



37th

Bi-annual Report

**Developments in
European Union
Procedures and Practices
Relevant to
Parliamentary Scrutiny**

Prepared by the COSAC Secretariat and presented to:

**LXVII Conference of Parliamentary Committees
for Union Affairs of Parliaments
of the European Union**

3-5 March 2022
Paris

First drafted by the COSAC Secretariat on 17 February 2022,
based on the replies to a questionnaire distributed to Parliaments/Chambers.

Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union

COSAC SECRETARIAT

MTY 06 R 010, 70 rue Montoyer, B-1047 Brussels, Belgium
E-mail: secretariat@cosac.eu | Tel: +32 2 284 3776

Table of Contents

BACKGROUND.....	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
CHAPTER 1	
THE ROLE OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION	1
CHAPTER 2	
THE RULE OF LAW	16
CHAPTER 3	
CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE (COFE)	23

BACKGROUND

This is the Thirty-seventh Bi-annual Report from the COSAC Secretariat.

COSAC Bi-annual Reports

The XXX COSAC decided that the COSAC Secretariat should produce factual Bi-annual Reports, to be published ahead of each ordinary meeting of the Conference. The purpose of the Reports is to give an overview of the developments in procedures and practices in the European Union that are relevant to parliamentary scrutiny.

All the Bi-annual Reports are available on the IPEX website by navigating to the respective meeting.

The three chapters of this Bi-annual Report are based on information provided by the national Parliaments of the European Union Member States and the European Parliament. The deadline for submitting replies to the questionnaire for the 37th Bi-annual Report was 31 January 2022.

The outline of this Report was adopted by the meeting of the Chairpersons of COSAC, held on 14 January in Paris, in hybrid format.

As a general rule, the Report does not refer to all Parliaments or Chambers that have responded to a given question. Instead, illustrative examples are used.

Note that, in some cases, respondents are able to provide more than one answer to multiple choice questions. Any perceived disparity in the total number of answers to a question and the total number of respondents can thus be accounted.

Complete replies, received from 37 out of 39 national Parliaments/Chambers of 27 Member States and the European Parliament, can be found in the Annex on the COSAC webpage¹.

Note on Numbers

Of the 27 Member States of the European Union, 15 have a unicameral Parliament and 12 have a bicameral Parliament. Due to this combination of unicameral and bicameral systems, there are 39 national parliamentary Chambers in the 27 Member States of the European Union.

Although they have bicameral systems, the national Parliaments of Austria, Ireland and Spain each submit a single set of replies to the questionnaire, therefore the maximum number of respondents per question is 37, including the European Parliament. There were 37 responses to the questionnaire.

¹ Due to the timing of national elections, the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* has only provided replies to Chapter 3, regarding the Conference on the Future of Europe, since they do not have a political nature.

The European Parliament did not answer to the questions in chapter 1a (Scrutiny of the government's European policy), 1b (Role in the European decision-making process) and 2a (Involvement of the national Parliaments in the adoption of measures to fight the COVID-19 pandemic), as they are not applicable.

ABSTRACT

CHAPTER 1: THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The first chapter of the 37th Bi-annual Report of COSAC seeks to analyse and compare the best practices and tools available to national Parliaments/Chambers in performing their role in European Union (EU) affairs.

The report addresses three main areas with this regard: the control of their government's European policy, the role of national Parliaments in the European decision-making process and interparliamentary cooperation at the EU level.

According to the report, the three tools most often used to scrutinise the government's European policy were hearings of ministers at committee level, followed by negotiating mandates-binding resolutions and pre-European Council meeting committee debates.

It was worth noting that there was an important variation across Parliaments/Chambers on the frequency and the kind of scrutiny carried from 2019 to 2021.

In less than half of Parliaments/Chambers the plenary/committee debates organised before a European Council meeting were followed by a vote.

A significant majority of Parliaments/Chambers had not recently considered any initiatives or passed any laws to improve or amend the scrutiny of the government's EU policy. Notwithstanding, some of the Parliaments/Chambers who had done so pointed to the need of accessing timely information and the scrutiny of the recovery and resilience plans as the main challenges.

On the systematic review of the legislative proposals of the European Commission by the parliamentary committees with regard to the principle of subsidiarity, the majority of Parliaments/Chambers stated that they had performed such scrutiny, either by the EU Affairs Committee only, jointly by the EU Affairs Committee and the sectoral Committees and, in very few cases, only by the sectoral committees.

Several Parliaments had produced, on average and from 2019 to 2021, from one to five resolutions containing reasoned opinions with regard to subsidiarity. These were focused mainly on the new Pact on Migration and Asylum, on climate issues, notably the "Fit for 55" package, and on the minimum wages directive proposal.

Furthermore, only one Chamber replied that proposals had been made to bring an action for annulment on grounds of infringement of the principle of subsidiarity before the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The political dialogue was also identified as an important tool at the disposal of national Parliaments, even if the frequency and number of political opinions submitted to the European Commission varied across Parliaments/Chambers. The vast majority considered that the European Commission mostly addressed the issues raised in the opinions sent within the political dialogue.

A significant majority answered that they were in favour of the introduction of a "green card" procedure, through which national Parliaments could ask the European Commission to put forward a legislative proposal.

On the regular interaction with Members of the European Parliament (MEP) from their respective Member State, the majority of Parliaments/Chambers informed they had organised such meetings.

When asked about the ways through which they followed the trilogues and European legislative procedure for examining legislative proposals, the replies from Parliaments/Chambers varied between hearings of ministers, MEPs, European commissioners and experts.

Regarding the involvement of the EU Affairs Committee in the legislative transposition process of EU legislation, a slight majority stated that they were not involved. However, some concrete examples of the involvement of Parliaments/Chambers in this procedure were also highlighted.

With regard to interparliamentary cooperation, the majority of Parliaments/Chambers considered themselves generally satisfied with the development and outcomes of the existing interparliamentary conferences.

From the choices offered on how to improve the work of the existing interparliamentary conferences, the vast majority of respondents believed that the introduction of lively sessions of questions and answers would be beneficial to increase the dynamic of the meetings. The possibility of establishing internal working groups within these interparliamentary conferences was also welcomed by a significant majority of respondents, together with the systematic adoption of common conclusions or contributions in these meetings, also deemed relevant to a number of Parliaments/Chambers.

When asked to assess which tools were most useful in terms of interparliamentary cooperation, a vast majority of Parliaments/Chambers identified the debates between members of national Parliaments and the debates with the European Commissioners as the most important ones.

On the creation of a second chamber at European level composed of national Parliaments, the overwhelming majority of Parliaments/Chambers expressed no opinion.

CHAPTER 2: THE RULE OF LAW

The second chapter of the 37th Bi-annual Report of COSAC sheds light on how national Parliaments had been following and assessing the developments in the area of rule of law in the EU, focusing both on their involvement in adoption of measures to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and their views regarding the rule of law issues in general.

Almost all Parliaments/Chambers had somehow been involved in the process of adopting measures to deal with the sanitary crisis and performed scrutiny of their government's actions in that regard. In most of the cases, the Parliaments/Chambers had not participated directly in the approval of measures taken which were, in principle, based on laws dealing with the public health crisis or the pandemic. Some of them had been involved in the decision-making on the introduction or prolongation of the state of emergency.

A large majority of Parliaments/Chambers had organised hearings or debates with government representatives and/or had asked written or oral questions on the measures taken. Some of them also adopted non-binding resolutions or reports on the current actions or possible further steps.

A few Parliaments/Chambers had created a special parliamentary body to deal with the pandemic or even a commission of inquiry focused on the management of the crisis by the government and its oversight.

On the recent rule of law judgements of the Court of Justice of the European Union, less than a third of Parliaments/Chambers replied that they had discussed such matters, however, mostly not in relation to the specific cases. Some of them expressed concerns about the lack of respect for the judgements of the Court of Justice of the European Union or for the decisions of the European Commission in this regard.

A majority of Parliaments/Chambers had carried out some work on the European Commission's 2021 Rule of Law Report, either via exchanges with the European Commission or with the national governments. A few of them organised special hearings with various stakeholders to discuss the Commission's evaluation of their own Member State.

Furthermore, the vast majority of national Parliaments had no opinion on whether they consider satisfactory the implementation of the mechanism of Article 7(1) of the Treaty on European Union relating to violations of the values set out in Article 2. Similarly, most Parliaments/Chambers expressed no opinion when asked whether they considered satisfactory the implementation of the rule of law conditionality mechanism concerning the financial management of the Union budget or of the Union's financial interests.

CHAPTER 3: CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE (CoFE)

The third chapter of the 37th Bi-annual Report of COSAC seeks to examine the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFE), following on from the Portuguese and Slovenian reports, which had already dealt with this topic.

After around ten months of consultation and debate within CoFE, this chapter focused on the role played by national Parliaments and the European Parliament, summarising the work completed so far, and providing an overview of events organised by the Parliaments/Chambers.

Asked about the flow of information with respect to the CoFE inside the Parliaments/Chambers, more than half of the respondents replied that no reports on the CoFE Plenary sessions had been put before their Parliament/Chamber. Some of the Parliaments/Chambers which responded that reporting did occur, specified that it took place before the Committees on European (and Foreign) Affairs or before the governing bodies. Some other respondents noted that written reports or written information had been prepared and disseminated.

More than half of the respondents had organised CoFE related debates in their committee meetings or plenary sessions during the second half of 2021, the majority of which within the scope of their respective Committee on European (and Foreign) Affairs. With respect to the topics discussed, Parliaments/Chambers mentioned the organisation and the progress of the CoFE Plenary and its working groups, or the involvement of citizens in the CoFE. Other topics included digital economy,

the importance of economic, social and territorial cohesion for regional development, artificial intelligence, energy policy, the role of the European Parliament and national Parliaments, and freedom of expression in Europe.

The majority of Parliaments/Chambers organised or took part in events to inform about or promote CoFE during the second half of 2021. A number of Parliaments/Chambers noted that they organised events that paid particular attention to involving young people and few of them discussed the future of the Western Balkans region. Also a number of respondents referred to promoting activities and citizens' involvement via social and other media. Respondents also mentioned that parliamentarians participated in several public discussions organised on the CoFE and its topics, in particular those parliamentarians who were members of the CoFE Plenary.

