

# Europeanisation of National Parliaments: Experiences and Best Practices



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# What is ahead?

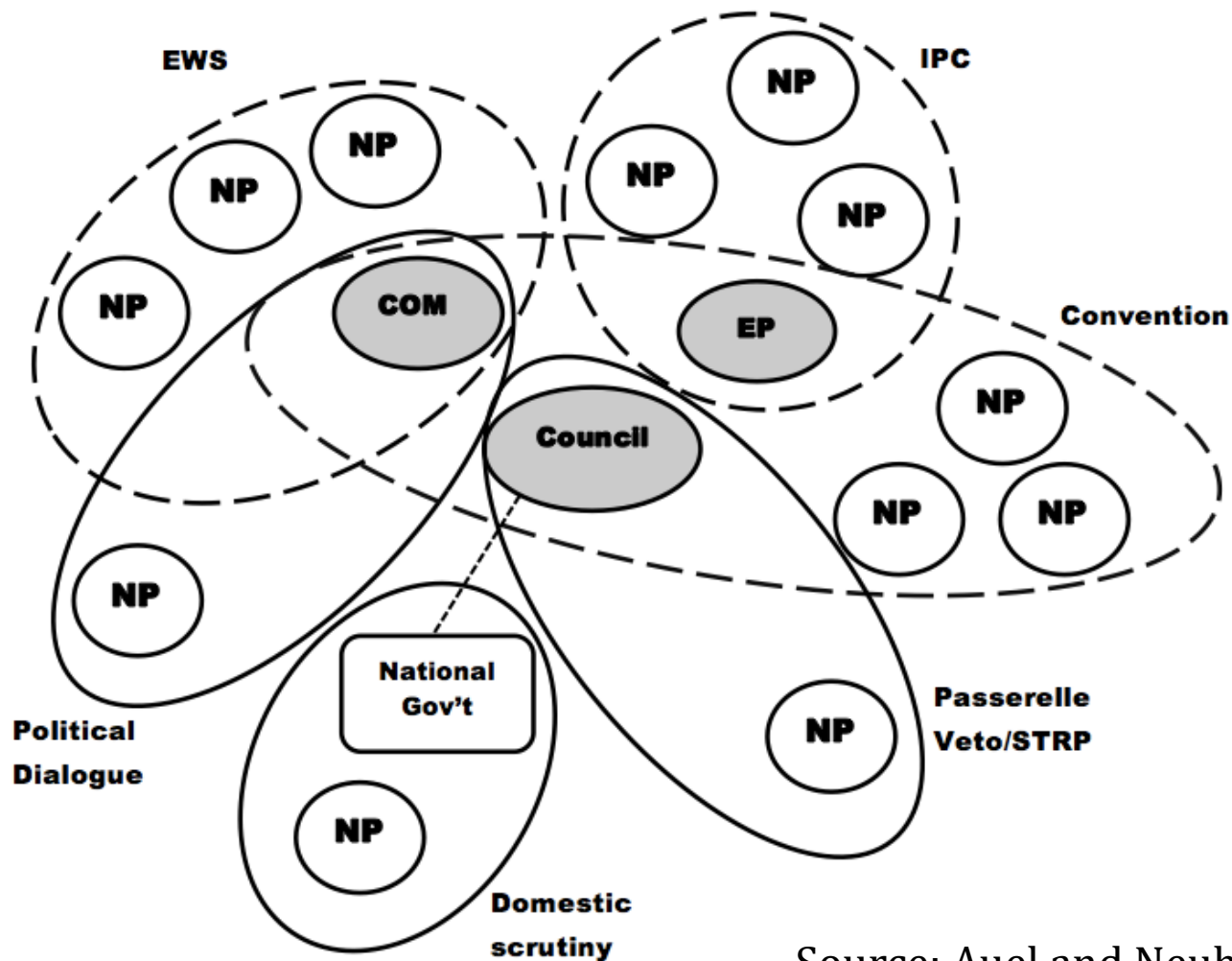
- I. A new role for national parliaments: arenas of parliamentary involvement after Lisbon
- II. Involvement within the **domestic** arena
- III. Involvement within the **European** arenas
- IV. Conditions for active involvement
- v. Concluding remarks



