

A Mapping of Recent Trends in Interparliamentary Cooperation within the EU

Diane Fromage*

1. Introduction

Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, interparliamentary cooperation between national parliaments (NPs) and the European Parliament (EP) is specifically mentioned and promoted by the Treaties:¹ Article 12 TEU states that ‘National Parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union: [...] by taking part in the inter-parliamentary cooperation between national Parliaments and with the European Parliament, in accordance with the Protocol on the role of national Parliaments in the European Union.’ This provision seems to be an invitation to cooperation between the national and the European legislatures, as opposed to the competition that might have existed between both types of institutions in the past (Casalena, Lupo, Fasone 2013: 1593).² Furthermore, cooperation at a horizontal level between national parliaments alone does not appear to be encompassed by Article 12 (Esposito 2014: 138), although, as we shall see, it does happen in practice. On the other hand, Articles 9 and 10 of Protocol no 1 also address the question of interparliamentary cooperation. Article 9 is more of a declaration of intention – in which the participation of both the EP and NPs is referred to – as it foresees that ‘The European Parliament and national Parliaments shall together determine the organization and promotion of effective and regular interparliamentary cooperation within the Union’, whereas Article 10 indirectly refers to COSAC (the French acronym for the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for European Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union) and its activities.

These provisions have formed the basis for the development of numerous initiatives for the reinforcement of interparliamentary cooperation. In recent years for instance, two new interparliamentary conferences among national parliaments and the European Parliament emerged in the European Union (EU): the Article 13 Conference and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Conference.³ Together with COSAC, established in 1989, these represent the three interparliamentary conferences currently in existence in the EU. Because COSAC has been long established and is, even now, the most formal forum for interparliamentary cooperation,⁴ and because the two newer conferences continue to be the objects of important debate with regard to their rules of procedures, all three have been the object of much academic attention.⁵

In contrast, other forms of interparliamentary cooperation have been developing over recent decades and, even more so, over the last few years. Outside of these three conferences, there exist, on the one hand, forums of interparliamentary cooperation equally formalized but organized on the EP’s initiative alone or on that of the NP of the Member State holding the rotating Council presidency, and, on the other, consolidated groups of national parliaments that commonly cooperate and might be geographically close.⁶ These last initiatives amount a sort of ‘reinforced cooperation’ among national parliaments (Esposito 2014: 174). Additionally, in the last few years, NPs have also sought to cooperate on an ad hoc basis.

* Diane Fromage, Max Weber Postdoctoral Fellow in Law (2014-2015) at the European University Institute, Florence, is Assistant Professor of European Law at the University of Utrecht: diane.fromage@eui.eu.

¹ From 1979, when the EP ceased to be composed of delegated MPs, some initiatives for interparliamentary cooperation had existed. However, the participation of national parliamentarians in the European arena was still qualified as bleak before 2009. (Maurer, Wessels 2001: 453-454).

² On this relationship and how it has evolved also: (Neunreither 2005).

³ It should be noted that a specific basis for the establishment of the Article 13 Conference is contained in Article 13 Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG).

⁴ For instance, because it is – indirectly – recognized in the Treaties and has its own permanent secretariat.

⁵ See, among others, on the Article 13 Conference: (Cooper 2014), (Kreiling: 2013), (Lupo 2014); on the CFSP Conference: (Herranz-Surrallés 2014).

⁶ Despite the importance it may have in practice, this contribution does not encompass the interparliamentary cooperation taking place at political parties or at the administrative levels.

In this context, this contribution aims to examine whether the EU and the existence of COSAC may have been motors for the development of new forums of ‘reinforced interparliamentary cooperation’, or whether, on the contrary, their existence is unrelated. If the latter is the case, I will try to explain what the elements are that may lead national parliaments to cooperate, and what the consequences are for interparliamentary cooperation in general. Indeed, while it could have been expected that the creation of new, sectoral, conferences for interparliamentary cooperation – whose organization and participation require a further mobilization of (already scarce) parliamentary resources – would have led to a concentration of parliamentary efforts, there instead seems to be an explosion of new initiatives, possibly motivated by the growing diversity and number of parliaments involved following the latest EU enlargements. A further incentive might also lie in the perceived lack of efficiency of forums such as COSAC where true debates are nonexistent because MPs read prepared contributions (Danish Parliament 2014). Also, it appears that in this framework, the cleavages are less between the European Parliament on the one hand, and national parliaments on the other, and more between national parliaments themselves, although initiatives common to the European Parliament and national parliaments are also diminishing.⁷

