



Brugge

College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

Politicising the Union? The Influence of 'Leading Candidates' for the Commission Presidency

Aileen Körfer



DEPARTMENT OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL
AND ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES

Bruges Political Research Papers

36 / 2014



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe

Brugge



Natolin

European Political and Administrative Studies /
Études Politiques et Administratives

Bruges Political Research Papers / Cahiers de recherche politique de Bruges
No 36 / October 2014

Politicising the Union?
The Influence of 'Leading Candidates' for the Commission Presidency

By Aileen Körfer

© Aileen Körfer

European Political and Administrative Studies/
Études Politiques et Administratives
Dijver 11, B-8000 Brugge, Belgium
www.coleurope.eu/pol

About the author

Aileen Körfer is a graduate of Maastricht University (Bachelor of Arts in European Studies) and of the College of Europe (Bruges, Voltaire Promotion). She gained work experience in the European Parliament and in the German Bundestag.

Contact: aileen.koerfer@coleurope.eu

Editorial Team

Michele Chang, Laurent Bonfond, Emilie Cazenave, Sébastien Commain, Thibaud Deruelle, Thomas Pellerin-Carlin, Katja Tuokko, and Olivier Costa
Dijver 11, B-8000 Bruges, Belgium | Tel. +32 (0) 50 477 281 | Fax +32 (0) 50 477 280
email michele.chang@coleurope.eu | website www.coleurope.eu/pol

Abstract

‘Leading candidates’ competed for the European Commission Presidency in the campaign for the European elections in May 2014. This element of political contestation poses a challenge to the Union’s institutional design. This article investigates to what extent competing ‘leading candidates’ enhances the process of deliberation and party contestation and thus strengthen the role of European Parliament (EP) party groups. In light of the example of the ‘Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats’ and its ‘leading candidate’, Martin Schulz, it is shown that the election campaign did strive to be EU-wide. However, Schulz’s influence on internal party cohesion and coalition formation remained limited. Therefore the influence of an elected ‘leading candidate’ is regarded as a symbolic act, which could deepen the relationship between the EP and the Commission as well as strengthen the democratic and political standing of both institutions vis-à-vis the European Council.

In light of the slogan ‘This time it is different’,¹ so-called ‘leading candidates’² for the Presidency of the European Commission were nominated and elected to represent their respective European Parliament (EP) party group in the European elections in May 2014. By presenting their visions for the European Union (EU), a parliamentary electoral campaign took place “in which political parties and their candidates compete[d] on the basis of alternative programmes which address the European dimension”.³ This competition introduced a new element of political contestation at the European level, which could pose a challenge to the Union’s institutional design characterised by consensus-oriented decision-making. Despite this incompatibility, the EP party groups nominated and elected their ‘leading candidates’. In the attempt to politicise the European elections and to better identify the profile of the different EP party groups, the parliamentarians follow the spirit of Art. 17.7 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and its Declaration No. 11:

“Taking into account the elections to the EP and after having held the appropriate consultations, the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, shall propose to the EP a candidate for the President of the Commission. This candidate shall be elected by the EP by a majority of its component members [...]”⁴

Even though the idea of competing ‘leading candidates’ was put into practice, there were many politicians who expressed their concern, including President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy⁵ and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.⁶ However, advocates of this idea such as European University Institute Joseph H. H. Weiler, interpreted the elections of and competition among leading candidates as an attempt to bring a necessary

¹ ‘This time it is different’ is the official slogan of the EP elections campaign in 2014.

² In European media the German term ‘Spitzenkandidat’ is widely known. However, the author uses the English translation ‘leading candidate’ in this work.

³ European Parliament, *European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2013 on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014, 2013/2102(INI)*, 4 July 2013.

⁴ N. Foster, *EU Treaties & Legislation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, 21st edition, p. 8.

⁵ L. Cerulus, ‘Van Rompuy scorns direct election of Commission President’, *EurActiv*, 14 October 2013, p. 1.

⁶ L. Cerulus, ‘German coalition talks cast long shadow over EU elections’, *EurActiv*, 29 October 2013, p. 1.

change to the EU without revising its treaties and legislation.⁷ Taking this argument into closer consideration, there is in particular one question which needs to be highlighted: does the idea of ‘leading candidates’ - as stated in a communication from the Commission to the EP as well as to other institutional entities –

“make concrete and visible the link between the individual vote of the EU citizens for a candidate for membership of the EP and the candidate for President of the Commission supported by the party of the candidate MEP”?⁸

This article investigates to what extent competing ‘leading candidates’ enhances the process of deliberation and party contestation and thus strengthens the role of EP party groups. The analysis is framed in view of the debate on the democratic deficit as well as the Union’s institutional framework by using the example of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)’s ‘leading candidate’ Martin Schulz. Even though in the May 2014 European elections the European People’s Party (EPP) became the strongest party in the EP and ‘leading candidate’ Jean-Claude Juncker was nominated as President of the Commission by the European Council, the analysis still holds in terms of the effect that it had on party cohesion, coalition formation and inter-institutional relations.

The article begins by presenting the theoretical framework. Firstly, insights into concepts of democracy and democratic deficit are provided to explain the necessity of political contestation at the European level. Secondly, the reader is acquainted with the institutional design of the EU to underline the challenges linked with the implementation of Art. 17.7 TEU and its Declaration No. 11. Thirdly, three criteria are established according to which the influence of political forces can be analysed. Finally, the hypotheses are introduced. In the second part, the focus shifts to an analysis of the influence of ‘leading candidates’ with regard to their role in creating an EU-wide campaign, in strengthening the

⁷ Prof. J. H. H. Weiler, ‘Euro-Elections 2014: The Quiet Revolution’, Brugge, College of Europe, 2 October 2013.

⁸ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions*, COM(2013)126 final, 12 March 2013.

profile of EP party groups as well as in shaping the inter-institutional relations. In the third part, the findings are evaluated and subsequently related to the initial research question. Finally, conclusions are drawn.

1. A Theoretical Framework to Explain the Influence of Political Forces

Christopher J. Lord suggests reducing democracy to two core attributes:

“The first is that the public must be able to control those who make decisions on its behalf [...]; and, second, citizens should exercise such control as equals [...].”⁹

Even though there are different forms of democracy, certain elements are common in all democratic societies.¹⁰ For instance, according to Andreas Follesdal and Simon Hix, the main features of democracy are:

“institutionally established procedures that regulate competition for control over political authority, on the basis of deliberation, where nearly all adult citizens are permitted to participate in an electoral mechanism where their expressed preferences over alternative candidates determine the outcome, in such ways that the government is responsive to the majority or to as many as possible.”¹¹

1.1. ‘Leading Candidates’: An Attempt for Greater Political Contestation

The EU institutions are often criticised for being deficient with regard to its democratic nature. In view of this criticism, the focus now shifts to the notion of a ‘democratic deficit’ at the European level. Even though there is no clear definition of this notion, certain features can be raised:

“the unelected character of the Commission, the alleged weakness of the EP, the withdrawal of powers from national parliaments, lack of European political identity or ‘demos’, low voter participation in European elections, the absence of strong

⁹ C. J. Lord, ‘Democracy and Democratization in the European Union’, in S. Bromley (ed.), *Governing the European Union*, London, Sage, 2001, pp. 166-167.

¹⁰ A. H. Birch, *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Democracy*, London/New York, Routledge, 2001, pp. 72-73.

¹¹ A. Follesdal and S. Hix, ‘Why there is a democratic deficit in the EU: A response to Majone and Moravcsik’, *European Governance Papers*, no. C-05-02, 2005, pp. 14-15.

democratic intermediaries such as political parties, the remoteness and obscurity of the Union's decision making procedures, and doubtless much else besides [...]"¹²

Despite the 'classical appearance' of the academic debate on the democratic deficit, an "increasing number of academics [argue] that the democratic deficit has been overstated and, indeed, that it may not actually exist".¹³ According to Andrew Moravcsik, the transfer of certain political competences to non-majoritarian entities is justified as (1) elected Member State governments act as control mechanisms; (2) the constitutional settlement imposes constraints on EU policy and thus prevents the Union against arbitrariness and unaccountable technocracy; and (3) finally,

"constitutional checks and balances, indirect democratic control via national governments and the increasing powers of the EP are sufficient to assure that the EU policy-making is [...] politically responsive to the demands of European citizens".¹⁴

However, Follesdal and Hix question Moravcsik's argument. They stress the fact that

"voters' preferences are not fixed or purely exogenously determined [...] [meaning that] citizens form their views about which policy options they prefer through the process of deliberation and party contestation that are essential elements of all democracies".¹⁵

Demands for greater political contestation have often been expressed, but this raises the question why political contestation is desirable at the European level. According to Hix, greater political competition is desirable for four reasons. Firstly, ordinary European citizens are able to choose between competing political leaders with rival agendas. Secondly, political competition enables citizens to form preferences and thus to identify themselves with a certain political leader at the European level. Thirdly, competition provides the winner with a political mandate which might be accepted by the electorate as a result of a

¹² C. J. Lord, *Democracy in the European Union*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press/University Association for Contemporary European Studies, 1998, p. 11.

