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**The European Parliament as a political actor: how
the EP is pushing for increased influence in
different policy areas.
Comparing the environmental and foreign policy fields.**

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ABSTRACT

La presente tesi mira ad analizzare il ruolo sempre più rilevante del Parlamento Europeo (PE) all'interno dell'Unione Europea (UE), concentrandosi specificatamente su due differenti settori politici: l'ambiente e la politica estera. La scelta di concentrarsi su questi ambiti particolari è motivata dalla loro capacità di fungere da esempi rappresentativi dell'evoluzione del PE e delle sue prerogative. Nel contesto istituzionale dell'Unione Europea e del suo processo di integrazione, il PE rappresenta infatti l'istituzione che ha subito uno dei processi di trasformazione più significativi, passando da semplice assemblea consultiva a colegislatore con pari autorità rispetto al Consiglio dell'UE nella stragrande maggioranza dei settori politici. Questi importanti cambiamenti sono stati introdotti principalmente dalla successiva adozione di diversi trattati europei che hanno gradualmente ampliato le prerogative e i poteri del PE; in particolare, i trattati di Maastricht e Lisbona possono essere identificati come quelli che hanno maggiormente influenzato in modo sostanziale il processo legislativo dell'UE, conferendo così una maggiore solidità al ruolo del PE.

Il trattato di Maastricht (1993), successivamente rafforzato dal Trattato di Lisbona (2009), ha segnato un significativo ampliamento dei poteri e delle competenze legislative del PE. Uno degli aspetti più rilevanti introdotti da questo trattato è stata l'istituzione della procedura di codecisione, un nuovo meccanismo legislativo che ha contribuito ad elevare lo status del PE a quello di colegislatore alla pari del Consiglio. Grazie a questa procedura, il PE ha infatti acquisito una maggiore parità giuridica e politica con il Consiglio, in particolare nei settori politici associati al mercato interno. Successivamente, il Trattato di Lisbona ha ulteriormente esteso il campo di applicazione di questa procedura legislativa, includendo altri settori politici. Attualmente, questa procedura decisionale, nota come Procedura Legislativa Ordinaria, viene utilizzata per adottare la maggior parte della legislazione dell'UE e si applica a circa 85 settori politici.

La trasformazione del PE in colegislatore, così come l'evoluzione del suo ruolo, sia all'interno del quadro istituzionale europeo che nel sistema internazionale, hanno dato vita a numerosi dibattiti riguardanti non solo l'espansione dei suoi poteri e della sua influenza politica, ma anche le strategie adottate da questa istituzione nel corso degli anni per ampliare il suo raggio d'azione sia all'interno dei vari ambiti politici dell'UE in cui esercita poteri legislativi, sia verso nuovi ambiti nei quali ha un'influenza politica limitata.

Questa tesi si propone pertanto di contribuire al corpus di conoscenze esistenti in materia di governance europea e sul ruolo del PE, al fine di analizzare le varie strategie adottate da quest'ultimo per consolidare il suo ruolo di attore politico e *entrepreneur*. In particolare, l'obiettivo di questa tesi

è valutare se il rafforzamento del PE come istituzione che opera all'interno del quadro europeo si sia effettivamente tradotto in un suo maggiore attivismo in diversi ambiti politici. A tal fine, i due capitoli centrali di questa tesi si concentrano su due diversi settori: la politica ambientale, in cui il PE dispone di poteri legislativi di codecisione, e la politica estera, in cui, invece, ha un'influenza molto più limitata. Lo scopo principale di questo elaborato è quindi analizzare se il PE tenta di emergere come attore politico e *entrepreneur* e in che misura riesce a farlo, andando a comparare due settori con caratteristiche e poteri molto diversi.

La tesi si articola in tre capitoli principali, seguiti dalle conclusioni che presentano un'analisi comparativa tra i due settori presi in esame. Il primo capitolo è costituito principalmente da una rassegna dei principali studi esistenti sul PE, concentrandosi in particolare sull'evoluzione dei suoi poteri. Questa sezione iniziale mira inoltre a presentare i principali concetti chiave che saranno affrontati nel corso della tesi (come l'influenza, il potere e la nozione di *entrepreneurship*) e a definire il quadro istituzionale europeo, con un'attenzione specifica sull'evoluzione del PE e dei suoi poteri, sia legislativi che non. Successivamente viene analizzato il recente ruolo del PE come nuovo attore politico e imprenditoriale, sia all'interno dell'arena europea che a livello internazionale, ponendo specifica enfasi sul relativo dibattito accademico.

Negli ultimi anni alcuni studiosi hanno infatti iniziato a sollevare dubbi sul ruolo imprenditoriale della Commissione Europea in determinati settori politici, come la legislazione ambientale, dove sembra essere stata raggiunta una forma di stagnazione politica caratterizzata da un calo delle proposte legislative e delle azioni intraprese, nonostante un effettivo aumento dei dibattiti. Dall'altro lato, il PE sembra invece stia cercando di assumere un ruolo imprenditoriale e di distinguersi come attore politico, tentando di influenzare gli Stati Membri a diventare più ambiziosi. Recentemente, il PE si è infatti distinto all'interno del quadro istituzionale europeo come un difensore dell'ambiente, promuovendo ambiziose politiche ambientali. Ciò nonostante, non tutti gli studiosi concordano nel considerare il PE un *environmental champion*; nello specifico, Kinski e Ripoll Servent (2022) hanno infatti sollevato dubbi riguardo l'efficacia della procedura di codecisione, soprattutto dopo l'adozione del Trattato di Amsterdam, nel promuovere l'attuazione di emendamenti più ambiziosi in ambito ambientale.

Partendo da queste considerazioni, il secondo capitolo si concentra pertanto sul settore delle politiche ambientali con lo scopo di valutare se, e in che misura, il PE sta cercando di agire come *policy entrepreneur* all'interno di un settore in cui ha poteri legislativi. Questo capitolo incorpora un'analisi di recenti proposte legislative avanzate dalla Commissione Europea negli ultimi anni con lo scopo di regolare le politiche ambientali e climatiche. I testi legislativi selezionati come casi studio sono collegati al recente Green Deal europeo, una strategia introdotta dalla Commissione con lo scopo

di ridurre le emissioni di gas serra e raggiungere la neutralità climatica entro il 2050. L'obiettivo primario di questo capitolo è pertanto quello di valutare il ruolo svolto dal PE nel processo di adozione di questi documenti e, in particolare, di verificare se questa istituzione abbia recentemente mostrato una maggiore ambizione rispetto alla Commissione e al Consiglio. Con questa analisi il capitolo si propone di contribuire a una riflessione sull'influenza del PE; pertanto, un punto cruciale è rappresentato dal grado di influenza effettivamente esercitato da quest'ultimo nel comunicare le proprie posizioni e, in particolare, nel vederle adottate.

Ai fini di questa analisi, il secondo capitolo presenta inizialmente quello che è un primo confronto tra le proposte legislative formulate dalla Commissione e i testi finali adottati al fine di stimare se e in che misura le proposte iniziali siano state modificate durante il processo legislativo. Nel caso in cui siano state apportate modifiche, un secondo tipo di confronto si concentra nello specifico sugli emendamenti presentati dal PE, al fine di determinarne la natura e il significato all'interno del processo legislativo europeo. Questa analisi viene condotta a due livelli.

Un primo livello di analisi prevede la categorizzazione di tutti gli emendamenti proposti dal PE in quattro gruppi, in base del loro grado di ambizione. Tale categorizzazione mira a identificare se il PE ha agito come *policy entrepreneur*, cercando di prendere l'iniziativa e influenzare gli Stati Membri attraverso l'adozione di emendamenti contenenti posizioni più ambiziose. Successivamente, il secondo livello di analisi esamina i risultati dei negoziati interistituzionali al fine di determinare in che misura il PE sia riuscito a far approvare la sua posizione e l'adozione dei suoi emendamenti. Questa valutazione mira pertanto a verificare se il PE sia riuscito a far approvare i suoi emendamenti all'interno dei testi legislativi finali o se, al contrario, la posizione del Consiglio abbia prevalso, a testimonianza di una maggiore predominanza e influenza degli Stati Membri nel plasmare i risultati politici.

Il terzo capitolo si focalizza invece sull'ambito della politica estera dell'UE, concentrandosi in particolare sul settore della Politica Estera e Sicurezza Comune (PESC), dove i poteri del PE sono significativamente più limitati rispetto ad altre aree. Analogamente al capitolo precedente, l'obiettivo è quello di esaminare in che misura il PE, pur non avendo poteri di codecisione, cerchi di esercitare un'influenza e di assumere un ruolo più proattivo all'interno di questa particolare area politica. Partendo da questi presupposti, l'analisi si concentra pertanto sui concetti di diplomazia parlamentare (con particolare riferimento a quella esercitata dal PE), sulle iniziative di mediazione e sugli strumenti non legislativi di definizione dell'agenda, quali risoluzioni inerenti alla procedura di iniziativa (INI).

Oltre alla definizione dei suddetti concetti, il capitolo impiega due distinti casi studio, ovvero il caso dell'Ucraina e di Taiwan, come punti di riferimento, approfondendo le relazioni tra questi due paesi e l'UE e ponendo così l'accento sul ruolo diplomatico e politico svolto dal PE durante l'attuale

legislatura. Per quanto riguarda il caso ucraino, il PE si è infatti contraddistinto in quanto istituzione politica il cui sostegno, negli ultimi anni, si è rivelato fondamentale per lo stato ucraino, in particolare in relazione ai recenti drammatici eventi che lo hanno trascinato in una guerra contro la Russia. Partendo da queste considerazioni, l'analisi si concentra sull'esame delle missioni diplomatiche intraprese dal PE in Ucraina nel corso della nona e attuale legislatura. Particolare attenzione è stata rivolta al periodo successivo l'inizio del recente conflitto con la Russia e, pertanto, lo studio indaga non solo il ruolo svolto dal PE nel Paese, ma anche i principali strumenti utilizzati da questa istituzione, valutandone infine il livello di coesione interna dimostrato durante la loro adozione e nel promuovere i risultati politici desiderati.

Lo stesso tipo di analisi è stato successivamente condotto anche per il secondo caso studio. La seconda parte sezione esamina infatti le missioni diplomatiche e le visite intraprese a Taiwan dal PE e dai suoi eurodeputati nel corso dell'attuale legislatura e studia l'utilizzo di strumenti non-legislativi, la loro adozione e il grado di coesione e consenso interni dimostrati attraverso i meccanismi di voto.

Nella valutazione di entrambi i casi e per poter determinare l'efficacia e l'impatto delle risoluzioni del PE, un aspetto cruciale è rappresentato dalla valutazione dell'adozione e della considerazione delle sue risoluzioni. Questa analisi si concentra principalmente sull'esame del grado di ricezione di queste risoluzioni da parte della Commissione, in quanto unica istituzione europea con l'autorità di avviare procedimenti legislativi e quindi in grado di portare avanti le richieste del PE. Un elevato numero di risoluzioni non legislative in grado di ottenere risposta dalla Commissione rappresenta infatti un importante indicatore della capacità del PE di vedere adottate le proprie posizioni e di riuscire a definire l'agenda politica.

Nel complesso, attraverso la decisione di concentrarsi su due distinti ambiti politici, questa tesi mira a contribuire a una comprensione più approfondita degli sforzi del PE nell'affermarsi come attore politico e *policy entrepreneur*, cercando pertanto di determinare se, e in che misura, le due aree politiche esaminate siano state influenzate dal rafforzamento dei poteri legislativi del PE e se quest'ultimo stia cercando di aumentare la propria influenza anche in settori in cui detiene pochi poteri, come nel caso della politica estera.

In conclusione, i risultati presentati in questa tesi e comparati all'interno della conclusione offerta nell'ultimo capitolo sembrano confermarne la domanda centrale, sostenendo che il PE abbia cercato e stia tutt'ora tentando di distinguersi tra gli altri organi istituzionali dell'UE come *entrepreneur* e attore politico. Da un lato, nella sua veste di imprenditore politico, il PE ha assunto un ruolo che era tradizionalmente stato attribuito alla Commissione. Dall'altro lato, il PE ha anche dimostrato di essere un attore politico, in particolare nel campo della politica estera, dove ha fatto leva sulla diplomazia parlamentare come mezzo per affermare la propria influenza, sia in ambito politico che diplomatico,

trascendendo così il suo ruolo istituzionale più convenzionale. Ciò nonostante, le sfide, spesso ancora attuali, nel definire l'agenda e nel vedere adottate le proprie posizioni mettono in luce le complessità del processo decisionale europeo, nonché le difficoltà del PE nel riuscire a ottenere un impatto significativo.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of the European Union's (EU) institutional framework and integration process, the European Parliament (henceforth EP) has undergone the most remarkable transformations, evolving from just a consultative assembly into an equal co-legislator with the Council of the EU in the majority of policy fields. These changes have primarily been prompted by the successive adoption of different EU treaties, which have gradually empowered the EU parliamentary body. As a matter of fact, of notable significance are the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties, for they have introduced substantial innovations in the legislative process of the EU, alongside enhancing the role conferred upon the EP. The Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force in 1993, marked indeed a significant expansion of the EP's legislative powers and competences. A noteworthy aspect of this treaty was the introduction of the co-decision procedure, a novel legislative mechanism which elevated the EP's status to that of an equal co-legislator alongside the Council of the EU. Consequently, the EP attained greater legal and political parity with the latter in numerous policy domains, in particular in the areas associated with the internal market.

With the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the co-decision procedure experienced a further expansion in its scope, extending its application to additional policy areas. This broader mechanism, now known as the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, currently encompasses the majority of EU legislation and has been responsible for reinforcing the position and influence of the EP in the legislative process. By requiring the agreement of both the EP and the Council, this procedure has indeed been instrumental in transforming the former into a genuine co-legislator alongside the latter (Burns, 2021) and in consolidating its position as a significant actor in the EU's decision-making process. Furthermore, the EP has also become an increasingly important actor in the international system, where it has been able to improve its reputation and raise its international credibility and profile (Bajtay, 2015).

The transformation of the EP into a co-legislator and the evolution of its role, both within the EU institutional framework and the international system, have indeed sparked a debate regarding not only its evolving powers and political influence but also the degree and the ways through which this institution has been trying to extend its reach both within and towards different EU policy domains. This thesis intends thus to shed light on the various strategies and mechanisms that have been employed by the EP as a way to enhance its role as a political actor and entrepreneur. The main aim is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge surrounding EU governance and the EP role, and

to shed light on the still-evolving dynamics between the various EU institutions which have shaped, and are still shaping, the process of EU integration. In particular, this dissertation aims to evaluate and assess whether the empowerment of the EP as an institution acting within the EU framework has actually resulted also into a major assertiveness of this body in different policy fields. Hence, the following chapters will focus on and draw a comparison between two different sectors: environmental policy, where the EP has co-decision powers, and foreign policy where, instead, it holds much less powers.

The decision to focus on these two specific policy fields stems from their potential to serve as representative examples of the evolution of the EP and of its prerogatives. On the one hand, the power to co-decide held in the environmental policy field symbolises the above-mentioned progressive development of EP powers achieved throughout recent decades as well as through the adoption of successive treaties and its proactive pursuit of increased power and influence. On the other hand, foreign policy embodies a domain where intergovernmental institutions wield greater influence and where the EP has limited powers. Hence, given its ability to advocate for and see its powers increased in the majority of policy fields, the present thesis aims to analyse whether the EP is still attempting to increase its visibility and influence in sectors in which it holds legislative powers, as well as to ascertain whether and how this institutional body is striving to enhance its influence and, accordingly, to absorb more power also in policy areas where it traditionally plays a much more restricted role. Overall, by focusing on these two distinct policy fields, this research will try to shed light on the EP's efforts to establish itself as a political actor and policy entrepreneur, thereby also analysing the different instruments and mechanisms that have been adopted by this institution in its pursuit of influence.

The research employed a qualitative approach and was conducted using a small-n comparative case study methodology, thus focusing on a limited number of issues which were analysed in a comparative manner. In particular, by focusing on two distinct policy areas and being these sectors and the role played by the EP so inherently different, the research conducted and the difficulties encountered during data collection and analysis have also been diverse.

In relation to the environmental policy sector, wherein the EP possesses legislative and co-decision powers alongside the Council of the EU, this study has primarily centred its analysis on recent legislative proposals which have been put forth by the Commission within the past four years and on the relative amendments presented by the two legislative bodies, with particular emphasis placed on the role of the EP. The legislative texts selected, which regulate environmental and climate legislation, are all closely tied to the recent European Green Deal, a comprehensive strategy which has been introduced by the Commission in an attempt to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve a

climate-neutral Europe by 2050. The primary objective of this chapter is thus to evaluate the role played by the EP in the process of adoption of these documents and, particularly, to assess whether this institution, despite having already attained legislative powers, exhibited greater ambition and attempted to become more visible when compared to the Commission and the Council.