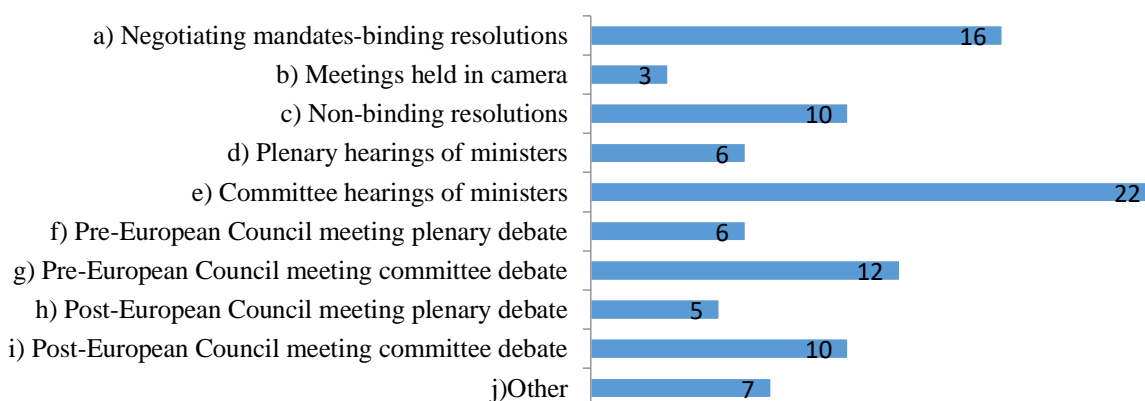
CHAPTER 1

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE 37th BI-ANNUAL REPORT seeks to identify, analyse and compare the best practice concerning tools and instruments available to and used by Parliaments/Chambers in their activities concerning EU Affairs. This was done by casting light on three different but complementary strands: the control of their government's EU policy, their role in the European decision-making process and interparliamentary cooperation at Union level.

1 Asked about the three tools most often used to scrutinise the government's European policy, most of the respondents first identified the hearings of ministers at committee level (22 out of 35 respondents), followed by the negotiating mandates-binding resolutions (16 out of 35 respondents) and the pre-European Council meeting committee debates (12 out of 35 respondents).

The tools most often used by Parliament/Chamber to scrutinise the government's European policy



Some Parliaments/Chambers had also provided details on other tools used to scrutinise the government's European policy.

The Hungarian *Országgyűlés* alluded to the possibility of convening, upon initiative of the Speaker, *in camera* meetings of the Consultative Body on EU Affairs of the Parliament, in which the Prime Minister shall provide information prior to the meetings of the European Council and on events of strategic importance of the EU. The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* pointed out that the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, when it deemed necessary, invited ministers and scrutinised EU matters before and after any meeting of the EU Council.

The Dutch *Eerste Kamer* mentioned that its main form of scrutiny was in written form, since the government sends the Dutch position in its annotated agenda before each European Council/Council meeting and reports after the meetings. Moreover, each committee was entitled to ask questions and issue comments on this position to the minister concerned. The committee could also invite a minister to discuss the European policy on specific topics and, once a year, the EU policy of the government was discussed in a plenary debate, which could adopt binding resolutions. In the same way, the German *Bundestag* noted that the vast majority of its EU activities are parliamentary questions, which are followed by statements and debates on European policy.

The Slovenian *Državni svet* specified that the committee for International Relations and European Affairs discussed the Government's proposals, issued opinions and might pass them on to the Committee on EU Affairs of the National Assembly, at least two days before the meeting at which the latter was to adopt a relevant position.

The French *Assemblée nationale* mentioned the information reports as an important tool to scrutinise the government's European policy.

2 When asked about the use, from a predefined list of options, of specific tools list to scrutinise the government's European policy, Parliaments/Chambers had to indicate how often they had used these instruments, on average, between 2019 and 2021: “none”, “1 to 5”, “5 to 10”, “10 to 20” and “more than 20”.

Concerning the negotiating mandates/binding resolutions, out of 35 respondents, 14 Parliaments/Chambers mentioned they did not produce any and 12 indicated that they produced more than 20 in average per year (Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, Danish *Folketing*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, Estonian *Riigikogu*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, German *Bundestag*, Latvian *Saeima*, Romanian *Senat*, Slovak *Národná rada*, Slovenian *Državni zbor*, Swedish *Riksdag*).

With regard to the meetings held *in camera*, out of 32 respondents, 18 Parliaments/Chambers mentioned they did not produce any and only four Parliaments/Chambers noted to have organised more than 20 meetings (Estonian *Riigikogu*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Swedish *Riksdag*).














































Out of the 34 respondents, 14 Parliaments/Chambers indicated that they had not adopted any non-binding resolutions, whereas seven respondents replied they had produced more than 20 (Czech *Senát*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, German *Bundestag*, German *Bundesrat*, Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*, Slovak *Národná rada*).

When it comes to the hearings of ministers at plenary level, 15 out of 34 respondents replied they had not organised any and 12 Parliaments/Chambers noted they had conducted between one and five.

Regarding the hearings of ministers at committee level, 29 out of 34 respondents mentioned they had been arranged at least once. Among these Parliaments/Chambers, 11 respondents informed they had organised more than 20 (Danish *Folketing*, Estonian *Riigikogu*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, German *Bundestag*, German *Bundesrat*, Latvian *Saeima*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Polish *Sejm*, Romanian *Senat*, Slovak *Národná rada*, Slovenian *Državni zbor*).

Use frequency of specific tools used by Parliament/Chamber to scrutinise the government's

European policy

Number/ %	None / Aucune	1 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 20	More than 20	
a) Negotiating mandates/binding resolutions/a. De mandats de négociation/ résolutions à caractère contraignant	14 - 38.9% 	6 - 16.7% 	4 - 11.1% 	0 - 0.0% 	12 - 33.3% 	36
b) Meetings held in camera /De réunions à huis clos	18 - 56.3% 	3 - 9.4% 	5 - 15.6% 	2 - 6.3% 	4 - 12.5% 	32
c) Non-binding resolutions / De résolutions à caractère non contraignant	14 - 41.2% 	9 - 26.5% 	2 - 5.9% 	2 - 5.9% 	7 - 20.6% 	34
d) Plenary hearings of ministers / D'auditions de ministre en plénière	15 - 44.1% 	12 - 35.3% 	3 - 8.8% 	0 - 0.0% 	4 - 11.8% 	34
e) Committee hearings of ministers / D'auditions de ministres en commission	5 - 14.7% 	10 - 29.4% 	5 - 14.7% 	3 - 8.8% 	11 - 32.4% 	34
f) Pre-European Council meeting plenary debate /cDe débats en plénière pré Conseil européen	25 - 73.5% 	4 - 11.8% 	3 - 8.8% 	2 - 5.9% 	0 - 0.0% 	34
g) Pre-European Council meeting committee debate / De débats en commission pré Conseil européen	14 - 40.0% 	10 - 28.6% 	6 - 17.1% 	3 - 8.6% 	2 - 5.7% 	35
h) Post-European Council meeting plenary debate / De débats en plénière post Conseil européen	22 - 66.7% 	7 - 21.2% 	3 - 9.1% 	1 - 3.0% 	0 - 0.0% 	33
i) Post-European Council meeting committee debate / De débats en commission post Conseil européen	10 - 28.6% 	19 - 54.3% 	1 - 2.9% 	3 - 8.6% 	2 - 5.7% 	35
Total respondents						35

Concerning the pre-European Council meeting plenary debates, out of 34 respondents, the vast majority of Parliaments/Chambers (25 respondents) said they did not organise any and nine Parliaments/Chambers noted they had arranged between one and 20.

With respect to the pre-European Council meeting committee debates, out of 35 respondents, 14 Parliaments/Chambers said they had not conducted any and 10 Parliaments/Chambers noted they organised between one and five meetings. Two respondents reported to have organised more than 20 (Belgian *Chambre des représentants* and Lithuanian *Seimas*).

With regard to the post-European Council debates at plenary level, the vast majority of Parliaments/Chambers (22 respondents out of 33 respondents) did not schedule any.

Finally, when asked about the convening of post-European Council meetings at committee level, 10 out of 35 respondents reported that none were organised and 19 Parliaments/Chambers noted they held between one and five meetings. Two respondents reported to have organised more than 20 (Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, Lithuanian *Seimas*).

3 Asked whether the plenary/committee debates organised before a European Council were followed by a vote, the majority of Parliaments/Chambers (17 out of 31 respondents) answered negatively.

The Slovenian *Državni zbor* specified that debates before the European Council meetings were only arranged at the committee level, in which case they were followed by a vote.

A number of respondents (four) did not answer positively or negatively to this question, but mentioned details about their practices.

The Italian *Senato della Repubblica* noted that every plenary meeting in both Houses of the Italian Parliament convened ahead of a European Council had been followed by a vote, based on a resolution submitted by the members of the EU Affairs Committees from both Chambers. On the other hand, the committee meetings convened prior to the European Council meetings were, as a general rule not, followed by a vote. In the same way, the Finnish *Eduskunta* stated that such hearings could have led to a vote, noting however that the voting on the Finnish negotiation position was usually adopted at an earlier stage of the parliamentary procedure, and therefore the hearings on the up-coming European Council meeting were dedicated to an overview of the state of play.

The Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna* stated that the Committee on European Affairs formally adopted a resolution, taking note of the information regarding the positions of the Government at the European Council meeting. The Dutch *Eerste Kamer* specified that a committee could send written questions and remarks to the government ahead of the European Council.

4 A significant majority of Parliaments/Chambers (24 out of 35 respondents) had not recently considered any initiatives or passed any laws to improve the scrutiny of the government's EU policy.

5 Among the Parliaments/Chambers that answered positively, 12 had provided further details.

The Hungarian *Országgyűlés* specified that, in 2020, some amendments were introduced to the Rules of Procedure and other legislation, stipulating that the Prime Minister would be able to inform the plenary on the outcome of the European Council meetings, and that the Government was obliged to present an oral (or written) report to the committee on European Affairs after each formal European Council.

The Czech *Senát* mentioned that, in the last two years, it had adopted non-binding resolutions calling on the government to 1) clearly and comprehensibly express its political position in so called Government Positions, 2) provide the Senate with timely, accurate and concrete information about how the Senate's resolutions on proposals for EU legislative acts were taken into account and on the further course of negotiations in the Council, 3) consistently elaborate minutes from working groups and other preparatory bodies of the Council and distribute them in the relevant governmental database and 4) support initiatives directed at strengthening transparency in the EU policymaking and of the EU legislative acts.

The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* specified that, given its presidential system, the Parliament could not mandate the executive on EU issues. However, it noted that other initiatives had been taken by the current President of the House to improve the existing framework of parliamentary control over the executive in such matters.

