser un changement permanent (que même le secteur privé ne souhaite pas), il est à présent reconnu qu'il est à la fois dans l'intérêt de l'Institution mais également plus respectueux de l'individu d'ajouter des connaissances et compétences à celles déjà détenues dans le domaine⁶⁰.

Le Parlement européen s'est lancé dans un ambitieux projet nommé *upskill-ing-reskilling* par lequel il identifie les compétences présentes et celles qui deviennent nécessaires dans l'organisation. Ce projet de prospective (discipline dans laquelle le Parlement s'est déjà illustré avec un agenda pionnier - *foresight*- et la création du groupe ESPAS) implique dans un processus exigeant un nombre élevé de professionnels ainsi qu'une granularité élevée des compétences. D'autres organisations se sont lancées, peu nombreuses sont celles qui ont réussi à dépasser le stade de l'exploration puis de l'initiation, le Parlement a déjà atteint le stade suivant, celui du travail avec les praticiens.

⁶⁰ L'objectif étant toujours de permettre aux fonctionnaires européens de travailler avec les expertises présentes dans les États membres, les corps scientifiques, les lobbys etc.

Ce projet d'avenir est l'occasion de fermer la boucle ouverte au début de cet article en revenant sur la formation aux compétences individuelles, dont il ne s'agit pas de diminuer l'importance, elle est fondamentale. Elle doit simplement être complétée (et l'a été récemment) pour faire corps dans une fonction publique, la servir en comprenant ses enjeux et en faisant régulièrement le point sur qui l'on est dans cette entreprise si particulière qu'est la construction européenne.

Career differentiation

Merit-based career progression

Andrea MRAZ-ANDROVICOVA

Director for Support and Technological Services for Translation in DG TRAD since 1 January 2021.

Andrea has a law degree from the Comenius University in Bratislava and a diploma from the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences-Po).

She joined the Court of Justice of the European Union in October 2003 as a lawyerlinguist. In November 2008 she was transferred to DG PERS at the European Parliament, where she worked as a legal advisor in the Legal Affairs Unit until December 2009, and then from January 2010 to February 2012 in the Directorate for Human Resources Development. She became a member of the personnel team in the Cabinet of the Secretary General in February 2012 and left this position in July 2015, when she was appointed Head of the Staff Management and Careers Unit in DG PERS. In November 2016, she assumed the position of team leader of the personnel team in the Cabinet of the Secretary-General.

She loves travelling wherever and whenever possible, as well as playing golf and tennis.

The meaning of career differentiation in the European Parliament

It is a modern and transparent policy of merit-based career progression, the full potential of which was realised by former Secretary-General Klaus Welle.

Requirements of the Staff Regulations...

The career progression policy of the European institutions is based on three Articles contained in the Staff Regulations from 2014:

- **Article 43** lays down the obligation of an annual assessment of each official in the following terms: *The ability, efficiency and conduct in the service of each official shall be the subject of an annual report ... That report shall state whether or not the performance level of the official has been satisfactory.*
- **Article 6, paragraph 2**, provides for the following: *without prejudice to the principle of promotion based on merit as laid down in Article 45, [the establishment] plan shall ensure that, for each institution, the number of vacant positions at every grade of the establishment plan on 1 January of each year corresponds to the number of officials in the lower grade in active employment on 1 January of the preceding year, multiplied by the rates laid down in Annex I, Section B, for that grade. Those rates shall be applied on a five-year average basis as from 1 January 2014.*
- **Article 45 of the Staff Regulations** defines genuine merit-based career progression as follows: *Promotion shall be effected by appointment of the official to the next higher grade in the function group to which he belongs. Promotion shall be exclusively by selection from among officials who have completed a minimum of two years in their grade after consideration of the comparative merits of the officials eligible for promotion.*

Each institution is free to adopt its own rules implementing the requirements set by the Staff Regulations in the area of staff assessment and career progression. Therefore, the form and content of staff reports vary from one institution to another, as do the rules governing promotion.

... and their implementation at the European Parliament

The European Parliament is known for its well-structured staff reports and transparent promotions policy, which affords staff members clarity and perspective regarding their career prospects.

Staff reports

As per the general implementing measures and the internal rules on staff reports adopted in 2014 by the former Secretary-General, the assessment of ability, efficiency and conduct is performed in accordance with predefined criteria for each category, with the possibility to use a maximum of six criteria per category.

This methodical approach allows not only for an in-depth assessment of the performance of staff members, but also for an objective comparison of their merits.

In 2015, the staff assessment procedure was the first fully digitalised and entirely paperless procedure implemented in the field of staff management at the European Parliament.

Merit points

The adoption by the former Secretary-General in 2014 of internal rules on the award of merit points and their subsequent amendment in 2017 are evidence of the strengths of the system of merit points adopted back in 1999.

The rules specify that points shall be awarded grade by grade separately to staff members in each function group and staff category, on the basis of a comparative assessment of merits [as reflected in the staff reports], in accordance with the following procedure:

- *identification of staff members whose performance has been deemed unsatisfactory, who are to be awarded 0 points;*
- *identification of staff members whose performance has been deemed satisfactory, who deserve 1 or 2 points;*
- *award of a third point, where available, to staff members whose exceptional merit warrants this.*

Experience shows that the system of award of merit points, as described above, is well accepted by staff members thanks to its clarity and simplicity.

In 2018, the award of merit points also went digital.

Career progression

The 2014 decision of the former Secretary-General on the policy of promotion and career progression maintained the principle of conversion of promotion rates, as established in Annex 1, Section B, of the Staff Regulations, into reference thresholds for merit points necessary for promotion to a higher grade. The decision incorporated the creation of the new AST/SC function group.

The conversion works as follows:

Rates Annex 1, Section B

Grade	AST/SC	AST	AD
13	—	—	15 %
12	—	—	15 %
11	—	—	25 %
10	—	20 %	25 %
9	—	8 %	25 %
8	—	25 %	33 %
7	—	25 %	36 %
6	—	25 %	36 %
5	12%	25 %	36 %
4	15%	33 %	—
3	17%	33 %	—
2	20%	33 %	—
1	25%	33 %	—

Thresholds of merit points

Grade	AST/SC	AST	AD
13	—	—	12
12	—	—	10
11	—	—	8
10	—	10	8
9	—	—	8
8	—	8	6
7	—	8	6
6	—	8	6
5	18	8	4
4	15	6	—
3	12	6	—
2	10	6	—
1	8	4	—

The logic behind the conversion into threshold can be explained taking the example of grade AD 11:

Annex 1, section B, states that the number of vacant positions in grade AD 11 on 1 January of each year must correspond to the number of officials in the lower grade in active employment on 1 January of the preceding year, multiplied by 25 %. In other words, a staff member in grade AD10 needs on average four years to be promoted to grade AD11. A staff member with average perfor-

mance receives two merit points per year. Therefore, the threshold needed for promotion is set at 8.

Due to the constraints pertaining to the award, on average, of two merit points, the thresholds for some grades do not strictly mirror the multiplication rates.

Taken as a whole, the thresholds contribute to guaranteeing that the European Parliament respects the multiplication rates set out in the Staff Regulations.

As regards **career differentiation**, two provisions of the decision on the policy of promotion and career progression play a key role, namely:

Article 9, which stipulates that staff members eligible for promotion who have been awarded three points at least once in their current grade may be promoted without having reached the reference threshold.

Article 10, which allows the Appointing Authority not to promote staff members who have reached the reference threshold if they were awarded no more than one point for their most recent year in their current grade.

These two articles function in tandem and allow the Appointing Authority to better reflect the merits of the staff members concerned in their career progression. They also contribute to maintaining balance within the system.

Former Secretary-General Klaus Welle used these two articles to put in place within the European Parliament an objective career differentiation based on staff members' merit.

He introduced the practice not only to promote staff members who have received three points once in their current grade without having reached the reference threshold (promotion at threshold -1), but also to differentiate those of particularly exceptional merit, by applying the creative '3 + 3 = 8' formula. In other words, owing to their exceptional merit, staff members having twice received three merit points in their current grade are promoted two points under the reference threshold (promotion at threshold -2).

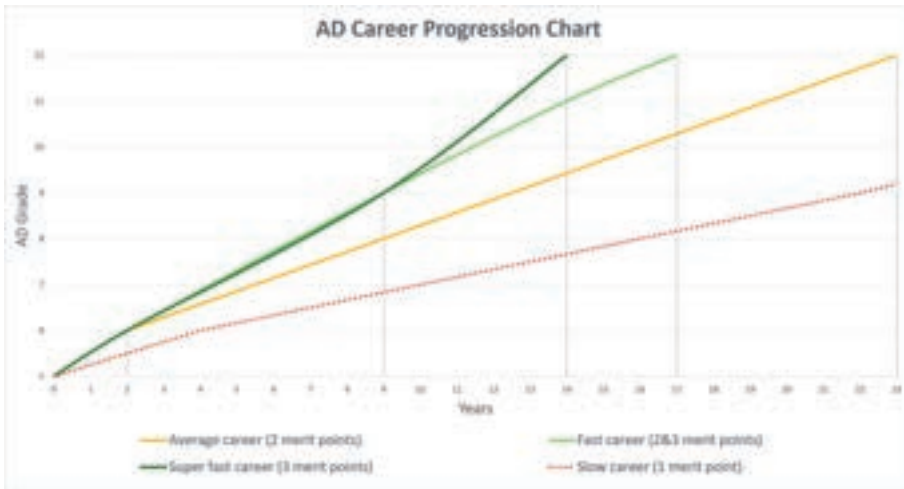
As regards staff members who have repeatedly received one merit point in their current grade, their promotion is refused until such a time as they improve their performance and receive two merit points, even if they have reached or exceeded the reference threshold.

Career differentiation: facts and figures

Every year, around 1 250 staff members are promoted at the European Parliament.

Of these, roughly 72 % are promoted by reaching or exceeding the threshold, 25 % at threshold -1 and, finally, some 3 % at threshold -2.

The following graphic best illustrates the impact of career differentiation at the European Parliament:



A staff member recruited in grade AD5 who has received two merit points per year would reach the final grade (AD 12) of his function group after 23 years (average career).

A staff member who has been awarded three merit points at least once in every grade would be promoted to grade AD 12 after 17 years of career (fast career).

Finally, those who have benefited from promotion at threshold -2 in all relevant grades (to grade AD 10 and higher) would reach grade AD 12 after 14 years (super fast career).

The career of a staff member who has once received one merit point is slowed down by one year, but in cases where a staff member has repeatedly received one merit point, the impact is potentially significant (slow career). The example illustrated in red in the graphic above shows the career of a colleague who has

received only one merit point every year in each grade, without the application of Article 10 of the decision on the policy of promotion and career progression. It demonstrates that even without applying this Article, after 23 years of career, the colleague in question is three grades below colleagues with an average career.

Conclusion

Thanks to the former Secretary-General, the European Parliament has a modern policy of career progression that is objective, predictable and transparent.

Its real value for staff members lies in the merit-based career differentiation for which it provides.

Geographical balance in the European Parliament Administration

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Formerly a lawyer-linguist in the Slovenian Translation Unit of the Court of Justice of the European Union (2006 - 2010), then an administrator at the Registry of the Civil Service Tribunal of the European Union (2010 - 2014), a legal administrator in the Directorate-General for Personnel of the European Parliament (2014 - 2017), a member of the Office of the Secretary General of the European Parliament, Klaus Welle (2017 - 2020), Head of the Human Resources Unit in the Directorate-General for Translation of the European Parliament (2020), Team Leader of the Personnel Team in the Office of the Secretary General of the European Parliament, Klaus Welle (2021 - 2022) and acting Director for HR Development in the Directorate-General for Personnel of the European Parliament (2022), Jurij Tomac is a Slovenian lawyer and holds a DEA in general public law from the University of Poitiers, France (2004).

Introduction

The geographical balance of staff in the European institutions aims to ensure fair representation of all Member States. It involves policies and practices to prevent over and under representation from certain countries and to promote diversity. This helps maintain equality and effectiveness in decision-making across the European Union. A fair geographical balance of staff is particularly important for the European Parliament. This EU institution is directly elected by the EU citizens and strives to be as close as possible to them so as to best serve their needs. It is therefore crucial that its administration loyally reflects the population of the European Union. Finally, the correct geographical balance is not only desirable but also foreseen in the legal texts governing the EU administration.

Legal Basis

According to Article 298 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union⁶¹ (TFEU), in carrying out their missions, the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union shall have the support of an open, efficient and independent European administration. Such an administration is set by the rules enshrined in the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union⁶² (Staff Regulations) adopted on the basis of Article 336 by the European Parliament and the Council⁶³.

According to Article 27 of the Staff Regulations, officials are to be recruited “on the broadest possible geographical basis from among nationals of Member States of the Union. No posts may be reserved for nationals of any specific Member State.” Article 27(2) of the Staff Regulations further provides that the “principle of the equality of Union’s citizens shall allow each institution to adopt appropriate measures following the observation of a significant imbalance between nationalities among officials, which is not justified by objective criteria. Those appropriate measures must be justified and shall never result in recruitment criteria other than those based on merit. Before such appropriate measures are adopted, the appointing authority of the institution concerned shall adopt general provisions for giving effect to this paragraph in accordance with Article 110.” In order to facilitate recruitment on the broadest possible geographical basis, Article 27(4) of the Staff Regulations imposes that the institutions strive to support multilingual and multicultural education for children of their staff.

As we can observe, a fair geographical balance of staff in the EU institutions is a *conditio sine qua non* for an open, efficient and independent administration as foreseen in the TFEU.

⁶¹ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Official Journal of the European Union, C 326/47, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

⁶² Consolidated text: Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community, OJ P 045 14.6.1962, p. 1385, [http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/1962/31\(1\)/2014-05-01](http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/1962/31(1)/2014-05-01).

⁶³ Article 298(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Official Journal of the European Union, C 326/47, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

Situation in the European Parliament

The European Parliament is the only institution of the European Union, which is directly elected by the citizens of the European Union Member States. Direct elections allow EU citizens to have a direct say in the composition of the European Parliament and play a crucial role in shaping EU policies and legislation. The very nature of the European Parliament requires that it represents the EU population as a whole in an even stricter sense than any other institution. As announced in Recital 4 of the General Implementing Provisions giving effect to Article 27 of the Staff Regulations (GIPs) adopted by the European Parliament's Bureau, "it is a policy of the European Parliament that all nationalities of the Union should be fairly represented among its staff, enabling Parliament to reap the full benefits of the diverse character of the Union and to remain broadly representative of the European citizens that it serves".

However, for some years now, we have witnessed a certain disparity between nationalities, which is not justified by objective criteria. The situation is even worse when it comes to younger officials. On the one hand, there is a clear overrepresentation of Belgian nationals and on the other, some Member States such as the Netherlands, Cyprus, Austria or Luxembourg are severely underrepresented in the European Parliament's administration. This geographical imbalance of staff in the European Parliament is due to several factors. Language barriers or advantages, economic disparities among the Member States, political dynamics, accessibility and transportation, cultural differences and perceptions of work-life balance among the different nations (to mention just a few of them) may influence the willingness of individuals from certain regions to relocate for work in the European Parliament.

In its recent resolutions, the European Parliament has called for concrete measures to address its competitiveness and attractiveness, including geographical balance.

However, the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO), on which the European Parliament relied for many years for the organisation of open competitions, has not made it possible to fulfil the requirement provided for in Article 27 of the Staff Regulations to recruit "on the broadest possible geographical basis" because of the insufficient number of laureates from some Member States, who could be later recruited by the European Parliament. The latter has pointed this out to EPSO on a number of occasions and has constructively discussed possible

changes to selection procedures, e.g. in a special working group chaired by the European Parliament, but without any tangible success.⁶⁴

In its resolution of 29 April 2021 on the discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Parliament's budget for the financial year 2019, the European Parliament called upon "the Secretary-General to do his utmost in order to improve the diversity and geographical balance of Parliament's staff, in terms of proportional representation per Member State, including in relation to the numbers in management positions and to explore all available options to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of Parliament as an employer."

In the resolution, the European Parliament further recalled "the importance of achieving a fair geographical balance among Parliament's staff; observes that, on the basis of the ratio of the number of the staff to the number of Members from the same Member State, there is no division between older and newer Member States in terms of over or underrepresentation; [...] calls on Parliament to ensure that staff at all levels are hired and promoted based on ability, efficiency and integrity, without any discrimination based on nationality; requests further efforts to ensure that employment at Parliament is equally attractive to all Union nationalities." This was reiterated in the European Parliament's resolution of 4 May 2022 on the discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2020.

During its Away Days on 13 and 14 June 2022, the Bureau of the European Parliament discussed the recruitment challenges related to geographical balance and concluded that the pluralistic character of the European Parliament is an important part of the institution's image and that particular attention should be paid to improving geographical balance in order to take full advantage of the diversity of the European Union.

⁶⁴ When EPSO was set up in 2002 there was already a concern that it would not be able to fulfil the European Parliament's recruitment needs. Therefore, in regard to the adoption of the decision establishing EPSO, the Bureau of the European Parliament issued a declaration according to which "in the event of the Office not being able to provide reserve lists sufficient to guarantee linguistic and geographical balance, the European Parliament reserve[s] its right autonomously to organise specific selection competitions."

Recruitment Challenges on Geographical Balance

Addressing geographical imbalances often requires concerted efforts to promote diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities in recruitment practices. Because of a statutory requirement that the composition of European Parliament staff should reflect, to the extent possible, the respective shares of nationalities within the European Union, it is important that the European Parliament has the means to bring the geographical balance into closer alignment with the ratio of Members elected by each Member State. The number of Members of Parliament is determined on the basis of the principles laid down in Article 14(2) of the Treaty on European Union and the representation is digressively proportional.

In order to ensure that its staff is geographically balanced, the European Parliament's planning of human resources needs to have a particular focus on the younger generation of its officials. It is crucial for a fair geographical balance in the medium term that any significant imbalance among nationalities in this group of officials is addressed. Currently, statistics show a huge disparity between nationalities when it comes to officials aged up to 40. A number of countries are clearly underrepresented (Luxembourg, Cyprus, and Sweden). The European Parliament thus needs to act swiftly in order to guarantee the geographical balance also in the future.

In the past years, the European Parliament tried to address the disparities in the geographical balance with different indirect measures such as outreach activities and attracting and recruiting young talents from underrepresented Member States through a traineeship scheme and a recruitment programme specially designed for them. Unfortunately, these measures had a limited effect.

In these circumstances, the European Parliament decided to adopt general implementing provisions for improving geographical balance in recruitment, which should bring its administration into closer alignment with the ratio of Members by Member State as a proportion of the whole. The idea was that organising competitions per nationality of a Member State could, within an appropriate legal framework, enable Parliament to enlarge the pool of candidates from underrepresented countries and help to comply with the Staff Regulations' requirement to recruit "on the broadest possible geographical basis", while strictly maintaining the principle of recruitment based on merit.

General Implementing Provisions

On 21 November 2022, at the request of the Secretary-General Klaus Welle, the Bureau adopted the General implementing provisions giving effect to Article 27 of the Staff Regulations. With this rather short legal text, the European Parliament set up the legal basis for the organisation of competitions per nationality.

In its Article 1, the term “significant imbalance” from Article 27 of the Staff Regulations is defined. According to this Article, a significant imbalance in the composition of staff of the European Parliament with respect to nationality of a Member State occurs if either (1) the ratio of all officials having the nationality of the Member State concerned and Members of the European Parliament elected in that Member State, or (2) the ratio of officials under 40 years of age having the nationality of the Member State concerned and Members of the European Parliament elected in that Member State is lower, or likely to become lower in the near future, than half of the overall ratio of either all officials or officials under 40 years of age and Members, taking all the nationalities of the European Union into account.

These two ratios would, according to Recital 7 of the GIPs, allow the institution either to take measures to address the existing situation or will allow it to take appropriate steps to secure the balance between nationalities of staff in the European Parliament's services in the future.

If the Bureau determines that a significant imbalance exists in the composition of officials of one or more nationalities of the Union, it may, according to Article 2 of the GIPs, authorise the Secretary-General to organise, or request the organisation of, competitions reserved for candidates of those nationalities. The number of places on the reserve lists of such competitions shall be sufficient to enlarge the pool of available successful candidates holding the underrepresented nationalities with a view to end the imbalance with respect to those nationalities among the staff of the European Parliament.

The referral to the Joint Committee⁶⁵, composed of representatives of the administration and the Staff Committee, prior to a possible publication of such a competition provides for an additional layer of transparency and objectivity of this measure since it has to state the reasons and provide the statistical information that justify its organisation.

⁶⁵ Article 2(2) of GIPs.

According to Article 3 of the GIPs, the successful candidates from these national specific competitions are on an equal footing with the successful candidates from other competitions organised by the European Parliament or EPSO⁶⁶. This is in line with Article 27(2) of Staff Regulations, which provides that the measures to improve the geographical balance shall never result in recruitment criteria other than those based on merit.

Conclusion

Upon the Bureau's request, the Directorate-General for Personnel has already published the first two national specific competition for Dutch and Austrian citizens. Moreover, two other - Cypriot and Luxembourgish - are already in the pipeline and will be published soon.

The European Parliament is the first EU institution to adopt the general implementing provisions for Article 27 of Staff Regulations and to organise a national-specific competition on this basis. If the vast majority of the Member States welcomed this approach, a minority considers challenging it before the Court of Justice of EU.

It is very difficult to predict if the approach of the European Parliament to improve the geographical balance of its staff will stand to the test in Court. The case-law on this matter is pretty old and not very pertinent. However, we can deduct that it does not prevent the institutions from adopting measures aimed at ensuring a global balance, in particular taking into account nationality for filling specific posts where qualifications of the various applicants are substantially the same.⁶⁷ Of course, we should not forget that, in the context of recruitment procedures, the criterion of merit, with a view to selecting candidates with the highest levels of competence, efficiency and integrity, always prevails.

⁶⁶ In periods of enlargement to new Member States, the co-legislator adopts a regulation of the Council and Parliament, which allows derogations from the principle of recruitment on the broadest possible geographical basis and foresees the organisation of competitions on the basis of nationality to better reflect the diversity of the Union. The big difference between these competitions compared to the competitions foreseen by GIPs is that the laureates of the former are recruited on the posts reserved for the nationalities for which these competitions were organised and are thus not on an equal footing with laureates from other reserve lists if they don't have the nationality required.

⁶⁷ See for instance judgments in *Lassalle v European Parliament*, 15/63, ECLI:EU:C:1964:9 and *Reinartz v Commission*, 17/68, ECLI:EU:C:1969:14.

It is evident that no measure could succeed if the pool of candidates from which the institutions recruit their staff is not sufficiently geographically balanced. By organising the national-specific competitions the European Parliament is doing just this - giving a chance to the employer to recruit among the candidates of equal merits the one whose nationality is underrepresented in its administration.

Encouraging social dialogue

Social dialogue in the European Parliament during the COVID-19 pandemic

Sandra VOLANTE

Sandra Volante started working in the European institutions in 1998 as an information assistant at the Commission's Directorate-General for Research, before joining the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union. In 2011, she made the big move to Parliament, where she worked in the Secretariat of the Committee on Foreign Affairs until 2014. She was elected to the European Parliament Staff Committee 10 years ago and has been part of it ever since. She was successively Vice-Chair, Political Secretary and President (2020-2023), and is currently first Vice-Chair. A translator by training, she is deeply involved in staff matters and staff well-being and she likes connecting with people. Half Belgian, half Italian, she is completely European.

The International Labour Organization defines social dialogue as including 'all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy'⁶⁸. European social dialogue refers to **discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions** involving organisations representing the two sides of industry (employers and workers).

European social dialogue is enshrined in the Treaty establishing the European Community (Articles 138 and 139) and is promoted by the Commission as a way to improve governance and promote social and economic reforms⁶⁹. It refers to discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions involving organisations representing both sides of industry (employers and workers). Its main goal is to promote consensus building and democratic involvement among the main

⁶⁸ International Labour Organization, 'What is Social Dialogue', <https://www.ilo.org/ifpdial/areas-of-work/social-dialogue/lang--en/index.htm>%20%20a.

⁶⁹ Baccaro & Simoni, 'Policy Concertation in Europe', *Comparative Political Studies*, 41 (10), 2008, pp. 1323–1348. CiteSeerX 10.1.1.475.2984.

stakeholders in the world of work⁷⁰, and in so doing, to advance opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equality, security and human dignity⁷¹.

Whether informal or institutionalised, social dialogue has become an essential factor in the efficient running of major international institutions such as Parliament.

At Parliament, social dialogue is central to the smooth functioning of the links between the institution and its staff and the actual core business of the Staff Committee.

Following the 2020 health crisis, social dialogue has taken on even greater importance.

In September 2020, a new Staff Committee began its three-year mandate after months of uncertainty due to the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic. Nobody was prepared. This was the first Staff Committee elected after the start of the pandemic and so it had to reorganise its work procedures.

The elections for the renewal of the Staff Committee had been held on 20 February of that year, but the start of the pandemic and the lockdown just four weeks later threw the timetable into disarray.

The outgoing Staff Committee therefore operated on a business-as-usual basis during this period, which lasted for seven months. This unusual context forced staff and management to adapt to the new situation and way of working. Dialogue and discussions continued on a regular basis, but took place online for the safety of all concerned.

Regular meetings with senior management enabled the Staff Committee to keep abreast of the situation and circulate information upwards. During this period, the Staff Committee also played an important role in helping colleagues who were distressed or disconcerted by the situation. Many colleagues were 'stuck' alone in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg with the borders closed, with very limited remote contact with their families throughout Europe.

⁷⁰ International Labour Organization, 'What is Social Dialogue', <https://www.ilo.org/ifpdial/areas-of-work/social-dialogue/lang--en/index.htm>%20%20a.

⁷¹ International Training Centre, 'Social dialogue and industrial relations: a self-guided introduction course', <https://www.itcilo.org/courses/social-dialogue-and-industrial-relations-self-guided-induction-course>.

The Staff Committee also managed to play a relay role with the medical service. Everyone played their part at their own level.

In September 2020, once the new committee was in place, face-to-face meetings resumed, but not for long. From 19 October 2020, for a whole year, plenary sessions of the Staff Committee were held remotely again due to the resurgence of the virus. Consultations of the Staff Committee through referrals on new rules regarding teleworking also carried on remotely. The Staff Committee's opinion was delivered in mid-July 2021. The new rules entered into force on 1 September 2021.

In between, the Bureau of the Staff Committee also negotiated with Parliament's administration on various files in the interests of the institution's staff.

At the same time, the Staff Committee's Bureau held frequent meetings with the Secretary-General, Mr Klaus Welle, to discuss both the situation and any administrative developments. His door was always open. Sometimes, meetings were organised at very short notice, remotely at first, and then in person when it was safe to do so.

The Staff Committee and the Secretary-General always collaborated in the interests of the staff during this difficult period.

It was essential for social dialogue to continue at all levels during this period when all staff and managers had to reinvent their working methods rapidly. In the same spirit, the President of the European Parliament, Mr Sassoli, also made sure to be available to meet with the Staff Committee to address the concerns of staff living through such an unprecedented situation.

The lesson to be drawn is that resilience is far greater than one might think in very complicated situations. All of the actors in Parliament ensured that we could continue carrying out our respective missions remotely and safely. Talents were pooled from across Parliament to ensure that this house of European democracy could carry on functioning. Activity never stopped.

Social dialogue is the ability to work together, discuss together and find solutions together in the interests of the staff, even in unexpected, difficult times. Mr Klaus Welle played a very active part in this process.

Leadership in COVID-times - Confronting the Corona virus

For people and EU democracy

Petra CLAES

Dr Petra Claes is Medical Advisor and Head of Unit of the European Parliament's (EP) Unit for Medical Preparedness and Crisis Management (MPCMU) and former Head of Unit of the EP Medical Service in Brussels in which she has worked since 2009.

She has been directly involved in the EP's internal crisis and business continuity management throughout the COVID-19 crisis, advising top management and working closely together with other senior medical advisors and occupational safety and health services. In 2022, she was appointed Director ad Personam and charged with the organisation of the new MPCMU unit.

She is Chairwoman of the Interinstitutional Medical Board (IMB) of the EU Institutions and member of its Risk Prevention and Management (RPM) group.

She is a medical doctor (Free University Brussels (VUB), 1994), specialised in internal medicine (with focus on infectiology) and emergency medicine with a degree in disaster management.

I am honoured and humbled to contribute to your Liber Amicorum with a chapter on COVID-19. This is a personal story, paying tribute to an extraordinary leader who navigated the EP's ship safely through the worst storm known for decades. A storm that has cost millions of lives, and was on track to cause millions more, if Europe and European Democracy had not faced the challenge boldly and wisely. This is not a report on the pandemic and its management. If the reader wishes to dig into facts and figures, I kindly refer them to the references included.

How it all began

Winter break 2019-2020. First reports on an outbreak in Wuhan trigger the interest of scientists around the globe. The Risk Prevention and Management (RPM) group of the Interinstitutional Medical Board (IMB) of the European Institutions keeps a close eye on this.

End of January, the world is still fast asleep, unaware of what is to come. The World Health Organisation (WHO) calls the novel coronavirus a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

The IMB alerts the Heads of Administration of the EU Institutions. Medical doctors in the EP sound the alarm and alert the Crisis Cell dealing with official travels, all DGs and the HR community of the EP. Our advice included *“People returning from risk areas should respect a 14 day quarantine period before returning to the office.”* This was unheard of. Quarantine? That word was not part of the every day’s vocabulary. Yet...

With a mixture of curiosity, interest and perhaps some criticism, you summoned me into your office to explain. That is where our close collaboration began...

You called the Business Continuity and Crisis Management Team (CBCMT) together and would continue to do so on a regular basis.

I will never forget the deafening silence in the Conference of Presidents when you asked me to brief them.

What follows is a journey, sometimes a roller coaster, of medical advice, scientific data, epidemiological updates, measures, communications, rules, dialogues with all stakeholders, ...

I remember a specific dialogue in your office. You asked my opinion on a proposal to shorten quarantine times, and I advised against it. Half serious, half amused you asked *“Do you know who I am?”* I said, *“I do, you are the Secretary General of the European Parliament.”* You asked me whether I had just said *“no”* to you. I confirmed. You laughed and said *people usually did not say no to you in your position.* I added that you had asked me for a medical advice; you had not asked me to say yes. You paused and agreed. We knew we could trust each other to be honest.

Three pillars

From the very start, President Sassoli and you decided to build the EP's approach on three pillars.

Where some people weighed "the interest of staff" against the "need to maintain business continuity", as if these were two opposites, you knew that they go hand in hand.

"If people are not safe, if they do not feel safe, if they worry about infecting their (vulnerable) family members, there will be no one to keep the business running."

Safeguarding Members and Staff

One of the main goals was avoiding in-house COVID-19 transmission. In the midst of a pandemic, it would of course be impossible to avoid infections in Members and staff, as they could catch the virus from family, friends and the little contacts they had outside the workplace. At work however, everything was done to limit the risk of transmission, and to interrupt any in-house chains of transmission.

Unprecedented measures were taken including maximised teleworking, physical distancing, obligatory mask wearing, hand hygiene measures, sanitary measures and 100% fresh air ventilation in EP buildings and temperature controls at the entrances; immediate 100% teleworking for vulnerable staff as long as this was necessary. Psychosocial measures and multilayered support were put in place.

The medical services^{72,73} manned the COVID-hotline and put in place an elaborate system of in-house contact tracing, giving quarantining and isolation advice as well as personal medical advice and support.

⁷² Experiences of health professionals in EU institutions during the Covid crisis. Authors: Gianluca Quaglio, Georgeta Done, Francesco Cavallin, Maria Gil Ojeda, Petra Claes. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, Volume 94, August 2023, 103810. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2023.103810>

⁷³ Pandemics and Other Health Crises: A Special Report from a European Parliament Workshop. Authors: Gianluca Quaglio, Luca Ragazzoni, Isabel De la Mata, Raed Arafat, Sabine De Muynck, Erika Vlieghe and Petra Claes. Prehospital and Disaster Medicine, Volume 37, Issue 6, December 2022, pp. 827 - 831. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049023X22001376>

State of the art test facilities were provided, facilitating access to regular testing and allowing us to put in place in-house epidemiological surveillance with regular reporting.

As soon as the vaccines were in sight, you endorsed the idea of having an accredited in-house vaccination centre in Brussels, which was put in place in record time. What a *tour de force* this was! With an intense inter-DG collaboration and the support of many volunteers in an atmosphere of fantastic solidarity, hope and deep gratitude. Access to vaccination was guaranteed on all sites of work.

Maintaining Business Continuity: all for European Democracy

Figure 1 - hybrid meeting of the Conference of Presidents 4/2/2021, with masks, physical distancing, interpretation including for remote speakers, etc)



Source: EP

As mentioned earlier, measures to keep staff safe, and to interrupt all chains of in-house transmission of the virus, also helped maintain teams and services in business.

All of the sudden, telework became the norm, for all staff whose tasks allowed for it. Staff with so-called “essential presence” were cohorted to guarantee having a team available in case of quarantine and isolation needs.

To keep the House’s core business running, rapid innovation was necessary. This was possible thanks to your visionary leadership, a strong and dedicated team around you, bold decisions and building on years of experience with “Innovation days” and the “Strategic Execution Framework”. To enable the sudden teleworking, you decided to implement the multiannual digitalisation plan in record time. I remember you told the Director General in charge at a CBCMT meeting to *“buy all the necessary hybrid computers now, next week there will be none left on the market”*. The deployment of a complex, multilingual remote meeting system in record time, asked for total commitment of all involved.

An innovating remote voting system and a watertight legal framework for all measures. There is too much to list.⁷⁴

Solidarity with the host cities

EP leadership also extended beyond the Parliament. Practical solidarity included creative offers where it was most needed, such as nightly transport for medical teams, charity food production and distribution and providing shelter⁷⁵ to vulnerable women.

Missing page

In this liber amicorum, one specific contribution will sadly be missing. The chapter of President David Sassoli with whom you have worked so closely together. I’m sure his words in this book would have been heartfelt, sincere and reflecting his deep gratitude and respect.

⁷⁴ The European Parliament in the time of coronavirus. Protecting Members and staff, ensuring business continuity and implementing practical solidarity. Author: Klaus Welle. Robert Schuman Foundation. <https://old.robert-schuman.eu/en/doc/ouvrages/EN-European-Parliament-2.pdf>.

⁷⁵ EU Parliament becomes shelter for vulnerable women during COVID-19 crisis. Press article. Author Beatriz Rios in Euractiv. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/eu-parliament-becomes-shelter-for-vulnerable-women-during-covid-19-crisis/>.

Figure 2 - President David Sassoli and Secretary General Klaus Welle



Source: EP

Looking beyond the crisis

In a classic crisis management cycle, we distinguish different phases: preparedness, incident, crisis response, recovery, mitigation and again preparedness. Long before the end of the crisis, and as soon as the situation allowed for it, you reorganised services with a view of increasing crisis preparedness for the future. The creation of the new Medical Preparedness and Crisis Management Unit (MPCMU) that I have the honour to lead, is but one example of it.

In conclusion

Thank you for your visionary leadership and your trust.

Under your guidance, EP management and staff were able to transform the EP in a seaworthy ship, strong enough to sail the stormy seas of the pandemic⁷⁶. Moreover, it has emerged stronger and better prepared for the next crisis.

You counted on all staff, and we counted on you.

Your leadership has had an immeasurable impact on the Institution and the European democracy it stands for.

Figure 3 - “Cheers, Mr Welle, let me raise this glass to your health”, at your farewell reception, EP Brussels.



Source: EP

⁷⁶ https://www.eca.europa.eu/lists/ecadocuments/sr22_18/sr_resilience-eu-inst_en.pdf.

Klaus Welle's strategy to enhance Parliament's administrative capacity despite financial constraints

A Testimony to Leadership and Innovation in the European Parliament

Kirsten LÜDDECKE

Born in Leipzig, in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), I pursued university and post-graduate studies in linguistics, economics, and international relations in Leipzig, Pjatigorsk, and Brussels. Additionally, I explored interior design. After beginning my career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I transitioned to the private sector, working in the construction industry in Seville, Spain. Since settling in Belgium in 1992, I have contributed to media at the "Agence Europe" News Agency and the Audiovisual Media Marketing Initiative Europe. My journey then led me to roles within the European Commission (Russia Desk) and the European Parliament, where I have held diverse positions, mainly linked to Foreign Affairs and Budget. From political group secretariats to serving as a team leader in the Cabinet of Klaus Welle, I have navigated varied challenges. Currently, after 5 years as Director for building projects, I hold the position of Director for Budget and Financial Services in the European Parliament.

In the corridors of the European Parliament, amidst the intricate tapestry of European governance, one individual's vision stands out as a beacon of inspiration and transformation. It is with profound reverence and admiration that I embark on the task of articulating the enduring impact of Klaus Welle's visionary leadership during his tenure as Secretary General of the European Parliament.

This Liber Amicorum serves as a platform to pay homage to Klaus Welle's unparalleled dedication and unwavering commitment to advancing the ideals of democracy, transparency, and efficiency within the European Parliament. Throughout his tenure, Klaus Welle undertook profound administrative reforms that not only steered the Parliament through tumultuous times but also posi-

tioned it as a bastion of democratic representation in an ever-evolving political landscape.

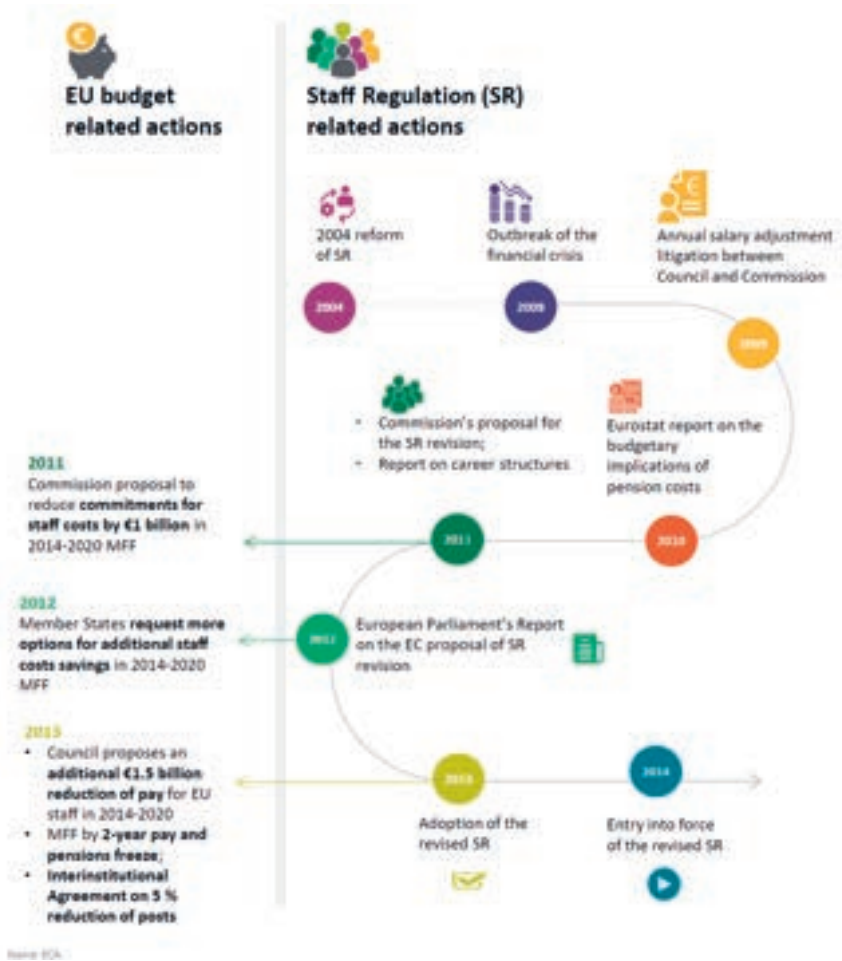
As I reflect on Klaus Welle's visionary contributions, I am compelled to acknowledge the depth of his foresight and the magnitude of his achievements. Under his stewardship, the European Parliament underwent a remarkable transformation, adapting to the exigencies of the times while remaining steadfast in its duty to serve as the voice of the European citizens.

In this article, I endeavour to delve into Klaus Welle's multifaceted vision for the European Parliament, exploring the strategies, innovations, and principles that guided his leadership. From pioneering administrative reforms to fostering a culture of inclusivity and collaboration, Klaus Welle's vision transcended mere institutional change, leaving an indelible mark on the very essence of European democracy.

As we look to Klaus Welle's contribution, I invite you to join me in a journey of reflection and appreciation for a leader whose vision continues to inspire and guide us towards a more united, democratic, and prosperous Europe thanks to a strong, multinational and efficient administration at the service of the Members of Parliament and ultimately at the service of European citizens.

Increasing Parliament's administrative power in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis

I would like to begin by contextualising Klaus Welle's more than 13 years of service as Secretary-General of the institution within the economic and administrative framework, as illustrated by the following chart:



As the reverberations of the 2008 financial crisis echoed through the halls of European governance, Klaus Welle embarked on a mission to fortify the administrative power of the European Parliament. Recognising the imperative to safeguard the institution's autonomy and effectiveness in the face of fiscal constraints, Welle spearheaded initiatives aimed at enhancing Parliament's administrative capacity.

One of Welle's key strategies was to leverage technological innovation to streamline administrative processes and optimise resource utilisation. Under his leadership, the Parliament embraced digitalisation and automation, implementing cutting-edge systems and tools to enhance efficiency and transparency in financial management, procurement, and human resources.

Furthermore, Klaus Welle advocated for strategic investments in talent development and capacity-building initiatives within the Parliament's administrative apparatus. By prioritising the professional development of staff and fostering a culture of excellence and innovation, Welle sought to empower the institution to navigate complex challenges with resilience and agility.

In addition to internal reforms, Welle actively engaged with external stakeholders, including other European institutions and member states, to advocate for the necessary resources and support to uphold the Parliament's administrative autonomy. Through diplomatic finesse and strategic negotiation, he secured vital funding and resources essential for maintaining the Parliament's operational integrity and effectiveness.

Under Klaus Welle's stewardship, the European Parliament emerged from the shadows of the financial crisis as a stronger and more resilient institution, equipped with the administrative prowess necessary to fulfil its mandate as the voice of European citizens. His visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to excellence laid the foundation for a modern, efficient, and responsive Parliament capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

European Parliament's administration in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis

The aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis posed formidable challenges for the European Parliament, compounded by the legacy of administrative constraints and the imperative to enhance efficiency initiated by Commissioner Kinnock's reform in 2004. The focus on improving administrative efficiency laid a solid foundation, yet the severity of the financial crisis demanded further adaptation and innovation to ensure the Parliament's resilience in the face of fiscal austerity.

With the European Union's budget for administrative expenditure scrutinised more closely than ever, Klaus Welle confronted the daunting task of reconciling fiscal constraints with the Parliament's mandate to effectively represent the interests of European citizens. Despite financial pressures, Welle remained steadfast in his commitment to safeguarding the Parliament's administrative autonomy and bolstering its capacity to fulfil its legislative and oversight functions.

To meet these challenges head-on, Welle embarked on a comprehensive review of the Parliament administration's core business, identifying areas of

optimisation and efficiency gains. Through strategic resource allocation and targeted reforms, he sought to enhance the Parliament's operational effectiveness while maintaining fiscal prudence.

Financial figures underscored the magnitude of the task at hand. Following the financial crisis, the EU's budget for administrative expenditure faced stringent scrutiny, necessitating prudent fiscal management and prioritisation of resources. Despite these constraints, Welle's strategic stewardship ensured that essential administrative functions remained intact, enabling the Parliament to fulfil its duties without compromise.

A pivotal moment in assessing the Parliament's capacity to meet these challenges came with the release of the 2012 comparative study on "Parliamentary Democracy in Action." This landmark study which was since twice updated by the European Parliament's Research Service, comparing the European Parliament with five national parliaments, provided valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the EU legislative body. While acknowledging areas for improvement, the study affirmed the European Parliament's role as a vital forum for democratic representation and legislative deliberation on the European stage.

In conclusion, Klaus Welle's leadership during the tumultuous post-2008 period was characterised by strategic vision, resilience, and a steadfast commitment to upholding the Parliament's institutional integrity. Despite fiscal constraints and the legacy of administrative reforms, Welle navigated the Parliament through turbulent waters, ensuring that it emerged stronger and more resilient, ready to face the challenges of the future with confidence and determination.

Redeployment as one of the means to increase administrative capacity and efficiency

Klaus Welle's approach to addressing the insufficiencies highlighted by the comparative study on "Parliamentary Democracy in Action" exemplified his strategic vision and commitment to excellence. While the study underscored the European Parliament's administrative strengths relative to other parliamentary bodies, it also identified areas in need of improvement, particularly in modern outreach, communication, and research capacity.

Welle recognised the imperative to enhance the Parliament's outreach and communication efforts to ensure greater transparency and engagement with

European citizens. In response, he initiated innovative strategies to modernise the Parliament's communication channels, leveraging digital technologies and social media platforms to disseminate information and foster public discourse on EU legislative activities. He also initiated the project of deploying 'Europa Experience' installations in all Member State capitals, offering citizens a first-hand experience of what the European Parliament represents, how it works, and what it does for every single European citizen.

Furthermore, Welle prioritised strengthening the Parliament's research capacity, particularly in the realm of legislative impact assessment. Recognising the need for greater independence and autonomy in evaluating the consequences of proposed legislation, he implemented measures to bolster the Parliament's research capabilities and reduce dependency on external assessments, particularly those provided by the European Commission.

Central to Welle's strategy was the concept of redeployment, a proactive approach to optimising resource allocation and enhancing administrative efficiency. Building on past redeployment efforts, Welle seized the opportunity to reallocate personnel and resources to areas of critical need within the Parliament's core business.

A notable example of this redeployment strategy was the transformation of the linguistic services. By opening up career pathways and reassigning staff from linguistic roles to essential administrative functions, such as legislative analysis and research, Welle effectively leveraged internal resources to bolster the Parliament's capacity in key areas identified by the comparative study.

Through these strategic redeployment initiatives, Welle not only addressed the deficiencies highlighted by the comparative study but also fostered a culture of innovation, efficiency, and adaptability within the Parliament's administrative apparatus. His visionary leadership and commitment to excellence ensured that the European Parliament remained at the forefront of parliamentary democracy, equipped to meet the evolving challenges of the 21st century.

Extending redeployment: The cooperation agreement between the EP and Committees

Recognising the need for broader redeployment beyond the confines of the European Parliament's administrative structure, Klaus Welle initiated a landmark

Cooperation Agreement between the European Parliament and its Committees. This innovative agreement, signed on February 5th, 2014, established a framework for enhanced cooperation and resource sharing between the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and was signed by the Presidents of the respective organs.

While cooperation between these institutions had existed prior to the formalisation of the Cooperation Agreement, its signing marked a significant milestone in strengthening collaboration and optimising resource allocation across the European Union's legislative bodies.

The Cooperation Agreement, accompanied by two annexes co-signed, outlines the scope and principles of cooperation, emphasising the importance of sustainable working relationships based on mutual cooperation. It delineates key areas of collaboration, including legislative work, policy assessment, and establishment of contacts at the rapporteur level, fostering a cohesive and integrated approach to EU governance.

Annex I of the Cooperation Agreement focuses on practical and logistical cooperation, addressing issues such as translation services, security protocols, IT infrastructure, and access to shared facilities such as canteens and buildings. By streamlining administrative processes and pooling resources, Annex I facilitates greater efficiency and effectiveness in the day-to-day operations of the participating institutions.

Additionally, Annex II of the Cooperation Agreement outlines the budgetary implications of staff transfers between the Committees and the European Parliament, ensuring transparency and accountability in resource management.

The Cooperation Agreement between the EP and Committees represents a paradigm shift in inter-institutional cooperation within the European Union, fostering a culture of collaboration and synergy among key legislative bodies. By leveraging the strengths and resources of each institution, the Agreement paves the way for enhanced legislative effectiveness, policy coherence, and administrative efficiency, ultimately advancing the collective interests of European citizens.

Addressing Challenges in Major Staff Redeployments

Undertaking major staff redeployments within the European Parliament posed significant challenges, requiring careful planning, coordination, and strategic foresight. One of the primary challenges stemmed from the need to balance institutional continuity and stability with the imperative to adapt to evolving priorities and operational requirements. Implementing standing mobility rules, particularly the seven-year rotation cycle for staff, presented logistical complexities and necessitated comprehensive transition strategies to mitigate potential disruptions to ongoing activities and projects.

Furthermore, major redeployments within specific departments, such as the linguistic services, required meticulous coordination to ensure seamless integration of personnel into new roles and responsibilities.

Redeploying a considerable portion of linguistic staff to essential administrative functions, including the establishment of the service of Lawyer-Linguists, demanded careful planning to optimise resource allocation and minimise operational gaps.

However, perhaps the most formidable challenge arose with the first-ever inter-institutional redeployment from the Committees to the European Parliament, notably to the newly founded European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). This unprecedented endeavour required close collaboration between the EP and Committees, as well as meticulous planning to facilitate the transfer of staff while maintaining continuity in legislative support and expertise.

Despite these challenges, Klaus Welle, supported by his team of Directors-General, Managers and staff, demonstrated remarkable leadership and resilience in navigating the complexities of major staff redeployments. Through strategic planning, transparent communication, and proactive engagement with stakeholders, they successfully overcame logistical hurdles and ensured the seamless transition of personnel to their new roles and responsibilities. The successful execution of these redeployment initiatives underscored the European Parliament's commitment to fostering institutional adaptability and efficiency in pursuit of its legislative and oversight mandate.

3

Leveraging parliamentary power

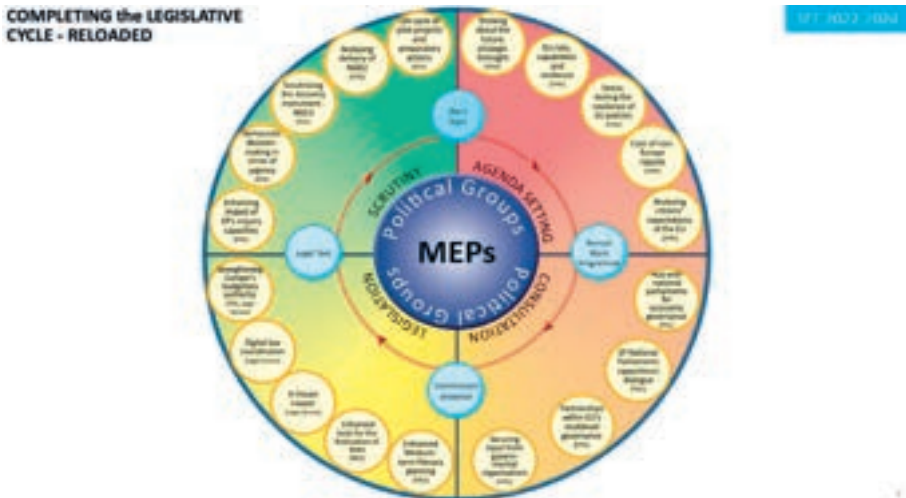
The EU legislative cycle: A Parliament perspective

Riccardo RIBERA d'ALCALÁ

was (until 31 December 2022) Director-General for Internal Policies in the European Parliament, the Directorate-General that assists the 20 parliamentary committees in their legislative, budgetary and oversight capacities, also providing them with expertise and thematic support through five dedicated Policy Departments. Previously, he was Director for Legislative Affairs, member and Head of cabinet of three Parliament Presidents and Deputy Secretary-General of the EPP Group in the European Parliament. He obtained a Master of Laws with honours from the University of Naples Federico II, specialising in International Relations and European Law. He has held positions as a Lecturer in various seminars and events (University of Padua, Catholic University of Milan, EUI Florence, EUCA Summer School Cambridge, University of Valladolid, etc.), Parliament representative in the High Council of the European University Institute, Florence and Member of the Jean Monnet Foundation. He is fluent in five languages.

With the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament consolidated its role as fully fledged legislator, with the ordinary legislative procedure becoming the general rule for adopting legislation and covering a wide range of EU policy areas. However, the adoption of legislation represents only one key aspect of a complex process starting with consultation and agenda setting, followed by the implementation and ex post evaluation of EU law. The European Parliament can only fully exercise its role as co-legislator and its democratic control if it is a player throughout the whole process. This was well understood by Klaus Welle, who, in his capacity as Parliament Secretary-General, developed the concept of 'legislative cycle', gaining leverage for the European Parliament throughout the whole legislative process and empowering MEPs and parliamentary committees with a number of strategic tools aimed at boosting the expertise and oversight capacity of the institution (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Completing the legislative cycle - Reloaded



The legislative cycle has major implications for the balance of power between the institutions and for the democratic legitimacy of the Union’s decision-making.

Two major interinstitutional agreements are relevant to the legislative cycle: the Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on Better Law-Making⁷⁷ (IIA on BLM), last modified in 2016, and the Framework Agreement on relations between the Parliament and the Commission of 2010, last amended in 2018⁷⁸ (FA).

1. Agenda setting

1.1 Legislative programming

The current Treaties (Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union) entrust the Commission with the task of initiating the legislative process and the annual and multiannual programming with a view to achieving interinstitutional agreements.

⁷⁷ OJ L 123, 12.5.2016, p. 1.

⁷⁸ OJ L 304, 20.11.2010, p. 47 and OJ L 45, 17.02.2018, p. 46.

The **Commission's work programme**, representing the Commission's contribution to the Union's annual and multiannual legislative programming, is the basis of the exercise.

How can Parliament influence it?

The FA between Parliament and the Commission provides for a systematic **structured dialogue** between Committee Members and the respective Vice-Presidents and Commissioners. This is concluded by a **summary report** adopted by the Conference of Committee Chairs containing Parliament's priorities for the forthcoming Commission work programme. On the basis of this summary report, Parliament adopts a resolution at the July part-session outlining its positions and requests.

Following the **State of the Union** debate at the September part-session, when the President of the Commission announces the main elements of the Commission work programme for the following year, meetings take place between the **Conference of Committee Chairs and the College of Commissioners** (or with the Commission's Vice-Presidents) and between the Conference of Presidents of political groups and the Commission President.

At the end of this intensive process, when Parliament's committees and political groups can announce their political and legislative priorities, the Commission's work programme is adopted in October. This is followed by a debate and a Parliament resolution in December.

How to move from the Commission's work programme to interinstitutional programming?

Beyond these provisions inaugurated in 2010 with the FA, the revised IIA on BLM provided a new opportunity to boost Parliament's political influence in the programming process, through a **joint declaration on annual interinstitutional programming** (JD) to be signed by the Presidents of the three institutions. This JD was designed to address one of the FA's weaknesses – the lack of a conclusive phase where Parliament could decisively influence the Commission's work programme as regards the legislative initiatives Parliament had requested. The joint declarations that have been signed regularly since 2016 are supposed to

identify the legislative files that should receive priority treatment in the following year *'without prejudice to the powers conferred by the Treaties on the co-legislators'*⁷⁹.