# I. New 'Tools' in Lisbon Treaty

- ▣ Expanded information rights
- ▣ Strengthened role in Treaty revisions
- ▣ Subsidiarity Watchdogs: Early Warning System
- ▣ Role in monitoring and evaluation in the area of freedom, security and justice (Europol, Eurojust)
- ▣ Formal Recognition of IPC
- ▣ Add to domestic scrutiny and Political Dialogue

# NP as Multi-Arena Players...



Source: Auel and Neuhold 2017

# Objective of study



- To examine how national parliaments have resorted to the **different tools** at their disposal within the different arenas;
- To then draw **lessons** from these national parliamentary experiences

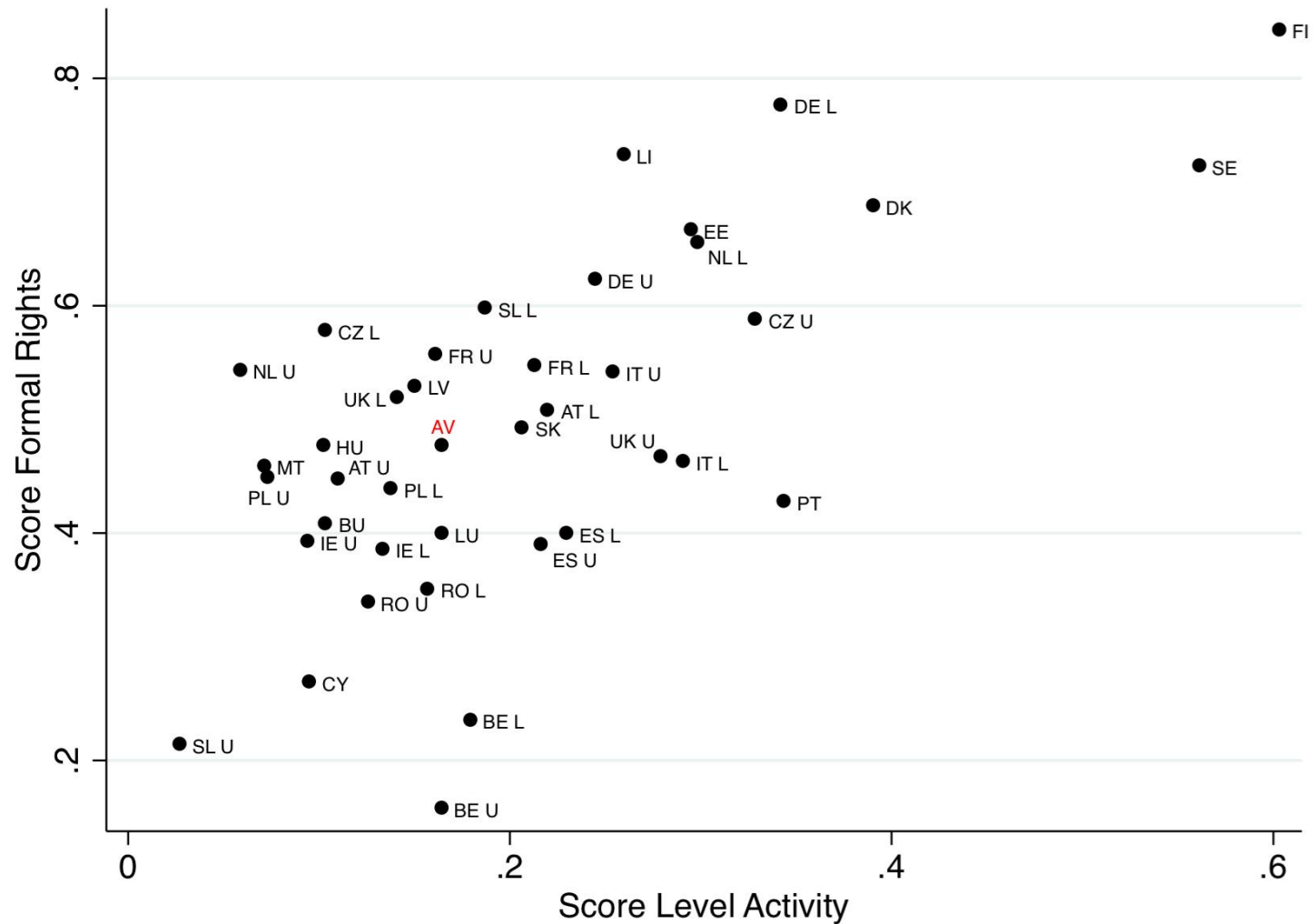
## II. Parliamentary involvement within the 'domestic arena'