Similarly, the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* and the Italian *Camera dei deputati* mentioned a recent amendment to the Law, which had reinforced the obligation of the government to provide information to the relevant parliamentary committee before the EU Council meetings (including Eurogroup informal EU Council meetings), with the possibility for that committee to issue resolutions. Furthermore, the Italian *Camera dei deputati* specified that the Law now required the government to

report every six months to the Parliament on the state of progress of the national recovery and resilience plan, allowing the parliamentary committees to adopt resolutions on the matter.

The Dutch *Eerste Kamer* pointed to the fact that it had regularly revised its scrutiny of the government with regard to European policy, precisising that in the last couple of years it had improved its procedure for adopting priorities, and - when possible - aligning it with the annual debate on the government's policy for the EU.

The German *Bundestag* mentioned that during the last parliamentary term, several requests for amendments to the Act on the Cooperation of the Federal Government and the German *Bundestag* in EU Matters were discussed, including the information to be provided about preliminary judgements and treaty infringement proceedings, as well as tertiary legislation. However, no amendment had been passed. The German *Bundesrat* pointed out the Amendment which strengthened the Act on Cooperation between the Federal Government and the Länder in EU Affairs (EUZBLG).

The Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* referred to the article 32A of the Hellenic Parliament Code of Conduct which was revised in 2019, enriching the competences of the European Affairs committee.

The Danish *Folketing* mentioned that in October 2021 a group of wise persons delivered a report on the role of the Danish Parliament in the scrutiny of the government's EU policy, and broader parliamentary involvement in EU affairs. A decision on the recommendations was expected by July 2022.

The Finnish *Eduskunta* noted that the yearly Committee Report on EU Policy from 2021 from the Grand Committee stressed that the information provided to the Finnish Parliament should always be comprehensive and timely. This was deemed necessary so that the Parliament could effectively influence the national negotiating objectives and the outcome of the negotiations, preventing it from being faced with a situation where an agreement at the EU level had *de facto* already been made.

6 Asked whether the relevant committee of their Parliament/Chamber systematically examined the legislative proposals presented by the European Commission with regard to the principle of subsidiarity, the majority of Parliaments/Chambers (23 out of 35 respondents) answered positively.

7 In 12 Parliaments/Chambers (out of 33 respondents) this subsidiarity scrutiny had been carried out solely by the EU Affairs Committee (Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, French *Sénat*, French *Assemblée nationale*, Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, Italian *Camera dei deputati*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, Polish *Senat*, Slovak *Národná rada*, Spanish *Cortes Generales*). In 13 Parliaments/Chambers this scrutiny was done jointly by the EU Affairs Committee and the sectoral Committees (Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie*, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, Danish *Folketing*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, German *Bundestag*, German *Bundesrat*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*, Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*, Romanian *Senat*).

The remaining Parliaments/Chambers, namely the Swedish *Riksdag* and Belgian *Sénat*, reported that the subsidiarity scrutiny was performed solely by the sectoral committees.

8 Regarding the adoption of resolutions with reasoned opinions regarding the principle of subsidiarity, on average, between 2019 and 2021, 19 out of 35 respondents answered they did not adopt any and 14 Parliaments/Chambers informed they had adopted between one and five.

9 The Parliaments/Chambers that issued reasoned opinions specified the subject of the resolutions adopted. The French *Sénat* mentioned three resolutions: on the legislative proposals regarding climate neutrality in agriculture², on the European Medicines Agency/crisis preparedness and management, establishment of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, tackling serious cross-border health threats³, and on climate neutrality⁴. The French *Assemblée nationale* signaled one resolution on a proposal for a regulation concerning financial discipline matters⁵.

The Hungarian *Országgyűlés* identified the resolutions containing reasoned opinions about some of the proposals contained in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. In the same way, the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* mentioned that a reasoned opinion was adopted on the Common European Asylum System package.

The Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* mentioned resolutions about the "Fit for 55" package, and the Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* about climate protection. The Czech *Senát* mentioned resolutions on the revision of EU Emissions Trading Scheme, energy efficiency, alternative fuels infrastructure, and energy taxation directive. The Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna* adopted one reasoned opinion on the Just Transition Fund.

The Dutch *Eerste Kamer* stated that a reasoned opinion had been sent, in 2020, on the European Climate law. The Dutch *Tweede Kamer* adopted resolutions about the European Green Deal, the Just Transition Fund, on the taxation of the digital economy and on the EU Labor Authority.

Finally, the Danish *Folketing*, the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati* and the Swedish *Riksdag* all adopted a resolution on the minimum wage directive. The *Maltese Kamra tad-Deputati* further noted the adoption of resolutions on the EU for Health, the Single European Sky, and the Swedish *Riksdag* on renewable energy, the Social Climate Fund, the VAT Directive and Own Resources.

10 Only the German *Bundestag* out of 35 Parliaments/Chambers replied that motions were tabled to bring an action for annulment on grounds of infringement of the principle of subsidiarity before the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) on behalf of the Parliament/Chamber against a European legislative act, as provided for by Article 8 of the Lisbon Protocol on Subsidiarity and Proportionality.

11 Asked to specify, the German *Bundestag* listed the three motions put forward to bring a subsidiarity action within this framework: on Directives 2019/790⁶ and 2019/1937⁷, and on the proposal to establish the European Defence Fund. All were rejected by the Bundestag plenary.

12 With regard to the political dialogue, Parliaments/Chambers were questioned on the number of political opinions they submitted, on average, to the European Commission between 2019 and 2021. Out of the 35 respondents, more than a third of Parliaments/Chambers (12 respondents) mentioned they submitted no more than five political opinions. Eight respondents answered that they had not submitted any. Only 6 Parliaments/Chambers issued between 5-10 political opinions and even less -

² COM (2021) 554, adopted on 8 November 2021

³ COM (2021) 725, 726 and 727, adopted on 23 February 2021

⁴ COM (2020) 80, adopted on 22 May 2020

⁵ COM (2019) 580, adopted in October 2019

⁶ Directive (EU) 2019/790 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market and amending Directives 96/9/EC and 2001/29/EC

⁷ Directive 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 October 2019 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law

five respondents - submitted up to 20 political opinions. The number of respondents who issued more than 20 political opinions was four (Czech *Senát*, German *Bundesrat*, Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*, and Spanish *Cortes Generales*).

13 The vast majority (24 out of 31 respondents) stated that the European Commission mostly addressed the issues raised in their opinions within the political dialogue. Six Parliaments/Chambers noted that the matters raised in the political opinions were mostly not addressed by the European Commission in the replies provided and the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* stated that its concerns were not addressed at all.

14 A significant majority (24 out of 35 respondents) answered that they were in favour of the introduction of a "green card" procedure, through which national Parliaments could ask the European Commission to make a legislative proposal. Nine Parliaments/Chambers had no opinion on this and two respondents stated that they were against it (Swedish *Riksdag* and Finnish *Eduskunta*).

The Finnish *Eduskunta* further specified that it had not adopted a formal position on this issue, but however noted that a right of legislative initiative of national Parliaments was not foreseen in the Treaties. Additionally, it considered that *de facto* institutional or quasi-institutional arrangements establishing the green card outside of the EU treaties would add complexity to the decision-making procedures. Accordingly, the same Parliament mentioned that the role of the national Parliaments in suggesting EU policies and legislation should rather be strengthened by using existing channels, mainly their political dialogue with the EU institutions and the interaction with their national Governments.

15 Asked whether they organised regular meetings with Members of the European Parliament (MEP) from their Member State, the majority (19 out of 35 respondents) replied positively, whereas 16 respondents stated that they did not promote such meetings.

16 As a follow-up question, 22 Parliaments/Chambers provided additional information. Many mentioned that their respective MEPs were invited to all European Affairs Committee meetings and were able to participate in debates (Croatian *Hrvatski Sabor*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*, Polish *Sejm*, Slovak *Národná rada*, Slovenian *Državni zbor*). On top of that, the German *Bundestag* also organised special meetings of the EU Affairs Committee with the MEPs on current European policy issues.

The Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, the Czech *Senát* and the Finnish *Eduskunta* answered that such meetings took place regularly twice a year, under normal non-COVID-19 circumstances. The Danish *Folketing* had held such meetings about once every month.

Meetings with MEPs were organised when deemed necessary and/or on topics of common interest in the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, Italian *Camera dei deputati*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica* and Latvian *Saeima*.

At the French *Assemblée nationale*, the MEPs were systematically invited to meetings of the European Affairs Committee. In addition, French Members of Parliament (MPs) – especially the members of the European Affairs Committee – had regularly met with their counterparts in the European Parliament during missions to the European institutions. Thus, 219 missions to Brussels were organised since the beginning of the current legislature. The French *Sénat* arranged such

meetings once or twice a year and had also promoted videoconferences between the rapporteurs/parliamentarians of the European Parliament and the *Sénat* since the breakout of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Dutch *Tweede Kamer* had scheduled a meeting between MPs and the Dutch MEPs before the yearly debate on the policy paper of the government about the state of the European Union. The Dutch *Eerste Kamer* had often promoted such meetings in the framework of a yearly visit of the EU Affairs committee to the European institutions.

17 When questioned on the kind of hearings they had promoted to monitor the trilogues and the overall EU legislative process, only two out of 33 Parliaments/Chambers referred to the hearings with their Member State's Permanent Representation to the European institutions (French *Sénat* and Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*). Three respondents organised hearings of Commissioners (Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*, Italian *Camera dei deputati* and Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*). In total, 10 Parliaments/Chambers replied that they held hearings of ministers.

The majority (19 respondents) reported other procedures. For instance, the German *Bundestag* had combined hearings of ministers and of European commissioners, and the French *Assemblée nationale* and French *Sénat* had hearings of the Permanent Representative to the EU, of ministers, of MEPs, of commissioners and of experts.

Other Parliaments/Chambers (Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, Latvian *Saeima*, Slovenian *Državni zbor*, Swedish *Riksdag*, Polish *Sejm*) identified alternative instruments to perform this scrutiny, namely hearings with the government's representatives for specific issues or by seeking information from the government in other ways (written form, informally).

The German *Bundesrat* and the Dutch *Eerste Kamer* stated they monitored the Government's position in the Council.

In the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, the information on trilogues, negotiations in the EU institutions, mandates of ministers and Government positions had been continuously made available to the Committee on European Affairs.

The Czech *Senát* asked the Government to provide written information on the further course of negotiations in the Council regarding any draft legislative act being scrutinised. Furthermore, this Chamber had sometimes discussed the current state of negotiations in the EU Affairs Committee, with the possibility to adopt further resolutions addressed to the Government.