Although the JD signified progress, it must be noted that the Commission's work programme has not always been respected and many legislative proposals have been delayed or postponed.

1.2 Parliament's right of legislative initiative

Unlike the national parliaments in the Member States or the US Congress, the European Parliament lacks the right to initiate legislation, with a few exceptions where the Treaties grant Parliament this right (electoral law, Statute for Members, its own composition, right of inquiry, Statute of the European Ombudsman, revision of the Treaties, and the rule of law).

However, the Treaties grant Parliament an indirect **right of legislative initiative** as, pursuant to Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), the European Parliament acting by a majority of its component Members, may request that the Commission come forward with a legislative proposal and the Commission must justify if it refuses to do so. According to the FA and the IIA on BLM, the Commission has committed to report on its follow-up on Parliament requests within three months. If it decides not to act, it will inform Parliament of the detailed reasons and provide an analysis of possible alternatives and respond to issues raised as part of *European added value* and *cost of non-Europe* analyses.

This commitment was further reinforced by the Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, who, in her inaugural address in July 2019, committed to respond with a legislative act to Parliament requests under Article 225 TFEU, taking into account the principles of proportionality, subsidiarity and better law-making.

The European Parliament, through its Conference of Committee Chairs, closely monitors the Commission's follow-up on legislative requests adopted by plenary. During the current 2019-2024 legislative term, the Commission improved its follow-up to legislative initiatives, replying in many cases with legislative proposals at least partially covering Parliament's request⁸⁰. These proposals include important pieces of legislation such as the Artificial Intelligence Act, the

⁷⁹ Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making of 13 April 2016, par.7.

⁸⁰ As of January 2024, Parliament has adopted 24 legislative initiatives, the Commission replied with a legislative proposal in 15 cases and assured to follow-up in the remaining cases.

Digital Services Act, the Directive on corporate due diligence and the Directive on combating gender-based violence. However, even in cases where the Commission responds with a legislative initiative following a request by Parliament, it does not mean that it will follow the substance of the Parliament proposal. The Commission keeps a wide margin of appreciation and full ownership of its legislative proposal.

Therefore, there are good reasons for Parliament to continue its constitutional fight for a real right of initiative. In the framework of the follow-up on the Conference on the Future of Europe, Parliament has vigorously called for the Treaties to be revised so that, as the only directly elected EU institution, Parliament is granted a general and direct right of initiative⁸¹.

Meanwhile, it is important that, in view of the next legislative term, Parliament further consolidates its right of initiative in its interinstitutional agreements, while further boosting its own capacity and resources.

In recent years, Parliament has reinforced its legislative capacity by introducing concepts such as the '*cost of non-Europe*' and '*European Added Value*' in the legislative cycle, which have been also included as instruments of Better Law-Making⁸², and dedicated services have been created in Parliament's Administration, at the initiative of Klaus Welle.

In addition, the multiple and overlapping crises that the EU has had to face in recent years, the *reconfiguration of globalisation and the rise of geopolitics* have posed unprecedented challenges for policymakers and highlighted the importance of a forward-looking approach in the EU institutions when shaping policies. Against this background, **foresight analysis** has become part of the legislative cycle and strategic foresight is included in the portfolio of the Commission's Executive Vice-President for interinstitutional relations, Maroš Šefčovič.

Parliament has also actively engaged in the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS), the interinstitutional EU network promoting foresight and anticipatory governance to support policymakers in a world that has become more fragmented and complex.

⁸¹ Parliament resolution of 22 November 2023, Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0427; Parliament resolution of 9 June 2022, Texts adopted, P9_TA(2022)0242.

⁸² See recital 5 and par.10 of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making of 13 April 2016.

Finally, Parliament's right of initiative can be usefully supported through a strategic use of pilot projects and preparatory actions (PPAs), creating a link between budgetary powers and legislative initiatives.

2. Consultation

A legislative procedure, from the formal proposal until its adoption, can last around 20 months, with the exception of urgent procedures. It is preceded by a long phase of public and stakeholder consultations conducted by the Commission's services. It is important that Parliament be fully informed of this process of pre-legislative consultation as provided for by the IIA on BLM⁸³.

Once the Commission has presented a proposal, it is up to the legislators to proceed with the public consultations it deems appropriate. As far as Parliament is concerned, these consultations cover a large spectrum: institutional consultation of national parliaments, cooperation with the advisory Committees – Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions – but also **public hearings** organised by parliamentary committees and the '**stakeholders dialogue**' held in Member States. The latter is an original initiative involving Parliament's rapporteurs and liaison offices, aimed at reaching out to stakeholders at national, regional and local level, outside the Brussels bubble.

Petitions submitted by citizens to Parliament can also have a very useful impact on Parliament's legislative and scrutiny work. A *petitions network* has been created in order to regularly inform the different parliamentary committees on topics and themes raised by citizens that might result in a legislative initiative or that address problems in the implementation of EU legislation.

Ex ante impact assessment (IA) is a key tool for adopting well-informed, evidence-based, accountable and transparent legislation and should map out the economic, environmental and social impacts in an integrated and balanced way. The prime responsibility for carrying out the impact analysis lies with the Commission, while Parliament and the Council can, if necessary, carry out impact assessments in relation to their substantial amendments to the Commission's proposal.

The IIA on BLM⁸⁴ sets out that all legislative and non-legislative initiatives should be accompanied by an IA, notably those included in the Commission's

⁸³ See par.9 of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making.

⁸⁴ Par.12 Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making.

work programme and the JD. However, this commitment has not always been respected, and not only as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. On several occasions, Parliament has carried out its own impact assessment in the absence of one by the Commission. Parliament has set up a dedicated Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value to analyse the quality of impact assessments produced by the Commission – in the form of initial appraisals of these documents as well as substitute or complementary IAs, or IAs on parliamentary amendments. The European Added Value Unit analyses the potential benefit of future action by the EU in policy areas where greater efficiency or a shared gain could be achieved through common action at EU level.

Parliament has also requested that the Commission strengthen the independence and transparency of its *Regulatory Scrutiny Board*, the body that performs quality controls on IAs within the Commission, and make IAs more inclusive of the climate neutrality objectives, the territorial and rural impact and human rights⁸⁵.

3. Legislation

3.1 Current trends in legislation

The 9th legislative term has been marked by unprecedented challenges for the EU – the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, Russia’s war against Ukraine with its geopolitical implications, and the energy crisis – which have affected both EU policymaking activities and the internal functioning of Parliament.

On the one hand, Parliament reacted with great flexibility and efficiency to the COVID-19 emergency by finding innovative technical solutions and adapting its internal procedures, which allowed it to continue assuming its role as legislator throughout the crisis through both remote and hybrid approaches.

On the other hand, the crisis mode has had some effects on Parliament’s institutional prerogatives, which need to be addressed.

In particular, the Commission’s recurrent use of Article 122 TFEU, as an ‘emergency legal base’ in cases such as SURE, Next Generation EU, joint vaccine pro-

⁸⁵ Parliament resolutions of 7 July 2022 on Better regulation, Texts adopted, P9_TA(2022)0301 and of 23 November 2023 on Better Law-Making, Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0442.

curements or joint gas purchases, has de facto excluded Parliament or at least prevented it from fully playing its role as legislator.

In addition, some of these instruments are financed outside the EU budget,

increasing the complexity of the *budget galaxy* and raising questions in terms of legitimacy and accountability⁸⁶.

As already stated by Parliament, emergency procedures should be limited in the future to exceptional cases and subject to strict conditions, also taking into account that, throughout the COVID-19 crisis, Parliament demonstrated its ability to adopt urgent measures in a very short period in line with the ordinary legislative procedure.

In recent years, the trend of concluding the legislative procedure at first reading has been further consolidated and all files are now concluded in the *first reading* or in what is called the *early second reading*⁸⁷. Therefore, all the possibilities offered by the ordinary legislative procedure are not being used and the role of **trilogues** is being reinforced, the informal tripartite meetings between the representatives of Parliament, the Council and the Commission, raising some questions in terms of transparency and representation.

The increasing complexity and cross-cutting nature of the Commission's proposals, presented more often in the form of legislative packages, has raised some questions as to the adequacy of the current vertical structure of Parliament Committees and the modalities of cooperation between the parliamentary committees to efficiently deal with these proposals. The current reform launched by Parliament President Roberta Metsola notably aims to streamline the modalities of cooperation between parliamentary committees.

3.2 Delegated and implementing acts

The choice between delegated and implementing acts continues to be a challenging issue for Parliament's negotiators and a rather 'toxic' interinstitutional

⁸⁶ See Study: The next revision of the financial regulation and the EU Budget Galaxy: Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, PE 721.500 - March 2022.

⁸⁷ It occurs when interinstitutional negotiations start after Parliament has adopted its first reading in plenary and ahead of the Council first reading, which will include the agreement reached with Parliament negotiators that Parliament will adopt without any amendment in second reading (Rule 72 of Parliament's Internal Rules of Procedure).

question. In the 9th legislative term, it has represented a source of contention in the negotiations of major legislative files, notably on legislative acts related to the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027.

The two types of acts differ in their scope and procedure.

Delegated acts can amend or supplement the basic legislative act and Parliament – like the Council – has the power to revoke the delegation or to object to it. *Implementing acts* represent implementing measures, specifying the basic act in further detail without affecting its substance. They are subject to approval by Member State representatives in comitology committees and Parliament has no formal role in scrutinising them.

Even after the adoption of a common understanding annexed to the IIA on BLM, the 2019 delineation criteria⁸⁸ and some Court of Justice rulings⁸⁹, there are still diverging interpretations between Parliament and the Council, as the latter has shown reluctance to accept the use of delegated acts for measures that meet the Treaty requirements, according to Parliament.

Concerns have been expressed in Parliament about the fact that in order to reach an agreement on other substantial points of a legislative proposal, Parliament's rapporteurs might be tempted to compromise on this sensitive point and give up by accepting implementing acts even when the conditions are not met.

4. Scrutiny

An efficient scrutiny capacity is essential for Parliament to exercise its legislative, budgetary and elective responsibilities and its democratic control.

Scrutiny-related activities of committees have been increasingly developed and strengthened in order to allow Parliament to exercise oversight over the executive, to ensure the correct and timely implementation of EU law and to monitor the proper use of the EU budget. This also includes scrutiny of the negotiations, conclusion and implementation of international agreements, which have wide-ranging impacts on Union policies and the single market, as recently illustrated by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement concluded with the United Kingdom.

⁸⁸ Non-Binding Criteria for the application of Articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, 18 June 2019, OJ C 223, 3.7.2019, p. 1.

⁸⁹ Case C-427/12, the Biocides case, and more recently Case C-695/20, Fenix International.

Parliament's administration has invested heavily in supporting MEPs in their scrutiny activities. A '**scrutiny toolbox**' of procedures and practices was set up in order to systematise the culture of scrutiny in committees. These parliamentary tools include *implementation reports* to strengthen the control on the transposition of EU directives and the implementation of EU legislation, the appointment of *standing rapporteurs* for important topics, *ex post impact assessments*, *public hearings* in parliamentary committees and *question time* in committees and in plenary.

Parliament's right of inquiry represents a very important tool of democratic control. The experience of recent Inquiry Committees has shown that Parliament's investigative powers should be made more effective. The negotiations on the regulation on the exercise of the right of inquiry, laid down in Article 226 TFEU, should be revived to this end.

Through its Committee on Budgets and its sectoral committees, Parliament also exercises scrutiny of the implementation of the MFF, which sets the limits for the budget allocations of the EU for a seven-year period, establishing maximum amounts for the major fields of expenditure.

By means of its Committee on Budgetary Control, Parliament exercises oversight over the implementation of the EU budget by EU institutions and bodies. This committee checks whether the Union's funds are being used in accordance with the rules in force and may grant, defer or refuse the **discharge**, which is necessary in order to formally close the accounts based on a report from the European Court of Auditors.

Cooperation with the Court of Auditors has been intensified in recent years and synergies have been created with Parliament's oversight activities, as the Court of Auditors conducts interesting performance audits. This goes beyond pure budgetary aspects, but involves different policy areas or systemic aspects of the institution's work, as was the case with the '*Special Audit on Impact assessment in the EU Institutions*' and the '*Landscape review on the Commission's duty to monitor the implementation of EU legislation*'.

Parliament has also increased its powers of oversight in the area of **economic governance**, where a dedicated unit⁹⁰ provides expertise in the areas of Economic and Monetary Union governance, monetary policy and banking union, supporting MEPs and the relevant committees in their scrutiny activities. By exercising its control function, Parliament plays a key role in overseeing the

⁹⁰ The Economic Governance and EMU Scrutiny Unit (EGOV), the Directorate General for Internal Policies.

implementation of the EUR 750 billion **Recovery and Resilience Facility**, the central element of **Next Generation EU**, from the evaluation of the national plans to the assessment of payment requests by Member States.

5. Future perspectives

Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, Parliament has decisively reached a new level of maturity as a legislator and political player.

Now, in view of the next legislative term, a further leap forward must be made in terms of interinstitutional balance.

In a time of increasing insecurity and global fragmentation, reinforced executive capacity, responsiveness and anticipatory policymaking will be instrumental for the EU to be in a position to respond to current challenges and future crises. However, increased EU responsibilities should go together with increased democratic legitimacy, therefore with an enhanced role for Parliament throughout the whole legislative cycle, including a real right of initiative and a bolstered oversight capacity.

Creating the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS)

Anthony TEASDALE

Anthony Teasdale is Visiting Professor in Practice at the London School of Economics (LSE) and Adjunct Professor at Columbia University in New York. He served as Director General of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) from 2013 to 2022. Previous roles have included working as political adviser to two Presidents of the European Parliament (Hans-Gert Poettering and Jerzy Buzek), as head of policy strategy and legislative planning for the EPP Group in the European Parliament, and as Special Adviser in Whitehall to a British Foreign Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister (Geoffrey Howe) and Chancellor of the Exchequer (Kenneth Clarke). He is co-author of 'The Penguin Companion to European Union' (2012) and 'Europe: The History of a Continent' (2023).

When Klaus Welle was appointed its Secretary General of the European Parliament in 2019, he came to this key position already boasting a long track-record of influencing and shaping the politics and power of the European Union's only directly-elected institution. His established impact on the Parliament's evolution - propelling it on a trajectory of growing prominence and influence within the EU system - was apparent in multiple ways. As well as greatly enhancing the status and significance of transnational European political parties, he had played a major role in the development of political groups in the Parliament, in the resourcing and empowerment of parliamentary committees, and in the growing visibility and profile of the position of President of the institution itself. Since his arrival in Brussels 15 years earlier, he had consistently left a strong, distinctive and positive imprint and legacy in each of his successive jobs - as Secretary General of the EPP transnational party, as Secretary General of the EPP political group, as Director General for Internal Policies (DG IPOL) in the Parliament's administration, and as *chef de cabinet* (chief of staff) to the President of the European Parliament.

Throughout these years, several important and recurrent themes were evident in Klaus's thinking. One was the proposition the European-level political activity should not simply be seen as the preserve of national or EU officials and technocrats, but also become a real political space in its own right - a space that

recognised and accepted party and ideological competition and differences, with the European Parliament serving as a key platform and player in that process. A second proposition was that public resources assigned to the EU institutions should be used more actively to empower parliamentarians, both individually and collectively, so that they could maximise their political impact in representing citizens. A third was that the European Parliament should become a full and equal partner to the other EU institutions in the policy-making process, and that it should be seen and treated as such by the other players. This role would extend not only to the Parliament's right to propose amendments to draft legislation, cemented decisively in the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties, but also to its oft-neglected function of overseeing the executive. The latter scrutiny should apply throughout the entire EU policy cycle, from the inception of legislation to its implementation and enforcement. To maximise the chance that the EU system would evolve in these directions, he believed that the Parliament needed to take itself more seriously, notably by devoting more of its own resources to both policy analysis and policy substance, as a precursor to the more systematic and confident exercise of power.

Victor Hugo once said that 'every revolution is first an idea in one man's mind'. The creation of a serious research service for the European Parliament was first an idea in Klaus Welle's mind. He understood, perhaps earlier than any other person in Europe, that a self-respecting parliament - especially one that was not under the effective control of an executive, which is a rare phenomenon in the western democracies - needed to have a free-standing, fully-functioning capacity for generating policy analysis and content that was separate to the executive. The principle of 'separation of powers' should extend to a separate ability to think about, and define distinctive positions on, public policy issues. In the EU context, that meant that the European Parliament needed to be free of intellectual dependence on the European Commission, the Council secretariat and/or member-state governments, if it was to have a proper understanding of the implications of the policy positions and initiatives which it might wish to adopt. In short, Members of the European Parliament, both individually and collectively, needed to be able to act on the basis of their own independent analysis, in order to maximise their political credibility and effect.

Already in his work as secretary-general of the largest political group in the European Parliament, the EPP Group, from 1999 to 2003, Klaus had advocated, and succeeded in securing, a strengthening of the analytical resources available to each of the political groups. This had been done both by boosting their staff numbers overall and by shifting the balance among their staff towards policy advice. Then, as Director General for Internal Policies (IPOL) in the Parliament's

administration, from 2004 to 2007 - a role that covered all the institution's major legislative policy committees - he had worked to increase the size and specialism of committee staff and to support them through the back-up role of new 'policy departments' (established under his predecessor as Secretary-General of the Parliament, Julian Priestley). As chief of staff to the President of the Parliament, Hans-Gert Poettering, from 2007 to 2009, he had worked on the creation of a new directorate within his old DG (IPOL), that would engage in ex-ante impact assessment work for committees on Commission legislative proposals (and some amendments thereto) and in the evaluation of the potential added value of new European policy initiatives, whether they were being considered by those committees or sought more widely.

Now, as Secretary General of the Parliament from 2009 onwards, Klaus was able to build on this work by moving to the logical next step - the creation of a more comprehensive parliamentary research service of the kind to be found in many other democratic legislatures. The initial design was very simple - and it one that still applies today, over a decade later. Indeed, I myself remember, during an official dinner in Strasbourg sometime in 2012, see Klaus write ten words on the back of a menu card: 'New EP research service?' at the top, with three lines fanning out below, pointing to 'Research for Members', 'Library', and 'Impact Assessment'. These ten words represented in embryonic form the structure which the new European Parliamentary Research Service (DG EPRS) was to take when it was established the following year.

Launched in November 2013, the new directorate-general brought together two previously separate entities - the Directorate for the Library (which had existed in some form since 1952 and was then located in DG Presidency) and the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value (created in autumn 2011 and then located in DG IPOL - and of which I served as director in 2012-13) - and it added on to them an entirely new directorate, called the Members' Research Service, of a kind which the European Parliament previously lacked on any scale. The latter was intended to offer tailored briefing and personalised research to individual MEPs, as well as to produce a very wide and ambitious range of (synoptic and more detailed) analytical material for Members as a whole. Operationally, the MRS was built up both through the reallocation of some existing staff - mainly transferred from the Library, which was already rapidly digitising - and the recruitment of additional staff in a budgetarily neutral way for the institution as a whole. These three administrative components - supported in due course by a cross-cutting directorate for resources - were to form a single service, totaling about 300 staff, designed to offer the kind of

full-scale research capability to be found, in whole or in part, in many other parliamentary democracies.

In order to define and refine the precise products and services which EPRS would provide to the parliamentary community, a detailed analysis was undertaken of what other such services were offering around the world. A very close look was taken, in particular, at how the larger research services and libraries - namely, those of the German Bundestag, French National Assembly, British House of Commons, and Italian Senate and Chamber of Deputies, as well as the largest such body of all, the 700-strong Congressional Research Service (CRS) of the US Library of Congress - all operated in practice, what they were offering to their members and committees, what innovations they were introducing to meet changing needs, and what lessons could be learned from each of their experiences.

On the back of this analysis, early decisions were taken to ensure that the new EPRS operated in accordance with the following principles: to be independent, objective and authoritative in the work it undertook; to provide a genuinely comprehensive service - that is cover to all EU law, policy and issues - backed by specialism as far as possible in all policy fields; to be client-oriented and responsive directly to the needs of members; to offer a single point-of-entry for members to its services and a rapid response to requests; to ensure a clear, simple branding of all its products and services; and to complement classic written material with greater 'in person' briefing of Members, as well as a variety of new online products.

More specifically, among the conclusions that were drawn from the comparative analysis of the experience of other parliamentary research services and libraries were, *inter alia*, the need to invest in policy specialism (to ensure credibility), to encourage staff mobility (to avoid 'issue ownership'), to have clear labelling of administrative divisions, such as the 'economic policies unit' or 'publications management and editorial unit' (to encourage clarity and avoid overlaps), to 'think digitally' in terms of generating and distributing content, and to make the service's output as visually engaging as possible, with inventive use of infographics, both to engage the parliamentary community and, beyond that, to embrace an interested public more widely.

The EPRS geared up to meet these and other challenges very quickly. In pursuit of its stated aim of 'empowering through knowledge', it rapidly established a pattern whereby its Members' Research Service was responding to about 3,000 confidential requests for personalised briefing or research from individual MEPs

each year, in addition to the some 10,000 reference requests being routinely answered by the Library. The various EPRS directorates - especially the Members' Research Service (and to a lesser extent) the Impact Assessment directorate - generated nearly 1,000 publications, with an average length of seven pages, each year. Ex-ante or ex-post evaluation work was soon being undertaken for all 20 parliamentary committees.

During the first half (or 30 months) of the 2019-24 parliamentary term, some 87 per cent of MEPs specifically used the Members' Research Service and 99 per cent used EPRS products and services in some form. EPRS material received around half a million page-views on the EP intranet, that is within the 8,000-strong parliamentary community, who also accessed over 125,000 e-books from the increasingly digital Library. The Parliament's 'Think Tank' website, featuring all EPRS publications, registered 2.3 million page-views, whilst the EPRS blog alone received 1.6 million page-views. Over 60 per cent of MEPs interacted with the EPRS on social media. Around 170,000 citizens' enquiries were handled by a dedicated team, meeting the Maastricht Treaty obligation for the Parliament to respond to public requests for information on its activities. Nearly 14,000 people attend the over one hundred events which the EPRS organised, first physically, then online (because of the coronavirus pandemic), and since then mostly in a hybrid format.

Unused opportunities under the treaties

Dynamic treaty interpretation and EU complementary executive capacity

Etienne BASSOT

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Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the European Parliament.

Introduction

Mr Klaus Welle was not only the *spiritus movens* behind the establishment of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) but also kept inspiring us by intellectually stimulating requests for research and publications, urging us to think out of the box on key issues at the interstice of European law and politics.

A recurring topic was the question of exploring the options, available to the EU institutions, of taking stock of unused and underused opportunities under the currently existing treaty framework (i.e. à *traité constant*), an issue of unquestionable importance given the rather cumbersome character of the treaty reform procedure.⁹¹ The research undertaken within the EPRS to address these issues yielded *inter alia* a study on *Unlocking the potential of the EU Treaties*, which was published in two editions (in 2019 and 2020) and in three language versions,⁹² as well as a shorter conceptual briefing on *Complementary executive capacity*, published in the series of EPRS Ideas Papers in 2021.⁹³ In this short contribution we would like to reflect on some of the ideas developed in these publications and put them in the context of more recent developments.

The paper is structured as follows: we first look into the *conceptual premises* underlying the exploration of the unused opportunities awaiting to be untapped within the current treaty framework, before moving on to recalling some of the *concrete proposals* formulated in the EPRS publications exploring the possibilities of unlocking the existing treaty potential, and concluding with looking at the *evolving practice* of the EU institutions which, faced with crises and unprecedented challenges, have, on numerous occasions, shown their capacity of looking beyond the dry letter of the treaties and exploring the possibilities of action within a dynamically conceived juridical framework.

The premises: dynamic interpretation of the treaty framework

The quest for exploring the untapped potential of the existing treaty framework, quite apart from on-going debates on possible treaty reform, is essentially based on two premises. Firstly, that the drafters of the EU treaties intended the legal infrastructure of the Union's primary law to be a *traité-cadre*, that is an openly textured 'framework treaty,' which is purposefully designed to be filled with normative content in the course of its interpretation and application.⁹⁴ Whereas the current treaties are much more complex and textually developed in comparison to the original EEC Treaty, it remains a fact that their wording is

⁹¹ See e.g. S. Kotanidis, *How the EU Treaties are modified* (EPRS, 2022).

⁹² É. Bassot (ed.), *Unlocking the potential of the EU Treaties: An article-by-article analysis of the scope for action*, 2nd ed. (EPRS, 2019).

⁹³ H. Mildebrath, R. Mańko, *Complementary executive capacity* (EPRS, 2021).

⁹⁴ The description *traité-cadre* has been applied to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, see e.g. K. Lenaerts, P. Van Nuffel, T. Corthaut, *EU Constitutional Law* (OUP, 2021), 11.

geared towards the *goals* to be attained by the Union, and the specific means are a matter to be developed in the course of working towards those goals. This approach is evidenced by the persistence of the flexibility clause of Article 352(1) TFEU, which mirrors its original model of Article 235 of the Treaty of Rome, but extends it to all EU policies, not only the internal market.⁹⁵ The purpose-oriented formulation of the Treaties is conducive to teleological (purpose-oriented) interpretation of the Treaties, practiced since the very outset by the ECJ.⁹⁶

The second premise is that of dynamic interpretation, that is an approach to legal interpretation which focuses on the changing circumstances within which a given legal text is to be given meaning.⁹⁷ Metaphorically, dynamic interpretation is conceptualised by resorting to notions such as 'living instrument'⁹⁸ or 'living constitution'.⁹⁹ As such, dynamic interpretation is conceptually opposed to 'static interpretation', i.e. an approach which focuses either on the literal meaning of the text (textualism) or the original intent of the drafters (originalism), either ascertained empirically on the basis of *travaux préparatoires* or *ex post facto* ascribed on the basis of knowledge about the values and goals they intended to pursue.

These two premises, although analytically distinct, are actually closely intertwined and, in fact, reinforce one another, corroborating a dynamic and purpose-oriented reading of the constitutional framework of the EU, in line with the goals set out by the framers but with an eye on the unexpectedly changing circumstances, both internally and externally. All this in line with the 'ever closer union' maxim, present already in the preamble of the Treaty of Rome and now enshrined in Article 1(2) TEU by the Maastricht Treaty.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ M. Kellerbauer, M. Klamert, 'Article 352 TFEU', in M. Kellerbauer, M. Klamert, J. Tomkin (eds), *The EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights: A Commentary* (OUP, 2019), 2073.

⁹⁶ J. Komárek, 'Legal Reasoning in EU Law' in A. Arnulf, D. Chalmers (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of EU Law* (OUP, 2015), 46.

⁹⁷ F. Bauer, 'Historical Arguments, Dynamic Interpretation, and Objectivity: Reconciling Three Conflicting Concepts in Legal Reasoning' in P.M. Bender (ed.), *The Law between Objectivity and Power* (Nomos, 2022), 118.

⁹⁸ See e.g. ECtHR judgment of 25 April 1978, *Tyrer v UK*, application no. 5856/72, para 31.

⁹⁹ See e.g. J. Balkin, 'Framework Originalism and the Living Constitution' (2009) 103(2) *Northwestern University Law Review* 549.

¹⁰⁰ M. Klamert, 'Article 1 TEU', in *The EU Treaties...*, 9. The maxim is described as 'descriptive rather than normative' (*ibid.*, 10). Cf. ECJ opinion 2/13, 18 December 2014, ECLI:EU:C:2014:2454, para. 167.

The proposals: unlocking treaty potential and complementary executive capacity

In this context, we explored which legal bases within the EU Treaties – as shaped by the Treaty of Lisbon which opened up new fields of action for the Union¹⁰¹ – can be described as ‘unused’ or ‘underused’ and a team of EPRS Members’ Research Service policy analysts, representing all areas of subject-matter specialism, came up with an article-by-article analysis of no less than 50 legal bases within the Treaties which could still be used more broadly.¹⁰² In fact, for analytical purposes, the legal bases were divided into ‘unused’, i.e. those which had not been put to any use so far, and ‘underused’, i.e. those which have been used, but not to the full of their legally permissible potential.¹⁰³ The possible areas of taking fuller stock of the legal framework in place were divided into five categories: (1) development of common rules (both legislative and regulatory); (2) enhanced executive capacity; (3) better implementation (of existing rules and policies); (4) targeted financing; and (5) increased efficiency.¹⁰⁴

A second area of our focus was the notion of ‘complementary executive capacity’. The origins of this concept can be traced back to Article 197(2) TFEU, whereby the Treaty of Lisbon ‘introduced a new legal basis’¹⁰⁵ for the EU to ‘support the efforts of Member States to improve their administrative capacity to implement Union law’. In fact, the deployment of EU’s complementary executive capacity is closely interlinked with the idea of unlocking the treaty potential and can be seen as one of the aspects of the latter.¹⁰⁶ The EPRS Ideas Paper on the topic identified six types of EU administrative action, and possible corresponding forms of complementary executive capacity, including: (1) indirect administration; (2) auxiliary Union administration; (3) cooperative administration; (4) qualified indirect administration; (5) divided administration and (6) direct Union administration.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ We kept in mind that “The post-Lisbon Treaties are not (...) simply another revision of the founding Treaties, since they incorporate most of the output of the European Convention and the legacy of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, although the latter never entered into force” (É. Bassot (ed.), *Unlocking...*, 2). In fact, the Lisbon Treaty, given the breadth of new forms of Union action envisaged, could be described as a “gold mine” of unused or underused legal bases.

¹⁰² É. Bassot (ed.), *Unlocking...*, 15-28.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 9-15.

¹⁰⁵ J.C. Piris, *The Lisbon Treaty* (Cambridge University Press 2010), 85.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. É. Bassot (ed.), *Unlocking...*, 9, 11.

¹⁰⁷ H. Mildebrath, R. Mańko, *op. cit.*, 2-6, esp. 3.

Within those two theoretical frameworks – of unused and underused legal bases, on one hand, and complementary executive capacity, on the other – the EPRS publications put forward numerous blueprints for EU action within the existing legal framework in all policy areas, with particular focus on health policy, climate change and EU values.

The practice: three examples

In this section, we examine three examples of EU institutions actually taking stock of the existing treaty potential in order to address existing needs in light of a dynamic interpretation of the Treaties. We start with the Court of Justice (ECJ) and its role in protecting EU values, before moving to the European Commission deploying novel forms of complementary executive capacity, and end with the Parliament stepping up its democratic scrutiny powers.

Court of Justice as guardian of the rule of law in the Member States

The rule of law is one of the founding values of the EU, mentioned in Article 2 TEU and binding on the Union and its Member States. In recent years, starting especially from the *Portuguese Judges* case of 2018, the ECJ has progressively assumed the role of a ‘guardian’ of the rule of law, acting both on initiative of the Commission (in response to its infringement actions) but also when called upon by national judges seeking its guidance in the preliminary reference procedure. Writing extra-judicially, ECJ President Koen Lenaerts explained his approach to the rule of law in the EU Member States in the following words:

...the rule of law within the EU is not ‘one rule to rule them all’. Each Member State has its own understanding of what respect for the rule of law exactly means, and rightly so. However, in order to fit in with the European integration project, the national understanding of the rule of law is ‘circumscribed’ by the contents of the rule of law at EU level. These contents do not militate in favour of a single, specific constitutional model, but limit themselves to providing a ‘framework of reference’ compliance with which protects the values on which the EU is founded: such a framework favours mutual trust among the Member States, and enables the smooth interlocking of legal orders.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ K. Lenaerts, ‘On checks and balances: the rule of law within the EU’ (2023) 29(2) *Columbia Journal of European Law* 25, 32.

The legal bases used by the ECJ to protect the rule of law in the Member States have included Article 19(1) TEU, first sub-paragraph and Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It was only in 2018 that the Court held that Article 19(1) TEU is 'actionable' in the sense of being the basis for judicial review of how Member States are complying with the principle of the rule of law, enshrined in Article 2 TEU. The development of the Court's case-law laying down common minimum standards of judicial independence in the Member States¹⁰⁹ is, therefore, an example of tapping into the resources of a legal basis (Article 19 TEU) which, until recently, was not used for this purpose.

Complementary executive capacity of the Commission

In response to concrete challenges and crises, the Commission has resorted to its complementary executive capacity on numerous occasions in order to support the Member States in their administrative action on topics of a Union-wide interest. Some of the most well-known and significant examples include the joint purchase of vaccines against the Covid-19 virus,¹¹⁰ in this way breathing a new life – that of the emergent European Health Union – into Article 168 TFEU.¹¹¹ As a permanent aftermath of the Commission's role in purchasing Covid-19 vaccines, a new body – the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) – was established.¹¹² As one researcher commented,

...the EU Vaccines Strategy appears to be the most innovative building block of the rising European Health Union. The EU executive carried out some administrative activities that clash with the traditional vision of EU public health as a market-orientated policy, as the Commission was required to make some

¹⁰⁹ For an overview see the EPRS briefing: R. Maňko, ECJ case law on judicial independence: A chronological overview (EPRS, 2023).

¹¹⁰ See Commission decision of 18.6.2020 approving the agreement with Member States on procuring Covid-19 vaccines on behalf of the Member States and related procedures, C(2020) 4192 final.

¹¹¹ See e.g. A.M. Paces, M. Weimer, "From Diversity to Coordination: A European Approach to COVID-19" (2020), Volume 11 European Journal of Risk Regulation 283; F.S. Della Corte, "The EU Vaccines Strategy: A Missed Opportunity for EU Public Health?" (2023) European Journal of Risk Regulation (online first: 25 January 2023) <https://doi.org/10.1017/err.2022.44>.

¹¹² Commission Decision of 16 September 2021 establishing the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority" COM (2021) 6712 final. Cf. Della Corte, op. cit., 2, 8-12.

*active choices on the purchase and redistribution of scarce resources, affecting directly Member States' healthcare systems.*¹¹³

Another form of the Commission's complementary executive capacity also stems from the Covid-19 pandemic. It is the 'Next Generation EU' (NGEU) financial instrument, which is legally rooted¹¹⁴ chiefly in Article 311 TFEU which provides that the EU 'shall provide itself with the means necessary to attain its objectives and carry through its policies', in the solidarity clause of Article 122 TFEU, and in Article 175 TFEU on the coordination of economic policies of the Member States.¹¹⁵ As Federico Fabbrini commented, 'the adoption of NGEU through Articles 122 and 175 TFEU demonstrates that the EU Treaties are a living instrument, whose interpretation can be adjusted in light of changing circumstances.'¹¹⁶ In fact, according to the same author, 'NGEU rests on solid legal foundations, but projects the EU towards the future, strengthening its federalisation process.'¹¹⁷

Stepping up the scrutiny powers of the Parliament

Democracy is listed among the fundamental values of the Union,¹¹⁸ whose functioning is 'founded on representative democracy'¹¹⁹ which finds its exclusive direct embodiment in the European Parliament,¹²⁰ the only EU institution which enjoys an electoral mandate proceeding, without any intermediators, from the entirety of European citizens. The growing powers of the EU executive, not least those linked to the establishment of NGEU, mentioned above, raise the need of stepping up the democratic scrutiny of implementation of policies.¹²¹ In order to create an appropriate institutional framework – once again, within the existing treaty attributions – the European Parliament has recently undertaken work on reforming its working methods and Rules of Procedure with view to creating

¹¹³ Della Corte, *op. cit.*, 3.

¹¹⁴ The main legal texts are: Council Regulation (EU) 2020/2094 of 14 December 2020 establishing a European Union Recovery Instrument to support the recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis; Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

¹¹⁵ See e.g. F. Fabbrini, 'Next Generation EU: Legal Structure and Constitutional Consequences' (2022) 24 *Cambridge Yearbook of European Legal Studies* 45.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹¹⁸ Article 2 TEU.

¹¹⁹ Article 10(1) TEU.

¹²⁰ Article 10(2) TEU, first sub-paragraph.

¹²¹ Cf. Joint Declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary scrutiny of the new proposals based on Article 122 TFEU with potential appreciable implications for the Union budget. Cf. F. Fabbrini, *op. cit.*, 60.

the necessary procedural ramifications. As part of this exercise, a number of new rules are currently being discussed, aimed *inter alia* at providing for an organisational format of *ad hoc* special scrutiny hearings and the regular scrutiny of policy implementation.

Conclusions

The European Union is a 'community of law', a *Rechtsgemeinschaft* as Walter Hallstein said¹²² and law is the source of its legitimacy and identity.¹²³ In line with the rule of law, the institutions' actions must be based on the law, including legal rules as laid down in the Treaties. However, given that the Treaties themselves have been deliberately drafted in an open-ended and goal-focused manner, their interpretation ought to be dynamic, i.e. adapted to the changing circumstances. In this brief contribution we explored some of the conceptual foundations of seeking how to untap – with a creative and open mindset – the existing potential of the current treaty framework. We examined some of the proposals made in this regard in EPRS publications, as well as pointed to three recent examples illustrating how the unlocking of treaty potential looks in practice.

¹²² W. Hallstein, 'Die EWG – eine Rechtsgemeinschaft' (speech of 12 March 1962) in W. Hallstein, *Europäische Reden*, ed. by T. Oppermann (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1979), 341-348.

¹²³ ECJ 16 February 2022, C-156/21, paragraphs 127 and 232. Cf. K. Lenaerts, *op. cit.*, 26.

La mise en œuvre du traité de Lisbonne et le Parlement européen

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Il est diplômé de l'Institut d'études politiques, a obtenu un DEA (Diplôme d'études approfondies) en droit à l'Université Robert Schuman de Strasbourg et est titulaire, avec la plus haute distinction, d'un master d'Études européennes au Collège d'Europe à Bruges.

Il a rejoint l'administration du Parlement européen en 1992, d'abord en tant qu'administrateur à la Direction générale des commissions et délégations inter-parlementaires, ensuite à la Direction générale de la Présidence. Entre 2002 et 2007, il a été conseiller auprès de différentes instances, du Secrétaire général adjoint, du Directeur général des politiques internes et pour finir du Président du Parlement européen.

C'est en 2007 qu'il est devenu le chef d'unité du Secrétariat du Bureau, de la Conférence des Présidents, et des Questeurs, pour être par la suite nommé chef de cabinet du Secrétaire général, M. Klaus Welle, en 2009.

Il a rejoint le Service juridique en 2012, d'abord en tant que Directeur des affaires législatives. Dans son rôle actuel de Jurisconsulte, il est l'avocat du Parlement européen et joue un rôle prépondérant pour conseiller celui-ci pour toutes les questions juridiques le concernant, ainsi que pour le représenter dans les affaires en justice.

L'échec de la ratification par voie référendaire en France et aux Pays-Bas a sonné le glas du projet de Constitution pour l'Europe et sans doute ôté les illusions de ceux prônant la généralisation de l'outil référendaire pour les futures révisions des traités de l'Union européenne.

Cet événement a ponctué et clos une phase typique pour l'histoire de l'intégration européenne. Cette histoire évolue de manière cyclique et une crise

suit une phase optimiste ; mais ladite crise permet de se recentrer sur l'essentiel et permet à l'idée européenne et à sa construction de progresser.

Il en est de même dans notre cas d'espèce. Le projet de traité constitutionnel après la convocation d'une convention, devait permettre à l'Union de prendre une autre dimension. Le destin lui fut funeste mais le traité de Lisbonne, fruit de beaucoup de réflexions communes, de pragmatisme et de bonne volonté fut consacré par une conférence internationale, est signé le 13 décembre 2007 par les chefs d'État et de gouvernement des 27 États membres de l'Union européenne et, après ratification par les États membres suivant les procédures constitutionnelles nationales et quelques péripéties notamment en Irlande et en République tchèque, entre en vigueur le 1er décembre 2009. Ce traité constitue ainsi à la fois le résultat d'un échec et l'expression d'une refondation de l'Union européenne. Il a permis de surmonter une crise de conscience et de confiance tout en allant de l'avant.

Il s'agit d'un traité d'envergure de quelque 325 pages, 38 protocoles et 65 déclarations. Il modifie amplement les traités constitutifs de l'Union européenne et des Communautés tout en tirant les leçons de l'échec du projet de traité établissant une Constitution pour l'Europe et en préservant les principales avancées.

Par rapport aux traités en vigueur antérieurement, le traité de Lisbonne opère une refondation dans le sens d'une rationalisation considérable et conséquente. En effet, l'Union européenne ne repose plus désormais sur une structure complexe et déséquilibrée en piliers. Elle est devenue « unie », tant du point de vue structurel que formel, sans devenir monolithique puisque des régimes et des moyens de différenciation ont été maintenus, voire amplifiés.

Klaus Welle est devenu le nouveau Secrétaire général du Parlement européen (ci-après, le Parlement) le 16 mars 2009, après avoir suivi les discussions et travaux sur la révision des traités de par ses différentes fonctions : Secrétaire général du plus grand groupe au Parlement, Directeur général de la DG des politiques internes, et Chef de cabinet du Président du Parlement. À son poste de vigie à la tête du Secrétariat général du Parlement, il a pu suivre - et même davantage parfois - la mise en œuvre du traité de Lisbonne en ayant toujours l'intérêt de son institution à l'esprit.

Le propos du présent article n'est pas de faire une présentation académique du traité de Lisbonne et de sa mise en œuvre, ni de se livrer à une hagiographie, mais de donner un aperçu, dans certains domaines clés, de l'importance qu'ont

déjà eu des dispositions nouvellement apportées par le traité de Lisbonne pour le Parlement et du rôle que son secrétaire général a pu y jouer.

I. Les valeurs de l'Union et la réaffirmation du respect des libertés et des droits fondamentaux

Le préambule du nouveau traité sur l'Union européenne fait désormais référence aux « héritages culturels, religieux et humanistes de l'Europe, à partir desquels se sont développées les valeurs universelles que constituent les droits inviolables et inaliénables de la personne humaine, ainsi que la liberté, la démocratie, l'égalité et l'État de droit » alors que l'article 2 de ce même traité énumère les valeurs de l'Union en reprenant celles de l'énoncé du traité constitutionnel.

Le titre III du traité sur l'Union européenne (TUE) énumère les dispositions relatives aux principes démocratiques et rappelle que le fonctionnement de l'Union est fondé sur la démocratie représentative et que le citoyen a le droit de participer à la vie démocratique de l'Union dont les décisions sont prises aussi ouvertement et aussi près que possible des citoyens.

C'est ainsi qu'a été prévu l'instrument de l'initiative citoyenne et l'intégration de la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne qui, à l'entrée en vigueur du traité de Lisbonne, possède la même valeur juridique que les traités constitutifs et prend le rang de droit primaire.

Dans ce contexte, il convient de mentionner aussi l'article 7 TUE relatif au contrôle politique du respect des valeurs. Le traité d'Amsterdam avait prévu un mécanisme de sanction d'un État membre ne respectant pas les valeurs de l'Union mais ce n'est que le traité de Nice qui y a ajouté un mécanisme de prévention.

Cet article donne à l'Union européenne la possibilité de sanctionner un État membre qui ne respecterait pas les valeurs énumérées dans le traité. Elles doivent guider les actions internes et externes de l'Union et de chacun de ses États membres qui s'engagent à les respecter et les promouvoir en adhérant à l'Union européenne (cf. article 49 TUE).

L'article 7 TUE, qui contient donc un mécanisme de prévention et de sanction, décrit la procédure pour activer ce mécanisme qui peut aller jusqu'à la suspension des droits de vote d'un État membre au Conseil même si les obligations incombant à cet État membre au titre des traités restent contraignantes à son égard. Arme atomique pour les uns, disposition morte pour les autres, ce dispositif a suscité de nombreux commentaires mais n'a jusqu'à présent jamais été appliqué du moins dans sa totalité. En effet, il fut utilisé pour la première fois contre la Pologne le 20 décembre 2017, à l'initiative de la Commission. Le 7 mars 2018, le Parlement apportera son soutien à la Commission par le biais d'une résolution.

Le 12 septembre 2018, ce sera le Parlement lui-même qui initiera la procédure en se prononçant, à plus de deux tiers de ses membres, en faveur du déclenchement de ladite procédure contre la Hongrie, estimant que l'indépendance judiciaire était à risque, tout comme la liberté d'expression, la protection des minorités et s'inquiétant entre autres de la corruption ou de la situation des migrants. Ce faisant, le Parlement a fait usage pour la première fois de la possibilité prévue à l'article 7, paragraphe 1, TUE en appelant le Conseil à déterminer l'existence d'un risque clair d'une violation sérieuse par la Hongrie des valeurs sur lesquelles l'Union est fondée.

La Hongrie a contesté le vote et la valeur de cette résolution devant la Cour de justice en déposant un recours en annulation. Les quatre moyens invoqués par la Hongrie visaient à considérer que le Parlement avait violé l'article 354 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne (TFUE) et son règlement intérieur en ne comptabilisant pas les abstentions, que le président du Parlement aurait dû demander une interprétation préalable du Règlement intérieur à la Commission des affaires constitutionnelles en ce qui concerne le comptage des votes, qu'il y aurait eu une violation du principe d'égalité entre les membres et du principe de démocratie directe, et que finalement, il y avait eu une mise en cause de la sécurité juridique.

La Cour, statuant en grande chambre, a rejeté par son arrêt du 3 juin 2021 (C-650/18 Hongrie / Parlement) l'ensemble des moyens invoqués et ce faisant, le recours, et confirmé la légalité de la résolution et de la procédure suivie par le Parlement.

II. La procédure législative ordinaire (PLO)

Les traités antérieurs avaient mis en place bon nombre de dispositions régulant la fonction législative et le processus décisionnel à cet égard. Le projet de traité constitutionnel prévoyait pour sa part une rationalisation des procédures et distinguait la procédure législative ordinaire et les procédures législatives spéciales (PLS), logique conservée par le traité de Lisbonne.

La procédure législative ordinaire est désormais la procédure d'usage pour la majorité des actes législatifs de l'Union. Peu ou prou, elle reprend la procédure dite de codécision instaurée par le traité de Maastricht et simplifiée plus tard par le traité d'Amsterdam. L'élargissement du domaine d'application, la suppression des piliers et l'ajout de nouveaux domaines tels qu'en matière d'espace de liberté, de sécurité et de justice doivent être soulignés. La PLO est en quelque sorte devenue la « procédure de droit commun » même si des PLS perdurent.

Si les phases de la première lecture, la deuxième lecture, la conciliation, la troisième lecture et la signature ont subsisté, force est cependant de constater que l'écrasante majorité des procédures se terminent après la première lecture, ce que certains peuvent considérer comme la preuve d'une procédure efficace fondée sur la négociation et la volonté d'aboutir rapidement. Cependant, d'autres estiment - à juste titre - qu'il n'est pas inconvenant d'utiliser toutes les facettes et moyens de la procédure pour arriver au meilleur résultat possible dans certains cas.

Néanmoins, toutes les procédures doivent se conclure par la signature des présidents des parties prenantes et la publication au Journal officiel de l'Union européenne avant d'entrer en vigueur. Pour ce faire, multilinguisme oblige, et sachant que les versions dans toutes les langues font foi, les actes législatifs adoptés en PLO doivent être peaufinés d'un point de vue linguistique par les juristes linguistes du Parlement et du Conseil.

À cet égard, d'aucuns se souviendront avec un sourire que ce qui fonctionnait bien et sans questionnement avant l'entrée en vigueur du traité de Lisbonne a néanmoins été remis en cause avec fermeté et succès par le nouveau Secrétaire général du Parlement. Pourquoi le Conseil, par l'entremise de son secrétaire général, était-il toujours le dernier à apposer sa signature en bas du tableau de la préparation administrative des différentes versions linguistiques, après le secrétaire général du Parlement européen, et avant les présidents des institutions ? Après un moment de surprise, stupeur et blocage, cette pratique fermement contestée par Klaus Welle, fut abandonnée et l'ordre protocolaire (ré)établi.

III. Le renforcement de la légitimité de la Commission et l'élection de son président

Depuis le traité de Lisbonne, le Parlement européen élit le président de la Commission à la majorité des membres qui le composent, sur proposition du Conseil européen statuant à la majorité qualifiée, en tenant compte des élections au Parlement et après avoir procédé aux consultations appropriées (article 17, paragraphe 7, TUE).

Cette disposition vise à permettre aux représentants des citoyens de l'Union de se prononcer de manière significative sur le choix du président de la Commission, et ce faisant sur ses orientations pour le mandat de celle-ci pour les cinq années à venir.

Malgré plusieurs résolutions (rapport Dehaene du 7 mai 2009, rapport Duff du 4 juillet 2013, rapport Lamassoure du 12 décembre 2013), il n'y a jamais eu (ni en 2014, ni en 2019) un accord ou un *modus operandi* à ce propos avec le Conseil européen, les chefs d'État et de gouvernement ne souhaitant d'évidence pas renoncer à leur pouvoir d'influence et de décision et le Parlement n'ayant pas été en mesure d'imposer ses vues. Il n'en demeure pas moins, indépendamment des divergences d'interprétation quant à l'article 17, paragraphe 7, TUE et de la déclaration n° 11 sur les articles 17, paragraphe 6 et 7, TUE, qu'il y a bien, dans des configurations certes différentes, des désignations de « candidats principaux » (*Spitzenkandidaten* ou *lead candidates*) pour les principales familles politiques (et leurs partis politiques européens) afin de structurer le débat politique et de donner du contenu et une orientation pour la campagne électorale pour les élections européennes.

En 2014, cinq partis politiques européens ont désigné leur candidat pour le poste de président de la Commission : Jean-Claude Juncker pour le PPE, Martin Schulz pour le PSE, Guy Verhofstadt pour l'Alliance des libéraux et démocrates, Franziska (Ska) Keller et José Bové pour le Parti vert européen, et Alexis Tsipras pour la Gauche européenne.

Jean-Claude Juncker fut désigné candidat et élu comme président de la Commission, fort de la majorité réunie sur son nom et du soutien du groupe ayant obtenu le meilleur résultat aux élections européennes de 2014.

En 2019, le processus connut un résultat plus mitigé si l'on considère que le candidat du parti ayant obtenu le plus de sièges, Manfred Weber, n'a pas été

proposé par le Conseil européen qui, par le jeu d'alliances, a intronisé Ursula von der Leyen qui a été élue par le Parlement (avec une courte majorité). Pourtant, le PPE avec Manfred Weber, le PSE avec Frans Timmermans, l'Alliance des conservateurs et réformistes européens avec Jan Zahradil, l'Alliance des libéraux et démocrates pour l'Europe avec une « équipe de leaders libéraux » composée de Nicola Beer, Emma Bonino, Violeta Bulc, Katalin Cseh, Luis Garicano, Guy Verhofstadt et Margrethe Vestager, le parti Vert européen avec Ska Keller et Bas Eickhout, et enfin le parti de la Gauche européenne avec Violeta Tomić et Nico Cué avaient participé à la campagne électorale.

Malgré la réticence susmentionnée, il n'en demeure pas moins que pour les élections de juin 2024¹²⁴, le PPE a nommé Ursula von der Leyen, le PSE Nicolas Schmit, les Libéraux Valérie Hayer, Sandro Gozi et Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, le parti Vert européen Terry Reintke et Bas Eickhout, et le parti de la Gauche européenne Walter Baier.

Ces représentants vont s'évertuer à défendre un programme, des idées et contribuer à « européeniser » des élections qui sont avant tout considérées dans beaucoup d'États membres comme des élections à voir par le bout de la lorgnette de la politique nationale.

L'émergence de l'idée des Spitzenkandidaten et de l'eupéanisation de la campagne afin de mettre de la substance dans l'élection européenne et définir les priorités et initiatives à prendre pour les cinq ans de la législature n'est pas étrangère, loin s'en faut de Klaus Welle, européen convaincu et toujours attaché au débat d'orientation et d'idées pour avoir des élections ayant un sens profond reflétant l'adhésion des citoyens, leurs inquiétudes et leurs espoirs.

IV. Conclusions des accords internationaux

Le traité de Lisbonne, à l'instar du projet de traité constitutionnel, décrit avec un certain détail les étapes marquant la procédure de négociation et de conclusion des accords internationaux dans la partie du TFUE consacrée à l'action extérieure de l'Union.

Au-delà de la question de la compétence exclusive ou partagée ou de la sensibilité que constitue la question même de la conclusion de certains accords et des débats suscités, le Parlement s'est attaché à définir le contenu et les limites de

¹²⁴ À la date du 12 avril 2024.

l'article 218 TFUE, et ce faisant, la procédure à suivre et les frontières de certaines politiques internes ou de la politique étrangère et de sécurité commune (PESC).

Pour ce faire, il s'est notamment tourné vers la Cour de justice pour étoffer la jurisprudence et définir la portée et le contenu de certaines dispositions de l'article 218 TFUE.

À cet égard, on citera deux arrêts de la grande chambre, à savoir l'arrêt C-658/11 Parlement / Conseil du 24 juin 2014 connu sous le nom de l'arrêt Maurice (du nom de l'accord entre l'Union européenne et la République de Maurice relatif aux conditions de transfert de la force navale placée sous la direction de l'Union européenne à la République de Maurice, des personnes suspectées d'actes de piraterie et des biens associés saisis, et aux conditions des personnes suspectées d'actes de piraterie après leur transfert) ; et l'arrêt C-263/14 Parlement / Conseil du 14 juin 2016, dit l'arrêt Tanzanie (du nom de l'accord entre l'Union européenne et la République unie de Tanzanie relatif aux conditions de transfert de la force navale placée sous la direction de l'Union européenne à la République unie de Tanzanie, des personnes soupçonnées d'actes de piraterie et des biens associés saisis).

Le premier arrêt dit « Maurice » portait principalement sur la question de la base juridique appropriée, la délimitation de la politique étrangère et de sécurité commune (cf. l'article 218, paragraphe 6, TFUE), ainsi que le droit du Parlement d'être immédiatement et pleinement informé de toutes les étapes de la procédure (ouverture des négociations, négociations, signature et conclusion), conformément à l'article 218, paragraphe 10, TFUE.

Dans cette affaire, la Cour de justice a été amenée pour la première fois à interpréter ces deux nouvelles dispositions du traité de Lisbonne. Le Conseil avait adopté sa décision sur la signature et la conclusion de l'accord susmentionné le 12 juillet 2011 sur base du seul article 37 TUE sans consulter le Parlement ou demander son approbation. Le Parlement estimait que cet accord ne se rapportait pas exclusivement à la PESC mais aussi au domaine de liberté, de sécurité et de justice, et à celui de la coopération au développement, et que l'article 37 TUE aurait dû être complété par les articles 82 et 87 TFUE (coopération judiciaire en matière pénale) et que l'accord ne pouvait être adopté que conformément à la procédure de l'article 218, paragraphe 6, second alinéa, sous a), v), TFUE qui prévoit l'approbation du Parlement.

En outre, le Parlement reprochait au Conseil de ne pas avoir été immédiatement et pleinement informé à toutes les étapes de la négociation et de la conclusion de l'accord UE-Maurice.