The primary sources employed to compare the Commission's initial legislative proposals with the final text and the diverse amendments put forward by the EP and the Council were the commonly referenced four-column documents (see Appendix A for a complete list of the documents used). These documents are used in the process of informal inter-institutional negotiations and display the Commission's legislative proposal, the EP and Council mandates with their relevant amendments, and the final text adopted.

Despite having sent an official request to the EP public register of documents, given the difficulties in obtaining the final and complete documentation needed, the analysis carried out in the second chapter of this thesis has been conducted through the consultation of the four-column documents already available in the EP register of documents which, however, did not contain, in the majority of the cases, all the final compromise agreements eventually implemented. With the exception of the Just Transition Fund (2020/0006(COD)), for which it was possible to obtain the final four-column document, all the other four-column documents utilized were the most recent intermediate texts that could be found on the EP public register of documents. In order to compensate for this lack of data and to carry out, to the extent possible, the following study, the documents with the final agreed texts have therefore been retrieved from the Legislative Observatory¹ of the EP.

On the other hand, with regard to the analysis carried out in the third chapter, all the relevant documentation concerning the foreign and security policy field has instead been gathered from the EP website and public register of documents, without encountering specific difficulties (see Appendix B for an exhaustive list of the documents consulted). The documents used are mission reports, own-initiative resolutions/recommendations and resolutions on topical subjects adopted by the EP during its current ninth term. In particular, through the examination of these cases, the third chapter aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the EP's endeavours to shape and impact the area of foreign and security policy. Specifically, the chapter seeks to determine whether the EP has been recently trying to act as an entrepreneur, expand its powers and adopt a more ambitious stance even in areas where it lacks co-decision and faces significant limitations to its legislative powers.

Comparative analysis will ultimately play a crucial role, for it will allow the evaluation of potential similarities and differences in the EP's behaviour across these two different policy areas. Whereas in

¹ The Legislative Observatory is the EP's database that oversees and tracks the progression of the EU decision-making process.

the *environmental policy field* the EP has already experienced an expansion of its prerogatives, which happened in conjunction with the process of European integration, in the area of *foreign policy* its powers and functions have not yet undergone significant changes; hence, the use of comparative analysis will be useful for evaluating the EP's attitude and assessing whether and how this body is experiencing and advocating for an evolution of its role and powers in these two different sectors.

As a matter of fact, the comparative analysis conducted in the concluding chapter of this dissertation will present an assessment of the data collected in the second and third chapters, thereby assessing the different instruments employed by this institution and contributing to a better understanding of its evolving role within the EU policy- and decision-making processes.

Overall, in order to address the main research question, the thesis will be structured into three main chapters, each of them dealing with three corresponding issues. The first chapter will provide a review of the most relevant literature so as to gain a comprehensive understanding of the evolving role and powers of the EP within the EU institutional framework. Subsequently, as anticipated earlier in this section, the second and third chapters will instead deal with the two above-mentioned EU policy sectors, namely environmental and foreign policy. The second chapter, focusing on environmental policy, will provide a comparative assessment between the initial Commission's legislative proposals and the finally adopted texts so as to evaluate whether and to what extent the former documents had undergone a process of amendment during the legislative process. An important section of the chapter will then concentrate on the amendments put forward by the EP. So as to evaluate the level of *ambition* put forward by the EP through its amendments, the latter will be compared with the original Commission's proposals while the Council's requests, on the other hand, will be mainly used to assess the *outcomes* of interinstitutional negotiations. The aim of such an assessment is thus to determine the extent to which the EP was eventually successful in securing its position and the adoption of its amendments and could therefore be considered as an entrepreneur in the field, or whether, instead, the Council's position ultimately prevailed.

On the other hand, the third chapter will concentrate mainly on the concepts of (EP) parliamentary diplomacy, mediation initiatives and non-legislative agenda-setting tools. Following their introduction, the study will then employ two distinct case studies, namely Ukraine and Taiwan, as reference points and will delve into the relations between these two countries and the EU, thus placing a specific focus on the diplomatic and political role played by the EP during its current term. The aim of this chapter is thus to ascertain whether the latter has been attempting to emerge as a political actor in a field which has traditionally been controlled by Member States and intergovernmental EU institutions.

Before delving into the evolution of the EP's role in the process of EU integration, however, it is also important to acknowledge an additional factor that has inevitably impacted the discussion on the role of the EP in EU foreign policy, namely the recent Qatargate scandal. This money-laundering scandal, which accused several members and former members of the EP, has undeniably revived the debate surrounding the issue of transparency within the EU and has likely had a negative influence on the credibility and reputation of the EP and of European institutions as a whole. The full extent of the effects of this corruption scandal is still subject to discussion and research; nonetheless, it is reasonable to anticipate that it will have a negative impact on the influence and on the position of the EP, particularly in foreign policy; hence, this aspect should be considered when formulating the relevant conclusions.

Chapter 1

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF EU INTEGRATION

1.1 Introduction

The EU is a complex, ever-evolving political system and an organization *sui generis*, unique and different from any other political organization, as defined by Moravcsik (1993). Central to this organization are its multiple actors and institutions, which interact and negotiate in order to shape its policies and decisions. Among these actors, the European Parliament stands out as its only directly elected supranational institution, thereby representing the voices of the European citizens in the EU legislative process. This thesis will thus place a close focus on the EP and its political and legislative empowerment, trying to examine how it actually managed to strengthen its position and influence within the European Union framework and its different policy fields. In particular, this first chapter will include a review of some of the most relevant studies that form part of the scientific debate and which will serve as a theoretical foundation for the analysis carried out later on in the thesis.

To address the main research question, this thesis will indeed refer to some essential concepts, including power, (policy) influence and ambition, all of which have been very much debated within political studies. The conceptualization of power within international relations and politics has undergone extensive discussion and analysis, thus leading to the development of various categories in order to define its different aspects. In the context of discussing the EU and its institutions, the notion of institutional power, as posited by Barnett and Duvall (2005: 51), may be deemed the most fitting and suitable framework for analysis. As a matter of fact, their category defines institutional power as “actors’ control over socially distant others” which involves “A exerting power indirectly on B (or many Bs) through the diffuse channels of institutional arrangements”. In the context of the European Union and its institutions, this concept could thus refer to the latter’s ability to exert influence over policies, decision-making processes, and actions of member states, non-state actors, and other international organizations through the employment of various means. This concept is inherently linked to the broader concept of power, which defines the ability to influence the actions and behaviours of others in order to achieve desired outcomes. In this sense, institutional power is a manifestation of formal institutional structures, functions, and competence that shape the interactions between different EU actors (Barnett and Duvall, 2005). Strictly connected to the concept of power, there is also the one of influence, which has been characterised by Fabbrini (2019: 418) as “a

capability informally exercised” whereas power, still according to this scholar (2019), is a formally institutionalised capability, as well as a necessary, but not sufficient, precondition for the exercise of the former. Overall, within the process of EU integration, the EP has exhibited a notable degree of ambition by advocating for an expansion of its legislative powers and overall influence. As of today, however, despite undergoing considerable transformation, the EP’s role remains restricted in certain sectors and crucial areas, which continue instead to be predominantly controlled by the European Commission and the Council of the EU (Burns, 2021); as such, the central objective of this thesis is to comprehensively examine and evaluate the various strategies and mechanisms that the EP has and continues to employ in order to expand its influence and augment its power, also in areas in which it historically had few.

Accordingly, the following paragraphs aim, in the first place, to appraise the development and increased role of the EP within the context of the European integration process, whereas the second part of this chapter will instead address the topics of political actorhood and entrepreneurship, as well as their connection with the element of agenda-setting, thus placing particular emphasis on the concept of the EP as a supranational actor.

1.2 Understanding European integration: evolution and theoretical perspectives

The concept of European integration refers to the gradual process of political, economic, and social convergence among European countries that was established with the aim of creating a unified Europe. The European Union represents thus the most prominent example of integration that has been achieved through the establishment of common policies, institutions and a single market, with the ultimate goal of promoting peace, stability and prosperity throughout the continent. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the process of European integration, it is crucial not only to grasp its historical evolution but also the range of theoretical perspectives that attempt to explain it. As a matter of fact, the EP has been and still is at the core of many theoretical and scientific debates, for according to Ripoll Servent and Costa (2021: 1), its features symbolize “many of the struggles that characterize the process of European integration”. The empowerment of the EP, in particular, has reignited in recent times the debates between the different schools of thought in the field of European integration studies, such as intergovernmentalists and neo-functionalists, but also constructivists and institutionalists (Brack and Costa, 2018), who have endeavoured to account for its increasing powers.

1.2.1 The main theories of European integration

The term European Union refers to a very specific economic and political organization, whose historical development has been very complex, as there has never been a consensus on the original

project or its institutional design. However, the case of the EU is very specific and original for it entails a deep integration and union of states. Given the complexity of the system, there is still a lack of consensus on what the EU should be, particularly for what concerns the centrality of the member states or of its supranational institutions. For this reason, different theories have been developed over the years by scholars in order to help analyse and theorise about European integration and offer various insights about what can be considered as a key feature of the European Union.

According to Kenealy, Peterson, and Corbett (2018: 12), there are several theories of European integration that draw from International Relations and in the majority of them, the basic unit of analysis is represented by the state. In particular, among the main theories, two are to be mentioned: neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism, both still used to explain different developments of European integration. In the words of Pollack (2005), in the 1950s and 1960s neo-functionalists tried to explain European integration as a process of functional and political spillover that was starting from a few sectors and developing into something more ambitious, a supranational polity. In the opinion of neo-functionalist scholars, such as Ernst Haas (1958), regional integration – as in the case of the European Union – would start with technical integration, a form of integration which entails the cooperation between states in specific functional areas in order to solve technical problems and develop common policies. This kind of integration in economic or technical sectors would then spill over into other areas as well, thus producing an “unintended and unforeseen consequence of promoting further integration in additional issue areas” (Pollack, 2005: 15), leading the European Union to become a real political unity. In this sense, European integration would result in the formation of supranational institutions, which would gain more power and be delegated more sovereignty, while states would eventually lose it. Neo-functionalist scholars emphasize thus the role played by supranational institutions, such as the European Commission or the EP, in driving integration forward.

On the other side, opposed to neo-functionalism and in response to the European integration crisis experienced in the 1960s, there is intergovernmentalism, a theory of European integration which “claimed that decisions on cooperation within the EU were firmly guided by Member States” (Princen, 2016). In addition, liberal intergovernmentalism, a specific variant of intergovernmentalism and whose leading scholar is Andrew Moravcsik, emphasizes the role of states as key actors in the EU integration process, arguing that it is their preferences, interests and bargaining powers the forces that drive it forward (Kenealy, Peterson and Corbett, 2018). According to this theory, states remain central and powerful actors and will further the integration process only if it is in their interests. In the end, this process will delegate only some limited powers to supranational institutions, which will remain more or less under the influence of the member states (Pollack, 2005).

Besides these two main theories, in the late 1980s and 1990s, a fresh paradigm arose that contested the pre-eminence of the state in shaping (European) integration. This novel theoretical framework, referred to as new institutionalism, re-emphasised the centrality of institutions, suggesting that they play a central role in the policymaking process and outcomes, as well as in shaping the behaviour of policy-makers, and the long-term process of European integration (Pollack, 2005; Kenealy, Peterson and Corbett, 2018). In addition to new institutionalism, constructivism is another theory that, however, was not originally formulated to explicate European integration. According to this theory, institutions encompass not only formal regulations, but also informal norms, which can actually profoundly influence or even determine the behaviour of political actors (Checkel, 2006 in: Kenealy, Peterson and Corbett, 2018); hence, European political actors are influenced by EU norms, its values, and modes of behaviour. As a matter of fact, as noted by Ripoll Servent (2013), both the institutionalist and constructivist approaches have indeed tried to analyse the EU decision-making process and the role of the EP in exerting influence. On the one hand, constructivism seeks to investigate the ways in which co-decision has given rise to a system of norms that have then become institutionalized, and how these norms subsequently shape and guide the behaviour of the institutions involved (Shackleton and Raunio, 2003; Ripoll Servent, 2013). On the other hand, institutionalism tends instead to view the EU decision-making process as a “bargaining game, through which actors try to maximise their exogenous preferences” (Ripoll Servent, 2013: 976).

As can be observed from the preceding sections, the significance of these various theoretical perspectives lies in the fact that they provide very distinct and valuable insights into key features and crucial aspects of the European Union (Kenealy, Peterson & Corbett, 2018), such as the evolution of European integration, as well as the role played by the different actors and institutional bodies involved. Regarding the role played by the EP, specifically, this has been often neglected and overlooked by European Studies until the 1990s, when the noticeable strengthening and evolution of its position within the framework of interinstitutional relations caught the attention of several scholars (Costa, 2017); consequently, in the following years, a substantial expansion of the literature on the subject occurred, thus generating a rich body of work.

Today the EP embodies the supranational, democratic and legislative dimension of the EU, which counterbalances the intergovernmental one, represented instead by the Council of the EU, and could thus be considered a key feature of the EU structure. The following sections will thus review part of this consistent body of literature which analyses the evolution of the EP and the extension of its powers, before presenting the scientific debate.

1.3 The European Union's institutional framework: a focus on the EP

The European Union is a complex system of layers that act and interact at different levels, both national and supranational. It has five major institutions: the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, the European Council, and the European Court of Justice. According to Article 13(2) of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), each of these bodies shall act within the limits of the powers, i.e., competence that has been conferred to it by the member states in the different treaties. Therefore, competence that is not specifically conferred upon the EU remains competence of the member states; in fact, since the European Union does not possess a general power to act, its powers are generally limited to those which have been conferred to it by the member states in the treaties and subsequent treaty revisions (Ziller, 2020). As a matter of fact, the aforementioned article reinforces what is considered as an essential principle to the functioning of the EU, that is the principle of conferral (also enshrined in Articles 4 and 5 TEU), which provides the foundation of the institutional balance that characterizes the European Union. According to Bauerschmidt (2021: 215), the observance of this institutional balance means that each European institution “must exercise its powers with due regard for the powers of the other institutions”; this entails the idea that these powers have to be considered within an already established institutional framework in which each body must act only within its rights and powers. At the same time, however, the principle of sincere cooperation, today enshrined in Article 13(2) TEU, requires them also to cooperate with each other (Bauerschmidt, 2021), if not against what already established by the treaties.

Throughout the process of EU integration, all EU institutions have undergone a certain level of transformation; however, the EP stands out as one of the institutions that was able to change the most, transforming from a purely consultative assembly into a legislative partner with the Council, while obtaining also recognition as a body of democratic control (Neuhold, 2000). As a matter of fact, at present the EP is the only directly elected institution at the EU level and, for this reason, embodies the core of representative democracy within the organization, in accordance with Article 10 of the Treaty on the European Union (Tilindyte, 2019). After successive changes, the 2009 Lisbon Treaty limited the EP at 750 members plus the President, ranging from a minimum of six and a maximum of ninety-six seats per member state, on the basis of degressive proportional representation (Corbett, Peterson & Kenealy, 2018; Wallace, 2005); however, the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union reduced the figure to 705 MEPs. This system currently manages to grant a balance of power between the bigger and the smaller states, which otherwise would be irrelevant if represented on a purely proportional basis; yet, from another perspective and according to some positions, this structure could also give too much power to the smaller states, as they may have a disproportionate influence due to their ability to form coalitions.

As of today, the members of the EP sit in political groups, enjoy a set of immunities, and are independent from the powers of their states or external interferences; therefore, they do not represent or defend the interests of their own country, but rather those of the European citizens. These political groups are based on the political affinity of their parties and are composed of at least 25 MEPs, elected in at least a quarter of the member states (Ziller, 2020). In addition, the leaders of each political group, together with the President, constitute the Conference of Presidents, responsible for setting the EP's agenda and coordinating its work, whereas its committees, mostly organized by policy areas, carry out the majority of the work of the EP and have thus been defined as "the EP's 'legislative backbone'" (Westlake, 1994 in Ripoll Servent and Roederer-Rynning, 2018: 12; Corbett, Peterson & Kenealy, 2018). Today much of the EP's work is indeed carried out by its standing committees, which mirror the ideological composition of the EP plenary, focusing on and discussing specific policies or issues. As a matter of fact, a significant portion of the discussions, technical work, and negotiations take place at the committee level, with plenary sessions typically serving as a means of formalizing agreements that have been reached in committees and intergroup negotiations (Settembri and Neuhold, 2009 in Ripoll Servent and Costa, 2021). The various committees are responsible for the formal input of the EP into the legislative process and their reports and opinions can have a significant impact on the eventual legislation; hence, they have developed their own reputations and organizational culture (Collins, Burns and Warleigh, 1998; Ripoll Servent and Roederer-Rynning, 2018; Burns, 2021). According to Collins, Burns and Warleigh (1998), in fact, the influence wielded by EP's committees may be regarded as significant, as both MEPs and committees have tried to exploit the formal and informal channels of influence available to them, thereby enhancing their capacity to shape policy outcomes.