Similarly, in the Danish *Folketing* there was no systematic reporting from the trilogues. When issues being discussed at trilogues were on the agenda of a Council meeting, the minister had reported to the EU Affairs Committee. In addition, the Permanent Representative of the Parliament in Brussels, along with EU advisors to the Parliament, regularly submitted reports on issues of interest being discussed in the trilogues.

In the case of the Finnish *Eduskunta*, besides the hearings of ministers, the Finnish Constitution requires the Government to seek a prior approval of the Parliament on EU matters falling within the legislative or budgetary powers of the Parliament. Moreover, the Constitution also gives the Parliament an unlimited right to obtain information from the Government on the preparation of EU matters. These principles apply throughout the legislative process, including trilogues, without any exceptions.

The Belgian *Sénat* and the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* mentioned that no regular follow-up was done.

18 When it comes to the involvement of the European Affairs Committee in the legislative transposition process of EU legislation, 18 out of 34 Parliaments/Chambers answered that they were not involved. The remaining 16 respondents noted they were associated to some extent: Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie*, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, French *Assemblée nationale*, French *Sénat*, German *Bundestag*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, Italian *Camera dei deputati*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*, Romanian *Senat*, Slovenian *Državni svet*.

19 Asked in a follow-up question to precise how this involvement took place, most Parliaments/Chambers answered they either overview, monitor, scrutinise or are informed about the transposition process or implementation of the EU legislation (Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, French *Assemblée nationale*, French *Sénat*; German *Bundestag*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Romanian *Parlamentul României: Camera Deputaţilor*, Romanian *Senat*, Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Slovenian *Državni svet*).

The Belgian *Chambre des représentants* and Estonian *Riigikogu* alluded to the interparliamentary cooperation at the EU level as a way to be involved in following these issues.

Both the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* and Italian *Camera dei Deputati* informed they were involved in the transposition EU legislation by examining the draft European Union Enabling Act, which the Government submits to both Houses before 28 February each year. This draft bill seeks to confer delegated powers to the Government to transpose EU directives and implement other EU acts. Furthermore, both Chambers also scrutinised the drafts of Government decrees concerning the transposition of specific pieces of EU legislation.

20 Parliaments/Chambers were asked whether they were satisfied/not satisfied/very satisfied with the development and outcomes of the following interparliamentary conferences (hereinafter referred also as IPCs): COSAC Chairpersons' meeting, COSAC Plenary meeting, Conference on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on EUROPOL, Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU (also referred hereinafter as the "Article 13 Conference").

While 34 out of 37 Parliaments/Chambers replied to this question, it should be noted that, in some cases, the answer to be provided required consultation with other parliamentary Committees, which means not all respondents were in a position to assess the remaining IPCs besides COSAC, as illustrated in the table on the next page.

Number (%)	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total replies
<i>COSAC Chairpersons' meeting</i>	21 (61.8%)	11 (32.3%)	2 (5.9%)	34
<i>COSAC Plenary meeting</i>	22 (64.7%)	9 – (26.5%)	3 (8.8%)	34
<i>Conference on the CFSP and CSDP</i>	19 (61.3%)	11 (35.5%)	1(3.2%)	31
<i>JPSG on EUROPOL</i>	19 (63.4%)	10 (33.3%)	1 (3.3%)	30
<i>Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU</i>	17 (58,6%)	10 (34,5%)	2 (6.9%)	29

From the choices offered, the majority of Parliaments/Chambers were satisfied with the five interparliamentary conferences mentioned, namely with the COSAC Plenary and COSAC Chairpersons (22 and 21 out of the 34 replies obtained, respectively), and with the IPC on the CFSP and the CSDP (19 replies out of 31), the JPSG on EUROPOL (19 out of 30) and with the so-called "Article 13 Conference" (17 out of 29 answers).

A significant number of Parliaments/Chambers reported they were very satisfied with the COSAC Chairpersons (11 out of 34), slightly above those who evaluated the COSAC Plenary in the same fashion (9 out of 34). Similar numbers could be found for those Parliaments/Chambers who were very satisfied with the IPC on the CFSP/CSDP (11 out of 31), on the JPSG on EUROPOL (10 out of 30), and on the Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU (10 out of 29).

Those dissatisfied with the developments and outcomes of these interparliamentary conferences were few, ranging from one respondent regarding both the JPSG on Europol (Czech *Senat*) and the conference on CFSP/CSDP (Danish *Folketing*), to two concerning the COSAC Chairpersons (Danish *Folketing* and French *Sénat*) and the “Article 13” Conference (French *Sénat* and German *Bundesrat*), and three with respect to the COSAC plenary (Danish *Folketing*, French *Sénat* and Latvian *Saiema*).

21 Asked in a follow-up question if they wished to provide further information on the assessment above, 14 Parliaments/Chambers complemented their replies. The French *Sénat*, for instance, considered that the work of these meetings could be more dynamic if more in-depth exchanges between the participating parliamentarians could take place, alluding to the establishment of two working groups within COSAC made by the French Presidency as a step in that direction. This Chamber also regretted that the documents of the conferences were not always available in French.

The Dutch *Eerste Kamer* mentioned that, even if the general feeling was that these meetings were very meaningful, they often seemed to lack the adequate in-depth exchange of information and best practices, and proper debate. The German *Bundestag* found that, concerning COSAC, the process of agreeing on conclusions and contributions in recent years had been perceived as increasingly complicated and time-consuming and was therefore in need of reform. The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* were not satisfied with the COSAC Plenary in virtual format. The Latvian *Seimas* noted that some of the instruments available were not being used to their full potential, pointing out that, for instance, the Bi-annual report would only be useful if actually debated and applied in the different debates at the COSAC plenary.

A more detailed additional reply was provided by the Danish *Folketing*, which put forward a comprehensive list of proposals to reform COSAC. Firstly, it was suggested that time should be allocated for parallel breakout sessions in COSAC for delegates dealing with a political topic of common interest, possibly with the participation of Commissioners. Furthermore, it was proposed that the key-note speeches were replaced by debates with high-level guests steered by a professional moderator to ensure an open and lively debate. Finally, the Danish *Folketing* also recommended some procedural changes in COSAC meetings, namely to limit the contributions submitted to the institutions to areas deemed of significant importance to COSAC, to update the guidelines concerning voting in COSAC for the adoption of contributions, and to use the expertise of the COSAC Secretariat to assist the Presidency in preparing tailored background documents for COSAC meetings to foster more focused debates. The latter would mean an adaptation concerning the current tasks of the COSAC Secretariat, namely the mandatory assignment of preparing the Bi-annual report on EU procedures and practices.

Concerning the other interparliamentary conferences, remarks were also made concerning the IPC on CFSP/CSDP. The German *Bundestag* considered that the possibility to exchange and network between parliamentarians and with the EU institutions was highly valued by the delegates, appreciating that the limited time during the conferences could be used for the most lively debates possible and less for detailed work on the text of the conclusions. The Lithuanian *Seimas* suggested, in broader terms, that the adoption of common conclusions or contributions should be left to the initiative of each Presidency.

The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* highlighted that, in recent years and regarding the IPC on CFSP/CSDP, Presidencies had opted for the adoption of Presidency statements instead of Conference Conclusions, which this Parliament considered to have resulted in the absence of real political debates. The same view was expressed by this Parliament regarding the need for systematic adoption of Conclusions in the Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU and in the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on EUROPOL.

Concerning the latter, a few other Parliaments/Chambers also assessed its proceedings. The Czech *Sénat* considered it had so far spent too much time on procedural and technical matters rather than on deeper discussions on its subject matter. Notwithstanding, both the German *Bundestag* and German *Bundesrat* emphasised the fact that, especially since 2020, meetings have been focused on addressing concrete thematic discussions, with summary conclusions being adopted at every meeting by the Co-Chairs.

22 From the choices offered on how to improve the work of the interparliamentary conferences mentioned, the vast majority of respondents (31 out of 37) believed that the introduction of lively sessions of questions and answers would be beneficial to increase the dynamic of the meetings.

Faced with the possibility of establishing internal working groups within these interparliamentary conferences to advance their work and outcomes, many Parliaments/Chambers responded favourably (27 out of 37 respondents). The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, the Danish *Folketing*, the Italian *Camera dei deputati*, the Latvian *Saeima*, the Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* and the European Parliament supported this idea for all interparliamentary conferences, the latter specifying that such internal working groups could indeed be useful in any of the Conferences, but depending on the subject and for a limited period of time.

The Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie*, the Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, the Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, the French *Assemblée nationale*, the French *Sénat*, the German *Bundestag*, the German *Bundesrat*, the Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, the Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*, the Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, the Polish *Senat*, the Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*, the Romanian *Senat* and the Swedish *Riksdag*, viewed favourably the creation of working groups within COSAC.

The Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, the Belgian *Sénat*, the German *Bundestag*, the Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, and the Lithuanian *Seimas* also considered the establishment of working groups as positive for the interparliamentary conference on CFSP/CSDP.

Other Parliaments/Chambers specified they would favour the creation of working groups for the JPSG on EUROPOL (the French *Assemblée nationale*, the German *Bundestag* and the German *Bundesrat*) and for the « Article 13 » Conference (German *Bundesrat*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica* and the Romanian *Senat*).

Finally, the Polish *Sejm* and the Slovak *Národná rada* were supportive of the possibility of establishing working groups in general, but specified that it should be assessed according to their need and purpose.

A dissenting view on the establishment of such working groups was expressed by the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*.

When asked if the systematic adoption of common conclusions or contributions in these meetings would contribute to the endeavour of improving the work of interparliamentary conferences, an important number of Parliaments/Chambers replied affirmatively (16 respondents).