Concernant la base juridique et la procédure qui en découle, la Cour a considéré que la décision du Conseil était fondée sur la bonne base juridique après avoir noté cependant que le libellé de l'article 218 paragraphe 6, et plus précisément la phrase « sauf lorsque l'accord porte exclusivement sur la PESC » ne permet pas, à elle seule, de parvenir à une interprétation univoque.

Mais la Cour a accueilli le moyen du Parlement concernant le droit à l'information, même lorsqu'il s'agit d'accords ayant trait à la PESC. En effet, elle a estimé que, « dans la mesure où le Parlement n'est pas immédiatement et pleinement informé à toutes les étapes de la procédure conformément à l'article 218, paragraphe 10, TFUE, y compris celle précédant la conclusion de l'accord, il n'est pas en mesure d'exercer le droit de regard que les traités lui ont conféré en matière de PESC et, le cas échéant, de faire valoir son point de vue en ce qui concerne, en particulier, la base juridique correcte sur laquelle l'acte en cause doit se fonder. La méconnaissance de cette exigence d'information porte atteinte, dans ces conditions, aux conditions d'exercice par le Parlement de ses fonctions dans le domaine de la PESC et constitue en conséquence une violation d'une forme substantielle » (point 86 de l'arrêt).

En attendant le prononcé de l'arrêt Maurice, le Parlement a porté devant la Cour un accord comparable concernant la Tanzanie, qui sera rendu le 14 juin 2016.

Dans cet arrêt, la Cour parvient à la même conclusion que dans l'affaire Maurice concernant la base juridique retenue mais annule à nouveau la décision du Conseil en raison du non-respect par celui-ci de l'article 218, paragraphe 10, TFUE et de son obligation d'information complète du Parlement.

V. La signature du budget

En matière budgétaire, le traité de Lisbonne a intégré bon nombre d'amendements issus des travaux de la convention et du projet de traité constitutionnel. Ainsi, les amendements repris concernant entre autres la codification du cadre financier pluriannuel (ou CFP, plus connu sous sa terminologie anglaise de *multi-annual financial framework* ou MFF) au sein de l'article 312 TFUE, la simplification de la procédure budgétaire annuelle dans l'article 314 TFUE, l'abolition de la

distinction entre les dépenses obligatoires et celles non obligatoires ou encore une PLS permettant au Conseil, à l'unanimité et après consultation du Parlement, d'adopter une décision fixant les dispositions applicables au système des ressources propres de l'Union, décision qui n'entre en vigueur qu'après approbation par les États membres, conformément à leurs règles constitutionnelles respectives.

La description de ce qu'on peut appeler « la galaxie budgétaire » permet en soi d'alimenter la doctrine. Le propos ici sera plus modestement de se référer à un incident symbolique qui se produit à l'issue de la première procédure budgétaire annuelle suivant l'entrée en vigueur du traité de Lisbonne.

Le Conseil, s'appuyant sur la nouvelle logique des colégislateurs et sur ce que prévoyaient certaines dispositions du projet de traité constitutionnel (mais non reprises dans leur entièreté dans le traité de Lisbonne) souhaitait, à l'instar de la PLO, signer le budget avec le Parlement à l'issue de la procédure.

Mais finalement, seul le président du Parlement signa l'acte constatant que la procédure budgétaire en application de l'article 314 TFUE était achevée et partant, que le budget général pour l'année concernée était définitivement adopté.

Le Conseil introduisit un recours en annulation contre l'acte du président du Parlement constatant l'adoption définitive du budget général de l'Union pour l'année 2011, ce qui conduira la Cour (en grande chambre) à prononcer son arrêt du 17 septembre 2013 dans l'affaire C-77/11.

Au soutien de son recours, le Conseil faisait valoir que la pratique en vigueur sous le traité instituant la Communauté européenne (TCE) selon laquelle seul le président du Parlement constate la fin de la procédure budgétaire n'avait plus lieu d'être avec le traité de Lisbonne et que désormais, les budgets annuels et les budgets rectificatifs devaient être établis par un acte législatif cosigné par les présidents des deux branches de l'autorité budgétaire.

Dans son arrêt, la Cour rappelle que l'article 314, premier alinéa, TFUE prévoit l'adoption du budget selon une PLS.

Le raisonnement du Conseil assimilant la procédure budgétaire à une PLO doit être rejeté dans la mesure où « c'est l'acte fondé sur l'article 314, paragraphe 9, TFUE par lequel le président du Parlement constate, après vérification de la régularité de la procédure, que le budget est définitivement adopté, ce qui constitue

la phase ultime de la procédure d'adoption du budget de l'Union et qui confère force obligatoire à celui-ci » (point 50 de l'arrêt).

La Cour relève encore qu'aucune disposition de l'article 314 TFUE ne prévoit l'adoption, à la fin de la procédure budgétaire, d'un acte cosigné par les présidents du Parlement et du Conseil et que la procédure prévue est une PLS adaptée à la nature du budget.

Pour la petite histoire dans la grande, il faut savoir que le différend sur la formalisation de l'accord sur l'adoption du budget avait fait l'objet de discussion avec la présidence du Conseil et que Klaus Welle, le nouveau Secrétaire général du Parlement, qui était parfaitement au fait de la situation et des enjeux, veillait...

Et c'est ainsi qu'à l'issue du vote du budget en plénière, le président du Parlement signa l'acte, et des témoins dignes de foi virent ensuite le secrétaire général du Parlement reprendre subrepticement le signataire sous les yeux médusés du président du Conseil, assis à côté du président du Parlement, la plume suspendue au-dessus d'un pupitre vide.

VI. Le retrait du Royaume-Uni

Le projet de traité constitutionnel prévoyait la possibilité pour un État membre de se retirer de l'Union européenne. Le traité de Lisbonne a repris ce droit de retrait ou plus précisément, le droit de quitter l'Union par le biais de l'article 50 TUE qui décrit avec précision la procédure.

À la suite du referendum sur le maintien ou la sortie du Royaume-Uni, qui a eu lieu le 23 juin 2016, et pour la première fois dans l'histoire de la construction européenne, un processus de retrait d'un État membre a été mis en œuvre.

Un projet d'accord de retrait a été entériné par les négociateurs le 14 novembre 2018 et adopté par le Conseil européen extraordinaire du 25 novembre 2018. La chambre des communes a rejeté plusieurs fois le projet et le délai pour la sortie a dû être reporté, à la demande du Royaume-Uni, par le Conseil européen. L'accord de retrait a finalement été signé le 24 janvier 2020 pour entrer en vigueur le 1^{er} février 2020. Une période de transition a été aménagée mais le Royaume-Uni est devenu un pays tiers.

Les nouvelles relations entre l'Union européenne et le Royaume-Uni sont établies par un accord de commerce et de coopération conclu le 30 décembre 2020 qui est entré en vigueur le 1^{er} mai 2021.

Il va sans dire que cette période a suscité bon nombre d'incertitudes et de craintes. Pour le Parlement se posait directement la question des élections européennes de 2019.

Le Secrétaire général du Parlement, Klaus Welle, s'appuyant sur une analyse fouillée du Service juridique, s'est donc assuré qu'à la suite des élections, les députés nouvellement élus – en ce compris les députés du Royaume-Uni – soient dûment accueillis et surtout que tout soit entrepris pour que le Parlement fraîchement issu des urnes puisse se constituer et que cette constitution ne puisse en aucun cas être mise en cause. Il en a été de même quand les députés élus au Royaume-Uni ont quitté le Parlement au moment où le Royaume-Uni est devenu un État tiers.

Ces quelques exemples tirés de la mise en œuvre du traité de Lisbonne démontrent une fois de plus qu'être à la tête du secrétariat général du Parlement européen n'est ni une sinécure ni un ensemble de tâches uniquement administratives.

Klaus Welle, de par son engagement et sa vision, en a été le parfait exemple. Pendant toutes ces années, il a mis son énergie sans réserve dans la défense des intérêts de l'institution qui ne peut que durablement s'en féliciter.

Partis politiques et fondations politiques au niveau européen : 20 ans d'évolution

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Depuis 2004 et la première mise en œuvre du règlement 2004/2003, les partis politiques au niveau européen et les fondations politiques qui leur sont affiliées se sont vu reconnaître un statut juridique particulier et le Parlement européen en assure le financement public européen à travers son budget.

Klaus Welle, ancien Secrétaire général du Parlement européen (2009-2022), a été un promoteur inlassable de ce formidable outil démocratique et a veillé au développement des ressources financières allouées aux partis depuis leur création jusqu'à nos jours.

20 ans après l'intégration des partis politiques européens dans l'ordre juridique européen, il convient de s'interroger sur l'évolution, l'efficacité et les perspectives d'avenir de cet outil essentiel pour la démocratie européenne.

1. Les partis politiques européens à l'image des partis politiques nationaux

Dans l'ensemble des États membres, les partis politiques nationaux jouent un rôle central dans le fonctionnement démocratique, notamment par la structuration de l'offre politique et la participation à l'expression du suffrage des électeurs.

Souvent ce rôle est inscrit dans la constitution. Ainsi en France l'article 4 de la Constitution dispose que « *Les partis et groupements politiques **concourent à l'expression du suffrage**. Ils se forment et exercent leur activité librement* ». De façon

semblable la Constitution allemande dispose en son article 21 que « **Les partis concourent à la formation de la volonté politique du peuple.** Leur fondation est libre. Leur organisation interne doit être conforme aux principes démocratiques. »¹²⁵. Dans les deux cas le financement des partis nationaux est en grande partie assuré par des dotations publiques nationales.

C'est sur base de ces modèles que l'article 10(4) du Traité sur l'Union européenne et l'article 12(2) de la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne reconnaissent que « **Les partis politiques au niveau européen contribuent à la formation de la conscience politique européenne et à l'expression de la volonté des citoyens de l'Union.** »

Avec le règlement 2004/2003, remplacé depuis 2018 par le règlement 1141/2014, les partis européens se sont vu reconnaître un **statut particulier** et assurer un **financement public européen** via le budget du Parlement européen jusqu'à 90% de leurs dépenses.

2. Le financement des partis et fondations a connu un fort développement entre 2004 et 2024

Selon de nombreux commentateurs l'Union européenne semble souffrir d'un déficit démocratique qui viendrait en particulier de l'éloignement des décideurs européens avec les citoyens. Pour y remédier les partis politiques européens et les fondations qui leur sont affiliées sont un instrument central pour animer le débat démocratique au niveau européen.

Fort de cette conviction, le Parlement européen, sous l'instigation constante du Secrétaire général Klaus Welle, a veillé à doter les partis politiques européens d'un financement correspondant à l'ampleur de leurs missions et à la hauteur du défi démocratique.

Ce financement a ainsi connu un **développement considérable**. Tandis que le premier financement en 2005 s'élevait à 8,4 millions d'euros et représentait 0,7% du budget du Parlement européen, il est passé en 2014 à 41,2 millions d'euros

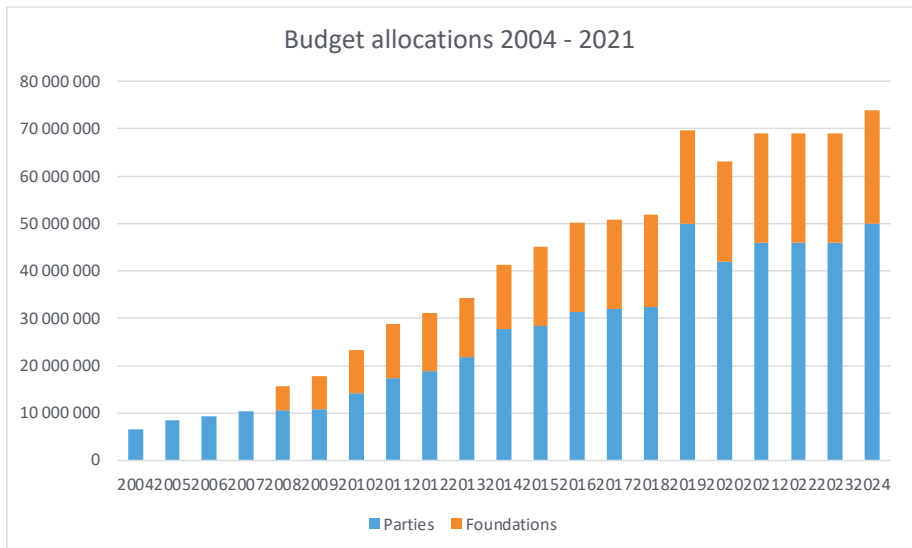
¹²⁵ Traduction libre de l'allemand: « Die Parteien wirken bei der politischen Willensbildung des Volkes mit. Ihre Gründung ist frei. Ihre innere Ordnung muss demokratischen Grundsätzen entsprechen. »

représentant 2,3% du budget du Parlement européen et s'établit finalement en 2024 à 74 millions d'euros soit 3,1% du budget du Parlement européen.

Aussi, tandis que le **budget du Parlement européen a augmenté de 87%** entre 2004 et 2024, sur la même période le **financement des partis politiques et fondations a connu une progression de 781%**.

Le tableau ci-contre retrace cette évolution.

Graphique 1 - Budget allocations 2004-2021



3. Le système de reconnaissance et de financement des partis politiques européens a atteint une forme de maturité, mais demeure encore imparfait

3.1. Le système est désormais solidement établi.

Comme pour toute nouvelle politique de l'Union il est possible d'observer une montée en puissance et une maturation du système de reconnaissance et de financement des partis politiques européens.

Au cours de la première décennie de mise en œuvre du dispositif, le financement a attiré un certain nombre d'acteurs secondaires dont l'objectif principal était la captation du financement, et cela sans projet politique véritable. Des contrôles rigoureux quant à la bonne application des règles, en ce compris des objectifs du financement, ont permis peu à peu de concentrer les financements sur les organisations politiques ayant une réelle envergure et représentativité. Ainsi ne sont actuellement reconnus comme partis, et donc éligibles au financement, que 10 partis et fondations, soit les représentants des grandes familles politiques au sein du Parlement européen, alors que précédemment jusqu'à 15 organismes avaient eu accès au financement.

D'autre part la reconnaissance du statut de parti politique européen et l'évaluation de certains critères comme le respect des valeurs de l'Union a été confié en 2018 par le règlement 1141 à un acteur indépendant, à savoir l'Autorité pour les partis politiques européens et les fondations politiques européennes, et non plus au Parlement européen directement, augmentant ainsi les garanties démocratiques du dispositif.

3.2. Mais il subsiste des imperfections qui nuisent à l'efficacité.

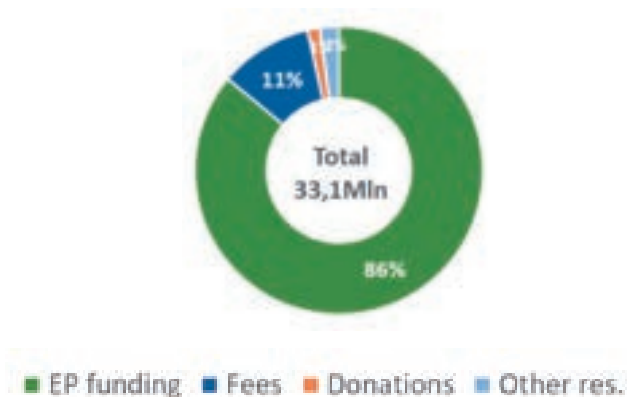
Concernant d'abord les revenus, on observe une dépendance excessive au financement par le budget de l'Union (entre 85 % et 90% pour les partis, et 95% pour les fondations) et une très faible collecte de ressources propres. Ceci entraîne un risque d'insolvabilité des partis et des fondations dès lors que des

dépenses sont jugées « non éligibles » ou après chaque élection européenne si les résultats obtenus conduisent à un financement moindre à cause d'une diminution du nombre de députés européens membres du parti concerné.

Comparativement aux partis européens, les partis au niveau national allemand, par exemple, sont beaucoup moins dépendants des ressources publiques puisqu'en moyenne tous partis confondus, seulement 37% de leurs ressources ne proviennent de financement publics tandis que les membres et les élus du parti assurent 42% du financement.

Le tableau ci-dessous présente les sources de revenus des partis politiques européens.

Graphique 2 - Sources de revenus des partis politiques européens



Concernant ensuite les **dépenses**, force est de constater que les **partis européens engagent trop de dépenses structurelles et pas assez de dépenses opérationnelles**. Ainsi les postes de frais de personnel, d'infrastructure et de dépenses administratives représentent 72% des dépenses, tandis que 23% sont consacrés à des activités de réunion et seulement 5% à des activités d'information et de publications. Il n'est pas évident que les activités générant une telle structure de dépenses concourent efficacement à la réalisation de l'objectif principal du financement européen, à savoir la formation de la conscience politique européenne et à l'expression de la volonté des citoyens de l'Union.

Une comparaison avec les partis politiques allemands montre une grande différence, ces derniers consacrant 41% de leurs dépenses aux campagnes électorales et à l'activité politique et seulement 55% aux frais de structure.

Le tableau ci-dessous retrace cette distribution de dépenses des partis politiques européens.

Graphique 3 - Distribution de dépenses des partis politiques européens



Enfin **l'empilement de règles européennes et nationales engendre une certaine inefficacité du système ainsi que des risques juridiques importants**. Ceci est particulièrement vrai concernant les élections européennes, le règlement 1141 enjoignant les partis européens à s'engager dans les campagnes pour les élections tout en interdisant de faire campagne pour un candidat ou un parti national donné.

Les scrutins des élections européennes sont en effet nationaux et les candidats présentés par des partis nationaux, le tout étant encadré par des dispositifs réglementaires nationaux stricts. Il est donc extrêmement difficile de respecter à la fois l'objectif de mener une campagne européenne, tout en restant distant des candidats à l'élection et des partis nationaux qui animent les scrutins nationaux. Il existe même un risque juridique important que certaines actions soient contraires à des lois nationales strictes, qui combattent l'ingérence extérieure ou encadrent les dépenses de campagne pour les partis et les candidats avec des conséquences parfois pénales en cas de dépassement des dépenses autorisées.

Conclusion

20 ans après la création d'un statut et d'un financement public européen des partis politiques européens, un système stable et connaissant une relative maturité est maintenant disponible pour animer la démocratie européenne. Tandis qu'une révision du règlement 1141 vient d'échouer en 2023 il conviendrait que dans les années à venir le législateur européen accroisse l'efficacité du système pour davantage de succès encore dans la poursuite de la formation de la conscience politique européenne. Une clarification du rôle dans les campagnes européennes en synergie avec les partis nationaux et les candidats ainsi qu'une simplification administrative du dispositif de financement sont des pistes de réforme à privilégier.

Klaus Welle and the Lead Candidate/ Spitzenkandidaten process

Martin WESTLAKE

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The history books will undoubtedly show that Klaus Welle was among the most influential and persuasive early proponents of a concept that is bound to win through in the end. His unique combination of experience and expertise – local and regional politics, national politics, European elections, European political party, European Parliament political group, European Parliament administration, European Parliament Secretary General – gave him practical as well as theoretical insights into how the lead candidate procedure could be made to work, and his serendipitous occupation of the position of European Parliament Secretary General, just as the Lisbon Treaty was finally implemented in 2009, gave him the resources and the platform to put his insights into action, particularly with regard to the 2014 European Parliament elections. Last but not least, his high strategic thinking, allied with his cogent reasoning, shrewd political analyses and persuasive argumentation enabled him to win broad interest in and support for the *Spitzenkandidaten* process at a crucial moment in its early development.

That there should be some sort of linkage between elections to the European Parliament and the appointment of the European Commission and its President had been implicit ever since the Maastricht Treaty extended the European Commission's mandate from four to five years, synchronised it with Parliament's electoral cycle, and installed a parliamentary vote of approval¹²⁶. As the European Commission's old paternalistic and technocratic legitimacy was gradually eroded, so the need for an alternative form of legitimacy grew. Other trends were also at work: the steady presidentialisation of the Commission, for example (primarily a pragmatic response to waves of enlargement), and the increasing emphasis on planning and programming. Treaty changes consolidated these trends, while the European Parliament was, as always, skilful at exploiting its rule-making autonomy to tie the Commission into a closer embrace, the latter trading accountability and responsiveness for reflected parliamentary legitimacy.

Against that backdrop, the lead candidate idea was pioneered and subsequently championed by the European People's Party. At the October 2002 EPP Congress meeting in Estoril, preceding the work of the 2002-2003 European Convention on the Future of Europe, EPP leaders together drafted a 'Constitution for a strong Europe'. This contained the following article;

'A candidate for the President of the European Commission should be proposed to the European Parliament by the European Council in light of the outcome of European elections and by qualified vote. The European Parliament should give or withhold its approval by majority vote. This would give European political parties the opportunity to present their own candidates in the framework of the campaign for European elections. It would ensure a more personalised election campaign and increase democratic control and support of the European Commission.'

This provision would, in due course, via the 2003 Draft Treaty Establishing a European Union, the 2004 Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, the 2007 Intergovernmental Conference and the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, become TEU Article 17(7). Although the lead candidate idea itself was not mentioned in any formal

¹²⁶ Martin Westlake, 2016, 'Chronicle of an Election Foretold: The Longer-Term Trends leading to the 'Spitzenkandidaten' procedure and the election of Jean-Claude Juncker as European Commission President, LSE 'Europe in Question' Discussion Paper Series, N° 102, January.

text,¹²⁷ it continued to be championed by the EPP, not least in the 2004 European elections, and the subsequent appointment of José Manuel Durao Barroso as European Commission President, which the EPP presented as anticipating the Constitution's provisions, and again in 2009 when, following the EPP's renewed strong electoral showing, Barroso was reappointed for a further five years.

Klaus Welle's influence in all of this was already substantial. As EPP Secretary General (1994-1999) and EPP-ED Group Secretary General (1999-2003), he did much to advance the concept and status of the trans-European political parties that were necessary to champion their lead candidates and run pan-European campaigns (and he would later do much more as European Parliament Secretary General). And, of course, Welle was a prime architect of the extension of the EPP's membership to new parties in Central and Eastern Europe, leading to the subsequent electoral dominance which had enabled the EPP to claim the Commission Presidency twice already with Barroso. There was, however, a sense that to describe the 2004 and 2009 elections as *Spitzenkandidaten* campaigns was somehow not entirely authentic. What was missing was competition among candidates.

The 2009 Lisbon Treaty changed all that. A number of innovations introduced by the Treaty enabled proponents of the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure (Klaus Welle discreetly prime among them) to transform the concept into a truly competitive process. The EPP language of 2002 had at last returned. Now, in proposing a candidate for the Commission Presidency, the European Council had to take 'into account' the elections to the European Parliament. It had to hold 'appropriate consultations' before making its proposal, and the candidate would be 'elected' by the European Parliament (and by an absolute majority). If Article 17 did not explicitly mention the concept of lead candidates, it nevertheless provided a 'great opportunity to be innovative'. Or, as Welle recently put it, the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure was 'not a necessary interpretation but absolutely a possible one.'¹²⁸

Klaus Welle's initial experience as EPP Secretary General had led him to understand that functioning European political parties could only exist if they had a proper legal basis and autonomous resources, and he set out to ensure that

¹²⁷ Nor indeed mentioned in two authoritative analyses of the Convention's work: Jean-Claude Piris, 2006, *The Constitution for Europe: A Legal Analysis*, Cambridge University Press, and Guy Milton and Jacques Keller-Noëllet, with Agnieszka Bartol-Saurel, 2005, *The European Constitution: its origins, negotiation and meaning*, John Harper Publishing, London.

¹²⁸ Klaus Welle, 'The Spitzenkandidaten process and European elections: Past, present and future,' 15 March 2024 seminar at the European Institute at the LSE.

these preconditions were met. Following on from an initial proposal from the Secretaries-General of the European Parliament's political groups, the 2001 Nice Treaty amended Article 191 of the TFEU to allow explicitly for the funding of European political parties from the EU budget.¹²⁹ Over time, and always with discreet support from Welle once he became Secretary General, European political parties gained sufficient resources to enable them realistically to consider such possibilities as, for example, the running of European political campaigns. But the availability of such funding also encouraged all political tendencies in the European Union to organise themselves into European political parties and hence to enter a common European Union framework. Thus, the combination of the legal basis and subsequent funding provided a major impetus in the completion of the spectrum of European political parties, from the far left to the far right. Slowly but surely, an essential prerequisite for the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure – the existence of European political parties – was brought into being and by 2014 the parties were ready.

Welle was aware that, in order to campaign, European political parties needed a forum and a platform, a political and media space distinct from that of the Member States, and so he turned the Parliament's attention to the communication aspects of such a campaign. To give some examples, in 2013 already, he proposed a series of measures to Parliament's Bureau. A first was to run an information campaign under the slogan, 'This time it's different; the power to decide what happens in Europe.'¹³⁰ Some 1,000 journalists from the Member States were invited to Brussels to attend seminars in the European Parliament, where Welle himself would always talk about the *Spitzenkandidaten* process. Under his leadership, the European Parliament gave the European political parties a platform for televised debates between the candidates, transmitted by Eurovision. All of these measures, and many more, he regarded as being organisational preconditions for being able to think in European terms about European political parties and their lead candidates. And, when the elections were over, Welle encouraged the Parliament's communication services to publish early polling predictions about the likely composition of the European Parliament, soon after the polling booths closed, thus allowing the national media in the Member States to report in good time about the European elections not only as a national event with national parties but as a European event with European parties and European political groups.

¹²⁹ David Galloway, 2001, *The Treaty of Nice and Beyond: Realities and Illusions of Power in the EU*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, p. 126.

¹³⁰ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections-2014/en/top-stories/this-time-it-s-different>.

Welle would list several pragmatic rationales for the use of the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure. Domestic political parties have limited resources. They have national, regional and local elections to fight. As Welle knows from his personal experience in the CDU campaign in the 1994 European elections, if left to themselves, national parties would prefer to save resources to fight domestic elections – the old ‘second order national elections’ phenomenon¹³¹. As he sees it, the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure provides cost-free media coverage. It also allows for personalisation of the campaign, which in turn allows citizens to relate more easily and journalists to provide more accessible copy. And in 2014 reporting about the elections started noticeably earlier – in itself a sign of growing interest. The legitimacy of the European Parliament depends on voter turnout, yet from 1979 to 2009, this was in constant decline. Clearly, if the Parliament lacks legitimacy, then so, because it is elected by the European Parliament, does the European Commission. Nobody would argue that the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure alone was responsible for the stabilisation of voter participation in 2014, nor for the 8% increase in 2019. But people are clearly now more interested in the European Parliament elections, in part because they have been personalised. Will Ursula von der Leyen be returned as President of the European Commission?

Welle is wont to say that ‘once is an accident, twice is a habit’. In 2014 the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure worked well. It was a surprise success (an ‘accident’), although one can’t help suspecting that Welle was a little less surprised than everybody else. When Jean-Claude Juncker was forced to resign as Luxembourg Prime Minister in July 2023 over a spy scandal¹³², Welle must surely immediately have seen him as a potential *Spitzenkandidat* for the EPP, for Juncker perfectly satisfied Welle’s three informal preconditions for success, these being:

- A centre-right candidate must be broadly acceptable on the centre left, and vice versa;
- A candidate must be acceptable in principle not only to the European Parliament but also to the European Council;
- A candidate should ideally have held down a top political job.

In 2019 these informal preconditions were not respected. However, Welle argues that 2019 was not a total failure for the procedure. The logic of Article

¹³¹ Karl-Heinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt, 1980, ‘Nine Second-Order National Elections – A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results’, *European Journal of Political Research*, March.

¹³² <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSBRE96A0MI/>.

17(7) ('taking into account the elections'¹³³) was respected. Even if Ursula von der Leyen was not the EPP's *Spitzenkandidat*, she was nevertheless from the EPP, and the second and third Vice-Presidencies of the European Commission were taken by the S&D's *Spitzenkandidat*, Frans Timmermans, and one of Renew's *Spitzenkandidaten*, Margrethe Vestager. Moreover, the Heads of State or Government in the European Council caucused as European party political families before reaching their collective decision.

And so we come to 2024. Welle is now no longer European Parliament Secretary General (since 2022) but he is the Academic Council Chairman of the Wilfried Martens Centre and, as such, is still taking a proprietary and very well-informed interest over a procedure that he has done so much to advance. On the one hand, Ursula von der Leyen's *Spitzenkandidatur* richly respects two of Welle's informal preconditions – she is broadly acceptable to the European Council and has successfully held down the job she is reapplying to do. Ironically, her problem may lie more with the third informal precondition - namely the European Parliament and the imperative to build a centrist supportive coalition; does she enlarge her majority to the right or to the left, and will this larger centre hold? Whatever happens, Klaus Welle has surely already chalked the 2024 European elections up as a partial success for the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure!

The *Spitzenkandidaten*/lead candidate procedure is bound to win out in the longer run. In the first place, the genie cannot be put back in the bottle. At each election, the idea will return and be discussed and will work, more or less, but it's not going to go away. In the second place, it does not matter how attentive Coreper and the European Council are, sooner or later another ideal candidate like Jean-Claude Juncker will come along and then an accident will become a habit. In the third place, from a prescriptive point of view, is there an alternative? It is all very well further empowering the European Parliament in order to democratise the European Union, but how do you convince European citizens that the European elections matter? It has long been impossible to argue that the Commission is neutral and technocratic. The only route to democratic legitimacy for the European Commission and its President is through the two supreme sources of legitimacy in the Union; the European Council (the Member States) and the European Parliament (the citizens). I trust Klaus will nod when he reads that!

¹³³ The wording is a masterpiece of ambiguity. Just to complicate matters, the German and Spanish versions of the Treaties say, 'take into account the results of the elections.' Westlake, 2016, p. 39.

Linking the levels for better EU law

Making the European Parliament great!

Klemen ŽUMER

Currently heading the European Parliament Office to the United Nations in New York City, Klemen was previously the first head of the Linking the Levels Unit (LINK), a central service in Parliament's Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS). Working closely with EPRS Director-General Anthony Teasdale, LINK realised the idea from 2018 to 2022 and presented at various Parliament Innovation Days. From 2014 to 2018, Klemen was the head of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Before joining Parliament's Secretariat, Klemen worked closely with various Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), including as the head of staff for the MEP and former Prime Minister of the first democratically elected Slovenian Government Lojze Peterle, for whom he also ran the campaign for President of Slovenia in 2007. Klemen holds a degree in economics from Canada and a masters in international political economy from the London School of Economics, as well as a masters in transatlantic European studies from Sciences Po, Paris. He is passionate about the European project and is committed to peacebuilding and social change.

Klaus Welle's visionary leadership was instrumental in improving cooperation between Parliament and other levels of governance in the EU, as well as globally. The work of linking the levels of governance helps better inform MEPs on the laws they are shaping and has made the EU more effective and responsive to the needs of its citizens.

YOUR IDEA

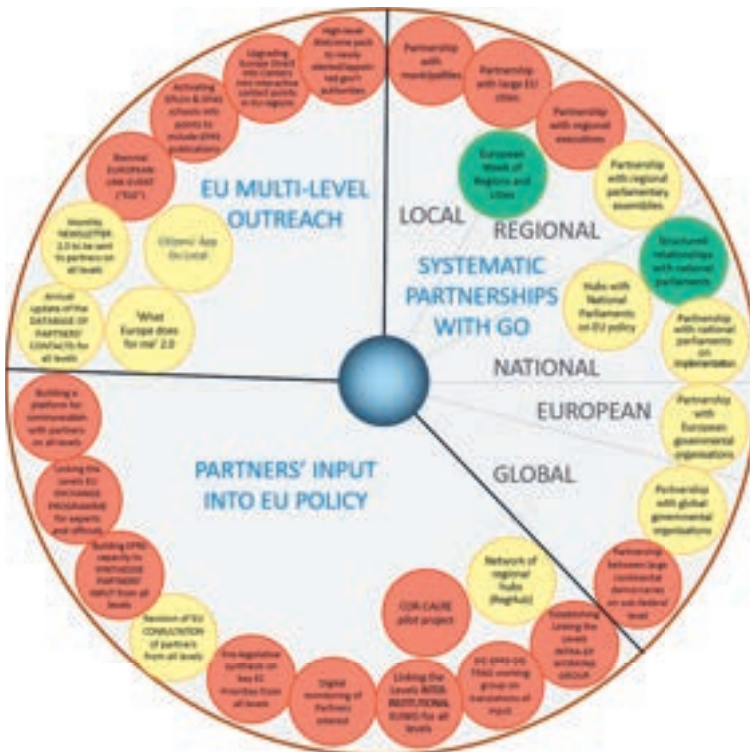
I had the privilege of working with you at Parliament and feel honoured that you entrusted me with delivering one of your many visionary, ground-breaking and innovative ideas.



Your meetings were short, concrete and efficient. In 2018, towards the end of my time as the head of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Slovenia, I asked for your advice. You offered few words, but they were carefully considered and provided key guidance. A few months later, EPRS recruited me to be the first head of the newly established Linking the Levels Unit (LINK).

Innovative ideas are often discouraged. However, from reading your Strategic Execution Framework (SEF), I understood that LINK was to be a piece of the puzzle of making Parliament and the EU great (see photo, AI-generated by author).

In the SEF, you encouraged innovative solutions to achieve key parliamentary goals in a focused and cross-directorate-general collaborative manner. This led to brainstorming sessions and focus groups at the directorate-general level, where we were encouraged to pinpoint our values, vision and strategy. The graph using project-circles in different colours showed our progress and allowed colleagues to grasp what various parts of Parliament were doing and how our work fitted together to empower and serve our MEPs. In this way, we delivered relevant results for Parliament and the EU.



While it took some time to fully grasp the extent of your strategy, I understood from the beginning that the work would be meaningful. I realised that you knew how to increase the value and relevance of Parliament's work and that you were pushing to evolve and modernise EU decision-making.

You personally gave life to the SEF when you showed that you believed in the selected projects by bringing attention to them at various public events. At one such event at Parliament's library in 2014, I remember you argued that the *'EU legislative cycle needs to be completed in terms of space and time'*. You have such simple ways to explain complex concepts:

- The **time** element referred to how Parliament must not only react to Commission proposals in classic legislation style, but should also make use of and influence the entire legislative cycle, starting from agenda setting and also covering consultation and scrutiny.
- Filling the **space** meant that Parliament should close the gaps with various levels of government. You rightly pointed out that we could share knowledge, information and experience with EU policy with the various levels of government: local, regional and national, as well as European and global. You argued that we cannot make good EU law if we make policy at the EU level without being in touch with those that study or deal with it every day and thus know what EU citizens need.

And there it was, my mission statement.

REALISATION

The Linking the Levels Unit was created on 1 March 2018 to 'assist the EPRS Director-General in engaging in outreach to build lasting partnerships with relevant stakeholders and potential multipliers in a system of multilevel governance, in order to support evidence-based policy-making and scrutiny of the executive on policy cycle issues, and develop a system to synthesise input from partners for use in the work of the European Parliament, in coordination with various EPRS units' (EPRS 2018 Annual Report).

Your clarity of vision and determination motivated me. I enjoyed working under the supervision of Anthony Teasdale and having genuine debates about how to innovate and deliver on your high expectations with colleagues at the EPRS, including Etienne Bassot, Wolfgang Hiller, Eschel Alpermann, Stephane Reynolds, Yann-Sven Rittelmeyer, and many others, as well as colleagues at the

Directorate-Generals for Internal Policies of the Union, for Communication, for Translation, for Innovation and Technological Support, and others. See Linking the levels SEF Wheel 2019.

Of course, my team also met and consulted with the regional and local levels of government, especially those represented in Brussels. Some of the main governmental organisations with which we built partnerships are outlined below in the mapping diagram. These relationships continue to deliver insights thanks to our partners' experience and knowledge of existing and future EU policies.

The Office of the Secretary-General checked on us regularly, even before this became systematised by modern SEF satisfaction surveys. You looked for results that were relevant, measurable and concrete.

Among other things, LINK delivered the following:

1. LINK produced the first ever comprehensive mapping of governmental organisations at different levels. This mapping continues to help guide outreach and identify potential partners for cooperation, as well as understand the different roles, responsibilities and processes that exist at each level of decision-making.



Presentation to the EPRS General Staff Assembly by Klemen Žumer, HoU – April 2022.

2. LINK developed an approach that made it a hub for exchanging information and bringing together various actors at different levels of government. This included developing guidelines on how to involve different levels of government in EU decision-making processes, as well as tools and resources for facilitating dialogue between different levels.

STAGE I	Actions
Increasing AWARENESS about ongoing EU policy work	1. Meeting and presentation of EU policy work
	2. Agreeing on a system of regular meetings and formal exchanges
	3. Establishing a regular system of information-sharing on EU policy work
	4. Targeted ad-hoc communications on any discovered gaps in awareness
	5. Regular participation at key GO events to present EU policy work
STAGE II	Actions
LISTENING to understand GOs' priorities and concerns	1. Regular analysis of which topics GOs cover and/or are concerned with
	2. Automated digital 'sentiment' analysis of publicly available material
	3. Regular follow-up and issue-specific meetings on common policy priorities
	4. Consultation on the gaps in awareness/misperceptions of EU policy work
	5. Establishing a single entry point for partners to contact EU institutions
STAGE III	Actions
Mutual EXCHANGE and input of knowledge and expertise	1. Aggregating EU/EPRS policy analysts' work plans, priorities and timelines
	2. Examining and aggregating partners' work plans, priorities and timelines
	3. Developing and promoting an electronic platform to collect partners' contributions
	4. Regular consultations of partners on relevant policy topics
	5. Synthesising collected input from partners for the EP and its committees

Linking the Levels approach.

3. LINK has been organising meetings, events and workshops to explain how Parliament promotes dialogue and cooperation with and between different levels of government. In the first four years, 252 meetings were organised with 1 767 participants and two memoranda of understanding were signed with the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

A particularly significant innovation was the 'virtual retreats' during the COVID-19 pandemic when all meetings were moved online. During this time, Parliament, through the EPRS, held regular meetings, which included expert-to-expert exchanges on key policies with the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank, the European Central Bank, and the European Court of Auditors, for example. Over 100 people from Parliament and other organisations frequently participated. In plenary, senior managers held exchanges on the strategies of their respective institutions, while experts further established personal contacts in smaller policy-based breakout groups.



In-person and virtual retreats and meetings with partners

4. In addition, LINK has produced a wide range of publications, including briefings, in-depth analyses, and studies. These publications are used by MEPs, their staff and other stakeholders to inform their work on EU policy issues. In our briefings in 2022, we obtained and analysed 141 relevant input documents by partner organisations.

The publications series, in any given year, includes:

- pre-legislative syntheses of national, regional and local positions on key EU policies;
- briefings on how the two parliaments of the countries holding the Presidency of the Council process, scrutinise and engage with EU legislation;
- briefings on key partner organisations from all levels of governance, their key policy priorities and insights, structure and organisation;
- monthly newsletters, which were sent to almost 1 000 of our partners' contacts to inform them about Parliament's work and request input on priority policy files on Parliament's agenda.



LINK products included one-page summaries of main findings to inform EU policy-making

5. Based on our private sector insights, LINK came up with the idea to build an AI-powered digital system that would speed up the linking the levels work. Our IT colleagues, together with the Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support, immediately jumped in and helped to develop a platform to automatically gather information from the thousands of webpages of local governmental organisations from across the EU in real time, organised by policy. This includes online platforms (in development) for exchanging information and collaborating on projects between Parliament and external governmental actors.



Pilot projects in innovative technologies: monitor partners' interests & perform

Your contributions to the Linking the Levels project have been invaluable. You have promoted the project to the wider European Parliament at various conferences and events and encouraged us to publish Innovation Day papers and present them at Parliament's annual Innovation Days.

The project is well established and is run by an efficient unit. It has a proven record of accomplishment. It is likely that the project will continue to make a

significant contribution to improving cooperation between Parliament and other levels of governance in the EU.

LINKING WITH THE GLOBAL LEVEL



Your idea of linking the levels extended beyond Europe. You believed the EU should prepare to be a global player, stepping up its support for multilateralism and democratic values, especially as we witnessed US withdrawal from multilateral forums. In 2021, you concluded the agreement with the European External Action Service (EEAS) to open three Parliament offices: to the United Nations in New York; to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Jakarta; and to the African Union in Addis Ababa.

I went to New York in this context in May 2022 to help establish and implement this agreement on the ground. We quickly established a working team with colleagues, embedded in the EEAS, to ensure that Parliament is an active player in European parliamentary democracy and assumes its rightful place in its foreign policy dimension.

Our work helps foster direct exchanges between MEPs and the UN system in a strategic, direct and sustainable way. This has resulted in an increasing demand and interest by the MEPs and Parliament's committees to tap into UN knowledge and experience on various policies. We ensure the best possible interlocutors for their meetings in New York, as well as systematically following up on those meetings after MEPs leave. UN officials often also appreciate the insights and experience that the MEPs bring to enrich UN policy at the global level, the AI Act being just one such recent example.

The EU Delegation in New York is entrusting increasingly high-profile UN policy files to Parliament's team to coordinate and negotiate on behalf of the EU, which is a testament to our good cooperation with experts from the EEAS and the Commission.

This cooperation also makes it possible for Parliament colleagues to prepare flash notes – briefings and analyses for MEPs and Parliament colleagues, packed with real-time global-level insights on key policy issues on Parliament's agenda.

In 2023, President Roberta Metsola was the first President of the European Parliament to ever come to New York during the High-Level week of the United Nations General Assembly. This meant that the highest EU levels had to consider the role and position of the Parliament on the global stage, something that is not clearly defined in the Treaties, and still needs to be agreed upon at the highest level. We feel honoured to foster this link.



THANK YOU, KLAUS!



I was always impressed by your dedication to empowering European parliamentary democracy and building a stronger and more united Europe. Your vision and leadership have made a real difference to the future of European governance. Your work has helped make the EU more effective, more efficient, and more democratic.

On the occasion of your 60th birthday, I want to express my sincere appreciation for your remarkable contributions to my professional development, Parliament and the EU as a whole.

Dear Klaus, I wish you all the best in your future endeavours as you continue to make a positive impact on our world!

Parliamentary offices outside the EU

European Parliament Liaison Office in Washington DC

Piotr NOWINA-KONOPKA

Polish, born 1949, Poland, Gdańsk University student 1966-1972, M.Sc.Econ 1972, Ph.D. 1978, assistant professor 1978-1989, College of Europe Bruges-Natolin vice rector 1999-2004; "Solidarity" member/expert 1980-1981, assistant/spokesman of Lech Wałęsa 1982-1989. Minister of State (PL President's Chancellery) 1989-1990, co-founder and Secretary General of Democratic Union Party 1990-2001, co-founder/president of the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation since 1991, vice-president of Polish Euro-Atlantic Society 1999-2003, member of Polish Parliament 1991-2001, secretary of state (European integration and PL/EU deputy chief negotiator). European Parliament Director for Relations with National Parliaments Brussels 2006-2009, Director of European Parliament Liaison Office, Washington DC 2010-2012. Polish Ambassador to the Holy See, Vatican 2013-2016.

Introduction

On a sunny weekend of mid-June 2009 Klaus Welle convened a traditional EP directors' "stay away day" in emblematic seat of Jean Monnet' Houjarray (France). As a Pole who joined the top EP management only 3 years earlier, I must have had a very confused face, when Klaus, having a walk with me in the park of Houjarray, shared with me an idea of creating soon European Parliament – US Congress Liaison Office in Washington DC, proposing me to move there, to build an office and to serve as its head. Half a year later the adventure started...

Pioneering phase

In 2009 clouds over EU were still not as heavy as it seems today but obviously in a global world there was no place for isolation – even for heavy weight players

like EU and US. Cold war seemed to be over, but new challenges were coming: China and other emerging powers, terrorism, poverty, climate change, arms trafficking. Interdependence between continents, countries and individuals was growing. Millions of Europeans travelling to USA and Americans to Europe, easier and generally more available transportation and communication, uncontrollable exchange flows of information whereas on the other side we were witnessing lack of harmonized laws, rules and procedures between two leading actors US and EU.

Neither US nor EU could feel comfortable and safe in such circumstances. It was clear also for a Pole, who saw his country dreams to come true, Poland being free, democratic and genuine member of European Union family.

Despite the initiative of EP President Klaus Haensch 25 years earlier to create in Washington a “liaison” institution between both parliaments – nothing real happened until 2009. EP Mendeleyev table still had a blank space outside the boundaries of the EU. Klaus Welle strongly believed that it should have a direct contact with congressional counterparts in order to establish ways and means to act “shoulder in shoulder” across Atlantic. Our going far beyond “normal” cooperation between political entities became a challenge and a project.

By the beginning of November 2009 both with Klaus we went to Washington DC where Secretary General introduced me to some leading figures in the US capital political world with whom he used personally to remain in very close touch. I never shared Klaus’ love for American hamburgers (sorry, Klaus, to disclose your cuisine preferences...), but these first contacts were more than valuable. And let me add, that throughout all 3 years of my service as EPLO Director – Klaus was always giving me his helpful hand. I would not accomplish much without his aid. Thanks, Klaus!

As a follow-up of our visit, Secretary General sent an official note to the US Congress, informing about EP decision to launch EPLO mission and specifying its main tasks:

- working on strategic strengthening the links at all levels with relevant US Congress bodies, i.e. by fostering political contacts between MEPs and US Congressmen, enhancing their participation in transatlantic structures and meetings, promoting long-haul joint legislative planning as well as joint legislative early-warning system,
- identifying key legislative issues of mutual interest and assuring necessary information exchange with new communication channels by

- monitoring US legislation and informing mutually EP and US Congress about potential opportunities both on European and US side,
- preparing and assisting enhanced mutual EP-USC contacts, with special emphasis on committee-to-committee links, including visits of delegations, committee chairs or rapporteurs, exchange and training-oriented meetings on staff level, including video format
- aiming at improving mutual perception and understanding between USC and the EP, i.e. by organizing/attending information seminars, presentations and other events, preparing and distributing new publications/newsletters/web postings
- reinforcing cooperation with EC Delegation in Washington DC, thus easing and promoting flow of information concerning transatlantic dialogue between the EC and EP

Only a year earlier Barak Obama became US President which, in our eyes, was opening a new chance to strengthen mutual links and inaugurate new schemes of working together. During his first trip to Europe, Obama declared: "We want strong allies. We are not looking to be patrons of Europe. We are looking to be partners of Europe". We counted on this declaration. The truth was (and I believe Klaus was taking this into account), that due to my earlier political activities in Poland within Solidarność and then during the transformation era I used to have several contacts with US political milieu, both democrats and conservatives. I must admit however, that time has much changed since and competition between democratic President and the conservative wing in the Congress did not make my job easier...

Start-up

One of first decisions was to fix our official name and logo. Support was given to "European Parliament Liaison Office with US Congress" and the abbreviation was EPLO. In our image-oriented world also the logo seemed important and the one fixed was using both parliaments logos and relevant flags, indicating time zone difference between Brussels and Washington. The slogan was not difficult to invent: Time to Liaise!



Preparations started. By mid-November 2009 I was already fully enlisted on a newly created position of Director of the EP Liaison Office with the US Congress. I got my first "crew": Michael Topping as councilor and Michelle Fletcher as my assistant in Washington, whereas Jowita Wypych was charged of assuring our office presence in Brussels/Strasbourg. Happened that Jowita was my previous student in the College of Europe Bruges/Natolin. This choice was a blessing for me! I owe all three of them my greatest gratitude and it was a great sorrow for me when I learned that already after leaving EPLO, Michael Topping passed away. It was a truly great loss of great companion and friend.

The first task was to prepare a multipage list of issues that create difficulties in working closely across Atlantic. But first, we had to articulate EPLO's mission:

"The role of EPLO, the European Parliament's Office for Liaison with the US Congress, is to ensure daily contact with US lawmakers. In cooperation with the EU Delegation, it aims to ease regular visits to Congress by Members of the European Parliament, when on official mission for their relevant Committees, Delegations or Political Groups. The more strategic task of EPLO is to build a network of Members and parliamentary staffers from both shores of the Atlantic in order to work together on precise and concrete issues requiring legislative and political cooperation or at least intellectual attention and understanding. The role of the Office is also to develop contacts with financial institutions such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, academia and think-tanks, as well as with the community representing EU business interests in the US. A growing number of global issues - post-crisis measures, climate and energy challenges, demographic phenomena, changing economic geography, the fight against terrorism - make it essential that we study, debate and decide in an ever-more coordinated way. Europe and America should work more "shoulder to shoulder" as some analysts put it. There is as much to win by working together as there is to lose by proceeding separately. This task may sound idealistic, but it is exactly what the entire European project is about. We wish to serve our ideals as the Washington-based antenna of the European Parliament, providing a strong new instrument for enhanced EU-US coordination." (Transatlantic Liaise Letter 1/2010).

And thus, adventure started. At the very beginning of January 2010 both with my wife Wanda as well as Michel Topping and Michelle Fletcher we flew to Washington DC, rented rooms in the hotel and started establishing the office. Apart of diplomatic arrangements the Department of State concerning our formal status, diplomatic ID etc. we had to start with fixing transitory headquarter of the office. EU representation in US (playing a role of EU Embassy) was in due course

of moving to new premises in K Street, but they were still not ready and EPLO had to be happy with rather primitive basement in 2300 M Street NW building.

Venue was neither elegant nor livable. No need to say that for first couple of months the only access to internet was via our cellphones... Winter happened this year to be quite strong in DC, prevailed very low temperatures (even counting in Fahrenheit), heating was not sufficient and poor Michelle was putting on herself everything available in order to keep heat when staying in the office when Michael and myself we were in meantime visiting one after another congressional and governmental offices. One day happened that snow storm blocked the hotel exit doors to the extend, that Michelle could not leave hotel for almost two days... Since then I will never forget, that American doors open towards outside.

After a month we took flight back to Brussels where another pack of duties waited on my desk, like preparing with relevant leading MEPs and legislative committees of EP a list of precise issues that we should discuss with American counterparts. Coming back to DC we started to share with Congress people a rather lengthy list of legislative issues to be dealt with.

Mid-March we were back with my wife to Washington DC. The urgent task was to move EPLO as soon as possible to the final premises, which was more than difficult. Finally, by the end of March 2010 we took over premises in 2175 K Street NW, neighboring EU Delegation not the US.

Official opening of our permanent premises happened finally on 27 April 2019 and it was marked by presence of EP President, who also paid an important political visit to the House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi that helped us a lot to open official doors to the Congress. This date should be noted as an official start-up of EPLO.



President Jerzy Buzek meets Speaker Nancy Pelosi in the company of EP Vice-President Stavros Lambrinidis, EU acting Head of Delegation to US Angelos Panagris and EPLO Director Piotr Nowina-Konopka

In upcoming months, apart of Jerzy Buzek and Stavros Lambrinidis, many EP leaders visited us:

Vice-Presidents Dagmar Roth-Berendt, Laslo Tokes, number of Committee chairs and rapporteurs

The crew started to be reinforced. I got onboard my deputy Clare Wells (also former director in the EP) as well as 4 liaison officers (Remi Pierot, GianPaolo Meneghini, Mario Damen and Simon Duffin) and assistant Isaura Ferro Tome, at later stage supplemented by Niall Leahy. Jowita Wypych was still assuring our presence in Brussels and Strasbourg, taking in charge all issues that had to be dealt with EP HQ directly. In this way we also had a Brussels address, in PHS building, rue Wiertz 60. Together with Michel Topping, Michelle Fletcher and myself we were thus 10.

The rule was, that liaison officers oversee issues concerning concrete Directorates General of the EP (which corresponded to their scope of legislative concerns) and stay in Washington for one year, being alternated by new colleagues. Following this principle, next liaison officers came then from Brussels HQ (Polona Car, Christian Maurin de Farina, Eva Palatova, Sanna Kangasharju and Jean-Luc Robert), serving EPLO with devotion, meriting my greatest esteem for these colleagues/friends and gratitude. For last months Geoffrey Harris replaced Clare Wells and helped me greatly in the final stage when in fall 2012 I was ending my service for EPLO (and the EP), easing also passing the leadership to my successor, Antoine Ripoll.

When staying within EU borders, one can easily forget about different time zones, unknown financial rules and procedures. When I was starting my office hours in Washington at 07.00-08.00, in Brussels or Strasbourg people were just starting or already having their lunch... At 17.00 Brussels time my clock was indicating 11.00 local DC time. In fact, time niche for communicating with my counterparts in Brussels/Strasbourg was limited to 08.30-11.30 Washington DC time, which corresponded to 14.30-17.30 European time... On top of this, EPLO was linked with EP servers, that were subject to technical works from 18.00 Brussels time (from 12.00 DC time onwards) and this could provoke full blackout on our screens...

Dealing in US with financial issues (like buying office stuff, paying rents or buying services) required new internal regulations to be invented and introduced for us in EP HQ. For instance, instead of VAT tax, there is a "sales tax" – tough task for accountancy. Thanks to HQ colleagues transparent and clear financial operations became possible, adapted to US system and fully in line with EP regulations. This saved me nightmares about involuntary transgressing saint financial rules.

Core business

EPLO had to build a network both with House/Senate Speaker offices, Members and staffers from relevant committees of both chambers, not neglecting majority and minority leaders.

Though our leading partner was to be US Congress., very soon it became clear, that American legislative system differs a lot from ours, as many issues are decided via laws issued by the executive. Therefore, EPLO built relations also with Department of State, National Security Council, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Transportation, Department of Agriculture, Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of the Interior, Department of Commerce, Department of Education, Department of Energy, regulatory agencies like Federal Aviation Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, Food and Drug Administration – sometimes not only at federal but also on state level. We had to put to the basket organizations and institutions crucial from European legislation standpoint, like IMF and World Bank, key thinktanks, political foundations, universities, business communities. We stayed in permanent contact with Congressional Research Center, Brookings, European Institute, SAIS, Atlantic Council, Heritage, American University, Georgetown University, George Washington University, Catholic University of America, Mason University, Wilson Center.

Extremely useful instrument to develop links between European Parliament and Congress was TLD (American TAR). Transatlantic Legislative Dialogue was established already well before and EPLO's mission was to build a body around the bones. Meetings of MEPs and Congressmen were indicating areas of joint interest but in time between EPLO had to lobby the Congress, to identify key and competent players on different issues of the US and EP.

Our flag product was "Rolling Transatlantic Legislative Agenda" RTLA, updated daily and presenting state of the play of dozens of top legislative issues, identifying stakeholders and estimation in difficulty/conflictuality on both sides of Atlantic.

Even more, Lisbon Treaty has heavily changed the role of European Parliament and put on political weight, this was practically unknown to our American partners. They were accustomed to watch EU state of play via activities of European Commission, not paying much attention to EP. We were often witnessing surprise and disbelief when we were explaining effects of Lisbon Treaty as regards factual powers of the EP.

Just few examples of “hot” issues we were dealing with: SWIFT agreement, Free Trade Agreement, electronic screening of air passengers, using GMO, standards of medical information, cyber security, light bulbs, novel foods, counter-terrorism policy, commercial privacy, phosphorus in detergents, animal and food cloning, e-waste and electronic waste, aviation security and aviation emissions CAP, oil drilling and shale gas, Dodd-Frank’s derivatives and financial measures, emission trading system, protection of children from pornography and sexual exploitation, rare earth policy. This list is far, far from being complete.

