

The European Parliament in EU external relations

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I. Introduction

- Presentation – Legal Service:
advice/representation in court – all policies
and administration – HoU A2 external
relations: committees AFET, INTA, DEFVE,
SEDE, subcommittee DROI, delegations...
- Starting point – EU External relations –CFSP
but also CCP ... - democratic legitimacy -
different policies – different roles for EU,
institutions and MS?

II. The European Parliament – Role and Powers (Art 14 TEU)

- The representatives of the EU citizens decide on
- Legislation – with Council
- budget – with Council
- Political control - international agreements (but also election Com Pres...) and
- accountability and
- ensure a political debate

III. European Parliament – Function and organisation

- The directly elected democratic representatives
→ plenary
- Article 232 TFEU
- Committees (standing) – subcommittees – temporary committees – Investigation committees
- delegations
- President / Bureau / Conference of Presidents / Questors
- Defence of EPs prerogatives - privileged party before ECJ

IV. EU External action

- Aims (Articles 2, 3(5) and 21 TEU) promote its principles and values ... democracy, human rights ... sustainable development...
- important for EP – but what is the current tendency?
- Policies: CFSP – but also
- CCP, development and technical cooperation and external aspects of internal policies
- Instruments – legislation, international agreements, representation and debate + enlargement...

V. CFSP – non legislative – measures - accountability to EP

- Actors: Sovereign MS, European Council, Council and HR/VP
- HR/VP to consult EP regularly on main aspects and basic choices + EP questions + debate twice a year (Art 36 TEU)
- → Only accountability towards EP, but consider
- Article 41 TEU and EP's role in the EU budget
- Article 40 TEU and EU policies
- Measures: Missions, Restrictive measures - Defence agency - Permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) - European Peace Facility
- Coordinating Member State action

VI. External relations in TFEU policies – Legislation – role of EP

- **Trade** – CCP [examples next page]
- **Development** and technical **cooperation**
- External aspects of **internal policies** – In particular now: Internal policies in support of **defence capabilities** (financial assistance, internal market rules, exemptions from rules... + economic policy coordination)
- **OLP** - Com prop – up to 3 readings but ...
- Delegated acts/Implementing acts
- Programming

VII. Recent legislation concerning external relations - trends

- CCP: US tariffs, Phasing out of Russian gas, GSP review, investment screening, anti-coercion, anti-subsidy...
- Development and technical cooperation : Ukraine loan and Ukraine facility, Global Europe, NDICI and IPA III
- Other Policies (industry/transport/internal market...): EDIP, EDIRPA, Rearm Europe, Defence readiness omnibus
- Important non legislative measures - SAFE (Art 122) (emergency measures... economic policy)
- Common tendency – security related concerns in any policy

VIII.A International Agreements

- Why should EP have a role? – Primacy - democracy
- Procedure – respective role of institutions – Open – negotiations – signing – provisional application – No EP!
- The conclusion – consent by EP
- Refusal – very rare

VIII.B International Agreements - Shortcomings

- Consent comes very late!
- Scope of Article 218 (only binding)...
- Provisional application, Art 218(9) TFEU ... etc
- but there is also the scrutiny under Article 218(10) TFEU

IX. Scrutiny of International Agreements by EP

- under Article 218(10) TFEU – an expression of a democratic principle on which EU is founded
- The right to information – Scope and meaning
- Access to information – modalities
- Framework agreement (reviewed) - EP RoP
- Resolutions with recommendation to negotiator
- Recently – MERCOSUR – now also Art 218(11) TFEU request + Chile, Thailand, the Samoa Agreement, TCA...

X. Political control – Accountability of COM/HRVP

- Legal framework for accountability
- High Representative (Art 36 TEU) – Commission (Art 14-17 TEU, 230 TFEU)
- Means of accountability – EP RoP – INI, Rec, Consultation, statements and debate
- Specific issues – annual reports (CFSP...), strategic issues (Global gateway, enlargement, China ...), aims (multilateralism, human rights sanctions act)... and of course Russian invasion of Ukraine (various aspects)
- To be distinguished from – legislative role, role in consent and consultation procedure (incl. 218(10))

XI. Other aspects of EP's role in external relations

- Representation of EU in external relations – Com-High Representative - EU delegations in third countries
- EP delegations
- Interparliamentary bodies ... ACP-EU, EU-UK...
- Election observations

XII. The Common Commercial Policy and the democratic debate

- An exceptional transparency initiative – TTIP
- How FTAs (and related matters) are dealt with in EP – modalities - confidentiality
- Central issues in the debate – freedom to regulate, investment protection, human rights, transparency...
- Influence of the debate in EP – often same debate in MS
- Now in particular **MERCOSUR – expectations and fears – now prov app and ECJ before decision!**

XIII. Recent developments

- Changes in the World political and economic order:
- MERCOSUR
- US tariffs
- Trade defence...
- ECT - withdrawal
- New security order:
- Russia – Ukraine - Ukraine loan – CCP for autonomy purposes...
- US role in security policy and NATO
- EU policies in support of defence
- Unanimity – qualified majority

XIV. Recommended reading

- Opinion 1/19; Opinion 1/17; Opinion 2/15; Case C-660/13; C-263/14, C-658/11...
- Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission, OJ L 304 of 20.11.2010, p. 47. Revised version approved in parliament on 11 March 2026, not yet published in OJ
- EP Rules of Procedure
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/lastrules/TOC_EN.html?redirect