Hence, forums for interparliamentary cooperation outside conferences are currently varied and numerous. However, while some of these initiatives seem to have been designed for national parliaments to join forces in the EU framework and, more specifically, in preparation of and around COSAC meetings (2), others are the result of external dynamics and only have an incidental role in EU affairs (3).

2. A multiplication of interparliamentary forums oriented towards COSAC meetings and in the attempt to influence EU institutions

2.1. Permanent forums

Within this first category, some forums are more consolidated than others. For instance, the Visegrád group -composed of the Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish parliaments- usually meets prior to all COSAC meetings (Lazowski 2007: 211). We can note that, although the Visegrád group has long existed – since 1991 when the Visegrád Declaration was adopted –, its parliamentary dimension at the level of president was agreed only in 2007 with the adoption of the Agreement of the presidents of parliament of V4 member countries on the institutionalization of cooperation on parliamentary level.⁸ Meetings at EU committee level have existed almost since these countries became members of the EU in 2004 however: they started in 2005 and are currently organized on an ad hoc basis once or twice a year. According to the Polish Sejm, this and other meetings organized among sectoral committees ‘provide a forum for exchanging best practices in matters connected with membership in the European Union as well as give an opportunity to exchange views on current issues, to coordinate positions and to take common initiatives’.⁹

Others of these meetings take place on a more informal basis. For instance, according to a consolidated practice, committees on European affairs of the parliaments of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland usually meet before COSAC meetings to ‘work out statements for the COSAC meetings and to take common initiatives’.¹⁰

More recently, a new initiative has been taken in order to enable an important dialogue between affected parliaments on the issues connected to the Mediterranean dimension of European

⁷ Joint committee meetings, and even more so joint parliamentary meetings, – both fruit of a joint initiative between the EP and the parliament of the Member State holding the EU Council’s presidency, are, indeed, becoming less frequent whereas interparliamentary committee meetings – organized on one or more EP Committee’s initiative – flourish. See, on this point, (European Parliament 2012), (European Parliament 2013) and (European Parliament 2014).

⁸ Available at http://oide.sejm.gov.pl/oide/en/images/files/international/porozumienie_wyszehrad_en.pdf last accessed 21/2/2015.

⁹ http://oide.sejm.gov.pl/oide/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=300&Itemid=30 last accessed 21/2/2015.

¹⁰ Polish Sejm, http://oide.sejm.gov.pl/oide/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14737:meetings-of-the-of-the-committees-on-european-affairs-of-the-parliaments-of-estonia-latvia-lithuania-and-poland-&catid=39&Itemid=746, last accessed 21/2/2015.

policies: this is the case of the meeting of chairpersons of the South European Parliaments. This new forum was created in Nicosia in January 2014 and is composed of Croatia, Cyprus, France, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain – the parliaments of two candidate countries, Serbia and Montenegro, have attended some meetings in their capacity as candidate countries –. Whereas these meetings have been organized so far in parallel with the COSAC chairpersons' meetings, they serve as a preparation for the upcoming COSAC plenary meetings as illustrated by the programme of the second meeting held in Rome in July 2014 and by the declaration adopted in Riga in February 2015.

2.2. Ad hoc meetings as a means for parliaments to show their political engagement or as the consequence of a growing number of parliaments?

In addition to these permanent initiatives, national parliaments sometimes also seek an exchange with their European counterparts on an ad hoc basis. In this framework, we can differentiate between meetings organized in preparation of COSAC or other interparliamentary meetings and other thematic meetings.¹¹

With regard to the first category, the most recent example is provided by the meeting organized by the Dutch Tweede Kamer on 19 January 2015 in order to improve interparliamentary cooperation.¹² This meeting gathered 14 national parliaments and the European Parliament in Brussels and permitted an exchange of views in preparation for the COSAC Chair meeting scheduled at the beginning of February 2015¹³. This initiative is particularly interesting as it appears to indicate that the opposition between national parliaments and the European Parliament, which had long existed, in reality is not as clear-cut as it is sometimes depicted. Additionally, while it clearly highlights the limits of the COSAC meetings organized twice a year for two days only, it also shows their importance as a forum for interparliamentary cooperation – reinforced, of course, by the possibility of interacting directly with the European Commission that COSAC meetings offer.