A good example of confronting cultural differences and historic experiences were our discussions Congress and National Safety Administration concerning scanning of passengers arriving to US airports. Using advanced electronics, airport security was able to watch a body of a passenger as if was completely nude. EP LIBE Committee was strongly opposing this procedure. Americans kept on saying that security prevails on privacy My last argument was: “you see, I have my Polish, quite European life experience. For decades my country was like a prison, in theory secure, though deprived of privacy. This is why want to enjoy freedom and privacy, even at some price of security. It goes without saying, that American attitudes in this respect had and still have a lot to do with their experience od “nine eleven”, terrorist attack on Ground Zero...

Time of my service as Director of EPLO came to its end on 31 October 2012, in parallel with achieving my pension rights. Happy those, who may -as I do – cherish their memories of having in my lifetime opportunities to live in interesting times and places, having fascinating challenges to fulfill and working with people who merit our gratitude.



I was already back to Europe, when on February 12, 2013 I was listening to President Obama State of the Union Address. I was more than happy to hear these words: “And tonight, I’m announcing that we will launch talks on a comprehensive Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the European Union - because trade that is fair and free across the Atlantic supports millions of good-paying American jobs.”

I had a feeling that EPLO’s message has reached right address But, times change, presidents change... sometimes in an unpredictable way and this not always makes us happy. Specially in this context, I wish long life to our United Europe and to EPLO !

Developing a right of legislative initiative

Micaela DEL MONTE

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Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the European Parliament.

Historically, and with very limited exceptions¹³⁴, the European Parliament does not have the right of legislative initiative. That right, rather, belongs almost exclusively to the European Commission¹³⁵. To a certain extent, this situation is anomalous with respect to national legislatures in democratic systems, where national parliaments enjoy at least the formal right to set the policy agenda via legislation.

¹³⁴ These include, for instance: the European electoral legislation (Article 223 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union - TFEU), regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the duties of Members of Parliament (Article 223(2) TFEU), provisions governing the right of inquiry (Article 226 TFEU), and rules concerning the performance of the Ombudsman's duties (Article 228(4) TFEU).

¹³⁵ Article 17 (2) Treaty on European Union (TEU).

And yet the European Parliament still manages to influence EU agenda-setting in various other ways¹³⁶.

These include, *inter alia*, debates and non-legislative own-initiative reports (INIs), which allow the European Parliament to express its views on any issue; the election of the European Commission president (including the political negotiations leading up to them)¹³⁷; parliamentary hearings of Commissioners-designate¹³⁸; plenary responses to the Commission president's annual State of the European Union address¹³⁹; and successive Joint Declarations on EU legislative priorities¹⁴⁰. All this provides an opportunity for the Parliament to help shape the Union's political and legislative agenda. Additionally, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, Parliament co-decides, together with the Council of the European Union, on almost every policy field.

As stated by Klaus Welle: 'the Parliament has become a fully-fledged co-legislator'¹⁴¹.

Notwithstanding these instruments, increased expectations regarding democratic EU governance have raised questions as to whether there should be an even greater role for the Parliament in initiating legislation. For Klaus Welle, an enhanced role within the policy cycle means Parliament should be involved at all stages: from 'Agenda setting' to 'Consultation', from 'Legislation' to 'Scrutiny'¹⁴².

¹³⁶ Article 17(1) TEU, introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, states: The Commission 'shall initiate the Union's annual and multiannual programming with a view to achieving inter-institutional agreements'. Rule 38 of Parliament Rules of Procedure clarifies the role of the Parliament in determining the 'legislative planning of the Union' and thereof enacts Parliament's active involvement throughout the whole legislative cycle, starting with the setting of the agenda.

¹³⁷ S. Kotanidis, Role and election of the President of the European Commission, EPRS, July 2019.

¹³⁸ M. Diaz Crego, Parliamentary hearings of the Commissioners-designate A decisive step in the investiture process, EPRS, September 2019.

¹³⁹ R. Manko, State of the Union address, European Parliament 2023, EPRS, September 2023.

¹⁴⁰ Since 2016, the Parliament, the Council and the Commission have agreed on an Annual Joint Declaration, which sets EU legislative priorities for the upcoming year. This enables the institutions to work more closely together. Moreover, in 2020, the three EU institutions signed Joint Conclusions for 2020-2024, which defined the common policy objectives until the next European elections, in 2024.

¹⁴¹ K. Welle note to the Members of the Bureau of 15 June 2011 D (2011) 30966, PE 466.177/BUR.

¹⁴² Strategic Planning for the Secretariat-General of the European Parliament, the Secretary General, December 2015.

Article 225 of the Lisbon Treaty (TFEU)¹⁴³ provided Parliament with the opportunity to contribute to the EU legislative process even at the stage of agenda-setting and initiating legislation. It clarified that even though the Parliament cannot initiate EU legislation *per se*, it can submit detailed legislative proposals to the Commission¹⁴⁴. The Parliament may request that the Commission submit ‘any appropriate proposal on matters on which it considers that a Union act is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties’. The Commission in such cases then has two options: either submit, within the legislative procedure, the requested legislative proposal; or else decide not to submit such a proposal but instead inform Parliament of its reasons¹⁴⁵. Some argue this constitutes a sort of ‘indirect’ right of Parliamentary initiative¹⁴⁶. Over the years, various Inter-institutional Agreements (IIA) on better law-making have been adopted¹⁴⁷. These IIA have made clear that better law-making principles must be applied throughout the whole policy cycle: from the preparation of the EU measures to their transposition, implementation and ex-post evaluation¹⁴⁸. Following its 2011 resolution

¹⁴³ Although the Treaty of Maastricht already foresaw the possibility for the Parliament to initiate legislation, the Lisbon Treaty introduced the obligation for the Commission to make explicit its rationale for not acting. Rule 46 of Parliament Rules of Procedure further specifies the procedural steps within the Parliament.

¹⁴⁴ Along similar lines, Article 241 TFEU establishes that the Council may request that the Commission carry on studies which the Council considers ‘desirable for the attainment of the common objectives, and to submit to it any appropriate proposals’. As in the case of article 225 TFEU, should the Commission decide not submit such a proposal, it shall inform the Council of its reasons.

¹⁴⁵ According to point 10 of the 2016 Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making and point 16 of the Framework Agreement, between the European Parliament and the Commission, the Commission shall give ‘prompt and detailed consideration’ to such requests; shall reply to them within three months; and shall give ‘detailed reasons’ for which it has decided not to submit a proposal in response. Moreover, ‘the Commission shall come forward with a legislative proposal at the latest after 1 year or shall include the proposal in its next year’s Work Programme. If the Commission does not submit a proposal, it shall give Parliament detailed explanations of the reasons’.

¹⁴⁶ S. Kotanidis, Parliament’s right of legislative initiative, EPRS, February 2020.

¹⁴⁷ Interinstitutional agreement on better law-making and Interinstitutional agreement on better law-making. The 2016 IIA on Better Law-Making in particular envisages a process of interinstitutional consultation and cooperation between the Institutions with regard to the EU’s multiannual and annual programming. Upon the appointment of a new Commission, Parliament and the other two institutions are to ‘exchange views on the principal policy objectives and priorities of the three institutions for the new term’, and to conduct dialogue both before and after the adoption of the Commission’s annual work programme. Parliament is also increasingly involved in activities aimed at evaluating EU legislation, which, in turn, can result into calls for revision of existing legislation or new initiatives. Finally, the IIA on better law-making requires the Commission to reply to issues raised by Parliament concerning European added-value and the cost of non-Europe (See Point 10 of the 2016 Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making).

¹⁴⁸ For more details see: Impact Assessment and European Added Value work during the eighth legislative term, 2014–2019, Activity report for 2020, Activity report for 2021, Activity report for 2022.

on guaranteeing independent impact assessment¹⁴⁹, the Parliament decided the institution should have at its disposal a stronger internal capacity in the field of better law-making¹⁵⁰: in order, among other reasons, to identify and (where possible) quantify the potential benefits of common EU action. Following a specific corresponding proposal then by Klaus Welle, the Bureau established a Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value¹⁵¹.

In 2013, the Bureau then decided to transfer this Directorate to the newly created Directorate General for Parliamentary Research (EPRS). Against this background, and based on Article 225 TFEU, since 2014, all Parliament 'legislative own-initiative reports' (INLs) have been accompanied by a European added-value assessment (EAVA study)¹⁵². These studies analyse the potential benefit of future actions¹⁵³ by the Union, as opposed to uncoordinated national or sub-national policy interventions. Again, as stated by Klaus Welle, 'the Parliament needs to be able to make serious and properly justified requests to the Commission about how the latter institution should use its right of initiative'¹⁵⁴. The overall objective was, and remains, to contribute to the Parliament's effectiveness and influence, *qua* institution, but also to justify legislative action at EU level¹⁵⁵.

A nuanced assessment

The Parliament's requests, based on Article 225 TFEU, may nevertheless lead to various outcomes. They may lead, for instance, to a legislative proposal, to a non-legislative proposal or to a legislative proposal which only partially meets the Parliament's demands. At any rate, use of Article 225 TFEU forces the Commission to respond to the Parliament's demands, since the Commission may not

¹⁴⁹ European Parliament resolution of 8 June 2011 on guaranteeing independent impact assessment.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 'impact assessments at European level should look into the European added-value in terms of what savings will result from a European solution and/or what supplementary costs would arise for the Member States in the absence of a European solution'.

¹⁵¹ 100 Steps forward, the European Parliament and the upgrading of European democracy since the Lisbon Treaty, the Cabinet of the Secretary-General, 2014, page 125.

¹⁵² For more details see: Mapping the cost of non-Europe report, Theoretical foundations and practical considerations, EPRS, October 2023.

¹⁵³ These actions are taken in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity, whereby Union action should be considered when objectives 'cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States ... but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level', see Article 5 Treaty on European Union (TEU).

¹⁵⁴ European Parliament work in the fields of Ex-Ante Impact Assessment and European Added Value Activity Report for the period June 2012 - June 2014, EPRS, page 5.

¹⁵⁵ Paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 of the Preamble Interinstitutional Agreement, Official Journal L 123, May 2016.

simply dismiss or ignore these without explanation. In sum: the Commission should respond to Parliamentary requests for proposals for Union action — or else should inform Parliament of its detailed reasons therefore, including a response to the Parliament’s analysis as to the potential European Added Value of the measure in question. The role of the Parliament’s European Added Value Assessments is thus to force the Commission to consider those arguments supporting the Parliament’s requests. Monitoring of Commission follow-up is two-fold. On the one hand, there is a quantitative and timing check¹⁵⁶; on the other, a qualitative and political one. According to a 2019 EPRS study¹⁵⁷, the Commission has mostly replied within the three-month deadline. The Commission did not, however, follow up — or only partially followed up — on Parliament’s requests. The Parliament’s political success in persuading the Commission to put forward legislative proposals can therefore be assessed as ‘mitigated’. In fact, of the 29 INLs put forward by the Parliament between 2010 and 2019, only seven were considered ‘successful’ or ‘partially successful’¹⁵⁸. Another Parliament study, in 2020¹⁵⁹, argued that up to 2019 only one third of the Parliament’s both legislative and non-legislative initiative procedures, combined, could be considered ‘successful’. Along similar lines, a 2018 Parliament resolution¹⁶⁰ on the interpretation and implementation of the IIA on better law-making welcomed the fact that the Commission mostly replied within the three-month deadline. Yet the Parliament regretted that the ‘Commission failed to adopt specific communications’, as foreseen in the IIA, which should ensure full transparency and provide ‘a political response to requests made by Parliament in its resolutions’. The Parliament came to a similar conclusion again in a 2020 resolution¹⁶¹: calling, *inter alia*, for the revision of the 2010 Framework Agreement with a view towards ensuring ‘stronger rights of initiative for Parliament’ — the reason being that the obligation for the Commission merely to *inform* Parliament of its reasons not to follow up on adopted INLs is far too weak. A preliminary assessment of the current

¹⁵⁶ Whether or not the Commission has replied within the three-month deadline.

¹⁵⁷ M. Reimac, Parliamentary scrutiny of the European Commission: Implementation of Treaty provisions, EPRS, July 2019, page 67 on; Impact Assessment and European Added Value work during the eighth legislative term, 2014-2019, EPRS, July 2019; European Parliament work in the fields of Impact Assessment and European Added Value, Activity report for 2020, Activity report for 2021, Activity report for 2022.

¹⁵⁸ See Tables 1 and 2 in S. Kotanidis, Parliament’s right of legislative initiative, EPRS, February 2020. During the 2014-2019 legislative term, eleven INLs based on Article 225 were adopted by the Parliament and eighteen during the 2009-2014 legislative term.

¹⁵⁹ The European Parliament’s right of initiative, Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies, PE 655.134, July 2020, pp. 55 and 57.

¹⁶⁰ European Parliament resolution of 30 May 2018 on the interpretation and implementation of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making (2016/2018(INI)).

¹⁶¹ European Parliament resolution of 9 June 2022 on Parliament’s right of initiative (2020/2132(INI)).

legislative term¹⁶² (2019-2024) confirms the Parliament was not shy in making use of Article 225 TFEU, with 24 INLs adopted in plenary. As in previous terms, even while replying within the three-month deadline, the Commission did not follow up — or only partially — on the Parliament's requests.

It takes two to tango... and in the EU's case, perhaps even more!

Despite the Parliament's strong intention to acquire a fully-fledged right of initiative, the current institutional set-up requires the other EU institutions to be involved should be a Treaties change be agreed.

As early as 1990¹⁶³, the Parliament demanded its own right of initiative, independent of the Commission, to address the alleged democratic deficit in the then-Communities¹⁶⁴. More recently, in 2017, the Parliament adopted two resolutions¹⁶⁵ suggesting ways to improve the functioning of the EU both with and without Treaties changes. In the first case, the Parliament stressed its intention to make more use of legislative initiative reports under Article 225 TFEU; in the second, and without prejudice to the Commission's basic legislative prerogative, the attribution of the right of initiative to both Parliament and the Council, in line with the common practice in bi-cameral Member States. Similar requests were repeated in two other resolutions: in 2019¹⁶⁶ and in the June 2022 resolution¹⁶⁷ on Parliament right of initiative. A resolution¹⁶⁸ on the follow-up to the

¹⁶² Author's own elaboration based on OEL results as of 15 January 2024.

¹⁶³ European Parliament resolution of 22 November 1990 on the Intergovernmental Conferences in the context of the European Parliament's strategy for European Union.

¹⁶⁴ S. Kotanidis, Parliament's right of legislative initiative, EPRS, February 2020 and S. Kotanidis, Gaining the right of legislative initiative for Parliament, EPRS, June 2022.

¹⁶⁵ European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2017 on possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union (2014/2248(INI)) and European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2017 on improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty (2014/2249(INI)).

¹⁶⁶ European Parliament resolution of 12 February 2019 on the implementation of the Treaty provisions on Parliament's power of political control over the Commission (2018/2113(INI)) and European Parliament resolution of 13 February 2019 on the state of the debate on the future of Europe (2018/2094(INI)).

¹⁶⁷ European Parliament resolution of 9 June 2022 on Parliament's right of initiative (2020/2132(INI)).

¹⁶⁸ European Parliament resolution of 4 May 2022 on the follow-up to the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe (2022/2648(RSP)).

conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe¹⁶⁹ has also underlined that deeper political integration and genuine democracy can be achieved by granting the Parliament its own right of legislative initiative and by abolishing unanimity in the Council. In November 2023, a Parliament resolution¹⁷⁰ to reform the Treaties called for many institutional reforms: including new wording for Article 225 TFEU¹⁷¹.

To conclude: over the years, the European Parliament has consistently called for recognition of the right of legislative initiative. In this vein, former Secretary General Klaus Welle envisioned, and worked to shape, a Parliament administration serving the institution's political ambitious to become a powerful fully-fledged legislator. Because as Jean Monnet once wrote: "Nothing is possible without men, but nothing is lasting without institutions."

And yet, as the old adage goes: it takes two to tango (and in the EU's case, perhaps even more)! For the Parliament to gain its right of legislative initiative, Treaties changes would be required, and thus the involvement of other EU as well as national actors. The issue was discussed at the European Convention in

¹⁶⁹ Several of the 178 recommendations put forward by citizens, suggested enhancing Parliament powers and role by granting it a right of legislative initiative with the Commission retaining a concurrent right of initiative or keeping the monopoly in certain specific areas (e.g. the EU budget). The citizens' recommendations were debated also with institutional actors within the Conference's plenary and resulted in 49 proposals, articulated into around 326 specific measures. Providing Parliament with a right of legislative initiative was one of them (recommendation 38(4)b): 'The European Parliament should have the right of legislative initiative, in order to proposed the topics to be discussed and, subsequently, adopt the necessary texts to follow up on the recommendations that emerge from deliberations'. See for more details: S. Kotanidis, Conference on the Future of Europe, EPRS, May 2021; S. Kotanidis, Preparing the Conference on the Future of Europe, EPRS, December 2019; S. Kotanidis, Conference on the Future of Europe: Overview of the final proposals, EPRS, November 2023.

¹⁷⁰ European Parliament resolution of 22 November 2023 on proposals of the European Parliament for the amendment of the Treaties (2022/2051(INL)); M. Diaz Crego, S. Kotanidis, Reforming the European Union How the European Parliament is responding to citizens' expectations, EPRS, March 2022; S. Kotanidis, Citizens' engagement and expectations of the Conference on the Future of Europe, EPRS, September 2021; M. Del Monte, S. Kotanidis, Strengthening citizens' participation: How the European Parliament is responding to citizens' expectations, EPRS, April 2022; S. Kotanidis, Conference on the Future of Europe: Overview of the final proposals, EPRS, November 2023. See also its Annex I on page 75.

¹⁷¹ The proposed new article 225 TFEU would be: 'The European Parliament may, in accordance with Article 294 and acting by a majority of its component Members, adopt proposals on matters to which the ordinary legislative procedure applies. Before doing so, it shall inform the Commission of its intentions'.

2002 and 2003, to no avail. To date, one relevant commitment¹⁷² has been made by the current president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, in her inaugural address of July 2019 and in her corresponding Political Guidelines¹⁷³. President von der Leyen confirmed on that occasion her intention to strengthen the Commission's relations with the Parliament: by responding with a proposal for a legislative act whenever the Parliament, acting on behalf of a majority of its members, should adopt a resolution requesting the Commission submit legislative proposals. She declared: 'I support a right of initiative for the European Parliament'.

¹⁷² Tough already in his opening statement in the Parliament Plenary session, on 15 July 2014, the President-elect of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, committed to 'filling the special partnership with the European Parliament, as laid down in the Framework Agreement of 2010'.

¹⁷³ A Union that strives for more, My agenda for Europe, By candidate for President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, 2019.

4

Outreach to citizens

Le Campus des Visiteurs du Parlement Européen à Bruxelles

La vision de Klaus Welle
pour mieux communiquer

Juana LAHOUSSE-JUÁREZ

Professional experience :

1976 - 1986 : Free-Lance interpreter, member of AIIIC

1986 - European Parliament - Administrator - Staff Member

1986 - 1995 : Head of the Spanish Interpretation Division

1994 - 1995 : Head of the Interpretation Central Planning

1994 - 2000 : President the Committee on Equal Opportunities (COPEC)

1996 - 1997 : Director of the DG Administration responsible for Buildings, Infrastructures and general services

1998 - 2007 : Director of Communication in the DG Information

2007 - 2010 : Director-General of DG Translation (until December 2007, DG TRED including publication and print services)

2010 - 2017 : Director-General of DG Communication, European Parliament.

Le Campus des Visiteurs du Parlement Européen à Bruxelles reflète la vision stratégique globale de Klaus Welle, Secrétaire général du Parlement Européen pendant 13 ans.

À l'occasion de ses 60 ans, j'aimerais rendre hommage au visionnaire qui a insufflé une nouvelle vie aux interactions entre le citoyen et l'Europe. L'édification de ce campus, unique en son genre par sa diversité et sa complémentarité, symbolise l'engagement du Parlement Européen à rapprocher les citoyens de l'Europe et de ses institutions.

Le Campus : une utopie ou une nécessité ?

La réponse est évidente : communiquer sur l'Europe et plus particulièrement, sur le Parlement Européen est crucial pour renforcer le lien entre les citoyens et les Institutions. En tant qu'organe démocratique élu au suffrage universel, soumis au scrutin de plusieurs centaines de millions d'électeurs, le PE se doit d'être une Institution ouverte, transparente, à l'écoute du citoyen. Par conséquent, il a pour vocation de les motiver à s'intéresser aux politiques européennes, de leur donner les outils nécessaires pour comprendre les processus décisionnels qui affecteront plus de 450 millions d'européens dans leur vie de tous les jours et enfin, de leur fournir des éléments de réflexion leur permettant de faire des choix lors des élections européennes.

Le Parlement Européen s'ouvre au Monde en 10 Grands Projets

1. Centre des Visiteurs

Le Centre des Visiteurs, cœur du Campus, offre à des milliers de citoyens venant de tous bords, individuellement ou en groupe, une immersion pédagogique en temps réel dans le fonctionnement du Parlement Européen. C'est une fenêtre ouverte sur la démocratie européenne. Comprendre le rôle du PE dans la prise de décision et parcourir les lieux de travail des Députés Européens reste une expérience unique propre à renforcer voire à déclencher un sentiment d'adhésion avec l'Europe et ses Institutions.

2. Espace d'accueil visiteurs Stefan Zweig

Point de rencontre des groupes de visiteurs, l'espace Zweig offre une atmosphère détendue et accueillante propice aux discussions et aux rencontres, mettant en avant la richesse de la diversité européenne.

3. Info-Point de l'Esplanade

Ouvert à tout public, un lieu d'échange d'informations au cœur de l'Esplanade, l'Info-Point complète l'offre de proximité en permettant, à tout moment, aux

citoyens d'obtenir des informations et des données actualisées sur les activités parlementaires.

4. Parliamentarium

Le Parliamentarium, musée interactif, dévoile l'évolution de la démocratie européenne à travers des expositions captivantes, offrant une perspective globale sur l'histoire du continent. La diversité de son offre touche tous les publics notamment les jeunes et les très jeunes par le biais des visites scolaires. Le Parliamentarium figure parmi les attractions touristiques les plus fréquentées de Bruxelles tant son concept est innovateur, vivant et unique. Le succès est tel que des mini-Parliamentarium ont été développés dans toutes les capitales sous l'appellation commune de « Europa Experiences ».

5. Station Europe

Hébergée dans l'ancien bâtiment de la gare Léopold, la Station Europe présente un aperçu global du complexe quartier européen et permet ainsi au visiteur de s'orienter et de faire ses choix en fonction de ses intérêts. Par ailleurs, la convivialité de l'espace permet également des rencontres entre divers membres de la société civile. Grâce aux outils de communication de pointe mis en place, cette gare version 3D connecte virtuellement les citoyens aux différentes institutions de l'UE, renforçant ainsi la conscience collective de la citoyenneté européenne.

6. Maison de l'Histoire Européenne

Située dans un des bâtiments les plus emblématiques du Parc Léopold, la Maison de l'Histoire est le seul lieu en Europe qui retrace son histoire commune, mettant en lumière les défis surmontés et les succès partagés qui ont forgé l'Union Européenne d'aujourd'hui. Son architecture, sa conception muséale et la richesse de ses collections en font un des hauts lieux touristiques de la Capitale.

7. Promenade Sakharov de la Liberté

En référence au Prix Sakharov décerné annuellement par le PE depuis décembre 1988, cette promenade rend hommage aux lauréats pour leur engagement

en faveur des droits de l'homme, incarnant la lutte continue pour la liberté de l'esprit et la défense des droits de l'homme.

8. Maison et Jardin des Citoyens

Nichée au sein d'un magnifique jardin urbain, cette maison qui fut jadis la maison atelier du peintre Wiertz, célèbre à double titre la dimension culturelle européenne : la préservation d'un patrimoine artistique et historique autrement voué à l'abandon et la création d'un espace vibrant où députés et citoyens peuvent s'exprimer et partager leur vision de l'Europe. À la fois audacieux et original, ce lieu de débats s'inscrit dans un cadre de verdure, de calme et de culture.

9. Bibliothèque de l'Europe

Connu sous le nom de Bibliothèque Solvay, cet édifice emblématique faisait jadis partie de la « Cité des Sciences » du parc Léopold. L'implantation de la Bibliothèque de l'Europe dans ce lieu voué au savoir et la recherche élargira l'offre aux visiteurs en leur offrant une immersion dans les idées et les débats qui ont façonné l'Europe.

10. Liaison Cyclo-Piétonne

La Liaison Cyclo-Piétonne reliant l'Esplanade Solidarnosc au Rond-Point Schuman encourage une mobilité durable, symbolisant l'engagement du PE envers la protection de l'environnement et la création d'une Europe plus verte.

Conclusion

Le rôle du Secrétaire général, incarné par Klaus Welle, a été déterminant dans la concrétisation du Campus. L'édification de cet ensemble dans le périmètre immédiat du PE est unique. La diversité de l'offre proposée en 24 langues aux citoyens ainsi que sa complémentarité représente une réponse audacieuse au défi de rapprocher les citoyens et les Institutions Européennes. Ces initiatives mettent en lumière la volonté du Parlement Européen d'ouvrir ses portes au monde, de communiquer de manière transparente et d'offrir des espaces interactifs et instructifs.

Le Campus, conçu en 10 grands projets, va au-delà de la simple présentation institutionnelle. Il vise à éduquer, inspirer et engager les citoyens, renforçant ainsi le lien entre eux et l'Union Européenne. Du Centre des Visiteurs offrant une immersion pédagogique aux espaces de rencontres favorisant la diversité européenne, en passant par des points d'information accessibles au public, le Campus incarne une approche holistique visant à sensibiliser les citoyens aux enjeux européens.

Le bilan de cette entreprise est indéniablement positif. Le Campus, développé étape par étape, s'est imposé comme un espace dynamique, inclusif et novateur. Sous l'impulsion du Secrétaire Général, les autorités politiques du Parlement Européen ont adopté chaque projet comme une pierre angulaire de cet édifice cohérent. Ainsi, en créant le Campus, le PE s'est doté de divers espaces propices à la compréhension mutuelle, favorisant la participation active des citoyens et renforçant le lien vital entre l'Europe et ses habitants.

The institutional election campaign 2019

Jaume DUCH GUILOT

Jaume Duch Guillot (Barcelona, 1962) is the Director-General for Communication of the European Parliament and its Spokesperson. He graduated in Law from the University of Barcelona (1980-1985), where he later also served as a Professor of International Public Law. In 1990 he became a European Parliament official and since then has always worked in communication-related positions, such as Spokesperson for the then President of the European Parliament, Head of the Press Room or Media Director. In February 2017, he was appointed as Director-General for Communication, a role that he combines with being the Spokesperson of the Institution since 2006. He has published several articles and book chapters on EU communication, EU Institutions and the future of the EU.

With genuine appreciation, I am delighted to contribute to this *Liber Amicorum* dedicated to Klaus Welle for the influence he has had on this parliamentary institution and its communication efforts. Allow me to commence our exploration of Klaus's legacy with the journey we collectively undertook to empower the European Parliament's communication approach, particularly in the lead-up to the 2019 European Elections.

Indeed, as we rewind to the year 2014, the European Parliament found itself grappling with the aftermath of the European Elections held that year. The prevailing sentiment was characterized by a noticeable, continuous disenchantment among voters, with a 42.6% turnout.

The House understood the importance of communication in this context, by empowering the Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament and supporting modern, ambitious communication strategy, based on solid insights and political understanding. DG COMM embraced innovation in the sphere of communication, adapting its services to meet new challenges and reach European citizens more effectively. Partially as a result of this effort, the 2019 elections saw an impressive turnout of almost 51%, the highest since 1994. The enhanced engagement, participation, and trust in European democracy helped revitalise the democratic spirit across the European Union.

A strong political, strategic and innovative steer

In my capacity as the Spokesperson of the European Parliament and the Director-General for Communication, I had the honour of playing a central role in translating the political mandate into tangible reality. I remember very well the so-called “KAMPA” meetings with the Secretary-General, the steering body of the overarching elections’ efforts, where operational communication activities were aligned with the broader picture and the political vision and priorities outlined by Klaus. It allowed, for the first time, a strong strategic steer connected to the political priorities of the European Parliament. For the first time, communication was recognised as being an integral part of the political, democratic process, and not a mere technical support. This vision, materialised by these “KAMPA” meetings, was a game-changer for Parliament’s communication.

This vision also translated in a number of guiding principles, developed with the Directorate-General for Communication. They were codified in **Parliament’s Strategic Execution Framework** - an innovative management tool implemented across the EP administration. These principles were:

- **Communication from citizens’ perspective:** all communication should start from the audience’s perspective (via notably Eurobarometer data), and be contrasted with the agenda of the sender (the Parliament), to come to a meaningful message and narrative.
- **From information to communication:** it means to continue the change from one-way to two-way communication, using further social media to their best capacity as well as exploring the new avenue of large-scale partnerships in communication.
- **Distribution before production:** no communication asset should be produced without a clear distribution from the outset, in order to shift resources into outreach mainly.
- **One message - all channels:** As Klaus often explained - the repetition of one single message is key to the success of its dissemination. He often recalled the example of Helmut Kohl doing, again and again, more or less the same speech. Moving away from a multiplicity of messages to one single promise (a democratic one) would prove much more powerful.
- **From ratio to emotion:** EU communication’s DNA has always been in explaining the rationale behind the decisions taken. While this part should remain, notably in the information work and in the media rela-

tions, the emotional bond to the EU and its project of peace and prosperity should be enhanced in the communication work.

- **Legislation as communication:** the completion of major legislative files should be seen as communication in itself. Hence - communication should not come as an afterthought, but should be inserted in the legislative work from its beginning.

Based on this solid strategic background, Parliament's communication developed six main areas of action.

a) A robust media strategy

A robust media strategy helped sustain interest beyond plenary sessions. Media partnerships doubled the coverage compared to the previous elections, ensuring widespread dissemination of Parliament's democracy message.

During the course of the campaign, incredible results were achieved. **The responsible Parliament services briefed over 11 000 journalists on the European elections, 10 times more than in 2014.** Sustaining media attention also benefited from the organisation of innovative seminars, which offered clear representation of achievements of the EP and the EU in the last 5 years. This resulted in almost doubling the media coverage compared to 2014.

Klaus Welle's legacy in this context was the extremely useful "What Europe Does For Me" website, which featured (and still features!) hundreds of tangible achievements of the EU all over Europe. This tool was developed by Parliament's Research service, a Directorate-General newly created following the model of the US Congress. The website successfully contributed to increasing awareness among media on the EU added value, showing concrete projects at a local level and by areas of interest.

b) Recognizing the uniqueness of each Member states

In parallel, DG COMM recognized the diversity among Member States as a central feature and strength for its communication strategy. This awareness prompted a strategic shift **towards a decentralized approach** in the institutional campaign, tailoring strategies for each Member State.

This decentralized approach granted significant autonomy to the Parliament's Liaison Offices (EPLOs). The House supported their reform and the clarification of their mission statement. From 2019 onwards, their role was reinforced and put centre-stage, and they played a crucial role in shaping communication strategies that resonated with the specific requirements of diverse national contexts. The general strategy was made in collaboration with them, honouring the European Union's official motto "United in Diversity".

c) An unprecedented Go-to-vote effort

From the beginning, a clear baseline "**Choose your future**" was transformed into a strong, emotional and powerful video, supplemented by a 30 second TV spot. With a strategic social media push, it resulted in an unprecedented **135 million views** online. This emotionally charged campaign not only reached a vast audience but also collected positive media attention across all Member States, marking a new standard for EU institutional communication.

The success of this voter activation strategy relied heavily on media and social media, but not only. For the first time, the European Parliament developed a coordinated, large-scale partnership strategy that gave its communication efforts more outreach and credibility.

d) Building a robust network through partnerships

Recognizing the influential potential of large-scale mobilization, the Parliament communication services prioritised partnerships with European civil society and private companies. This deliberate approach aimed to broaden Parliament's reach to an unprecedented number and diverse array of audiences, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the 2019 European elections and the overarching democracy message. It resulted in a robust network of partners and campaign allies, spanning private and public organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), interest groups and key digital influencers.

This deliberate approach not only expanded the campaign's reach but also tapped into the influential voices of individuals and entities that resonated authentically with varied segments of the population. In a contemporary landscape where trust in institutions faces challenges, it was central to acknowledge the credibility associated with the "person like me" phenomenon.

Furthermore, the European Parliament extended invitations to over 1000 distinguished VIPs and celebrities. This deliberate inclusion of influential individuals added a layer of authority to the promotion of the 2019 European elections, further solidifying the campaign's impact and resonance across diverse audiences.

e) Institutional Partnerships

Institutional partnerships, particularly with the Commission, were fostered, contributing greatly to the outreach of the campaign. Cooperation between the Parliament and the Commission was formalized in a cooperation agreement between the two institutions, underlining the crucial role of EPLOs and Commission Representations.

Other Commission DG's, thanks to these institutional partnerships, contributed to the elections cause. The Directorate-General for Human Resources agreed to assist in aspects of staff mobilization for the campaign. The Commission's DG CONNECT was instrumental in ensuring the free distribution of the "Choose your future" cinema spot. DG JUST assisted in promoting the get-out-the-vote effort among EU expats, another aspect of the campaign that the European Parliament elaborated for the first time in 2019.

f) "A ground game" Mobilization Effort

The thistimeimvoting.eu platform served as a hub for engaging citizens and organizations. It encouraged not only voting but also active participation in spreading the message about the EU elections.

During the campaign, a monumental mobilization of citizens unfolded across the 28 Member States through the thistimeimvoting.eu platform. Positioned as 'supporters' of the campaign, individuals who joined this initiative received targeted email communications underscoring the significance of the elections and encouraging active participation in the mobilization effort.

The impressive results speak volumes: **Over 330,000 European citizens pledged their support, with more than 25,000 stepping forward as dedicated campaign volunteers.** These volunteers played a pivotal role in disseminating the institutional communication message to diverse audiences, organizing a spectrum of election-related events such as information sessions, debates, pub quizzes, and more.

The multifaceted contributions of these volunteers extended to the online realm, where they tirelessly promoted the elections across various platforms. This included creating blogs, crafting multilingual and citizen-oriented podcasts, engaging in online debates, and contributing articles to newspapers.

Conclusions

While dissecting the historic turnout for EE19 across the EU is nuanced, the institutional EE19 campaign effectively tapped into the prevailing sentiment across Europe. It achieved not only the important goal of informing European citizens about the elections and their significance, but also successfully mobilised a diverse array of actors to rally behind this cause.

Analyses demonstrate a clear impact of the general campaign messages. **Almost half of Europeans (44%) recall seeing or hearing messages from the European Parliament encouraging them to vote.** More importantly, national turnouts differ significantly among people who recall the EP campaign messages and people who do not. The impact of the “Choose your future” video on the mobilization of voters is a good example: across 27 Member States, people who had seen the video were more likely to have voted in the ballot.

Post-electoral survey results showcase the rise in the proportion of 'soft abstainers' among voters in the 2019 elections compared to 2014. The increased turnout at the EU level is even more notable within the national target groups defined for the campaign activities, with 72% of them experiencing an increase in turnout. The survey also demonstrates the success in engaging key identified soft abstainer target groups such as young people. This demonstrates that the European Parliament, either through institutional or political messages, was present in the minds of the Europeans.

Central to this historic milestone was Klaus Welle's collaborative support and strong commitment to democracy in empowering the European Parliament's communication services. His legacy echoes in the revitalized democratic spirit that now permeates the EU's communication services, and Parliament's DG COMM specifically. The success of this campaign was not merely that of achieving historic turnout numbers or in fostering a renewed democratic spirit, but in laying down a framework of innovation.

Showcasing Europe: The House of European History

Dr Constanze ITZEL, Museum Director, House of European History

Constanze Itzel is Museum Director at the House of European History in Brussels. She has contributed to building up this new museum of the European Parliament as adviser and curator since 2009, and has been leading the museum since June 2017.

Previously, Constanze worked as a teaching assistant at the University of Heidelberg, as a curator at the Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe, and did freelance work and internships in five other museums in Germany and France. From 2005, she worked in Brussels first in research and later as a committee administrator for the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament.

Constanze holds a PhD for her thesis on the impact of the image debate on fifteenth-century paintings (awarded the Ruprecht-Karls-Preis of the University of Heidelberg in 2005). She has published about the pre-reformatory image debate and about different facets of daily life in the Middle Ages. As a curator for the House of European History, she specialised in the history of the European Union, Europeanisation processes, history of encounters, and related topics. She was elected to the Board of Administrators of the Brussels Museum Council and has been part of numerous advisory boards and museum juries in different European countries.

Introduction

The House of European History is a museum that the European Parliament decided to establish during the Presidency of Hans-Gert Pöttering. Its founding principles, laid down in a Conceptual Basis written by a committee of experts, stipulated that the museum was to have academic independence and should be based on the most innovative museum practice.¹⁷⁴ Since the Bureau adopted this concept in December 2008, the main stages of development took place

¹⁷⁴ Conceptual Basis for a House of European History, p. 7, - https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/745/745721/745721_en.pdf.

during the period in which Klaus Welle was Secretary-General of the European Parliament.

The administration of the European Parliament was thus entrusted with an unusual task: to create a new structure within its remit which had academic independence as one of its founding principles, which would not be at the service of Members nor serve a political, let alone a party-political, logic. It was to be a museum whose content would not be subject to political majorities, but left to historians and other museum experts.

And indeed, Parliament's leadership had the generosity to provide the museum with financial, human and material resources and still to let it develop according to the plans of its curatorial team, together with its Academic Committee. Although administratively attached to the office of the Secretary-General and later to the Directorate-General for Communication, the museum was given the freedom to develop its own historical narrative, independent of any political agenda.

Creating a European history museum was a challenge of its own. However, with its opening in May 2017, there was a lot to be done: a building had to be found, the operations needed to start, it required a team, and the definition of a lot of methodology across the whole spectrum of a museum's work. But which methodology? According to which museum practice? In a team composed of professionals from as many different institutions as a small historic house museum in Ireland to Madrid's Museo Nacional del Prado, the question was wide open. Because of the unique European nature of the museum, the decision was taken to create its own tailor-made approaches, relying on the international body of museum law and practice.

This article describes how this European museum was set up when it opened. While the work of creating European content and bringing together a European collection has been described in previous publications¹⁷⁵, this article will focus on the strategic development, and notably the work of expanding the museum to Europe.

¹⁷⁵ Andrea Mork, Perikles Christodoulou, *Creating the House of European History*, Luxembourg, 2018. Constanze Itzel, 'European heritage re-visited - The House of European History in Brussels', *Interpret Europe* (2019) Conference 2018 Heritage and identity – Proceedings (2nd edition), 2019. Perikles Christodoulou, Simina Bădică, Raluca Bem Neamu, Jitka Mlsová Chmelíková, 'Collecting Testimonies of Current Events for the House of European History', *Culture. Society. Economy. Politics*, Volume 2, Issue 2, 'Museums. Communities, and Society' (open access), 2022.

1. Structures, strategies, objectives

The museum's organisational structure was determined following a study of how other museums were organised. Five departments were created: curatorial, collections, learning, communication and resources, including financial resources and facilities. These departments would later slightly change their remit to include visitor services and partnerships, and the Financial Department would be moved out of the House of European History's unit in 2023.

Immediately after the creation of this vertical structure, horizontal, cross-departmental working groups were created with the aim of fostering cooperation across teams. These multi-national, multi-perspective, interdisciplinary teams were to pool the expertise and experience they had earned at the different museums from which they had been recruited, to form new European working methods.

Strategies were written in the following areas: accessibility, audience development, archiving and library, collection management, collecting, communication, intellectual property rights, exhibitions, evaluation, events, learning, outreach, publications, partnerships and visitor services. The papers were presented to and discussed with the Academic Committee and the Board of Trustees.

In early 2018, the management re-formulated the museum's mission, vision and overall objectives. These were defined as follows:

Researching & Exhibiting European History

Develop exhibitions that arouse curiosity and increase the understanding of European history: They will reflect both the current state of the academic knowledge and the highest standards of museological presentation which apply to historical museums.

Collecting & Preserving European History

Acquire, maintain and enhance a collection of European significance: The collections will comprise a variety of artefacts, which will strongly support the museum's narrative and will result in making the permanent exhibition substantially less dependent on loans.

Communicating & Interpreting European History

Increase and diversify access and participation at local, national and regional levels for the widest possible public: A strong and attractive identity for the museum will be created and promoted, along with high quality visitors' services and innovative educational programmes.

Stimulating & Facilitating debate on European History

Promote a European and transnational approach to history and heritage: This will be carried out by working in a spirit of professional cooperation with local and international organisations from different sectors, such as academia, museums, and institutions with strong focus on formal and informal learning.

While these general museum objectives aimed at describing how to break down the mandate given to the museum through its Conceptual Basis, the museum management also saw the need to define objectives for improvement and innovation across all sectors of museum work. Five development objectives were defined as priorities in 2019, based on the policies and strategic documents mentioned above, as well as on a needs assessment and an evaluation of the first 2½ years of the museum's functioning. They were:

- improving the quality of the visitor experience throughout the museum visit;
- increasing the number of visits, audience engagement and participation, both physically and digitally;
- increasing visibility, branding and communication;
- increasing European outreach;
- further professionalising the application of museum standards.

On the basis of these development objectives, a work plan for the period 2020 to 2022 was developed, with different projects under each of the objectives. While the regular museum operations were in full swing, these projects ran in parallel to improve the museum's functioning across all these areas. All objectives proved strikingly relevant even during the pandemic. They were reconfirmed for the phase 2023-25, while sustainability was added as an important sub-objective under point 5 based on the innovations developed in the context of the Throwaway exhibition.

The tasks given to the House of European History were challenging and manifold. It soon turned out that the original organigram with posts for 25 officials and

14 contract agents would not allow all of the objectives to be fulfilled. Ensuring that all tasks could be completed was a complex issue as they involved not only covering the main museum functions, but also researching content and collections throughout Europe in a variety of different languages; collaborating with partners, museums, academics and teachers across the continent; and delivering content in 24 languages in the exhibitions, the museum's publications and on its website. And all of this work was part of the museum's build-up phase, which brought challenges in terms of development, the definition of practices, innovation, improvement, evaluation and some trial and error.

In early 2019, the museum management carried out a thorough analysis of what the staff needs would be if it were to fulfil all principal museum functions and all objectives laid down in the Conceptual Basis. These needs were estimated at 70 full time members of staff, even when taking into account that many functions were carried out by other services of the European Parliament or by external companies, such as visitor welcome and exhibition oversight, security, exhibition design, production and maintenance, collection transport and storage, translation, building works and certain administrative services.

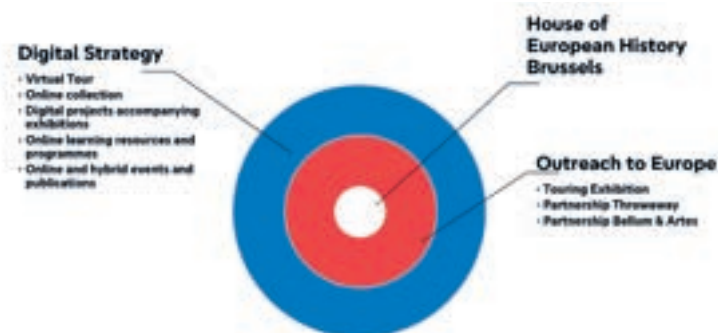
Given that new internal staff recruitment was not an available option to reinforce the team, the museum management was very thankful to obtain authorisation to use part of its financial resources to recruit colleagues through a service contract with a Belgian company. This was a helpful compromise that allowed the team to be 'topped up' to enable it to fulfil its most important functions, notably when the need for new digital competences emerged in the context of the pandemic. It is through this reinforcement that the museum was able to considerably expand its channels and meet targets set in the Conceptual Basis, such as running touring exhibitions.

2. Expanding to Europe

Soon after the opening, it became clear that due to its location in western Europe, the House of European History would be more difficult to reach for eastern European visitors. Visitor statistics from the first few years after opening showed that most visitors came from western and southern Europe, and visitors were even more likely to come from the local area during the pandemic.

In order to fulfil its mission of being available for 'Europeans from all parts of the continent, in all age groups and in all walks of life'¹⁷⁶, outreach to Europe was necessary and became one of the development objectives. Since 2019, this outreach has been developed in three different areas, as is shown here below:

Figure 1: Expanding to Europe and the world



Source: House of European History team.

a. Digital strategy

While a digital strategy had already been in the museum's development plans since 2019, museum closures and the reduction in group activities and visits during the COVID-19 pandemic provided the opportunity to speed up the development and implementation of the strategy.

1. The digital strategy outlined:
2. a virtual tour of the museum;
3. putting the museum collection online;
4. digital projects accompanying exhibitions;
5. online learning resources and programmes;
6. virtual and hybrid events & publications.

The development of these five areas of online presence started during the pandemic years and eventually became an integral part of the museum's offer. Most of its activities now have an online component. While many events became either fully digital or hybrid, leaving permanent traces such as the recordings on

¹⁷⁶ Conceptual Basis, p. 7, - https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/745/745721/745721_en.pdf.

the museum's YouTube channel¹⁷⁷, temporary exhibitions started to be accompanied by digital projects. For example, When Walls Talk! Posters – promotion, propaganda and protest was made available as an online exhibition on the Europeana platform¹⁷⁸. Throwaway – the history of a modern crisis had an online platform co-created with nine other museums¹⁷⁹. On top of the virtual tour of the permanent exhibition and the online collection¹⁸⁰, guided video tours were made available for various exhibition content¹⁸¹. Learning activities were carried out both on-site and online, with teacher seminars reaching participants as far away as Türkiye. In 2023, the museum carried out an extensive survey with over 1 000 teachers in Europe in order to explore their needs for classroom teaching, with a view to creating a digital learning platform for classroom use. With the development of a new website, live from January 2024, all digital offers were brought together under one single access point, making it easier for people who cannot visit to access all content at once¹⁸².

b. Touring exhibition

From the very first concept of the museum, touring exhibitions were seen as an important means to reach out to audiences in Europe¹⁸³. After more staff joined the museum, a touring exhibitions strategy was devised. As a core principle, touring exhibitions were to be shown in countries from which few visitors were able to visit the museum in Brussels, that is, in eastern and northern Europe.

Identifying the venues involved communicating with potential partners, finding museums that met the necessary conservation standards and other standards, and coordinating the planning across museums in several countries. The first venues decided upon were museums in Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Sweden.

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/@HouseOfEuropeanHistory>.

¹⁷⁸ <https://www.europeana.eu/en/exhibitions/when-walls-talk>.

¹⁷⁹ <https://throwaway-history.eu/en/about/project>.

¹⁸⁰ <https://historia.europa.eu/en/collection>.

¹⁸¹ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfFmlaaSoqz6F5Bg909_Z99x95oTmxzp0.

¹⁸² <https://historia.europa.eu/en/digital-offer>.

¹⁸³ Conceptual Basis, p. 8 - https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/745/745721/745721_en.pdf.

c. Partnerships

Another way to expand to other parts of Europe was through partnerships. For the Throwaway temporary exhibition, content was co-created for a digital platform with nine other European museums¹⁸⁴. This co-creation meant Europeanising the approach to any given topic for all partners, and it generated media attention in countries that would not have otherwise reported about the House of European History¹⁸⁵.

In addition, the museum's sixth temporary exhibition, *Bellum et Artes*, was based on a pan-European partnership involving 13 partners.

Figure 2: Map with partners of three exhibition projects of the House of European History, status 2024



Source: House of European History team.

As a result of the strategic development described above, the House of European History can, in 2024, convey its transnational approach to European history across a wide array of channels, as is shown below:

¹⁸⁴ <https://throwaway-history.eu/en/about/project>.

¹⁸⁵ For an overview of all press articles, see the 2023 Annual Report of the House of European History.

Figure 3: Content outlets of the House of European History

Content Outlets of the House of European History - Status January 2024		
<i>Physical</i>	<i>Since...</i>	<i>Target audience</i>
<i>Permanent exhibition</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Family Trail and Offer</i>	<i>2017, renewed 2024</i>	<i>Families</i>
<i>Activity Sheets for Schools</i>	<i>2017, renewed 2024</i>	<i>Secondary Schools</i>
<i>Tablet Tours about different topics</i>	<i>2017, 2022? 2024</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Temporary Exhibitions</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>Depending on topic</i>
<i>Touring Exhibition</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Events</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>Adults, young people, depending on topic</i>
<i>Guided Tours of the permanent and temporary exhibition and topical guided tours</i>	<i>2017, renewed 2024</i>	<i>Adults, primary & secondary schools</i>
<i>Lunch Tours: thematic guided tours provided every Tuesday</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Silent Discussion: public participatory installation in the museum</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Teacher Seminars, Workshops & Presentations</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>Primary & secondary schools, international educational stakeholders</i>
<i>Workshops Secondary Schools</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>Secondary Schools</i>
<i>Workshops Primary Schools</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>Primary Schools</i>
Hybrid		
<i>Events</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Tracking my Europe Interactive</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>iWalk App, Holocaust education in partnership with the USC Shoah Foundation</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>General public in Brussels, schools</i>

Digital		
<i>Website</i>	<i>2017, renewed 2024</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Social Media Platforms</i>	<i>2017, 2022</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Virtual Tour of the Permanent Exhibition</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>Secondary schools, higher education, general public</i>
<i>Online Collection</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>General public, museum peers</i>
<i>Digital Exhibition When Walls Talk on the Europeana Platform</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Video Guided Tours, permanent and temporary exhibition</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>Higher education, general public</i>
<i>Throwaway Digital Platform</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>Environmental activists, general public</i>
<i>Virtual Reality Experience European Coal and Steel Community</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>Higher education, general public</i>
<i>Events</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Live Online Teacher Seminars & Workshops</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>Primary & secondary schools, international educational stakeholders</i>
<i>Digital Learning Platform</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>Secondary school teachers and their learners</i>
Print		
<i>Guidebook Permanent Exhibition</i>	<i>2017, 2022-24</i>	<i>General public</i>
<i>Temporary Exhibitions Catalogues</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>General public, adults, higher education</i>
<i>Museum Publications, e.g., Creating a HEH</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>General public, academics</i>
<i>Leaflets and flyers</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>Depending on topic</i>
<i>Academic Publications of Staff Members</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>Academics, higher education</i>

<i>Impact on offers of other institutions</i>		
<i>Throwaway European Partnership</i>	<i>2021-23</i>	<i>9 other museums and their audiences</i>
<i>Bellum & Artes Partnership</i>	<i>2020-24</i>	<i>12 other museums and research institutes</i>
<i>Membership of Advisory Boards and Museum Juries</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>Museum peers, academics</i>
<i>Lectures, participation in panel debates and conferences</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>General public, academics, museum peers</i>
<i>Teacher seminars & workshops offsite - participation in international teachers' conferences organised by learning stakeholders</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>Primary & secondary schools, international educational stakeholders</i>
<i>Throwaway local partnership</i>	<i>2021-23</i>	<i>Waste workers and communities in Brussels</i>

Source: House of European History

Outlook

At the time of writing, the House of European History has expanded the diversity of its channels as much as possible; it reaches a huge variety of audiences physically and digitally. In 2023, the museum had 172 567 visitors, 109 060 website views and 928 883 social media views. As the above table shows, the museum team has quickly managed the digital transition and all teams have adopted digital ways of working. Digital offers have become a permanent part of the museum's strategic planning.

Nearly seven years after opening, the House of European History has become a reference for new museum projects in Europe and beyond and has been asked to join advisory boards and juries in different European countries. Visitor satisfaction is consistently very high. Recognition for the museum's work includes Tripadvisor's 'Travelers' Choice' and a special mention at the 2019 European Museum of the Year Award. The museum has also yielded a lot of attention from researchers; more than 120 articles and books have been published about it. In 2023, a historian was commissioned to conduct a meta-analysis of these reviews with a view to getting an overview of how they assessed the different themes

presented in the permanent exhibition. The positive attention from academics and museum peers alike shows that the strategy of letting the museum develop according to the standards in the field has paid off. It is being recognised as a professional museum.

The ongoing evaluation of all museum channels should determine not only the numbers and qualitative satisfaction, but also the impact on visitors and the messages they take away. In line with the new museum definition, including a clear societal mission for museums¹⁸⁶, the House of European History has an important role to play in educating its visitors about democracy, fostering diversity, enhancing understanding for a shared past and its diverse memories, and advancing the European idea. The museum's management are currently taking steps aimed at making its work more audience-driven, inclusive, participative and sustainable, in line with the most important current trends in the museum field.

The House of European History is deeply indebted to the former Secretary-General of the European Parliament for the opportunity to develop the museum based on academic and international professional standards. It is only through this freedom, leverage and room for manoeuvre that such growth has been possible. The development of this museum also hugely benefited from Klaus Welle's strategic advice, his protection from political intrusion into its content and even his support in collecting objects. The field collection of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the European Union would not be 98 objects strong without the hands-on help of the Secretary-General, who thought about the museum's collection even in the most prestigious settings of the celebrations¹⁸⁷.

¹⁸⁶ 'A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.' <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>.

¹⁸⁷ <https://historia.europa.eu/en/collection/collecting-projects/nobel-peace-prize-oslo-2012>.

EYE: Teen spirit for Europe

Klaus Welle's sense of innovation

Klaus LÖFFLER

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DO YOU STILL NEED ME WHEN I'M 64? - 9 May 2014: First edition of the EYE in Strasbourg, on the exact day 64 years after the Schuman declaration. Theme: Ideas for a better Europe

"SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT," Nirvana's greatest hit, is the anthem of a generation that refuses to meet the expectations of adults and seeks its own lifestyle.

Who would dare to expose the European Parliament in Strasbourg to this unpredictable teen spirit and offer thousands of young people a unique platform for their concerns and ideas? No one but Klaus Welle. With his knack for innovation, he invented a novel format ten years ago: The EYE, an exciting weekend of ideas, debates, and encounters, gives active young citizens from all European countries and regions influence over the course of European politics.

The persuasive power of parliament members (MEPs), experts, and scientists is not what is sought, but rather the inventiveness of the young people. "Ideas for a better Europe" was the motto of the first edition of the EYE in 2014. The flagship is in full sail and is taking on board more young people today than ever before. "The House of European democracy is yours today," Roberta Metsola called out to 8,500 participants of the 5th edition of the EYE in the spring of 2023 in Strasbourg, "you are here pushing forward the Europe you want to see." And as the captain on the flagship she added, "Let's listen to the ideas and take them on board. You are the front-runners of change!"



EYE 2023, 5th edition of the flagship youth event on 9-10 June in Strasbourg with 8.500 young participants. Roberta Metsola : You are the front-runners of change!

