

The European Parliament – more powerful, less legitimate? An outlook for the 7th legislature

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Some of the recently published by EPIN members: CEPS (Brussels): The European Parliament – more powerful, less legitimate? An outlook for the 7th legislature by Julia De Clerck-Sachsse and Piotr Maciej Kaczy?ski.

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At the end of the 6th legislature, fears that enlargement would hamper the workings of the European Parliament have largely proved unfounded. Despite the influx of a large number of new members to Parliament, parties have remained cohesive, and legislative output has remained steady. Moreover, after an initial phase of adaptation, MEPs from new member states have been increasingly socialised into the EP structure. Challenges have arisen in a rather different field, however. In order to remain efficient in the face of increasing complexity, the EP has had to streamline its working procedures, moving more decisions to parliamentary committees and cutting down time for debate.

This paper argues that measures to increase the efficiency of the EP, most notably the trend towards speeding up agreements with the Council (1st reading agreements) run the risk of undermining the EP's role as a forum of debate. Should bureaucratisation increasingly trump politicisation, the legitimacy of the EP will be undermined, and voters will become ever more alienated from its work. For the 7th legislature of the European Parliament therefore, it is crucial to balance efficiency of output with a more politicised policy style that is able to capture public interest.

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