- Process of harmonization over time, partly due to mutual learning, partly due to reforms after Lisbon
- Differences persist with regard to
  - ▣ Binding character of ex ante involvement
  - ▣ Degree of mainstreaming
  - ▣ Timing of involvement
  - ▣ Scrutiny of European Councils
  - ▣ Parliamentary communication of EU politics

# Four roles parliaments play in the domestic arena

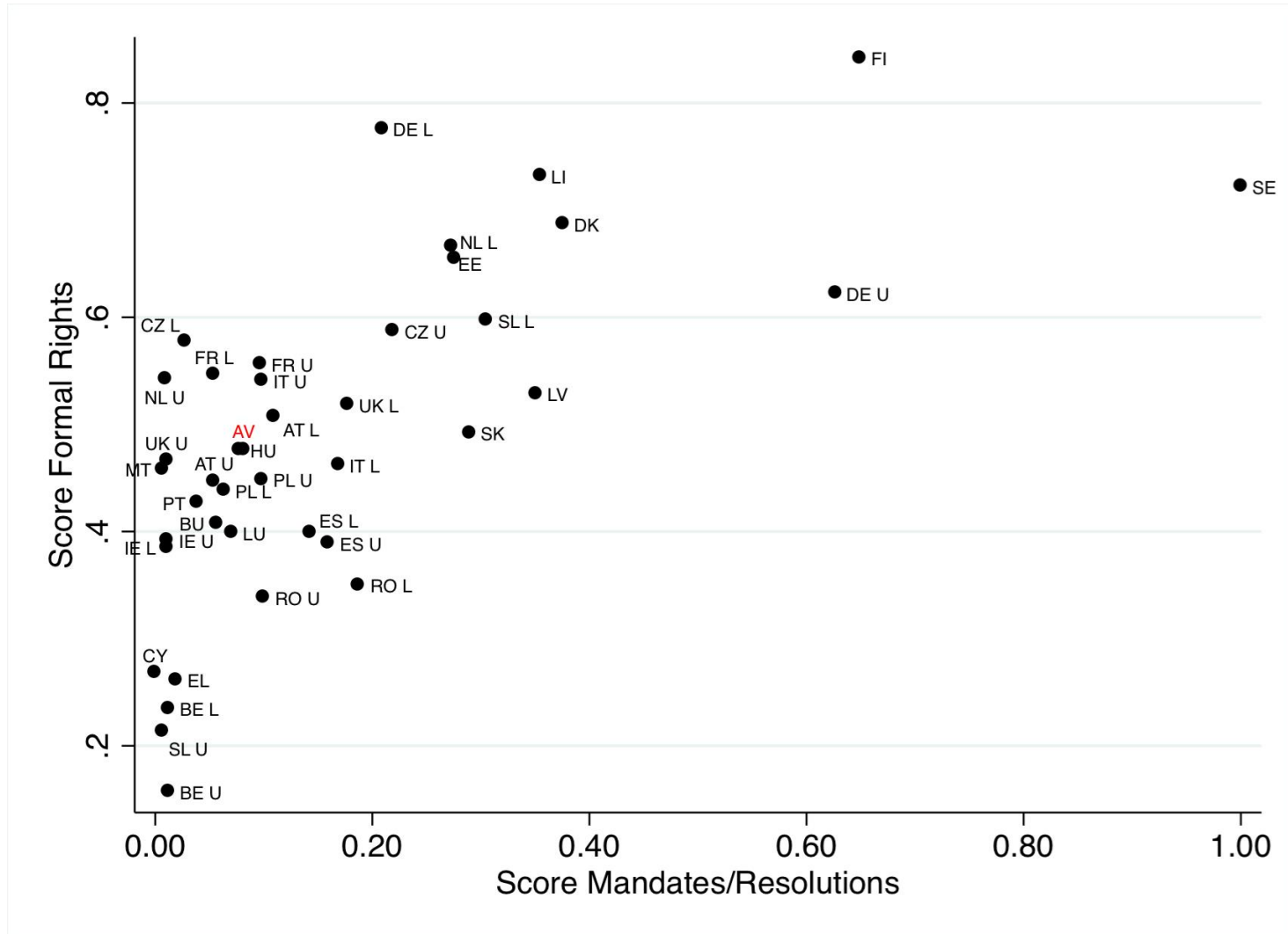
- ❑ **‘Expert’**: develops in-depth expertise on EU matters
- ❑ **‘Policy Shaper’**: parliamentary influence on the government’s negotiation position (ex ante mandates or resolutions)
- ❑ **‘Government Watchdog’**: holds governments to account (normally takes place *ex post*)
- ❑ **‘Public Forum’**: parliamentary communication function