Who believes that young people under 30 can stand up and be front-runners of change? Klaus Welle, for sure. "Together we can make a change" was not chosen

as the motto for the 2016 event by chance. His willingness to take a risk with the EYE was a bet that the younger generation deserves our trust.

ERASMUS, probably the EU's most successful program of all times, provided a huge motivational boost for Europe. "Erasmus has created the first generation of young Europeans," said Umberto Eco. European integration is no longer primarily a lesson from history, but a door opener for personal experiences beyond the borders. Now, young people can speak from their own experience about Europe. Klaus Welle recognised earlier than others that this holds great potential for dialogue with the youth - and with the EYE, he staked the claims for the European Parliament.

I was there when he took the initiative in the autumn of 2013 and outlined the concept of the new project. The key points assembled immediately to a design, a kind of scribble in my mind's eye, but not yet to a full picture. The original EYE essentials remain consistent from edition to edition. Participants: up to 10,000, aged 16 to 30. Diversity: Young people from all regions and backgrounds. Special attention to those who are remote, isolated, or at risk of exclusion. Language: No EU jargon, please. Words don't come easy. Commitment: We want to listen to you and your ideas. Your creativity is a source of inspiration for European legislation. Partners: Most activities are organised by young people, notably the European Youth Forum. Activity formats: 300 activities, many different formats. Ideas check and youth hearing, especially designed for the EYE. For the Secretary-General - in his younger years an active member of a political youth organisation - the EYE is not just any project. He keeps a tight rein on the young and untamed horse. Fortunately. Because implementation is not an easy game to play. With little exaggeration, one could say that launching the first event in 2014 under the conditions of public administration was akin to a suicide mission. Financial resources? Rather slim, unspent leftover funds from the visitor service. "Less is more," Welle says in such situations. Human resources: There was no youth outreach unit at the time. A small task force had to suffice, assuming the generous cooperation of other services of the house. Preparation time? A few months. Not much time to put together a program that attracts young people in droves to Strasbourg. Innovation is a game of risk. Not many are willing to take this risk. Even Martin Schulz, known for his hands-on optimism, maintained a polite distance from the EYE until the idea took off.

The project was a resounding success because Klaus Welle trusted young people from the start. The teen spirit, amplified by team spirit, can unleash unforeseen creative forces. Acrobatic performances by students of European circus schools - without accidents. A colourful tent city on the premises of par-

liament - completed on time. 200 students from the University of Strasbourg as volunteers guide the way through the labyrinth of the Parliament building - and prevent chaos. The EYE team at work - the best out-of-the-box team ever.

I also admired the performance of the interpreters. In the format political comedy, a comedian appeared who (in the words of Mairead McGuinness) "looks like Kim Kardashian and talks like a rapper." How does an interpreter accustomed to routine political speeches switch on the fly to "keeping up with the Kardashians"? Chapeau!

On the 60th birthday, I would like to congratulate Klaus WELLE with a line from Bob Dylan: May you have a strong foundation when the winds of changes shift - may you stay forever young.

Klaus Welle and the Jean Monnet House

A vision for a European memory site

Martí GRAU SEGÚ

Martí Grau Segú holds a Ph.D. in History from Pompeu Fabra University. He graduated in both History and Political Science from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). He pursued graduate studies in European Politics at the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University in Bologna (Italy) and at the Pompeu Fabra University, where he obtained a Master's degree in International Law / International Studies. After a research fellowship at the School for a Culture of Peace (UAB), he worked in the European Institute for the Mediterranean. In 2008-2009, he served as a Member of the European Parliament, in the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Internal Market and Consumer Protection, as well as in the Delegations for Relations with Japan, Canada, South Caucasus and the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly. In 2011, he joined the academic team that created the House of European History (Brussels). Since 2018, he has been head of service and curator at the Jean Monnet House (Bazoches-sur-Guyonne, France). Throughout his career, he has taught at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Indiana University and the University of Versailles-Saint Quentin, and he has been an affiliated researcher at KULeuven.

Quotes:

'The Jean Monnet House is a place that is open to all – a wide variety of people from all walks of life find their way here.'

'Klaus Welle showed his attachment to the site on several attentive visits, during which he was able to slow down from the hectic pace of Brussels or Strasbourg.'

'Coherent with Monnet's world-spanning career, the site opens outwards to the main players in multilateral life in Europe and worldwide.'

Everybody knows Klaus Welle's attachment to the Jean Monnet House. During his tenure as Secretary-General of the European Parliament, he had a distinctive

vision for this historic site. In 2018, he took steps to bring it fully under European Parliament management, after three decades in which it had been run by the Jean Monnet Association.

The business plan issued in the same year laid out a twofold mission for a new Jean Monnet House service. On the one hand, the site raises awareness about the life and work of Jean Monnet, the father of Europe. On the other hand, it encourages public conversation on the present and the future of our continent, in the light of Monnet's legacy. On both accounts, the new service found its natural home in the Directorate-General for Communication. As part of the House of European History Unit, it would both draw on and enrich the European Parliament's public history initiatives. As part of the Directorate for Visitors, it would attract an ever-growing number of people and acquaint them with Monnet's home, as a way of grasping the full significance of his work and accomplishments. As part of the wider Directorate-General for Communication, the service shares its core goals of ensuring coherent and consistent outreach by the European Parliament, as well as safeguarding the institution's reputation.

In 2017, before that plan had been realised, Klaus Welle had already launched a project to renew the permanent exhibition at the Jean Monnet House, including a series of interactive exhibits similar to the Europa Experience multimedia spaces. The revamped permanent exhibition was inaugurated in 2019 by European Parliament President David Sassoli. That upgrade was also the starting point for a fully fledged programme of temporary exhibitions, either hosted or (co-) produced by the Jean Monnet House team. Hosted exhibitions that were particularly significant include those marking the 70th anniversary of the Schuman declaration and celebrating Louise Weiss 40 years after her death, both mounted by the European Parliament Historical Archives. Among the exhibitions created by the Jean Monnet House team, *The natural setting of thought* used the work of painter Joël Migneaux to recall Monnet's attachment to the nature surrounding his house, which had been a constant source of inspiration for him. Noteworthy among the co-produced exhibitions were the exhibition, in collaboration with the House of European History, devoted to the 10th anniversary of the European Union's Nobel Peace Prize, and the exhibition, with the European Parliament Historical Archives, to mark the 40th anniversary of the European Parliament's involvement in the Jean Monnet House.

Welle showed his attachment to the site on several attentive visits, during which he was able to slow down from the hectic pace of Brussels or Strasbourg, for example, when he spent a whole morning visiting every corner of the site and then, in the basement of the conference building, took the time for a relaxed con-

versation with a can of Coke. At other times he would take a brisk, early-morning stroll around the perimeter of the site and through the neighbouring properties – with permission! Or he would make a surprise visit during his holidays, on a rainy summer’s day, which called for us to unpack the new umbrellas, sporting the site logo, that we had just received and to drink some tea from the newly arrived Jean Monnet House-branded mugs. On those occasions, his vision was vividly brought home to us when he would step over to this or that window and, from that viewpoint, emphasise his words with a finger pointing out to the open.

In 2019, the Jean Monnet Academy, attached to the Directorate-General for Personnel, began training staff members on-site. For this training, as for many other events and activities on the site, Klaus Welle was (and continues to be) an occasional lecturer. The European Parliament Research Service (EPRS) also started holding scholarly and networking events at the Jean Monnet House. Initiatives important to the Jean Monnet brand have continued, such as the Jean Monnet Dialogue, under the leadership of former European Parliament President Pat Cox, who also happens to be President of the Jean Monnet Foundation for Europe in Lausanne. Furthermore, every week from the end of 2021 to the end of 2023, almost without exception, the Jean Monnet House welcomed European Union Visitor Programme groups. Yet, doubtlessly, the most important moments for the internal life of the institution at the Jean Monnet House have been the Bureau meetings. They help to demonstrate the importance of the Jean Monnet House as a meeting place for high-level decision-making, and their preparation entails a great many functional upgrades for the site. Since 2022, participants at meetings and events may benefit from overnight accommodation on-site.

Sound work between different services has been key to a tight programme of successful events and Klaus Welle has been present at a number of them; I will mention just a few of them here. He participated in the opening of the series of debates, *L'Europe de l'énergie*, (on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Treaty of Paris) in 2021, in an EU3D networking event on the Conference on the Future of Europe in 2022, and in the opening intervention of the joint working meeting between the Jean Monnet House Service and the Jean Monnet Foundation, where he reflected on the importance of Jean Monnet’s legacy, just before both teams exchanged updates on the latest developments in their respective collections. It was great to observe how he treasures friendships and how, as in Monnet’s case, friends and allies for the greater cause are often the same. This was true of Enrico Letta, who came to the Jean Monnet House in the same week he conceded the Italian election; as President of the Jacques Delors Institute, he was warmly welcomed to the Institute’s Away Day. Personally, it was great for me to be able to attend the ceremony in which Klaus Welle was decorated

by the Maison de l'Europe at the Paris city hall, before we headed to the Jean Monnet House to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the European Parliament's involvement in the site, only days before the end of Welle's tenure as European Parliament Secretary-General.

The Jean Monnet House Service has strengthened its ties with the other houses dedicated to the European founding fathers. We shared featured objects and ran joint audiovisual projects online during COVID-19 restrictions. Within the Network of Political Houses and Foundations of Great Europeans, run by the EPRS, we created a working group on the history of the gardens attached to the houses. A particular bond has been established with organisations and people dealing with the legacy of Altiero Spinelli, helping them to gain visibility, especially since numerous locations connected to Spinelli are not open to the public. This led, for example, to the joint organisation (also with the European Observatory of Memories and the Young European Federalists) of the Ventotene-Houjarray School of European Memories in 2023, also planned for 2024.

Local partnerships have become important. The area where the Jean Monnet house is located is particularly rich in history and heritage, and that has led to a project to establish an interpretation centre, *centre d'interprétation de l'architecture et du paysage*, underpinned by various local town councils¹⁸⁸. The site has maintained a stable partnership with the *Paradeisos – Jardins européens* association, initially for the conception and upkeep of the European Citizen's Garden¹⁸⁹, but also for public events on numerous occasions, including a recent series on the history of the garden, which yielded detailed guidelines on how the historical features of the garden and its attractiveness to visitors can be enhanced in the future. On Multilingualism Day 2023, the *L'Europe des langues* event was co-organised by the Jean Monnet House and the Maison de l'Europe de Paris and hosted by the prefecture of Yvelines. Collaboration with the *Mesnographies* international photography meeting and the theatre festival, *Petites scènes de la Guyonne*, have become regular fixtures.

More than ever, in the site's new phase of life, the Jean Monnet House is a place that is open to all: people from all walks of life find their way to the Jean

¹⁸⁸ Lucien Jedwab. 'De jardin en jardin, de l'abbaye de Port-Royal-des-Champs à la maison-musée Jean-Monnet'. Billet de Blog. Le Monde, 27 December 2020.

¹⁸⁹ Marine Bissinger, Nicolas Cazabat, Pauline Guiffant and Robinson Mangematin. Les nouveaux chemins de la plaine de la Haute Mauldre – Un centre d'interprétation archéologique et patrimonial à grande échelle. Cahiers du DSA. École d'architecture de la ville & des territoires Paris-Est : Paris, 2020.. See also: Martí Grau i Segú. 'European Parliament public history initiatives and the memory of European unity: some reflections and a blueprint for action'. RiMe, 7/II n.s., 2020, pp. 113-137.

Monnet House, but it also plays a role for European institutions and international organisations. On the eve of Britain leaving the European Union, at the end of January 2020, the presidents of the three European institutions – Ursula von der Leyen for the Commission, Charles Michel for the Council, and the late David Sassoli for Parliament – came together at the Jean Monnet House. Nine people – each president flanked by two high-ranking officials from each institution, Klaus Welle among them – met all day, surrounded by the site’s beautifully deserted landscape, visible from the Hans-Gert Pöttering conference room. Over a hundred people were backstage. Hour after hour, the meeting went on, and the guided tour of the historic house, scheduled for some time in the middle of the day, seemed an ever more distant prospect. At dusk, the three presidents signed the golden book in the historic house and, as they stood up from Monnet’s coffee table with heavy eyes, Welle grabbed my shoulders and said, ‘And now, the guided tour!’ I quickly decided to ignore the momentary stern looks, and luckily, they soon turned into smiles as we dived into the remarkable story of the founding father of Europe! The next day, the three presidents gave a press conference in Brussels where they all mentioned that they had been in Bazoches-sur-Guyonne the day before, discussing the way ahead for Europe. It was good to see how the Jean Monnet House continues to be a place of inspiration, even in the most dire moments.

The magic of objects

One of the achievements of early 2023 was the acquisition of a collection of numerous objects that had belonged to Jean Monnet or his household. These include a porcelain rooster, kitchen pots that Monnet had with him in many of the places where he lived, visible in several pictures, and andirons that he had kept for many years. There is also a framed signed portrait of Konrad Adenauer, a present from the German chancellor.

It is sometimes surprising how items that Monnet’s friends and collaborators placed in the house as substitutes for missing original items remind us of the originals. This is the case for a blue armchair that Monnet had in his apartment at rue de Condé in the 1930s, which was substituted by two twin armchairs that can be seen in the living room of the historic house. The original, iconic red couch and the two matching red armchairs were retrieved. Since that couch and armchairs are in a picture of one of the display areas at the Jean Monnet Foundation for Europe in Lausanne, for a moment it seemed that there were not two but three of the same suite of furniture! The Foundation double-checked and, since there were no traces, past or present, of the furniture at that location,

we concluded that the suite might have travelled back and forth at some point. The Jean Monnet House added to its collection several paintings by Monnet's wife, Silvia, of family members, and of flowers and plants. Silvia had also painted guests, like Robert Schuman, or had given some of the paintings to friends and acquaintances.

An important portion of Monnet's personal library was recovered: antiquarian books that include an 18th-century edition of the Diderot and D'Alembert encyclopedia (alas, incomplete) and works by authors ranging from Saint Augustine to Walter Scott. We know for certain that those works indeed belonged to Monnet, thanks to pictures showing him standing or sitting next to the books. Allegedly, Monnet did not write his name in very many of the books he owned or read. Some of the rare occasions he did – as with Benjamin Franklin's or Trotsky's autobiographies – reveal his pioneering spirit. A number of the books with dedications are from Salvador de Madariaga, Elisabeth Bibesco (the daughter of British Prime Minister Lord Asquith) and Anne Morrow Lindberg (Charles Lindberg's wife and daughter of Monnet's close friend, Dwight Morrow).

The way ahead

At the revamped permanent exhibition, visitors can look through binoculars to see Monnet, Robert Schuman and Schuman's aid, Bernard Clappier, meeting in the garden in the aftermath of the Schuman declaration. The panel presenting the scene reads, 'Where it all began'. The nearby interactive round table shows us what we make of Monnet's legacy in today's Europe. But Monnet's influence needs to be extended further.

To this aim, the site is intent on developing state-of-the-art museum facilities, bringing Monnet alive for visitors. A significant increase in the number of visitors needs to be compatible with preserving the intimate character of the place. The youngest generations are given a special place among target audiences: Welle promoted an agreement between the Conseil Regional d'Ile-de-France and the European Parliament, regarding youth education, which was signed by one vice-president of each institution, in the presence of Parliament President Roberta Metsola.

Coherent with Monnet's world-spanning career (as Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations, or with the fundamental insights he provided to the post-Second World War world), the site opens outwards to the main players in multilateral life in Europe and worldwide:

the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe, the United Nations. And in realising Klaus Welle's vision, the site should continue to be a meeting point for all strands of governmental and public conversation, always looking to the future.

Figure 1 – Klaus Welle at a European Movement event at the Jean Monnet House on 1 March 2024.



Source: Jean Monnet House service (Liz Petim).

The European Parliament and EU National Parliaments: From Rivals to Partners

Katrin RUHRMANN

Headed the EP Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments from 2018 to 2023. Director for the European Parliament Liaison Offices 2009-2018. Spokesperson of EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering 2007-2009 and Head of Cabinet from March to July 2009. Administrator in the EPP Group 1991-2007. Positions in the private sector (Coopers & Lybrand, European Strategy) 1988-1991. Postgraduate studies and diploma in European administration at the College of Europe.

The start of Klaus Welle's mandate as Secretary-General coincided with the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty, a major gamechanger for both the role of national parliaments (NP) and the European Parliament (EP) in the EU. Whereas solid and efficient structures of interparliamentary (IP) cooperation have been established on political level, SG Klaus Welle inspired and gave his unwavering support to establish close cooperation between administrations of the EP and NP as an essential element for facilitating IP cooperation also on political level.

Although cooperation between the EP and the NP of the member states goes back as far as 1981¹⁹⁰, the Lisbon Treaty gave a new dimension to the role of both the EP and NP in the EU and was a gamechanger for interparliamentary relations. The "Treaty of Parliaments" not only gave much more power to the EP, but also conveyed new rights and an enhanced role to NP. In addition to the important right to ratify accession treaties and being part of any future treaty revision, the Treaty includes provisions that NP will ensure compliance with the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality and the right to comment on EU legislative files and non-legislative documents (the so-called Informal *Political Dialogue*)¹⁹¹. In

addition, in the area of Justice and Home Affairs, the Treaty conveys to NP the right to scrutinise and evaluate activities of Europol and Eurojust¹⁹².

¹⁹⁰ Since 1981, organisation of the first meetings between the EP President and the Speakers of NP; creation of COSAC in 1989.

¹⁹¹ Art. 5 TEU and Protocol 1 and 2.

¹⁹² Art.88 TFEU.

Following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty and under the guidance of the EU Speakers' Conference, new formalised formats of IP cooperation have been created, mainly the Interparliamentary Conferences (IPC) for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and for the Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/CSDP) and the IPC on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU¹⁹³. More recently, the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol and an Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the Evaluation of Eurojust have been established¹⁹⁴.

During these years, the EP has always been strongly committed, both on political and administrative level, to developing and enhancing cooperation with NP. Under the guidance of its Secretary-General, the EP has given its unwavering support to interparliamentary cooperation between administrations by providing resources and facilitating cooperation in many ways¹⁹⁵. One of the most effective initiatives on administrative level was certainly the offer to host representatives from the NPs' administrations in the EP¹⁹⁶. The EP provides these representatives with office space in Brussels and Strasbourg, access to the EP buildings and support by the EP Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments for various activities, such as the organisation of bilateral visits of Members or high-level staff from their home parliaments as well as staff visits from incoming Presidency Parliaments with a view to jointly prepare, with the EP services involved in IP activities, the common work during the upcoming 6 months' Presidency.

The EP Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments, with the support of Secretary-General Klaus Welle, has been fully involved in staff networks, in particular the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation

¹⁹³ The Interparliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU was established in accordance with Art. 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (Fiscal Compact).

¹⁹⁴ For more details see "Guidelines for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation in the EU", last version adopted by the EUSC in Helsinki/Berlin (2020), published on ipex.eu as well as the Annual Reports published by the EP Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments on <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/relnatparl/en/home/annual-reports>.

¹⁹⁵ For example, on request of NPs, the EP administration (DG LINC) together with the Bundestag administration, coordinated and supported the search for a common video conference system for NPs, including a joint public procurement procedure (Meetings of the SG of the EU Parliaments: Minutes of the videoconferences of 24 January 2022 and of 6 February 2023, https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/conferences/eu_speakers/meetings).

¹⁹⁶ The first representative welcomed by the EP was sent by the Danish Folketing in 1991 following the adoption of the report by Vice-President Joao Cravinho, "Le développement des relations entre le PE et les parlements des états membres", adopted by the enlarged Bureau on 24 September 1991. Today the EP is hosting representatives (55 staff) from all 27 NPs.

(ECPRD) and the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange network (IPEX). For both networks the EP has made available dedicated EP staff, both from the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments and DG ITEC as well as financial contributions¹⁹⁷. Other more informal networks have been established such as on the “European Semester”, Democracy Support (in cooperation with DG EXPO) and EMAS.

Whereas the Lisbon Treaty had given national parliaments a fundamentally new role in EU affairs, including in the area of legislation and scrutiny¹⁹⁸ (the establishment of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group of Europol was however only possible after the adoption of the Regulation on Europol in 2016), national parliaments viewed with some scepticism the fact that with the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the EP had become a full-fledged EU legislator and budgetary authority on equal footing with the Council. The EP on the other hand was observing carefully how NP would use their new rights. Therefore, following the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty, relationships between the EP and NP have not been without tensions and it needed time to build mutual understanding, trust and awareness for their common goals as the peoples’ representatives in the European Union.

Over the years it became clear that regarding their new right to express directly their position on EU legislation via the subsidiarity check (Early Warning System) and the contributions within the “Informal Political Dialogue”, NP have been much more interested in commenting the substance of legislation rather than just monitoring subsidiarity¹⁹⁹. The EP has taken account of this by fostering direct pre- and post-legislative dialogue with NP²⁰⁰, for example in the framework of interparliamentary committee meetings or with its most recent initiative of

¹⁹⁷ ECPRD is a network in the framework of the Council of Europe. The EP has made available one fulltime administrator to run the secretariate as co-secretary together with a staff member from the Council of Europe as well as a full time staff member from DG ITEC, who is developing and maintaining the websites of ECPRD and IPEX. The EP is also financing the development and maintenance of the ECPRD and IPEX websites.

¹⁹⁸ Mainly regarding their say on the respect of the principle of subsidiarity in EU legislation (“Early Warning System”), their involvement in Treaty changes and the right of joint scrutiny with the EP on Europol and evaluation of Eurojust activities. For more details see, Katrin Auel, Christine Neuhold, Europeanisation of NP in the EU Member States, published by The Greens/EFA group in the EP, 2018.

¹⁹⁹ The large majority (more than 80%) of submissions of NP under protocol 1 and 2 relate to the substance of a legislative proposal, less than 20% are “reasoned opinions” dealing with subsidiarity.

²⁰⁰ Already mentioned in EP Resolution of 7 May 2009 on the development of relations with the EP and national parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon (Rapporteur Elmar Brok) and Recommendations of the Steering Group on national parliaments chaired by Vice-President Miguel Angel Martinez-Martinez (2010).

a “Rapporteurs’ Dialogue”²⁰¹, organised by the Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments, which allows Members of NP to exchange views and discuss with EP rapporteurs.

For the development of a constructive relationship between the EP and NP, the various IP meetings have been most important fora. These meetings need to be prepared carefully since they involve many participants representing diverging views and interests. Members often do not speak on behalf of their parliaments but represent the views of their political parties or even their governments. Meetings need to be politically sounded out during preparation, even more if a text is to be adopted. This preparation for most meetings takes place between the “troika” which comprises representatives from the Presidency Parliament, the previous and the following Presidencies as well as from the EP. The EP, both on political and administrative level, has been strongly committed to be a trustworthy partner in these meetings with a view to facilitate compromises, to support the Presidency Parliament that is in the driving seat of these meetings and to enhance cooperation between all parliaments. The task of the troika is to prepare the draft agenda and, as for EU Speakers’ Conference (EUSC) and COSAC plenaries, to prepare a draft text to be submitted to the full meeting. The troika meetings are prepared by parliamentary staff i.e., the respective NP representatives in Brussels and the EP Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments. In case of the EUSC, the highest-level IP meeting, preparation takes place by a meeting of the Secretary-Generals of all parliaments, equally prepared and guided by a troika. In this context, Klaus Welle during his mandate has played a crucial role in the preparation of all meetings of the EUSC since 2009 and thereby in shaping IP relations during the critical years after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty.

The NPs’ representatives in Brussels, together with the EP Directorate, play a pivotal role in the preparation of all troika meetings. They act as bridge builders between NPs and the EP, foster mutual understanding and smooth exchange of information as well as fast and reliable communication between all relevant actors and decision-makers, thereby facilitating the preparation of troika meetings on political level. Close and trusted cooperation between staff of parliaments largely contributes to a smooth and efficient preparation of IP meetings. The close cooperation in these troika meetings, both on political and administrative level, has been a main element for the establishment of good cooperation where, during the years, the EP has become a trusted and respected partner

²⁰¹ In a pilot phase, so far two “Rapporteurs’ Dialogues” have been organised on 29 August 2023 on “Prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market” and on 30 January 2024 on the Soil Monitoring Directive.

at the side of national parliaments by always being fully committed to good cooperation and continuous improvement and enhancement of IP relations.

In challenging times, it seems even more important that the European Parliament and national parliaments join forces for a strong parliamentary democracy. The recent initiative of First Vice-President Othmar Karas made in the context of COSAC, brought up by the Spanish Presidency to the EU Speakers Conference on 21-23 April 2024, for a “Charter on the role of Parliaments in a functioning liberal democracy”²⁰² could be a starting point for joining forces to defend European parliamentary democracy.

²⁰² The EU Speakers “take note of the draft Charter on the role of Parliaments (...) and commit themselves to continue fostering modern parliamentarism by for example conducting debates in all the NP and in the EP on the strengthening of parliamentarism in the European democracy for which the proposed Charter could serve as a basis.” Presidency Conclusions of the EUSC, 23 April 2024. See also Minutes of the LXX COSAC Meeting, Madrid 26-28 November 2023, p. 45, all documents published on ipex.eu.

5

The seats of the European Parliament

Le siège du Parlement à Strasbourg

Améliorer le présent pour préparer le futur

François GABRIEL

François Gabriel, né en 1979 en Alsace, est Directeur-adjoint du cabinet de la Présidente du Parlement européen, Roberta Metsola. Il a commencé sa carrière au sein du cabinet du maire de Strasbourg, Fabienne Keller, et du président de la communauté urbaine de Strasbourg, Robert Grossmann, avant de rejoindre le Parlement européen. En 2010, il a intégré le cabinet de Joseph Daul à la présidence du groupe du Parti populaire européen (PPE), après avoir dirigé sa campagne en 2009. Ancien collaborateur du député européen Arnaud Danjean, il a également été conseiller diplomatique au sein du cabinet de l'ancien Président du Parlement européen, Antonio Tajani, puis membre du cabinet du Secrétaire général, Klaus Welle.

Introduction

L'optimisation du siège strasbourgeois du Parlement européen constitue l'un des engagements accomplis du Secrétaire général Klaus Welle. Par sa volonté de faire d'un problème des solutions, en particulier s'agissant des trois semaines hors sessions plénières, à améliorer les conditions de travail du personnel et des députés, et son ambition de rapprocher les citoyens de la région et au-delà, Klaus Welle n'aura eu de cesse d'ancrer sous un angle novateur la présence de l'Institution en Alsace. En 13 ans, les initiatives menées à bien par le Secrétaire général, sur fond de réformes institutionnelles, ont durablement modifié l'action du Parlement européen, tout en ayant un impact très fort sur son siège à Strasbourg.

Un lieu de travail moderne et adapté

En 2009, alors que le Parlement européen hérite d'un rôle renforcé de co-législateur, il devient clair que ses infrastructures à Strasbourg ne lui permettaient

pas de répondre aux nouvelles responsabilités qui lui sont confiées. L'étroitesse des espaces de travail, en particulier ceux dévolus aux députés et leurs collaborateurs et l'insuffisance des lieux de réunion gênaient le bon fonctionnement du travail législatif.

L'acquisition, la rénovation et la mise en service du bâtiment HAVEL a ainsi rapidement apporté une solution concrète et durable au manque de place du Parlement. Racheté en 2012 par le Parlement, le bâtiment était initialement trop vétuste. Durant cinq années, sous la conduite du Secrétaire général et des services compétents du Parlement, des travaux de rénovation et de restructuration des espaces sont conduits. Cette approche permet aujourd'hui à l'immeuble d'accueillir 240 postes de travail supplémentaires. L'efficacité énergétique, les dernières normes environnementales ont en outre été au cœur de la réflexion qui entoure la rénovation du bâtiment. Dans une logique d'unicité fonctionnelle, une passerelle reliant le bâtiment HAVEL au bâtiment PFLIMLIN et par conséquent à l'ensemble des immeubles du Parlement européen à Strasbourg a par ailleurs été construite.

En parallèle de l'agrandissement nécessaire des infrastructures du Parlement, la rénovation du bâtiment HAVEL aura aussi permis de sauvegarder le patrimoine immobilier du quartier européen de Strasbourg. Conçu en 1953 pour accueillir le Conseil de l'Europe, ce bâtiment est l'immeuble le plus ancien des Institutions européennes installées à Strasbourg. Originellement voué à la destruction, un nouvel usage a été offert à ce bâtiment historique, témoin central de la construction européenne. Cette réflexion a en outre ouvert la voie à une réflexion sur la dimension patrimoniale historique et architectural de bâtiments et espaces du Parlement européen. Aujourd'hui, en plus des services administratifs du Parlement européen, en particulier les DG INLO, LINC et COMM, le bâtiment accueille le siège du Médiateur européen ; une présence en symbolique qui fait écho au nom de l'immeuble, Václav Havel, ancien Président de la Tchécoslovaquie puis de la République tchèque, qui aura lutté toute sa vie pour remettre la société civile au centre de l'action politique européenne.



De 2011 à 2017, le Secrétaire général Welle a dirigé le rachat, la restructuration et la mise en service du bâtiment HAVEL.

En parallèle d'une stratégie immobilière pragmatique et audacieuse, il s'est aussi agi de restructurer des espaces existants, en les optimisant. Avec ces gains de place et agrandissements maîtrisés successifs, l'organisation du Parlement européen à Strasbourg s'en est trouvée profondément marquée.

La première attente à satisfaire concernait les députés européens dont les conditions de travail à Strasbourg étaient difficiles du fait d'un espace de bureau à la surface exiguë, partagé avec leurs collaborateurs. En imaginant et en mettant en œuvre la stratégie « 1+1 », à surface immobilière totale constante, le Secrétaire général et le Bureau ont permis à chaque parlementaire européen de bénéficier d'un bureau propre, ainsi que d'un autre contigu pour leurs assistants au sein des infrastructures de Strasbourg. Il convient de souligner que les négociations entre groupes politiques concernant les nouveaux bureaux n'étaient pas des plus aisées et appelaient une grande compréhension des enjeux. Avec détermination et un sens habile de la médiation, un terrain d'entente a été trouvé en répondant aux besoins évidents des députés.

Ce faisant, les conditions de travail des assistants parlementaires ont été sensiblement améliorées, ce qui répond à une conception nouvelle et renforcée du travail parlementaire européen à l'échelle des bureaux des députés.

Cet objectif du doublement des espaces réservés aux députés et à leurs collaborateurs, à surface immobilière totale constante, a aussi été rendu possible grâce au réaménagement du bâtiment PFLIMLIN, situé entre les immeubles HAVEL et CHURCHILL. Les salles de réunion vétustes ont ainsi laissé la place à des espaces de travail partagés répondant aux dernières normes d'organisation des espaces de bureau, permettant aux différentes DG dont la présence est indispensable en session plénière, notamment les DG IPOL et EXPO, d'être mieux présentes à Strasbourg, et ce grâce à ces nouveaux espaces, mais aussi avec une révision des règles de missions qui réduit la présence des administrateurs à l'essentiel. Cette opération a aussi, malheureusement, été rendue possible grâce au Brexit et le départ des députés européens britanniques.

Un ancrage local et régional renforcé

Bien plus que l'amélioration du siège du Parlement européen, le Secrétaire général aura eu à cœur de consolider les liens entre une Institution et les citoyens, tout en veillant au rayonnement du Parlement à Strasbourg et dans sa région. En fortifiant les relations avec les autorités locales et nationales et en s'engageant au sein dans la vie strasbourgeoise, Klaus Welle a transformé le Parlement en un lieu de vie et d'échange.

Renforcer la coopération avec les acteurs locaux fut une priorité. En octobre 2017, a ainsi été mis en place un cadre de travail important pour le Parlement à Strasbourg : le Groupe de Contact « Strasbourg - Parlement Européen ». La création de ce groupe de travail a mis fin à des années de dialogue infructueux, entre d'un côté le Bureau du Parlement et les députés qui soulevaient régulièrement les conditions d'accès et de travail à Strasbourg, et d'un autre des collectivités locales et les services de l'État français qui avaient à cœur de promouvoir la vocation européenne de la capitale alsacienne, sans forcément émettre les meilleures solutions. Pour ainsi dire, les uns et les autres parlaient, sans se comprendre et grâce au Groupe de Contact, un dialogue structuré et efficace a pu être mis en place. Depuis lors, les services de l'État, la Ville et l'Eurométropole de Strasbourg, la Collectivité européenne d'Alsace, la Région Grand Est, ainsi que les membres compétents du Bureau du Parlement européen se retrouvent à échéances régulières.

Parmi les réussites de ce groupe de travail, nous pouvons citer le renforcement de l'accessibilité du siège en multipliant et diversifiant l'offre ferroviaire et les dessertes aériennes de la ville. En 2019, une nouvelle ligne aérienne reliant Strasbourg à Munich se voit déployée ainsi que des trajets Strasbourg-Istanbul,

Strasbourg-Athènes et Strasbourg-Varsovie. Parallèlement, les liaisons depuis l'aéroport d'Amsterdam ont été pérennisées. Le Parlement a aussi pu étayer l'offre de transports au sein même de la ville à travers la création d'une navette fluviale reliant le Parlement au centre historique en moins de 15 minutes. Et si la ligne aérienne Strasbourg-Munich a été fragilisée par la pandémie de COVID 19, c'est bien au sein du Groupe de Contact que des solutions alternatives sont actuellement discutées.

Rapprocher le Parlement des citoyens européens fut aussi un engagement fort de Klaus Welle. La diversification des activités proposées aux visiteurs dans les bâtiments de Strasbourg en est un signe clair. Son mandat à la tête de l'administration du Parlement européen fut ainsi marqué par l'inauguration du Parliamentarium « Simone Veil » à Strasbourg, espace interactif de découverte du processus législatif européen et du fonctionnement de l'Institution. De même, un nouveau circuit de visite des bâtiments strasbourgeois fut mis en place. Par ces activités immersives et ludiques, le Parlement renforce aujourd'hui encore son ancrage au sein de la ville, en faisant de Strasbourg un lieu central de l'Histoire européenne, un lieu de partage, d'accueil et d'information.



Le Parliamentarium de Strasbourg propose notamment un jeu de rôles, plaçant les visiteurs dans la peau des députés européens.

L'Alsace ne se limitant pas à Strasbourg et sensible à une dimension mémorielle, Klaus Welle œuvra aussi à l'ancrage régional du Parlement, en développant l'attachement de la région à son histoire européenne. Sous sa direction,

Le Parlement participa ainsi à l'agrandissement du Mémorial Alsace-Moselle de Schirmeck. En partenariat avec la Région Alsace, le Parlement a ainsi financé l'extension du musée qui intègre désormais une exposition permanente sur l'histoire de l'intégration européenne et sur le rôle clef de la région dans cette construction.



Le Mémorial Alsace-Moselle dévoile l'histoire particulière de cette région et nous enseigne la nécessité qu'il y a à unir les Européens dans leur diversité tout en consacrant un espace à la construction européenne.

Autre point saillant de l'ancrage du Parlement européen à Strasbourg, celui, altruiste, qui s'est développé lors de la pandémie de COVID-19. Pendant plus de 15 mois, pour des raisons sanitaires et de sécurité, l'Institution n'a pas pu trouver le chemin de son siège strasbourgeois et siéger en sessions plénière. Soucieux d'affirmer la solidarité du Parlement européen avec son territoire hôte, Klaus Welle avait envisagé plusieurs solutions. La première qui n'a pas pu se concrétiser, consistait à proposer les espaces de la Tour Louise WEISS aux services hospitaliers de la région pour y accueillir des personnels de soins ainsi que des malades atteints de COVID-19.

Le dialogue permanent avec les services de la préfecture du Bas-Rhin et ceux de la Ville de Strasbourg ont néanmoins permis de mettre en œuvre deux actions particulièrement appréciées en Alsace. En un temps record et malgré les défis organisationnels imposés par la situation sanitaire, toute la flotte de véhicules du Parlement européen a été mise à la disposition des services de santé, afin d'assurer le transport des médecins, infirmiers et assistants sociaux de la ville.

De même, en solidarité avec les opérateurs de restauration du Parlement et afin de soutenir les personnes dans le besoin, l'initiative des « repas solidaires » a été développée. Entre mai et juillet 2020, 500 repas quotidiens ont ainsi été préparés au sein des cuisines du Parlement puis distribués, en collaboration avec la Croix Rouge, à des jeunes et des familles monoparentales dans le besoin.

Afin de pallier à la propagation de l'épidémie, le self de l'édifice Louise WEISS a aussi été mis à disposition pour accueillir un des plus grands centres de dépistage de la région. D'une capacité de 2 500 tests par jour, ce centre a accueilli pendant plusieurs mois les patients ayant côtoyés des personnes touchées par le virus, leur apportant un accueil, un suivi médical ainsi que des résultats en moins de 24 heures.



Sur l'initiative du Secrétaire général Welle, le Parlement a accueilli un centre de dépistage du Covid-19 en 2020.

En parallèle de ces initiatives, il s'agissait, dans un contexte d'accalmie de la pandémie, de permettre la reprise progressive mais néanmoins rapide des travaux parlementaires à Strasbourg grâce à une organisation millimétrée.

Un mandat tourné vers l'avenir

De 2009 à 2022, le Secrétaire général Welle aura démontré son souci constant de répondre aux défis du présent tout en préparant l'avenir du Parlement à Strasbourg. Cette longévité remarquable a en effet été accompagnée d'une volonté continue de promouvoir des solutions innovantes, d'anticiper les besoins

à venir et d'imaginer le futur des Institutions. Dans l'amélioration des conditions de travail du personnel comme dans l'ouverture du Parlement aux citoyens, le Secrétaire général aura eu à cœur de pérenniser de façon originale la présence du Parlement à Strasbourg.

Dans la continuité des améliorations concrètes qu'il aura portées tout au long de son mandat, le Secrétaire général a ainsi souligné 5 piliers qu'il convient de renforcer. On y retrouve des mesures concrètes quant à l'amélioration des conditions de travail, par le renforcement de l'accessibilité du siège, la restructuration de certains bureaux mais aussi par la consolidation des effectifs au siège du Parlement. De plus, il y est souligné l'importance de développer Strasbourg en tant que Capitale européenne, en multipliant l'organisation de manifestations culturelles et de conférences de haut niveau au sein des locaux du Parlement européen.

Le Secrétariat général du Parlement européen à Luxembourg : quand le provisoire se fait durable

Ludovic DELEPINE

Dr Ludovic Delépine has 30 years' experience in IT, including IT governance for public administration, IT enterprise architecture and digital transformation. He leads the Inter-Parliamentary Union's IT governance thematic hub. Currently, he is Head of the Archives Unit in the European Parliament.

He holds a Ph.D. in IT from the University of Bourgogne, where his principal area of specialisation was artificial intelligence. He has also worked as a lecturer at French universities and as a researcher in this field at CNRS laboratories for over eight years.

Pendant quarante ans, de 1952 à 1992, la présence et les conditions d'installation provisoire du Secrétariat général du Parlement européen échappent presque totalement au contrôle de l'institution. Malgré les récriminations du Parlement et de son administration qui souhaiteraient disposer au plus vite d'un seul lieu de travail et de réunion, c'est bien la précarité immobilière et les déménagements successifs qui caractérisent cette période. Découlant directement de la déclaration Schuman du 9 mai 1950, le traité de Paris qui institue le 18 avril 1951 la Communauté européenne du charbon et de l'acier (CECA) ne dit pas un mot sur le siège ou le lieu d'implantation des nouvelles institutions. Plusieurs villes sont alors évoquées, avec plus ou moins d'insistance, par les représentants des Six au cours des délibérations finales de la commission intérimaire du Plan Schuman : Liège, La Haye, Paris, Sarrebruck, Strasbourg, Bruxelles ou encore Turin²⁰³.

Au Quai d'Orsay, le ministre Robert Schuman envisage d'abord Strasbourg afin de faciliter les rapports entre la CECA et le Conseil de l'Europe. Mais il cherche aussi une solution européenne à la question sarroise en suggérant ensuite Sarrebruck comme siège de certaines institutions de la CECA. L'affaire n'aboutit pas et les pourparlers entre les diplomates s'enlisent. Ce n'est qu'en juillet 1952,

²⁰³ C. Hein, « Choosing a site for the capital of Europe », in *GeoJournal*, vol. 51, n°1-2, 2000, pp. 83-97.

quelques semaines à peine avant l'entrée en fonction des institutions, qu'une solution de compromis est adoptée par les ministres des Affaires étrangères des Six : la ville de Luxembourg est choisie comme lieu de travail provisoire des premières institutions communautaires²⁰⁴.

Comme l'écrira plus tard Jean Monnet dans ses Mémoires, cette décision permet de faire démarrer la CECA, même de façon précaire, « dans une petite ville qui est devenue un carrefour de l'Europe »²⁰⁵.

Entre août et décembre 1952, toutes les institutions peuvent commencer à fonctionner dans des locaux mis sans traîner à leur disposition²⁰⁶. Seule distinction : l'Assemblée commune dont l'embryon de Secrétariat est basé à Luxembourg alors que, pour des raisons logistiques et matérielles, les sessions plénières doivent se tenir dans l'hémicycle qu'utilise depuis deux ans l'Assemblée consultative du Conseil de l'Europe dans la Maison de l'Europe à Strasbourg.

À Luxembourg, mis en place de façon empirique, les premiers services administratifs et techniques du Secrétariat général de l'Assemblée commune se trouvent d'emblée éparpillés dans plusieurs bâtiments appartenant à la municipalité ou à l'État luxembourgeois. Parfois, il s'agit même d'anciens appartements transformés à la hâte, ce qui ne manque pas de créer pour le personnel un certain inconfort. À l'époque, un petit état-major d'à peine une quarantaine d'agents rapidement recrutés sur contrats est à pied d'œuvre sous la houlette du premier secrétaire général, Frits de Nerée tot Babberich. On notera que ni le traité ni le Règlement de l'Assemblée commune ne définissent les tâches qui incombent au secrétariat. Mais à une époque où les membres de l'Assemblée se réunissent à intervalles irréguliers, il importe de pouvoir compter sur le bon fonctionnement de son secrétariat et sur la continuité dans ses structures administratives. Bien vite, une partie des services (la présidence, la direction des commissions et des études parlementaires, la bibliothèque et la direction de l'Administration) prend ses quartiers à la Rue Beaumont, dans un immeuble flambant neuf initialement destiné à héberger les fonctionnaires du ministère de l'Intérieur. Afin de pouvoir travailler sans subir les déplacements permanents des membres du

²⁰⁴ E. Croisé-Schirtz, « La bataille des sièges (1950-1958) », in G. Trausch et al. (dir.), *Le Luxembourg face à la construction européenne*, Luxembourg, Centre d'études et de recherches européennes Robert Schuman, 1996, pp. 67-104.

²⁰⁵ J. Monnet, *Mémoires*, Paris, Fayard, pp. 433-434.

²⁰⁶ G. Trausch, « L'heure européenne qui fait d'une ville de province un carrefour européen », in G. Trausch (dir.), *La Ville de Luxembourg : du château des comtes à la métropole européenne*, Anvers, Fonds Mercator, 1994, pp. 372-459.

staff, tous les services du Secrétariat général sont reliés entre eux par un central téléphonique²⁰⁷.

En 1958, suite à l'entrée en vigueur de la Communauté économique européenne et de la Communauté européenne de l'énergie atomique (Euratom), l'Assemblée commune de la CECA se dissout dans une Assemblée élargie pour les trois Communautés européennes et qui prend le nom d'Assemblée parlementaire européenne. Ses membres sont plus nombreux et ses activités se diversifient. S'ensuit une augmentation progressive du nombre de fonctionnaires (413 postes en 1963) au sein de l'organigramme, ce qui rend bientôt la dispersion immobilière du Secrétariat général à Luxembourg assez inconfortable. Les besoins en bureaux et en salles de réunion se font de plus en plus sentir. Le comité du personnel ne manque pas de s'en faire l'écho. Pour le Secrétariat général, il importe également d'améliorer les conditions d'accès à Luxembourg, notamment par les voies ferroviaires et aériennes. Car dans le même temps, des fonctionnaires du Parlement européen doivent aussi se rendre très souvent en mission à Bruxelles pour assister aux réunions de certaines commissions parlementaires ou à celles des groupes politiques. Mais l'absence d'une décision politique des Six sur le siège définitif des institutions communautaires rend impossible pour le Parlement européen de tracer des plans à long terme ou de construire des bâtiments pour son propre compte. Le temporaire des débuts finira-t-il par devenir définitif ? Dans l'incertitude, c'est en tout cas la formule des locations qui continue à s'imposer, entraînant des dépenses sans cesse croissantes.

Dans l'immédiat, la disparition programmée de la Haute Autorité de la CECA suite à la fusion dans une Commission unique des exécutifs des trois Communautés conduit le gouvernement luxembourgeois à réclamer dès 1964 des compensations politiques et matérielles, notamment à travers la tenue de sessions du Parlement européen plusieurs fois par an à Luxembourg. Dans la foulée, est d'ailleurs créé au sein du ministère des Affaires étrangères un comité de coordination pour l'installation d'institutions et d'organismes européens. Il faut dire que depuis le début des années 1960 et la création du Fonds d'urbanisation et d'aménagement du Plateau du Kirchberg, les projets se multiplient pour construire de nouveaux immeubles et urbaniser la zone constituée d'une réserve foncière de 360 hectares. Reliant le centre-ville au Plateau du Kirchberg situé à moins de trois kilomètres, le pont Grande-Duchesse Charlotte ('Pont rouge')

²⁰⁷ Archives du Parlement européen (Luxembourg), Fonds « Secrétariat général du PE/ Cabinet du SG Frits de Nerée tot Babberich/Ressources immobilières et mobilières », Dossier EU.HAEU/SG 01NB.2000/IMMO//IMMO-010/0010, Note « Estimation des besoins en locaux du Secrétariat de l'Assemblée dans l'hypothèse d'un siège définitif ».

est inauguré en 1966, après quatre ans de travaux. L'année suivante, pressé de quitter le centre historique de la capitale où il se trouve à l'étroit et où il est encore dispersé dans neuf bâtiments et dépôts, le Parlement européen loue à l'État luxembourgeois les quinze premiers étages du Bâtiment-tour Alcide De Gasperi, édifice-phare et polyvalent du nouveau quartier. C'est aussi le premier « gratte-ciel » du pays (d'où son surnom de « *Héichhaus* »). Tous les services du Secrétariat général peuvent enfin être regroupés dans un seul bâtiment²⁰⁸. Rassuré par la décision des Six qui, tout en s'accordant sur la fusion des exécutifs des trois Communautés, confirment en avril 1965 que Luxembourg, Bruxelles et Strasbourg resteront les lieux de travail provisoires des institutions communautaires et que le Secrétariat général de l'Assemblée demeure installé à Luxembourg, le gouvernement luxembourgeois entend bien pousser son avantage. Ainsi cherche-t-il à consolider autant que possible la présence dans la capitale des fonctionnaires du Parlement européen. Les choses alors ne traînent pas. Quelques mois plus tard, le ministère des Travaux publics engage en effet avec le Parlement européen des discussions en vue de construire un nouveau bâtiment administratif au Kirchberg. Focalisé sur les aspects fonctionnels et logistiques pour son personnel, le Parlement estime nécessaire de pouvoir disposer d'au moins 470 bureaux, de salles de réunion, d'un salon d'accueil, d'une salle de presse, d'une bibliothèque et de diverses infrastructures comme une cafétéria, une cantine et plusieurs salles d'archives. Mais à la demande du Parlement, les plans prévoient aussi toutes les installations nécessaires à la tenue de séances plénières. Il n'y a là rien de surprenant puisqu'à l'époque, dans la foulée d'une décision prise en 1967 par son Bureau élargi, le Parlement européen organise déjà des sessions extraordinaires et de courte durée dans la grande salle des congrès du Centre européen du Kirchberg. Ce qui ne va toutefois pas sans provoquer des frictions diplomatiques. Bien décidée à faire valoir ses droits acquis, la France ne tarde en effet pas au début des années 1970 à exprimer ses inquiétude face à l'accroissement des périodes de session prévues en dehors de Strasbourg. Pour le gouvernement français, toujours dans l'attente d'une décision définitive sur le siège du Parlement européen, il faut surtout empêcher que ce qui pouvait passer pour des cas exceptionnels prenne peu à peu un caractère régulier. Autrement dit, la crainte est que Strasbourg soit abandonnée petit à petit. Mais rien n'y fait : dès son inauguration en février 1973, l'hémicycle - dont les plans ont dû être entre-temps modifiés pour pouvoir recevoir un plus grand nombre de députés après le premier élargissement des Communautés européennes - accueille ses premières sessions plénières. Le moment est symboliquement important car pour la première fois dans son histoire, le Parlement européen dispose de son

²⁰⁸ Le Centre européen de Kirchberg à Luxembourg, Service Information et Presse du Gouvernement luxembourgeois, 1971, 22 p.

propre hémicycle. Trente-cinq séances s’y tiendront jusqu’au printemps 1979²⁰⁹. Mais le bâtiment administratif, qui prendra bientôt le nom de Robert Schuman, accueille aussi les fonctionnaires du Secrétariat général, même si les services de traduction restent momentanément installés dans le Bâtiment-tour tout proche. Les effectifs, accrus suite au premier élargissement des Communautés, sont alors d’un peu plus de mille fonctionnaires²¹⁰. Et bien vite, ils se trouvent à nouveau à l’étroit dans le bâtiment Schuman. Pour autant, les appels du Parlement qui, dans la perspective de son élection au suffrage universel et de l’accroissement du nombre de ses membres, fait connaître les problèmes de fonctionnement auxquels il est confronté dans trois villes différentes, restent pour l’heure sans réponse²¹¹.

C’est alors que l’État luxembourgeois prend une initiative hardie. À peine déguisé, l’objectif est de faire pièce aux ambitions françaises suite à l’inauguration, en janvier 1977, du Palais de l’Europe à Strasbourg destiné à accueillir à tour de rôle les sessions de l’Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l’Europe et celles du Parlement européen. Il faut dire que pour le Luxembourg, la perte éventuelle du Secrétariat général du Parlement européen ne saurait être compensée par un simple accroissement numérique des fonctionnaires d’autres institutions communautaires. Le gouvernement luxembourgeois fait alors appel aux services de l’architecte français Roger Taillibert pour construire au Kirchberg un nouveau bâtiment entièrement destiné à satisfaire les besoins du Parlement européen et assurer le maintien dans le pays des fonctionnaires de l’institution. Mondialement connu pour ses infrastructures sportives et olympiques, Taillibert soumet en 1978 son projet de construction du Centre 300. Le programme comporte la création de 100.000 m² de bureaux et d’équipements, dont un hémicycle d’une capacité de 1200 places. Ironiquement qualifié par les Luxembourgeois de ‘*Grousse Kueb’* (gros corbeau) en raison de sa taille et de son aspect aérien, le Centre 300 doit être achevé dans un délai de quatorze mois, c’est-à-dire avant les premières élections européennes, en juin 1979. Résolument futuriste et très onéreux, le bâtiment projeté suscite toutefois une violente controverse politique et urbanistique. Aussi, sous la pression croissante de l’opinion publique, le gouvernement

²⁰⁹ F. Davanzo, Le premier hémicycle du Parlement européen : le Bâtiment Schuman, Luxembourg, Archives historiques du Parlement européen, 2016, 8 p. [PE 563.515].

²¹⁰ Archives du Parlement européen (Luxembourg), Fonds « Secrétariat général du PE/ Cabinet du SG Hans Nord/Ressources immobilières et mobilières », Dossier EU.HAEU/SG 02HN.2000/IMMO//IMMO-070/0100, Notes « Attribution et répartition des locaux et bureaux », 1974-1978.

²¹¹ Groupe de travail « Procédures et méthodes de travail du Parlement européen » : Note sur les conséquences découlant de l’absence d’un lieu de réunion fixe du Parlement européen (Rapporteur : M. Luigi Noé), PE 34.352, Parlement européen, 16 octobre 1973, 7 p.

luxembourgeois finit-il par abandonner le projet²¹². Le regroupement de tous les services du Secrétariat général en un seul lieu s'en voit donc reporté à plus tard. Car il apparaît vite que la construction dans l'urgence du bâtiment-hémicycle du '*petit Kueb*' (petit corbeau) ne permettra pas d'accueillir l'entièreté du staff dont les effectifs ont entre-temps continué à augmenter (2289 fonctionnaires en 1980). Et par ailleurs, c'est à partir de 1981 que de plus en plus nombreux sont les fonctionnaires affectés au secrétariat des commissions parlementaires qui quittent Luxembourg pour s'installer pour de bon à Bruxelles. Cette situation décidément compliquée conduit le Parlement européen à faire pression sur les États membres pour qu'ils fixent enfin, d'un accord unanime, le siège définitif des institutions communautaires. Il en appelle pour cela aux devoirs réciproques de coopération loyale entre l'assemblée et les gouvernements.

Pleinement conscientes des inconvénients inhérents à la dispersion des lieux de travail pour le Parlement européen, les autorités grand-ducales ne ménagent pas leurs efforts pour satisfaire les besoins logistiques de l'institution. Ce qui n'exclut pourtant pas des tensions épisodiques avec le Secrétariat général. C'est encore le cas au début des années 1980 quand l'État luxembourgeois introduit devant la Cour de justice des Communautés européennes un recours en annulation contre une résolution de l'assemblée qui prévoit à la fois d'installer de façon permanente des fonctionnaires du Secrétariat général à Strasbourg et à Bruxelles et de prendre en compte cette nouvelle répartition lors des nouveaux recrutements. S'il obtient finalement gain de cause, en obligeant le Parlement à maintenir l'essentiel de son staff dans le pays, le Luxembourg n'en promet pas moins d'améliorer, en étroite collaboration avec la Belgique et la France, la connexion ferroviaire et les télécommunications entre Luxembourg-ville, Bruxelles et Strasbourg²¹³. Mais la réponse définitive des États membres se fait toujours attendre. Ce qui en 1983 conduit le Parlement, qui emploie alors à Luxembourg un peu plus de 2100 fonctionnaires titularisés, à muter aussi de manière permanente une centaine de fonctionnaires à Bruxelles où opèrent par ailleurs 155 agents temporaires affectés aux groupes politiques. Le mouvement de déplacement n'ira désormais qu'en s'accroissant.

Pour les autorités luxembourgeoises, la menace est donc toujours réelle. Et elles entendent bien obtenir des compensations du même ordre en cas de départ

²¹² A. Linster, « Das 'Centre 300' oder 'de Kueb' auf dem Kirchberg », in M.-P. Jungblut (dir.), *Luxemburg, eine Stadt in Europa : Schlaglichter auf mehr als 1000 Jahre europäische Stadtgeschichte*, Luxembourg, MHLV, 2014, pp. 472-477.