Prior to this recent meeting, some groups of national parliaments had already sought a first consensus at the time of negotiating the establishment of the Article 13 Conference.¹⁴ For instance, the six Founding Member States met, with the European Parliament, in Luxembourg on 11 January 2013 'for an exchange of views on interparliamentary cooperation and democratic oversight in the field of Economic and Monetary Union'.¹⁵ Other Member States' parliaments gathered, with the purpose of 'discuss[ing] how national parliaments could become proactive players in a more integrated financial, budgetary and economic union', in Copenhagen on 11 March 2013¹⁶; this was the second initiative of the Danish Parliament in this sense, given the fact that 11 national parliaments had already attended a meeting with a similar purpose on 26 November 2012 (COSAC 2013).¹⁷ The European Parliament did not participate in either of these two meetings, illustrating the division existing between the European and the national legislatures in this domain¹⁸, whereas the EP was involved in the latest initiative for the improvement of interparliamentary participation and in the meeting of the Founding Member

¹¹ Note that, so far, this new phenomenon has been subject to limited academic attention; therefore, the present analysis is based mostly on primary sources.

¹² Background paper by René Leegte, Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal.

¹³ See, on the 'green card' initiative discussed at that meeting, the contribution by Cristina Fasone and Diane Fromage in this issue.

¹⁴ It should be noted that the Visegrád group was also active in this framework. See, on these groups and their proposals: (Cooper 2014).

¹⁵ Letter from the President of the Chamber of Deputies of Luxemburg addressed to the Speaker of the Cypriot Parliament on 18 January 2013.

¹⁶ Letter from the President of the EU affairs committee of the Danish Parliament, the UK House of Lords, the Estonian Parliament, the Luxemburg Parliament, the Czech Chamber, the Irish Houses of Oireachtas, the Slovak Parliament, the Romanian Parliament, the Hungarian Parliament, the Slovenian Parliament, the Lithuanian Parliament, the Latvian Parliament, the Finnish Parliament, the Belgian Parliament, the Czech Senate and the Swedish Parliament addressed to the Speaker of the Cypriot Parliament on 8 April.

¹⁷ Interestingly, not all NPs were invited to participate.

¹⁸ This opposition, which relates to the role the EP should assume in this interparliamentary conference, was also visible in the negotiations of the rules of procedure of the CFSP Conference. Both initiatives for interparliamentary cooperation have provoked the resurgence of the EP's and NPs' dissenting views.

States. However, the aim of these meetings was the same and consisted in joining forces in order to influence the upcoming Speakers' Conference meetings; by the same token, they might as well be considered to have actually dealt with subject matter belonging to the competence of the Speakers' Conference.¹⁹ Additionally, although the letters resulting from both of these meetings made contradictory proposals as to the form that interparliamentary cooperation in economic governance should take, they were signed both by the Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg and the Belgian Senate, which seems to, at least, put their importance in terms of political engagement in perspective.

Other initiatives have also been organized with a more thematic focus; national parliaments sought to form 'clusters of interest'.²⁰ For instance, the French National Assembly hosted an interparliamentary meeting on the European Public Prosecutor's Office and on personal data protection in September 2014, as a consequence of a Franco-German initiative, with the aim to influence the EU Commission, and it had previously hosted a similar meeting on the financing of European cinema in June 2013. Before that, the German Bundestag organised an interparliamentary meeting on the European sale of goods law in November 2012 and, in fact, this first initiative and a videoconference organized between the French National Assembly, the EP and the EU Commission served as sources of inspiration to the National Assembly at the time of preparing its meeting on the EPPO. The Danish Folketing has also been active in this field by organizing a meeting on the free movement of workers in 2013. In these cases, the hosting parliament pre-circulates a discussion paper and the participating NPs can adopt a common declaration or a common position.