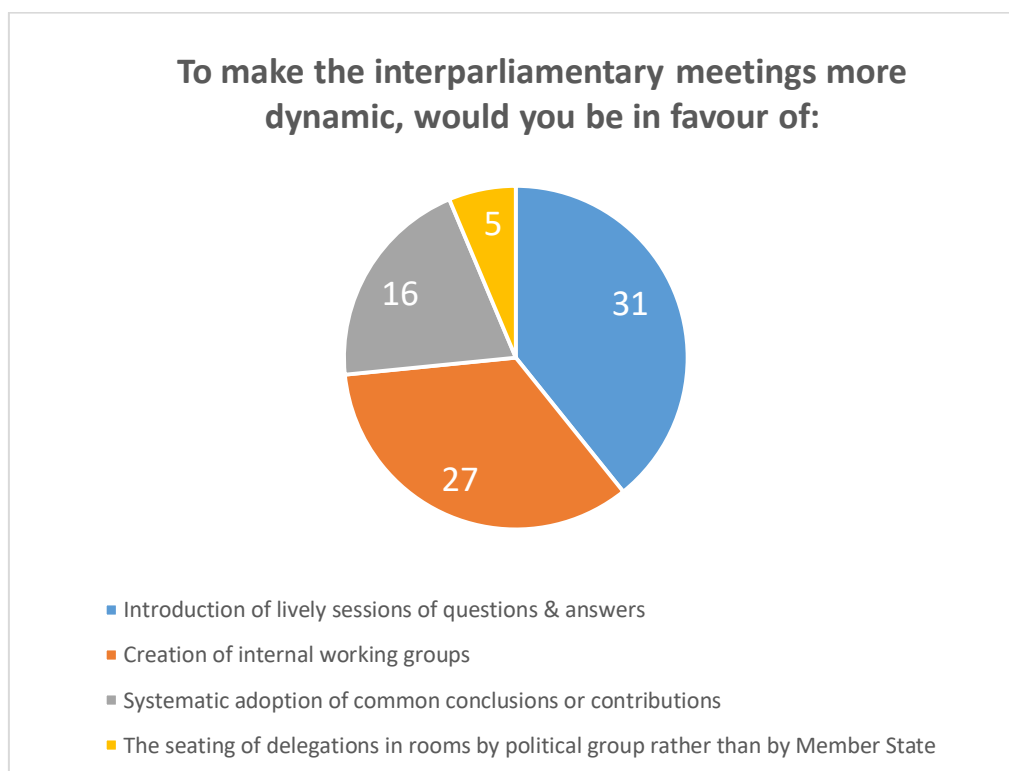
The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, the French *Assemblée nationale*, the French *Sénat*, the Italian *Camera dei deputati*, the Polish *Sejm* and the Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor* endorsed this possibility for all interparliamentary conferences.

Some Parliaments/Chambers expressed their support for this approach specifically for COSAC (Belgian *Sénat* and *Chambre des représentants*, Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie*, German *Bundesrat*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas*,). The German *Bundesrat* mentioned that the adoption of Conclusions was important, especially in the case of COSAC, but questioned whether the procedure to do so could be simplified and made more transparent.

Some Parliaments/Chambers also referred to the importance of conclusions being systematically adopted at the IPC on CFSP/CSDP (Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*), at the JPSG on EUROPOL (Lithuanian *Seimas* and German *Bundesrat*) and at the « Article 13 » Conference (French *Sénat*, German *Bundesrat*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica* and Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*).

Dissenting views on this possibility were expressed by the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, the Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, European Parliament and Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*, with the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna* stating that, in many cases, no common positions could be found which made it impossible to agree on anything but too general statements.

Very few Parliaments/Chambers replied favourably to the possibility of organising the seating of delegations in interparliamentary meetings by political group rather than by Member State (five respondents out of 34). The French *Sénat*, the Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* and the European Parliament were in favour of that idea as a general practice for all interparliamentary conferences, whereas the Belgian *Sénat* supported this approach for the interparliamentary conference on CFSP/CSDP. The German *Bundestag* favoured this seating arrangement for the Article 13 Conference, but explicitly rejected it for the interparliamentary conference on CFSP/CSDP.



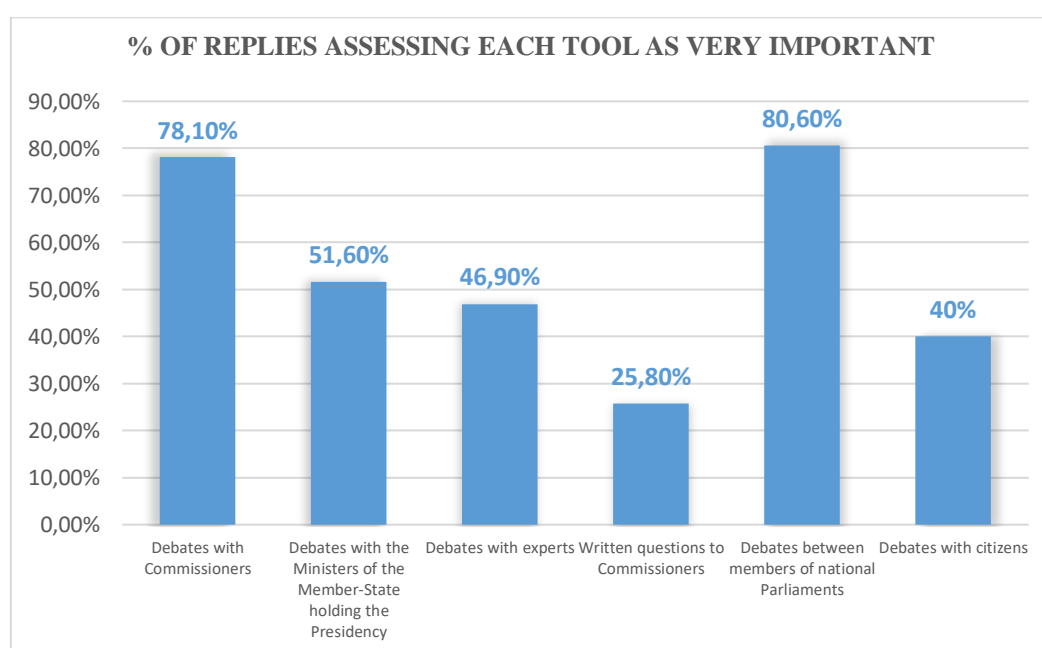
A more expressive number of Parliaments/Chambers replied negatively to this potential change (18 respondents out of 34), namely the Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna* and *Senát*, Croatian *Hrvatski sabor*, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, German *Bundesrat*, Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, Italian *Camera dei deputati*, Latvian *Saeima*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, the Polish *Sejm* and *Senat*, Romanian *Senat*, Slovenian *Državni zbor*, Slovak *Národná rada*, explicitly to the JPSG on Europol, and Swedish *Riksdag*. The rest of Parliaments/Chambers expressed no opinion.

The German *Bundestag* complemented its reply, by suggesting the convening of parallel breakout sessions/work in smaller groups during plenary meetings, the discussion about a topical question

announced shortly before the meeting, and the use of blue cards, like in the plenary of the European Parliament.

23 When asked to assess which tools were most useful in terms of inter-parliamentary cooperation, rating them as very important, important or less important, the majority of Parliaments/Chambers replied that the debates between members of national Parliaments and the debates with the European Commissioners (25 each out of 33) were indeed the most valued.

Moreover, the exchanges with the ministers from the Member-State holding the Presidency were very important to 16 respondents (out of 32) and the debates with experts were identified in the same fashion by 15 Parliaments/Chambers (out of 33). The debates with citizens gathered the same number of replies finding it either very important or important (13 Parliaments/Chambers each, out of 32 respondents). Finally, the tool which seemed to be less valued was the possibility of putting forward written questions to Commissioners (15 out of 33 respondents considered it to be less important).



24 The vast majority of respondents (27 out of the 36 Parliaments/Chambers) expressed no opinion on the creation of a second chamber at European level composed of national Parliaments. Seven Parliaments/Chambers replied negatively to that possibility (Danish *Folketing*, German *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat*, French *Assemblée nationale*, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, Slovak *Národná rada* and the European Parliament) whereas two Parliaments/Chambers favoured that possibility (French *Sénat* and Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*).

25 Nine Parliaments/Chambers provided additional information on this question, namely to specify that it had not been discussed formally or led to the adoption of any resolutions on the matter (Belgian *Sénat*, Czech *Senat* and Polish *Sejm*). The Lithuanian *Seimas* noted that more discussions were needed on the subject, and the Latvian *Saeima* added that more details on the idea of a second chamber (e.g. its objectives, tasks, responsibilities, institutional balance) were required before adopting a position. The French *Assemblée nationale* noted that the establishment of a second chamber would not improve the understanding of EU institutions and might weaken the position of the European Parliament. According to the European Parliament, national Parliaments already participate in the Union's political and legislative action by controlling their own government which sits in the other Union chamber, namely the Council.

The Italian *Senato della Repubblica* instead supported an upgrade of the role of COSAC to deal with the EU's legislative procedures and determine a collective position of national Parliaments. The German *Bundestag* specified its stance, by considering that the Council should be transformed into a Second Chamber, composed of representatives from national governments.

CHAPTER 2

THE RULE OF LAW

THE SECOND CHAPTER OF THE 37th BI-ANNUAL REPORT seeks to analyse the activities and positions taken by the national Parliaments/Chambers concerning the rule of law in the EU. Firstly, it was focused on their involvement in the adoption of measures to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, the chapter examines the latest and more prominent activities of Parliaments/Chambers on the rule of law issues in general.

1 When asked if they were involved in the process of adopting measures to deal with the public health crisis, all but two respondents (33 out of 35 respondents) replied positively. The Belgian *Sénat* and Croatian *Hrvatski sabor* replied that they had not been involved in the adoption of such measures.

2 Asked whether the Parliaments/Chambers had scrutinised the government's action throughout the public health crisis, the same amount of respondents (33 out of 35 respondents) gave a positive answer. Only the Belgian *Sénat* and Slovenian *Državni svet* replied negatively.

3 Invited to elaborate on the modalities to control those government's actions, most of the Parliaments/Chambers replied that they had not been involved directly in the approval of measures adopted under the form of governmental decrees/regulations which were based on laws dealing with the public health crisis or the pandemic. However, when the measures were translated into laws, the Parliaments/Chambers indeed took part within the ordinary/extraordinary legislative processes. A number of Parliaments/Chambers responded that they were involved in the decision-making on the introduction or prolongation of the state of emergency (Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, Czech *Poslanecká sněmovna*, French *Assemblée nationale*, French *Sénat*, Slovak *Národná rada*) or measures affecting the freedom of movement (Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*).

A minor part of Parliaments/Chambers had revised (Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie*, Latvian *Saeima*) or validated the measures adopted, in order to ensure their democratic legitimacy (Italian *Camera dei Deputati*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*). A few Parliaments/Chambers created a special parliamentary body to deal with the public health crisis. The Danish *Folketing* indicated that a Committee on the Epidemic had been established, which needed to be consulted on the measures taken by the government. The Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* stressed that a Committee on the COVID-19 Response had also been constituted, to oversee the government.