²¹³ Archives du Parlement européen (Luxembourg), Fonds « Secrétariat général du PE/ Cabinet du SG Hans-Joachim Opitz/Question du siège, politique immobilière et gestion des locaux au PE, Dossier EU.HAEU/SG 03HO.3000/SIEG//SIEG-050, « Résolutions du PE sur la question du siège, recours du Grand-Duché du Luxembourg », 1983.

du Secrétariat général. Or c'est précisément pour éviter un tel scénario que le gouvernement se décide à construire le Bâtiment administratif du Kirchberg (BAK). Dès la fin de la première phase des travaux et de sa mise en service en 1987, le Parlement européen peut occuper l'immeuble qui sera rebaptisé dix ans plus tard bâtiment « Konrad Adenauer » (KAD). Les lieux deviendront même propriété de l'institution en 2003²¹⁴. Car entre-temps, au grand dam du Parlement qui voit ainsi s'envoler ses espoirs d'une solution pratique à ses problèmes d'organisation via la désignation d'un siège unique, l'accord d'Édimbourg entre les Douze a confirmé en 1992 le *statu quo* existant en ce qui concerne les lieux de travail des institutions européennes. Si le caractère provisoire du siège est certes levé, le Secrétariat général du Parlement européen et ses services restent donc installés à Luxembourg. Pour le Parlement européen, cette décision est incompatible avec les prérogatives naturelles d'un Parlement élu au suffrage universel direct, à même de déterminer ses propres méthodes de travail pour remplir le plus efficacement possible ses missions. Mais rien n'y fait : l'accord d'Édimbourg sera même confirmé en 1997 via un protocole annexé au traité d'Amsterdam.

Bien que rassuré quant au maintien formel à Luxembourg du Secrétariat général du Parlement européen, le gouvernement luxembourgeois entend toutefois se montrer vigilant. Il s'agit de limiter l'hémorragie. Aussi juge-t-il nécessaire en 1996 de garantir la localisation dans la capitale du pays d'un nombre minimum d'employés permanents et temporaires du Secrétariat général du Parlement européen. Un accord de coopération est alors adopté afin de mieux encadrer les échanges d'informations en cas de transferts supplémentaires de postes de l'administration parlementaire hors de Luxembourg. L'accord porte notamment sur le maintien dans la capitale d'au moins 2000 postes de travail, notamment les services de traduction, le personnel du Service juridique et les équipes chargées de l'organisation des sessions plénières de l'assemblée. L'accord ne sera jamais remis en cause. La preuve en est que malgré de nouveaux transferts vers Bruxelles de membres du personnel du Secrétariat général pour des raisons fonctionnelles, le nombre d'employés en poste à Luxembourg n'a cessé de croître, au fil des élargissements successifs de l'Union européenne et du renforcement des compétences et des missions du Parlement européen.

C'est si vrai que cette augmentation rend nécessaire, dès 2009, l'agrandissement et l'aménagement du bâtiment KAD en vue de regrouper - idée ancienne - tout le personnel dans un même ensemble immobilier et ainsi donner une identité plus forte à la présence du Parlement européen à Luxembourg. Mais en attendant l'achèvement des travaux d'extension, le Secrétariat général doit

²¹⁴ Centenaire de l'Administration des bâtiments publics Luxembourg, Luxembourg, ABP, 2010, pp. 130-131.

encore louer à l'État, entre 2004 et 2018, les Tour A et B qui marquent l'entrée du Kirchberg le long du boulevard Kennedy afin d'y installer une partie du staff, essentiellement les services de traduction, ainsi que quelques années plus tard un bâtiment à la Cloche d'Or. Et c'est en mai 2022, alors qu'une dernière partie du personnel s'apprête à quitter définitivement le bâtiment Schuman depuis longtemps obsolète, que le nouveau bâtiment Adenauer peut être inauguré en grande pompe par la présidente du Parlement européen Roberta Metsola en présence des autorités luxembourgeoises et du couple grand-ducal, ainsi que du Secrétaire général Klaus Welle. 3000 fonctionnaires et agents y sont désormais installés. Ainsi s'achève une histoire politique et immobilière chaotique. C'en est au moins fini des déménagements répétés. Car à défaut pour le Parlement européen d'avoir jamais pu obtenir des États membres la fixation du siège de l'assemblée et de son appareil administratif dans une seule et même ville, le Secrétariat général du Parlement européen possède enfin, soixante-dix ans après son installation *a priori* provisoire à Luxembourg, un unique lieu d'installation dans la capitale grand-ducale qui l'a vu naître.

6

**Klaus Welle and key EU
policy actors**

The Bureau of the European Parliament

More than a decade in shaping Parliament's internal organisation, functioning and vision

Paolo MARTINELLI

Head of the Secretariat of the Bureau and the Quaestors since July 2020, Paolo Martinelli held various positions during his ongoing 23-year career at the European Parliament. Between 2016 and 2020 he served as member of and subsequently as Team Leader for Resources in the Cabinet of the Secretary-General, dealing in particular with budgetary matters, discharge procedures and building policy. He has worked in the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics from 2012 to 2016, initially filling the role of Administrative Manager and then of Advisor to the Director-General. After having started his career in the Institution as a parliamentary assistant (from 2000 to 2009), he assisted Parliament's First-Vice-President in his duties related to Parliament's Bureau from 2009 until 2012. He holds a degree in International and Diplomatic Sciences from the University of Bologna, Italy, and also studied at the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

Summary

As the body responsible for financial, organisational and administrative decisions on matters concerning the internal organisation of Parliament, its Secretariat and bodies, the Parliament's Bureau, which is made up of the President, the 14 Vice-Presidents and the 5 Quaestors, played a strategic role in the last decades in shaping and defining what the Institution has become today. Since he took up his duties as Secretary-General of the European Parliament on Monday 16 March 2009, Klaus Welle worked as a staunch supporter of the European project and gave an important direction for the modernisation and reinforcement of the role of the European Parliament as a legislator, guiding the Bureau in its decision-making process throughout the years. Without having the presumption that I will succeed, I will briefly try to retrace some of the major achievements of the Bureau under the term-in-office of Klaus Welle as Secretary-General of the European Parliament.

The Bureau of the European Parliament in essence

Often sarcastically considered as Parliament's powerful governing body, the duties of the Bureau are clearly defined by the Parliament's Rules of Procedure (Rule 25). They revolve essentially around financial, organisational and administrative matters concerning the internal organisation of Parliament, its Secretariat and its bodies, as well as on matters concerning Members on a proposal from the Secretary-General or from a political group. Amongst its major tools for shaping Parliament's functioning, the Bureau is responsible, *inter alia*, for drawing up Parliament's preliminary draft estimates on the basis of a proposal from the Secretary-General, and also decides on the establishment plan of Parliament's Secretariat. It is also the body in charge of taking decisions on matters relating to the conduct of sittings, and holds a specific role for the authorisation of hearings and missions by parliamentary committees, as well as on the financing of Political Parties and Foundations at European level.

Throughout the next few lines, I will try to review some of the most significant decisions progressively taken by eight successive Bureaux during the term-in-office of Klaus Welle as Secretary-General of the European Parliament. Under the guidance of the former Secretary-General and under the leadership of six Presidents (Hans-Gert Pöttering, Jerzy Buzek, Martin Schulz, Antonio Tajani, David Maria Sassoli and Roberta Metsola) the Bureau took important decisions over the years 2009-2022, which have shaped the European Parliament as a modern and effective legislator.

The post-Lisbon Treaty: a new impetus for Parliament (2009-2014)

The start of the seventh parliamentary term coincided with the entry into force of a single Statute for Members of the European Parliament as well as a Statute for Members' assistants representing an important milestone for which Parliament had been long campaigning for. While the former covered rules applicable to the exercise of the Members' mandate, the latter constituted a transparent tool for the employment of Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs) by way, *inter alia*, of direct contracts with the Institution. In order to complement the Members' Statute, the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members (IMMS) were adopted by the Bureau in 2008, and subsequently amended by the Bureau in

the course of the seventh parliamentary term in order to make them more correspondent to the reality of the parliamentary mandate of Members.

Having met the challenge of the accession of the new Member States in 2004, the entry into force of the Members' and Assistants' Statutes (July 2009) as well as of the Treaty of Lisbon (December 2009), which substantially reinforced Parliament's legislative powers, brought forward the need for the Bureau to ensure that Members could dispose of the best support for their effective use of the new powers conferred by the Lisbon Treaty. The Secretary-General's proposal for Parliament's preliminary draft estimates for the financial year 2011 was indicative of such ambition to complete the preparation for Parliament to play its new enhanced role in an effective way and making full use of its strengthened power under the new Treaty. After having reinforced the direct assistance to members, staff working in parliamentary committees and political groups, it was strategic to also reinforce the research capacities available to Members. Having this in mind, upon a proposal from the Secretary-General and based on the outcome of the comparative study with four national parliaments and the Congress of the United States (which had demonstrated a significant margin for improvement in Parliament's support structure), in May 2013 the Bureau decided to create a new Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) in order to provide independent scientific advice for both the political bodies of Parliament and for individual Members. This was possible also in the framework of the synergies agreed and in the framework of the enhanced inter-institutional cooperation established via a Memorandum of Understanding with the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee.

Whereas it was fundamental to provide Members with an enhanced tool to support their legislative prerogatives, the reinforcement of the Members' mandate corresponded with the need to improve their working conditions. It was in this framework that on 24 March 2010, the Bureau endorsed the first ever 'Buildings Strategy' detailing Parliament's property needs until 2014. For the first time, the strategy clearly referred to the principle of purchasing rather than renting buildings (in light of the opportunities that might arise) and shed light on the need to renovate Parliament's owned buildings. The strategy would be also characterised by the start of work for major building projects such as the renovation and extension of the Adenauer building in Luxembourg and the fitting-out of the House of European History in the Eastmann building situated in the adjacent park Leopold, as well as on the opening of the Parliamentarium, the Parliament's visitor centre, in October 2011, which still continues today to be one of the most visited tourist attractions in Brussels.

Parliament's enhanced role and powers under the Lisbon Treaty also required it to focus on its communication with citizens. On 5 July 2010, the Bureau endorsed its updated communication strategy, which reflected the political nature and increased powers of the Institution, with the aim of bringing Parliament's work on EU policies and politics closer to European citizens.

The reinforcement of Parliament's powers and prerogatives went also in parallel with the enhancement of Parliament's environmental performance. The introduction of the EMAS certification in 2007 in Parliament's three places of work had in fact only been the beginning of a positive commitment to sustainable development. As a result of the strong impetus provided by the Secretary-General, and under the guidance of different Presidents and Bureaux, major progress and considerable results were achieved so far by the Institution, amongst others in terms of the reduction of carbon emissions, electricity and paper consumption, the increase of waste recycling and implementation of a systematic wide approach to greening public procurement.

At the same time, it is worth recalling that the seventh parliamentary term also witnessed the establishment of an EP-US Congress Liaison Office in Washington, laying down the foundation for Parliament's permanent structural working relations with its counterparts in the US Congress.

Strengthening the European Parliament's capacity to comply with all its powers (2014-2019)

From the side of the Bureau, Parliament's eighth parliamentary term was characterised by the deployment of resources aimed to empower its Members to fulfil their mandate. The finalisation of the negotiations on the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-making in 2015 was followed by a clear commitment by the Bureau to provide the necessary resources to guarantee Parliament's scrutiny capacities and abilities to assess the performance of EU legislation. In practical terms, this translated in different proposals for reinforcement of scrutiny capacities, investments in innovation, infrastructure and equipment to ensure that Members, staff and Political Groups could benefit from appropriate working conditions. It is significant to recall the impulse given to the e-Parliament programme to support the core activity of the Parliament, through the complete digitalisation of the legislative chain.

In parallel, this term was also characterised by a progressive increase by the Bureau of the appropriations related to the funding of Political Parties and Foundations at European level (subsequently approved by the Plenary via the annual budgetary procedures), as a way to enable them to fulfil their missions, in accordance with the Treaty provisions and EU Regulation 1141/2014.

Due to the changed security situation in Europe, the Bureau had to take also important decisions on further improvements of its security infrastructure, as well as to cope with increasing cybersecurity threats. Over the parliamentary term, this eventually resulted in decisions on security works and in particular on the upgrade of Parliament's entrances in all buildings in order to meet the newest security standards, as well as the decision to internalise the Institution's security services. From an IT perspective, the strategic importance to react to cyber-threats and to anticipate measures to counter them took on strategic importance.

Strategic decisions would be taken by the Bureau in 2017 to improve Members' working environments to provide flexible working spaces as of the new parliamentary term in 2019 thus allowing Members to benefit from additional office modules in Brussels and Strasbourg for them and their staff. This major result in terms of office allocation policy had been possible through the implementation of Parliament's building policy and a series of key strategic investments on buildings in Brussels and Strasbourg, in line with the objectives set in its buildings strategies over the years.

Parliament's visitors' programme has been playing for more than two decades a key role in sponsoring citizens from all Member States to come and visit the Institution in Brussels and Strasbourg. This effort to bring Europe closer to citizens was boosted with the decision by the Bureau to progressively deploy 'Europa Experience' facilities, having allowed so far more than two million citizens to experience the functioning of the European Parliament via interactive tools directly from the Liaison Offices of other premises in the EU capitals. The first Europa Experience was opened in Berlin (2016), followed by Ljubljana (2017), Helsinki (2018), Copenhagen (2019), Tallinn (2020), Paris and Rome (2022), Stockholm, Warsaw and Vienna (2023), and Prague, Luxembourg and Dublin are scheduled in the course of 2024.

The opportunity to strengthen the parliamentary component in the external representations of the European Union was one of the latest principle decisions taken by the Bureau towards the end of the term, with a specific focus on multi-lateral parliamentary assemblies and international organisations, and resulted

in Parliament's presence in the Delegation to the United Nations in New York, the Delegation to the African Union in Addis Ababa, and the Delegation to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Jakarta.

The end of the eighth parliamentary term coincided with the final negotiations on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. The MEPs elected in the United Kingdom for the ninth parliamentary term on 23 May 2019 held office in the European Parliament until the formal Brexit date of 31 January 2020, the date on which the flag of the United Kingdom was lowered and removed from outside the European Parliament buildings, indeed a sombre enough date for many devoted Members and staff from the United Kingdom and indeed for those citizens who would have wished to remain an integral part of the European Union.

The European Parliament in the Covid-19 era (2019-2022)

With the formal date of Brexit on 31 January 2020 having come and gone, no-one could have envisaged what was about to hit our doorsteps in Europe and in the world. The beginning of the ninth parliamentary term could be considered as the most challenging one in Parliament's history so far, as it was characterised by the spreading of the Covid-19 pandemic at global level in March 2020, just 6 months after the effective start of the ninth parliamentary term. Measures taken by the Member States to contain the spread of the virus, and in particular the restriction of movement, confronted Parliament for the first time with the unprecedented dilemma on how to first of all protect both Members and staff whilst maintaining Parliament's core function operational, and secondly to safeguard Parliament's legislative and budgetary powers of an Institution made up of 705 Members, coming from 27 Member States and speaking 24 languages, and that suddenly could no longer physically gather neither in committee meetings nor in the Plenary Chamber to ensure the adoption of any urgent measures required at Union level to cope with the crisis.

Since the beginning; Parliament showed a very high degree of resilience. Different measures were adopted at different levels by the then President, David Maria Sassoli, and the Secretary-General, Klaus Welle. The implementation of risk mitigation measures, on the one side, was essential to protect staff from contamination and to ensure business continuity. On the other side, the deployment of new IT systems and infrastructure in a very rapid manner allowed Parliament

to become operational by means of new remote tools. It is significant that at its extraordinary meeting of 20 March 2020, the Bureau decided to amend its Decision of 3 May 2004 on rules governing voting, allowing for the first time (and only after 2 months from the outbreak of the pandemic), the temporary possibility for remote voting, thus laying down the basis for the Institution to remain in a position to take urgent votes and enabling Members to participate remotely in parliamentary activities, both at committee and Plenary level. During the crisis, Parliament gradually established itself as world-leader in terms of multilingual remote meetings and substantially made unequivocal progress in the digitalisation of processes, which have reshaped Parliament's functioning in the second half of the parliamentary-term and beyond.

The legacy



Throughout Parliament's history, Secretaries-General have played a fundamental role in providing guidance for the Members of the Bureau in their decision making process. Concretely, this allowed the Bureau to take important decisions over the last 15 years and to respond *inter alia* to Parliament's enhanced role and reinforced powers and prerogatives under the Lisbon Treaty, as well as to shape a more modern and effective Institution capable to legislate while at the same time be open to citizens.

Political decisions are never easy to be taken and can be often challenged or contested. This is part of democracy. Nevertheless, even the least attentive observer would note the substantial improvements in Parliament's organisation and functioning over the recent parliamentary terms.

While it lies with the political leadership to give concrete momentum to political decisions and determine the change, no political decision would ever be effective without a thorough preparation at administrative level. This is somehow why the legacy of Klaus Welle as a Secretary-General leading Parliament's Administration from 2009 to 2022 is remembered throughout the political decisions (only recalled shortly and in a non-exhaustive manner throughout these lines) that the Bureau took during his mandate. In order to make those decisions effective, I like to recall the fourteen budgetary procedures for the establishment of Parliament's annual preliminary draft estimates having accompanied Klaus Welle's mandate, and which eventually provided for the financial framework to translate political decisions into concrete actions.

Under the leadership of the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, and the guidance of the Secretary-General Alessandro Chiocchetti, the last part of the current parliamentary term has been characterised by the response to new challenges that eventually paved the way to new reforms that further strengthened Parliament's transparency and integrity, as well as by an ambitious ongoing reform process to strengthen Parliament's internal working methods and procedures. This to reaffirm, once more, the strategic importance of strong political and administrative leaderships capable to impress and bring about change.

The Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament

Parliament at the centre of the European agenda

Ana María FERNÁNDEZ PERLES

After obtaining her Law Degree and a Jean Monnet course on EU institutions from the University of A Coruña (Spain), she devoted her professional career to the European project. Ana worked very closely with Secretary-General Klaus Welle for more than 10 years in various capacities including deputy Head of Cabinet for Policies. She also served as Advisor in the Cabinet of the EP President Hans-Gert Poettering and as acting Director for Legislative and Committee Coordination in the Directorate-General for Internal Policies. Currently, she is Head of the Secretariat of the Committee on Culture and Education. She is married and has one daughter, Isabel, who is her greatest project worldwide.

As Secretary-General of the Conference of Presidents for more than 13 years, Klaus Welle demonstrated a deep commitment and a unique vision for making the Parliament stronger and bringing it closer to citizens.

He was able to provide the best administrative support to position the President and the political groups at the centre of the organisation of Parliament's work and the agenda-setting process. He was successful in this endeavour. Klaus Welle was also able to offer each President of the European Parliament the best technical support and advice to strengthen the institutional role of the Conference of Presidents.

Composition and duties

In 1993, the new Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament (EP) established a new body called the Conference of Presidents (CoP), which replaced the "Enlarged Bureau" with a more limited membership but similar responsibilities.

The CoP consists of the President of Parliament and the Chairs of the political groups. Additionally, the President of Parliament shall invite one non-attached member to attend meetings of the CoP, without the right to vote.

The CoP shall endeavour to reach a consensus on the matters referred to it. If a consensus cannot be reached, the matter shall be put to a vote subject to weighting based on the number of Members in each political group.

In accordance with the EP Rules of Procedure, the main duties of the CoP include:

- Taking decisions on the organisation of Parliament's work and matters of legislative planning;
- Drawing up the draft agenda for Parliament's part-sessions;
- Making proposals to Parliament concerning the composition and competence of committees, committees of inquiry, joint parliamentary committees and standing delegations. The CoP shall be responsible for authorising ad hoc delegations;
- Authorising the drawing up of own-initiative reports;
- Overseeing matters concerning Parliament's relations with the other institutions and bodies of the European Union and with the national parliaments of Member States;
- Managing relations with non-member countries and with non-Union institutions and organisations;
- Organising structured consultation with European civil society on major topics.

A political body that works very closely with the CoP is the Conference of Committee Chairs (CCC). The CCC promotes better cooperation between the committees and may make recommendations to the CoP on the committees' work and the agendas for plenary sittings. It can also advise the CoP, if there is disagreement as to which committee should be responsible. Importantly, the CoP may delegate certain tasks to the Conference of Committee Chairs. Due to this close cooperation, the Chair of the CCC is also invited to participate in the meetings of the CoP.

The functioning of the Conference of Presidents and the role of the EP Secretary-General

The functioning of the CoP was established by a note dated 14 October 1993, jointly signed by the EP Secretary-General Enrico Vinci and the coordination of the Political Groups, the Secretary-General of the European Free Alliance (EFA) group Herman Verheirstraeten, and endorsed at the CoP meeting on 3 November 1993.

In general, the working methods established in 1993 remain the same today. Typically, the meetings of the CoP take place on Thursdays of the part-sessions to consider the preliminary draft agendas for the following part-sessions and on the Thursday preceding an ordinary plenary sitting to adopt the final version of the draft agenda. The meetings are held in camera.

The meetings of the conference are preceded by preparatory meetings of the Secretaries-General of the political groups with the EP Secretary-General and the Cabinet of the President. These preparatory meetings, chaired and convened by the EP Secretary-General, occur on Tuesdays and Wednesdays before the CoP meetings.

During these preparatory meetings, the Secretaries-General of the political groups, the EP Secretary-General and the President's Office will, by common assent, finalise the draft agenda for the meetings of the CoP, propose preliminary draft agendas for the part-sessions, and consider other proposals or suggestions to be submitted to the conference. In this manner, the political groups -through their Secretaries-General- will be fully involved 'upstream' in the preparation of files for subjects under the CoPs' responsibility.

The EP Secretary-General prepares an initial draft agenda for the CoP meetings for the President's approval. Additionally, the draft agenda is accompanied by a technical file distributed to all CoP members. This file contains technical notes offering an objective and non-partisan summary of the matter concerned including administrative, regulatory and financial aspects, precedents and any other background elements that may clarify the questions to be considered.

These working methods ensure that all political groups have access to relevant information. In this context, the role of the EP Secretary-General in maintaining

a well-functioning system is crucial to ensuring that all groups are included in the decision-making process.

Major contributions of Klaus Welle as Secretary-General in the Conference of Presidents

Enhancing the institutional role of the Conference of Presidents

Klaus Welle as Secretary-General worked tirelessly on the administrative organisation of the CoP to maintain a well-functioning system that will provide the EP President with timely agendas that contributed to enhancing the institutional role of the CoP.

His balanced and coherent approach applying the rules and procedures allowed the CoP to consistently make relevant decisions.



Extraordinary meeting of the Conference of Presidents following the triggering of Article 50 by the UK government, 29 March 2017.

Mr Welle was always very active in proposing a wide range of possible guests for the different EP Presidents to invite for relevant and timely exchanges of views with the CoP.



Extraordinary meeting of the Conference of Presidents with Vice-President Joe Biden, 6 May 2010.

Parliament at the centre of the European agenda setting

Klaus Welle's constant commitment to always providing the EP President with a solid and timely draft agenda for the meetings of the CoP was fundamental administrative support. It helped make the European Parliament a key player in setting the legislative and political agenda.

A key example is when the European Council proposes a candidate for President of the Commission: the President shall request the candidate to make a statement and to present his or her political guidelines to Parliament, followed by a debate. In accordance with Article 17(7) of the Treaty on European Union, Parliament shall elect the President of the Commission by a majority of its component Members.

On 10 July 2019, one week before the vote on the election of the President of the Commission during the plenary session in Strasbourg, an extraordinary meeting of the CoP was organised for an exchange of views with Ursula von der Leyen,

candidate for President of the European Commission. The exchange allowed for open and frank discussion between von der Leyen and the Chairs of the political groups, focused on their respective stances and priorities.

The institutional role of the CoP in steering the process leading to the election of the Commission President by Parliament was key on shaping von der Leyen priorities vis-à-vis Parliament's priorities and the political groups' positions and opinions.



Extraordinary meeting of the EP Conference of Presidents with Ursula von der LEYEN, candidate for President of the European Commission, 10 July 2019.

During the exchanges of views between the CoP and the candidate for President of the European Commission in June and July 2019, Parliament achieved von der Leyen's support for a right of initiative. She committed to respond with a legislative act to Parliament's resolutions adopted by a majority of its component

Members in accordance with Article 225 TFEU, and requesting the Commission to submit a legislative proposal.

In her opening statement at the European Parliament plenary session of 16 July 2019, as well as in her accompanying Political Guidelines, the President of the European Commission, von der Leyen, advocated for a stronger right of initiative for Parliament. She committed “to responding with a legislative act in full respect of the proportionality, subsidiarity, and better law-making principles” when Parliament adopts a resolution requesting a legislative initiative from the Commission.

This commitment was key to obtaining the support needed (374 votes) for von der Leyen to be elected. With 383 votes in favour, the European Parliament elected her President of the European Commission in a secret ballot on 16 July.

A Parliament closer to the citizens

Every 6 months the CoP meets with the incoming presidency of the Council of the European Union in the capital of the respective member state holding the presidency.

Secretary-General Klaus Welle consistently supported the President of the Parliament in organising a meaningful programme and agenda with each of the governments and its parliaments holding the presidency, focusing on the key priorities for the EU. Additionally, he was always keen on providing the President of the Parliament with a wide range of activities to engage with students and civil society during these visits to the member states.

The role of the Cabinet of the Secretary-General

Christian MANGOLD

Christian Mangold is currently Director-General for Internal Policies of the Union (secretariats of 19 committees and 5 policy departments delivering expertise for committee work). From January 2019 until December 2022 he was Director of the Campaigns Directorate in the Directorate-General for Communication. From 2012, he was Director for the Cabinet of the Secretary-General of the European Parliament and the central services and from 2009-2012 he headed various teams in the Cabinet. He had various roles within the European Parliament, including working as an administrator in the Secretariat of the Conference of Presidents, in the Office of the Quaestors and the Bureau, in the Legislative Coordination Department of the Directorate-General for Internal Policies, as advisor for a political group in the Committee on Citizens' Rights, Justice and Home Affairs and as a parliamentary assistant for a Member. Before working in Parliament, he worked as an international purchasing manager at Lidl Discount.

Cabinets are traditionally special places with heavy workloads and frequent decision-making. This is particularly the case in such a large and complex organisation as the European Parliament with an overall budget of more than 2 billion Euros and with Members from around 200 national parties, organised in seven or more political groups with three governing bodies. Almost 10,000 people work for Members in different staff categories with different hierarchical relationships. Therefore, proper organisation and effective management of complexity is key.

I. How was the cabinet organised

1. Structure

The structure of the Cabinet changed over time. When Klaus Welle started with his Head of Cabinet, Freddy Drexler, the Cabinet was rather small (the rule was to not have a bigger Cabinet than the President). The Cabinet grew over time,

since the needs, responsibilities and challenges also grew and the Parliament's competences increased after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

What remained the same was the division into existing teams: the Private office, Personnel, Resources, Policies as well as Strategy and Planning. The last three were of key importance as they were dealing with the parliamentary Committees, the Bureau, the Presidency and mirrored the different Directorates-General.

During the seven years when Christian Mangold was Head of Cabinet, the central services of the European Parliament attached to the Secretary-General grew from three to eight units. They were managed by the Head of Cabinet but distinct from the Cabinet. In 2015, this function was upgraded to a Director post responsible for both parts, the Cabinet and the Central Services.

At the end of Christian Mangold's term, the latter included the following Units: Risks, Crisis and Business Continuity, the Secretariat of the Conference of Presidents, the Secretariat of the Bureau and Quaestors, Internal Audit, Data Protection, Project Management Office, Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), EU Visitors Programme (EUVP). Most of these services are now part of the Directorate for Innovation and Central Services.

2. Workflow

In order to guarantee an effective and efficient workflow, daily and weekly meetings took place and internal communication was a key necessity. Therefore, every morning, the Secretary-General's day started with a meeting with the Head of Cabinet. Topics were the priorities of the day, the calendar and preparation of meetings. At the end of the day, a debriefing with the Head of Cabinet took place on the day with an assessment of which follow-ups were necessary.

Once per week, usually on Mondays, a Team Leaders' meeting with the Secretary-General and his Head of Cabinet took place where he informed them about the most important meetings and tasks of the week as well as ongoing developments, such as important legislative files, preparation of the Bureau and the Conference of Presidents. The Secretary-General would ask for their assessment on certain issues, requesting clear inputs with concrete proposals for solutions. The Team Leaders could also inform with short, precise input on important issues relevant to the whole team. There was usually no one-to-one meeting between a Team Leader and the Secretary-General unless an urgent

matter had to be discussed, but once per week the Team Leader and the team met with him. The Head of Cabinet participated usually if time allowed.

In the Strasbourg weeks, every Monday, the Secretary-General used to meet with the Directors-General. Once per year the Secretary-General, after a preparatory meeting with the Directors-General, met the Directors and the Heads of Unit of the respective Directorate-General together with the Team Leader in charge and accompanied by the Head of Cabinet. These exchanges focused on the specific situation of the DG and the state of implementation of major projects in the DG.

Internal communication within the House runs over the “GEDA” tool (Gestion Electronique des Documents Administratifs), which is a tool for the electronic transmission of administrative documents of the European Parliament. All letters and mails received by the Secretary-General were registered in GEDA and had to be checked by the Cabinet. The Cabinet either added to or explained information on mails attributed for information to the Secretary-General or corrected and/or adapted those which were attributed to him for signature. At the end of each week, usually Friday afternoons in Brussels and Thursday noon in Strasbourg, the Secretary-General would sign all documents. This could take up to 3 hours and went by priority. Important files had to be flagged to make sure they pass quickly. This also included the institutional documents for the President’s signature as those had to go through a VISA procedure by the Secretary-General.

The Cabinet never had a pause. The Team Leaders were rotating over summer or Christmas (permanence) and the Secretary-General and his Head of Cabinet were always on duty and could be contacted on urgent and important matters any time, including during holidays.

II. What were the functions of the Cabinet

The Cabinet had to guarantee, with the relevant services, the support of the management of the whole administration as well as of the governing bodies, such as the Bureau and the Conference of Presidents (CoP). The range of responsibilities and functions can be structured into eight pillars.

1. Preparation and follow-up of governing bodies in particular the Bureau

As Head of the administration, the Bureau was the key body for the Secretary-General and its agenda was determined by him. The Secretariat of the Bureau and the Quaestors was responsible for preparing and following up on the meetings of these two governing bodies, in close cooperation with the Cabinets of the President and the Secretary-General, as well as all other relevant Directorate-Generals and Services. In the whole process, for preparation and follow-up, the Cabinet had a leading role.

Every note coming from a given Directorate-General to be presented and /or adopted in the Bureau became a note from the Secretary-General and was signed by him. Since it was thus his responsibility, every note had to be checked, harmonised in the correct format and changed by the Cabinet if deemed necessary. The Secretary-General was presenting the notes during the Bureau meetings and also coordinating the working groups, for example on Buildings, Transport and Green Parliament; Information and Communication Policy; the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity; Audit Panel; and ICT Innovation Strategy.

The budget and project planning cycles are mid- and long-term. It was thus essential to focus on the strategic and operational perspective at the same time. There was also a mid- to long-term planning for the meetings of the Bureau.

The preparation of the Conference of Presidents, being a political body, was also done by the Secretary-General together with the Cabinet of the President but the dynamics were different as the two preparatory meetings of the Secretary-General with the Secretary-Generals of the political groups were decisive and these meetings were more topical in nature.

2. Support of the Management of the Secretariat-General

a. Resource Directors

The Resources team in the Cabinet supported the administration in order to ensure that it had at its disposal the adequate human, financial, IT and technical resources to be able to perform its tasks. They were also in charge of the implementation of the minimum standards of internal controls, the data protection

issues and had to take care of all issues related to the Parliament premises and its safety as well as those of the Members and the staff.

The Secretary-General considered this team as a key team since it was responsible for the most important administrative issues such as the preparation and control of the notes for the Bureau. Each Tuesday morning in Strasbourg, the Resources team in the Cabinet met with the Head of Cabinet and Resources Directors of all DGs.

The Resources Directorates were created as of 2011. Those Directorates, in most of the different DGs, included at least specific units for Human Resources, Finance and IT. With the creation of these Directorates, it became possible to organise exchanges with all the Resources Directors and to bring the IT, HR and Budget specialists of each DG together with the “provider” DGs in the newly created Inter-DG Steering Groups.

The meetings of the Resources Directors were chaired by the Head of Cabinet. These new meeting types served as an early warning mechanism, testing ground, bodies for development of new ideas or proper implementation of management decisions.

b. Inter-DG steering groups

The Inter-DG Steering Groups were supported by a member of the Cabinet and had a similar function as the Resource Directors meetings. Over time, additional groups created in order to improve the administrative workflow, such the Inter-DG Steering Group on Environmental Management. One of the last groups created by Klaus Welle was the Inter-DG Steering Group on Document Management (GIDOC, created in 2022).

To give an example of their organisation: when the Inter-DG Steering Group on Finance met, it was not chaired by the “provider DG” (DG Finance) but the Chair always came from one of the DGs that had to execute the budget and relevant decisions concerning the budget management (“client DG”). Participants were Heads of Unit on financial resources in all DGs and their corporate projects. They met regularly in order to assess ongoing and future tasks as well as following-up on them. There were also trainings together. The Inter-DG Steering Groups had an annual work programme and the Chairs were regularly invited to the Resource Directors meeting.

c. Corporate Strategy and Innovation Office

The Corporate Strategy and Innovation Office supported the Secretary-General in the definition and implementation of the Strategic Execution Framework (SEF), which is the strategic planning and management tool for the European Parliament administration. This included the planning, monitoring and reporting framework common to all DGs. The unit also coordinated the Annual Work Programme process and provided DGs with guidance and tools. A member of the Cabinet was always involved in each SEF project.

3. Staff management function

In an organisation with approximately 9000 people working under the Staff Regulations in various categories, staff management was one of the most important tasks of the Secretary-General. He was the responsible authority for many staff-related decisions concerning individual staff members, such as approving the publication of posts, appointment of officials or Heads of Unit and also many decisions concerning groups of staff, for example the implementing measures for promotion, mobility and teleworking. One main responsibility was the preparation of the decisions of the Bureau for the appointment of senior managers (Directors and Directors-General). In this regard, he was also chairing the respective selection boards.

This team in the Cabinet was bigger in size than others in order to be able to support the Secretary-General with his many responsibilities in this area and also with the task of facilitating contacts with the Staff Committee and DG Personnel.

4. Specific relations at central level

a. Relationship with Council and Commission

The Secretary-General met his counterpart of the Council once per month at a breakfast or lunch accompanied by one staff member for a general exchange. Often the Ambassador of the Presidency of the Council participated. In that case, the Secretary-General was accompanied by two staff members, who had to prepare the meetings and their follow-ups.

Such an exchange also took place on a monthly basis with the Secretary-General of the European Commission. He was accompanied by a staff member.

b. Relationship with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)

When there was an intervention necessary concerning the relationship with Members, in most cases the Team Leader responsible for the Quaestors' matters was in charge. Since several nationalities were represented in the Cabinet, sometimes the staff member of the nationality of the Member in question took care of a request.

The Team Leader responsible for the Quaestors' matters or the relevant Cabinet members were also in charge of complaint management, which was often related to financial matters and decisions of DG Finance. In those cases, often the Head of Cabinet took over.

c. Contact point for OLAF and EPPO

At the beginning of Klaus Welle's term, the Head of Cabinet, Freddy Drexler, having a legal background himself, was in charge of legal issues and the contact to European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). Later on, there was always a team member also having the function - among others- of being the Cabinet's legal advisor. This person then became the contact person for OLAF and, as of June 2021, also for the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO).

Concerning investigations related to financial matters of Members, such as assistance allowances, DG Finance was in charge with internal investigations in consultation with the Cabinet.

5. Solving conflicts between Directorate-Generals

The Secretary-General met the Directors-General and Directors regularly to discuss ongoing and up-coming issues. The aim was to have a smooth running administration. When there were discrepancies among specific DGs which could not be resolved at their bilateral level, the Head of Cabinet or a Team Leader had to help solving it. This mostly concerned situations which had never occurred

before and where guidance was needed, for example on which DG had which responsibilities.

Sometimes the Secretary-General gave input on how to handle, for example, cases concerning Members. He himself only intervened as a very last resort. Only if necessary, the Secretary-General or his Head of Cabinet would act as a broker or even intervene. The aim was always to solve problems at an early stage.

6. Managing problems that have never occurred in the European Parliament

Sometimes unforeseen circumstances occurred -in some cases of very exceptional nature - which had never happened before - but needed quick, effective and professional solutions.

Examples include: a bank robbery in the European Parliament, terror attacks in Mumbai where a European Parliament delegation composed of several Members and staff was in the attacked hotel, a volcano eruption in Iceland causing flights cancellations over days affecting the European skies, terror attacks in Brussels including on the Maalbeek metro close by, water leakage over the week-end flooding the elevators, and in particular COVID-19 pandemic.

To further professionalise the area of crisis management, the Risk, Crisis and Business Continuity Unit was created as a central service.

The Unit provides expert guidance and support to all Directorates-General and services in the areas of risk management, crisis management, business continuity planning, and internal control. The aim is to identify potential threats in a timely manner and minimize the impact of disruptions, while maintaining the safety of employees and the continuity of our business operations. Among other tasks, this unit designs and elaborates guidelines and protocols for crisis management by the Secretary-General.

When situations occurred that have never happened before, but requested fast and strong, administrative guidance, the Secretary-General, and his team reacted - if necessary - indirect management with the approval of the President/ The Bureau.

7. Early warning system

One of the functions of the team members was that they had to be well connected with the Directorates-General and create an early warning system in order to find quick solutions or - even better - avoid turbulences in the first place. Therefore, each Directorate-General was mirrored at least by one member of the Cabinet

8. Development / platform for staff across the Secretariat-General

Over the tenure of 13 years as Secretary-General, Klaus Welle also paid attention to the selection of performing staff and their posting after their Cabinet time. Around 100 people joined and left the Cabinet over those years.

People which have been a Cabinet member were often considered as high performers and experienced staff. The work in the Cabinet gave a very broad and detailed overview of the whole House, its structures, its working methods, problem solving, management support and included building up a large network. This background provided a solid base for other tasks and responsibilities in the European Parliament's administration.

The European Parliament administration seen from the European Council

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Introduction

The European Council and the European Parliament (EP) are in the ascendent in the EU political system. Both have benefited greatly from treaty change and from the EU's growing political importance, with the European Council assuming more responsibility for collective EU leadership and the EP acquiring greater power and prestige as the only directly elected institution at the European level. In their formal and informal interaction, the two institutions view each other warily. Their relationship is not inherently antagonistic but generates friction. Seen from the European Council, the European Parliament—specifically its administration—is ambitious assertive, and highly successful in the pursuit of greater EP power and a more parliamentary EU system.²¹⁵

The Constitutional, Institutional, and Political Setting

The European Council came into existence in 1975 to steer the European Community through turbulent times. From the beginning, the European Council and the EP had a symbiotic connection. As part of a deal to counterbalance the strengthening of intergovernmentalism implicit in the European Council's emergence, national leaders agreed to proceed with direct elections to the EP, which took place for the first time in 1979. Subsequently, the European Council, as the key negotiator of treaty change, progressively increased the power of the Parliament. The EP was not a passive bystander but was adept at influencing

²¹⁵ See Desmond Dinan; Relations between the European Council and the European Parliament; European Parliamentary Research Service; Brussels; 2018.

treaty change by forming coalitions with sympathetic national governments, interacting with national parliaments, and networking within the leading European political parties.

Especially in the post-Maastricht period, the European Council consolidated its position at the apex of the EU's institutional edifice.²¹⁶ Regular summit meetings gave national leaders an opportunity to direct the EU, negotiate treaty changes, conclude accession agreements, and occasionally act as a special configuration of the Council of Ministers.

The EP viewed the European Council with misgiving. As a supranational institution, the EP disliked the European Council's position at the top of the EU's institutional architecture and its occasional intrusion into legislative decision-making. The EP's wariness towards the European Council was apparent in the 2000s, during the protracted period of constitutional reform that resulted in the Lisbon Treaty. The EP seemed less than enthusiastic about the formal institutionalization of the European Council and its acquisition of a full-time President, elected by the European Council itself.

At the same time, the treaty strengthened the EP considerably, giving it additional budgetary authority and a greater legislative role. Indeed, Lisbon was the latest in a series of treaty changes, going back to the late 1980s, from which the EP benefited greatly. Thanks largely to strong collective leadership—political and administrative—the EP advanced its institutional and policy preferences by means of assertive parliamentarianism, a counterpart to new intergovernmentalism in the EU system of governance.

Given the origins of the Lisbon Treaty, it is not surprising that the European Council and the EP fared so well. Public disenchantment with the EU was mounting since the early 1990s and seemed to grow in proportion to the EU's increasing size and broadening remit. In response, EU leaders sought to strengthen the EU's legitimacy. This played to the strengths of the European Council and the EP, which were firmly based on the principle of representative democracy (Article 10 TEU). Moreover, meetings of the European Council and plenary sessions and committee meetings of the EP provided the EU with a degree of political theater, without which it would have even more difficulty connecting with citizens.

²¹⁶ See Uwe Puetter; *The European Council and the Council: New intergovernmentalism and Institutional Change*; Oxford University Press; 2014; and Wolfgang Wessels; *The European Council*; Palgrave; 2016).

European Council-European Parliament Interaction

Various treaty articles touch directly or indirectly on interaction between the European Council and the EP. Article 15(6)(d) TEU requires the European Council President to report to the EP after each of the meetings of the European Council, which is usually followed by an exchange between the European Council President and the EP's political group leaders and ordinary MEPs. As for EP representation at the European Council, Article 235(2) TFEU states only that the EP President "may be invited to be heard by the European Council." In fact, since 1987 the EP President has spoken at the beginning of regular European Council meetings.

Formal interactions between the EP President and the European Council, on the one hand, and the European Council President and MEPs, on the other, are the tip of the iceberg of European Council-EP relations. Beneath the surface, the two institutions interact in several ways, many of which also spring from provisions in the Lisbon Treaty. Those include articles of a constitutional nature, such as Article 48 TEU on treaty change; and articles on institutional affairs, such as Article 17 TEU on the election of the Commission President and the appointment of the College of the Commission. In some of those cases, the European Council needs the consent of the EP to act; in other cases, the European Council is obliged to consult the EP before it can act. Also noteworthy because of their potential for conflict with the EP are several provisions in the TFEU that allow the European Council, in exceptional cases, to encroach into legislative decision making, an area from which it is otherwise explicitly excluded.

Nonetheless, the two presidents are the chief interlocutors in the interinstitutional relationship. Apart from their regular visits to each other's institution, they meet often, in various formal and informal settings. The European Council President also meets other members of the EP's collective leadership, which includes the EP President, the EP's Vice-Presidents, the presidents of the political groups, the chairs of the committees, and even the committee rapporteurs. The EP's leadership structure includes another influential office filled not by an MEP, but by Parliament's most senior civil servant: the Secretary-General. The collective leadership of the EP, though personified by the President, in effect consists of the Conference of Presidents—the EP President and the presidents of the political groups, with the assistance of the Secretary-General.

For their part, the EP President and other EP leaders are in close touch with individual national leaders. The leader of the country in the rotating Council Presidency is in frequent contact with the EP President, political group presidents, committee chairs, and committee rapporteurs, partly in pursuit of European Council business. Membership in the European political parties provides additional opportunities for the European Council President, the EP President, the national leaders, and leading MEPs to meet.

Looking down from the Olympian heights of EU summitry, the European Council does not see too far into the EP's administration, although individual national leaders, especially those who are former MEPs, may be familiar with how the EP works. The leader of the country in the Council presidency has a particular interest in understanding the inner workings of the EP because of the presidency's central involvement in the EU legislative decision making. In most cases, the European Council's knowledge of the EP's administration does not extend beyond a familiarity with the EP Secretary-General, who accompanies the EP President to opening sessions of the European Council and stays if the EP president is invited to do so.

The European Council has minimal institutional support. It relies on its President's cabinet (private office) and assistance from the Council Secretariat. The Council's Secretary-General meets regularly with his EP counterpart. The two secretaries-general, as well as the point-people (sherpas) in the presidential cabinets, coordinate closely on the presidents' visits to each other's institutions. Within the Council Secretariat, the Director-General for General and Institutional Policy (DG-GIP), one of the few civil servants present in the room during European Council meetings, is the main point of contact for day-to-day interactions between the European Council and the EP administration.

The EP cannot hold the European Council to account, but it can provide a degree of oversight, which is consistent with the EP's constitutional role of scrutinizing the executive. Accordingly, since June 2014, the European Council Oversight Unit within the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), the EP's in-house research arm and think-tank, has been monitoring and analyzing the work of the European Council, notably with respect to the delivery of commitments contained in the European Council's Conclusions. The regularly updated "Rolling Check-List of Commitments" reviews progress to date in achieving the goals that the European Council has set itself. The Service also provides material to the EP President to help prepare for European Council meetings.

The European Council may not like the idea of EP scrutiny or oversight of its work. Nevertheless, relations between senior Council Secretariat and senior EPRS officials are close and cordial. There appears to be a growing appreciation on the part of the Council Secretariat of the quality and usefulness of the EPRS's output. For instance, a European Council publication of September 2017, on implementation of the Bratislava Roadmap, included a lengthy table with, in the left-hand column, a list of commitments made in the roadmap; in the middle column, a list of measures taken and results achieved; and, in the right-hand column, colored dots to represent progress so far: done; on track; efforts still needed; or insufficient).²¹⁷ This was the first time that the European Council publicly tabulated its commitments and follow-through, using a methodology closely resembling one that the EPRS had already developed.

An Assertive EP Administration

One of the most striking developments in the political history of European integration is the rise of the EP.²¹⁸ Impelled by a strong sense of institutional loyalty or patriotism, and a deep commitment to supranationalism, the EP's leadership has been extraordinarily adept at advancing Parliament's interests during intergovernmental conferences for treaty reform and negotiations for inter-institutional agreements; at quickly revising Parliament's rules of procedure in order to take full advantage of treaty changes; and at exploiting other opportunities to advance the EP's agenda.

Perhaps because the EP had to fight so long and so hard for direct elections, and then for full legislative co-decision, the EP's leadership has a historical memory that fuels its natural inclination to take a combative approach in its dealings with other institutions, particularly on the intergovernmental side of the EU. This approach is apparent in the title of a book by former Secretary-General Julian Priestley on the EP's institutional advance over the years: *Six Battles that Shaped Europe's Parliament*.²¹⁹ The EP fought one of those battles to win a seat at the table: the European Council table (albeit only for the opening session).

²¹⁷ European Council; The Bratislava Roadmap: One Year On; European Parliamentary Research Service; Brussels; 2017.

²¹⁸ See Ariadna Ripoll Servent; *The European Parliament*; Palgrave; 2018; and Berthold Rittberger; *Building Europe's Parliament: Democratic Representation Beyond the Nation State*; Oxford University Press; 2005.

²¹⁹ Julian Priestley; *Six Battles That Shaped Europe's Parliament*; John Harper; 2008.

As head of the EP's administration and an ex-officio member of the EP's leadership, the Secretary-General is highly influential in shaping strategies to advance the EP's agenda, not least in relation to the European Council. Within the Council Secretariat, the Secretary-General and the Director-General for General and Institutional Policy, as well as member of the European Council President's cabinet and perhaps some members of the European Council itself, are keenly aware of the contribution of the EP Secretary-General to raising the profile and increasing the power of Parliament. The Spitzenkandidaten process is a good example of that.

The EP has long skirmished with the European Council over the selection and election of the Commission President. Matters came to a head following implementation of the Lisbon Treaty when, based on its interpretation of Article 17(7) and Declaration 11 TEU, the EP insisted that the European Council accept a new arrangement whereby the EP would nominate as Commission President the candidate of the European political party who, following the next elections, in 2014, had the support of most MEPs. The EP would then elect that candidate as Commission President.

The Spitzenkandidaten process met several important objectives for the EP. One was to try to strengthen the legitimacy of the EU by strengthening the legitimacy of the Commission President and, indirectly, that of the entire Commission. Another was to bolster parliamentarianism in the EU by tying the EP elections to the election of the head of the EU's executive body. Also, the Spitzenkandidaten process sought to inject a strong dose of partisan politics into the EU as a means of tackling the chronic democratic deficit and as a means also of increasing voter turnout in the EP elections.

The Spitzenkandidaten process brought the EP into conflict with the European Council, which hitherto had enjoyed a free hand in nominating the Commission President. The outcome of the Spitzenkandidaten process in 2014 is well known.²²⁰ What matters here is how the controversy affected the European Council's perception of the EP administration.

It was easy for anyone to see EP Secretary-General Klaus Welles' fingerprints all over the Spitzenkandidaten process. He made no effort to hide them. According to Welle, the Lisbon Treaty offered the potential to take an entirely new

²²⁰ See S. B. Hobolt; 'A vote for the President? The role of Spitzenkandidaten in the 2014 European Parliament elections', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21;10; 1528-1540; Nereo Peñalver García and Julian Priestley; *The Making of a European President*; Palgrave Macmillan; 2015.

approach to selecting and electing the Commission President. As he explained in a speech in Brussels in September 2013: “People are now finding out—to their astonishment—that ... the Lisbon Treaty has very much changed the legal basis for the process on how to get the Commission into office.” The nomination by European political parties of candidates for Commission President “is a very important change because it means that voters [will] have an idea about who would lead the Commission depending on the outcome of the European elections. That is something which on [a] national level is absolutely normal ... If from now on, also in the EU, voters could know in advance who the personal alternatives are [to lead the executive] then we also would have a much higher degree of legitimacy”.²²¹

Welle was trying to appeal to voters, on the one hand, and to national leaders, on the other. His strategy was to draw as close an analogy as possible between the unfamiliar EU system of governance and familiar national systems of governance. What could be simpler than to compare the EP to a national parliament, and to compare EP elections to national elections? In each case, elections result in the parliament (European or national) electing a leader (Commission President or Chancellor/Prime Minister) to form the executive (Commission or government).

This did not go down well with certain members of the European Council. It especially annoyed the European Council administration, meaning people in the Council Secretariat General and the President’s cabinet. It confirmed their view that Secretary-General Welle was an institutional entrepreneur of the highest order and earned him their admiration of his political skill, even though they disagreed with his strategy and objectives.

In this case as in many others, seen from the perspective of the European Council the EP administration was audacious, innovative, and highly effective. The Secretary-General provided much of the intellectual scaffolding as well as the administrative support for the EP’s effort to promote its agenda, enhance its profile, and advance parliamentarianism in the EU system, often at the expense of the European Council. This has not gone unnoticed in the Europa building on rue de la Loi, not far from the campus in Brussels of the European Parliament.

²²¹ Klaus Welle, “Democratic Progress: Citizen’s Empowerment at the European Level”, speech at ESPAS Experts Seminar, Brussels, 17 September 2013.

Different institutions, same objective: The fight for a better and stronger Europe

Klaus Welle, a key player
on the European scene

Jim CLOOS

Jim is presently Secretary-General of TEPSA (Trans European Policy Studies Association) and a Senior Associate Fellow at the Egmont Institute. He is also a Board member of the EPC.

He retired from his job as DG for General and Institutional Policy at the General Secretariat of the Council at the end of January 2021. Between 2001 and 2006, he oversaw the Directorate "Americas, U.N. and Human Rights, Counterterrorism" and was a close collaborator of High Representative Javier Solana (GSC). From 1995 to 1999, he was Head of Cabinet to the President of the European Commission and the EU Sherpa within the G7/G8. Between 1993 and 1995, he headed the Cabinet of the Commissioner in charge of agriculture.

He is the co-author of books on Germany in Europe, the Maastricht Treaty and the European Council and regularly writes on EU issues.

I have known Klaus for a long time. Our paths crossed when he was Secretary General of the EPP, and I Head of Cabinet of Commission President Jacques Santer. Those who remember history will know that we were not exactly always agreeing completely at the time. Surprisingly, we remained friends; we both understood how politics works. Klaus was the Secretary general of the EP during all the years when I headed the Directorate General in the GSC responsible for political and institutional questions. While defending our respective institutions, we never forgot that our duty was to promote European integration. In fact, we invented new ways of doing so, as I will explain later.

Klaus Welle, a very political civil servant

Klaus has always been far more political than I. He came from German party politics into European party politics, and there is hardly a more political post than Secretary general of the EPP. I on the other hand have always been a civil servant through and through, with no party affiliation whatsoever. I remember a little episode in 1996, when the EPP called a meeting of personal representatives to prepare the new treaty (Amsterdam). Klaus gently passed on the message that they expected President Santer's representative to be a Christian Democrat. This created a small problem because there was no card-bearing Christian Democrat in the Santer cabinet.²²²

On Jacques Santer's instruction, I sent back word that the President had decided to nominate me and that I had his full confidence. Klaus replied that in the absence of a Christian Democrat in the Santer cabinet the representative of the President would be expected to treat the information received and the exchanges in the meeting as confidential and only report to Jacques Santer. Well of course! I happily traipsed to the meeting, and no one bit off my head; a bit mischievously, I intervened a bit more than I would otherwise have done, just to make a point.

This was of course "very small beer" as the Germans say, compared to what happened later in our mandate when the EP engineered the fall of the Commission. This was a highly political power game. The EP had for a long time dreamt of bringing down the Commission to change the institutional balance of power within the EU by controlling the Commission. After my nomination as Head of Cabinet I went to see Pascal Lamy in Paris to benefit from his experience with Jacques Delors. At the end of the talk, he said: "Jim, I must tell you that the Santer Commission will not go to its full term, because the EP will strongly push to bring it down. They even tried with us towards the end of our mandate, but Delors by then was too powerful." He was right: we faced calls for resignation in each of the crises that happened, like Chirac's resumption of nuclear tests, the BSE crisis and later the Cresson episode. This was all about institutional power, and the fact that Santer had been one of the creators of the EPP did not prevent the latter from attacking him, especially after the CDU/CSU had lost the 1998 elections in Germany. Unfortunately for us, the only way to bring down the Commission was a motion of censure according to Articles 17 (8) TEU and 234 TFEU, which

²²² We had initially a German member who was a CDU member in our cabinet, but he left after one year. When I nominated someone else to follow relations with the EP (Martine Reicherts), I received an angry call from Helmut Kohl's diplomatic advisor, complaining that she was a socialist.

is an impeachment clause rather than a political clause; so, the EP had to show that the Santer Commission was “corrupt”. This was painful, but I never held a personal grudge against Klaus who did his job and behaved with dignity all through this episode. As to Jacques Santer, he decided to stand for election as a backbencher to the EP that had brought down his Commission.