¹³ I. Bache, S. George and S. Bulmer, *Politics in the European Union*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, 3rd edition, p. 67.

¹⁴ A. Moravcsik, 'In Defence of the Democratic Deficit: Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no. 4, 2002, p. 605.

¹⁵ Follesdal and Hix, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

fair contest. Finally, greater political competition might lead to the formation of a European demos in the future.¹⁶

The Treaty of Lisbon has introduced a more open political battle with regard to the appointment process of the Commission Presidency. Bearing in mind that the institutional setting at the European level is oriented towards finding a consensus, the following question needs to be highlighted: is the EU institutional system designed for ‘constrained politics’? To answer this question, the following section focuses on the nature of the Union’s institutional design.

1.2. The Institutional Design of the EU and Art. 17.7 TEU: A Question of Incompatibility?

The institutional design of the EU is based on the concept of ‘institutional balance’, which refers to the rule that “[EU] institutions have to act within the limits of their competences” as defined by the treaties.¹⁷ Since the beginning of the European integration process, several treaty revisions have extended the Union’s competences and policies in various fields. In view of the extension of these powers, an institutional balance is considered necessary to guarantee the representation of different interests at the European level.¹⁸

The legal principle of ‘institutional balance’ and the need to form intra- und inter institutional coalitions to secure policy changes underline the consensus-oriented design of the EU.¹⁹ This is in particular reflected in the Community Method. Within the scope of this work, the ordinary legislative procedure is of special interest as the role of the EP has been

¹⁶ S. Hix, ‘Why the EU needs (Left-Right) Politics? Policy Reform and Accountability are Impossible without it’ in S. Bartolini and S. Hix, ‘Politics: The Right or the Wrong Sort of Medicine for the EU?’, *Notre Europe Policy Paper* no. 19, 2006, pp. 7-11.

¹⁷ J.-P. Jacqué, ‘The Principle of Institutional Balance’, *Common Market Law Review*, vol. 41, 2004, p. 383.

¹⁸ J. Monar, ‘The European Union’s Institutional Balance of Power After the Lisbon Treaty’, 2012, *online paper*, p. 1, retrieved 14 October 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/education/jean-monnet/doc/ecsa10/monarb_en.pdf.

¹⁹ A. Lijphart, *Pattern of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999; G. Tsebelis, *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002.

strengthened with every treaty revision. Strengthening the only directly elected European institution has been regarded as an appropriate mean to address the democratic deficit. Therefore, the focus now shifts to the role and importance of this institution.²⁰

The Nature of the Party System in the European Parliament

Since its establishment in 1952, the EP has moved “from being a ‘minimal legislature’ with hardly any influence on the policy output to a ‘reactive legislature’ with policy influencing power”.²¹ This institution has increased its power in two traditional fields of parliamentary authority, namely legislative power and executive appointment. The lack of competition among the party groups in the EP and the resulting difficulty for European citizens to identify with a certain group and its political approach is often criticised. However, bearing the Union’s consensus-oriented design in mind, the following question needs to be highlighted: is the idea of competing ‘leading candidates’ for the Commission Presidency compatible with the nature of the EP party system?

Political parties appear in three different forms within the EU system: (1) as national political parties, (2) as party groups in the EP and (3) as parties at the European level or - as they are also known - as EU-wide party federations.²² The party system in the EP distinguishes itself from party systems at the national level with regard to the fact that there is no executive actor at the European level. The only directly elected institution strives to demonstrate unity against the Commission and the Council of Ministers, which reflects its consolidated nature.²³ The following three criteria underline the special character of the party system in the EP: first, the members of the EP (MEP) are aligned in seven political parties

²⁰ L. Buonanno and N. Nugent, ‘The Principle Policy Institutions’, in L. Buonanno and N. Nugent (eds.), *Policies and Policy Processes of the European Union*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 40-57; A. Kreppel, ‘Rules, Ideology and Coalition Formation in the European Parliament: Past, Present and Future’, *European Union Politics*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2000, p. 358.

²¹ T. Faas, ‘To defect or not to defect? National, institutional and party group pressures on MEPs and their consequences for party group cohesion in the European Parliament’, *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 42, 2003, p. 842.

²² A. Rasmussen, ‘Party soldiers in a non-partisan community? Party linkage in the European Parliament’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 15, no. 8, 2008, pp. 1164-1165.

²³ Further explanations are given at page 23 and 24.

according to the traditional left/right dimension.²⁴ Second, the party system is characterised by growing fragmentation. Finally, despite or rather due to its fragmented nature, the two main political groups (the EPP and the S&D) often collude to secure the institution's unity.²⁵

In addition, it is important to underline that MEPs face a dilemma in the party system in the EP due to the multi-level nature of the EU: on the one hand, they have to defend national party interests. On the other hand, they have to support the interests of EP committees and their political group leaderships. As a consequence, MEPs are seen as agents of two potential principals.²⁶

Nonetheless, "a party system has two essential elements: (1) organization [...]; and (2) competition [...]"²⁷ If one of these elements is underdeveloped, voters' choices are not effectively reflected in final policy outcomes. The party system in the EP has internally hierarchical party organizations. Nonetheless, it does not follow a competitive-based approach. Thus, many scholars of the 'democratic deficit' demand a competitive party system in the EP. The Treaty of Lisbon has introduced such a competitive element with the possibility of rival 'leading candidates' for the Commission Presidency. Whereas some assume that the competition of 'leading candidates' for the Commission Presidency impairs the consensual nature of EU decision-making, others argue that this might even lead to a politicisation of the EU.²⁸

In view of the contradicting assumptions, the following questions need to be highlighted:

- To what extent are 'leading candidates' able to contribute to EU-wide campaign which raises public awareness and interest in European elections?

²⁴ S. Hix, 'Legislative Behaviour and Party Competition in the European Parliament: An Application of Nominate to the EU', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2001, p. 665.

²⁵ S. Hix, A. Kreppel and A. Noury, 'The Party System in the European Parliament: Collusive or Competitive?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2003, pp. 315-318.

²⁶ S. Hix and B. Hoyland, *The Political System of the European Union*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 55; Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

²⁷ Hix, Kreppel and Noury, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

²⁸ R. Ladrech, 'National Political Parties and European Governance: The Consequences of 'Missing in Action'', *West European Politics*, vol. 30, no. 5, 2007, p. 955.

- To what extent can ‘leading candidates’ strengthen the party groups in the EP that might - as a far-reaching effect - even shape the political standing of the only directly elected European institution?

To answer these questions the following section provides an analytical framework on the influence of political forces.

1.3. The Influence of Political Forces

According to Bertoincini, the influence of a political force can be measured in view of the following three criteria: the number of seats won as a result of the party’s ability to convince citizens of its political approach during the European election campaign; the internal cohesion of the party group and its ability to form majority coalitions with other parties; and the inter-institutional context.²⁹

In light of these criteria, the following three hypotheses are tested to investigate to what extent competing ‘leading candidates’ enhances the process of deliberation and party contestation and thus strengthen the role of party groups in the EP:

- (1) The competition among ‘leading candidates’ leads to EU-wide campaigns, which raise public awareness and interest in the elections.
- (2) The competition among ‘leading candidates’ strengthens the profile of EP party groups as:
 - a. the ‘leading candidate’ contributes to improve the interaction within the EP party group, which strengthen its public perception and thus enhance the chances for his fellow party members to be ‘(re-) elected’;
 - b. the ‘leading candidate’ contributes to an increase in internal party cohesion due to his influence on ‘office seeking’, i.e. the distribution of portfolios within the EP party group;

²⁹ Y. Bertoincini, ‘European Elections: Less Abstention, More “Populism”?’, *Notre Europe Tribune*, November 2013, p. 5.

c. the ‘leading candidate’ convinces his fellow EP party group members to engage in alliances with other parties based on ‘European ideologies’, i.e. left/right coalition formation, which shapes the party group’s ‘policy seeking’.