The question could be asked, however, as to the efficiency of these *ad hoc* initiatives. Indeed, the latest event hosted in Paris in September 2014 highlighted what can be considered, to a certain extent, the limit of this type of cooperation: some representatives could not commit to the joint declaration because of recent elections and subscribers to it signed only in their own names, a fact which was underlined several times as well as in the common declaration itself (National Assembly 2014). Additionally, the EP was invited to the meeting but did not take up the invitation²¹ and, as already mentioned, the members of some national parliaments had already subscribed to two contradictory declarations. In contrast, when national parliaments and the EP adopt conclusions in the framework of COSAC they do so in the name of the conference as a whole, although as recalled in Protocol no 1 'Contributions from the conference [COSAC] shall not bind national Parliaments and shall not prejudge their positions.' Therefore, COSAC conclusions will have more legitimacy – and, hence, potentially more impact – than the contributions adopted in the framework of these interparliamentary meetings in which, additionally, only a minority of national parliaments participate, with the presence or the absence of the European Parliament. This notwithstanding, such initiatives may be motivated by a determined political will to affirm a position and find allies among the other national parliaments, as was the case of the French National Assembly in September 2014: being clearly in favour of the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, it sought to unite with like-minded counterparts. Moreover, in spite of the limited political value of such a declaration, it will undoubtedly be superior to a mere contribution submitted by one national parliament alone to the EU Commission in the framework of the Political Dialogue or even to its national government alone.

As to the rationale for the organization of these meetings, before the French initiative existed Antonio Esposito noted that 'it is significant that the organization of clusters was promoted by parliaments which, like the Danish one, exercise systematic control and influence on their respective government (also through a system based on negotiating mandates)' (Esposito 2014: 176). This counselor of the Italian Chamber added further that these assemblies may be interested in reinforcing

¹⁹ The Italian Chamber of Deputies considered it unnecessary, for instance, 'to participate in a meeting organized outside of the institutional framework for interparliamentary cooperation, in the absence of the European Parliament and dealing with decisions whose competence belong to the Speakers' Conference'. (Esposito 2014: 175, fn 113).

²⁰ A proposal to include these clusters of interest in the framework of COSAC, with the possibility to organize extraordinary COSAC meetings with this purpose, was discussed in Vilnius in October 2013. (Esposito 2014: 176).

²¹ This is particularly interesting given the fact that the EP suggested some amendments to the proposal for the establishment of an EPPO, which seemed to be strongly inspired by the arguments NPs had raised in their reasoned opinions. However, it did not acknowledge this source of inspiration clearly and later refused to attend the meeting in Paris.

their relationship with the EU Commission because their relationship with their government is mostly circumscribed in relation to single legislative proposals put on the EU Council's agenda, and is hence rather ill-suited if it is to have some influence on the pre-legislative phase or, more in general, on the definition of the political and strategic choices of European institutions. According to this author, another motivation would potentially lie in the extending use of trilogues, which threaten the influence of those parliaments acting on the basis of a mandating system. However, the fact that the French National Assembly has been active in organizing thematic meetings seems to indicate instead that what is common to the parliaments seeking to form 'clusters of interest' is their weakness in EU affairs, be it derived from the actual institutional framework, as is the case in France, or be it due to changes that have occurred in the EU legislative process, as in Denmark. The House of Lords, on the other hand, simply justifies this thirst for informal interparliamentary meetings by the fact that NPs increasingly engage with key EU policies (UK House of Lords 2014: par. 132).

3. Interparliamentary cooperation with other purposes incidentally dealing with EU affairs

In parallel to these ad hoc 'clusters of interest' and to permanent interparliamentary forums acting in preparation of larger interparliamentary meetings, some regional associations of parliaments also deal with EU affairs, although this is not necessarily their main purpose.

In this category belongs the Baltic assembly, created by the three Member States from the Baltic region – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – in 1991.²² It is composed of parliamentary delegations from these three Member States and meets once a year. Although it has existed for over two decades, this assembly underwent an important process of reform and redefinition of its goals after its members became EU Member States.²³ As a result of this reform, its focus appears to be rather broad and aiming at inter-regional cooperation, with the Benelux assembly for instance, rather than aimed at creating an alliance within the EU.²⁴ EU affairs committees of the parliaments of the Weimer triangle – composed, since 1991, of France, Germany and Poland – also meet once to twice a year to discuss European matters²⁵ and although this practice was abandoned in 2004, it was resumed in 2008.