Klaus Welle at the head of the EP administration: vision and pragmatism

In the last twenty years of my career, I viewed relations with the EP from the perspective of the European Council and the Council; it is a quite different perspective from that you have when you are in the Commission. The European Council is a powerful body, and it is not responsible before the EP. It does not do legislation and hence plays no direct part in codecision files. The only obligation it has is for the President of the European Council to debrief the EP on its meetings. Of course, dialogue with the EP is important, not least because of the EP’s role in the nomination of the Commission President; the candidate proposed by the European Council must find a majority in the EP afterwards. Klaus was one of the architects behind the *Spitzenkandidaten* model, whereby the choice of the Commission President would be determined by the outcome of the European elections. I have always argued against this model because, in my view, it goes against the spirit and letter of the treaties; it would in fact reverse the order set by the latter and deprive the European Council of its right to nominate a candidate as it sees fit.

I strongly believe in the double legitimacy that is at the basis of our institutional structure as a union of States (represented by democratically elected governments in the Council and European Council) and peoples (with citizens voting for directly elected MEPs). This has never prevented Klaus from inviting me to EP events and even to *Away days* of the EP’s general secretariat. It seems to me that one of the key virtues of democracy is to keep the dialogue alive between people and institutions who have different views and to work towards finding the best possible compromise in the interest of the common cause. This is also the reason I liked the regular encounters between the members of the EUCO with the President of the EP before each of their meetings. This allows for a political exchange on the major issues of the day. They all require a cooperation between the institutions; none of them can really do anything with the others. Klaus was extremely good in advising the EP President on how best to catch the attention of the Heads of States or government.

On a more mundane level, I remember one day colleagues of mine coming to my office and complaining about the EP secretariat having created in their new research DG (EPRS) a unit to monitor the work of the European Council. "This is none of their business. We should not talk to them," said one of them. "Well, I replied, I disagree wholeheartedly, and we will do exactly the opposite. For two quite simple reasons: they organise themselves as they see fit and that is none of our business. And more importantly, how can you say that what happens in the European Council, which provides the Union with the necessary impetus for its development, does not concern the directly elected parliament?" I then told them to invite the whole new unit of the EPRS over to our building for a meeting with our EUCO unit. And that is what happened. We had a great chat, we could explain to them how the EUCO functioned, and why the routine accusations about the undemocratic nature of the EUCO were absurd. And they showed us graphs and statistics on the work of the EUCO which we found highly interesting and which we did not have the time nor resources to do. To cut a long story short, we became close associates, and I would regularly go to events organised by the EPRS and would even sometimes suggest themes for them to examine on our behalf.

Klaus had been the main architect of this new DG (vision coupled with operational work), which I think has helped the EP develop a better knowledge of EU policies and the other institutions. Klaus incidentally showed the same mix of vision and pragmatism on key projects such as the Jean Monnet House in Scy-Chazelles, or the House of European History or the Parliamentarium. I sometimes wished that the Council had shown similar vision and participated in these projects.

From the Council and GSC perspective, historically, the EP was not an important partner, except in budgetary matters. That changed over time as the EP was gaining more codecision powers. Since the Lisbon treaty, the ordinary legislative procedure now applies to most legislative files, and it puts the Council and the EP at the same level. That means that negotiating with the EP in so-called trilogues has become the main task of the rotating presidency of the Council. That in turn obliges the GSC to prepare the trilogues in the same way as Council meetings.

ESPAS: a new way of working together

I would like to conclude this short homage to Klaus Welle by mentioning ESPAS (The European Strategy and Policy Analysis) where he played a major part. This is an inter-institutional process promoting foresight and anticipatory gover-

nance, bringing together representatives of the various institutions. The initiative came from the European Parliament (in 2010, if my memory is correct), when the EP rapporteur for the budget James Elles pushed for including financing for this purpose into the EU budget. They approached me soon afterwards to see whether the SGC would be open to cooperate in such a venture. I said yes provided we worked in an informal way and in a true spirit of brainstorming and open discussion, without formally committing our respective institutions. I also insisted that we should operate primarily through contributions in kind and no specific financing from the EU budget, which did in fact stop after two or three years. Over the next years, and particularly when Ann Mettler ran the in-house think tank of the Commission under President Juncker, we managed to establish a new way of working together, in full confidence and with the sole objective of serving the longer-term interests of the EU. We organised an annual conference that attracted quite considerable interest and brought to Brussels experts from all over the world and we wrote foresight reports. We also created a 'Young Talents Network' to bring together promising civil servants of the various institutions. ESPAS still exists and I hope that the same pioneer spirit persists.

It has been a real pleasure and enrichment to work with Klaus Welle through my European career. I am sure that we will continue our exchanges and cooperation now that we are both active pensioners with a juvenile passion for all things European.

L'administration du Parlement Européen vue par la Commission

*Pascal LEARDINI*²²³

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A occupé différentes fonctions de directeur et chef d'unité au sein du Secrétariat général de la Commission européenne, précédemment à la Direction générale du marché intérieur et des services financiers, après un passage dans le secteur privé européen.

Dans les quelques pages qui suivent, je voudrais rendre hommage au personnel du Parlement européen, tant pour sa défense de l'idéal européen que pour son professionnalisme, lui qui opère dans un environnement politique souvent changeant, toujours délicat. Cet hommage s'adresse tout particulièrement à celui qui a dirigé l'administration de cette institution avec brio pendant une longue période : Klaus Welle, Secrétaire général du Parlement européen de 2009 à 2022.

Au cours des trente années que j'ai passées à la Commission européenne, j'ai été amené à interagir très souvent avec mes homologues du Parlement européen, à différents niveaux et dans des contextes différents, ce qui m'a permis d'acquérir une bonne connaissance du fonctionnement de cette institution. Dans cette analyse, et pour rendre fidèlement compte de tous les talents qui se déploient au sein du personnel du Parlement européen, je broserai un tableau impressionniste de ce que j'ai pu observer, parlant tout autant du personnel qui est dans la lumière que celui qui travaille pour la cause européenne sans nécessairement bénéficier de grande visibilité, couvrant ainsi le large spectre « de l'ombre à la lumière ».

²²³ Le point de vue exprimé dans cet article l'est à titre personnel et ne représente pas celui de l'institution à laquelle l'auteur appartient.

La plénière et les commissions

C'est évidemment lors des séances plénières du Parlement européen, tant à Strasbourg qu'à Bruxelles, que dans les réunions de commissions, que le personnel du Parlement européen est le plus exposé à la lumière politique, puisque tous ces débats sont publics et retransmis sur internet. J'ai pu observer, en observateur privilégié, ayant assisté à de multiples séances plénières et réunions de commission, tout le doigté nécessaire qu'il faut pour aider, conseiller et guider les présidents de séance et les présidents de commission qui ont chacun leur tempérament, leur manière de lancer les réunions, d'interroger les représentants de la Commission ou de conclure les réunions. Le paradoxe, ici, est que le personnel du Parlement européen est partout présent et joue un rôle essentiel, mais dans le silence, puisqu'il ne peut pas prendre la parole. Mais les multiples apartés avec la personne qui assure la présidence de la séance sont essentiels au bon déroulement des réunions et à l'avancement des travaux. Le respect de l'agenda, du temps de parole des intervenants, du règlement intérieur du Parlement, sont autant de « garde-fous » qui guident le travail des collègues du Parlement intervenant dans ces enceintes. Mais bien évidemment, le travail ne s'arrête pas à la partie publique des réunions. Je citerai trois exemples de ce travail de l'ombre : celui dans les commissions parlementaires, la préparation des séances plénières et les auditions des candidats à la fonction de Commissaire européen.

En ce qui concerne les commissions parlementaires, le personnel du Parlement peut être amené à jouer un rôle important dans la préparation des projets de rapports et des amendements à ceux-ci, dans la mesure où les députés sont disposés à travailler en confiance avec lui, tout en maintenant une bonne entente avec les groupes politiques auxquels ils appartiennent. Il faut noter que les relations entre le personnel du Parlement et celui des groupes politiques sont un sujet sensible et complexe, qu'il n'est pas facile d'appréhender pour un observateur extérieur !

Pour les séances plénières, si les choses apparaissent se dérouler avec aisance vues de l'extérieur, rien n'est pourtant simple et un engagement continu du personnel du Parlement est nécessaire dans plusieurs enceintes préparatoires : tout d'abord, au sein de la réunion du Groupe de Coordination Interinstitutionnelle (GCI) à laquelle participent des représentants de la Commission européenne et de la Présidence du Conseil : le GCI se réunit chaque semaine précédant la plénière, sous la présidence du Secrétaire général adjoint du Parlement européen, pour procéder à un premier balayage de l'ordre du jour et discuter de la disponibilité des différents intervenants pour la prise en charge des rapports, mais aussi

pour la participation aux débats importants, pour l'heure des questions à la Commission, etc. Ensuite, la discussion se poursuit au sein de la Conférence des Présidents (des groupes politiques), sous la direction du Président du Parlement, qui procède aux arbitrages entre les groupes et produit un ordre du jour plus ou moins définitif de l'ordre du jour, sujet aux changements de dernière minute pouvant intervenir jusqu'à l'ouverture de la séance elle-même! A chaque étape de ce processus, le personnel du Parlement est présent, reçoit les informations pertinentes à l'établissement de l'ordre du jour des travaux de la plénière, non seulement de la part des différents organes du Parlement, mais également de la Commission et de la Présidence du Conseil, assurant ainsi un suivi nécessaire à la bonne marche des choses.

En ce qui concerne les auditions des candidats à la fonction de Commissaire européen, le processus des auditions est désormais bien rôdé, et là également, le personnel du Parlement joue un rôle important, non seulement dans la préparation des questions écrites qui sont adressées à l'avance aux personnes concernées, mais également pour l'organisation des auditions des différents candidats. Il s'agit d'un processus remarquable et unique, qui permet de tester la qualité des candidats, mais aussi d'établir un rapport de force entre les institutions au début du mandat de la Commission, et d'extraire des engagements politiques clairs de la part des futurs Commissaires dans les différentes politiques qu'ils auront à mener. Ce processus a abouti à des avancées importantes dans l'affirmation du Parlement européen comme une force de proposition législative, notamment par l'engagement politique pris par la Présidente de la Commission européenne de donner suite à toute résolution législative adoptée par le Parlement²²⁴. En effet, depuis 2019, lorsque le Parlement adopte une résolution invitant la Commission à soumettre une proposition législative, celle-ci en discute en procédure orale lors d'une réunion du Collège et informe le Parlement, dans les trois mois, de la suite qu'elle compte y apporter, dans le plein respect des principes de proportionnalité, subsidiarité et mieux légiférer. Cette automaticité dans le suivi n'existait pas jusqu'alors.

Les accords interinstitutionnels

Les accords interinstitutionnels encadrent les relations entre les institutions, établissent des procédures pour l'interaction entre les institutions, pour clarifier

²²⁴ Selon l'article 225 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne, le Parlement, statuant à la majorité de ses membres, peut, sur la base d'un rapport établi par l'une de ses commissions, demander à la Commission de soumettre toute proposition législative appropriée.

l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre du processus législatif, mais ils ont aussi pour vocation de fixer certains rapports de force et de créer des obligations mutuelles. Au cours de ma carrière, j'ai été un observateur puis un acteur direct de la négociation de plusieurs accords interinstitutionnels ; je citerai l'accord-cadre entre le Parlement européen et la Commission européenne²²⁵ ; l'accord « mieux légiférer »²²⁶ et, enfin, l'accord institutionnel sur le registre de transparence²²⁷. Dans toutes ces négociations, le rôle du personnel du Parlement européen a été essentiel, à la fois pour défendre les intérêts de leur institution tels qu'ils avaient été définis dans les résolutions pertinentes, mais aussi pour être à l'écoute des positions des autres institutions et trouver, le moment venu, ensemble avec les homologues des autres institutions, les éléments de compromis qui permettent d'avancer dans les négociations, afin d'aboutir à des textes équilibrés et défendables devant chacune des institutions participantes. Je me souviens des réunions « tripartites » que nous avons dans un restaurant italien à Strasbourg, qui avait été recommandé par Guy Verhofstadt, le négociateur pour le Parlement européen de l'accord « mieux légiférer » ; je conseillais alors le Vice-Président en charge des relations interinstitutionnelles Frans Timmermans et la Présidence luxembourgeoise du Conseil étant représentée par le ministre Nicolas Schmit. En plus de toute l'ardeur politique des négociateurs, l'expertise incontestée de leur équipe technique respective a fait la différence sur de nombreux points lorsqu'il s'est agi de couler dans un accord interinstitutionnel des engagements tout autant politiques que quasi-juridiques.

On retiendra pour la petite histoire que l'accord-cadre entre le Parlement européen et la Commission avait créé beaucoup d'émotion au sein du Conseil, qui considérait, à l'époque, que l'accord « à deux » déséquilibrait, voire portait atteinte à la répartition des compétences entre les institutions telles qu'elles résultent des traités et avait évoqué la possibilité de lancer un recours devant la Cour de Justice, ce qui finalement n'eut pas lieu...

²²⁵ Accord-cadre sur les relations entre le Parlement européen et la Commission européenne du 20.10.2010, JOEU n° L304 du 20.11.2010, p. 47.

²²⁶ Accord interinstitutionnel entre le Parlement européen, le Conseil de l'Union européenne et la Commission européenne, Mieux légiférer, 13.4.2016, JOEU n° L123 du 12.5.2016, p.1.

²²⁷ Accord interinstitutionnel entre le Parlement européen, le Conseil de l'Union européenne et la Commission européenne sur un registre de transparence obligatoire du 20.5.2021, JOEU n° L207 du 11.6.2021, p.1.

Le travail de recherche et d'analyse

Au fil du temps, le Parlement européen s'est équipé, sous l'impulsion de Klaus Welle, d'une capacité de recherche et d'analyse remarquable, dont j'aimerais aborder deux volets.

Le premier concerne la création, puis le développement du Centre de Recherche Parlementaire Européen (EPRS), qui est le service de recherche interne du Parlement, mais aussi son « réservoir d'idées ». L'EPRS apporte aux députés et aux groupes parlementaires, une analyse indépendante, objective et qui fait autorité, ainsi qu'une recherche sur les questions de politique européenne, afin de les aider dans leur travail parlementaire. J'ai pu observer l'évolution qualitative des travaux de l'EPRS au fil des ans, avec la production d'excellents documents comme les rapports sur le coût de la non-Europe ou le suivi des conclusions du Conseil européen. Le personnel du Parlement est à la manœuvre pour préparer tous ces documents.

Le second est une forme originale et informelle de coopération entre les institutions européennes pour examiner ensemble ce que l'avenir peut réserver comme risques et opportunités ! Il s'agit d'ESPAS²²⁸ – le système européen de stratégie et d'analyse ; il s'agit d'un processus interinstitutionnel destiné à promouvoir l'analyse prédictive et la gouvernance anticipative. Sur base de leur bonne volonté et enthousiasme, neuf institutions et organes de l'Union développent des travaux de réflexion sur le long terme et permettent aux décideurs politiques de poser leurs choix en étant mieux éclairés sur les enjeux de l'avenir.

Ces deux actions symbolisent l'intuition de Klaus Welle d'inscrire les travaux parlementaires dans un cadre plus large, basé sur la rigueur scientifique, l'analyse et la recherche, ayant un œil tourné vers l'avenir, dans des processus ouverts aux autres institutions et organes de l'Union. En ce qui concerne ESPAS, l'horizon est même plus lointain, puisque des échanges et coopérations se sont établies au fil du temps avec les homologues américains, canadiens ou japonais. Étant un acteur moi-même de ces processus, je peux témoigner de l'engagement du personnel du Parlement européen pour délivrer des documents de qualité, s'appuyant sur des recherches larges et multidisciplinaires, afin d'éclairer au mieux les députés, mais aussi l'ensemble des décideurs européens.

²²⁸ <https://www.espas.eu/>

L'identification du Parlement européen

La jeune démocratie européenne, résultant des traités successifs, s'incarne au travers de ses élus au Parlement européen, surtout depuis l'élection directe intervenue pour la première fois en 1979. Cependant, si la démocratie prend forme par de nombreux discours en séance plénière, des rapports et des résolutions, des myriades d'amendements, des négociations souvent longues et tortueuses et beaucoup de réunions, elle prend également forme au travers de symboles qui « parlent » davantage au grand public. Dans ce contexte, l'inspiration de Klaus Welle d'inscrire le Parlement européen dans le paysage bruxellois, et « dans la brique », est une œuvre pionnière qu'il faut saluer. Je citerai deux réalisations remarquables à ce niveau.

La première est la mise en place du Parliamentarium, le centre de visite du Parlement européen. Le Parliamentarium relève le défi d'expliquer le fonctionnement du Parlement européen de manière simple et participative. Grâce à ses outils interactifs comme un cinéma à 360°, un jeu de rôle pour les étudiants et une carte interactive géante posée à même le sol, le Parliamentarium fait entrer les visiteurs au plus près dans le fonctionnement du Parlement européen. À ce jour, le Parliamentarium a reçu plus de 2 millions de visiteurs.

La seconde est la mise sur pied de la Maison de l'histoire européenne, afin de faire connaître au grand public d'où vient l'Europe que nous connaissons aujourd'hui. Des mythes et découvertes au chaos de la première moitié du 20^{ème} siècle, puis à la cohésion progressive entre les nations européennes, la Maison de l'histoire européenne emmène les visiteurs dans un voyage fascinant à travers l'histoire de l'Europe et les met au défi d'imaginer son avenir. J'ai eu la chance de rencontrer plusieurs membres de l'équipe qui a mis sur pied cette Maison de l'histoire européenne, et leur enthousiasme et motivation faisaient plaisir à voir, eux qui savaient travailler, pour les générations futures, à la préservation de la mémoire des grands événements qui ont marqué l'Europe.

Au terme de ce bref tour d'horizon de différentes activités du Parlement européen, je voudrais témoigner du fait que, au-delà des rapports de force institutionnels et de la « machinerie » complexe qui caractérise les relations entre nos institutions, les contacts avec mes homologues du Parlement européen ont toujours été empreints de respect mutuel, mais aussi du sentiment partagé que nous étions tous engagés dans une aventure unique – la construction, pas à pas,

par des réalisations concrètes, d'une Europe toujours plus unie, au bénéfice de ses citoyens²²⁹.

²²⁹ « L'Europe ne se fera pas d'un coup, ni dans une construction d'ensemble: elle se fera par des réalisations concrètes créant d'abord une solidarité de fait. », déclaration Schuman, 9.5.1950.

The EP administration seen from the European External Action Service

Stefano SANNINO

Mr Stefano Sannino is the Secretary-General of the European External Action Service (EEAS) of the European Union since 1 January 2021.

He held the post of the Deputy Secretary-General for Economic and Global Issues at the EEAS from April 2020 to December 2020.

From March 2016 to April 2020 he was Ambassador of Italy to Spain and Andorra.

From July 2013 until March 2016 he held the position of Permanent Representative of Italy to the EU in Brussels.

After a period at the Cabinet of the President of the Commission (from 2002 to 2004) he joined the Directorate General for External Relations as Director for Crisis Management and Representative at PSC (2004-2006), then Director for Latin America (2008-2009) and finally as Deputy Director General for Asia and Latin America (2009-2010). In 2010 he moved to the Directorate General for Enlargement as Deputy Director General and later as Director General, a position he held until June 2013.

From 2006 to 2008 he was the Diplomatic Advisor to the Italian Prime Minister and his Personal Representative to G8 summits.

He has also held the position of Ambassador and Head of the OSCE Mission in Belgrade from 2001 to 2002 and within the Italian Diplomatic Service: Deputy Head of Mission of the Italian Embassy in Belgrade (1994-1996), Head of the Secretariat of the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1996-1998), Diplomatic Advisor and Head of the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Trade (1998-2001).

Mr Sannino is fluent in Spanish, English and French beyond his native Italian.

Klaus Welle has undeniably shaped the European Parliament as one of the world's most active parliamentary assemblies in international affairs. As Secretary-General of the European Parliament from 2009 to 2022, Klaus Welle worked to strengthen the democratic voice of Europe in the world.

Together, we reinforced the cooperation between the European Parliament and the EEAS, with the aim of making Europe stronger in this increasingly challenging geopolitical world.

We worked together during one of the most difficult periods in the functioning of our institutions, the COVID-19 pandemic, which posed numerous challenges to the EU and the whole world. I recall with deep gratitude the excellent collaboration during such challenging times where we were able to put in place new ways of ensuring efficient working of the EP and the EEAS through exchange of information, analysis and intelligence for the benefit of EU citizens in Europe and around the world.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has marked a profound paradigm shift in EU's foreign and security policy. From its outset, our institutions have worked closely together on the multilateral stage to constantly show unwavering support Ukraine and ensure the broadest possible support among third countries. Under Klaus' leadership, I have welcomed and supported the constant attention devoted by the EP to strengthening Ukraine, including through innovative committee-to-committee cooperation recently launched with the Verkhovna Rada, as a strong political signal in support of Ukraine's future membership in the EU.

Klaus has been a staunch supporter and precious partner to elevate Parliament's unique role in bringing EU foreign policy closer to our citizens and in strengthening its democratic legitimacy, not least by consistently placing human rights, the rule of law and democracy at the heart of EU external action.

During his tenure, the European Parliament has championed the conviction that that we need a more united Europe in international affairs to promote peace, security and prosperity, as well as the values and interests of EU citizens across the globe.

In particular, Klaus and I shared a deep belief in the contribution of Parliamentary Diplomacy to EU foreign and security policy. We have promoted the presence of Parliament staff in EU Delegation to strengthen parliamentary cooperation with multilateral organisations, and EP staff is now represented in EU

Delegations to the United Nations in New York, to the African Union in Addis Ababa and to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Jakarta. The EP presence in the EU Delegation offers an important way of direct parliamentary engagement that strengthens the EP's cooperation with multilateral organization and third countries.

Furthermore, I deeply appreciate Parliament's support of EU foreign policy, including through the allocation of financial and human resources to the EEAS. Klaus has always been attentive and sensitive to the political and financial priorities of the EU's diplomatic service, as well as to the fundamental work carried out by our network of EU delegations around the world. This enabled us to strengthen our relations with third countries, to launch new initiatives and to ensure the safety of our staff during crisis. In return, we have been pleased to welcome an increasing number of the European Parliament's official visits to third countries, to whom our delegations and Ambassadors provided the necessary security and political support on the ground.

Finally yet importantly, the European Parliament has been instrumental in addressing the issue of foreign information and manipulation interference, which poses a grave threat to citizens' democratic rights and freedoms. During Klaus' tenure, we have joined forces to address this challenge and work towards strengthening preparedness and readiness to protect both the EU institutions and its decision-making process, as well as our citizens.

I am personally grateful to Klaus for the support always showed to the work of the EEAS Regional Task Forces responding to foreign disinformation, information manipulation and interference in the Western Balkans, in the eastern and southern neighbourhood, and recently in Africa.

The European Parliament's administration viewed from the European Committee of the Regions

Petr BLÍŽKOVSKÝ

Petr Blížkovský serves since 2019 as Secretary-General of the European Committee of the Regions. Over a career spanning nearly three decades in various public roles, Petr Blížkovský has been a member of a city council and a university lecturer, and served in a number of positions in the Czech and European civil services. He was also a young elected politician during the Velvet Revolution. He worked on the Czech Republic's process of accession to the EU, and more recently led the Council of the European Union's directorate for economic and regional affairs, directorate on agricultural policy and on social affairs. He obtained a PhD in Economics and Management and from Brno's Mendel University where he was later appointed Professor in Economics and Management. He is also a Guest-Professor at VUB Brussels.

The two institutions which Klaus Welle and I have had the honour to serve as Secretaries-General – the European Parliament and the European Committee of the Regions – have a history of long-standing and successful cooperation.

The breakthrough for us was the Lisbon Treaty, which strengthened the position of 'our' institutions in the EU legislative processes.

The Lisbon Treaty brought new powers for the Parliament and put it on an equal footing with the Council as co-legislator. For the CoR it marked a new chapter too, guaranteeing that all new proposals for EU legislation had to take into account the expected impact on local and regional government.

As Klaus once said, "*What wasn't possible twenty years ago with the Maastricht Treaty was suddenly possible*". But I have to add that success comes not from seeing the opportunity, but from knowing how to grasp it.

It is not easy to navigate such fundamental change or to administratively support a political institution which is constantly evolving. Klaus not only lived up

to this task, but has also provided inspiration to his successors and counterparts in other institutions.

I am very grateful that in the momentous years between 2009 and 2022 when he led the Parliament's administration, the EP was consolidating its interinstitutional relations with all its partners, including the Committee.

Klaus understood very well that both of our institutions, despite the differences between them, shared unique characteristics as assemblies composed of democratically elected members, and that there was more that united us than that divided us.

These were times when many commentators spoke about a perceived lack of representation of the man or woman in the street by the EU institutions, the so-called 'democratic deficit'. The Parliament knew that it had an important role to play in addressing this gap and that it needed partners in this process.

The Committee has been a younger and less mighty brother of the Parliament, but the EP has never questioned our democratic credentials or the fact that the views of cities and regions needed to be heard too.

The positive political and administrative cooperation between our institutions dates back to 1994, when the CoR was created, but it was during Klaus's term in office, and to be precise in 2014, when the good relations between our institutions were formally recognised in the form of a cooperation agreement.

When our respective presidents, Martin Schultz and Ramon Luis Valcarcel Siso, signed the cooperation agreement, they called for stronger bilateral links when preparing EU legislation and European elections, and in areas such as translation, access to buildings and canteens and security.

This agreement became one of the building blocks on which our ever-closer relations were constructed. Today, after almost ten years, the agreement is being reviewed to take account of our increasing links. It serves as a basis for that review.

Indeed, it is with great satisfaction that I can say that relations between the EP and the CoR have gone from strength to strength since that time. It is not my goal to list here all the good examples of our work, but allow me to mention just a few: the high number of exchanges between our rapporteurs, the organisation of joint meetings between our committees and commissions, and collaboration

on communication and research via the Parliament's Research Service. We are also working closely together with a view to the 2024 European election: the goal is to help increase the turnout and spread information about the importance of voting. All of this has fostered our links and brought them to the next level.

A passageway that was opened up between our institutions, and which allows for free circulation of our members and staff, is not only a practical improvement, it is a symbol of our good cooperation and amicable relations.

What has remained stable are the two main objectives guiding the work of our political leadership and administrations. The first one is still to reinforce the democratic legitimacy of the Union and to contribute to the Treaty objective of pursuing territorial, social and economic cohesion. The second one is still to ensure respect of the principle of subsidiarity. These two goals are as valid today as they were in 2014.

Another point I would like to praise Klaus for is the mainstreaming of the notion that administration in political institutions should understand, or at least try to understand, the political world. Bringing the administrative and political worlds together is never easy, but it is a task worth pursuing. Only if staff understand politics will they be capable of efficient policy support.

Today I can confidently say that the EP and the CoR have become more political over the years. Political groups have grown powerful, and by and large they shape the agendas of both institutions. This process started in the European Parliament and has had a clear effect on the Committee. It has made the EU more democratic, and policy output more usable.

I remember that Klaus repeatedly emphasised that elected politicians had to be at the heart of European democracy. In the last few decades, political groups at the CoR have enjoyed strong links with those in the Parliament. They organise joint meetings in Brussels and local dialogues in the Member States, often far away from the capitals. This helps them to reach out to the public, even those living in more remote areas. They exchange information on how EU policies work on the ground and on how to ensure the best possible turnout in European elections. Our administration assists them in this work, inspired by measures adopted by the European Parliament, albeit operating with more limited resources.

The coming together of our administrations and political groups has had a lasting and positive impact on European democracy. I wish to thank Klaus for

the many years of fruitful cooperation with Europe's cities and regions, inspiring us in terms of administrative reforms and philosophy, as well as for all his efforts which have brought 'Europe' closer to Europeans. Our institutions have built many bridges to better connect not only themselves – but also Europe – with its people. This has made us better prepared for the future.

Petr Blížkovský

Secretary-General

European Committee of the Regions

Disclaimer:

The information and views set out in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Committee of the Regions.

The European Parliament administration seen by the European Economic and Social Committee²³⁰

Gianluca BRUNETTI

Gianluca is a former EU official of Italian nationality. Graduated in Political Sciences from the Federico II University in Naples, he specialized in EU policies and International law. He started his career in 1986 at the Council of Europe and joined in 1991 the European Parliament as administrator in parliamentary committees and hold later different positions of Head of Unit. In 2010 he joined the European Economic and Social Committee as Director of Human Resources, being also in charge of Finances from 2017. In November 2018 he was appointed Secretary General, function occupied until the end 2023. Gianluca has followed trainings in management and administration at Harvard Business School, Stanford University and Berkeley Haas School of management.

Introduction

The growing complexity of the EU legislative making process and the pressure on the budget have largely impacted the functioning of the European Economic and Social committee (EESC), putting strong pressure on its limited resources. As a consequence, the search for administrative synergies with other institutions, and the EP in particular, represents a key element to help guaranteeing the proper running of its consultative function.

²³⁰ The opinions expressed are the entire responsibility of the author and do not necessary reflect the official position of the EESC.

EESC working methods, administrative structure and the cooperation with the EP administration

The EESC has been established by the Treaty of Rome in 1958 as consultative body to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission (articles 301–304 of the TFEU). The objective was to accompany the law making process with the views of stakeholders active in the economic and social fields, such as employers, employees, representative of specific categories (farmers, liberal professions etc.). The model chosen was based on existing structures in some member states, such as the Italian Consiglio Nazionale dell'economia e del lavoro (CNEL), or the, recently renamed, French Conseil économique, social et environmental (CESE).

Over the years the composition of the EESC has been reshaped to include other components of the civil society, notably in socio-economic, civic, professional and cultural areas, going beyond the simple dynamic employers/employees. As such, the EESC brings in the interinstitutional framework the element of participatory democracy by involving various associations of citizens and strengthening the legitimacy of the EU policies.

Despite the non binding nature of its opinions, the consultation of the EESC is mandatory on the main areas of the EU activities. The EESC also prepares own initiative opinions, reports and analysis at the request of other institutions. Its political structure and working methods show some similarities with the EP. First and foremost the bodies: an Assembly, composed of all its members, formally adopts the relevant texts such as opinions etc.; a Bureau bears the political responsibility for the general management of the committee; specialized sections are in charge of the preparatory work in different thematic fields (agriculture, internal market, transport etc.); other specific permanent bodies deal with communication, financial and budgetary matters, etc.. Ad hoc structures are also foreseen in order to deal with specific topics. According to their organizations of origin, EESC members choose to belong to one of its three groups (employers, employees, and civil society). Each group has its own secretariat.

A General Secretariat, composed of roughly 700 staff members ensures the functioning of the EESC bodies. The administrative structure is composed of directorates covering the various fields of administrative support: Statutory Bodies (Assembly, Bureau and other governing bodies, members working conditions), Legislative works (two entities in charge of the sections), Communication

and interinstitutional relations (including relations with national economic and social councils), Human Resources and Finances and, finally, Logistics (Buildings, Catering, Security etc.), Informatics and Translation. These three last directorates are part of the EESC-CoR (European Committee of Regions) Joint Services, a unique model of administrative cooperation between institutions.

A set of instruments and services help the EESC bodies and members to perform their functions, quite similar to the ones in place at the EP: policy advice, clerical assistance, translation and interpretation, support for travel arrangements, organization of missions, contacts with appropriate stakeholders, training needs, informatics etc..

The geographical proximity, far being anecdotal, has an influence on the administrative relations with the EP. The EESC shares its premises with the CoR. Its buildings are directly connected to the EP premises. To facilitate the flows of members and staff, an user friendly gateway has been opened, creating the conditions for a common working location where elected members of the EP, representatives of civil society organizations and local and regional authorities, together with their staff, work for the purpose of the European project. This physical closeness brings additional opportunities for exchanges of views and cooperation for instance in the fields of security, mobility and transport policies in the area.

Over the last 15 years, the EESC administration has been confronting the challenges of an increasing workload accompanied by severe pressure on its budgetary and human resources. The budgetary austerity has pushed for the adoption of virtuous behaviours in terms of reforming and modernizing working methods, optimizing the financial circuits and better allocating human resources. All these steps have represented a responsible way to address the legitimate concerns of the taxpayers for more accountability on the use of the budgetary appropriations.

Nonetheless, for a relatively small entity like the EESC, with limited margin of maneuvering in terms of human resources and financial appropriations, the need to maintain the essential functions without disposing of a buffer safety net represents a potential risk in terms of business continuity. The way forward is keeping modernizing the procedures, establishing negative priorities but also exploring ways of smartly outsourcing and externalizing activities. The overall objective is to create the conditions for redeployment and reallocation of human and financial resources to the sectors identified as priority by the EESC political authorities.

Hence, the EESC administration has been constantly looking for more inter-institutional synergies. Actually both the EU consultative committees have acted as pioneers deciding, already twenty years ago, to cooperate in logistic fields and to pool some support activities through joint services. This arrangement generates important budgetary savings. It covers buildings, security, safety, catering, EMAS policies, informatics and translation, management of meeting rooms, coordination of medical services, distribution of mail and is constantly monitored in the search for further improvements. Service level agreements have also been concluded with the Commission for the management of staff individual files (Sysper), the supply of interpretation services (SCIC) or more recently the conduct of administrative investigations (IDOC). Moreover the active participation in interinstitutional multilateral committees provides additional opportunities to share experiences and find ways to optimize the use of resources.

The current constraints push for more cooperation in terms of pooling resources and access to facilities at the disposal of other institutions. In this respect the EP administration keeps a special place because of previously outlined elements. The list of the main fields of activity in which a strong cooperation has been developed is quite extensive.

The most important is no doubt a proper venue for the meetings of the EESC plenary assembly. Not disposing of its own hemicycle, the EESC turns naturally to the Commission and the EP which do possess this kind of facility. The EESC plenary sittings are hosted in the De Gasperi room of the Commission Charlemagne building and, depending on the availability, two or three times per year they take place in the EP hemicycle (and particularly on solemn occasions such as the five years term renewal). Well planned in advance, the possibility to make use either of the Commission or the EP facilities allows the EESC administration to plan and organize in an efficient way the working calendar of the committee.

Coming to the supply of interpretation services, to complement the provisions in place with the Commission, the EESC has also signed a service level agreement with the EP for the furniture of interpretation each time an EESC meeting takes place in the EP premises. For the EESC this means a diversification of the service providers while for the EP this allows the optimization of its domestic interpretation resources.

Research and documentation for police advice constitute another domain in which there is largely room to develop synergies and avoid duplicating resources. An administrative arrangement has introduced the possibility for EESC to make

use of the EP Research Center to get support in terms of policy analysis for the benefit of the EESC rapporteurs.

The necessity to arrange travel needs for its members has pushed the EESC to join the EP administration in the organization of the calls for tender for the travel agency: indeed, the small size of the committee and the volume of activities involved are better served by a contractual arrangement under the guidance of a major partner which runs operations of the same nature.

The cooperation works also very well on an ad hoc basis: for instance, during the COVID 19 pandemic, the EP put at the disposal of the EESC members its testing facilities, thus helping the Committee to keep its consultative function without disruption.

Possible ways forward

A number of possible additional fields of cooperation could be explored. Just to quote a few, keeping in mind that, in some cases, both consultative committees might be interested:

- 1) Competition and selection procedures for officials: these are normally conducted under the aegis of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO). Apart from the normal exchanges of views on the drafting of the notices of competition, given the analogies in some of the requested profiles, the pooling of resources in the selection panels via a system of proxy could be explored.
- 2) Stronger coordination in the field of security: in the light of the interconnectivity between the premises, the notion of single security area for the perimeter including the committees and the EP could be discussed, respecting the autonomy and the specific interests of each party.
- 3) Mobility: safety for pedestrians, access for vehicles, public transports, flows of visitors and more generally working and living conditions in the area are discussed at multilateral level with the Belgian authorities. A step forward could be a common representation before the local and regional authorities preceded by proper consultation and alignment of the respective positions.

4) Medical services: a closer cooperation could be explored, for instance in case of organization of vaccination campaign (flu etc.). In the past the EESC made use of the Commission services but the proximity and the valuable experience of the testing provided by the EP for the EESC members during the pandemic might encourage to explore additional synergies.

5) Traineeship: similarities in working methods and policies could push towards a coordinated selection procedure with important savings for the administrations in terms of administrative burden.

6) Trainings and exchanges of staff : specific training could be opened to EESC and EP staff on legislative procedures, informatics, cybersecurity etc. and could also be extended to EESC members (for instance when it comes to ethical issues). Also an exchange program could be put in place to allow respective staff to spend short periods of 2/3 weeks in services dealing with similar topics to help mutual understanding of working methods.

7) Meeting rooms: conference rooms with interpretation facilities could be, at least partially, managed in common to optimize the occupation rate and make savings in terms of equipment and maintenance.

More generally, the question should be put to which extent a closer integration of the EESC in the EP administrative structure would improve the impact of its work. The EESC has adopted a pragmatic approach to optimize its resources thanks to the outsourcing of some activities and the development of a close cooperation with the other institutions. Doing more will bring additional advantages: avoid duplicating services, optimizing the use of existing facilities etc. From the point of view of a small body, the perspective of more outsourcing is attractive since this could provide room for redeployment of staff to core functions. On the other hand, autonomy remains a key element that each administration should bear in mind to guarantee the correct and independent execution of its tasks. The risk of not being in a position to control anymore the quality of the services offered by an external provider, with no possibility to go back to the status quo ante, has to be carefully assessed.

In the end a proper balance needs to be kept between the opportunity to pool resources and outsourcing and an appropriate control on the requested services. The solution consists in the establishment of a true partnership with a well functioning, fair and balanced governance system, to allow taking into consideration the roles, needs and specificities assigned by the Treaties to each institution/body involved.

EP Pöttering Presidency, 2007-2009, by Hans-Gert Pöttering

Professor Dr. Hans-Gert PÖTTERING

Prof Dr Hans-Gert Pöttering

Former President of the European Parliament

Commissioner for European Affairs of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation

Hans-Gert Pöttering was born on 15 September 1945 in Bersenbrück (Lower Saxony). He studied law, politics and history at the Universities of Bonn and Geneva and completed a research stay at Columbia University in New York. He was an uninterrupted Member of the European Parliament from 1979 to 2014 and its President from 2007 to 2009, having previously been Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament from 1999 to 2007. From January 2010 to January 2018, he was Chairman of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and is now its Commissioner for European Affairs.

Hans-Gert Pöttering is the initiator and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the House of European History, which was opened in Brussels in May 2017.

From 2018-2022, he was Chairman of the “Former Members Association”, the association of former Members of the European Parliament in Brussels.

He lectures on European politics at the University of Osnabrück.

Thank you, Klaus!

‘Young Klaus Welle’ is turning 60. This is something I find it quite hard to get my head around, being 18 years his senior. To me, he is still the same age that he was at the start of our many years of trustworthy collaboration. I would like to begin my contribution to the



Liber Amicorum by expressing my sincere and heartfelt gratitude for the path we were able to tread together as we developed the European Parliament and the European Union as a whole. I would also like to offer Klaus Welle my warmest wishes for the present and for the future, with the hope that he may continue to be as committed to the future of European integration as he has been in the past. In this context, I would like to repeat what I wrote in my autobiography, 'United for the Better':

*„I also developed especially good working relations with Klaus Welle, our group's secretary-general. Klaus, who came from Westphalia, had taken a job in the CDU's head office after completing an economics degree. In that role he had been responsible for European policy and proved particularly adept at writing papers. In 1994 he had become secretary-general of the European People's Party and worked closely together with the party leader, Wilfried Martens. Then, on 8 February 1999, Klaus Welle became secretary-general of the EPP-Group which gave him a perfect start to a career in the European Parliament. In these days it was still customary, and made good sense, to touch base with the group in Germany's Bundestag. We duly consulted it, and Wolfgang Schäuble agreed with Martens and myself that Klaus was a good person to deploy on the group's behalf. Some people in the CDU/CSU Group had distinctly different ideas, but in the end we prevailed and Klaus was elected secretary-general. This was fortunate for me because he went on to become my closest and most trusted colleague, as well as a good friend, and having him work alongside me for many years was one of my most positive experiences in politics. In 2004, Klaus became a director-general of the European Parliament. When I was elected President of the European Parliament on 16 January 2007, he became my **chef de cabinet**, and on 15 March 2009, in the run-up to the 2009 European elections and shortly before my departure from office on 14 July 2009, he was appointed secretary-general of the European Parliament. This was a major achievement for Klaus, and it was a triumphant moment for me to appoint him secretary-general of the European Parliament with unanimous support from Parliament's Bureau. On mid-march 2009, Katrin Ruhrmann, who had hitherto served as my press officer, took over from Klaus as the head of the office of president for the last remaining months of my term. She was subsequently replaced by a new press officer, Jesús Gómez...“*

Klaus Welle and I are not only united in our shared views on European politics, but we have also almost always seen eye to eye (and we still do) when it comes to assessing people. Klaus Welle is therefore to thank for several wise staffing proposals. Among many others, this included my 'chief secretaries', Malou Daironment, during my time as group chair (1999-2007), and Marie-Jeanne Smets, while

I was President of the European Parliament (2007-2009). Both demonstrated care, reliability and professionalism and that the trust placed in them was justified in every way. I could list many more names, but I will mention just one: Ruth Bahnemann, an 'institution' in and of herself, who had already worked closely with Egon Klepsch in his capacity as group chair. Helmut Kohl once said to me: 'The most important thing is trust'.

Yes, this applies to political associates and colleagues, but also to staff. Little can be achieved without a good team.

On the subject of Helmut Kohl: the Honorary Citizen of Europe saw Klaus Welle as a natural interlocutor. And so, Helmut Kohl called him shortly before my election as group chair. 'Can you talk? Who will be group chair?'

Klaus Welle was (and remains) an interlocutor for the 'greats' of national and European politics. One of my successors as President of the European Parliament once told me – and he meant it as a criticism – that Klaus Welle was more of a politician than a civil servant. That may be true, but it is actually a compliment. It shows Klaus Welle's unique personality. He combines political opinions and initiatives with administrative skill. He achieves objectives, in particular in relation to European policy, with tenacity and perseverance (one step at a time). These characteristics and behaviours are particularly valuable in the field of European policy. Never giving up. Knowing that nothing is certain until it is certain. Konrad Adenauer once said that the real work only truly starts once most politicians have given up on a goal. In my many years of experience, I have found this to be true, and Klaus Welle has been beside me offering encouragement every step of the way.

The most noteworthy example of this was the failure of the Constitutional Treaty following the referenda in France and the Netherlands (May/June 2005). The disappointment was huge, and some major political figures quickly abandoned the project. 'The Treaty is dead', said a famously pro-European minister of foreign affairs. We were determined to preserve the substance of the Constitutional Treaty. It was of great benefit that Klaus Welle was Director-General in the European Parliament and then 'my' Head of Cabinet following my election as President of the European Parliament on 16 January 2007. We managed to preserve the substance of the Constitutional Treaty in cooperation with European Parliament colleagues, like Elmar Brok and others, Heads of Government, including, among many others, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and the Luxembourgish Prime Minister, Jean-Claude Juncker.

The Treaty of Lisbon, which was signed on 13 December 2007, was the welcome fruit of our labour.

It was Klaus Welle's idea to have the presidents of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Council sign the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union – the legal and political component of the Treaty of Lisbon – at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 12 December 2007.



Klaus Welle was behind so many initiatives that it is difficult to recall half, let alone all of them. That is why I shall confine myself to the following.

With the European Parliament elections in June 1999, our group – the Group of the European People's Party (EPP) and European Democrats (ED) – became, for the first time and by far, the largest group. I always believed that the President of the European Commission should be selected in line with the election results. Nonetheless, the European Council put forward the former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi for the post. Romano Prodi, a man of principle and former Christian Democrat, had, however, joined the democratic centre left following the dissolution of the Democrazia Cristiana in Italy, meaning he was no longer a member of our EPP party family. We could hardly prevent Prodi's appointment, but we did successfully demand institutional concessions from him. I can no longer remember exactly which ideas came from Klaus Welle, from other Members of Parliament or from myself, but we all agreed on the final list of demands, which I read out in the plenary session of the European Parliament:

„Firstly, the timetable of the Parliament and of its Committees and, therefore, the presence of the Commission in the Parliament, are to take precedence over all other obligations of the European Commission. Secondly, requests by Parliament to the Commission to set out legislative proposals are to be complied with as far as possible. Thirdly, a vote of no-confidence against a member of the Commission is to be reason enough for the President of the Commission to seriously consider dismissing him. Fourthly, constructive dialogue and regular consultation are to take place with the European Parliament about reform of the Commission. Fifthly, Parliament and the Commission are to support comprehensive institutional reform in anticipation of the Intergovernmental Conference” 12

Romano Prodi accepted our demands and was finally elected. We thus made significant institutional progress. This increase in powers was, to a great extent, thanks to Klaus Welle, who was one of the brains behind it and who later became a keen advocate for the model of the ‘Spitzenkandidat’ (the lead-candidate for the post of Commission President).

Following the limited success of the Nice Summit (December 2000), I asked Klaus Welle, our group’s Secretary-General at the time, to draft a motion for the January 2001 EPP Congress in Berlin, chaired by Wilfried Martens, for the EPP to call for a convention on the comprehensive reform of the European Union. And so he did, and as I explained in my speech at the EPP Congress:

„The group has agreed that our final position will be decided in the context of our discussion of the report submitted by the (European Parliament’s) Committee on Constitutional Affairs, which will be drawn up over the coming months. But we must always say clearly that the treaty does not meet our expectations, because it fails both to extend key areas of policy to majority voting in the Council and to expand Parliament’s co-decision powers to areas in which the Council reaches decisions on a majority basis. The Treaty of Nice did not succeed in fulfilling its historical mission. Moreover, the IGC method proved to be outdated. President Chirac openly admitted this to the European Parliament in his report. We need to draw our conclusions from this for the future, for further reforms. The Convention system used to draft the Charter of Fundamental Rights under the leadership of former German President Roman Herzog could serve as an example of a better working method. Representatives of the European Parliament, national parliaments, governments and the European Commission should prepare for the next treaty. In addition, there has to be an intensive public debate.” 24

With this, our group had taken the lead in the future reform debate. The socialist Chair of the Constitutional Affairs Committee, Giorgio Napolitano, who would go on to become the President of Italy, pulled me aside during the January plenary session in Strasbourg.

‘That was a good decision,’ he said. ‘I recommend you do likewise in your own party family,’ I replied. We all know what the outcome was. The Heads of State and Government agreed to the convention. The chair: Valérie Giscard d’Estaing, former French President. The convention had a broad staff base. Members included members of the European Parliament and of national parliaments, as well as representatives of governments and European institutions. Unfortunately, as already mentioned, the Constitutional Treaty was defeated following referenda in France and the Netherlands. The Treaty of Lisbon, also as already mentioned, succeeded in preserving the substance of the Constitutional Treaty.

On 1 January 2004, Klaus Welle made the transition to an administrative position in the European Parliament, becoming its Director-General for Internal Policies. Then, when I was elected President of the European Parliament, he became my Head of Cabinet. We also maintained close contact in the period between 2004 and 2007, while Niels Pedersen from Denmark was Secretary-General of our group. Klaus Welle developed a special sense for when I needed psychological support, for example during the difficult process of forming the Commission with the presidential candidate, José Manuel Durão Barroso, after the 2004 European elections. We had not planned to talk, but he found me anyway to discuss the way forward.

The following anecdote provides another example of the trust we shared. It must have been in around 2008. I had plans to meet José Manuel Durão Barroso, the Commission President, for dinner at ‘Barbanera’, a restaurant in Brussels near the Commission Building, the Berlaymont. I asked Klaus Welle to join us. After all, Barroso, with whom I got on well, took up his office thanks to the strong support of our group. I wanted to make absolutely sure that the Commission and its President were making every effort to make the Treaty of Lisbon a reality. If I got the impression that this was not the case, the European Parliament would withdraw its confidence from the Commission. Fortunately, it did not have to come to that – Barroso and the Commission were loyal allies. Today, the Treaty of Lisbon is the legal and political basis of the European Union – a kind of constitution, so to speak. It entered into force on 1 December 2009, following a difficult ratification process. How long we had fought for it! Klaus Welle had a huge hand in that.

Without Klaus Welle's active support in his capacity as Secretary-General of the European Parliament, a project which was, and is, so close to my heart would not have become a reality: the House of European History (HEH).

In my inaugural address as President of the European Parliament on 13 February 2007, I said to the European Parliament in Strasbourg:

„In national museums, European history is nearly always represented in purely national terms. I would like to suggest a locus for history and for the future, where the concept of the European idea can continue to grow. I would like to suggest the founding of a 'House of European History'. It should not be a dry, boring museum, but a place where our memory of European history and the work of European unification is jointly cultivated, and which at the same time is available as a locus for the European identity to go on being shaped by present and future citizens of the European Union. A 'House of European History' such as this should be established in the seat of the European institutions and should network with comparable foundations in the member States" 69

At the beginning of May 2017, the House of European History was ceremoniously opened by the then President of the European Parliament, my friend Antonio Tajani, who at the time of writing is the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of Forza Italia. Klaus Welle played a key role in overcoming all the obstacles encountered in the creation of the HEH. It was his idea to provide the HEH with a legal basis: the European Parliament's right of self-organisation. The HEH became part of the European Parliament's outreach activities.

It still sometimes amazes me that the House of European History, in its beautiful setting of Parc Leopold behind the European Parliament, really exists and inspires its many visitors. In this context, I would like to share an excerpt from the introduction to my autobiography, 'United for the Better. My European Way':

„Having Klaus Welle working alongside me was a huge bonus in my life in politics. Our assessments of political and staff-related issues almost always tallied, a fact I not only consider extraordinary, but also regard as a real stroke of good fortune.“

I would like to encourage Klaus Welle to write his own 'memories', so that we can hear his thoughts on his political life. It would be very valuable.

Thank you, Klaus, for your great commitment to the unity of our continent! Personally, I would like to thank you wholeheartedly and sincerely for the spirit of trust and friendship you brought to the long, European path we were able to tread together.

Professor Dr Hans-Gert Pöttering

President of the European Parliament (2007-2009)

Berlin, February 2024



EP Buzek Presidency, 2009-2012, by Maciej Popowski

Maciej POPOWSKI

Maciej Popowski is Director-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations at the European Commission.

Ambassador Popowski is a Polish diplomat with more than 30 years of professional experience. Closely involved in the accession negotiations of Poland to the EU, he was Director for EU affairs at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in 2001-2008 served as Deputy Head of the Permanent Representation of Poland to the European Union. Between 2003-2008 he was Poland's first permanent representative to the EU's Political and Security Committee. He then joined the European Commission as Director in Directorate-General for Development focusing on policy coherence, aid effectiveness, financing, relations with other donors and public information. In 2009-2011 he served as Head of Cabinet of the President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek. From 2011 until 2015 he was Deputy Secretary-General of the European External Action Service, supervising the Common Security and Defence Policy as well as development policy. In April 2016, Mr Popowski joined the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations serving as its Deputy Director-General and, from September 2020 until January 2023, as acting Director-General. He supervised, inter alia, EU's assistance to Ukraine following the Russian aggression as well works on the opinion on the candidate status for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

Institution Man

Klaus and I were born in the same year - the Year of the Dragon but I always thought that he was older than me. It wasn't the looks or the lifestyle that made me think this way about him, it was an entrenched feeling that Klaus has always been around. He has been around Place du Luxembourg, he could be seen in lofty buildings of the European Parliament he kept acquiring in Brussels and Strasbourg, you rubbed shoulders with him at EPP events and in the corridors of the European Council meetings. In hindsight Klaus can be defined as a man who

has become an institution, an Institution Man. Historians of European integration have written volumes about founding fathers of the Communities, visionary Commission or Parliament Presidents like Jacques Delors or Simone Weil, national leaders for whom Europe was *Chefsache*. Officials manning the engine room of the European Union, Secretaries-General, Directors-General, Permanent Representatives are less known the wider audience, admittedly many of them were shying away from the limelight. And yet they all deserve credit and recognition. So far only a couple of windowless meeting rooms smelling of compromise, sweat and warm recycling paper coming out of the printer have been named after EU officials. I have a better proposition - names of eminent fonctionnaire grandees should be included in a special protocol annexed to the next Treaty eg. the Accession Treaty of Albania or Moldova. For purely alphabetical reasons, Klaus Welle's name would be one the last but certainly not less honourable entries.

Speaking of birth date coincidence that may be seen as a sign of destiny if you believe in astrology - both Klaus Welle and Jerzy Buzek were born on 3 July. Klaus and I got to know each other in September 2009 when I arrived in the European Parliament as President Buzek's Head of Cabinet. As a Polish diplomat turned European official, I introduced myself as a "gun for hire" and our first encounter became a starting shot of a professional and personal relationship. I left my bright office in the Paul Henri Spaak building which I in fact inherited from Klaus, after barely 16 months when I moved over to the newly established European External Action Service (EEAS). But what a year and a bit it was! First Parliament President hailing from a then new Member State, entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009, parliamentary hearings of and two votes on the Barroso II Commission, appointment of the first ever President of the European Council Herman van Rompuy and High Representative - Vice President of the Commission Cathy Ashton. On top of that first signs of the financial crisis with Latvia's economy shrinking by 18%, Nigel Farage playing anti-European Don Quixote, first encounters with the Obama administration, negotiations of the decision creating EEAS and the first annual EU budget under the Lisbon rules. The European Parliament gained in importance and assertiveness not least because of Klaus' foresight and smart use of the new legal framework.

We shared quite a few dramatic but also funny moments and spent a lot of face time together. As many of EP top brass officials back then were German speakers - not only Germans themselves but also Alsations, Lotharingians, Luxemburgers and ...well, some Poles - we ended up holding meetings in the language of Goethe. They took place in Klaus Welle's office with his impressive collection of souvenir photographs, dusty bureau de passage in the Council building or in the back seat of Klaus' hybrid BMW whizzing us off to Luxembourg

or Strasbourg with the notorious former driver of Madame Chirac clutching the steering wheel. Klaus used to call himself “the last Kohlianer” with reference to the vision of Europe developed by the former German chancellor. Unlike the former Klaus Welle did not sit things out (in original *aussitzen*) but shared and cherished Helmut Kohl’s belief in reconciliation and sense of community. True believer in *la méthode Communautaire*, the EP Secretary General always wanted to strengthen its democratic credentials and to make the European Parliament great - not again but for the first time in terms of realpolitik. The investiture of the Barroso II Commission was all but ceremonial. Parliamentary hearings were a rough ride with political groups trying to shoot down Commissioner-designates coming from other parties and the actual - second - vote in September 2009 was a real cliff hanger albeit with an overwhelmingly positive result. European Parliament was gaining experience in the execution of power and Secretary General Welle never missed an opportunity not to be silent about it.