# Relationship between institutional strength and activity in EU affairs





# Relationship between institutional strength and mandates/resolutions



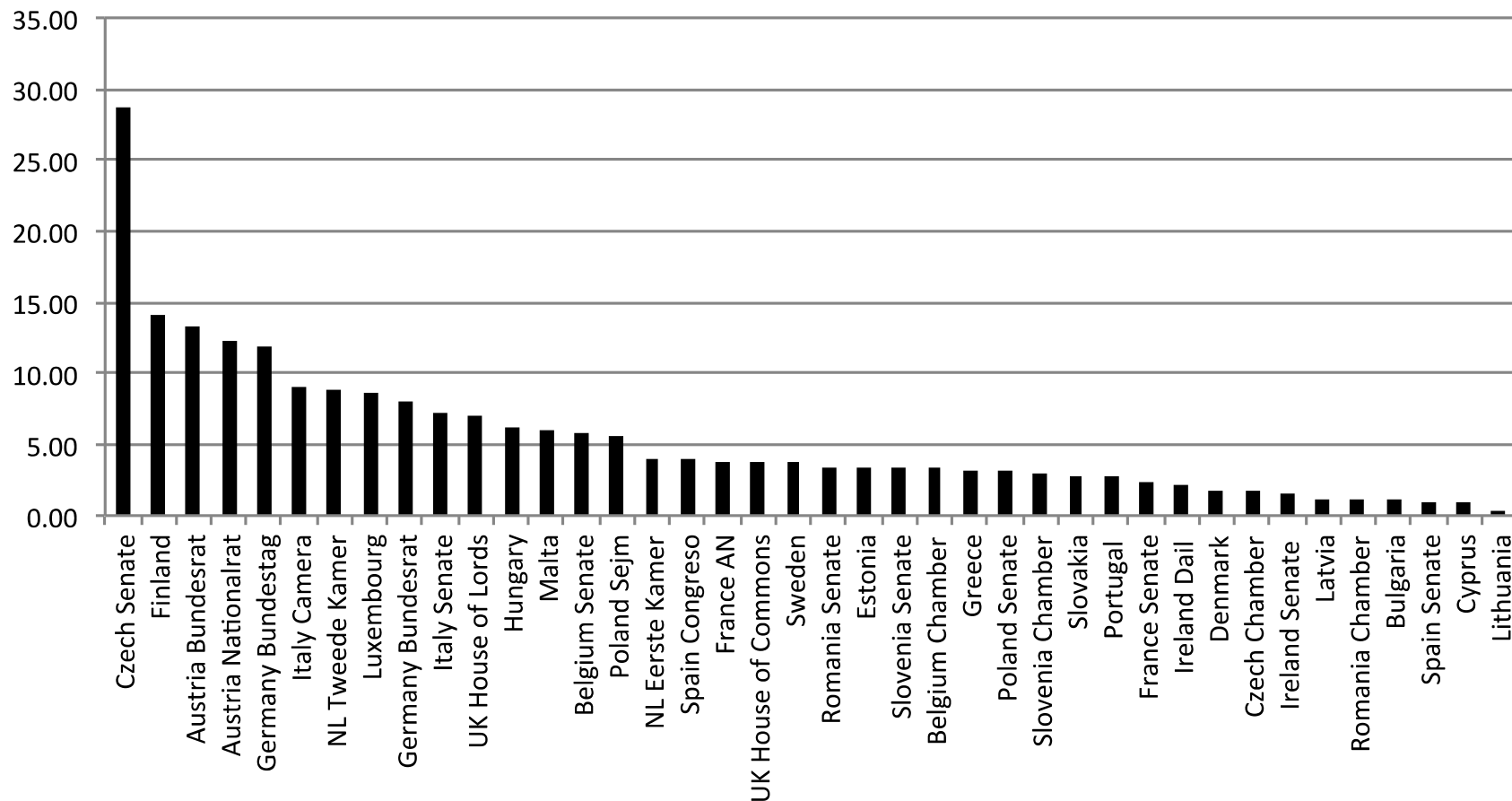
# Scrutiny of European Council meetings

## *Ex Ante*

<i>Ex post</i>	<b>Limited involvement</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Plenary</b>	<b>Both</b>
<b>Limited involvement</b>	<i>Bulgaria, Luxemburg, Malta, Romania</i>	<i>Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>	