In addition to the above-mentioned standing committees, the EP may also establish temporary committees, such as special committees or committees of inquiry, to address urgent or contentious issues; one of these was the Temporary Committee on Climate Change (CLIM) which was established in 2009 (Burns, 2021).

For the purpose of this thesis, the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee together with the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) represent indeed the ones that have had the major involvement. The ENVI Committee, which comprises 88 members, currently stands out not only as one of the largest, but also as one of the most significant committees due to its responsibility in handling an extensive legislative workload and a reputation for its "green credentials" (Ripoll Servent and Roederer-Rynning, 2018: 12; Burns, 2021). This can be attributed to the EP's esteemed reputation as a proponent of environmental protection and legislation, as well as to its increasing significance in the said field. In contrast, the AFET Committee supervises the implementation of the

Common Foreign and Security Policy, monitors the EU's external action funds, and aims to ensure the guarantee of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

1.3.1 The powers of the EP

Today the powers of the EP fall under four main categories: legislative, budgetary, scrutiny, and appointments. As it will be closely examined in a subsequent section of this chapter, the EP's legislative powers were initially very weak, for the EP played only a "marginal role in the policy process, with only consultative powers" (Wallace, 2005: 65). Since the 1970s, however, the EP "has seen its original limited powers of 'consultation' transformed to encompass the powers of delay, amendment and veto" (Kreppel & Webb, 2019: 386), thereby consistently increasing its policy-making authority. Today after successive treaties, and according to Article 14 TEU, the EP exercises, jointly with the Council of the EU, legislative and budgetary functions, co-deciding nearly all EU legislation. Indeed, over the years, the EP has constantly (and successfully) pushed for more powers in the context of the continuous developments that have been shaping the EU institutional landscape, and today its legislative work has finally come to characterize the main core of all its activities as it may be consulted, it can give consent or co-legislate with the Council through the Ordinary Legislative Procedure (Tilindyte, 2019).

For what concerns its budgetary powers, the EP is responsible for setting the budget and controlling its implementation (Tilindyte, 2019). When it comes to budgetary matters, most decisions are taken following a procedure that is similar to the Ordinary Legislative Procedure and in which the consent of the EP is necessary; however, for what concerns the revenue side of the budget, its role is still less developed (Tilindyte, 2019). As set forth by Article 311 TFEU, being the budget financed for the most part by contributions coming from the member states, it follows that they tried not to delegate too much budgetary power to the EU level; hence, the authority of the EP in this realm is still limited to the exercise of the consultation procedure. On the other hand, when it comes to the expenditure side of the budget and its authorization, the powers of the EP are more influential. The annual budget is adopted jointly by the EP and the Council through a Special Legislative Procedure and is constrained by the multiannual financial framework (MFF), a long-term financial perspective that has to be adopted by the Council acting by unanimity and with the consent of the EP (Tilindyte, 2019; Ziller, 2020). Lastly, given the necessity for the budget to be balanced, meaning that the EU's revenues and expenditures must match, the EP is also responsible for monitoring its implementation, thus holding the EU's executive to account (Tilindyte, 2019).

Concerning the function of scrutiny, the EP exercises its oversight on the European Commission and, to a degree, also on a series of other bodies and agencies (Corbett, Peterson & Kenealy, 2018)

through the implementation of different means, among which are parliamentary questions, committees of inquiry, special committees, and the discharge procedure. As in the words of Ripoll Servent and Roederer-Rynning (2018: 17), the EP “has managed to increase its oversight over the EU’s executive roughly in line with its legislative power”; however, this “expansion has been limited to control of the Commission [...], while the Council and the European Council have remained outside of EP control”. This notwithstanding, the EP has been constantly exploring new ways to broaden its influence in the areas of agenda-setting and implementation.

As with regards of the tools, parliamentary questions are one of the oldest employed by MEPs in order to ask questions to several institutions, mainly to the Commission, as to control the executive’s work and make these EU bodies accountable for their actions (Guinaudeau & Costa, 2021). In addition, in the words of Guinaudeau and Costa (2021: 7), these questions could also be considered as “a substitute to the impossibility for the EP to initiate legislative proposals” or as a way to be able to make more amendments. Finally, the EP plays a role in the appointment of some EU bodies or institutions, such as the European Ombudsman; it holds the power to appoint the President of the European Commission, to approve the appointment of this institution and also to dismiss it as a whole through a vote of no confidence (Corbett, Peterson & Kenealy, 2018). While the power to dismiss the European Commission had been instituted since the very beginning, the faculty of Commission appointment has instead increased gradually (Tilindyte, 2019). As a matter of fact, it was the Maastricht Treaty the agreement which “endowed [the] Parliament with the power to approve (and, therefore also to reject) the Commission as a body before it took office” (Tilindyte, 2019: 5). Today Article 17(7) TEU provides that “[t]he President, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the other members of the Commission shall be subject as a body to the vote of consent by the European Parliament” before being formally appointed by the European Council. In fact, despite not having powers in rejecting individual Commissioners-designate, the EP can actually exercise political pressure regarding candidates or their assigned portfolios (Tilindyte, 2019). In addition, the European Council is entitled to nominate a candidate for the Presidency, but only before having taken into account the parliamentary elections and having had appropriate consultations (Tilindyte, 2019), in order to find a suitable candidate who would not be blocked by the EP. In 2014 this complicated process led to the creation of the *Spitzenkandidaten* process, a procedure through which each political party in the European Parliament, ahead of parliamentary elections, would nominate a lead candidate (or *Spitzenkandidat*) for the role of Commission President; in the end, the party winning the most seats in the EP would get to nominate its *Spitzenkandidat* to become President of the European Commission (Tilindyte, 2019). This process, first used in 2014 with the election of Jean-Claude Juncker, was intended to increase the transparency and democratic

accountability of the EU institutions; nevertheless, it eventually led to some controversy and was not followed after the 2019 elections, when the European Council ultimately decided to nominate Ursula von der Leyen as the new President of the European Commission.

Despite any potential counterarguments, the information presented in this paragraph shows indeed how both the formation and the actions of the European Commission (as well as of other EU bodies) are subject to the control of the EP. As the sole democratically elected institution within the EU, the EP assumes thus a paramount role in ensuring a form of democratic control and accountability over the Commission, as well as over other political entities, a concept that constitutes a fundamental feature of every political organization.

As of today, despite its growing powers, the EP is also facing various challenges, as noted by Ripoll Servent and Costa (2021). These include a growing polarization resulting from the expansion of Eurosceptic and populist parties, as well as the growing influence of the executive branch at the expense of the legislative one, particularly during times of crisis. In particular, as argued by Ripoll Servent and Costa (2021: 25), the existing levels of polarization, both among and within political groups, could pose a potential challenge to “the supranational character of the EP and its ability to fight for more powers and a deepening of the integration process”.

1.3.2 From consultation to co-decision: tracing the evolution of the EP’s legislative power and influence through each successive treaty change

The term legislation defines every act that is “adopted in accordance with a (parliamentary) legislative procedure” (Bauerschmidt, 2021: 212) and can thus be enacted by various institutions or supranational bodies, like the European Union. As a matter of fact, the European Union has a unique legislative process, which involves multiple procedures and actors, among which is the EP. As of today, the EP’s role in EU legislation is vital in ensuring that EU policies represent the interests of European citizens and in holding the EU’s institutions accountable; however, when the European Community was established, the decision-making powers rested still largely in the hands of the Council of the EU, whereas the EP was just consulted. Since then, the evolution of the EU legislative procedure has undergone several phases and has contributed also to change the influence of the EP within the process. This development can be observed during the course of the years and through the adoption of different acts and treaties.

As argued by Ripoll Servent and Costa (2021), the EP was initially established as the Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952 and granted with very limited powers. In the years following the adoption of the Treaty of Rome (1957), the newly established European Community and its institutions started consolidating. In 1965, for instance, the then Parliamentary

Assembly decided to rename itself “European Parliament”, a name which was later institutionalized by the 1986 Single European Act (Westlake, 1994 in Guinaudeau and Costa, 2021). Indeed, the initial appointed parliamentary assembly had tried to affirm itself from the beginning, demanding the election of its members; however, especially in this early phase of development, the EP actually lacked the political support from the most powerful member states (Dinan, 2018). As a matter of fact, despite the possibility of direct elections already established by the Treaty of Rome (1957), in this initial phase the members of the EP were not directly elected, but rather delegated by the national parliaments of the member states (Neuhold, 2000). The MEPs represented their own country at the European level, thus showing a reluctance on the part of the member states to create a supranational institution. The election of the members of the EP was eventually introduced in 1979 in order to give democratic representation to the citizens of the then European Community, as well as some direct and democratic legitimation to the actions of its countries, which up until that point had been electing the MEPs according to their national election procedures. In addition, the introduction of direct elections contributed to the rise of this institution’s profile and the enhancement of its formal legitimacy, thus strengthening the claims for its stronger role in legislative decision-making (Dinan, 2018; Ripoll Servent and Costa, 2021). However, as Burns (2021) argues, during its initial election in 1979 the EP possessed only limited legislative powers and which primarily consisted in the sole right to offer amendments to the Council before this institution had reached its common position; despite this, it is noteworthy that the Council frequently either ignored the EP’s proposed amendments, or implemented its viewpoint before the EP had actually delivered its own.

The 1986 Single European Act represented then an important step forward in the evolution of the parliamentary body, as it “marked the beginning of a new ‘triangular relationship’ between the Council, the Commission and the EP” in the EU legislative process due to the introduction of the cooperation procedure (Neuhold, 2000: 4). This new decision-making process contributed to the enhancement of the powers of the EP by giving it a second reading of legislation, a conditional right of veto and by introducing the possibility for the Council to incorporate possible amendments proposed by it, thus marking the beginning of an era of closer collaboration between the EU institutions (Burns and Carter, 2010; Burns, 2021). However, while the intensification of interactions between the EP and other institutions facilitated the reinforcement of the EP’s status as a serious legislative body, it is important to note that the Council still played a greater and more central role, as it retained the power to override EP amendments with a unanimous vote (Collins, Burns and Warleigh, 1998; Kasack, 2004). Nonetheless, according to Tsebelis (1994), the EP was actually able to wield significant power under the cooperation procedure due to the fact that its proposed amendments were subject to a lower threshold for acceptance (qualified majority voting), compared

to the higher unanimity requirement for modifying them. This arrangement afforded the EP more power and influence than before in shaping EU legislation and therefore, was defined by Tsebelis (1994: 128) as a “conditional agenda setter”.

As a matter of fact, in the words of Burns (2021), the Single European Act was also instrumental in introducing qualified majority voting (QMV) in the Council, an introduction which played a pivotal role in the initiation of the internal market programme and its harmonisation, thus signifying the Act’s substantial contribution towards the integration of the European Union. Furthermore, the introduction of the cooperation procedure represented a crucial turning point in the history of the EP, for it ushered in a new era of enhanced and closer collaboration between the EP, the Commission, and the Council.

With the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the EP’s legislative powers and competence were extended further, for this treaty introduced a significant innovation in the EU’s legislative process: the co-decision procedure (Co-decision I). The co-decision procedure is a legislative procedure that placed the EP on a more equal position with the Council of the EU, whilst transforming it also into its legally and politically equal co-legislator. Under the co-decision procedure, the EP obtained equal decision-making powers on most EU legislative proposals and an absolute veto power. This meant that both institutions had to negotiate and approve a legislative proposal in order for it to be adopted; if the EP rejected the final act, this could not be adopted (Kasack, 2004). In order to avoid rejection, a conciliation committee would be called whereby the two institutions would have been obliged to meet in order to resolve their differences and reach an agreement on a joint text (Schackleton and Raunio, 2003; Kasack, 2004). The introduction of the co-decision procedure raised thus a debate (Tsebelis, 2000; Maurer, 2003; Burns and Carter, 2010, Ripoll Servent, 2013) about the extent to which it had increased or not the EP’s capacity to exert influence. In particular, part of the dispute concerned the Council’s prerogative under co-decision to restate its “common position” if an agreement on a joint text could not be reached during conciliation, a prerogative which, according to Tsebelis (2000), contributed actually to reduce the power of the EP. Furthermore, Ripoll Servent (2013: 976) raised another interesting point regarding the EP’s expanded veto powers. Despite possessing the ability to veto legislation and having experienced an increase in veto powers, the EP might still be incentivized to avoid invoking the second and third readings, which necessitate securing an absolute majority or successfully negotiating with other EU bodies; consequently, the EP may acquiesce to “a sub-optimal solution” during the first reading of the legislation.

This notwithstanding, the Maastricht Treaty actually played a significant role in enhancing the EP’s position and legislative responsibilities, particularly in the areas associated with the internal market (Maurer, 2003). Subsequently, following the adoption of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997,

the rules of procedure underwent a revision, which bolstered the position of the EP, especially with regard to its participation in the legislative process and leading to the introduction of Co-decision II, as highlighted in scholarly works by Neuhold (2000) and Burns and Carter (2010). Furthermore, the Amsterdam Treaty played a pivotal role in the expansion of the co-decision procedure's scope to new policy domains, such as the environment, energy, transports and development cooperation. This development marked a significant shift in the power dynamics between the Council and EP, which were elevated to the status of equal partners in the process of amending and adopting legislation (Shackleton and Raunio, 2003) and was accompanied by the removal of the Council's right to reinstate its common position after conciliation, as well as by the perception of co-decision as an interdependent and continuous procedure characterised by extensive contacts between the two legislative bodies throughout the whole procedure, which allowed for more opportunities to reach agreements without always having to resort to the conciliation procedure (Kreppel, 2002; Shackleton and Raunio, 2003). Indeed, the Amsterdam Treaty brought about a substantial increase in the number of co-decisions successfully concluded by the EP and the Council, which was achieved by enhancing the opportunities to reach agreements in the early stages; in the conclusions of the Helsinki Summit in 1999, the Council presented thus a document stating an increase of nearly 25 per cent in the number of cases concluded at first reading, while second-reading agreements had risen to more than 50 per cent (Shackleton and Raunio, 2003). This change in the legislative procedure delineated also a significant shift in the conduct of the EP and Council, which still persists in contemporary EU legislative practices. This new working mechanism is characterised by regular and confidential deliberations and informal negotiations, termed Trilogues, which involve representatives of the Commission, as well as of both legislative bodies and which can occur at all stages of the legislative procedure, including the conciliation procedure.

With the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the co-decision procedure was then further extended in its scope and applied to other policy areas, as it became known under the name of Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP). Today the OLP is the most common procedure, for it covers and applies to a significant portion of EU legislation and makes the EP "a genuine co-legislator with the Council, [for] the agreement of both institutions is necessary for new legislation to be adopted" (Burns, 2021: 137). The OLP consists of different phases: the first stage is the so-called agenda-setting, which can last for a very long time (Kenealy & Hayes-Renshaw, 2018). This is the phase of formal initiative in which the European Commission enjoys the right and holds the power of legislative initiative. Since the Commission has no legislative power, its mission, instead, is to draft legislative proposals, holding wide-ranging consultations with different parties, such as member states or members of the EP, before submitting it, in order to identify possible difficulties of implementation (Kenealy & Hayes-Renshaw,

2018). Once the legislative proposal is adopted by the College of Commissioners, this is sent at the same time to a variety of bodies: the Council of the EU and the EP, which have legislative power, the 27 national parliaments and, where required by the treaties and for certain fields of action, also to the European Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee, the European Court of Justice or the European Central Bank, which can express their advisory opinions. As for the national parliaments, their role is to make sure that the principle of subsidiarity is respected and, for this reason, they have eight weeks from the date of receipt of the proposal to indicate whether or not they believe the principle has been followed. As a matter of fact, in case they do not find the act conform to the principle of subsidiarity, the national parliaments can express their opposition through the so-called yellow card mechanism. Under this procedure, if at least one-third of the parliaments raise objections against the legislative proposal in the form of reasoned opinions, and the EP and Council agree with the objections raised, the Commission is requested to re-examine the proposal. The idea behind this was to grant more power to national parliaments in order to make Brussels together with its institutions and decisions as close to the EU citizens as possible, thereby legitimizing the EU policy making process. The third phase is then represented by a formal sequence of a maximum of three readings which are set out by Article 294 TFEU (Bauerschmidt, 2021). In this phase the institutions possessing the legislative power, that is the Council of the EU and the European Parliament, are called to negotiate in order to reach an agreement on a common text. In fact, the two legislative bodies “exercise jointly legislative functions” and “act as co-legislators with symmetric procedural rights” (Bauerschmidt, 2021: 218). There is no time limit for the Council and the EP to complete their respective first reading. The EP will firstly examine the Commission’s proposal and eventually adopt or amend it; the task of preparing the EP’s position is assigned to the most relevant committee, which is responsible for drafting a report with a set of approved amendments, which will later have to be endorsed by the EP during its plenary session (Burns, 2021). Moreover, as in the words of Burns (2021), in committees, designated members known as rapporteurs are responsible for consulting with the Commission, the Council, and representatives from other political groups within the EP in order to formulate opinions and draft amendments that could secure the widest possible support. Once the report is referred to the plenary, committees, political groups or groups of at least 35 MEPs may propose amendments, and votes may be recorded on request of a political group or a minimum of 35 MEPs.