Some other interparliamentary forums, although they have a clear link to the EU, are composed of both EU and non-EU parliamentary delegations. This is for example the case of the Nordic Council. This assembly, formed in 1952, is composed of 87 elected members from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland and it regularly interacts with the EP, having visited the European institution twice in 2013 for instance (European Parliament 2014: 28-29). In that same region, the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, founded in 1991, brings together, on a yearly basis, 11 national parliaments, 11 regional parliaments and 5 parliamentary organizations from both EU and non-EU countries. It is peculiar in that it not only includes the participation of the European Parliament but also that of the Baltic Assembly, the Nordic Council, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Another parliamentary assembly gathering EU and non-EU MPs is the parliamentary assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean. It is composed of delegates from the 28 Member States, the EP and 15 Mediterranean countries; representatives from the Arab League also participate.

In addition to these forums, in which several Member States' parliaments come together, some bi-lateral initiatives, for instance between the French and the German parliaments, can be mentioned.²⁶

²² However, the cooperation between these three States dates back to the 1980s. (Lunardelli 2014: 9).

²³ Website of the Baltic Assembly, History: <http://baltasam.org/en/history/institutional-reforms> last accessed 21/2/2015.

²⁴ Objectives as defined at <http://baltasam.org/en/history/renaissance>, last accessed 21/2/2015.

²⁵ For instance, the latest meeting organized in November 2014 contained a discussion on the Energetic Union in the EU and employment in the EU.

http://oide.sejm.gov.pl/oide/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14881:spotkanie2014&catid=11&Itemid=292, last accessed 21/2/2015.

²⁶ Franco-German initiatives have existed for long and were underlined during the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty in 2013. Declaration adopted on 22 January 2013 by the German Bundestag and the French National Assembly.

4. Concluding remarks

There appears to be a growing variety of forums for interparliamentary cooperation within the EU, some of which may actually be a reaction to the existence of COSAC. This proliferation of interparliamentary forums invites a reflection as regards the dangers it may suppose for their sustainability. Over recent years, and following Valentin Kreilinger's analysis, the interest shown by national parliaments for the bi-annual COSAC meetings has been variable, ranging from Italy, Austria and Portugal, which have systematically been represented by six MPs, while Malta, Latvia and Hungary sent, on average, only two representatives (Kreilinger 2013: 5). However, while the factor of interest surely plays a role, other elements, such as the cost of these meetings, the fact that they exist alongside numerous other parliamentary forums, as has been highlighted in this paper, and the perception of their efficiency – or lack thereof – surely play a role too.

It seems therefore that the prediction made by the House of Lords in 2014 has begun to become a reality. Indeed, as already mentioned, in its report on the role of national parliaments in the European Union, the EU Select Committee of the House of Lords underlined the fact that 'As national parliaments increasingly engage with key EU policies, it is likely that there will be informal conferences to discuss major policy issues' (UK House of Lords 2014: par. 132 ff.). As underlined by the Danish Parliament too, '[t]he number of inter-parliamentary conferences and meetings in the EU has increased significantly over the past few years. In particular new large scale Parliamentary Conferences have recently been established in the field of foreign and security policy and in economic and financial matters. But it is time to stop creating new large-scale inter-parliamentary meetings with too many participants, too many pre-prepared speeches while lacking in substantial political debate. Instead we must become more operational, innovative and solution-oriented' (Danish Parliament 2014). The Danish Parliament's assessment is particularly critical as, in its opinion, 'To this end, national parliaments should consider organizing more small scale meetings and informal contacts between members of parliaments and examine how existing large scale inter-parliamentary bodies such as COSAC, the CFSP-Conference and the Article 13 conference on budgetary policies could be reformed. A code of conduct on good inter-parliamentary meetings could lay down minimum standards for the organization of good inter-parliamentary meetings'. For this reason, they invited the Speakers' Conference to adopt such a code of conduct and, like the House of Lords, advocated the establishment of clusters of interest within whose framework 'Parliaments [would] organize small scale informal meetings along shared interests between groups of national parliaments on topical EU policy issues. Such meetings should have a clear purpose and common understanding of what their outcome should be. They could serve the purpose of either coordination, exchange of views or simply mutual inspiration on issues of particular interest to clusters of parliaments.'²⁷