<b>Committee</b>	<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>Belgium Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Slovenia</i>	<i>Croatia, France, Portugal</i>	<i>Germany</i>
<b>Plenary</b>	<i>Hungary, Spain, UK</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>Ireland</i>	
<b>Both</b>	<i>Greece*</i>			

Source: Adapted and updated from Wessels et al. 2013

# Plenary debating time spent on EU issues (in per cent)



# Four roles parliaments play in the domestic arena

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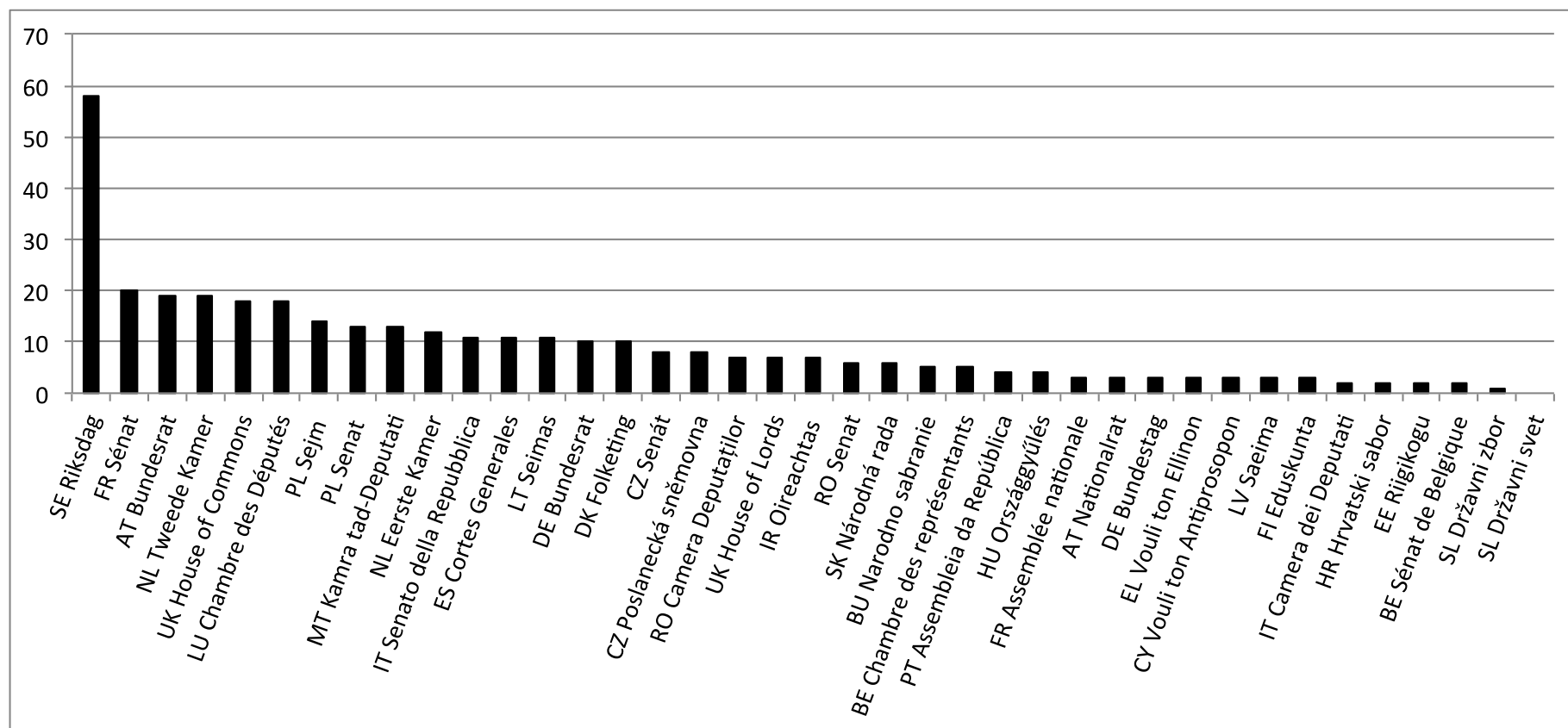
# III. How do they use the Lisbon tools?