(3) The election of a ‘leading candidate’ improves the accountability of the Commission vis-à-vis the EP and thus the electorate, as well as strengthens the democratic and political standing of both institutions vis-à-vis the European Council.

The following section tests these three hypotheses. The timeframe is limited to the nomination of the ‘leading candidate’ of the S&D in November 2013 to the beginning of May 2014. Firstly, the analysis focuses on the influence of the ‘leading candidate’ on advertising an EU-wide campaign in view of his nomination and election process and the election campaign as such. Secondly, the influence of the ‘leading candidate’ on strengthening the profile of his EP party group is analysed with regard to the chances for his fellow party members to be (re-) elected as well as in view of ‘office’ and ‘policy’ seeking within the S&D. Thirdly, the influence of the ‘leading candidate’ on the inter-institutional relations between the EP and the Commission as well as society’s expectations towards the European Council in view of Art. 17.7 TEU are considered.

The exact influence of a political force in view of the number of seats won can only be measured by the final election result. However, it is possible to measure an EP party group’s possible influence with regard to the predicted number of seats it might win. To analyse the internal cohesion of a party group, it is important to measure the ideological proximity as well as the effectiveness of a party group organization. A political group’s ability to form majority coalitions within the EP is firstly analysed with regard to the interest of the institution to be on the winning side and secondly in terms of policy preferences, which need to be analysed in the overall intra- and inter-institutional context. These two

criteria must be considered in the framework of two types of institutions, namely the internal and the external side in the overall scope of the separated-powers system at the European level. In this context, the internal side refers to the structure of incentives inside the legislature, whereas the external side rather focuses on the structure of relations between on the one hand the EP and on the other hand the executive. With regard to the specific nature of the EU system, the structural framework inside the legislature can serve as an incentive to powerful legislative party organization, while legislative parties are less cohesive in their relationship to other institutions.³⁰

The structure of incentives inside the legislative is evaluated with regard to three main objectives legislators pursue on both sides of the left/right dimension: (re-)election, office seeking and policy seeking. The structure of relations between the EP and the executive is studied in view of the EP's interest to be perceived as a united actor in the EU system.³¹ Furthermore, the relationship with other institutions is investigated with regard to a possible politicisation of the EU.

2. Case Study: Martin Schulz as the 'Leading Candidate'

This section tests the three hypotheses by applying the theoretical framework described above on the impact of Martin Schulz's 'leading candidate' campaign on the party group.

2.1. The Role of the 'Leading Candidate' in an EU-Wide Election Campaign

The first hypothesis tested is that the competition among 'leading candidates' leads to EU-wide campaigns, which raises public awareness and interest in the elections. The analytical approach is divided into the following three steps: firstly, the position of the 'leading candidate' as a credible alternative to other pro-European candidates is analysed. Secondly, the position of the respective EP party group as a credible alternative to other

³⁰ S. Hix, A. Noury and G. Roland, 'Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament, 1979-2001', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2005, pp. 211-215.

³¹ A. Noury and G. Roland, 'European Parliament – Should it have more power?', *Economic Policy*, 2002, pp. 305, 311.

parties is assessed by focussing in particular on the election campaign of the Party of European Socialists (PES), which shapes the perception of the S&D party group. Finally, the decrease/increase of public awareness and interest in the elections and in particular the support for the S&D party is examined.

Personalizing European Politics: The Nomination and Election Process

Machmer, spokesperson to the President of the EP, stated in an interview on 26 March 2014 in Brussels,

“we have witnessed a new phenomenon over the last few years, not least due to the economic crisis. A real European public sphere (Öffentlichkeit) is developing [...]. Having internationally competing leading candidates is a natural succession in that development [...].”³²

The vision of the PES is reflected in the nomination and election process of the ‘leading candidate’ as well as in the election campaign. On 1 March 2014, the PES Election Congress in Rome ratified the votes on the ‘leading candidate’ and adopted the Party Manifesto. Schulz was elected as the ‘leading candidate’ with 91.1% by the PES Member Parties.³³ The PES Manifesto underlines the party’s desired move ‘Towards a New Europe’, which is reflected in:

- **‘A Union that progresses’** in view of (1) the creation of jobs, (2) the re-launch of the economy and (3) the regulation of the financial sector in line with the services of the citizens and the real economy as well as (4) the creation of a sense of community and respect for European citizens;
- **‘A Union that protects’** (5) equality and women’s rights as well as (6) the Union’s diversity and (7) guarantees a safe and healthy life for all its citizens;

³² Interview with A. Machmer, spokesperson to the President of the European Parliament, Brussels, 26 March 2014.

³³ H. Knaup, ‘Krönungsmesse für den Buchhändler aus Würselen’, *Spiegel Online*, 1 March 2014, retrieved 2 March 2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/europawahl-martin-schulz-wird-spitzenkandidat-der-sozialdemokraten-a-956426.html>.

- ‘**A Union that performs**’ (8) more democracy and participation, (9) protects the planet from an ecological perspective and (10) promotes its influence beyond its borders.³⁴

These ten ambitious goals were taken up by the elected ‘leading candidate’ in his speech at the PES Congress in Rome, which underlines the mutual support and the common challenge of the PES and its ‘leading candidate’.³⁵

The launch of the PES European Candidate for the EP elections in 2014 was paved at the PES Congress in Prague in 2009. The PES Congress unanimously decided to pursue a common strategy and to implement a Party Manifesto, which would be embodied by a ‘leading candidate’ running for the Commission Presidency. In the following year, the PES decided at the Warsaw Council that a PES candidate would be designated as the winner of a democratic and transparent process.³⁶ The required rules, the procedure and the timeframe were adopted at the Brussels Council in 2011.³⁷ At the Brussels Congress the PES officially amended its statutes to have a ‘leading candidate’ who is democratically elected.³⁸ This amendment paved the way for the open process to accept nominations. During the official nomination period Schulz was nominated by the German Social Democrat Party (SPD) and supported by 21 PES Member parties. Following this support he was nominated as

³⁴ Party of European Socialists, *PES Manifesto – Towards a New Europe*, Rome, 1 March 2014, retrieved 7 March 2014, http://www.martin-schulz.eu/en/assets/media/download/pes_manifesto_towards_a_new_europe.pdf.

³⁵ M. Schulz, ‘Speech at the Rome Congress of the Party of European Socialists’, 1 March 2014, p. 10, retrieved 7 March 2014, http://www.spd.de/linkableblob/116518/data/20140301_schulz_rede_pes_rom.pdf.

³⁶ Party of European Socialists, *A democratic and transparent process for designating the PES candidate for the European Commission Presidency – Resolution adopted by the PES Council in Warsaw on 2 December 2010*, Warsaw, 2/3 December 2010, retrieved 13 April 2014, http://www.pes.eu/sites/www.pes.org/files/adopted_pes_council_resolution_2_en.pdf.

³⁷ Party of European Socialists, *PES Resolution – Selecting our common candidate in 2014*, Brussels, 24 November 2011, retrieved 12 April 2014, http://www.pes.eu/sites/www.pes.org/files/adopted_resolution__selecting_our_common_candidate_in_2014__en.pdf.

³⁸ The exact wording of Chapter 5, Article 24.1 is: “The Election Congress shall select the PES common Candidate to the European Commission Presidency, through an open, transparent and democratic competitive process [and shall] adopt the PES Manifesto for the European elections.”; Party of European Socialists, *PES Statutes adopted by the 9th PES Congress*, Brussels, 28/29 September 2012, retrieved 12 April 2014, http://www.pes.eu/sites/www.pes.org/files/pes_statutes_2012_en.pdf.

‘candidate designate’ in November 2013 and finally elected as ‘leading candidate’ at the PES Election Congress in Rome in March 2014. The Party Manifesto and the common ‘leading candidate’, who embodies the political vision of the PES and personifies the S&D party group, are necessary conditions to lead an EU-wide campaign. Nonetheless, it is necessary to analyse the election campaign, as only its approach and to a certain extent its success can prove its EU-wide character. Therefore, the focus shifts in the next section to the election campaign and its specific characteristics.