At a later time, the Council, which is usually expected to await the EP’s position, can also either accept or amend it. If accepted, the legislative proposal can be considered adopted, as it happens with the vast majority of legislative drafts. An important instrument in this phase is represented by the use of the above-mentioned Trilogues, during which negotiating teams from the three institutions

(Council, EP and Commission) discuss a text which represents a compromise that could be suitable for the interests of both the Council and the Parliament. These meetings, designed to advance the negotiation process, have become an institution of the European Union and are established as soon as the EP and the Council adopt their initial positions on the proposed legislation (Bauerschmidt, 2021); therefore, as argued by Ripoll Servent and Costa (2021), the votes in plenary represent thus often only a formal and predominantly symbolic step. Moreover, the institution of Trilogues shows how the European Commission's role does not end once the legislative proposal has been drafted and submitted. Rather, the Commission tries to promote contacts and the reaching of compromises between the EP and the Council and could even alter the proposal, as long as the Council has not acted (Bauerschmidt, 2021).

This notwithstanding, the use of Trilogues to facilitate interinstitutional negotiations in the EU legislative procedure has sparked a debate among scholars and practitioners about the issues of transparency and democratic legitimacy (Shackleton and Raunio, 2003), as well as about the possible benefits and drawbacks that Trilogues might bring to the EP (Ripoll Servent and Costa, 2021). Since no official records are kept and only a limited number of representatives take part in the negotiations, some scholars (Brack and Costa, 2018; Ripoll Servent and Costa, 2021) have come to question their legitimacy, thereby bringing to light what has been considered as a lack of democratic accountability. On the other side, however, Ripoll Servent and Costa (2021) also suggest that the employment of Trilogues has been contributing to strengthening the power of committees and other stakeholders that are involved in interinstitutional negotiations; at the same time, the number of people and the type of majority the EP is able to enter Trilogues with could have a significant impact on its negotiating position. Hence, as Brack and Costa (2018) have noted, the use of Trilogues has highlighted what is an enduring tension between efficiency, transparency and democratic accountability.

In case an agreement is not reached in the first reading and the Council decides to amend the EP's position, the legislative proposal undergoes a second reading, which in this case will be subject to time limit. As stated by Kenealy and Hayes-Renshaw (2018: 136), during the phase of the second reading, a "failure by the EP to amend or reject the Council's position by the deadline means it is accepted"; this means that according to the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, a legislative draft could still be adopted without a formal vote of the EP, if its members are not able to act before the deadline (Brack & Costa, 2018). On the other hand, however, the Council's failure to "act by the deadline means [that] the proposed legislation goes to conciliation". The Conciliation Committee, called before the third reading, is formed with an equal number of representatives from the EP and the Council and "has a wide margin of discretion in choosing the method for resolving disagreements" (Bauerschmidt, 2021: 221). The members of the Conciliation Committee will thus try to decide on a

jointly agreed text in order to have a final version which will then need to be approved both by the Parliament, by a majority of the votes cast, and by the Council, by qualified majority.

Officially it is rare to see the Council or the EP rejecting a legislative proposal of the Commission, since negotiations, which often take place behind closed doors, play a very important role in the process of trying to find a compromise. This is particularly true for the Council of the EU, an institution composed of diplomats, bureaucrats and representatives of their member state's executive, who generally try to avoid dissenting and formally rejecting legislative proposals. The EP, on the other hand, being it composed of political actors, is more willing to take also dissenting positions. Despite that, in the majority of the cases the legislative actors will try to reach compromises; therefore, EU laws are usually the result of compromises reached within and between the legislative institutions. Compromises within institutions are enforced by the need to reach either unanimity (in few policy sectors) or qualified majority when voting for an EU law; on the other hand, compromises between legislative institutions refer to the need for the EP and the Council to co-decide and negotiate together in order to pass a legislative proposal. This requisite is due to the heterogeneous character of the European Union, which often poses a question of legitimacy, transparency and democratic control. The establishment of the OLP has undoubtedly had a profound impact on inter-institutional relations, by promoting the creation of direct and informal relations between them (Burns, 2021).

Despite most EU legislation being adopted by means of the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, it is also important to underline how in some sectors in which states want to retain their power to control, such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), legislative proposals are still adopted by means of Special Legislative Procedures which do not foresee the joint adoption of the legal act; a feature that, in most cases, ends up favouring the Council, while restricting the rights of the EP.

The evolving powers and political influence of the EP have indeed been a topic of extensive scholarly debate and have undoubtedly generated considerable interest, particularly among scholars concerned with the distribution of power among the different institutions of the EU. Ripoll Servent and Costa (2021) identified and presented what could be considered the two primary theoretical explanations for the rise of the powers of the EP. One approach emphasizes the proactive actions taken by MEPs, such as unilateral initiatives, audacious treaties interpretation, and the exertion of pressure to increase their influence, whereas a second approach underlines instead the contribution of individual member states in defining and strengthening the powers of the EP through every treaty revision. Furthermore, according to Moravcsik (1993), even though the enhancement of the powers of the EP was posing a threat to the predominance of the Council, certain member states still invoked the principle of parliamentary sovereignty in order to support such measures.

On the one hand, the scientific debate has clearly established that the EP benefited from the successive treaty reforms, for as a result of these reforms, it had acquired the authority to negotiate with the Council in a wide range of policy areas, thus consolidating its position as a significant actor in the EU's decision-making process. However, while there is a general consensus on the fact that EP's political powers have increased since the mid-1980s, there has also been considerable discussion regarding the scope of such powers, mostly regarding the influence wielded by the EP within the different legislative procedures. In particular, starting from the 1990s, concomitantly with the introduction of the co-decision procedure, a large strand of the scholarly debate (Tsebelis, 2000; Shackleton and Raunio, 2003; Maurer, 2003; Kasack, 2004; Ripoll Servent, 2013) concentrated on investigating the impact of the legislative empowerment of the EP and the extent of its influence under the new legislative procedure, in comparison to cooperation. Overall, while scholars generally agreed on the fact that the provisions introduced under the Maastricht Treaty, particularly the progression from cooperation to co-decision I, represented the real turning point in the evolution of the powers and influence of the EP, there appeared to be less consensus on the role played by the Amsterdam Treaty and the subsequent shift from co-decision I to co-decision II (Maurer, 2003; Schackleton and Raunio, 2003; Kasack, 2004).

Furthermore, given its reputation as a champion of environmental policy within the European Union, some of these studies (Burns and Carter, 2010; Burns, Carter, Davies and Worsfold, 2013; Burns, 2019) specifically focused on the role of the EP within the environmental policy field. As reported by Burns (2019), the ENVI Committee was indeed among the first to benefit from these processes of parliamentarization, leveraging the increasing powers of the EP to become a prominent advocate for environmental issues and playing a significant role in shaping also the EP's reputation as a leading promoter of environmental protection in the EU. This notwithstanding, analyses like the ones carried out by Burns and Carter (2010), as well as Maurer (2003) and Kinski and Ripoll Servent (2022) have suggested what could be considered a possible trade-off between influence and ambition. As its policy influence grew, the EP seemed in fact to have become less ambitious in proposing its own amendments to legislation. Burns and Carter (2010) have indeed raised doubts about whether the adoption of co-decision actually led to the adoption of greener EP amendments, and their findings suggest that although the EP has achieved greater influence under co-decision, this has not always been matched by a qualitative impact of its amendments and propositions. In particular, as stated by Kinski and Ripoll Servent (2022), there appears to be a discrepancy between the external actions, where the EP can adopt non-legislative resolutions and tends to be more ambitious and the internal actions, where instead it collaborates with the Council of the EU as a co-legislator and, therefore, needs to be more pragmatic and moderate in order to be able to reach a compromise.

1.3.3 Non-legislative powers

As explained in the section above, from its designation as Common Assembly of the ECSC until today and concurrently with EU treaty changes, the power of the EP in the legislative process of the EU has significantly increased, with a considerable growth experienced as a result of the introduction of the co-decision procedure (Hix, 2002 in Kreppel & Webb, 2019). This notwithstanding, according to some scholars, the EP is still perceived as a relatively weak institution vis-à-vis the European Commission due to its inability to directly initiate legislative proposals (Westlake, 1994 in Kreppel & Webb, 2019), which represents one of the main tools of political influence. In order to overcome this specific lack of formal power, the EP has been trying to actively increase its (political) role and to strengthen its position and influence within the European Union framework through a range of different instruments, among which there is also the use of the so-called soft power.

In general terms, the concept of soft power refers to the ability of a country or organization to influence others through attraction or persuasion, rather than through the use of force or coercion. In the context of the EP, this term refers to its competence to exercise (political) influence over policies and decisions within the EU framework through means other than formal legislation. According to Bajtay (2015: 28), the EP has “always had the ambition and attitude to maximise parliamentary authority and make full use of the acquired formal powers for the sake of taking European integration forward”; this ambition has indeed proved to be crucial for the EP in order to try to exercise a form of political authority and influence in different EU policy-making sectors, including those “areas not falling under the remit of hard legislative powers but where parliamentary bodies and [m]embers have to reach beyond formal competences in order to make an impact [...] and shape policies” (Thym 2009 in Bajtay, 2015: 28). Some examples of EP’s soft power may include the already-mentioned exercise of oversight and scrutiny, but also the more recent practices of parliamentary diplomacy and mediation, through which the EP has been able to promote democratic values and human rights protection both within the EU and beyond its borders. Despite some scholars (Redei and Romanyshyn, 2019) arguing that in some cases EP diplomacy cannot be defined as a form of parliamentary diplomacy, for it acts in ways that do not always conform to its traditional patterns, the majority of the scholarly debate (Jančić, 2017: 21; Nitoiu and Sus, 2017) agrees in regarding EP diplomacy as a key way “in which the European Parliament challenges the foreign policy-making monopoly of the [...] EU executive trio – that is, the Council, the Commission and the European Council”.

According to many scholars, the legislative empowerment of the EP has contributed, over the years, to boost its assertiveness in certain policy fields in which it has acquired the power to co-decide with the Council of the EU. However, for the past years, the members of the EP have been working at enhancing its role also in fields in which its influence and powers had always been limited and

attempted to do so through the adoption of different non-legislative means and soft power approaches (Bentzen and Immenkamp, 2019). Today the EP could thus be considered as a political entrepreneur and agenda-setter in many fields, for it managed to increasingly raise its political and institutional profile; therefore, the next paragraphs will dwell on the concepts of policy entrepreneurship and agenda-setting and will thus serve as a preliminary background for the study carried out in the following chapters.

1.4 The European Parliament as a new actor in the EU and international arena

Nowadays, the international system is a system that is not only composed of states, but also of other actors of international law, such as international and transnational organizations or huge corporations. At the same time, however, it is always states who decide to confer powers to international organizations and decide how to develop the international community. The case of the European Union, as it was possible to see in the previous paragraphs, is a peculiar one, for its member states decided to delegate their sovereignty – their power to decide – to some of its supranational institutions in certain policy fields, and thereby recognized the European Union as a superior entity within those areas. Today the European Union has the potential for autonomous action and impact in different policy fields; the question, however, is whether the EP, which represents a peculiar institutional entity within the EU landscape, is able to qualify as a political actor and entrepreneur (Bajtaj, 2015).

As Bajtaj (2015: 21) puts it in his study on the role of the EP, “the main requirement of actorhood in the international system [...] is the ability to make an impact and exert influence internally (on related decisions) and externally (on third parties and on international relations overall)”. As mentioned in the previous sections, after its establishment as the Common Assembly of the ECSC at the beginning of the 1950s, the EP was endowed with very limited powers according to which it could only have a consultative role and provide opinions on legislative matters; hence, it was not considered as a reliable actor and its positions carried little weight (Bajtaj, 2015). In the following decades, however, and within the context of a growing democratisation of the EU system, what took place was also a gradual parliamentarisation of the EU polity; the EP used this event as an opportunity to accumulate internal capacities, improve its internal and external reputation and raise its international credibility and profile (Bajtaj, 2015). The EP has thus become an increasingly important actor both in the European Union as well as in the international arena, with significant powers in the EU legislative process, an important oversight role, and a key role in shaping EU policies. Its role has also evolved over time, thus reflecting the ongoing development of the EU institutional framework, and stands today as a central political actor within the European Union, representing the diverse

political views and interests of the EU citizens and engaging in political debates and negotiations to shape EU policies and laws.

1.4.1 The European Parliament as a political actor and entrepreneur: setting the agenda within the EU

When trying to define the term “entrepreneurship”, we refer to a concept that is used mainly in the analysis of public policies. A general definition considers policy entrepreneurs as actors or institutions that “seek to initiate dynamic policy change and are willing to invest their resources – time, energy, reputation, and sometimes money – in the hope for a future return” (Mintrom, 1997 and Kingdon, 1984 in Knill, Steinebach & Fernández-i-Marín, 2020: 365). This definition entails in it the willingness to take initiatives and exploit opportunities in order to influence policy outcomes and initiate a policy change (Cohen, 2016); this is the case of the European Commission, an institution which has always been considered as an entrepreneur, in line with its formal power of legislative initiative and policy formulation, and is especially true in the case of the environmental policy field, for it is a sector in which member states are usually more reluctant to take action. As a matter of fact, the European Commission has often been regarded as “the promoter of tougher environmental rules, [...] seeking to conflate ‘Europeanness’ and ‘greenness’” (Lenschow, 2005: 313), as opposed to member states, which are usually portrayed as less ambitious. This notwithstanding, recently some scholars (Steinebach and Knill, 2017; Knill, Steinebach and Fernández-i-Marín, 2020) have started questioning the entrepreneurial role of the Commission in certain policy fields, such as environmental legislation, where the EP appears instead as trying to take the lead and standing out as a political and policy entrepreneur, thereby influencing member states to become more ambitious. Steinebach and Knill (2017: 443) have indeed emphasised how its “reputation as a central driver of environmental policy innovation” and its policy entrepreneurship have actually been challenged over time, causing what could be defined as a form of policy stagnation, that is a decline in legislative proposals as well as in the number of actions taken by the European Commission to sanction the member states that do not comply, despite an actual increase in talks about environmental issues (Knill, Steinebach and Fernández-i-Marín, 2020). The results of their studies have thus suggested how the Commission should no longer be considered as the main policy entrepreneur in the environmental policy field, underlining how this evident change could actually be associated with the recent financial and economic crises which had, as an effect, the reduction of the Commission’s output in economically sensitive areas, for it had to take into account also the interests of the member states facing economic and financial challenges. The EP, on the other side, with its long history of being an environmental champion, could now have an opportunity to take the lead in the field of policy entrepreneurship.

Agenda-setting represents a crucial aspect of policy entrepreneurship, for the activities carried out by policy entrepreneurs are of fundamental importance in order to exert an influence and set the agenda (Cohen, 2016; Thierse, 2019), something which the EP has been trying to perform in a variety of policy fields. The notion of political agenda-setting refers in fact to the ability of individuals, organizations and institutions to influence which issues are to be considered important, introduced to the political discourse and debated by policymakers; for this reason, this could be considered as a key element among the strategies that political actors and policy entrepreneurs want to pursue (Princen, 2011). As in the words of Cohen (2016: 180), “while agenda setting is not the only element of policy entrepreneurship, it is perhaps the most crucial and important stage in the process, which involves translating ideas into feasible policies”. As of today, according to Webb and Kreppel (2019), the concept of agenda-setting could be divided into two main categories: one that is achieved through the capacity of directly influencing and controlling the policy-making process and the content of legislation, and an alternative one, which instead focuses more on shaping the discourse and introducing issues that are considered relevant into the political conversation. The main goal of this more indirect form of agenda-setting is creating the opportunity for a shift in political attention, through a process by which issues gain influence in the public and policy-making discourse through a variety of factors and mechanisms.

The concept of agenda-setting within EU studies has only appeared quite recently, that is in the middle of the 1990s. This was mainly due to the fact that, up until that moment, the main focus of study among EU scholars had regarded the European integration process and its dynamics, in an attempt to explain the type of cooperation and integration that had developed among the (then) EU member states (Princen, 2016). However, starting from the 1990s, EU studies experienced what could be considered as a shift in focus, as scholars started to become increasingly interested in the processes of decision- and policy-making within the EU, thus creating the premise for studying agenda-setting processes in the European Union context (Princen, 2016). An important work, in this sense, is the one of Tsebelis (1994: 128) who, as mentioned earlier, defined the EP as a “conditional agenda setter” already under the cooperation procedure for its right and power to put a veto over the legislative proposals.