Negotiations of the 2011 annual EU budget turned out to be a true power game. The Lisbon Treaty gave the European Parliament much a bigger say in the budgetary procedure. Both branches of the budgetary authority entered a new territory. All mainstream political groups - EPP, socialists, liberals, Greens - pushed for a significant increase of the budget, not least against the background of new tasks conferred upon the Union by the Treaty. Most of the Member States chose to stick to austerity and wanted to avoid an ever growing “transfer Union” at any cost. The Parliament requested the 2011 budget to grow by 2,91%, Council’s response was a clear *njet*. Big institutional clash was looming large, budget experts were dusting off contingency plans based on monthly instalments of last year’s amount (the so-called “*douzes provisoires*”). As the situation was unprecedented, President Buzek followed the advice of the Secretary General and decided to lead the negotiations himself. Obviously, he kept heads of political groups in the loop. The presidency of the Union in the second half of 2010 was in the apt hands of Belgium. Belgian officials have a long institutional memory and are known as masters of compromise. The particularity of the situation was though that Prime Minister Yves Leterme was leading a caretaker government. Following the 2010 election formation of a new Belgian cabinet took record-breaking 541 days. Leterme mirrored Jerzy Buzek decision and led the Council negotiating team himself. Belgian PM known for his easy-going attitude once said: as a care taker premier I don’t have much to do domestically so I can actually seriously engage in European affairs. Of note is that Yves Leterme started his public career as a European Parliament official working for ... the secretariat of the budget committee and was still on unpaid leave from the institution. During the first negotiating session he half-jokingly remarked that Klaus Welle was actually his boss and the he would have to be nice to him.

In the end the Parliament - almost - got its way and the budgetary “conciliation” which is the understatement of the century, have marked the climax of the annual legislative calendar of the EU.

During his stint as Secretary General Klaus Welle was well known for his long-term thinking and his penchant for innovation. He developed a culture of strategic management, set up a parliamentary research service, established a new real estate policy and introduce stricter security rules. Inspiration for many of his ideas came from the US congress which he truly admired as a democratic powerhouse. Klaus’ transatlantic convictions have led to the establishment of the first EP office outside of the European Union - in Washington DC. President Buzek inaugurated it at the occasion of the Europe Day in May 2010. I am keeping fond memories of the cordial meeting with the then Vice President Joe Biden on his West Wing office embellished with a portrait of Theodor Roosevelt by the Polish painter Tadeusz (Tad) Styka.

I admired Klaus Welle’s interest in new technologies. He followed the latest developments always trying to explore their immediate practical application. I received my first ever service iPhone in February 2010 whereas my friends and colleagues in the European Commission were still using bulky HTC devises with a little stick to tap on the screen with. If my memory serves me well, under Klaus’ watch the Parliament adopted its sustainability rules, purchased a fleet of hybrid and then electrical vehicles, equipped all Members with tablets.

All good things come to an end but somehow it was hard to believe that Klaus Welle’s term ever would. It’s obvious though that he will continue being around - teaching, thinking, advising and ... playing golf. I don’t know much about golf, and I don’t think I ever will, but I know of Klaus’ passion for hitting white balls with a big stick. When I went on holiday in Scotland in August of 2019, I sent Klaus a picture of the golf course in St Andrews considered the oldest in the world. He replied that playing there was a matter of prestige. I am sure Klaus is spending some time playing golf courses all over Europe and beyond, but I know he would always come back to Brussels. He is an Institution Man in the end and Brussels is the home for institutions with a capital I.

European Parliament President Martin Schulz 2012-2014, first mandate

Richard FREEDMAN

Richard Freedman has worked for the European Parliament for more than 20 years. He worked as a communications officer and social media manager for two Presidents of the European Parliament (Martin Schulz and Jerzy Buzek). Richard Freedman was a press officer for many years working in the European Parliament's administration. Currently, he is as a policy analyst in the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS).

Richard carried out his undergraduate degree at the University of Kent at Canterbury where he studied European Studies, Economics and Politics with French. Richard Freedman carried out his postgraduate studies at the College of Europe in Bruges.



Martin Schulz elected President of the European Parliament in Strasbourg in January 2012 flanked by Secretary-General Klaus Welle.

January 2012 to July 2014 would represent a significant two and a half years for the European Parliament and its newly elected President Martin Schulz and Secretary-General Klaus Welle. Among the highlights for the European Parliament would be in no particular order:

- The awarding of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union
- The battle over the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020
- The welcoming of Croatia as the 28th EU Member State on 1 July 2013
- The Pat Cox- Aleksander Kwasniewski mission in support of Ukraine

In 2014, the first successful use of the *Spitzenkandidaten* process (lead candidates) to elect the President of the European Commission

A few highlights and memories

When Martin Schulz was elected President of the European Parliament on 17 January 2012, it marked a new chapter for the European Parliament and its administration. Following on from the work of President Jerzy Buzek, it was the beginning of the second half of the European Parliament's eighth legislature leading up to the 2014 European elections. Two huge pro-European figures with different political colours and backgrounds would steer the European Parliament politically and administratively through historic times. The close interplay between the President and its administration was clear from day one as President Schulz set out in his inaugural speech in Strasbourg: *'With the help of our Administration, I intend to ensure that parliamentary bodies and Members are provided with all the support they need so that we can carry out our tasks as legislators to the full.'*²³¹

The European Parliament had many tasks ahead. Among the many highlights would be the preparation and the eventual adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020, the European Union being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012 and the welcoming of Croatia as the EU's 28th Member State on 1 July 2013.

Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020

The preparation and eventual adoption of the European Union long-term budget 2014-2020 known as the **Multiannual financial framework** was an important issue throughout President Schulz's first mandate. The decision to

²³¹ Martin Schulz inaugural speech January 2012 - <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20120117MLT35533/20120117MLT35533.pdf>.

establish a MFF Contact Group with representatives of all the political groups would prove to be fundamental in the negotiations. It would be a key body that would help shape Parliament's ambitious position. Klaus Welle and President Schulz would work closely together on this key dossier.

Parliament would eventually approve the MFF in July 2013 after a tough battle with the Council/European Council. Among Parliament's achievements were that it secured the key priorities set out in its negotiating mandate. These include close to full flexibility to move unpaid funds (payment appropriations) between years and large flexibility for commitments, both between years and categories of expenditure, to make it easier to finance youth employment and research policies, the Erasmus for All programme and support for small and medium-sized firms.

Klaus' role, working and advising President Schulz, would be key throughout as they ensured that the four main political groups (EPP, S&D, Liberals and Greens/EFA) stood united in face of EU Member States. Parliament obtained significant improvements.



First meeting of the Multiannual Financial Framework Contact group. The eventual adoption of the MFF underlined the importance of the four major pro-European political groups working together.



Klaus Welle and Martin Schulz would travel to Ireland on several occasions. Ireland held the rotating presidency of the Council in the first half of 2013. A particularly happy moment was the welcome from the Irish President Michael D Higgins in Dublin Castle in November 2012.

Croatian Accession - EU grows to 28

The European Parliament prepared for the accession of Croatia on 1 July 2013. A 24th EU official language, a new enlargement to the Western Balkans. The Secretary-General ensured a smooth enlargement with Croatian Members of the European Parliament being welcomed to the plenary in July 2013. Little did we know, or even expect, that more than a decade later, Croatia would still be the Union's 'newest' Member State. As President Schulz put it at the time, *'It is good news when a family grows, especially our family of values, committed to democracy, justice and the rule of law. It is historic day for the EU and Croatia. Europe is taking another important step towards reunification, and Croatia opens a new chapter in its history. Since its foundation, the European Union has been a promise of peace. For the Western Balkans, a region that only some years ago was torn apart and devastated by war, Europe has become a magnet of peace and change. Croatia has become a pioneer: You have created institutions based on the values of democracy and the rule of law; you have reformed your economy and made it more competitive. You have demonstrated that through determination and hard-work EU membership is within reach. On behalf*

of the European Parliament, I want to pay tribute to Croatian citizens for continuing on the path of reform.'

Nobel Peace Prize 2012 - a tremendous honour

When the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, it came as a surprise to most people. Klaus was one of the first to be informed of this magnificent honour for the whole of the Union. The question of choreography of who would accept the prize on behalf of the EU, who would deliver the address at the Nobel Prize ceremony in Oslo and what do with the medal and the prize money became a rather complex question, with the media naturally showing great interest. Nevertheless, the three institutions quickly settled these issues. The most important point being as President Schulz put it: *'This Nobel Peace Prize is for all EU citizens'*²³² Returning to Strasbourg after the award ceremony, Klaus to the delight of many members of staff ensured that colleagues had the opportunity to have their photo taken with the Nobel medal and certificate. Unsurprisingly, many social media posts were created!



President Schulz, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 2012.

²³² [https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2012/summary/.](https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2012/summary/)



Secretary-General Klaus Welle and Martin Schulz's Head of Cabinet Markus Winkler attending the Nobel Peace Prize Banquet in Oslo in December 2012.

Lead candidates for the Commission President - Klaus' significant contribution

The year 2014 would mark the first time the *Spitzenkandidaten* (lead candidates) process would be successfully tested to elect the President of the European Commission - Jean Claude Juncker eventually taking up the role. This was, inter alia, thanks to the ingenious interpretation of Article 17, paragraph 7 of the Treaty of the European Union which states²³³: *'Taking into account the elections to the European Parliament and after having held the appropriate consultations, the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, shall propose to the European Parliament a candidate for President of the Commission. This candidate shall be elected by the European Parliament by a majority of its component members...'*

Klaus Welle was one of the key players in designing and implementing the system²³⁴. As Martin Westlake put it: *'Welle was rumoured to have played an important*

²³³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX%3A12008M017poe>

²³⁴ Martin Westlake, LSE, Europe In Question Discussion paper series, 102/2016 January 2016, page 53/57. - <https://www.lse.ac.uk/european-institute/Assets/Documents/LEQS-Discussion-Papers/LEQSPaper102.pdf#page=57>.

behind-the-scenes role in ensuring that the Parliament fulfilled its pre-ordained role in the Spitzenkandidaten process. (For example, 'It was a Welle-fostered power play,' reported the Financial Times on 14 May 2014, 'that has yielded a new system of using the parliamentary elections to select the presidency of a more revered Brussels institution – the European Commission.') In his analysis, Welle argued that the creation of an executive dependent on a parliamentary majority would lead also, inevitably, to the creation of an effective opposition within the system (as distinct from opposition to the system itself)¹¹ and would necessarily have organisational and structural consequences for the other twin arm of the European Union's legislative authority, the Council.'

Martin Schulz was the candidate for the Party of European Socialists, (PES). Although Martin Schulz was not ultimately elected President of the Commission, the 2014 process had shown that the Spitzenkandidaten process could work. (It would suffer a major setback five years later).

Ukraine - parliamentary diplomacy in action

Following the country's 2010 presidential elections, which brought a change of power, the European Union and the European Parliament grew concerned by Ukraine's application of selective justice to opposition leaders. In response, President Martin Schulz nominated two special envoys - former European Parliament president Pat Cox and former President of Poland Aleksander Kwasniewski - to work on this complex issue, in coordination with Ukrainian stakeholders. The two undertook twenty-seven visits to Ukraine between June 2012 and November 2013, helping to release several political prisoners such as Yulia Tymoshenko. Naturally, Parliament's administration, led by Klaus, would play a key role in facilitating these extraordinary parliamentary diplomatic missions. In the 2013-2014 Euro-Maidan revolution in Ukraine, the European Parliament was again actively involved adopting resolutions and sending missions.

London 2013 - a personal memory

One personal memory of Klaus and Martin was in London in September 2013 when the UK was still an EU Member State! Following a meeting with the then leader of the opposition Ed Miliband, Klaus and Martin attended a G7 Speakers' Conference held in Westminster. The Brits put on a red double decker bus for transport across London. Smiling for the camera, Martin and Klaus were ready for action.



Klaus Welle and Martin Schulz on old-fashioned British double-decker in September 2013 and Klaus Welle at the House of Commons - September 2013.

The next chapter...

Secretary-General Klaus Welle and European Parliament President Martin Schulz would work closely together for another two and a half years, as Martin became the first European Parliament President to be elected for a second consecutive term. Looking back at these memories from 2012-2014, we were fortunate to have such strong and determined personalities leading the European Parliament both politically and administratively.

Some lighter moments shared between President Schulz and Secretary-General Klaus Welle January 2012-July 2014



Meeting of the EP Conference of Presidents following European Elections 2014 - May 2014.

European Parliament President Martin Schulz and Klaus Welle at the Conference of Presidents at Dublin Castle in Dublin, Ireland on 29 November 29, 2012.



Open Conference of Presidents with German Chancellor Angela Merkel - 7 November 2012.

Awaiting the then President of Portugal Aníbal António Cavaco Silva -12 June 2013.



A lighter moment awaiting the then President of Tunisia, Moncef Marzouki - 6 February 2013.

Conference of Presidents
with European Council
President Herman van
Rompuy - 10 April 2014.



EP Tajani Presidency, 2017-2019, by Antonio Tajani

Rome, 3 April 2024

Dear Klaus,

I remember very well when we first met. I had just started my political journey in Bruxelles as a newly elected Member of the European Parliament in 1994. You were a young and resolute Secretary-General of the European People's Party.

I understood immediately that we shared the same values and passion for Europe. Our late leader Silvio Berlusconi used to say that "only those who believe can fight, only those who believe can overcome obstacles, only those who believe can win!" You are a believer and a winner, and your career is there to testify it.

Our work together is marked by many important achievements and nice recollections.

We worked to bring Forza Italia into the EPP and finally, in December 1999, Forza Italia was given full membership in our Christian Democratic family. In the very same year, at the 1999 European elections, Forza Italia scored 25% of votes in Italy.

Bringing Forza Italia into the EPP was not only crucial for the establishment of the party in Italy, but also for the stability of the whole European Union. With Forza Italia in the EPP, the European Centre-Right affirmed itself as the largest political force in Europe, representing millions of voters united by principles, which are key for European integration. I mean core values at the basis of European democracy, such as and especially freedom, equality, rule of law and social market economy.

More than two decades after we met for the first time, you were essential for the successful running of my mandate as President of the European Parliament in your role as longstanding Secretary-General of the Institution.

Together, we launched the high-level conferences, enabling citizens and stakeholders to discuss on topics of strategic relevance for European integration. This

was particularly important in the framework of the 2019 European elections and helped prepare the ground for the debates with citizens held in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Together, we steered the Brexit process. It was not easy, not only because of the files to be negotiated, but in particular and most importantly because we both shared the same conviction, namely that UK belongs to Europe and Europe belongs to the UK.

Together, we stood up when terrorist attacks hit Brussels and Strasbourg. We did our best to ensure the security of Members and staff. And we did the necessary to guarantee that the Institution could continue working to show that the strength that we draw from freedom and democracy will always win over violence and terror.

Dear Klaus, you are a cornerstone of European democracy, an exemplary and trusted leader, appreciated by many generations of politicians and officials. You have been a great and loyal friend to me and my country, which decided to award you with the Grand Cross in December 2022. It was a privilege for me to hand the Order to you on behalf of the President of the Italian Republic, together with President Metsola.

Along your career, you have genuinely strived for the European project to grow. You have contributed to key moments of European integration, including with your continued efforts to make the European Parliament stronger by enhancing among others its scrutiny power and by shaping the Spitzenkandidaten process.

During the COVID crisis you delivered in my view your most remarkable contribution as Secretary-General of the European Parliament. It will stay forever in your legacy.

At the time, I was Chair of the committee on Constitutional Affairs and President of the Conference of Committee Chairs. Both bodies were heavily involved in the preparation and implementation of decisions aimed at minimising the risks for Members and staff, while ensuring that the Institution remains in a position to carry out its core activities.

Indeed, despite COVID, the House of European democracy never stopped working. This was possible thanks to far-reaching decisions taken by the govern-

ing bodies, led at the time by our beloved friend and late President David Sassoli. But, the political bodies of the House could take those decisions because of the preparations by the administration with you, dear Klaus, on the driving seat.

Thank you for what you have done during the COVID crisis to protect Members, staff and visitors, and to enable the European Parliament to continue to work and to take decisions in the best interest of European citizens!

Your ability to be inclusive, open to ideas, and tireless in keeping the compass in the right direction is what made you emerge as an extraordinary leader. You have always known that the only way to achieve results in a complex organisation, such as the European Parliament, is to work hard and have a clear vision based on strong values.

Since the beginning of your career at the EPP, you have always looked ahead and it is thanks to your vision, strategic approach and capacity to seize opportunities also in times of crises that the EPP and later the European Parliament managed to deliver concrete results, acquire more relevance, and get closer to the citizens.

Dear Klaus, you are a strategist, a gifted politician and a remarkable leader. For me, you are first and foremost a friend. I could always count on you and you can always count on me.

Happy birthday, my friend, and I hope to see you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Antonio Tajani

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic

Klaus Welle and the Sassoli Presidency

Lorenzo MANNELLI

Mr Lorenzo Mannelli is currently Director-General for Innovation and Technological Support (ITEC) in the European Parliament.

From January 2022 to September 2023 he was Deputy Head of Cabinet of the Secretary General Klaus Welle.

From July 2019 to January 2022 he was Head of Cabinet of President David Sassoli.

From May 2014 to July 2019 he was Director for Members' Financial and Social Entitlements in the Directorate General for Finance.

He has also extensive experience in Constitutional and Economic Public Law as Professor at the University of Pisa, Italy.

From November 1998 to January 2000, he was Head of Cabinet of the Italian Minister for European Affairs Enrico Letta.

Mr Mannelli holds a degree in law from the University of Pisa, a PhD in Public Law from Scuola Sant'Anna of Pisa and has completed postgraduate studies at the ENA in Paris.

I joined with great pleasure the initiative of a Liber Amicorum in honour of Klaus Welle on his 60th birthday.

When I think of Klaus, I realise that a very large part of my career in the European Parliament has been in parallel with his, having had him for almost twenty years as my Director-General and Secretary-General.

I have always admired the strong managerial style and forward-looking vision of the European Parliament in the institutional and political context, just as I appreciated Klaus' ability to fully understand the political and human nature of our institution and his wide intellectual curiosity.

There is no doubt that Klaus has left an indelible mark on creating a modern parliamentary administration in step with the political times. Sometimes ahead of politics itself.

In fact, I have been convinced for many years that you cannot direct a public administration like the European parliamentary one if you do not also have political skills.

And Klaus proved to possess them fully.

For this reason, he has worked profitably with the governing bodies of the House, President and Bureau, during his long years as Secretary-General.

This leads me to outline his figure from a particular angle and that I had the privilege of knowing first hand: his role during the presidency of David Sassoli.

From the beginning, it must be said that Klaus and David (you will allow me a tone of familiarity) had a natural appreciation of each other. They were both intellectually curious, reasonable and calm people, never over the top. They were animated by a great political passion that had its roots in the democratic humanism of Christianity, attentive to the people, and with a sincere desire to strengthen the project of the European Union by enhancing the role of our Parliament.

They understood each other and agreed on things to do. David was ready to listen to Klaus' solicitations and proposals, usually sharing them, and, vice versa, Klaus was always ready to implement David's suggestions or requests.

On a weekly basis and sometimes more often during crises, a meeting took place between them to discuss current issues, the agenda of institutional bodies' meetings, and the prospects for the short and medium-term future. It was an important moment and pleasant for its human dimension.

The President saw the Secretary-General as one of his closest collaborators because he represented the entire administration that makes the complex machine of the European Parliament work. Without the administration, no project had any hope of success. David was aware of this and was glad that Klaus was there. It was a matter of trust based on loyalty and competence.

Thinking back, the formidable and unrepeatable years of the Sassoli presidency recount countless episodes that describe, better than any word, the substance and solidity of the relationship.

You can start by mentioning a highly evocative place for Parliament. Jean Monnet's residence in Bazoches near Paris. It was there that the Schuman declaration, considered by all the political birth certificate of the European institutions, was written. Parliament had bought it, and preserved it for many years. But it was Klaus Welle who valued it, and desired to make it a place of pro-European sentiment open to citizens, and in particular to young people, and also a training centre for officials of our institution.

David still did not know him directly when, in autumn 2019, he was looking for a place to organise a summit meeting between the presidents of the three EU institutions: the European Parliament, European Council and European Commission. The aim was to lay the foundations for enhanced inter-institutional cooperation, based on mutual trust, to address some of the biggest challenges for the EU such as Brexit, nationalism, global warming, the migration crisis, the Conference on the Future of Europe, and the negotiation of the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The idea of leaders being able to get to know each other better through discussions held in a suitable place was a real priority. A few minutes' exchange of ideas was enough for Klaus to propose holding the meetings in Jean Monnet's house.

The President immediately accepted with enthusiasm. The proposal was also accepted by the other parties, and so in January 2020 David Sassoli, Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen sat for dinner at Jean Monnet's table in the dining room of his country house. It was a pleasant and fruitful evening... They laid the groundwork for a promising collaboration. And, indeed, the relations between the three presidents have long been constructive; brought about by Bazoches and Jean Monnet.

The relationship between David and Klaus has resulted in the improved development of the Parliament's administration. This is why David took part in the events organised on Innovation Day in a non-formal way. He has intervened several times, always in person to speak to all the management gathered to express his vision of things and help consolidate the strategic orientation of the staff.

He said regarding the post-pandemic, "However, in what will be the so-called new normal, the right balance will have to be found to keep together the needs of the staff and the functionality of the institution. The latter must be a commit-

ment for every official in the Parliament and for every Member. As president, it is a mission.

I am willing to do everything possible within the rules to promote this balance in the lives of workers, but at the same time workers must feel strong their responsibility towards this institution and its proper functioning²³⁵."

It called for its responsibilities to be taken as a key to the Parliament's future development. This is one of David Sassoli's most important legacies. A President who did not back down when he had to decide, regardless of popularity, and acted only in the interest of Parliament and European democracy.

Klaus Welle joined him with loyalty, determination and effectiveness in a task that became vital during the time of the COVID-19 crisis.

This phase profoundly marked the Sassoli presidency and the life of the Parliament. I remember precisely the first days of parliamentary lockdown and the difficulty in taking the necessary decisions.

Yet in those moments, when considering the urgent sanitary measures to protect Members and staff, when decisions had to be made on the suspension of sessions in Strasbourg, the procedures of participation and voting in committees and plenary, or subsequently on the creation of the vaccination centre, David was able to rely on Klaus and the ability of the administration to respond.

I still remember with some trepidation the days on which David had to make the decision to postpone the holding of the sessions in Strasbourg. Strong were the internal and external pressures to go or not to go. When the advice of the medical service arrived, we were confined to David's private apartment in Ixelles. In order to make the decision, the President wanted the Secretary-General beside him. So Klaus joined us and there was an in-depth assessment that helped David in the decision he had to make. Then we stayed for dinner with him, like old friends.

But I would like to give David the word to describe how much the entire administration under the leadership of the Secretary-General was spent during the pandemic. He said: "In addition to the main political decisions taken at European level, involvement in the life of the local community has been a key element of Parliament's response. We all felt together that parliaments should also play their

²³⁵ Speech of David Sassoli at Innovation Day of 2 July 2021.

part, that they could not escape even an effort of solidarity with the citizens in difficulty, of cities that were experiencing deeply, painfully the crisis. We felt it was necessary to make our contribution to the fight against the pandemic in the cities that host us. This is why we have offered, in cooperation with local authorities, support to the most vulnerable people for what we could do. We welcomed in one of our buildings here in Brussels about 100 homeless women, many of whom had nowhere else to go because of domestic abuse suffered and it was nice to entrust this mission to an organisation that aims to redeem the dignity of women not only in the economic condition but in their being a woman, in rediscovering their identity.

I know that many of you have engaged in different activities within your communities, offering yourself as volunteers to help the people most in need, and this spirit of solidarity has emerged at all levels and it is for me, for us, for all of us, for all of us, for great pride.

In Strasbourg we used Parliament's premises to create a Covid testing centre with waiting rooms and beds. Our catering services in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg remained open, there was a risk of sending many workers home, and instead our kitchens continued to have hundreds of free meals every day for people in need. In the same way our drivers and Parliament's transport services have also been engaged, committed, made their valuable contribution and favoured the travel of doctors, medical personnel, assistants, nurses"²³⁶.

In addition to all this, Parliament has been able to maintain its activities despite the restrictions. The administration has been able to support the digitalisation of parliamentary activities in full respect of the legal and formal aspects of debates and voting.

In doing so, the house of European democracy was kept functioning. During the restrictions, with Members confined to their home countries, Parliament was present in Brussels with staff essential to security and technical maintenance, and always David Sassoli and Klaus Welle. The Board of Command of the Institution has never found itself lacking due to the high sense of responsibility of the President and Secretary-General.

These are some of the moments that define the collaboration created during the two and a half years of mandate.

²³⁶ Speech of David Sassoli at Innovation Day of 11 September 2020.

David Sassoli never lacked a great sense of esteem for the human qualities and professional abilities of the Secretary-General. He knew he could count on him unreservedly, and, to a great extent, the unprecedented trials they faced together prove this..

Klaus Welle found in the President continuous guidance and support for improving and projecting the Parliament's administration into the future. But, at the same time, he served the President with loyalty by following, with all his abilities, his political direction.

From this, we can all continue to draw an example and inspiration in our service to the European cause.

EP Metsola Presidency, 2022, by Roberta Metsola

Dear Klaus,

During 14 years, as Secretary General, you steered the course of action of the European Parliament's administration, understanding, like no other, the intricacies of our unique institution - the largest directly-elected multinational and multilingual Parliament in the world.

During your term, you witnessed many challenges in European politics. Yet, as has become typical of the European approach, it is precisely through obstacles and difficulty that the European Parliament and the European Union found the strength to stand up tall and come out even stronger.

Your ability to make even the most difficult of situations seem lighter is something that I will forever remember. You are a true consensus builder and a true European. You are remembered at the European Parliament for your gentlemanly way of weathering storms and keeping calm, all while steadily steering our institution's administration on a solid path of advancement. You worked tirelessly with a remarkable clear and accurate vision for the future of our organisation. Above and beyond day-to-day business, you always had the ability to look at the bigger picture, the ability to adapt to circumstances, the ability to listen and the ability to make ambitious decisions.

Before becoming Secretary General of the European Parliament you had already cultivated expertise in combining the skills of a smooth political operator with those of an innovative forward-looking administrator. From the leadership of the European People's Party and then Group, to Director-General for Internal Policies at the European Parliament; from Head of the Cabinet of the former President of the European Parliament Hans-Gert Pöttering, to Secretary-General of the European Parliament, none of us believed for one second that you would step down from conducting European affairs. And we are all the happier for it, because European centre politics can use your acumen and Europe can use your wisdom.

Now you chair the Martens Centre's Academic Council. You are also a guest Professor in practice at the London School of Economics, a visiting Professor at KU Leuven and a leader in residence at the Moynihan Center of the Colin Powell School for global leadership in New York. I am glad that you are still imparting

knowledge. There is no doubt that in the challenging times that we are living, we need to be thinking together.

Always, we could count on you, and we count on you still, as a staunch advocate for Europe. I was grateful for your support from the day of my election until your very last day at Parliament. And we can all be grateful for your continuing contribution in adding a welcome piece to the construction of Europe.

Europeans stand more to gain from being united. Together, we have navigated through a sovereignty debt crisis, a coronavirus crisis and have pulled out stronger from the consequences of Russia's illegal and brutal invasion of Ukraine. These threats have reminded us of the imperative for European states to work together.

I am convinced, as much as I believe you are Klaus, that going forward we can build an even stronger Europe together. I believe in the European Union being a superpower of rights, a leader in modernisation, innovation and in setting global standards, like with the recent EU Artificial Intelligence act or with the EU's commitment to climate-neutrality by 2050, or even with our European pledge to close the gender pay gap.

From post-world World War Two reconstruction, to the European elections of 2024, Europe is committed to protecting our accomplishment of peace and prosperity.

I am glad that a majority of Europeans believe in the European Union's merits. But it is crucial that European leaders do not lose sight of the fact that the world is changing and European people do not want to lose out. They want even more protection, even more rights. And that is why, the European institutions that govern EU operations must be fit for purpose and fit to deliver for our people. That is also why, EU institutional reforms will be needed, as we look to enlarge the European Union. Enlargement is our strongest geopolitical asset. You understood this and understand still, that Europe must step up on the global stage, if not, other players will step in.

Along a process of adapting to a changing global environment, Europe must stay true to its core principles. We must defend democracy, with more transparency. Here, I see the European Parliament leading that change and defending the interests of European citizens. We must step up, act with foresight, steer our course, all while maintaining a human-centric approach. Europe's leaders must not lose people along the way.

It is our job to convince that EU enlargement toward Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans will be a win-win for all Europeans. It is our job to convince that, with the twin green and digital transition, we are putting Europe on track not only to defend our way of life, but also to lead and drive a competitive forward-looking Europe. No one must be left behind.

In order to meet the challenges and continue to develop, Europe needs bright minds able to take stock of lessons learnt to help us prepare for our future. Europe needs the wisdom to build on its '*acquis*' and take notes from previous role models in leadership. That is our prerogative.

You understood this Klaus, which is why it is an honour and pleasure for me to wish you a very happy 60th birthday and all the best for years to come, where we expect to continue to see you leading debates at the Martens Centre and across academia.

Yours sincerely,

Roberta Metsola

President

Interim President 2014

Gianni PITELLA

Since March 2018, Gianni Pittella is **Senator** of the Republic following substantial institutional experience. He is Mayor of Lauria since September 2021.

Elected town councillor in his hometown Lauria in 1979 and regional councillor in Basilicata in 1980, with re-elections in 1985 and 1990, he served as regional councillor for Training and Culture and then for Productive Activities.

He was elected Member of Parliament in 1996 for the Lagonegrese Val d'agri constituency on the Ulivo lists.

He was elected as **Member of the European Parliament (MEP)** in 1999, where he became a permanent rapporteur on structural funds. In 2004, Mr Pittella was re-elected as a **MEP** and to the Budget Committee where he became general rapporteur for the EU budget. In 2006, he became head of the delegation of the Italian left-wing deputation in the European Parliament.

Re-elected **MEP** in 2009, he was nominated **First Vice-President of the European Parliament**, gaining the highest number of votes among MEPs, and was confirmed in the same responsibility at mid-term.

Re-elected as a **MEP** in 2014 with more than 240,000 votes, he was **interim President of the European Parliament** until the election of President Schulz. Following that, he was appointed **President of the Group of European Socialists and Democrats** and later re-elected by acclamation mid-term.

Mr Pittella carried out numerous missions to European countries, Africa, the United States, China and Latin America. He is an honorary citizen of Buenos Aires, Athens and Tirana.

He is married to Agata Scaldasferri, father of Domenico and Ludovica, grandfather of Egidio and Edoardo and Margherita.

He co-founded the online newspaper *Focus On Africa* and has written numerous publications, including 'Breve storia del futuro degli Stati Uniti d'Europa' (A Brief History of the Future of the United States of Europe) together with Elido Fazi,

'L'Europa indispensabile: tra spinte nazionalistiche e mondo globalizzato' (Essential Europe: Between Nationalistic Urges and the Globalised World) and 'Scusate il ritardo. Una proposta per il Mezzogiorno d'Europa' with Amedeo Lepore.

He is a doctor specialising in legal and insurance medicine.

I have collaborated directly with Klaus Welle for a decade, from 2009 to 2018, during which I held roles such as Vice President Deputy of the European Parliament, President of the group of Socialists and Democrats, and interim President of the European Parliament in June 2014. It was a politically tumultuous period marked by the hopes generated by the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2008, but also by complex and dangerous challenges such as the Eurozone crisis of 2013-15 and Brexit in 2016.

In this context, populism and Euroscepticism developed, shaking and continuing to threaten the foundations of European integration. Considering Klaus Welle primarily as a politician, it is essential to understand his role as Secretary-General of the European Parliament in the political context in which he operated. Welle is not a politician in the partisan sense, nor a man of a specific faction, but a man of institutions. He is a politician in the noble sense, embodying "politics as a vocation," constructing an intellectual vision that translates into coherent administrative action.

In politics, action and thought must always be allies: action without intellectual reflection does not produce real effects, and intellectual reflection, without being combined with concrete actions, remains pure theoretical speculation. From an intellectual standpoint, Klaus Welle has understood that the rise of populism and Euroscepticism are not temporary phenomena destined to fade away on their own. Instead, they are indicators of underlying trends stemming from complex and deep-rooted reasons, including a weak direct legitimation of the European project.

Therefore, a pan-European political arena is necessary where European citizens can recognise themselves, providing greater legitimacy to European decision-making processes to avoid being perceived as disconnected from the citizens. Strengthening the European Parliament is the main tool to re-legitimize European politics. In this, Welle is likely inspired by his German experience, the strength of the parliamentary tradition in that country, and the historical knowledge of the risks a weak and divided Parliament can pose to democracy.

In today's Europe, only a fully empowered European Parliament can give the European Union the strength of immediate and clear popular support, overcoming the criticism of those sovereigntists who accuse the EU of being distant from the people.

In this sense, a Europe limited to negotiations between Member States would likely lack the strength to respond to the populist challenge and would probably be destined for decline. I recall a conversation with Klaus Welle during a politically difficult time for the Union: the migrant crisis triggered by Merkel's decision to allow Syrian asylum seekers to go to Germany in 2015, leading to the reintroduction of borders and political fragmentation in Europe.

On a winter morning in 2016, at the peak of that crisis, while expecting a technical discussion with the Secretary-General of the European Parliament, I found Klaus Welle thoughtful and concerned. Instead of discussing agendas, he looked out of his window overlooking the European quarter and spoke about literature: "We should read again Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, understand the relevance of that sense of decline. European decline: that is the real ghost haunting European politics. A slow but not inexorable decline, unlike Mann's time."

In his words, there was no pessimism but rather a sense of urgency and action. This vision of the Parliament as a bulwark of European democracy became clear to me when I had to temporarily preside over the European Parliament in June 2014. Outgoing President Martin Schulz had left office due to his election as head of the Socialists and Democrats group, and as First Vice President, I had to temporarily lead the institution.

The period was politically intense as we had to prepare for the European Council meeting in Ypres. The agenda included the appointment of the President of the European Commission, and for the first time, the proposal of the so-called *spitzenkandidat* had been put forward, the idea that the European party to which voters had given the relative majority should nominate the President of the Commission. This proposal was inspired by the German model and strongly supported by Martin Schulz. However, I remember Welle's strong support for this approach. With the discretion that characterizes him and respecting the diversity of roles, we can now recognise his contribution to that political design. I recall his commitment in defending the Parliament's role in preparation for that summit.

However, describing Klaus Welle as a simple supporter of a new European parliamentary system in the German style would be reductive. I believe that he

is also aware that it is necessary to seek new paths and experiment with new solutions to build not a copy of 20th-century parliamentarism but something innovative, ambitious, and appropriate for the times.

According to my experience, Klaus Welle believes that parliaments should be dynamic institutions capable of swiftly adapting to social and political changes. Above all, they should remain open to citizens, who are, in essence, the true sovereigns. The administrative framework crafted by Klaus Welle diverges from the conventional 19th-century parliamentary model. Under his guidance, the organisation of the Parliament underwent unique modifications, even though traces of influence from the U.S. Congress are evident. Recalling his engaging narratives from U.S. missions, his keen interest in Washington, academic affiliations with the country, especially New York, it is likely that his observations of the U.S. Congress inspired his efforts to strengthen the connection between European parliamentarians and citizens. This involved introducing new tools, such as efficient support offices for us parliamentarians, enabling closer proximity to the electorate.

Welle has also believed that knowledge is a prerequisite for performing any political function. "Knowledge for decision-making" could be the motto for this approach. The creation of an excellent research service within the European Parliament is an indication moving in this direction. I also recall Welle's support for the European Parliament's internationalisation efforts beyond Europe. For an institution like the European Parliament, it is crucial to have a global presence that allows understanding the dynamics at play in the world and helps the European Union be better known and have an impact on global processes.

Under the administrative leadership of Klaus Welle, the European Parliament has successfully modernised itself and is now a globally recognised organisational model that draws inspiration from the best tradition of European parliamentarism, adapting it to the new times.

However, this pan-European parliamentary vision would not have thrived without Klaus Welle's key attribute: a commitment to compromise as a decision-making tool. The European Parliament, renowned as one of the world's most diverse institutions, reflects this diversity through officials and Members hailing from 27 member states and numerous regions. Furthermore, political diversity is evident as European parliamentarians represent over 150 parties spread across a multitude of political groups.

In such a rich, varied, and complex context, it is crucial to listen, understand, and then reach a compromise that allows progress. Behind this emphasis on compromise, I believe there is the idea, fully shared by me, that strong leadership is about listening and just imposing. Strong leadership involves considering the interests of all parties involved. It involves a willingness to listen, understand, and find common ground, fostering cooperation and collaboration,

Confronted with a political landscape frequently marked by a focus on individual personalities and a pursuit of quick, immediate, and sensational resolutions, the abilities to listen, deliberate, and strive for balance – qualities exemplified by Klaus Welle during his tenure – are invaluable attributes essential for the success of the European project.

7

**The European Parliament
of the Future**

Alessandro CHIOCCHETTI

Born on 4 November 1968 in Moena, Italy

Education:

Degree in Political Science and International Law (University of Padua)
Postgraduate Diploma in International Law, Economics, History and European Integration (University of Padua)

Professional experience:

As of 1 January 2023: Secretary-General of the European Parliament
January-December 2022: Head of Cabinet of the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola
2019-2022: Director for Legislative and Committees' Coordination, Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union, European Parliament
2017-2019: Deputy Head of Cabinet of the President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani
2011-2017: Head of the Legislative coordination Unit, Head of the Secretariat of the Conference of Committee Chairs, Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union, European Parliament
2009-2011: Member of the Cabinet of the Secretary-General of the European Parliament, Klaus Welle
2007-2009: Member of the Cabinet of the Secretary-General of the European Parliament, Harald Römer
2004-2007: Administrator, Legislative coordination Unit, Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union, European Parliament
1996-2004: Accredited Parliamentary Assistant, EPP Italian Delegation, European Parliament
1995-1996: Trainee in the Secretariat-General of the European Commission, Unit in charge of relations with Citizens

It is a privilege for me to share some thoughts on the occasion of Klaus Welle's 60th birthday. Not only out of institutional duty to Klaus, my eminent predecessor, but especially because he played an essential role throughout my career in the European Parliament, and honoured me with his friendship.

My first encounter with him was in the early 2000s, when I was an MEP's assistant. At the time, he was the Secretary-General of the EPP group. I wrote him a message (back then, this was only done on paper) asking if, exceptionally, I could attend the EPP group meeting. The answer I got could not have been clearer. He replied with a huge "NO" scrawled on the back of my note. "This guy is a tough one", I told myself, and I was right.

There is no doubt that Klaus Welle can be counted among the greatest Secretaries-General of this Parliament. During the nearly 14 years he held the position, he was able to seize opportunities arising from Treaty changes, and also crises, to further reinforce Parliament's role and structures. This concerns inter alia backing up the scrutiny powers of the Institution with the creation of a dedicated parliamentary research service, reaching out to citizens via a robust visitor policy in the three workplaces and in the Member States, professionalising technical support services, in particular security and IT. During the COVID crisis, Klaus Welle was able to lead the administration through multiple challenges, succeeding in preparing policies and decisions to protect the integrity of Members, staff and visitors, while ensuring that the House of European Democracy never stopped working.

This is why, when I was appointed as his successor I felt a bit like the (then) Prince Charles, after the Queen passed away. How to do better? Klaus' act would be a tough one to follow.

On further consideration, however, it dawned on me that Klaus Welle and I are very complementary. He provided Parliament with a solid and high-performance "hardware"; my task is now to take care of the "software", if I can allow myself this computing allegory.

By "software", I of course mean the legislative, budgetary and scrutiny functions, in other terms our "core business". My natural inclination to this area stems from the fact that I come from the legislative dimension of the House, having worked there for 20 years.

As requested, I am happy to share some thoughts about how I view the challenges ahead.

First and foremost, I believe a number of reforms are necessary and urgent. Indeed, the way Parliament's legislative process has developed over the last years is extremely worrying. Our position has weakened on the inter-institutional level. There are several factors behind this negative trend.

We have to consider that, for the first time in our history, in the 2019 European elections, there were 64 % newly elected members against only 36% re-elected. Until then, we had always had the opposite proportion. This new element, combined with the exceptional (and radically different) working methods we were obliged to adopt during the Covid-19 pandemic, made the transmission of knowledge and expertise from the old generation of Members to the new one more difficult, and favoured the development of new practices that are not always beneficial for Parliament.

This situation is exacerbated by our structures and procedures, some of which are obsolete and inefficient, and do not correspond to the present inter-institutional context.

I am convinced that our legislative procedures require a radical overhaul to increase their efficiency, inclusiveness and transparency. The world has moved on and yet our legislative structures date back to the late 1980s. Since then we have had four enlargements and four Treaties, including the Lisbon Treaty whose potential Parliament has yet to fully exploit.

The Commission switched already some years ago towards a holistic approach when proposing legislation, which is now tabled “per objective” and no longer “per policy”. Annex VI of our Rules of Procedure defining the competences of Committees based on policies is thus outdated and should be adapted to the new way of legislating.

It is also clear that the regulatory framework for allocating the responsibility for legislative files to Committees is cumbersome and time consuming. Moreover, it produces a climate of competition rather than cooperation among committees and does not always ensure a balanced result, which is why it urgently needs a thorough revision.

In addition, a fully-fledged legislator must be equipped with all the tools it needs to produce good, high-quality and effective legislation in the citizens’ interest. To this end, Members must be provided with modern and effective tools to enable them to gain a more comprehensive overview of the entire legislative cycle. This would allow them also to focus on the pre-legislative and post-legislative phases, a prerequisite for the coherence of legislation over a longer period of time. Klaus Welle had the foresight to set up the European Parliament Research Service. We now must exploit its potential to the full.

Reforming our House is a recurring challenge. At the start of my mandate in January 2023, thanks to the personal engagement of current President Roberta Metsola, the Conference of Presidents established a working Group (Parliament 2024), which has been working for over a year studying the appropriate procedural reforms.

I am convinced Parliament has a historical opportunity to move up a gear and become a more modern, mature and strong institution. Modern in its working methods; mature in its powers and prerogatives within the inter-institutional framework; strong in its political stance to the outside world.

Likewise, I think that Parliament could perform better in inter-institutional legislative negotiations, for instance by making strategic use of all the available procedural options, including “simple first readings” and “early second readings”, which have gradually fallen into disuse. During our negotiations with the Council, Parliament’s success rate in obtaining its initial goals has been estimated at only 20-30%. This should thoroughly be reflected on.

Furthermore, the fourth columns of the trilogue tables are increasingly empty, often filled only with bullet points rather than legislative texts. The negotiation mandates adopted by Plenary are often disregarded. Trilogues need to be better framed and made more efficient and more transparent.

A special mention must be made of the right of initiative in which Klaus greatly invested himself with remarkable results.

In 2019, Commission President von der Leyen made a historic opening in agreeing to propose legislation requested by Parliament. I am convinced we must respond seriously and rethink our ways of working with the ultimate goal, over time, to acquire the capacity to draft legislation ourselves, a competence we are lacking at the moment. This will not only require changes of procedures and working methods but also a reorganisation of the different services involved in the legislative process.

The budgetary function also needs improving. Parliament is one of the two branches of the Budgetary Authority. Unfortunately, in this role we are far from having parity with the Council. I refuse to accept that Parliament be regularly treated as the “28th Member State” rather than an equal partner. This needs to change. I am convinced that the first step is to recognise that the “budgetary function” is distinct from the legislative one and this should be reflected within

Parliament's structures. The BUDG Committee should play a coordinating and horizontal role, (only) when performing the budgetary function.

The negotiations with the Council for the future MFF will be painful. I am convinced that Parliament can come out on top, but only if we better organise ourselves.

Klaus was adamant that, as the only Institution directly elected by European citizens, Parliament has an immense responsibility in ensuring the democratic scrutiny of the Executive. This is at the heart of the democratic legitimacy of EU decisions. Following the path paved by Klaus, I strongly believe that our Institution must not only regain its pre-COVID-19 positions within the inter-institutional framework, but also further enhance them. It is disappointing to see the lack of respect that the Commission and its members sometimes show towards Parliament. A renegotiation of the Framework Agreement with the Commission is necessary and I am happy to see that the process has already begun.

Finally, to boost its scrutiny role, the Institution - and its Members - needs the right tools. I firmly believe that it is time for Parliament to start discussions with the Council about establishing a genuine right of enquiry modelled on that existing in many Member States.

This is only part of what, in my view, needs to be done. There are many other issues to be addressed, such as an in-depth reform of the Plenary or revising the current structure of Parliament's calendar (another of Klaus' ideas).

The task is vast, there is no doubt about it. But when I have doubts or hesitations I remind myself of what he used to tell me and has become my main guiding principle, not only in my professional life: "if you think that something is impossible, then it is impossible".

Being Secretary-General is not an easy job. If anything goes wrong it is your fault, if everything goes well, nobody thanks you. Klaus left me an extensive heritage and an array of guiding aphorisms, which I dearly cherish and are of great help in my daily life as Secretary General.

I believe these teachings are all drawn from real-life experiences of his and I am so very honoured he shared them with me.

When faced with a difficult decision, I always remind myself of one of Klaus' famous sayings: "Do not build walls in your head". This also shaped my profes-

sional attitude “to think outside the box”. I am sure Klaus strategically conveyed this message to more people than just me. This was indeed his way to broaden the mind-set of those working close to him.

No surprise there, he is a strategist and he always will be.

“Think politically!”: this he repeated incessantly. In the beginning, I struggled to fully understand what he exactly meant. Twenty years on, I believe it equates to understanding the true interest of each actor in a given situation, which is crucial to make the right move.

I am sure Klaus would agree that the role of Secretary-General requires not only a considerable degree of courage and pragmatism, but also of imagination, and the ability to turn problems into opportunities. During his whole mandate Klaus lived by this, and I strive to follow his lead. Of course, it is not always easy to make the right decisions and we are all humans susceptible to making mistakes, and when I do, I recall what Klaus used to say: “I may make mistakes but I try to never make the same mistake twice”.

Klaus and I have different styles, maybe even different priorities, but we both share the same passion for the European project and the same determination to strengthen our Institution. As a friend, I wholeheartedly thank you Klaus for all you have taught me. As Secretary-General I thank you, on behalf of the entire administration (now I can say it), for all you have done and continue doing for Parliament and European democracy.



**Being
Secretary-General**

Being Secretary-General

Klaus WELLE

Klaus Welle was the Secretary-General of the European Parliament from 2009 to 2022. He held the functions of Head of Cabinet of the President from 2007 to 2009 and Director-General for Internal Policies from 2004 to 2007. From 1999 to 2004 he served as Secretary-General of the EPP parliamentary group and from 1994 to 1999 as the Secretary-General of the European People's Party transnational party.

Being Secretary-General of the European Parliament demands many dimensions in just one person: the capacity to imagine a future for the organisation and to make that happen, the ability to earn the trust of the political world and keep it, to manage proactively a staff of more than 5000 civil servants and a budget of more than €2 billion Euros, and the readiness to decide the 100 dossiers or so that arrive for decision every week.

It is exhausting, sleep depriving and hugely fascinating. It is the role of one's life.

You will one way or another leave your own trace in the organisation and all Secretary-Generals in their specific ways have.

- Joachim Opitz (1979 - 1986) managed to set up the new parliament's functioning after the first direct elections in 1979.
- Enrico Vinci (1986 - 1997) successfully bridged the divergences that existed and in many ways established the foundations of the modern administration of today.
- Sir Julian Priestley (1997 - 2007) will for always be remembered for the British elegance and style with which he nearly seamlessly managed the administration. "Raising the game" was not only the title of one of his major structural reforms, but sums up his ambition for Parliament.
- Harald Roemer (2007 - 2009) is still with us for his bravery to implement the statute of assistants and members against manifold vested

interests. Appointed just two years before retirement he invested his credibility in that one major project and assured its success.

All Secretary-Generals want to leave Parliament behind as a better place and stronger in the set up of the European institutions.

The European Parliament started off many decades ago as the underdog and still profits from the underdog culture it has deeply enshrined in its DNA: Creativity, imagination, a dose of anarchy and flat hierarchies in comparison to the other European institutions. All contributes to a culture of innovation and to a workplace full of ideas.

Parliaments get nothing for free. They have to fight for it and take it, always playing with the limit and going beyond it in a controlled way. That is how democracy was achieved. If the Council is perfectly happy, we've done something wrong.

It is fascinating how quickly an idea can become a project proposal and realised in practice. If the Bureau of Parliament trusts and supports the Secretary-General there are very few limits to what can be done, to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Europe. Elected with the support of all the members of the Bureau in the autumn of 2008, I am grateful for enduring support across political boundaries.

My obsessions have now become part of the organisation of the European Parliament as well and I would like to mention just some.

- I came into politics as a youth activist, starting in the Catholic youth movement, visiting the Katholikentag and the Kirchentag where young people could discuss the challenges of our times. The European Youth Event in Strasbourg now regularly provides a similar experience for up to 10,000 young people, discussing and developing their vision for a united Europe, Independent of political beliefs or social or national background.
- For more than 20 years, I was engaged in party structures before I joined the administration of the European Parliament. I am deeply convinced that there is no lasting democracy without political parties and foundations that give democratic engagement structure and orientation and bring together political decision-makers in an institutionalised manner across Europe. We now have a legal and financial

base for European political parties and foundations developed over the past two decades, that allows exactly that and brought political families together that were divided before. And parliament has created the organisational base for lead candidates for commission president.

- Be careful, when choosing a former management student as Secretary-General. He can't help it but see unused opportunities everywhere and try to optimise process and resource allocation. The hundreds of posts moved away from the language services and provided to the political support functions of the house, newly created directorates general or management tools like the strategic execution framework are the consequence.
- I have been accused all along to be inspired by the set up of the United States Congress and I have to plead guilty. Both the United States and the European Union have to organise unity in diversity in a democracy of continental scale.
- To organise a continent as diverse as Europe with that European Union uniting 440 million European citizens, 27 member states, diverging historical experiences, cultures and religious backgrounds, it has to be done in a federal way. Federal in the sense of allowing separated centres for decision making both on the horizontal level of that Union with the Commission, the Council and the Parliament as independent actors as well as vertically between the federal level, the member states and its regions and cities.
- If Parliament therefore wants to be able to challenge Commission proposals and Council positions, we need independent scientific advice as Congress has as the legislative branch of the US government and can not just rely on the wisdom of the executive Commission. The newly established European Parliamentary Research Service and the considerably enlarged committee secretariats, numbers of political group staff and members assistants provide exactly that.
- Expertise is also the precondition to maximise parliamentary impact along the whole legislative cycle from agenda setting to scrutiny. It also enables us to link the levels of our federal Union of citizens and states and beyond.

- Early on, at the beginning of 2010, we started to establish parliament offices outside the European Union with the liaison office in Washington DC. Complemented now by Parliament staffers in London, New York, Addis Ababa and Jakarta, Parliament finds itself in a unique position among its peers worldwide in its ability to support members in their international activities which are comparable to no other citizens chamber around the globe.
- Parliament was increasingly accused to be out of touch with citizens and not legitimate given the decreased participation in European elections ever since 1979 to 2009. Parliament conducted major efforts to counter that. The Parliamentarium, the House of European history, experience Europe facilities in all member states, a dedicated visitors team in Strasbourg and a change in communication involving civil society and citizens much more directly have helped to turn the trend around.
- With the first introduction of Spitzenkandidaten in 2014, greatly aided by parliaments administration, participation in European elections was stabilised, and 2019 turned around with an increase of more than 8%.
- The State of the Union speech is now a major media event across Europe and provides for holding the President of the European Commission publicly to account by the institution the president of the European Commission is answerable to: the European Parliament.
- The House of Jean-Monnet in Bazoches close to Paris provides us now with a first class training and conference center and an opportunity to keep the spirit of the Founding Fathers alive in the organisation.
- Gender balance advanced greatly from only 21% female Heads of Units in 2009 to 43% in 2022, while among directors parity was achieved.

It is also true that not everything succeeded and surely more can be mentioned here.

I tried to convince several presidents to start the new legislature with an inauguration procedure for the new commission on the Esplanade, showing to everybody that the European commission receives its mandate from the directly elected European Parliament, voted into office by 440 million European citizens. That remains still to be done.

What did succeed could never have been successful without the support of my cabinets headed by Freddy Drexler, Christian Mangold and Susanne Altenberg, the Deputy Secretary-General, the responsible Director-Generals and Directors and Heads of Unit and all the colleagues in the house.

Nothing can be done alone and without trust.

I have to thank my Presidents Hans-Gert Pöttering, Jerzy Buzek, Martin Schulz, Antonio Tajani, David Sassoli and Roberta Metsola.

- Hans-Gert Pöttering has after so many years of close cooperation become a personal friend. His successful fight for the Lisbon treaty against all odds was in many ways decisive and shall not be forgotten. He is the father of the House of European History.
- Jerzy Buzek symbolised the successful Integration of democratic Central and Eastern Europe into the West. His capacity to listen to his colleagues and integrate divergent views were already a precondition for Solidarnosz' successful resistance against communist dictatorship in Poland.
- Martin Schulz and I were united in our strong ambition to advance European integration. He assured the broad majority for the election of Jean-Claude Juncker as Commission President across the political divide and therefore the success of the Spitzenkandidaten process in 2014.
- Antonio Tajani became the first Italian President of the parliament since direct elections and assured a broad and harmonious cooperation across the groups, respect for everybody and a renewed focus on the citizens and their demands.
- David Sassoli, himself already seriously ill, was my close partner in guaranteeing the continued functioning of the house during Covid. His readiness to take responsibility, and even the most difficult decisions against strong resistance to assure the well-being of everybody, deserves the utmost respect.
- Roberta Metsola combines outstanding political and communication skills with personal warmth and is able to assemble through hard work an unrivalled level of support behind her presidency. Her personal

courage in engaging for Ukraine having been the first President of a European institution to visit Kyiv in wartime is impressive.

This *liber amicorum* provides a record from nearly 50 different angles on the administrative development of the European Parliament during my tenure as its Secretary-General from the 15th of March 2009 to the 31st of December 2022. For our institution it is the first granular source book of this kind.

Surely written from a personal and friendly perspective, it has the merit to shed some light on the normally invisible side of our institution, which is extremely rare to say the least.

May it contribute to an increased understanding of the invaluable contribution of European civil servants to the construction of a United Europe.

Acknowledgements

As Klaus Welle's former Director of Cabinet, I had the honour of coordinating the production of this Liber Amicorum.

On behalf of Klaus, I would like to express gratitude to all authors for their wonderful contributions. It is important to note that the authors solely represent their own view and not the position of their respective institutions.

A huge thank you to my colleague Hanna Klimek for her valuable support, to our colleagues from the Clear Language Unit of DG Translation of the European Parliament for proofreading some articles upon the authors' request, to Cedric Michiels and Emanuele Moicciaro for the wonderful design of the book cover, to Jill Huvelle for the layout and IndigoPro for the printing.

Finally yet importantly, we extend our sincere gratitude to Freya Windle-Wehrle for her invaluable advice and support. Without her, this commemorative publication would not exist.

Susanne Altenberg