An EU-Wide Election Campaign: Bridging National Borders

According to Sir Julien Priestley, former Secretary-General of the EP and the campaign manager for Schulz, the election campaign comprises traditional and modern elements, i.e. the ‘leading candidate’ does EU-wide visits and participates in public campaign events, which are then shared on his social media platforms to reach the greatest possible audience beyond national and linguistic borders.³⁹ During the official election campaign, Schulz visited most EU Member States, during which he either launched the campaign or contributed to an event. The events always promoted the ‘leading candidate’ as well as the respective politician running for office as an MEP. In addition, the campaign was announced, followed and evaluated on social media, in particular on the Facebook and Twitter profiles of the ‘leading candidate’. These profiles accompanied the PES campaign ‘Knock the vote’, in which

“PES activists and volunteers directly talk to millions of European voters in their countries and on their door steps about their future [...] to win an election from the grassroots up”.⁴⁰

In view of the analysis of the nomination and election process of Schulz as the ‘leading candidate’ for the PES as well as the common election campaign, it can be

³⁹ Sir Julien Priestley, ‘The 2014 EP elections – really different this time? Roundtable with Mr. Jo Leinen and Sir Julien Priestly’, Brugge, College of Europe, 17 March 2014.

⁴⁰ Party of European Socialists, ‘PES: Knock the vote’, published on 11 March 2014, retrieved 18 April 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CrwVinFMEg>.

concluded that the competition of ‘leading candidates’ led to an EU-wide campaign. According to Görgen, journalist and department head of ‘Trimediale Nachrichten bei SWR’ in Germany, a ‘leading candidate’ should strive for the creation of a pan-European public sphere as “people are interested in a politician they believe they can trust. If the politician succeeds in setting out his vision, much would be won from a political perspective.”⁴¹

To find out to what extent the competition among ‘leading candidates’ and the EU-wide campaign of the PES raise public awareness and interest in the election campaign, the focus shifts in the next section to the increase in the followers of the ‘leading candidate’ on Social Media as well as opinion polls provided by PollWatch 2014.

The Measurement of Public Interest: A Possible Increase?

The role of Social Media is important in the election campaign and might reflect to a certain extent the voters’ support. Since his nomination as ‘candidate designate’ in November 2013, Schulz succeeded in gaining supporters on his Facebook and Twitter profiles. In line with the increase in followers on social media, it was plausible to assume that there was an increase in public awareness and interest in the PES election campaign. Nonetheless, it needs to be stressed that Schulz converted his social media accounts for use in the election campaign. For example, on his Facebook profile he did not inform his fans about his ‘impartial’ work as President of the EP but as ‘leading candidate’. In addition, he turned his Twitter account from ‘President of the European Parliament’ into ‘I am the @PES_PSE candidate for President of the @EU_Commission in #EP2014’ in March 2014.⁴² As a logical consequence, Schulz’ web campaign was in particular followed by citizens who were interested in his political work as President of the EP. However, this interest was not automatically linked with support for his election campaign.

⁴¹ Interview with Dr. J. Görgen, journalist and department head of ‘Trimediale Nachrichten bei SWR’ in Germany, Mainz, 26 March 2014; Translated into English by the author.

⁴² G. P. Schmitz, ‘Der Twitter-Trick von Martin Schulz’, *Der Spiegel*, 14 March 2014, retrieved 14 March 2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/martin-schulz-ep-praesident-erregt-mit-twitter-trick-unmut-a-958565.html>.

In contrast to social media, opinion polls made more reliable predictions with regard to the (expected) seats won in the EP. According to these predictions, the S&D was ahead the EPP after the PES Election Congress in Rome in March 2014. However, as indicated in the following Table, the S&D lost its lead and was expected to have 5 seats less than the EPP shortly before the election.

Table 1 Expected Seat Allocation

Date	EPP	S&D
05.03.2014	202	209
01.04.2014	212	212
16.04.2014	222	209
25.04.2014	217	208
30.04.2014	213	208

Data retrieved from K. Cunningham and S. Hix, 'Who will win the EP elections?', VoteWatch. Accessed on 2 May 2014, <http://www.electio2014.eu/pollsandsenarios/pollsblog>

Following these predictions it could not be concluded that the election campaign of the PES raised public awareness and interest in the political vision set out by this political camp.

Having shown that the competition among 'leading candidates' leads to EU-wide campaigns (but does not automatically raise public awareness and interest in the elections), the focus now shifts to the possible effects on the profile of party groups in the EP.

2.2. Strengthening the Profile of Party Groups in the European Parliament

According to the second hypothesis, competition among 'leading candidates' strengthens the profile of party groups in the EP. To test this hypothesis, the role of the 'leading candidate' in intensifying the organisation and interaction within the EP party group is analysed. Secondly, the role of the 'leading candidate' in contributing to internal party cohesion is assessed in view of its influence on 'office seeking'. Finally, the role of the 'leading candidate' in convincing his fellow EP party group members to engage in alliances with other parties based on 'European ideologies' is examined, as this could shape the party group's 'policy-seeking'.

(Re-) Election

The agreement on a common ‘leading candidate’ and the cross-border support for Schulz reflects a ‘united party’ in a personalised European election campaign, which strengthens the interaction between the PES and the S&D as well as the exchange with the electorate. The EU-wide approach diminishes the perception of the European elections as a ‘second-order national election’, in which “less is at stake” as they are primarily fought on national issues.⁴³ Rather, the ‘leading candidate’ enables the electorate to link one European politician (and thus a face) to the S&D party group, who might be perceived as a ‘symbolic figure’ towards whom the others were oriented. Thus, the (re-)election of the party group’s members depends on the perception of the ‘leading candidate’ as well as on their own election campaign.

The competition among ‘leading candidates’ enables a “personalisation of political claims”.⁴⁴ Such claims have to be communicated simply and effectively to citizens. However, mass communication poses a challenge to the European level as

“the nationality remains a decisive variable in journalistic activities as they are in particular dependent on the political sphere in view of the policy issues”.⁴⁵

The media are a powerful tool to bridge the cultural and linguistic divergences that emerge in an election campaign. According to Hackländer, correspondent and head of SWR studio in Brussels, the media are responsible for making citizens aware of the significant role of the EU, and it is important “to be informed about the decision makers and to take the opportunity to have a say in personnel decisions”.⁴⁶ Use of media is one powerful tool to get the message across the Member States about the need to change the direction of the EU.

⁴³ H. Schmitt MZES, ‘The European Parliament Elections of June 2004: Still Second-Order?’, *West European Politics*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2007, p. 651.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 668.

⁴⁵ O. Baisnée, ‘Les médias et l’Union européenne : un espace public encore introuvable’, in C. Belot and B. Cautrès (eds.), *La vie démocratique de l’Union européenne*, Paris, La documentation française, 2006, p. 69; Translated by the author.

⁴⁶ Interview with S. Hackländer, correspondent and head of SWR studio in Brussels, Brussels, 28 March 2014.

Nonetheless, it is not sufficient to communicate the vision on how the policies of the EU should change. It is first and foremost necessary to convince the electorate of the vision: only a convincing result would provide the S&D party group with a political mandate that could enhance its power by providing its ‘leading candidate’ for the next Commission Presidency.

To find out to what extent the role of the ‘leading candidate’ might shape ‘office seeking’ within the EP party group, the focus shifts in the next section to the analysis of internal party cohesion.

Office Seeking

In light of the increasing powers of the EP, the cohesion of the mainstream party groups has improved. This underlines the correlation: “the more power an established political group has, the greater is the incentive and the necessity to cooperate”.⁴⁷ It was expected that the ‘leading candidate’ Schulz might positively influence internal cohesion within the S&D party group, as he was regarded as a political figure towards whom the others were oriented. According to Schmidt, vice-president of the German Bundestag and Former Federal Minister, as well as Freitag, member of the German Bundestag and deputy foreign policy spokeswoman of the parliamentary group of Social Democrats, a ‘leading candidate’ strengthens the sense of solidarity within the S&D party group. However, this might not be immediately evident as it is a continuous process.⁴⁸

In general, voting cohesion inside mainstream party groups in the EP is relatively high. Nonetheless, it needs to be stressed that ‘group whipping’ within the EP is less strict than in national parliaments. Even though MEPs “shall be free and independent [and] shall vote on an individual and personal basis”⁴⁹, they face a dilemma in the party system in the

⁴⁷ Interview Görgen, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁸ Interview with Ulla Schmidt, vice-president of the German Bundestag and Former Federal Minister, and Dagmar Freitag, member of the German Bundestag and deputy foreign policy spokeswoman of the parliamentary group of Social Democrats, Berlin, 20 February 2014.