Furthermore, in trying to tackle the logistics problems, the House of Lords Select Committee suggested that 'It may be appropriate for an expanded COSAC secretariat to give a measure of logistical support to these informal conferences, subject to some simple baselines set down by COSAC.' This proposal would surely require a significant reinforcement of the COSAC secretariat – which is currently managed by one single administrator – and the question remains as to which of the national parliaments would be ready to bear the cost such an expansion would generate. However, a centralized management of the initiatives would prove useful in terms of transparency towards the citizenry, since currently the proliferation of interparliamentary forums and their sometimes punctual basis make it difficult for citizens to be fully informed of what is happening. Besides, if these initiatives were managed by one single organ, it might be possible to manage their schedule in the best possible way in order to allow the interested parliaments to make their choices while being fully informed. This could prove useful for them to manage their – sometimes scarce – resources in an efficient way. The custom according to which South European Parliaments meet around COSAC meetings seems, in this sense, to be an initiative worth examining further, although arguably national parliaments seeking to form a 'cluster of interest' may either precisely be willing to come to a

²⁷ Note that the proposals made by the Danish Parliament were particularly far-reaching as they called for an important reform of COSAC as well as a change in COSAC's role in relation to the CFSP and the Article 13 Conferences.

previous agreement in the view of a future COSAC meeting, or to act as protagonists in organizing their meeting at home.

Further to the question of the organization of these meetings, the question of the identity of the participants, or rather, of the invited and participating national – and European – parliaments needs to be asked as well. The examples of informal meetings observed in preparation of the establishment of the Article 13 Conference by the Speakers' Conference show that one of these meetings was reserved for the Founding Member States and the EP. The two meetings organized by the Danish parliament were open only to some of the 40 chambers for the first of these events, whereas the second was indeed open to all of them – and neither of them was open to the European Parliament. The French National Assembly had invited the EP to its informal meeting on the EPPO in September 2014 but the EP did not show up. Regarding this matter, the House of Lords argued that 'One important principle might be that (unless the meeting is for a specific geographical grouping) invitations should be extended to all parliaments equally' (UK House of Lords 2014 par. 132 ff). This proposal is attractive in the sense that it would allow for all national parliaments to attend, be they in favour or not of the position defended by the hosting parliament, as happened in the meeting organized on the EPPO by the French National Assembly in September 2014. However, while this formula would probably be favoured in most cases, some leeway should be left to the initiator of the informal meeting who might pursue a precise political goal justifying the choice of certain Member States only – that is, those that might be seeking to create a real 'cluster of interest', or those that might wish to select the participants on a precise criterion, such as their experience with the European integration process. In fact, these 'clusters of interest' could contribute to the emergence of a public debate in the Member States involved or at the European level (Esposito 2014: 177). However, Antonio Esposito warns against the counterproductive effect their use as means to create "trade unions" of national parliaments with antagonistic functions with regard to the EU activities' would have (Esposito 2014: 177). According to this councillor of the Italian Chamber who referred to the Danish initiatives, the EP's systematic exclusion by the Danish parliament is the sign of an evolution in this direction, even though the EP could provide a contribution important to the knowledge and the assessment of a complex question. While a systematic exclusion of the European legislature based solely on its not being a national parliament is certainly not desirable, there may indeed be a need for national parliaments to be able sometimes to have exchanges solely among legislatures that are at the same level,²⁸ and there may also be a lack of interest from the EP in being involved.