With regard to the European Union, agenda-setters have to face two main challenges: gaining attention – which is common to all agenda-setting processes – as well as being able to build sufficient credibility for the EU to deal with that specific issue (Princen, 2011). As Princen (2011) noted, the first element revolves around controlling participation, which means involving actors that will eventually support their cause, an element which is also determined by the way in which this specific issue is defined. Hence, the importance of being able to frame the issue in the right way in order to

arouse interest. With the second element, instead, Princen (2011) discusses the importance of building credibility as an agenda-setting actor in the EU, especially regarding those issues in which the EU involvement is not self-evident, for they may be new or the EU may play only a limited role. A relevant tool in this sense would be “capacity-building”, which takes place both within and outside EU institutions and is of particular importance for those EU institutions that are more responsible for agenda-setting, such as the European Commission (Princen, 2011).

As reported also by Webb and Kreppel (2019), this more indirect form of agenda-setting has already been established in the EU context, where many actors have been able to influence and shape the direction of the policy-making process as well as its content, despite the Commission’s formal monopoly. Among these bodies, there is also the EP which, thanks to its increased legislative power provided for by the latest treaty amendments, has been able to leverage substantial means in order to exert pressure on the Commission, thereby playing a progressively proactive role in influencing and shaping policy outcomes (Maurer and Wolf, 2018; Kreppel and Webb, 2019).

Having the EP no right of legislative initiative, it has also “no direct right [...] to determine which policy proposals should be introduced” (Webb & Kreppel, 2019: 307-308), a factor which is still limiting the EP’s legislative influence only to those policy areas in which the Commission decides to initiate legislation. This notwithstanding, throughout the whole process, the EP has played an active role in trying to overcome its lack of formal powers of initiative, also through the exercise of pressure, as well as of numerous other avenues, in order to make effective use of its indirect agenda-setting influence (Kreppel & Webb, 2019); among these possibilities, there is the presence of intergroups, informal groups of MEPs who share an interest in a specific issue and come together to work on specific topics. This has represented an effective way to put issues on the EP and EU agenda (Princen, 2011), thus raising awareness on specific matters, and influencing decision-making within the EP and, consequently, within the European Union. Their influence, however, has been also highly dependent and limited by various factors, such as the issue at stake, the level of support they receive within the EP as well as the political context.

Another set of significant tools utilized is the adoption of resolutions pertaining to relevant subjects, commonly referred to as resolutions on topical subjects (RSP), as well as own-initiative resolutions (INI and INL). The former category encompasses non-binding and non-legislative resolutions whose content is of a highly ideological nature (Cheysson and Fraccaroli, 2019). These resolutions serve as means to articulate political opinions or express a political will in specific areas; however, they lack the capacity to impose legally binding actions, nor they necessitate further procedural activities; hence, are not deemed salient (Börzel et al., 2023)

On the other hand, the procedure for own-initiative resolutions is a power that the EP has entailed since its creation in 1957 and which starts with the adoption and the subsequent approval of own-initiative reports (EPOIRs) by a relevant parliamentary committee on a wide range of topics. As of today, EP's own initiative reports are still considered as a potential working tool, for they allow the EP to shape EU policy and legislative proposals, and the MEPs to state their interest in certain issues and their willingness to affect EU legislation and action. In the words of Kreppel and Webb (2019: 387), "in the absence of actual decision-making power, the EP used own-initiative reports in an effort to shape the discourse and set the EU political agenda", thus making its voice heard within the European framework and pressuring the Commission to initiate legislation.

Maurer and Wolf's study (2018) presents a detailed analysis of EPOIRs, thereby offering a comprehensive understanding of the differences between legislative and non-legislative own-initiative reports. According to Maurer and Wolf (2018), non-legislative own initiative reports (INI) could thus address communications from the Commission or cover topics of interest of MEPs that align with the EP's position. As stated by the EU Monitor website (n.d.), upon receipt of an own-initiative report, the Commission has then three months to either submit an official response covering the specific issues brought about by the EP, or notify the latter that it will not provide any official reply to the report, thus stating the reason behind its decision. Hence, it follows that if accepted by the Commission, these reports could pave the way and serve as a foundation for new legislation. In contrast, legislative own-initiative reports (INL) are explicitly referenced in the treaties of the EU as well as Article 225 TFEU and, in addition, are required to contain a comprehensive draft of the text that is expected from the Commission. As a matter of fact, INL initiatives have only been formalised with the Maastricht Treaty (today Article 225 TFEU), which granted the EP the formal right to submit suggestions of legislative initiatives to the Commission on matters on which it considered that the Union should have acted (Maurer and Wolf, 2018). Nevertheless, according to some scholars, this possibility was still not perceived by MEPs as a tool sufficient enough to set the agenda; additionally, also the Commission had always been showing some reluctance to introduce legislative proposals that had been formally suggested by other EU actors, despite the Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's expressed support for Parliament's right of initiative (Kreppel and Webb, 2019; Tilindyte, 2019).

The scholars Kreppel and Webb (2019) have indeed tried to study and theorize on the ability of the EP to increase its influence over policy outcomes. For the purpose of their study, the EP's own-initiative reports have been divided into two categories: "those in which the EP appeared to be responding to the actions of other actors (usually the Commission) and those in which it was actively calling upon the other institutions to act" (2019: 392), with the latter being the ones through which

the EP was actually attempting to set the agenda. Overall and as a result of their study, the EP does appear to be a more effective agenda setter in policy domains over which it has already an influence, that is policy fields in which the EP co-decides together with the Council of the EU, thereby suggesting how the influence of EPOIRs actually increased over time, in conjunction with its growing legislative decision-making powers. However, the use of own-initiative reports has proved, in part, to have a positive impact also when trying to initiate the discussion on new issues or policy frames (Webb & Kreppel, 2019).

EPOIRs are usually produced by a committee of the EP which has expertise and jurisdiction over the subject matter of the report. As a matter of fact, as Collins, Burns and Warleigh (1998) put it, much of the EP's work is carried out by its committees, which are specialized in different policy areas and are responsible for the formal input of the EP into the legislative process, since their reports and opinions can have a significant impact on the eventual legislation. Nevertheless, the influence of the committees can vary, thus reflecting the fact that some policy areas, despite being under the EU's competence, will remain largely intergovernmental in nature because member states want to keep their sovereignty and do not intend to delegate it to supranational institutions. Two policy fields which fully embody this different ability of the EP in exercising its own influence are environmental and foreign policy. On the one hand, over the years the Environment Committee has turned out to be one of the most successful in exploiting the opportunities of empowerment given by the subsequent treaty changes, thereby pushing the EP to act more like an entrepreneur (Collins, Burns & Warleigh, 1998). On the other hand, despite the existence of an EP Committee on Foreign Affairs, some aspects of the area of foreign policy, such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy, remain primarily intergovernmental and neither the Commission nor the EP can have much direct influence. As of today, in fact, there is still a wide variety of policy fields that remain directly under the influence and jurisdiction of the member states which appear unwilling to delegate sovereignty to supranational EU institutions. One of these areas is exactly the one of foreign and security policy, which still resides for the most part outside of the formal legislative process; however, as it will be outlined in the subsequent chapters, the EP has indeed expressed interest in trying to assume a more assertive role and to influence outcomes in this and other domains as well, through the use of own initiative resolutions (Kreppel & Webb, 2019), alongside the employment of other tools.

In addition to the committees, also rapporteurs "enjoy some important procedural prerogatives with regard to agenda-setting in the EP" (Finke, 2012 in Thierse, 2019: 272) as they are responsible for leading the drafting and the negotiation of the EP's own initiative reports, thereby helping in developing a consensus position. Moreover, their role has become particularly prominent also in the case of Trilogues, where a rapporteur of the EP is called to discuss and negotiate with representatives

of the Commission and of the Council in an attempt to find a compromise on a legislative proposal and may thus advocate for the EP's position in an effort to build consensus around their recommendations (Thierse, 2019).

Overall, the formal increase in EP's powers explained in the previous paragraphs, together with the policy entrepreneurship of MEPs have enabled the EP and its committees and rapporteurs to notably increase their informal powers and impact in terms of shaping the policy agenda (Collins, Burns & Warleigh, 1998). As suggested by the previous paragraphs, the concept of policy entrepreneurship is closely related to the one of agenda-setting, for the activities put forward by policy entrepreneurs are often its main causal driver (Thierse, 2019); the EP could thus be defined as a political actor and policy entrepreneur, which has been actively trying to increase, through different means, its role and arenas of influence within different areas of the European Union framework, including those in which it traditionally does not have many powers.

1.5 Concluding remarks: presenting the main research questions

This introductory chapter has tried to depict the historical and institutional context of the analysis that will be conducted in the following chapters, focusing, in particular, on the EP, its empowerment, and development. In fact, out of all EU's institutions, the EP is indeed the one which has changed the most; this aspect can be observed in all the subsequent treaty changes which have brought about its increasing legislative empowerment and which have transformed it from just an appointed and consultative assembly into a legislative body which today co-decides together with the Council of the EU on a variety of policy fields. However, as we have seen, the legislative power is not the only one exercised by the EP. There is in fact a variety of other powers and prerogatives that are carried out by this institution and that represent today its main source of non-legislative or soft power, hence they could be employed in all those domains in which the EP does not have much influence because member states want to preserve their authority.

The aim of this thesis is thus to analyse and assess whether this empowerment of the EP as an institution acting within the EU framework has actually resulted also into a major assertiveness of this body in certain policy fields. In particular, the following chapters will focus on and then draw a comparison between two distinct policy sectors, hence environmental and foreign policy, in an attempt to investigate whether, and especially how, the EP has tried to stand out as a political actor. As already presented within the introduction, starting from the theoretical background put forward in this chapter, the present thesis will try to assess the ways through which the EP tries to act as an entrepreneur and agenda-setter in sectors in which it has co-decision powers (environmental policy field), thus questioning whether this policy field was effectively influenced by the EP legislative

empowerment, and whether and how the EP actually attempts to influence decisions and absorb powers also in sectors in which it traditionally has few, as in the case of foreign policy.

Chapter 2

THE EP AS AN ACTOR UNDER CO-DECISION: EVALUATING ITS ENTREPRENEURIAL ROLE WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

2.1 Introduction

Environmental policy could be regarded as one of the younger policies within the European Union framework. Despite its recent emergence, the EU has long been committed to assuming a prominent role in the realm of environmental matters, exemplified by its early enactment of significant climate legislation even before this sector had gained treaty recognition (Siddi, 2020; Lenschow, 2005). This initial informal status ended with the adoption of the Single European Act in 1986, which provided the first legal basis for a common environmental policy. Up until that moment, the proposals on matters of environmental legislation had been presented and justified as being part of a policy neighbouring the functioning of the Common Market, for they feared that different national standards in this field could have led to trade barriers and distortions (Knill and Liefferink, 2021; Bürgin, 2021). The introduction of the Single European Act, on the other hand, established “a concrete legal basis for environmental action at the EU level [and] the Commission used its exclusive right of initiative to propose new legislation that greatly expanded the scope of EU environmental policy” (Bürgin, 2021: 93). The EP and the Commission, in particular, viewed environmental policy initiatives as potential opportunities to further promote integration; hence, they advocated for stringent legislation compared with the Council (Majone, 1996 in: Deters, 2019). The subsequent adoption of the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties contributed then to the expansion of the European Union’s role in this policy field, by making the newly introduced co-decision procedure the rule for most environmental policies, a change which further strengthened also the role of the EP (Lenschow, 2005; Knill and Liefferink, 2021; Deters, 2019). However, both the 2004 Eastern enlargement and the 2008 financial and economic crisis represented a turning point in the progression of environmental legislation, as a noticeable slowdown was observed in the subsequent years (Deters, 2019).

As stated by Article 4(2) TFEU, today the environmental policy field is part of a long list of shared competences, upon which both the European Union and the member states can take decisions and adopt legal acts. In particular, when it comes to shared competences, the general framework and standards are provided for by the European Union and its supranational actors; however, some features are still left to the states, which can act in those fields, but only to the extent to which the EU has decided not to legislate or regulate them.

Additionally, title XX TFEU and, in particular, Articles 191 and 192 regulate the Union's policy on the environment and its objectives; more specifically, Article 192 TFEU establishes the Ordinary Legislative Procedure as the legislative process regulating the field and, in accordance to which, the EP and the Council "shall decide what action is to be taken by the Union in order to achieve the objectives referred to in Article 191" (Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, 2012: 87).

Among the main actors involved in this field are the European Commission and the EP, which together with its environment committee, has always been considered a key player in the EU environmental policy-making (Judge, 1992 in: Burns et al., 2013). Over the last decades, the EP's legislative and decision-making powers have continued to increase, mainly due to the adoption of different treaties and of the consequent implementation of the co-decision procedure. The scientific debate presented in the first chapter, despite the different positions expressed, clearly highlighted how the EP was always considered a positive force and a key actor in shaping EU environmental policies. However, connecting to the topic of entrepreneurship previously discussed, traditionally it was the European Commission the institution that, also in this sector, was considered as endowed with the strengths and reputation of a policy entrepreneur (Laffan, 1997; Bürgin, 2021).

Moving on from the existing literature and scientific debate, the aim of this chapter is to examine the potential entrepreneurial role of the EP within the EU environmental policy field. The analysis aims thus to explore whether and how this legislative body actively seeks to emerge within the EU inter-institutional bargaining process and whether it effectively influences policy outcomes. In order to evaluate the impact of the EP, this chapter will employ a two-fold approach, encompassing an evaluation of the EP's impact and influence during the legislative process, as well as a focus on its more informal sources of influence. Subsequently, a set of hypotheses will be presented and later tested by making specific references to some selected case studies, thereby facilitating the evaluation of our underlying assumptions and the formulation of conclusive findings.

2.2 Research design

As anticipated in the introductory paragraph of this chapter, the field of environmental policy currently serves as an area where shared decision-making powers are exercised by both the EP and the Council of the EU, which jointly participate in the legislative process. Despite the increase of EP powers already discussed in the previous chapter, as well as its use of the co-decision procedure in the environmental field, the EP has been actively trying to increase both its political and legislative role and to strengthen its influence vis-à-vis the other EU institutions and member states.

As previously mentioned, a number of scholars (Steinebach and Knill, 2017; Deters, 2018; Knill, Steinebach and Fernández-i-Marín, 2020) have recently put forth a challenging argument that depicts

the European Commission as the EU institution responsible for a shift towards a form of policy stagnation and hypocritical policy entrepreneurship, especially for what concerns the environmental policy field. These scholars argue that despite a continuous increase in talks and discussion, the Commission has experienced a sharp decline in legislative activity, as well as a stagnation in policy activism and decision-making. This ongoing debate has thus created an opportunity for further exploration into the role of the EP as a policy entrepreneur and agenda-setter. Indeed, if it is true that the EP has assumed a leading position and exhibited a more progressive stance compared to the Commission, one would anticipate that the former would seek to amend the Commission's legislative proposals by suggesting more ambitious modifications and by trying to exert influence over member states. Therefore, we posit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: the EP is trying to propose amendments which are more ambitious than the propositions formulated by the Commission in its legislative proposals.

This notwithstanding, considering the tendency of member states to exhibit comparatively less ambition regarding environmental concerns, it is anticipated that the Council may not fully endorse the most ambitious amendments put forward by the EP. Consequently, the adopted amendments are likely to reflect a position closer to the Council's less ambitious stance. Moreover, when examining the adoption rate of EP amendments, technical and less ambitious amendments, as well as those modifying recitals (which primarily serve as public statements) are expected to have a higher likelihood of being adopted when compared to amendments that seek to introduce substantial policy changes or that revise articles within the body of the proposal. These considerations result thus in the following three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a: the majority of finally-adopted amendments correspond to the Council's position or are the result of a compromise reached between the two legislative institutions.

Hypothesis 2b: the majority of EP amendments that are fully adopted are not ambitious, for they primarily consist of technical changes and clarifications, without producing substantial transformations or new policy dimensions.

Hypothesis 2c: the majority of fully- and partially-adopted EP amendments are amending recitals rather than articles.

Regarding the voting behaviour of MEPs, instead, in order for the EP to wield substantial influence, it is expected that MEPs would present a united front and emerge as a cohesive political entity during voting procedures; such conduct entails also working towards the reaching of internal compromises

between the various political groups within the EP. These considerations result in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: during the voting procedure, EP groups try to reach an internal agreement so as to emerge as united and cohesive actors.

The sixth and final hypothesis rests, instead, on the assumption that due to its co-decision powers, the EP would rely less on informal instruments, such as own-initiative reports, to exert influence and make its voice heard within the European framework. Consequently, it is anticipated that the number of own-initiative reports and resolutions in this specific policy area would be considerably lower when compared to other policy fields where the EP does not hold co-decision powers.

Hypothesis 4: the EP's possession of co-decision powers has led to a reduced reliance on informal instruments, such as own-initiative reports.

In order to test all the aforementioned hypotheses, the following sections will present a selection of case studies, namely recent legislative proposals that have been formulated within the scope of the new European Green Deal strategy. Given the policy sector and the purpose of this study, the proposals selected have all been forwarded by the Commission within the past four years – hence, within the ninth parliamentary term – and have been amended and adopted under the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, where the EP shares co-decision powers with the Council of the EU. In order to test the influence and entrepreneurship of the EP, all the case studies have concluded the first reading of the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, and have either already been published in the Official Journal of the EU or are just awaiting to be signed.