⁴⁹ R. Corbett, F. Jacobs and M. Shackleton, *The European Parliament*, London, John Harper Publishing, 2011, 8th edition, p. 121.

EP due to the multi-level nature of the EU.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the national cross-party support for the ‘leading candidate’ could contribute to a shift from a national identity to a European identity, which would be reflected in a stronger collaboration with fellow European party colleagues.

As stated in the third Vote Watch Report, MEPs vote primarily along transnational political lines in the last EP, and the four largest political groups have recorded an increase in their cohesion rates.⁵¹ On average, the cohesion rate for the S&D party group is 91, 54 % in all policy areas from 2009 to 2014.⁵²

In line with the argument that an increase in party group size leads to more cohesion, the EPP party group was able to exercise more power as it is the strongest party in the current legislature.⁵³ However, the influence of the ‘leading candidate’ on his fellow EP party members remains to be seen, as “loyalty to the party leadership is a statistically and substantively important determinant of who get what assignment”.⁵⁴

Nonetheless, Junker was not able to exercise influence on office assignments in particular in view of the committee assignments and the distribution of key positions in the EP as it was beyond his abilities as President of the Commission to take such decisions. On the other hand, as the re-elected President of the EP, Schulz was able to shape these decisions.

To find out to what extent the role of the ‘leading candidate’ might shape ‘policy seeking’ within the EP party group, the focus shifts in the next section to the analysis of coalition formation within the EP.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ As stated in the third VoteWatch Report “cohesion measures the extent to which the members of a single political group vote together as a block. The higher the score, the more cohesive a group is.”; No name, ‘Voting in the 2009-2014 European Parliament: How do MEPs Vote after Lisbon?’, *VoteWatch*, 2014, Third report, retrieved 19 April 2014, http://www.votewatch.eu/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/votewatch_report_voting_behavior_26_january_beta.pdf.

⁵² VoteWatch Europe, ‘European political group cohesion rates on all policy areas (14.07.2009 – 17.04.2014)’, retrieved 2 May 2014, <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/political-group-cohesion.html>.

⁵³ Hix, Noury and Roland, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

⁵⁴ Faas, *op. cit.*, p. 846.

Policy Seeking

Given the fact that no single party has a majority in the EP, coalition formation is necessary to guarantee the absolute majority, as this is technically required in the second reading of the ‘Ordinary Legislative Procedure’.⁵⁵ In addition to the technical reason, there is a pragmatic explanation: “the EP is most influential, regardless of the procedure, when it can present a unified front to the other EU institutions.”⁵⁶ In the EP there are two different types of coalition formation, namely a ‘grand coalition’ and left/right voting. To analyse a possible movement from consensus-oriented towards partisan-oriented coalition formation in view of the role of the ‘leading candidate’, the two types of coalitions are analysed in detail.

It is a common perception of party competition in the EP that the EPP and the S&D collude with than compete against each other.⁵⁷ There are four main explanations for this voting behaviour: firstly, the aforementioned technical rules force the EPP and the S&D to vote together to guarantee the necessary majority in the EU’s legislative procedures. Secondly, there is a collective institutional interest of both EP party groups to increase the influence of the only directly elected institution as a whole.⁵⁸ Thirdly, the EPP and the S&D share ideological similarities on many issues on the EU agenda. According to Martinez, legal advice to the President of the EP, the ‘grand coalition’ reflects a traditional and pro-European approach against rising Euroscepticism in the EU.⁵⁹ The final argument refers to the collusion between the EPP and the S&D “to prevent the smaller groups from securing influence in the internal workings of the EP”.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ A. Kreppel, ‘Rules, Ideology and Coalition Formation in the European Parliament: Past, Present and Future’, *European Union Politics*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2000, p. 358.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

⁵⁷ VoteWatch 2014, Third Report, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁵⁸ Hix, Kreppel and Noury, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

⁵⁹ Interview with Maria José Martinez, legal adviser to the President of the European Parliament, Brussels, 26 March 2014.

⁶⁰ Hix, Kreppel and Noury, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

The voting coalitions in the EP in the last legislature reflected the consolidated nature of the EP.⁶¹ Even though there are no signs for a radical change, there are greater incentives for left/right politics in certain policy areas. A shift towards left/right politics is particularly visible in these three policy areas: budget, civil liberties and home affairs as well as environmental and public health.⁶² Nonetheless, it is striking that the policy area ‘Economic and Monetary Affairs’ shows a “noticeable increase in the appearance of the ‘grand coalition’ on these issues”.⁶³ The same applies for ‘Constitutional and Inter-Institutional Affairs’. Even though the competition among ‘leading candidates’ might contribute to a certain extent to the expected deliberation and party contestation within the Union, Schulz’s efforts to convince his fellow S&D party members to engage in alliances with left-wing parties would have remained limited in his function as President of the Commission.

To better understand the influence of the ‘leading candidate’ on the role of the EP in the institutional setting of the EU, the focus shifts in the following section to the possible effects on the accountability of the Commission vis-à-vis the only directly elected institution as well, as a possible strengthening of both institutions vis-à-vis the European Council.

2.3. Shaping Inter-Institutional Relations

In light of the third hypothesis it is tested that the competition among ‘leading candidates’: improves the accountability of the Commission vis-à-vis the EP and thus the electorate; and strengthens the democratic and political standing of the EP and the Commission vis-à-vis the European Council.

To test this hypothesis the symbolic relevance of the elected ‘leading candidate’ in view of the inter-institutional relationship between the EP and the Commission is analysed. Secondly, society’s expectations towards the European Council in view of the European elections are assessed.

⁶¹ VoteWatch 2014, Third Report, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶³ *Ibid.*.

The 'Leading Candidate': Only A Symbolic Act?

According to Martinez, the role of the 'leading candidate' might not remarkably improve the already well-established inter-institutional relationship between the EP and the Commission.⁶⁴ The role of the 'leading candidate' has to be examined in an inter-institutional context, which will not change in the near future. Nonetheless, Martinez stressed that the elected President of the Commission has democratic support, which might be perceived as a symbolic act and could positively shape the inter-institutional relationship.⁶⁵ In the literature, the Commission is either portrayed as a "technocratic, non-majoritarian institution or as an agent of EU member governments".⁶⁶ Nonetheless, in view of the increasingly powerful role of the EP, several scholars refer to an increased parliamentarisation of the Commission: "To resolve specific institutional grievances and [...] to realign inter-institutional relations" the institutions have developed so-called 'codes of conduct'.⁶⁷

However, it needs to be stressed that the EP and the Commission are not only inter-institutionally linked, they are mutually dependent on each other. The close relationship between these institutions is facilitated by similar structures that are based on the same organisational principles: first of all the officials and politicians of both institutions regard their respective EU institution as their primary affiliation. Furthermore, the EP as well as the Commission regard "sectorisation as one of their basic principles of organisational specialisation".⁶⁸ The supranational connections as well as the horizontally specialised structure lead to a behaviour which is characterised by a European dimension: MEPs increasingly vote and form transnational alliances (as shown in the previous section), and the

⁶⁴ Interview Martinez, *loc. cit.*

⁶⁵ Interview Martinez, *loc. cit.*

⁶⁶ M. Egeberg, A. Gornitzka and J. Trondal, 'A Not So Technocratic Executive? Everyday Interaction between the European Parliament and the Commission', *West European Politics*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2014, p. 3.

⁶⁷ D. Judge and D. Earnshaw, 'The European Parliament and the Commission Crisis: A New Assertiveness?', *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administrative, and Institutions*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2002, p. 364.

⁶⁸ Egeberg et al., *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Commission proposals reflect “the ideological profile of either the Commissioner [...] or of the Commission President”.⁶⁹ These three structural similarities strengthen the inter-institutional relationship, which is reflected in daily interaction between the EP and the Commission.