In sum, in spite of the potential introduction of a 'secretariat for interparliamentary relationships', a balance needs to be struck between the need to create 'variable geometry' forums for interparliamentary cooperation – which, arguably, are inevitable in the context of an always larger and more diverse European Union – and the need to control this increase so that these forums remain useful and, most importantly, so that national parliaments can continue to be active participants in them. They are certainly also useful in securing some interest for the EU integration process itself on the part of MPs who, traditionally, have been neither keen on being involved in this process – or interested in it – nor very successful in cooperating with other legislatures. However, some transparency should be guaranteed, and these initiatives should not compete with the more formalized conferences or, even worse, should not replace them de facto as platforms of exchange. Rather, efforts of coordination and rationalization should be made so that all forms of interparliamentary cooperation co-exist in the most rational manner.

²⁸ The problem arising from the fact that the EP is both a participant and an address among COSAC has been recorded numerous times; for instance: (European Parliament 2014: 11-12).

See on the potential need for national parliaments to have their own forum for cooperation in general: (Fromage 2015).

References

- Casalena, P.-G., Lupo, N. and Fasone, C. (2013), 'Commentary on the Protocol No 1 Annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon' in H.-J. Blanke and S. Mangianelli (eds), *The Treaty on European Union (TEU). A Commentary*, Heidelberg, Springer: 1529-1633 .
- Cooper I. (2014), 'Parliamentary Oversight of the EU after the Crisis: On the Creation of the 'Article 13' Interparliamentary Conference', *LUISS Working paper* no 21.
- COSAC (2013), 'Minutes of the Meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC Dublin, Ireland, 28 January 2013'.
- Danish Parliament (2014), 'Twenty-Three Recommendations to Strengthen the Role of National Parliaments in a Changing European Governance' (2014).
- Esposito, A. (2014), 'La Cooperazione Interparlamentare Principi, Strumenti E Prospettive' in Andrea Manzella and Nicola Lupo (eds), *Il sistema parlamentare euro-nazionale*, Torino, Giappichelli: 133-182.
- European Parliament, 'Report on "Interparliamentary Relations between the European Parliament and National Parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon" 2010-2011'.
- European Parliament, 'Report on "Interparliamentary Relations between the European Parliament and National Parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon" 2012'.
- European Parliament, 'Report on "Interparliamentary Relations between the European Parliament and National Parliaments under the Treaty of Lisbon" 2009-2014. Annual Report 2013/2014'.
- Fromage, D. (2015), 'Parlamento Europeo y Parlamentos Nacionales después del Tratado de Lisboa y en un Contexto de Crisis: ¿Un Acercamiento de Grado Diverso según El Ámbito?' in P. Andrés Sáenz de Santa María and J.-I. Ugartemendia (eds), *El Parlamento Europeo: ¿Esta Vez Es Diferente?*, Guipuzcoa, IVAP: 223-249.
- Herranz-Surrallés, A. (2014), 'The EU's Multilevel Parliamentary (Battle)Field: Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation and Conflict in Foreign and Security Policy', *West European Politics*: 957-975.
- Kreilinger, V. (2013), 'La Nouvelle Conférence Interparlementaire pour la Gouvernance Économique et Financière', *Notre Europe Policy Paper*.
- Lazowski, A. (2007), 'The Polish Parliament and EU Affairs. An Effective Actor or an Accidental Hero?' in J. O'Brennan and T. Raunio (eds), *National Parliaments within the Enlarged European Union*, Abingdon, Routledge: 203-219.
- Lunardelli, M. (2014), 'Estonia amid Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region and EU Membership' 2 *Nomos. Le attualità nel diritto*.
- Lupo, N. (2014), 'La Conferenza Interparlamentare sulla Governance Economica e Finanziaria: la Deludente Attuazione dell'Art. 13 del Fiscal Compact', *Quaderni costituzionali*: 113-116.
- Maurer, A. and Wessels, W. (2001), 'National Parliaments after Amsterdam: From Slow Adapters to National Players?', *National Parliaments on their Ways to Europe: Losers or Latecomers?*, Baden Baden, Nomos: 425-475.
- National Assembly (2014), *Minutes of the Interparliamentary Meeting*. http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/europe/declaration/c0154_en.pdf , last accessed on 21/2/2015.
- Neunreither, K. (2005), 'The European Parliament and National Parliaments: Conflict or Cooperation?' 11 *Journal of legislative studies* 466-489.
- UK House of Lords European Union Committee (2014) 'The Role of National Parliaments in the European Union'.