A first level of analysis will take into consideration and compare the Commission's legislative proposals with the final acts in order to assess whether there have been changes adopted during the legislative and inter-institutional bargaining processes. The final compromise texts represent in fact the agreements which have been reached between the two co-legislators following rounds of Trilogue negotiations. Therefore, in case the Commission's legislative proposals have been modified, the present chapter will analyse the initial amendments and stances adopted by the EP and, subsequently, the position advanced by the Council, in an attempt to establish whether the EP eventually managed to have an influence within the process of informal negotiations and which position ultimately prevailed. As a matter of fact, the final amendments adopted frequently reflect compromise positions that have been agreed upon during the aforementioned rounds of informal meetings. As a result, they may either fully embody or only partially include the provisions that were initially put forward by the EP. The study will indeed place a specific focus on the amendments proposed by the EP, thereby analysing not only how many amendments the EP adopted, but especially whether it tried to establish

more ambitious or stringent criteria than the Commission and the Council on matters of climate legislation and, eventually, whether it managed to have an influence in having its amendments adopted.

A second level of analysis will instead focus on the voting behaviour of MEPs. As a matter of fact, right- and left-wing parties are known to have very different ideas on matters of environmental legislation and protection, for the centre-right is traditionally considered as “less sympathetic to environmental concerns than the centre-left” (Princen, 2021; Burns, 2021: 138-139). Furthermore, the recent increasing prominence of Eurosceptic and populist parties is believed to negatively affect the EP’s voting behaviour and its position as an environmental champion (Lenschow et al., 2020 in: Buzogány and Četković, 2021). Since, at the moment, “no single group enjoys a majority [...], in order to adopt amendments to new legislative proposals, the political groups must cooperate with one another to achieve an absolute majority” (Burns, 2021: 129). Voting behaviour in the EP exhibits indeed high levels of cohesion and a culture of seeking consensus among the largest European Party Groups (Ripoll Servent and Roederer-Rynning, 2018). This notwithstanding, before arriving at a consensus, it is necessary for each political group to have first reached an internal agreement, a task which has become increasingly difficult after the last rounds of enlargement which have caused the absorption of a wide range of political parties within each single EP group (Burns, 2021). The primary objective of this second section is thus to investigate whether there exists a robust internal cohesion both within and between the various political groups of the EP with respect to voting and securing legislative amendments in the environmental policy domain. Additionally, it seeks also to determine whether members of EP political groups are actually capable of transcending some of their ideological positions in order to reach consensus and compromises. An important indicator in this sense is represented not only by the rate of adoption of the different legislative amendments and, consequently, by the presence of very broad and comprehensive majorities, but also by the inclusion in roll-call votes of members of EP groups with traditionally contrasting views.

Lastly, the concluding section of this analysis will also consider the implementation of own-initiative reports on the part of the ENVI Committee and their subsequent adoption by the EP plenary. The objective is to ascertain whether the EP actually seeks to set the agenda and enhance its influence over policy outcomes also through the use of this more informal agenda-setting instrument, whose number, however, is expected to be significantly lower compared to other policy fields. The main objective of this last section is thus to assess whether the EP relies less on such informal instruments in policy areas where it co-decides, as its focus may be more directed towards formal legislative processes and negotiations.

Nevertheless, it is also noteworthy to analyse the extent to which own-initiative resolutions and recommendations manage to be influential in different policy fields. Evaluating their impact requires indeed considering their reception and the subsequent actions taken by other institutions, particularly the European Commission, as this allows for a comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness; hence, for the purpose of this thesis, a comparative analysis will eventually be conducted in the final chapter of this dissertation in order to compare the influence of own-initiative procedures in the environmental policy sector with the influence exercised in a policy sector in which the parliamentary institution does not co-decide, an aspect which will be the subject matter of the following chapter.

2.3 Case studies

The cases selected for this research form part of a new growth strategy that has been put forward by the Commission with the aim of tackling climate and environmental challenges and “transforming the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net-emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economy-growth is decoupled from resource use” (European Commission, 2019: 2). As a matter of fact, before the issuance of this official communication, at the end of November 2019 the EP (2019: 2) had issued a resolution declaring the need for the Commission to take concrete action and ensure that “all relevant legislative and budgetary proposals [...] are fully aligned with the objective of limiting global warming to under 1.5°C, and that they are not contributing to biodiversity loss” while proclaiming also a climate and environmental emergency in Europe, as well as globally. Following this resolution, on 11 December 2019, the Commission released the aforementioned communication revealing the strategy and initial roadmap of the necessary key policies for achieving a climate-neutral continent by 2050: the so-called European Green Deal (henceforth Green Deal).

As in the words of the European Commission (2019), the Green Deal, which forms part of its strategy to implement the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda and sustainable development goals (SDGs), is composed of various elements which are aimed at tackling the current and pressing climate and environmental challenges. Among the main points presented by the Commission’s plan, there is the need to reach a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, which means achieving net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by that date and, as a consequence, increasing the EU’s climate ambition and reductions target for the year 2030 as well. In its communication to the European institutions, the European Commission (2019: 4) declared its proposal to “present an impact assessed plan to increase the EU’s greenhouse gas emission reductions target for 2030 to at least 50% and towards 55% compared with 1990 levels in a responsible way”; in particular, with regard to the 55% figure and its feasibility, the Commission stated it would be evaluated through an attentive impact assessment, so

as to address the opposition of a part of the member states, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, which are usually more concerned about the costs and the financial aspects of environmental policies (Siddi, 2020).

Following this communication, the subsequent EP debate of 11 December 2019 (European Parliament, 2019a) offered MEPs the opportunity to discuss and examine their initial positions; the debate shows clearly the presence of contrasting views between the different political forces and, in particular, a stronger opposition coming from the side of Eurosceptic right-wing political parties, such as Identity and Democracy and the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), whose members stressed on the economic and budgetary aspects of the Green Deal, questioning its feasibility and bringing about also a representation of the interests of the member states. These internal discrepancies that can be observed in the aforementioned debate underline how the Green Deal represents for the EP both an opportunity, as well as a challenge (Burns, 2021), which eventually resulted in the adoption of a parliamentary resolution implemented on 15 January 2020 by 482 votes to 136, and with 95 abstentions. Through this resolution the EP specifically called on the Commission to present an ambitious EU climate law and urged for “an increase of the EU’s domestic GHG emissions reduction target for 2030 to 55% compared to 1990 levels” (European Parliament, 2020: 4), instead of the already presented objective of “at least 50% and towards 55%” (European Commission, 2019: 4). The text adopted was presented as a joint resolution by the European People’s Party (EPP), Socialists and Democrats (S&D), Renew and Greens/EFA groups, thereby displaying a cohesive stance among different political groups, including both centre-right and left parties, as well as a more ambitious position in comparison to the one initially advanced by the European Commission.

On the 4th of March 2020, the European Commission forwarded to the EP and the Council of the EU a legislative proposal which was to represent a milestone towards this target and towards a climate-neutral Europe: the European Climate Law. Furthermore, as previously asked by the EP and, after having conducted an impact assessment, on 17 September 2020 the European Commission amended this proposal to introduce an updated 2030 climate target of a net reduction of 55% of EU GHG emissions compared to 1990 levels.

In the EP, this legislative proposal was referred to the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and represents thus the first case study which will be analysed within this chapter. Following the European Climate Law, in July 2021, the European Commission adopted also the “Fit for 55” package, a set of proposals aimed at reviewing, amending or updating EU legislation on matters of climate policy in order to achieve the targets set out within the European Climate Law.

Therefore, for the purpose of this research, a total of six legislative proposals have been chosen as case studies to test the hypotheses outlined above. Alongside the European Climate Law (2020/0036

COD), five additional legislative proposals have been selected; these chosen case studies have all been formulated within the scope of the Green Deal, and some of them are also part of the comprehensive “Fit for 55” package. Specifically, these are the Social Climate Fund (2021/0206(COD)), the Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) (2021/0201 COD), the Effort Sharing Regulation (2021/0200 COD), the Revision of the Market Stability Reserve for the EU Emissions Trading System (2021/0202 COD). Finally, an additional legislative proposal which is strictly connected to the Green Deal and which will be included in the examined case studies is the Just Transition Fund (2020/0006(COD)). The following sections will thus provide a more detailed presentation of these selected case studies and their scope, thus setting the stage for further analysis within the context of the research objectives.

2.3.1 European Climate Law

The European Climate Law represents a central and key element in the field of climate protection and environmental legislation, for it transformed the Green Deal’s political commitments into a binding obligation (European Parliament, 2021). The legislative proposal, finally endorsed by the EP with 442 votes to 203 and 51 abstentions, was for the most part aimed at setting a legally binding EU-wide target of net-zero GHG emissions by 2050, as well as an intermediate target that had to be reached by 2030, and which was the object of many controversies and debates both within the EP and during the process of the interinstitutional negotiations. Furthermore, the proposed regulation will require EU institutions and member states to adapt their existing legislative framework to the new objectives; among other things, the Commission will be expected to evaluate the overall progress towards climate neutrality and adaptation, thereby ensuring the coherence and adequacy of relevant measures implemented by both the EU and its member states with the objective of achieving climate neutrality (Erbach, 2021). Should any inconsistencies be identified, the Commission will be empowered to undertake “corrective actions” in relation to EU measures in order to align them with the aforementioned objectives (Erbach, 2021: 6).

2.3.2 Just Transition Fund

The Just Transition Fund was introduced by the Commission in January 2020 as a vital component of the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan, closely aligned with the overarching goals of the Green Deal. Its fundamental purpose is to provide targeted financial support within the framework of cohesion policy, specifically addressing the economic and social challenges arising from the transition to a climate-neutral and circular economy (European Commission, 2020). By offering dedicated funding, the Just Transition Fund aims to assist regions that are disproportionately impacted

by this transition, thereby alleviating the socioeconomic consequences they may face (European Commission, 2020). After a round of interinstitutional negotiations, the proposal was eventually adopted by the EP plenary in May 2021 and shortly after that also by the Council, thereby entering into force in June of the same year.

2.3.3 Social Climate Fund

The Social Climate Fund constitutes a key component put forth by the European Commission as part of the “Fit for 55” package. This comprehensive package of reforms is designed to realize the main objective of the Green Deal in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030. The legislative text aims to provide support to individuals and businesses falling within the most vulnerable categories, as well as those more directly and adversely affected by energy and transport poverty and by the transformative shifts brought about by energy transition, thereby also establishing new common definitions for poverty and mobility poverty across the EU (Widuto, 2023). This legislative text is closely connected to another proposal falling within the “Fit for 55” package, namely the revision of the EU Emission Trading System (ETS), and its primary focus is on delineating the financial resources which should be used “for both compensation – that is, temporary direct payments to citizens to help them pay energy bills – and investment programmes that would finance climate measures” (Casamenti and Roldán Mejías, 2022: 3).

2.3.4 Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR)

The Effort Sharing Regulation is another legislative text forming part of the “Fit for 55” package and containing provisions that will contribute to the revised goals of climate neutrality and greenhouse gas emissions cuts in sectors such as transport, buildings, agriculture and waste. With this proposal, the European Commission (2021) suggested an increase from 30% to 40% of emissions reduction from ESR sectors compared to 2005 levels, while maintaining GDP per capita as the main criterion for setting the national targets, despite their increased level of ambition. The two legislative institutions reached an agreement in March 2023 and less than a month later the final act was eventually signed and published in the Official Journal.

2.3.5 Revision of the Market Stability Reserve for the EU Emissions Trading System

This legislative proposal was presented by the Commission on 14 July 2021 so as to amend Decision (EU) 2015/1814 regarding the establishment of a market stability reserve for the EU greenhouse gas emission trading scheme, namely the number of allowances to be placed in the market stability reserve. With this proposal, the Commission tried to ensure that the current parameters were

maintained also after 2023 and until 31 December 2030 (European Commission, 2021a); as with the previous case study, an agreement was ultimately reached in March 2023 while the finally agreed text was signed and published in April of the same year.

2.3.6 Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF)

Closely linked to the European Climate Law, there is also the proposal for a regulation amending the already existing Regulation 2018/841 on land use, land use change and forestry. This legislative proposal was put forward by the European Commission on 14 July 2021 and, like the preceding case study, forms part of a package aimed at revising several pieces of EU climate legislation with the final scope of achieving the objectives formulated within the Green Deal and the subsequent European Climate Law. The revised LULUCF regulation is indeed set to regulate GHG emissions and removals also from land use, land use change and forestry, thereby increasing EU carbon sinks, and as a consequence also the 2030 EU's target (European Parliament, 2021). As with the previous cases, the revised proposal was eventually adopted at the end of March 2023 and officially published within the following month.

2.4 Analysis

The study and evaluation of EP amendments have already been the subject matter of many pieces of research (Tsebelis and Kalandrakis, 1999; Kreppel, 1999; Burns and Carter, 2010) which attempted to measure and gain a better understanding of the influence of the EP within the legislative process, thereby studying the content of the proposed amendments and, especially, whether they tried to introduce substantive and ambitious changes to the legislative proposals. Kreppel (1999) deems the content and purpose of amendments to have a significant impact on their success; in this sense, amendments that do not entail high levels of policy change might be more likely to be adopted than politically controversial ones. At the same time, her research (Kreppel, 1999) has observed that the EP tends to achieve greater success with its proposed amendments when they aim to broaden the existing scope or domain of a legislative proposal, as opposed to introducing entirely new policy areas. Furthermore, EP's amendments to the introductory recitals of a proposal have proven to be more effectively adopted in comparison with textual revisions within the main body of the proposal. This is primarily because recitals typically serve as overarching "statements of purpose rather than specific calls to action" (Kreppel, 1999: 523). Furthermore, Kreppel (1999: 523-24) highlights also the significance of internal cohesion within the EP in influencing the likelihood of successful adoption of amendments. It is suggested that amendments that are "able to secure broad support in the

Parliament might be generally more acceptable to other institutions as well”, indicating a positive correlation between internal unity and the EP’s success in achieving its objectives.

When it comes to classifying EP amendments’ significance, scholars (Tsebelis and Kalandrakis, 1999; Kreppel, 1999; Burns and Carter, 2010) have adopted different forms of categorisation. Tsebelis and Kalandrakis (1999: 130) categorised them according to their relative importance. The range adopted extends on a scale ranging from “insignificant” for those amendments which do not have substantive legal implications, but which mostly modify the linguistic aspect of the text, to “significant” and “highly significant” when they were introducing substantive changes without significantly altering the scope of the legislation, and from “important” to “highly important” in case they were considerably altering the scope of legislation.

On the other hand, Kreppel (1999) in her study divided EP amendments into three main types, without making reference to their importance, for in her view even amendments that proposed only relatively small changes could actually hold a high political significance. Her three groups encompassed “amendments that clarified or simplified the language of the proposal, amendments that expanded the area covered by the proposal and amendments that added new policy arenas to the proposal” (Kreppel, 1999: 526).

Taking into account these classifications and in order to make ours easier, the analysis carried out in the following sections will divide the amendments into four main groups, which have been conceived by taking into consideration the main focus of this chapter, that is the level of policy ambition. Our four categories can be classified as follows: “*not ambitious*”, which closely corresponds to the category “insignificant” as defined in the study of Tsebelis and Kalandrakis (1999), “*ambitious*” and “*highly ambitious*” which will include instead amendments that introduce substantive and relevant changes to the legislative text, and “*status quo*” which instead includes articles and recitals that have not been amended by the EP. These four categories, which will be further discussed later on in the section, will apply to all levels of analysis of the legislative texts, with the exception of Annexes, which have not been taken into consideration for the purpose of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is also worth underlining how this kind of classification is always subject, to an extent, to a discrete margin of arbitrariness and therefore it cannot exhibit an absolute level of objectivity.

In order to assess whether the approved amendments were more ambitious in terms of climate regulation than the original provisions stipulated by the European Commission, each amended and also each newly introduced paragraph has been compared and categorized into one of the above-mentioned categories. Specifically, the “*highly ambitious*” and “*ambitious*” categories comprise amendments that have introduced substantial transformations to the legislative proposals. The former

includes all those amendments that alter the scope of the legislation, expanding its applicability to certain areas or subjects. This category encompasses also amendments which either modify or introduce new final goals and/or time limits, thereby establishing new higher targets and policy instruments or more stringent standards than the ones set by the Commission. The “ambitious” group, instead, contains EP amendments that do not significantly alter the scope of the legislative proposal but suggest possible areas for improvement, where the Commission or the member states should act, without setting specific or higher targets and deadlines. Furthermore, this category encompasses also amendments which are responsible for making targets or propositions more precise, as well as newly introduced sections or paragraphs that make references to general aims or use a more high-reaching language and precise vocabulary, but without necessarily mentioning policy instruments or deadlines. Given the often-technical nature of these legislative texts, determining whether an amendment was actually expanding the scope of the legislation was sometimes challenging. In such cases, these amendments were categorised as “ambitious” rather than “highly ambitious”.