In light of the possible influence of the ‘leading candidate’ on the process of politically shaping in the Commission, it is important to take the factors into account that influence the decision-making process in the College of Commissioners. In Article 17.3 TEU it is stated that:

“The members of the Commission shall be chosen on the ground of their general competence and European commitment from persons whose independence is beyond doubt. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Commission shall be completely independent.”⁷⁰

Nonetheless, according to Morten Egeberg and Arndt Wonka, Commissioners’ behaviour is framed by four different roles, namely the ‘portfolio role’, the ‘Commission role’, the ‘country role’ and the ‘party role’. Therefore Commissioners are influenced in their decision-making by various factors, which take on completely different emphasis depending on the respective context.⁷¹ Nonetheless,

“while the ‘portfolio role’ seems to be most frequently evoked, both the ‘Commission role’ and the ‘country role’ are important ingredients of the College’s political life’. Less visible is the political ‘party role’”.⁷²

In light of these findings the influence of the elected ‘leading candidate’ as President of the Commission remains limited.⁷³ On the other hand, due to his strong personal and political profile Schulz might have been able to influence the political shaping to a certain extent.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁷⁰ Foster, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

⁷¹ M. Egeberg, ‘Executive politics as usual: role behaviour and conflict dimensions in the College of European Commissioners’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2006, pp. 5-6; A. Wonka, ‘Decision-making dynamics in the Commission’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 15, no. 8, 2008, pp. 1148-1151.

⁷² Egeberg, *op. cit.*, p.11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷⁴ Interview Martinez, *loc. cit.*

To find out to what extent society's expectations might 'push' the European Council to propose one of the 'leading candidates' as Commission candidate to the EP, the focus shifts in the next section to the relationship with this institution.

Proposing the 'Leading Candidate' as Commission President: A Sign of Respect Towards the Electorate?

In her speech at the opening ceremony of the 61st academic year of the College of Europe in Bruges in November 2010, Merkel emphasized the role of the European Council:

"It should not be overlooked that the European Council, too, is part of the EU; it is a EU institution. The Member States are constitutive elements of the Union, they are not its adversaries."⁷⁵

It is without doubt that the European Council is an important institution in the EU. Nonetheless, according to Martinez the European Council will have to take the elections to the EP into account to create and strengthen confidence and trust among the European population; it serves as a gesture of respect towards the European electorate and reflects the spirit of the Treaty of Lisbon. However, it does not necessarily mean that the 'leading candidate' from the biggest EP party group would become President of the Commission.⁷⁶ The question of if and to what extent the newly introduced element of competing (and as a result elected) 'leading candidate' might influence the relationship between the EP and the European Council remains to be seen.

To underline the experimental character of this work and to stress the complexity linked with the influence of 'leading candidates' for the Commission Presidency on the role of party groups in the EP, the focus shifts in the following part to the evaluation of the findings.

⁷⁵ A. Merkel, 'Speech by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel at the opening ceremony of the 61st academic year of the College of Europe in Bruges', Bruges, 2 November 2010, p. 6.

⁷⁶ Interview Martinez, *loc. cit.*

3. A first Step towards a Federal Structure

In view of the title question, “Politicising the European Union?” it can only be said that the competition among ‘leading candidates’ can be perceived as an attempt to do so. However, its success will be visible after the European elections and – most probably – only in a long term perspective. Despite its experimental character, this work shows remarkable findings.

Firstly, the nomination and election process of Schulz as the ‘leading candidate’ as well as the common cross-border campaign characterised an EU-wide approach. However, as indicated in the polls, it did not automatically raise public awareness and interest in the election campaign. Secondly, the analysis showed that Schulz positively shaped the public perception of the S&D party group, which might have increased the chances for his fellow party members to be (re-)elected. At this point in time, it is not possible to measure his influence on internal party cohesion and coalition formation as ‘leading candidate’ but rather in his new role as re-elected EP President. Likewise the analysis did not show that Schulz would have been able to exercise influence on coalition formation. Thirdly, the competition among and final election of a ‘leading candidate’ is perceived as a ‘symbolic act’, which could deepen the already well-established relationship between the EP and the Commission and could strengthen the democratic and political standing of both institutions vis-à-vis the European Council.

It can be concluded that competing ‘leading candidates’ enhances the process of deliberation and party contestation and thus strengthen the role of the EP party groups. Despite this development, it needs to be stressed that the institutional design of the Union is based on the principle of institutional balance and that “the EU still lacks several of the fundamental and interconnected characteristics normally associated with a parliamentary system”.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the new challenges and opportunities linked with Art. 17.7 TEU and its Declaration No. 11 might be perceived as a first step towards a federal structure. From a

⁷⁷ Judge and Earnshaw, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

long term perspective, this might even counteract the perceived democratic deficit in the EU.⁷⁸ The official election result has shown that the step towards deliberation and party contestation has not stimulated the European population to go to vote. Due to the low turnout in the European elections, the following question needs to be asked: “Which direction will the EU take?”

Conclusion

As shown in this work, the competition among ‘leading candidates’ enhance the process of deliberation and party contestation and thus strengthen the role of EP party groups. In view of the experimental character of this work, the author was only able to fully prove that the competition among ‘leading candidates’ leads to EU-wide campaigns. However, the hypotheses that the competition strengthens the profile of EP party groups and improves the inter-institutional relationship remain to a great extent subject to assumptions and predictions at this point in time and might only be proven in a long term perspective. Nonetheless, the analysis of the influence of the ‘leading candidate’ for the Commission Presidency on the role of EP party groups shows remarkable findings as summarized in the evaluation.

The research design of this work proves helpful in light of the analysis of the influence of ‘leading candidates’ for the Commission Presidency on the role of EP party groups. Nonetheless, the theoretical part shows certain shortcomings: various criteria have not been taken into account, such as the analysis of the institutional strengths or the subsequent power linked to public visibility.⁷⁹ In addition the analysis examines only the ‘leading candidate’ Schulz and the S&D party group and therefore provides a limited perspective. A comparative analysis between the EPP and the S&D would provide further insights into this field.

⁷⁸ Hix, 2006, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-11.

⁷⁹ Monar, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

Therefore it can be concluded that the shift towards left/right politics in the EU in general and the EP in particular might not be visible in the current legislature. Even though a visible shift towards left/right politics might not take place in the near future, it is nonetheless possible to speak of ‘leading candidates’ as a significant symbolic change. At a later point in time, these European elections might be regarded as the first step towards a currently unknown political path at the European level. Therefore, analysing the influence of ‘leading candidates’ for the Commission Presidency on the role of EP party groups would be a promising avenue of future research.

Even though the European elections did not bring a significant political change, they are of symbolic importance, which could pave the way for an effective change in the European elections in 2019 and thus justify the slogan of the recent EP election campaign ‘This time it is different’.

Bibliography

- Bache, Ian, George, Stephen and Bulmer, Simon, *Politics in the European Union*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, 3rd edition.
- Baisnée, Olivier, 'Les médias et l'Union européenne: un espace public encore introuvable', in C. Belot and B. Cautrès (eds.), *La vie démocratique de l'Union européenne*, Paris, La documentation française, 2006.
- Bertoncini, Yves, 'European Elections: Less Abstention, More "Populism"?' , *Notre Europe Tribune*, November 2013.
- Birch, Anthony H., *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Democracy*. London/New York, Routledge, 2001.
- Buonanno, Laurie and Nugent, Neill, 'The Principle Policy Institutions', in L. Buonanno and N. Nugent (eds.), *Policies and Policy Processes of the European Union*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillian, 2013.
- Cerulus, Laurens, 'Van Rompuy scorns direct election of Commission President', *EurActiv*, 14 October 2013.
- Cerulus, Laurens, 'German coalition talks cast long shadow over EU elections', *EurActiv*, 29 October 2013.
- Corbett, Richard, Jacobs, Francis and Shackleton, Michael, *The European Parliament*, London, John Harper Publishing, 2011, 8th edition.
- Cunningham, Kevin and Hix, Simon, *Who will win the EP elections?*, Votewatch, 5 March 2014, retrieved 2 May 2014, <http://www.electio2014.eu/pollsandsenarios/pollsblog>.
- Egeberg, Morton, 'Executive politics as usual: role behaviour and conflict dimensions in the College of European Commissioners', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2006.
- Egeberg, Morton, Gornitzka, Ase and Trondal, Jarle, 'A Not So Technocratic Executive? Everyday Interaction between the European Parliament and the Commission', *West European Politics*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2014.
- European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions*, COM(2013)126 final, 12 March 2013.
- European Parliament, *European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2013 on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014*, 2013/2102(INI), 4 July 2013.
- Faas, Thorsten, 'To defect or not to defect? National, institutional and party group pressures on MEPs and their consequences for party group cohesion in the European Parliament', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 42, 2003.
- Follesdal, Andreas, and Hix, Simon, 'Why there is a democratic deficit in the EU: A response to Majone and Moravcsik', *European Governance Papers*, no. C-05-02, 2005.
- Foster, Nigel, *EU Treaties and Legislation 2010-2011*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010/2011, 21st edition.
- Dr. Görgen, Joachim, journalist and department head of 'Trimediale Nachrichten bei SWR' in Germany, Mainz, 26 March 2014.
- Hackländer, Sabine, correspondent and head of SWR studio in Brussels, Brussels, 28 March 2014.
- Hix, Simon, 'Legislative Behaviour and Party Competition in the European Parliament: An Application of Nominate to the EU', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2001.

