National Parliaments in the European Union Dataset (NPdata): Short overview of the update to November 2020

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Overview

The National Parliaments in the European Union Dataset (NPdata) codes formal rights and mechanisms for parliamentary involvement in EU affairs. It contains information on oversight institutions, which specify parliamentary information and participation rights in relation to the government's involvement in EU policymaking. NPdata also includes information on parliamentary rights in the European Semester (ES) and decision-making of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM).

This document briefly addresses the following questions:

1) Which indicators are included in the dataset?
2) How can the data be obtained and how should it be cited?
3) This dataset extends two existing datasets. What changed compared to the earlier datasets?

Detailed coding notes by country and a folder with the main primary documents or links to these documents can be obtained from the author on request.

Which indicators are included in the dataset?

Table 1 and Table 2 show the indicators included in the dataset. NPdata aims to capture formal rules. Whenever possible, the data collection relied on primary documents and preferably legally binding instruments such as constitutions, laws, and parliamentary rules of procedure. Other parliamentary documents that clearly state the procedures applicable in EU affairs were also considered. Secondary literature was considered as well if it stated the relevant parliamentary procedures clearly although, in cases of disagreement, priority was given to primary sources.

Oversight institution	Definition and coding
European Affairs Committee (EAC)	Parliaments can have dedicated EACs or combine EU affairs and other responsibilities (mostly foreign affairs). Coding: 1=EAC. 0.5=Shared responsibility. 0=No committee.
Involving sectoral committees (Seccom)	Parliaments can create strong mechanisms for the involvement of sectoral committees in scrutinizing EU affairs. Rules might invite but not require their involvement or leave their role vague or open. Coding: 1=Strong mechanisms. 0.5=Optional or occasional involvement. 0=Vague or no mechanisms.
Explanatory memorandum (Memo)	Parliaments can require that governments routinely detail the background and their intended position on EU documents. They might do so only in rare circumstances or not at all. Coding: 1=Memorandum generally required. 0=Memorandum not or rarely required.
Scrutiny reserve (Reserve)	Parliaments can impose a reserve to prevent the government from taking a position for a substantial period or until scrutiny is concluded. Coding: 1=Scrutiny reserve. 0=No reserve.
Mandating rights (Mandate)	Parliaments can approve or mandate positions of the government, which has to comply. Parliaments might allow the government to deviate if it gives reasons, and valid reasons are not restricted significantly. Coding: 1=Binding mandates with no or few exceptions. 0.5=Justified deviation routinely possible. 0=No mandating.
Aggregating oversight institutions	A standardized count of (types of) institutions is used here to describe oversight institutions: Information-related institutions: (EAC + Seccom + Memo)/3. Constraining institutions: (Reserve + Mandate)/2. Overall strength: (Information-related institutions + Constraining institutions)/2.

Table 1. Oversight institutions coded in the updated data

Note: The selection of institutions builds on Winzen (2012). The indicator 'Access to documents' has been dropped.

	ESM: Approval	ESM: Information	European Semester
0	**No** The parliament does not approve governmental voting intentions.	**No or minor** The parliament does not have specific rights, or receives only rare government reports (quarterly, bi-annual, or annual).	**No reforms** No new parliamentary rights and procedures that aim to engage with processes or decisions during the European Semester.
1	**Selective** The parliament approves only a sub-set of *key decisions* or has otherwise minor participation rights (e.g., the government has to appear in parliament for a discussion of its voting intentions).	**General reporting** The government is required to report regularly on ESM affairs and documents without further clarification of the scope or timing of information, or it has to provide further information only on parliament's own initiative.	**Moderate reforms** Parliamentary procedures and rights acknowledge some key steps or decisions during the European Semester. Typically, the parliament is entitled to receive the Stability / Convergence and National Reform Programmes at least at the same time as the EU institutions.
2	**Yes** The parliament has to approve governmental voting intentions on *key decisions* on the agenda of ESM decision-making bodies.	**Extensive** The government is formally obliged to inform parliament broadly, immediately and on its own initiative on all ESM affairs.	**Strong reforms** Parliamentary rights and procedures go beyond mere acknowledgement of some stages of the European Semester, such as more extensive governmental reporting obligations or rights to participate in the preparation of important documents.