On the other side, the “*not ambitious*” category consists of amendments that only alter or clarify the language, without bringing substantive changes which would modify the legislative proposals put forward by the Commission. Are part of this category also newly-introduced amendments that mention the legislative background, provide more context or make references to areas or policies that have already been covered in previous legislative texts. The fourth and final category is the so-called “status quo” and indicates articles and recitals that have remained unchanged, demonstrating that the EP agreed with the Commission’s initial stance. Finally, it is important to note that amendments only deleting previous legislative provisions or parts of those provisions have been placed within a separate category and excluded from this analysis, for understanding the rationale behind such decisions would require conducting interviews with policymakers.

As stated earlier, following this initial analysis, this chapter will further evaluate the success rate of the EP by examining the degree of adoption and retention of its proposed amendments throughout the subsequent rounds of interinstitutional negotiations which occurred behind closed doors, and during which the EP and the Council of the EU (with the mediating role of the Commission) were tasked with reaching a compromise on the amended legislative proposals. In measuring the adoption rate of EP amendments, Tsebelis and Kalandrakis (1999: 128) offer a classification consisting of five categories that range from “*fully adopted*”, to “*largely adopted*” if more than 50% of the amendment’s provisions have been accepted, to “*partially adopted*” when the acceptance rate goes down to less than 50%, and to “*modified text*” for a fraction of amendments which can neither be encompassed in the previous categories nor can be classified as “*rejected*”.

Classification	Meaning
Fully adopted	Adopted word for word
Largely adopted	More than 50% of the amendment's provisions have been adopted
Partially adopted	Less than 50% of the amendment's provisions have been adopted
Modified text	Legislative text is modified, but cannot be encompassed in the previous categories
Rejected	Amendment not adopted

Table 1: EP amendments' categories proposed by scholars Tsebelis and Kalandrakis (1999).

Taking these categories into consideration, the analysis carried out in this chapter will then consider the adoption rate of the EP amendments by classifying them into three main categories: “fully adopted” when the amendments have been accepted as such or with minor language changes which did not alter their meaning, “partially adopted” when at least half of the provisions contained have been implemented, albeit with some language modifications, or a new compromise agreement has been reached, which contains in principle the stipulations put forward by the EP, and “not adopted” when the EP amendments have been entirely or for the great majority rejected. In case of not adopted amendments, the present analysis will then try to evaluate whether they were completely dismissed or either the Council's position or a new institutional agreement was eventually reached and adopted.

In order to address the overall research question and hypotheses, the research carried out in the following sections will be initially organized around the following two questions:

- 1) Is the EP trying to put forward more ambitious amendments than the European Commission?
- 2) Is the EP able to be influential and secure the adoption of its amendments?

2.4.1 Is the EP trying to put forward more ambitious proposals than the European Commission?

In order to address this first inquiry, a comparative analysis was initially conducted examining the selected legislative proposals as case studies and comparing them to the final texts agreed upon at the conclusion of the legislative procedure. As anticipated in the preceding sections, the aim was thus to evaluate the extent and character of the modifications made to the original Commission texts

throughout the legislative process. Upon initial examination, it became evident that each final legislative text appeared to incorporate a significant number of modifications, some of which altering the recitals and the articles already included in the Commission’s initial proposals, while others, instead, introducing entirely new sections. Within this study, the majority of cases analysed revealed a notable prevalence of modifications falling into the former category. Indeed, in some instances, these amendments accounted for as much as 86% of the revised recitals and articles, as observed in the cases of the Just Transition Fund (2020/0006(COD)) and of the Social Climate Fund (2021/0206(COD)).

After having confirmed that the great majority of these legislative proposals have indeed been modified, the first focus of the analysis will be placed on the amendments put forward by the EP. A first level of scrutiny will thus provide a quantitative analysis of the amendments put forth by the appointed committee, as well as of those proposed by EP political groups or MEPs; these amendments will be later divided into two distinct categories, namely amendments modifying recitals or articles part of the Commission’s proposal and amendments introducing new recitals or new articles. This intends not only to highlight the total number of amendments adopted by the EP plenary but also to provide a first distinction between the two aforementioned categories.

The following table shows indeed, for each legislative text, the number of amendments that have been forwarded by the relevant committee, by EP political groups or by MEPs on behalf of their groups, and which have been subsequently adopted in plenary. As anticipated earlier in the section laying down the research design, for the purpose of this thesis both the amendments to the Annexes and those only totally or partially deleting recitals and articles have not been taken into account, hence they will not be included in the following calculation.

	Amendments proposed by Committee responsible	Amendments proposed by Committee and adopted in plenary	Amendments proposed by EP political groups or MEPs and adopted	Total amendments adopted
European Climate Law	95	92	14	106
Just Transition Fund	60	60	1	61
Social Climate Fund	150	150	/	150

Effort Sharing Regulation	40	40	2	42
Revision of the Market Stability Reserve	19	19	/	19
LULUCF	77	68	4	72

Table 2. Number of amendments proposed by EP committees and political groups and adopted in plenary.

Out of the six legislative texts that form part of our research, five were referred to the ENVI Committee, while the Just Transition Fund was instead directed to the Committee of Regional Development (REGI), with ENVI acting as an associated committee and tasked with providing an opinion. The designated rapporteurs were responsible for the drafting of reports that contained the amendments to the legislative proposals and, in addition, also some MEPs and EP political groups put forward amendments to the legislative texts. Before being tabled for plenary, the reports, along with their respective amendments, underwent a voting process within the committee itself, thus requiring a simple majority of votes cast. As demonstrated by Table 2, a total of 451 amendments were proposed by the appointed committees for the six selected case studies. However, it should be noted that during the EP plenary sessions, a portion of these proposed amendments was ultimately rejected. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that in certain instances the EP plenary adopted, instead, amendments that had been put forward by MEPs on behalf of their political groups or by a group of MEPs collectively. In the end, a total of 461 amendments were eventually adopted by the EP during the relevant plenary sittings.

A breakdown of the aforementioned categories of amendments distinguishes those modifying articles and recitals of the Commission’s legislative proposals from the amendments that, instead, introduced entirely new sections (either new recitals or entirely new articles). The majority of the selected case studies presented a higher number of amendments pertaining to the first category and thus modifying the articles or the recitals that had been forwarded by the Commission within its legislative texts. However, in some cases, such as in the case of the European Climate Law, the number of amendments introducing new sections was significantly higher than the one relating to the other category. This could indeed signify the willingness of the EP to introduce and bring its stances forward in the legislative text, thereby proving to be an influential actor in the EU decision- and policy-making process. Whether it actually managed to exert a real form of influence, however, will be assessed in the next section.

Moving on to the main question of this section, the following table presents indeed the aforementioned categorization of EP amendments into three different groups based on the level of ambition displayed when amending the provisions contained in the legislative proposals.

	Highly ambitious	Ambitious	Not ambitious
European Climate Law	22 (20.7%)	55 (51.8%)	29 (27.3%)
Just Transition Fund	9 (14.7%)	22 (36%)	30 (49.1%)
Social Climate Fund	22 (14.6%)	96 (64%)	32 (21.3%)
Effort Sharing Regulation	9 (21.4%)	22 (52.3%)	11 (26.1%)
Revision of the Market Stability Reserve	1 (5.2%)	8 (42.1%)	10 (52.6%)
LULUCF	15 (20.8%)	29 (40.2%)	28 (38.8%)

Table 3. EP amendments' categories

Considering all the legislative proposals part of our study, on average, around 47% of the amendments presented by the EP were including at least one element which could be considered as ambitious and could thus be encapsulated within the “ambitious” category. With a figure of approximately 64%, the Social Climate Fund indeed stands out as the legislative text with the highest rate of ambitious amendments, followed by the European Climate Law and the Effort Sharing Regulation. Indeed, in the great majority of the cases here analysed, the category including amendments that were regarded as “ambitious” constituted the largest share of amendments, the only exceptions being the Revision of the Market Stability Reserve and the Just Transition Fund, which displayed instead the highest rates of “not ambitious” amendments.

For some legislative texts, the EP was also able to put forward what could be considered as a significant share of “highly ambitious” amendments, ranging from around 15% in the case of the Social Climate and Just Transition Funds, up to approximately 21% in the European Climate Law and the LULUCF and Effort Sharing regulations.

Regarding the “highly ambitious” category, some amendments, such as amendments number 13, 20 and 27 modifying recitals of the Social Climate Fund were considered as widening the scope of legislation, for they were introducing within the legislative text the concepts of “climate neutrality”

and “social impacts from carbon pricing”, which were not envisaged by the original Commission’s proposal (European Parliament, 2022). Other amendments pertaining to this category have been, instead, very much debated both within the EP and the scientific committees, as well as by the public opinion, for they represented crucial and significant advancements in the realm of climate protection and environmental policies. Among these revisions, amendment 48 of the European Climate Law has indeed emerged as one of the most contentious and widely discussed, for it aimed to update the EU’s climate target for 2030, advocating for an increase in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the Commission’s proposed target of 55% to a more ambitious goal of 60%. This proposal had sparked considerable controversy also within the EP and its political groups due to the potential implications and consequences it could have had over European industries and jobs, as indicated by some MEPs from the centre-right European People’s Party (EPP) political group (Simon, 2020).

Overall, the data presented in this section seems to confirm the first hypothesis put forward within the research design in portraying the EP as an institution that is trying to propose more ambitious amendments than the proposals formulated by the Commission in its legislative texts. While a significant number of “non ambitious” amendments exist, it is important to note that when the “highly ambitious” and “ambitious” categories are combined, they constitute indeed the largest portion.

Another interesting element of analysis is represented by the category denominated “status quo”, namely recitals and articles whose paragraphs or subparagraphs were not amended by the EP, thereby showing that it accepted the original position put forward by the Commission. Overall, the analysis has disclosed only a limited number of sections which had not been amended by the EP, some of which did not contain controversial aspects, as in the case of some recitals or of the final articles concerning the entry into force of the regulations. However, in some cases, especially with regard to articles’ paragraphs or subparagraphs contained within the body of the regulation and which made reference to budget commitments (as in the case of Articles 3 and 3a of the Just Transition Fund), despite the EP not modifying the Commission’s proposals, amendments were instead put forward by the Council of the EU, which was trying to advance its positions.

Overall, the findings presented in this section appear also to confirm the key concepts of entrepreneurship and actorhood previously introduced within the first chapter. Indeed, the subsistence of large proportions of amendments which were categorized as “ambitious” and “highly ambitious” underlines the willingness of MEPs to undertake ambitious initiatives and take the lead so as to influence policy outcomes and initiate a policy change. Taking into consideration the previous points, the next section will then try to determine whether, and to what extent, the EP was eventually successful in influencing policy outcomes and seeing its stances adopted.

2.4.2 Is the EP able to be influential and secure the adoption of its amendments?

As mentioned earlier, the willingness of EP groups to put forward ambitious amendments is not enough for it to be considered as an influential political actor and entrepreneur within the EU institutional framework. Considering the fundamental importance played by the informal rounds of interinstitutional negotiations – also known as Trilogues – in the process of policy-making, a second level of analysis has indeed focused on the adoption rate of the EP’s amendments examined earlier.

	Fully adopted	Partially adopted	Not adopted
European Climate Law	2 (1.8%)	24 (22.6%)	84 (79.2%)
Just Transition Fund	9 (14.7%)	22 (36%)	30 (49.1%)
Social Climate Fund	4 (2.6%)	38 (25.3%)	108 (72%)
Effort Sharing Regulation	/	18 (42.8%)	24 (57.1%)
Revision of the Market Stability Reserve	1 (5.2%)	10 (52.6%)	8(42.1%)
LULUCF	1 (1.3%)	24 (33.3%)	47 (65.2%)

Table 4. EP amendments’ adoption rates.

As depicted by Table 4, a significant majority of the cases analysed exhibited a prevailing trend of unadopted amendments, with percentages largely exceeding fifty percent of the total amendments in most instances. Furthermore, an average proportion of around 35% of the total amendments was able to achieve a partial level of adoption, with the highest rates being found in the decision on the Revision of the Market Stability Reserve for the EU Emissions Trading System and in the Effort Sharing Regulation. Conversely, figures significantly drop when considering the category with fully adopted amendments. Among the selected case studies, only the Just Transition Fund prominently stood out, with approximately 14.7% of EP amendments being fully adopted. All the other legislative texts reveal instead really low percentages of EP amendments that were implemented in their entirety when adopting them, with the Effort Sharing Regulation ranking last, as no EP amendment was adopted fully.

As suggested by Kreppel (1999), amendments to recitals seem to exhibit higher rates of adoption and appear to be more effectively implemented when compared to articles’ amendments. As a matter of fact, hypothesis 2c was formulated to verify whether the validity of such proposition still endures. Hence, the categories containing “fully adopted” and “partially adopted” EP amendments have been analysed to see whether there was a prevalence of adopted amendments modifying recitals rather than articles. The data collected seems indeed to confirm such hypothesis, for the great majority of the

legislative texts analysed exhibited a majority of adopted EP amendments modifying recitals, with percentages ranging from approximately 72% as in the case of the LULUCF regulation, to around 60% for the Social Climate Fund and European Climate Law. The only legislative proposal which, instead, presented a higher ratio of adopted EP amendments modifying articles was the Just Transition Fund, whose proportion was almost 70% of the total adopted changes.

In addition to the data presented in Table 4, it is also really important to understand the extent to which the “highly ambitious” and “ambitious” amendments, contained in the categories displayed in the previous section, were eventually able to be adopted. In particular, this last aspect is of utmost significance, for it allows to comprehend the degree of influence presented by the EP within the EU policy-making process, as well as its ability to act as a policy entrepreneur and eventually shape the agenda.

The European Climate Law and the Social Climate Fund stand out as the legislative texts with the lowest adoption rates of amendments proposed by the EP. Indeed, despite putting forward a relatively substantial number of “highly ambitious” amendments as well as displaying very significant percentages of amendments falling within the “ambitious” category, the EP was unable to successfully secure their adoption. In these instances, the amendments were either completely rejected without any alternative proposal from other EU institutions (either the Council or the Commission), or they were overridden by prevailing positions, predominantly aligned with the Council’s stance. Concerning the European Climate Law, out of a total of 22 amendments categorised as “highly ambitious”, approximately 68% of them (15 amendments) were not adopted. The remaining amendments were only partially adopted, thus resulting in compromise agreements which reflected and incorporated elements of both the EP’s proposals and the Council’s position. As a matter of fact, the already-mentioned Amendment 48 of the European Climate Law, which was categorised as “highly ambitious”, for it was advocating for a “reduction in emissions of 60% compared with 1990 levels” in comparison to the less ambitious figure proposed by the Commission (Council of the European Union, 2021), did not receive adoption. Ultimately, the final position was indeed aligned with the less ambitious stances presented by both the Commission and the Council of the EU, which were supporting, instead, a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of “at least 55%” (Council of the European Union, 2021).

The case of the Social Climate Fund serves as another notable example of the limited EP success in seeing its “highly ambitious” amendments adopted. Indeed, in relation to this legislative text, with the exception of a single instance, all the amendments falling within the “highly ambitious” category were eventually not adopted. While the majority of them were simply dismissed, in two cases the Council’s amendments were adopted in their stead, and in one case, it was the Commission’s

compromise suggestion the one which prevailed. Very similar outcomes can also be found in the LULUCF regulation, which ranked as the third highest in terms of unadopted EP amendments. In this case, out of a total of 15 “highly ambitious” amendments proposed, 13 were not adopted; nonetheless, in the majority of the cases a new compromise agreement was eventually achieved and implemented by the two legislative institutions at the end of the rounds of Trilogues negotiations.

Moving on to the amendments falling within the “ambitious” group, these appear to present a much more diversified distribution concerning their adoption rates, for many ambitious EP amendments were also fully and partially adopted. Regarding the Social Climate Fund, all the amendments classified as “fully adopted” were indeed putting forward ambitious stances, either modifying final goals or putting emphasis on various ambitious areas, including the protection of certain communities that were more severely impacted by climate change, and in which the Commission and the member states were called on to act. Also all the other legislative texts display this more differentiated distribution of ambitious amendments among the three categories presented above, as many ambitious amendments were at least partially adopted and some even fully adopted. The regulation on the Revision of the Market Stability Reserve for the EU ETS exhibits indeed a figure of 75% of ambitious amendments which were either fully or partially adopted. Nonetheless, it is also important to underline that the majority of these legislative texts still present high numbers of ambitious amendments which were not adopted.

Shifting the focus to the “not ambitious” category, it is worth noting that some legislative proposals presented a significant number of adopted amendments which were part of this group. The Just Transition Fund regulation displayed indeed a rate of almost 90% of fully adopted amendments which have been classified as “not ambitious”. The same findings hold true also for the Effort Sharing Regulation, where over 50% of the “not ambitious” amendments were partially adopted. These findings seem to confirm hypothesis 2b according to which the majority of fully or partially adopted amendments were not ambitious. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the other legislative proposals analysed seem not to support such hypothesis, for the majority of the total “not ambitious” amendments put forward by the EP were eventually also not adopted.