A majority of respondents indicated that the control of government had been at the centre of parliamentary activity (20 out of 33), through hearings or debates on the measures adopted with government representatives, either in the plenary or at the committee level. Several respondents had asked written or oral questions (Austrian *Nationalrat*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor*, Slovenian *Državni zbor*, Swedish *Riksdag*). Additionally, some Parliaments/Chambers had adopted non-binding resolutions or reports in which they expressed their opinion on the actions taken by the government (Czech *Senát*, Lithuanian *Seimas*, Polish *Senat*, Swedish *Riksdag*). Furthermore, the Swedish *Riksdag* had constituted an all-party commission of inquiry with the task of conducting a follow-up of its work during the COVID-19 pandemic, including its interaction with the government.

The French *Assemblée nationale* indicated that a law adopted in March 2020 provided for the adequate parliamentary oversight, namely on the measures adopted in the context of the crisis and extension of the state of health emergency. It also noted that the Conference of Presidents had set up an information mission on the impact and consequences of the pandemic, which was subsequently given the prerogatives of a committee of inquiry. Similar activity had been performed by the French *Sénat*, which established a committee of inquiry upon the request of the President of the *Sénat*, or by the Slovenian *Državni zbor* with committees of inquiry related to the management of the public health crisis.

In the context of above-mentioned, the Belgian *Sénat* added that it had not been specifically involved in the control of the government on this issue. However, its Committee on Institutional Affairs had been responsible for examining the questions of transversal scope (involving several levels of decision-making in Belgium) which were raised in relation to the management of the COVID-19 crisis.

4 Asked about their involvement in debates on the recent judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) relating to the rule of law, less than a third of Parliaments/Chambers (10 out of 36 respondents) replied positively, namely the Belgian *Chambre des représentants*, the Belgian *Sénat*, the Danish *Folketing*, the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, the Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, the French *Sénat*, the German *Bundesrat*, the Polish *Senat*, the Swedish *Riksdag* and the European Parliament.

The German *Bundestag* noted that no debate on this specific issue was held, but that the judgements had been mentioned in the resolutions of the Committee on European Affairs or within the parliamentary questions addressed to the government representatives. The Finnish *Eduskunta* replied that no debate on this topic had been organised, noting however that the judgements were discussed in the Grand Committee's ministerial hearings concerning the General Affairs Council.

5 Asked to elaborate on the conclusions of the debates, the European Parliament indicated that the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) had regularly discussed the situation in Poland and the procedure under the Article 7(1) of the Treaty on European Union. The European Parliament specified that deliberations had been projected into several resolutions calling the European Commission for concrete actions.

The Belgian *Chambre des représentants* and the Danish *Folketing* replied that developments in Poland and/or in Hungary had been debated, referring that the discussions were marked by criticism about the lack of respect for the judgements of the CJEU and for the decisions of the European Commission in this regard. Some doubts had also been raised by the Danish *Folketing* regarding the effectiveness of existing mechanisms.

Two Parliaments/Chambers discussed this issue in the context of a political dialogue with the relevant European Commissioners. The Dutch *Eerste Kamer* addressed some of the recent judgements of the CJEU in a debate with the Commissioner for Justice, Mr Didier REYNDERS, and was planning to follow-up on this through an exchange with the Vice-President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency, Ms Věra JOUROVÁ. The Polish *Senat* also indicated that a debate with Mr REYNDERS was held in this regard. In addition, the French *Sénat* stressed that a round table had been organised with representatives of the European Commission and experts on this topic, examining the intervention of the judgements of the CJEU in the Member States' sovereignty.

The remainder of Parliaments/Chambers that replied positively mentioned that they had discussed the rule of law related issues on various occasions, mostly at committee level (Belgian *Sénat*, Swedish *Riksdag*). The Dutch *Tweede Kamer* underlined that special attention was paid to this topic by appointing rapporteurs and holding debates on a regular basis. The German *Bundesrat* also mentioned the adoption of an opinion on the matter.

6 When it comes to the work carried on the European Commission's 2021 Rule of Law Report, a vast majority of Parliaments/Chambers (29 out of 36 respondents) replied that they performed some activities or conducted hearings with this regard.

7 From those who replied positively, a large majority (19 out of 29) reported that they had been or are supposed to be involved through an exchange of views on the content of the report with the European Commission, namely with the Commissioner for Justice, Mr Didier REYNDEERS, and in some cases also with the Vice-President of the Commission for Values and Transparency, Ms Věra JOUROVÁ. The respondents indicated that hearings had been held, in principle, at committee level. The German *Bundesrat* specified that it had participated in the framework of the political dialogue with the European Commission by sending a contribution on this matter. The Hungarian *Országgyűlés* replied that its members had exchanged their views with the delegation of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE).

Another frequent way of involvement mentioned by the respondents (12 out of 29) was an exchange of views with representatives of the government. The Estonian *Riigikogu*, the Finnish *Eduskunta*, the Latvian *Seimas* and the Swedish *Riksdag* stated that these debates were organised in the context of the meetings held in advance of the General Affairs Councils in order to discuss the national position on the content of the aforementioned report. The Czech *Senát* also underlined that the position of the government was subject to a debate.

A number of Parliaments/Chambers called or were planning to call for *ad hoc* hearings of ministers, public prosecutors, ombudsmen, data protection officers and other authorities concerned on the part of the report regarding the Commission's evaluation of their own Member State (Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie*, Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, Lithuanian *Seimas*). The Irish *Houses of the Oireachtas* emphasized its interest in the findings of the report and noted that the 2021 report had not yet been discussed.

The French *Assemblée nationale* indicated that several works had been conducted on rule of law, with the presentation by Mr REYNDEERS of the Rule of Law report in 2020 and 2021. It also adopted a report in 2021 about the rule of law in the context of the sanitary crisis. The French *Sénat* had also heard Mr REYNDEERS and adopted a report in March 2021 about the rule of law in the European Union.

The European Parliament replied that an exchange of views with national Parliaments had been organised on the rule of law situation within the European Union, in presence of the Commission's representatives and other stakeholders. The outputs of this meeting were meant to serve as a basis of an own initiative report being currently prepared by LIBE that was adopted on the Commission report every year.

8 When asked about the organisation of debates about the conditions of implementation of the Article 7(1) of the TEU, more than a half of respondents (21 out of 36) answered negatively, whereas the remaining 15 respondents replied positively.

9 Among the 15 respondents who gave a positive answer, several Parliaments/Chambers provided additional information on these debates. The Irish *House of Oireachtas* specified that the Joint Committee on EU Affairs debated this issue in a number of settings (hearings with Commissioner Reynders, with the Minister of State for European Union Affairs, with the Head of Representation of the European Commission in Ireland, with MEPs and with the Prime-Minister ahead of the European Council). The Dutch *Tweede Kamer* noted that the implementation of Article 7(1) of the TEU had been discussed with the minister of Foreign Affairs, namely in the context of the General Affairs Council. The Italian *Senato della Repubblica* reported that such debates were held during Plenary ahead of the European Council, or at committee meetings after these summits.

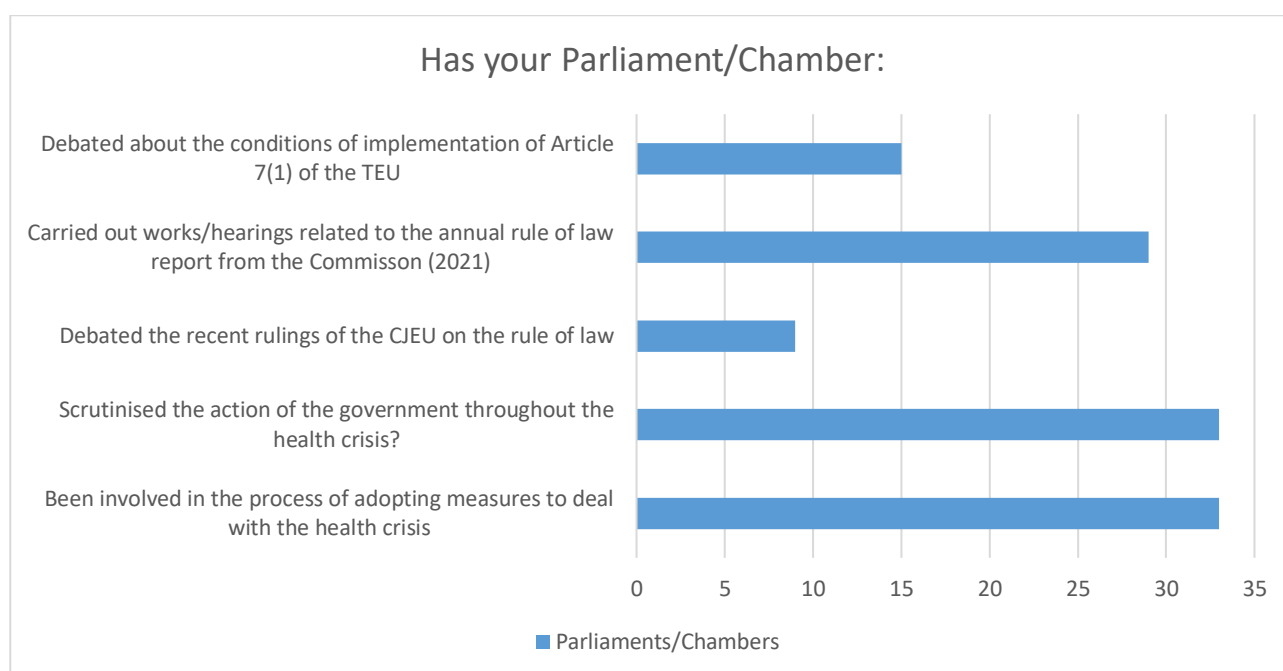
The Polish *Sejm*, the Dutch *Eerste Kamer* and the Swedish *Riksdag* also indicated that their EU Affairs committees had debated the issue several times. The Finnish *Eduskunta* noted that, even if no specific debate had been arranged, the Article 7(1) procedures were addressed in Ministerial hearings of the Grand Committee concerning the General Affairs Council when this issue was on its agenda.

Five Parliaments/Chambers out of the 15 who replied positively stressed that they had adopted a formal position. The French *Sénat* noted that a European resolution on the rule of law in the EU had been adopted, which called for a review of the sanctions mechanism provided for by Article 7(1) of the TEU, in order to make it more dissuasive and more gradual. The French *Assemblée nationale* also approved two reports addressing the issue, which stressed the complexity of implementing the sanctions procedure, particularly in relation to the unanimity required in the EU Council.

The German *Bundestag* underlined that its members had intensively dealt with the application of Article 7(1) of the TEU, and stated that this procedure was a suitable instrument to identify serious violations of the rule of law, while noting the need to specify the conditions for its application, and to supplement the procedure by further mechanisms.