Table 2. Parliamentary rights in the ESM and European Semester

Note: Adapted from Rittberger and Winzen (2015). *Key decisions*: Decisions on aid programs, memorandums of understanding, the authorization of aid tranches within programs, the choice and changes of instruments in aid programs, and the authorization of callable capital. We do not consider approval of ESM treaty changes (e.g., if ESM lending volume or country contributions change).

How can the data be obtained and how should it be cited?

NPdata is available for download via the author's website (https://thomaswinzen.com) and Harvard Dataverse (https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/twdata).

If you use the *data on oversight institutions*, please cite:

- To acknowledge this update (from 2010-2020): Winzen, Thomas. 2021. The Institutional Position of National Parliaments in the European Union: Developments, Explanations, Effects. *Journal of European Public Policy*.
- To acknowledge work on the data up to 2010: Winzen, Thomas. 2012. National Parliamentary Control of European Union Affairs: A Cross-National and Longitudinal Comparison. *West European Politics* 35 (3): 657–72.

If you use the data on *parliamentary rights in the ESM Treaty or European Semester*, please cite:

- To acknowledge this update (from 2014-2020): Winzen, Thomas. 2021. The Institutional Position of National Parliaments in the European Union: Developments, Explanations, Effects. *Journal of European Public Policy*.
- To acknowledge the original 2014 data: Rittberger, Berthold, and Thomas Winzen. 2015. Parlamentarismus Nach Der Krise: Die Vertiefung Parlamentarischer Asymmetrie in Der Reformierten Wirtschafts- Und Währungsunion. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 56 (3): 430–56.

This dataset extends two existing datasets. What changed compared to the earlier datasets?

This data collection extends existing data in Winzen (2012), which ended in spring 2010, to include new information up to November 2020. There are several differences in the new data. These have been applied retrospectively to the older data to ensure consistency over time. The main differences are as follows. More detailed information per country is available (see previous question).

1) The indicator 'access to formal documents' has been dropped. With most formal EU documents now available online as well as in domestic government databases with parliamentary access, this indicator has ceased to be meaningful. New questions have emerged around confidential documents, especially in the context of the ESM or foreign and defence policy, but the old indicator was not designed to address these questions. The aggregate measures excluding this indicator do, however, remain very highly correlated with the old aggregate data. This also suggests that access to documents did not add important information.

2) Stricter rules have been applied for deciding whether the involvement of sectoral committees in EU affairs can be considered obligatory. This has required downgrading a limited number of countries, in which sectoral committee involvement had previously been coded as obligatory, but in which the formal rules do not feature strict mechanisms

such as deadlines for submitting opinions or automatic inclusion of certain EU documents on the agenda.

3) Stricter rules have also been applied for deciding whether a 'scrutiny reserve' could be said to exist. Specifically, a clearer distinction has been made between parliaments with mandating rights, which typically require that the government offers the parliament an opportunity to approve a mandate before the national position is decided, and parliaments with a scrutiny reserve, which can take a decision that prevents the government from adopting a position in the EU institutions for a significant time or until parliamentary scrutiny ends. The first rule gives the parliament an opportunity to vote on but not to delay the government position. The second does the opposite.

In addition, this study includes new data on parliamentary rights in the European Semester and the ESM Treaty. This data was initially collected in early summer 2014 and presented in Rittberger and Winzen (2015). These data were extended to include information up to November 2020, mainly because new countries have since joined the Euro area, finalized reforms that had been under discussion in 2014, or initiated new reforms. A small number of corrections of ambiguities in the early data have been made.