- ❑ Treaty revisions
- ❑ Action before CJEU re subsidiarity
- ❑ Early Warning Mechanism
- ❑ Political Dialogue
- ❑ Inter-Parliamentary cooperation.

# How do they use the 'Lisbon tools': EWS

## Reasoned opinions (**EWS**) by Chamber 2010 - 2017



Source: Annual Reports of the European Commission

# Three yellow cards....

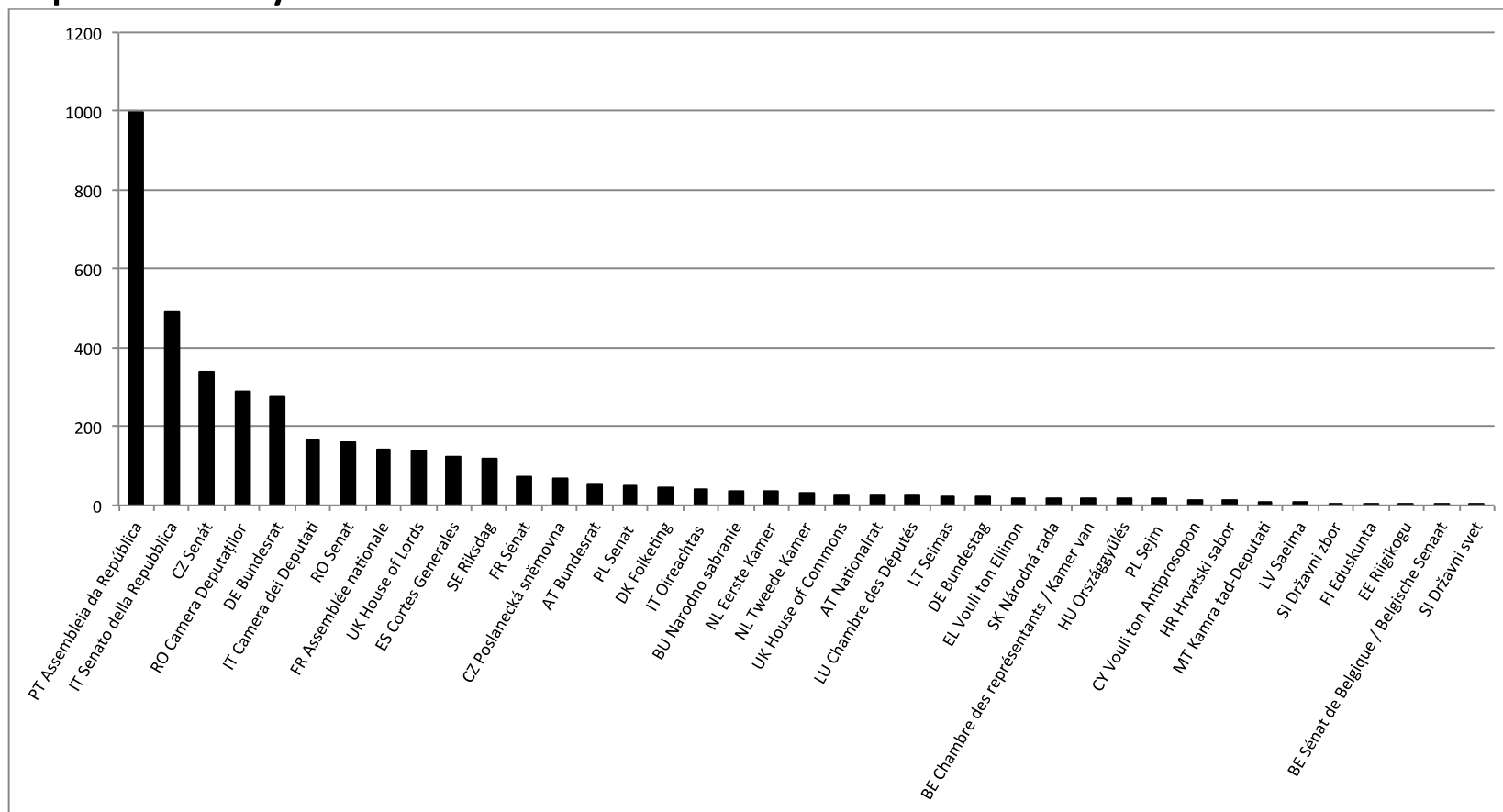
Have been issued on:

- the so-called 'Monti II' Regulation,
- the Regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office,
- and most recently on the Posted Workers Directive.



# How do they use the 'tools': *Political Dialogue*

## Opinions by Chamber 2010 - 2017



Source: Annual Reports of the European Commission



# Inter-parliamentary cooperation

## Main channels:

- ▣ Inter-Parliamentary Conferences COSAC,
- ▣ administrative liaisons in Brussels,
- ▣ Inter-Parliamentary EU information eXchange (IPEX)



# Inter-parliamentary cooperation

## ***Proliferation and Specialisation:***

- Inter-parliamentary Conference on CFSP and CSDP (established in 2012)
- Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance (2013)
- Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol (2017)

# Inter-parliamentary cooperation

- Arena for inter-parliamentary exchange of information
- Virtual Third Chamber
- Any influence?
  - Coordination yellow cards
  - Divergent interests and institutional rivalries
- Deliberation - Public impact?
  - Media

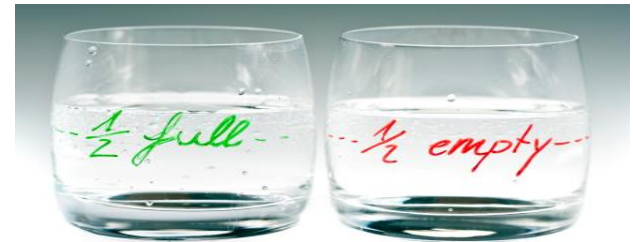
# IV. Conditions for active involvement

- ▣ Access to information
- ▣ Selection/Prioritisation of dossiers
- ▣ Designating MPs responsible for EU affairs
- ▣ Role of administration



# V. Concluding remarks

- No easy answer to the question of whether parliaments play an active role in EU affairs
- Overall, we can find both extremely active chambers and scrutiny laggards – and a large field in between
- Role as MAP not fully developed
- Level of engagement depends both on institutional factors AND motivation



# Concluding remarks



Strengthened parliamentary participation rights

- *enable* parliaments to fulfil their roles
- lead to reforms of parliamentary procedures
- and increase MPs' motivation to become engaged across different arenas.

# Concluding Remarks



- Quantity vs. Quality: continuous and broad control vs. in-depth scrutiny
- Early Warning Mechanism and Political Dialogue: Efficiency boost or distraction?
- Parliamentary Communication
- IPC: development into European public space?

# Last words...

- Any **assessment** of parliamentary involvement also depends on the prior definition of what their role in the EU should consist of.
- Parliamentary involvement ought to help overcome what Lindseth (2010) has termed the 'democratic disconnect' between [citizens's perception of European governance as bureaucratic and distant, on the one hand, and attachments to national institutions as the true loci of democratic and constitutional legitimacy, on the other.