- Hix, Simon, 'Why the EU needs (Left-Right) Politics? Policy Reform and Accountability are Impossible without it' in S. Bartolini and S. Hix, 'Politics: The Right or the Wrong Sort of Medicine for the EU?', *Notre Europe Policy Paper* no. 19, 2006.
- Hix, Simon, and Hoyland, Bjorn, *The Political System of the European Union*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Hix, Simon, Noury, Abdul and Roland, Gérard, 'Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament, 1979-2001', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2005.
- Hix, Simon, Noury, Abdul G. and Roland, Gerard, *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Jacqué, Jean-Paul, 'The Principle of Institutional Balance', *Common Market Law Review*, vol. 41, 2004.
- Judge, David and Earnshaw, David, 'The European Parliament and the Commission Crisis: A New Assertiveness?', *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administrative, and Institutions*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2002.
- Knaup, Horand, 'Krönungsmesse für den Buchhändler aus Würselen', *Spiegel Online*, 1 March 2014.
- Kreppel, Amie, 'Rules, Ideology and Coalition Formation in the European Parliament: Past, Present and Future', *European Union Politics*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2000.
- Ladrech, Robert, 'National Political Parties and European Governance: The Consequences of 'Missing in Action'', *West European Politics*, vol. 30, no. 5, 2007.
- Lijphart, Arend, *Pattern of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.
- Lord, Christopher J., *Democracy in the European Union*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press/University Association for Contemporary European Studies, 1998.
- Lord, Christopher, J., 'Democracy and Democratization in the European Union', in S. Bromley (ed.), *Governing the European Union*, London, Sage, 2001.
- Machmer, Armin, spokesperson to the President of the European Parliament, Brussels, 26 March 2014.
- Martinez, Maria José, legal adviser to the President of the European Parliament, Brussels, 26 March 2014.
- Merkel, Angela, 'Speech by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel at the opening ceremony of the 61st academic year of the College of Europe in Bruges', Bruges, 2 November 2010.
- Monar, Jörg, 'The European Union's Institutional Balance of Power After the Lisbon Treaty', 2012, *online paper*, retrieved 14 October 2013 from http://ec.europa.eu/education/jean-monnet/doc/ecsa10/monarb_en.pdf.
- Moravcsik, Andrew, 'In Defence of the Democratic Deficit: Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40, no. 4, 2002.
- Noury, Abdul and Roland, Gérard, 'European Parliament – Should it have more power?', *Economic Policy*, 2002.
- Party of European Socialists, *A democratic and transparent process for designating the PES candidate for the European Commission Presidency – Resolution adopted by the PES Council in Warsaw on 2 December 2010*, Warsaw, 2/3 December 2010.
- Party of European Socialists, 'PES: Knock the vote', published on 11 March 2014, retrieved 18 April 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CrwVinFMEg>.
- Party of European Socialists, *PES Resolution – Selecting our common candidate in 2014, Brussels*, 24 November 2011.
- Party of European Socialists, *PES Statutes adopted by the 9th PES Congress*, Brussels, 28/29 September 2012.
- Party of European Socialists, *PES Manifesto – Towards a New Europe*, 1 March 2014.

- Sir Priestley, Julien, 'The 2014 EP elections – really different this time? Roundtable with Mr. Jo Leinen and Sir Julien Priestley', Brugge, College of Europe, 17 March 2014.
- Rasmussen, Anne, 'Party soldiers in a non-partisan community? Party linkage in the European Parliament', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 15, no. 8, 2008.
- Schmidt, Ulla, vice-president of the German Bundestag and Former Federal Minister, and Freitag, Dagmar, member of the German Bundestag and deputy foreign policy spokeswoman of the parliamentary group of Social Democrats, Berlin, 20 February 2014.
- Schmitt MZES, Hermann, 'The European Parliament Elections of June 2004: Still Second Order?', *West European Politics*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2007.
- Schmitz, Gregor P., 'Der Twitter-Trick von Martin Schulz', *Der Spiegel*, 14 March 2014.
- Schulz, Martin, 'Speech at the Rome Congress of the Party of European Socialists', 1 March 2014.
- Tsebelis, George, *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002.
- VoteWatch Europe. 'Voting in the 2009-2014 European Parliament: How do MEPs Vote after Lisbon?' VoteWatch, 2014, Third report, retrieved 19 April 2014, http://www.votewatch.eu/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/votewatch_report_voting_behavior_26_january_beta.pdf.
- VoteWatch Europe, 'European political group cohesion rates on all policy areas (14.07.2009 – 17.04.2014)', retrieved 2 May 2014, <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/political-group-cohesion.html>.
- Weiler, Joseph H. H., 'Euro-Elections 2014: The Quiet Revolution', Brugge, College of Europe, 2 October 2013.
- Wonka, Arndt, 'Decision-making dynamics in the Commission', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 15, no. 8, 2008.

Bruges Political Research Papers / Cahiers de recherche politique de Bruges

No 35 / 2014

Guillaume Meynet, Analyser l'influence du syndicalisme agricole majoritaire: quelle utilité pour le modèle néo-corporatiste? Etude de cas à partir du «mini-paquet lait

No 34 / 2014

Laurent Bonfond, Le Parlement européen et les actes délégués: De la conquête d'un pouvoir à son exercice

No 33 / 2014

Alexis Perier, Le quatrième paquet ferroviaire: l'impossible libéralisation?

No 32 / 2013

Eguzki Osteikoetxea, EU Trade Actors after Lisbon: Enhanced Negotiations or Business as Usual?

No 31 / 2013

David Freed, Do Institutional Changes Make a Difference? A Veto Player Analysis of how Institutional Changes in the Council of the EU Influence Legislative Efficiency and Outputs

No 30 / 2013

Camille Dehestru, Industries and Citizens' Groups Networks in EU Food Policy: The Emergence of 'Unholy Alliances' in Multilevel Governance?

No 29 / 2013

Carole Pouliquen, Le cadre européen de protection des données personnelles en matière pénale: Dimensions interne et externe

No 28 / 2013

Marta Zalewska and Oskar Josef Gstrein, National Parliaments and their Role in European Integration: The EU's Democratic Deficit in Times of Economic Hardship and Political Insecurity

No 27 / 2012

Laura Batalla Adam, The Significance of EU Topics in National Media: Has There Been a Europeanization of Reporting in the National Media?

No 26 / 2012

Claire Baffert, Participatory Approaches In The Management Of Natura 2000: When EU Biodiversity Policy Gets Closer to its Citizens

No 25 / 2012

Serena Garelli, The European Union's Promotion of Regional Economic Integration in Southeast Asia: Norms, Markets or Both?

No 24 / 2012

Luis Bouza García, Víctor Cuesta López, Elitsa Mincheva and Dorota Szeligowska, The European Citizens' Initiative – A First Assessment

No 23 / 2012

Isabelle de Lichtervelde, La défense des droits de l'homme en Chine: Le parlement européen est-il la voix normative de l'union européenne ?