The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* replied that, in several meetings of the EU Main Committee, members had discussed this topic with government representatives; they had also adopted a communication addressed to the EU institutions welcoming the introduction of a new instrument to strengthen the rule of law, in which some recommendations for action to improve the situation were made.

The European Parliament informed about the resolution adopted on 16 January 2020 on the ongoing hearings under Article 7(1) of the TEU regarding Poland and Hungary. Moreover, it alluded to the interim report under the Article 7(1) regarding Poland that was later adopted in plenary in October 2020. In September 2021, the LIBE committee held an exchange with the relevant Commissioner on the state of play of Article 7(1) of the TEU. Furthermore, as a follow-up to its mission to Hungary at the end of September 2021, LIBE was now preparing an interim report in relation to that Member State, to update its position laid down in the reasoned opinion triggering Article 7(1). The European Parliament underlined that, in all exchanges, it had called upon the Council to finally act under this procedure, organise hearings and address concrete recommendations to the two countries concerned. An exchange of views on the state of play of Article 7(1) TEU with the current Presidency of the EU Council was organised on 31 January 2022.



10 The vast majority (27 out of 36 respondents) had no opinion on the implementation of the mechanism of Article 7(1) of the TEU relating to violations of the values set out in Article 2. Eight Parliaments/Chambers replied that the mechanism was not satisfactory (the Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, the Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, the European Parliament, the French *Assemblée nationale*, the French *Sénat*, the German *Bundestag*, the German *Bundesrat* and the Polish *Sejm*).

The Belgian *Chambre des représentants* considered the mechanism to be satisfactory, but pointed to a resolution in which it had asked the Government to argue in more general terms for an extension of the mandate of the Article 7(1) of the TEU procedure for Poland, as to include the most recent developments in terms of the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, freedom and independence of the media, and respect for fundamental rights.

11 Among the Parliaments/Chambers who replied that such mechanism was not satisfactory, the Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, the German *Bundesrat*, and the Spanish *Cortes Generales* underlined that the procedure was not effective enough. The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* alluded to the length of the process and the need for the EU Council to make clear recommendations for action to improve this situation regarding the rule of law.

Two out of the seven Parliaments/Chambers who replied positively stressed they had adopted a formal position. The Finnish *Eduskunta* indicated that in its report on the Government EU Policy, the Grand Committee considered that it was essential that the EU would be able to react in a timely and proportionate manner in situations where national mechanisms had failed and threats to the rule of law became a reality. The French *Assemblée nationale* indicated that a resolution had been adopted, supporting the initiatives taken by the European institutions in favour of the rule of law, but considering that in a situation of serious and persistent violation by a Member State of the values referred to in Article 2, unanimity in triggering the sanctions procedure should be reassessed.

12 Asked whether their Parliament/Chamber considered satisfactory the implementation of the rule of law conditionality mechanism concerning the financial management of the Union budget or of the financial interests of the Union, 22 out of the 35 respondents had no opinion. Six

Parliaments/Chambers were satisfied with this mechanism, whereas six others evaluated it as unsatisfactory.

13 The Italian *Senato della Repubblica* emphasised that the EU's financial interests must be protected and that the compliance with the values of Article 2 of the TEU are a prerequisite for that. Consequently, the Member States who benefit from the EU budget resources should comply with the fundamental European values. Similarly, the Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat*, Bulgarian *Narodno sabranie* and the Finnish *Eduskunta* pointed out that sanctions should be foreseen for those Member States who did not comply with the common values of the European Union. These Parliament/Chambers also underlined that they welcomed the introduction of new instruments to strengthen the rule of law, in particular the mechanism which links the payment of EU funds to compliance with democratic and rule of law principles.

The German *Bundesrat* expressed a similar view, noting that financial sanctions, such as withholding funds, were considered an effective tool, even if this Chamber replied that the mechanism was considered to be unsatisfactory.

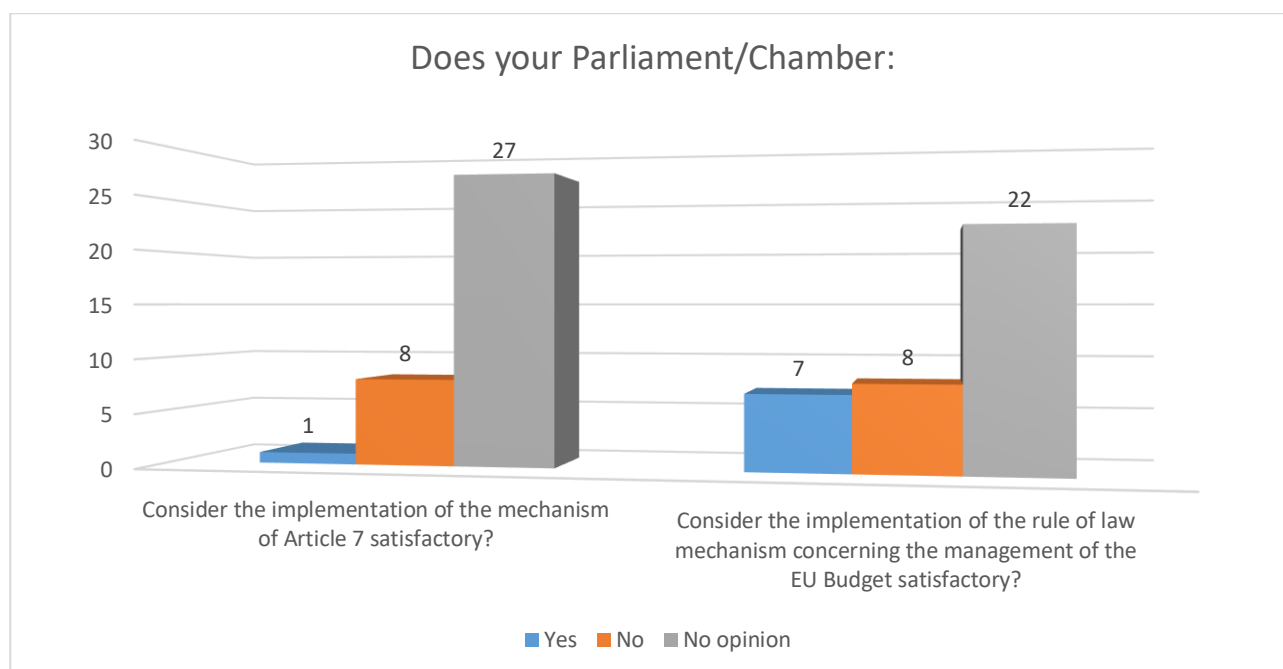
The French *Assemblée nationale* referred that its report on the rule of law in the context of health emergencies welcomed the existence of the rule of law conditionality mechanism. It added that this tool should make it possible to outline a genuine "European semester of the rule of law", which should allow for a regular, precise and objective review of the situations in each Member State. Although it was also satisfied with the introduction of this mechanism, the *Luxembourg Chambre des Députés* indicated that the restrictions could be more stringent.

The Belgian *Chambre des représentants* replied that the mechanism was satisfactory, and that a formal resolution had been adopted asking the federal government to urge the European Commission to continue withholding funds from the Next Generation EU for Poland. This resolution aimed at making the approval of the submission of the national recovery and resilience plan of Poland by Council conditional on the compliance of that Member State with a number of conditions, such as the dismantling of the disciplinary chamber of the Supreme Court.

The Czech *Senát*, the Dutch *Eerste Kamer* and the Polish *Senat* replied that no formal resolution had been adopted by their respective Chambers. However, the Czech *Senát* and the Polish *Senat* indicated that their chamber had globally expressed their support for the introduction of this mechanism.

The Parliaments/Chambers that had responded that the implementation of the rule of law conditionality mechanism was unsatisfactory provided several reasons. The Polish *Sejm* replied that the financial matters and the rule of law issues should not be interrelated. On the contrary, the German *Bundestag* expressed its will to see a more consequent and timely use of the mechanism.

The European Parliament also considered the mechanism unsatisfactory, and stated it had called on the Commission, on the basis of Article 265 of the TFEU, to take action and ensure the full and immediate application of the Regulation, adding that the Commission had not efficiently used the time since the entry into force of this legislation, and that the situation in some Member States already deserved immediate action by means of a written notification to those concerned.



14 Finally, several Parliaments/Chambers had provided additional information on Chapter two. The Slovak *Národná rada* mentioned the discussion held, in September 2021, with a delegation of MEPs from LIBE Committee and Members of the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights Monitoring Group (DRFMG), focused on the rule of law, reform of the judiciary, fight against corruption, measures to protect journalists and the state of media freedom. Moreover, these issues were also discussed at the meetings of the EU Committee to approve the positions of the government ahead of the European Council and of the General Affairs Council, and also during bilateral exchanges with foreign delegations.

The European Parliament pointed out it had addressed rule of law situations in various Member States in specific resolutions and reports (e.g. resolution on situation in Slovenia of 16/12/21, on the rule of law in Bulgaria of 8/10/20, on situation in Malta and Slovakia of 28/03/19) and had been asking since 2016 for a comprehensive and preventive mechanism in this field via an EU Pact on Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights (EU DRF Pact). Furthermore, the European Parliament also mentioned that it had adopted a resolution on an EU Pact on reinforcing Union values asking for strong inter-institutional cooperation in this area.

CHAPTER 3

CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE (CoFE)

THE THIRD CHAPTER OF THE 37th BI-ANNUAL REPORT seeks to examine the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFE), attempting to summarise the work thus far, the perspectives and positions adopted on the multiple topics discussed, as well as an overview of events organised by the Parliaments/Chambers. It builds from the work and content of the 35th and 36th Bi-annual reports on the same topic.

1 When asked whether reports on the CoFE Plenary sessions had been put before their Parliament/Chamber more than half (22 respondents out of 37) replied negatively, while 15 replied positively.

2 Parliaments/Chambers who responded in the affirmative were invited to elaborate on how the aforementioned reports were presented. Several stated that members of the delegation to the CoFE Plenary reported to the Committee on European (and Foreign) Affairs (Danish *Folketing*, Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, German *Bundestag*, Portuguese *Assembleia da República*, Swedish *Riksdag*), with the Dutch *Eerste Kamer* and Finnish *Eduskunta* specifying reporting was done in preparation for and as a follow up to the CoFE Plenary. The Slovenian *Državni svet* stated their appointed members of the CoFE delegation would report about their work to the plenary session once per year. In the Dutch *Tweede Kamer* and Italian *Senato della Repubblica* written reports had been presented to their respective Committees on European Affairs and in the latter case also Committee on Foreign Affairs, while in the European Parliament reports were presented to the respective Conference of Presidents and to the Bureau. In the Belgian *Chambre des représentants* reports on CoFE were published as parliamentary documents.