No 22 / 2012

Erik Brattberg and Mark Rhinard, The EU and US as International Actors in Disaster Relief

No 21 / 2011

Alesia Koush, Fight against the Illegal Antiquities Traffic in the EU: Bridging the Legislative Gaps

No 20 / 2011

Neill Nugent and Laurie Buonanno, Explaining the EU's Policy Portfolio: Applying a Federal Integration Approach to EU Codecision Policy

No 19 / 2011

Frederika Cruce, How Did We End Up with This Deal? Examining the Role of Environmental NGOs in EU Climate Policymaking

No 18 / 2011

Didier Reynders, Vers une nouvelle 'gouvernance économique'?

No 17 / 2010

Violeta Podagelytė, Democracy beyond the Rhetoric and the Emergence of the "EU Prince": The Case of EU-Ukraine Relations

No 16 / 2010

Maroš Šefčovič, From Institutional Consolidation to Policy Delivery

No 15 / 2010

Sven Biscop and Jo Coelmont, Permanent Structured Cooperation in Defence: Building Effective European Armed Forces

No 14 / 2010

Antonio Missiroli, Implementing the Lisbon Treaty: The External Policy Dimension

No 13 / 2010

Anne-Céline Didier, The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT): A New Way for Promoting Innovation in Europe?

No 12 / 2010

Marion Salines, Success Factors of Macro-Regional Cooperation: The Example of the Baltic Sea Region

No 11 / 2010

Martin Caudron, Galileo: Le Partenariat Public-Privé à l'Epreuve du «Juste Retour»

No 10 / 2009

Davide Bradanini, The Rise of the Competitiveness Discourse—A Neo-Gramscian Analysis

No 9 / 2009

Adina Crisan, La Russie dans le nouveau Grand Jeu énergétique en Mer Noire: Nabucco et South Stream ou «l'art du kuzushi»

No 8 / 2008

Jonas Dreger, The Influence of Environmental NGOs on the Design of the Emissions Trading Scheme of the EU: An Application of the Advocacy Coalition Framework

No 7 / 2008

Thomas Kostera, Europeanizing Healthcare: Cross-border Patient Mobility and Its Consequences for the German and Danish Healthcare Systems

06 / 2007

Mathieu Rousselin, Le Multilatéralisme en Question: Le Programme de Doha pour le Développement et la Crise du Système Commercial Multilatéral

05 / 2007

Filip Engel, Analyzing Policy Learning in European Union Policy Formulation: The Advocacy Coalition Framework Meets New-Institutional Theory

04 / 2007

Michele Chang, Eric De Souza, Sieglinde Gstöhl, and Dominik Hanf, Papers prepared for the Colloquium, "Working for Europe: Perspectives on the EU 50 Years after the Treaties of Rome"

03 / 2007

Erwin van Veen, The Valuable Tool of Sovereignty: Its Use in Situations of Competition and Interdependence

02 / 2007

Mark Pollack, Principal-Agent Analysis and International Delegation: Red Herrings, Theoretical Clarifications, and Empirical Disputes

01 / 2006

Christopher Reynolds, All Together Now? The Governance of Military Capability Reform in the ESDP



Europe is in a constant state of flux. European politics, economics, law and indeed European societies are changing rapidly. The European Union itself is in a continuous situation of adaptation. New challenges and new requirements arise continually, both internally and externally.

The *College of Europe Studies* series seeks to publish research on these issues done at the College of Europe, both at its Bruges and its Natolin (Warsaw) campus. Focused on the European Union and the European integration process, this research may be specialised in the areas of political science, law or economics, but much of it is of an interdisciplinary nature. The objective is to promote understanding of the issues concerned and to make a contribution to ongoing discussions.

L'Europe subit des mutations permanentes. La vie politique, l'économie, le droit, mais également les sociétés européennes, changent rapidement. L'Union européenne s'inscrit dès lors dans un processus d'adaptation constant. Des défis et des nouvelles demandes surviennent sans cesse, provenant à la fois de l'intérieur et de l'extérieur.

La collection des *Cahiers du Collège d'Europe* publie les résultats des recherches menées sur ces thèmes au Collège d'Europe, au sein de ses deux campus (Bruges et Varsovie). Focalisés sur l'Union européenne et le processus d'intégration, ces travaux peuvent être spécialisés dans les domaines des sciences politiques, du droit ou de l'économie, mais ils sont le plus souvent de nature interdisciplinaire. La collection vise à approfondir la compréhension de ces questions complexes et contribue ainsi au débat européen

Series Titles:

- vol. 18** Schunz, Simon, *European Union Foreign Policy and the Global Climate Regime*, 2024 (371 p.), ISBN 978-2-87574-134-9 pb, 978-3-0352-6409-8 (eBook)
- vol. 17** Govaere, Inge / Hanf, Dominik (eds.), *Scrutinizing Internal and External Dimensions of European Law volumes I and II*, 2013 (880 p.), ISBN 978-2-87574-085-4 pb, ISBN 978-3-0352-6342-8 (eBook)
- vol. 16** Chang, Michele / Monar, Jörg (eds.), *The European Commission in the Post-Lisbon Era of Crises: Between Political Leadership and Policy Management*, 2013 (298 p.), ISBN 978-2-87574-028-1 pb, ISBN 978-3-0352-6294-0 (eBook)
- vol. 15** Mahnke, Dieter / Gstöhl, Sieglinde (eds.), *European Union Diplomacy: Coherence, Unity and Effectiveness*, 2012 (273 p.) ISBN 978-90-5201-842-3 pb, ISBN 978-3-0352-6172-1 (eBook)

- vol. 14** Lannon, Erwan (ed.), *The European Neighborhood Policy's Challenges*, 2012 (491p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-779-2 pb, ISBN 978-3-0352-6104-2 (eBook)
- vol. 13** Cremona, Marise / Monar, Jörg / Poli Sara (eds.), *The External Dimension of the European Union's Area of Freedom, Security and Justice*, 2011 (432 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-728-0 pb, ISBN 978-3-0352-6107-3 (eBook)
- vol. 12** Men, Jong / Balducci, Giuseppe (eds.), *Prospects and Challenges for EU-China Relations in the 21st Century*, 2010 (262 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-641-2 pb.
- vol. 11** Monar, Jörg (ed.), *The Institutional Dimension of the European Union's Area of Freedom, Security and Justice*, 2010 (268 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-615-3 pb.
- vol. 10** Hanf, Dominik / Malacek, Klaus / Muir, elise (eds.), *Langues et construction européenne*, 2010 (286 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-594-1 pb.
- vol. 9** Pelkmans, Jacques / Hanf, Dominik / Chang, Michele (eds.), *The EU Internal Market in Comparative Perspective*, 2008 (314 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-424-1 pb.
- vol. 8** Govaere, Inge / Ullrich, Hanns (eds.), *Intellectual Property, Market Power and the Public Interest*, 2008 (315 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-422-7 pb.
- vol. 7** Inotai, András, *The European Union and Southeastern Europe: Troubled Waters Ahead?*, 2007 (414 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-071-7 pb.
- vol. 6** Govaere, Inge / Ullrich, Hanns (eds.), *Intellectual Property, Public Policy, and International Trade*, 2007 (232 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-064-9 pb.
- vol. 5** Hanf, Dominik / Muñoz, Rodolphe (eds.), *La libre circulation des personnes: États des lieux et perspectives*, 2007 (329 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-061-8 pb.
- vol. 4** Mahncke, Dieter / Gstöhl, Sieglinde (eds.), *Europe's Near Abroad: Promises and Prospects of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy*, 2008 (316 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-047-2.
- vol. 3** Mahncke, Dieter / Monar, Jörg (eds.), *International Terrorism: A European Response to a Global Threat?* 2006 (191p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-046-5 / US-ISBN 978-0-8204-6691-0 pb.
- vol. 2** Demaret, Paul / Govaere, Inge / Hanf, Dominik (eds.), *European Legal Dynamics - Dynamiques juridiques européennes*, Revised and updated edition of *30 Years of European Legal Studies at the College of Europe*, 2005 / 2007 (571 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-067-0 pb.
- vol. 1** Mahncke, Dieter / Ambos, Alicia / Reynolds, Christopher (eds.), *European Foreign Policy: From Rhetoric to Reality?*, 2004 / second printing 2006 (381 p.), ISBN 978-90-5201-247-6 / US-ISBN 978-0-8204-6627-9 pb.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list and be informed of new publications and department events, please email rina.balbaert@coleurope.eu. Or find us on Facebook: College of Europe Politics and Administration Department.