Furthermore, members of the CoFE delegations of the Belgian *Sénat*, Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati*, Portuguese *Assembleia da República* and Spanish *Cortes Generales* prepared written reports on the work and activities of the CoFE Plenary sessions, with the Maltese *Kamra tad-Deputati* stating these reports were then tabled by the Speaker during the plenary session. The two members of the CoFE delegation of the German *Bundestag* had also sent out a newsletter to all members of the Parliament summarising their work in CoFE.

In addition, the Finnish *Eduskunta* and Swedish *Riksdag* conducted ministerial hearings on CoFE and the Latvian *Saeima* reviewed the national positions prepared by the government for the agenda points of the CoFE Plenary in January 2022.

3 Asked whether Parliaments/Chambers organised any CoFE related debates in their committee meetings or plenary sessions during the second half of 2021 the majority (23 respondents out of 37) replied positively and 14 replied they had not promoted such discussions.

4 Invited to specify within which body or bodies did these debates take place and what was the precise topic debated, 18 Parliaments/Chambers replied that this was organised in the scope of their

respective Committee on European (and Foreign) Affairs. For the Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés*, Polish *Sejm* and Spanish *Cortes Generales*, the debates on CoFE also took place in the special standing subcommittees. In the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* and Italian *Camera dei deputati* a fact-finding inquiry on CoFE had jointly been conducted by their respective Committees on Foreign Affairs and the Committees on European Affairs, through hearings of all relevant stakeholders. The European Parliament stated that exchanges were regularly organised with the European Parliament's Co-Chair of the Executive Board and the European Parliament's delegations to the Executive Board and to the CoFE Plenary, as well as with the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO).

Parliaments/Chambers also delineated several topics that were debated. The Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, German *Bundestag* and the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* mentioned the structure and organization of CoFE and the progress of the CoFE Plenary and its working groups, with the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* also mentioning the conclusions of the Executive Board meetings. The Dutch *Eerste Kamer* and the Belgian *Sénat* also debated the involvement of their respective citizens in the CoFE, with the latter considering a motion to create a citizens panel within the Senate.

Several Parliaments/Chambers addressed the CoFE in meetings with government and other officials (Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, French *Assemblée nationale*, Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon*, Hungarian *Országgyűlés*, Italian *Camera dei deputati*, Italian *Senato della Repubblica*, Spanish *Cortes Generales*). In their joint fact-finding inquiry the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* and Italian *Camera dei deputati* also conducted hearings with representatives from the EU institutions, civil society and relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the French *Assemblée nationale* organised meetings with the Committees on European Affairs from the Spanish *Congreso de los Diputados* and Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, as well as with the European Movement (*Le Mouvement Européen*). Finally, the Dutch *Eerste Kamer* mentioned it also held meetings with the Dutch citizen representatives to CoFE.

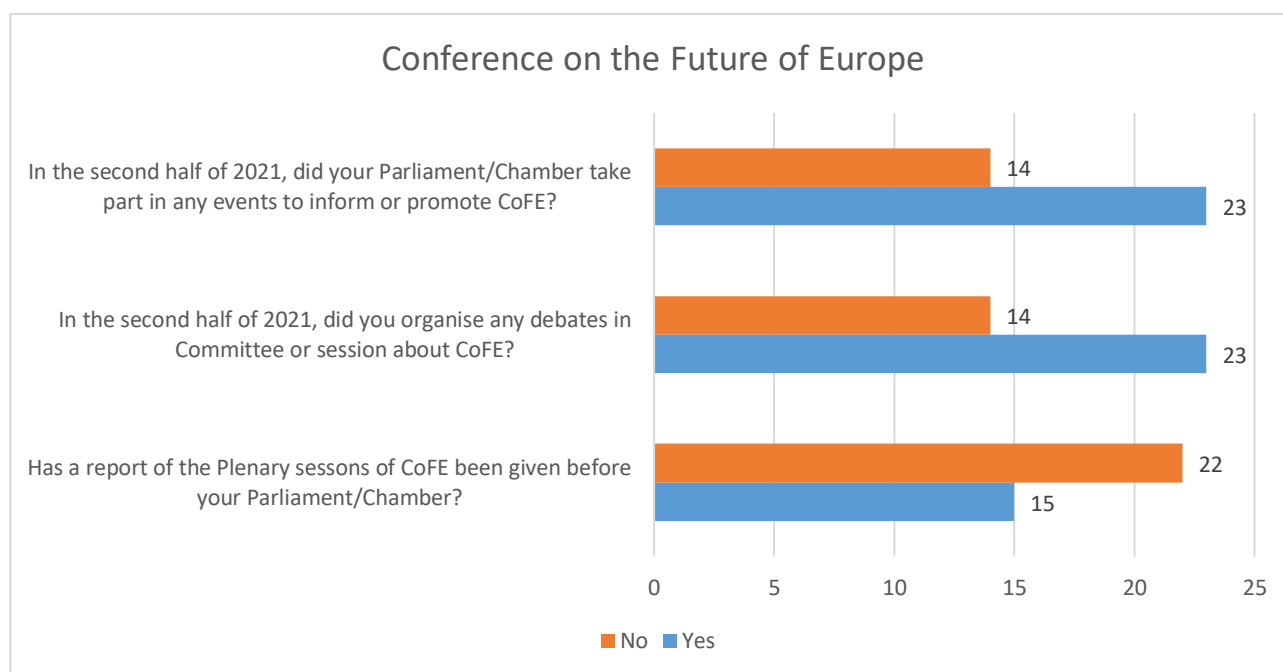
In addition, the Committee on European Affairs of the Romanian *Camera Deputaţilor* initiated open and structured dialogues on the topics of digital economy and the importance of economic, social and territorial cohesion for regional development, and the Committee on European Affairs of the Lithuanian *Seimas* organised a meeting on artificial intelligence and the digital future of the EU and, similarly, the subcommittee on CoFE of the Polish *Sejm* organised meetings on energy policy, the role of the European Parliament and national Parliaments, and freedom of expression in Europe.

5 Asked if during the second half of 2021 Parliaments/Chambers promoted or took part in any events to inform about or give visibility to CoFE, the majority (23 out of 37 respondents) replied positively.

6 When asked to specify those events, a number of Parliaments/Chambers noted the initiatives organised that paid particular attention to the involvement of young people. The Austrian *Nationalrat* and *Bundesrat* scheduled workshops on the future of Europe with young people and a discussion event about Europe from the perspective of the youth from the Western Balkans, also with the involvement of the French *Assemblée nationale*. Similarly, the Slovenian *Državni zbor*, in the framework of the Western Balkans Speakers' Meeting, held a dialogue with young people about the young generation from the Western Balkans and the EU. The Italian *Senato della Repubblica* reported two events involving young participants, one from the EU and Western Balkan countries and another from the EU and Mediterranean countries. The German *Bundestag* reported the organisation of events with young people, namely exchanges with pupils from a European school and with young graduates

of the Bundestag's International Parliamentary Scholarship from the Western Balkans. The French *Assemblée nationale* noted the participation of the EU Affairs Committee Chair in the "European Youth Event".

The EU Affairs and Foreign Policy Committees of Slovenian *Državni zbor* organised relevant debates with online - due to COVID-19 - public participation. The EU Affairs Committees of both the French *Assemblée nationale* and of the French *Sénat* led initiatives to promote CoFE. The French *Sénat*, through its EU Affairs Committee, launched a consultation with locally elected representatives and organised a symposium and a round table on the role of national Parliaments in the EU and the place of the EU in the media, respectively.



Some respondents referred to promoting activities and citizens' involvement via social and other media. Such was the case of the Lithuanian *Seimas* that, through its website, invited citizens to express their views and to make proposals about the future of the EU on the Multilingual Digital Platform. The German *Bundestag* provided relevant information on its website, on social media as well as a posters in the nearest subway stations. The German *Bundesrat* produced and published a video to promote CoFE and provided relevant information via web seminars of the Bundesrat Visitors Service. The Dutch *Tweede Kamer* promoted CoFE through social media and broadcasted interviews with members of its delegation to CoFE.

The Belgian *Chambre des représentants* hosted one of the sessions of the Belgian citizens' panel in October 2021. The Greek *Vouli ton Ellinon* held a meeting with citizens' participation on migration. The Hungarian *Országgyűlés* mentioned parliamentary events organised under the Hungarian Presidency of the Visegrád Group that focused on the topics of CoFE, as well as the exchanges within the Forum of Hungarian Representatives of the Carpathian Basin. The Latvian *Saeima* stated that a meeting was organised with their national representatives to the CoFE plenary and representatives from the civil society. Also the Luxembourg *Chambre des Députés* organised a series of panels with civil society within the Parliament, as well as meetings with citizens in different regions around the country.

Both the Italian *Senato della Repubblica* and the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* replied that they were part of specific committees responsible for organising relevant events to promote CoFE in their countries. In particular, the Portuguese *Assembleia da República* was part of an institutional partnership with the government, the European Parliament (Liaison Office in Portugal), the representation office of the European Commission in Portugal, the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities, the Economic and Social Council and the National Youth Council, organising seven events throughout the country. The *Assembleia da República* was responsible for the organisation of two of these events, one on migration and international partnerships and another on agricultural policy and the fight against climate change. The Italian *Senato della Repubblica* also stated that it approved a resolution in November 2021 engaging the government to take every useful action to involve citizens, communities and the civil society in CoFE.

The European Parliament referred to the organisation of the Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the expectations of national Parliaments for CoFE organised by the AFCO Committee, in which many national parliamentarians had participated. In addition, different institutional and communication campaigns promoted the Multilingual Digital Platform in particular, and the Conference, in general.

Many Parliaments/Chambers stated that their individual members were invited to several events and public debates organised on the topic (Danish *Folketing*, Estonian *Riigikogu*, German *Bundesrat*, Italian *Camera dei deputati*), particularly the members who were part of the CoFE plenary (Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, Finnish *Eduskunta*, Spanish *Cortes Generales*).

Some of the respondents that replied negatively, specified nevertheless that their members participated in activities organised by their governments (Dutch *Eerste Kamer*, Slovak *Národná rada*), by other stakeholders (Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon*), or that members participated in relevant events and promoted the Conference individually (Czech *Senát*) and discussed various European topics in different cities and universities (Slovak *Národná rada*).

The Cyprus *Vouli ton Antiprosopon* and Slovak *Národná rada* indicated that relevant events were being planned.

37th
Bi-annual Report
COSAC