Overall, these examples highlight the challenges encountered by the EP in achieving the adoption of its most ambitious amendments and indeed seem to confirm hypothesis 2a in portraying the majority of finally adopted amendments as the result of compromise agreements reached between the two legislative institutions during the rounds of informal negotiations, for the cases in which the position of the EP was fully adopted by the Council and implemented in the final legislative texts are much limited. Being the great majority of EP amendments partially or even not adopted, it follows that the amendments eventually agreed on and implemented correspond, in the majority of the cases,

to compromise agreements which have been reached between the two legislative institutions and which, in case of partially adopted EP amendments, correspond to settlements encompassing parts of the EP's proposed adjustments and parts of proposals put forward by the Council, as in the case of the Social Climate Fund, which out of 31 EP amendments that were partially adopted, 24 were eventually implemented in the form of compromise agreements reached between the latter and the Council.

Based on the examination conducted and taking into duly consideration also the limitations encountered when analysing the four-column documents used to carry out the present examination, the instances in which the final position coincided with the sole amendments put forward by the Council appear indeed to be less numerous than the cases of compromise agreements. According to the information provided by the four-column documents, and comparing them with the finally adopted text, the great majority of cases in which Council's amendments were adopted can indeed be found in case the EP amendments were completely rejected. As a matter of fact, in the Social Climate Fund, out of a total of 108 unadopted EP amendments, in approximately 15% of the cases the final position implemented corresponded to the Council's stance. In all the other instances, the EP amendments were either just dismissed (especially in case of amendments which were introducing new sections), the original Commission's proposal was maintained or a new compromise agreement was eventually reached.

Regarding the former occurrence, it is noteworthy to observe how, in this case, the great majority of EP amendments introducing new sections (that is 45 out of 57 amendments) were not adopted. Out of approximately a 79% rate of non-adopted amendments pertaining to this category, more than half of them were completely dismissed, without even reaching new compromise agreements. An interesting aspect to detect in this case is the fact that a large number of these dismissed amendments had been classified as "ambitious" or even "highly ambitious", for they were extending the scope of legislation (such as Amendment 50 which was making reference to the importance of ensuring "[r]espect for fundamental rights and compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union" (European Parliament, 2022c)) or making reference to new general objectives or sectors which should be taken into consideration (as in the case of Amendments 15 and 18 which were advancing the need to "support vulnerable households, [...] microenterprises, [...] small enterprises or [...] transport users" (European Parliament, 2022c)).

Similar data can also be found in other legislative proposals, such as the LULUCF regulation which exhibited a rate of around 17% of Council's amendments that were adopted instead of EP amendments or the Effort Sharing Regulation, where this rate increased to 29%. Additionally, the Council was able to secure a relevant number of adopted amendments also in areas where the EP had

not introduced any, whereas in many other occasions its position corresponded to the original one proposed by the Commission.

Overall, the data collected and the information presented in these sections seem to confirm the idea of the EP as an institution acting as a policy entrepreneur, thus attempting to be visible and trying to initiate policy changes and influence policy outcomes. What emerges from the previous analysis is the presence of a large section of amendments put forward by the EP which were categorized as encompassing “ambitious” or “highly ambitious” stances. This notwithstanding, the results highlighted also a discrepancy between the EP’s entrepreneurship and its ability to exert a real impact. A substantial majority of the cases analysed exhibited, in fact, large percentages of unadopted amendments and, in particular, the EP seemed unable to secure the adoption of its most ambitious ones. As a matter of fact, the European Climate Law and the Social Climate Fund, despite presenting relatively high rates of “highly ambitious” and “ambitious” EP amendments, stood out as the legislative texts with the lowest adoption rates. The “highly ambitious” category, in particular, represented the one with the most difficulties in seeing its amendments adopted. “Not ambitious” amendments, on the other hand, disclosed quite different results, for while some legislative proposals presented a significant number of adopted amendments which were part of this group, in others the majority of the total “not ambitious” amendments were eventually also not adopted.

All things considered, despite its activism, such difficulties in seeing its most ambitious amendments adopted and the presence, in some legislative texts, of high percentages of “not ambitious” amendments being implemented, meaning amendments not putting forward significant changes, reflect indeed the EP’s still current challenges in exerting a real impact and form of influence.

2.4.3 MEPs voting behaviour

The voting behaviour of MEPs provides important information with regard to their willingness and ability to be influential and shape the EU policy agenda. Concerning the environmental policy field object of the current analysis and given the EP’s co-decision powers, which involve the ability of the latter to be a dynamic actor in the EU policy-making process and take part in the development of legislative texts, the capacity to reach consensus and set forth a strong and cohesive stance when adopting its most ambitious amendments appears indeed crucial.

According to Kreppel’s study (1999), within the context of the EP, the term “*consensus*” refers to legislative texts’ degree of support and their subsequent adoption by large majorities. Overall, in the EP there has been an undeniably prevailing tendency to adopt acts with substantial majorities, even in the face of opposition or abstention by a relatively small number of MEPs (Novak et al., 2021). Such tendency is the result of several factors, including its perception as a norm, MEPs’ own interests

in compromising, the participation in Trilogues where “large majorities serve as signals of the level of cohesiveness and determination of each actor” and the presence of Eurosceptic groups, which foster the formation of alliances among pro-EU MEPs (Novak et al., 2021: 479).

The following table presents the results of votes within the EP when adopting its negotiating mandate, namely its amendments to the Commission’s legislative proposals, as well as the votes that resulted from the approval within the EP of the final provisional agreements reached at the end of the interinstitutional rounds of negotiations.

	Votes results EP negotiating mandate (+ - 0)	Votes results provisional agreement (+ - 0)
European Climate Law	392, 161 142	442, 203, 51
Just Transition Fund	417, 141, 138	615, 35, 46
Social Climate Fund	479, 103, 48	521, 103, 48
Effort Sharing Regulation	437, 142, 40	486, 132, 10
Revision of the Market Stability Reserve	490, 127, 7	504, 118, 11
LULUCF	472, 124, 22	479, 97, 43

Table 5. EP voting results (+ adopted; - rejected; 0 abstained).

All the proposed amendments have been duly adopted by a simple majority of the votes cast, thereby obtaining the required approval. Specifically, approval is granted when more than half (namely half plus one) of all the members of the EP vote in favour and, as of today, a majority in the Parliament requires at least 353 votes approving the amendments. The abovementioned results demonstrate indeed generally large majorities within the EP when adopting its negotiating mandate; however, the European Climate Law appears to be the legislative proposal for which it was more difficult to secure a wide-ranging majority. The reason could lie in particular in the sensitive and often controversial matters discussed, such as the previously-mentioned Amendment 48, which often made it difficult the achievement of very large majorities, for they tried to put forward ambitious stances on matter of climate legislation, thus standing in contrast to the proposal previously set forth by the Commission.

Indeed, when looking at the roll-call votes for the adoption of the amended Commission proposal, what appears is a clear prevalence of votes in favour coming from left and centre-left political groups, but also from centre and centre-right parties, Renew and EPP respectively, thus displaying a level of understanding across different, and sometimes opposed, political groups. On the other hand, the majority of members of the most conservative right-wing political parties have often been displaying

contrasting stances, thus acting in an almost unanimous way, especially against the adoption of the most ambitious amendments. While it is not possible for the scope of this thesis to analyse into more detail the different positions and motivations that stand behind MEPs voting positions, such findings seem indeed to confirm hypothesis 3 in expecting parliamentary groups to act as cohesive actors are trying to reach compromises between various political forces.

Another evidence emerging from Table 5 is a noticeable rise in the approval rate – hence in the number of votes in favour – when voting for the provisional agreements reached at the end of negotiations with the Council and the Commission. This observation suggests a potentially higher rate of approval for the agreements attained at the end of these negotiations, which ultimately facilitated consensus among different political groups for, in some cases, they meant the non-adoption of the most ambitious and divisive EP amendments.

Right-wing and far-right political groups have indeed always exhibited a considerable degree of scepticism with regard to environmental and climate legislation, often opposing the most ambitious stances. Notably, the Identity and Democracy (ID) group, which represents a right-wing to far-right faction, has consistently proposed the rejection of every legislative text put forward by the Commission, proposals which, however, were never approved. The ID political group, however, was not the sole entity expressing dissent towards many ambitious amendments concerning climate protection and legislation. As previously discussed in this chapter, members of the EPP group have indeed frequently displayed a dubious attitude with regard to certain propositions or some of their aspects, including the above-mentioned Amendment 48 of the European Climate Law, for they feared possible negative consequences on the EU population and economy. Nonetheless, their votes have indeed often proved fundamental for the successful adoption of the amended legislative texts.

Looking at the results of roll-call votes can certainly represent a powerful indicator of MEPs positions and viewpoints, for it allows to see how each member of the EP voted with regard to single amendments. The overall picture that emerges is a prevalence of votes in favour coming from left- and centre-left wing parties, especially when voting for amendments previously categorized as “ambitious” or “highly ambitious”. The majority of members of right-wing parties, instead, tended to vote against or abstain, while centre-right political groups – as in the case of the EPP group – displayed a more varied attitude, for it is also possible to observe positive high adoption rates of ambitious amendments coming from this group. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the examination of roll-call votes revealed also instances where members belonging to Eurosceptic and right-wing groups decided to dissent and vote against their respective group’s predominant stance. Despite the difficulty in assessing the reasons for this behaviour, these findings suggest a willingness of certain anti-EU forces to engage in compromise and adopt a more pragmatic approach (Novak et al., 2021).

Overall, while the total adoption rates of amended and compromise agreements demonstrate high levels of internal cohesion amongst the various political groups, there still appears to be a wide range of different and often contrasting stances and positions displayed. This notwithstanding, it is indeed worth mentioning how, when adopting the amended texts, the EP and its political groups were still able to do so while displaying substantial majorities, a factor which symbolises their ability to reach widespread consensus.

2.5 Setting the agenda in the environmental policy field: the role of own-initiative procedures

When it comes to environmental policy, given the EP's role as a co-legislator with the Council, it follows that its main ability to shape policy outcomes goes through its powers of co-decision which allow it to influence the Commission's legislative proposals by suggesting amendments which would modify the propositions already put forward by the Commission or by suggesting amendments which would introduce entirely new sections or articles within the legislative texts. Having the EP no right to initiate legislation, this aspect allows the institution to still exert a form of influence over proposed legislation, hence to shape the agenda within the EU institutional framework.

As duly exemplified in the first chapter of this dissertation, the concept of agenda-setting, instead, entails the ability for an institution to influence which issues are to be considered important and introduced to the political discourse; therefore, it could be considered as a key element among the strategies that political actors and policy entrepreneurs like the EP want to pursue (Princen, 2011). Agenda-setting implies in fact a wide range of, often informal, instruments which are deployed for the attainment of forms of influence within the decision- and policy-making processes. For the specific case object of the present analysis, the possession of co-decision powers represents indeed the main form of influence exercised by the EP; as a consequence, the last hypothesis presented advanced the idea that the EP and its ENVI Committee rely less on the adoption of own-initiative reports in order to be influential in environmental and climate legislation, especially in comparison to policy fields where the parliamentary body of the EU does not hold co-decision powers.

The data available and accessible in the EP register of documents seems to confirm such hypothesis, for during its last term, the EP – and more precisely – its ENVI Committee only initiated a limited number of own-initiative procedures, namely 12 own-initiative reports and a motion for a resolution on topical subjects. In particular, no own-initiative procedure could be found with regard to the matters subject of the here selected case studies, even though there are some concerning the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 or the EU carbon border adjustment mechanism.

With regard to the Commission's response rate to such procedures, which indicates the ability of the EP to see its stances recognised and its positions possibly adopted in future legislative proposals,

the EP exhibited a relatively high degree of official Commission replies, which accounted for approximately the 58% of the reports, while the motion for a resolution, instead, did not obtain an official response. The rate of formal responses provided by the Commission is particularly important, for it allows to esteem a first measure of the influence exerted by the EP and of its ability to bring its positions forward. As a matter of fact, these documents contain a point-by-point response to the EP requests as well as an overview of the action that has already been implemented by the Commission or that the latter intends to take, after having considered the EP's requests contained in its own-initiative resolutions.

Overall, it appears that the ENVI Committee did not make an extensive use of such procedures, for the numbers of own-initiative reports and resolutions of topical subjects appear to be quite limited, thereby seemingly confirming the last hypothesis presented in this chapter in expecting a reduced reliance on such informal instruments. This data, however, will be further examined and re-elaborated in the conclusions presented at the end of this dissertation, which will present a comparative analysis of the environmental and foreign policy fields, in light of all the data and information collected.

2.6 Concluding remarks

Overall, the case studies examined in this chapter hold significant importance in understanding the current role played by the EP in the realm of environmental policy, a sector where this institutional body co-legislates with the Council of the EU. The analysis was mainly carried out in order to assess the entrepreneurial role of the EP, as well as its ability to act as an ambitious and influential political actor in addition to the means employed.

In particular, for the purpose of this study, six recent Commission legislative proposals regulating environmental and climate legislation were selected with the main purpose of evaluating the role played by the EP in the process of amending and implementing legislation. As a matter of fact, the chapter concentrated for the most part on the analysis of EP amendments to the legislative texts and their relative rates of adoption, thereby always taking into duly consideration also the relations with other EU institutional bodies, especially with the Council of the EU. On the whole, the results obtained portray the EP as an institution which has been – and is currently – trying to exploit its recently-enlarged legislative and co-decision powers in order to attempt to take the lead and act as a more ambitious and entrepreneurial actor on matters of climate legislation, in comparison to the Commission and also to the Council of the EU, whose more intergovernmental nature often prevented the latter from pursuing more ambitious and largescale positions.

This notwithstanding, the data has also unveiled relatively high rates of unadopted EP amendments, many of which had been previously classified as “highly ambitious”, whereas a great number of “not

ambitious” amendments were, in fact, adopted. Furthermore, the analysis of these documents has underlined the importance of Trilogue negotiations and the ability of the EU institutions involved to make effective use of these rounds of informal meetings so as to reach compromise agreements of proposed amendments. As a matter of fact, a very significant proportion of finally adopted amendments consisted of agreements which often included a compromise between EP and Council positions. In some instances, it was also possible to observe a prevalence of the latter’s view over the amendments put forward by the EP; nonetheless, in case of partially- or non-adopted EP amendments, the reaching of compromises appeared to constitute indeed the largest option.

Despite the still present difficulties in seeing its most ambitious amendments adopted, the EP has, in the majority of the cases, indeed displayed a determined attitude in proposing and adopting amendments containing more ambitious proposals, thereby also reaching wide-ranging majorities among its various political groups and demonstrating therefore its commitment to shaping legislation in a way that aligns with its vision. When participating in the co-decision process, the use of amendments has indeed proven itself to be the most effective instrument through which the EP can attempt to wield influence and act as an entrepreneur, for it allows the EP to advance its most ambitious stances; on the other hand, despite their positive adoption rates, the use of additional and more informal instruments to shape policy outcomes, such as the initiation of own-initiative procedures, appeared to have a considerably less prominent impact. As a matter of fact, over the course of the last decades, the powers of the EP have notably increased and this empowerment has influenced the environmental policy field, for it allowed the EP to play an increasingly pivotal role in the policy- and decision-making processes, often capitalizing on the recent decline in the Commission’s traditionally dominant entrepreneurial position.

Chapter 3

THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF THE EP IN FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ITS ROLE IN UKRAINE AND TAIWAN

3.1 Introduction

The development of an EU foreign policy has been a matter of extensive debate since the beginning of the process of European integration. Historically, this policy field has always been perceived as a prerogative of the member states, as well as closely linked to the exercise of national sovereignty; hence, the initial external powers given to the European Community regarded primarily the exercise of trade and development; in particular, economic integration and the development of an internal market which required, among other things, having a common customs union. Therefore, since the beginning of its development, the EU needed a number of external powers to carry out some of its main functions and tasks. These powers are today part of what is known as external action, which is framed mainly in the TFEU, involves a more supranational dimension, and comprises common commercial policies, development and humanitarian cooperation, and the external dimension of internal policies (Ziller, 2020); namely, areas in which the EP can act as a co-legislator with the Council of the EU.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), instead, is a much more general and broader area which covers foreign policy, security issues, and the progressive framing of a common defence policy and which is based on specific institutional structures, procedures and instruments “which differ from the traditional community method” (Ziller, 2020: 57). The creation and development of a common foreign policy originated from the failure to establish a European Defence Community in 1952. Subsequently, the institution of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in 1970 marked a significant step towards the coordination of national foreign policies within an intergovernmental framework. This body was largely dominated by national foreign ministers, with the Commission playing only a marginal role, and the EP being completely excluded (Peterson and Helwig, 2018).

The historical events which took place in 1989, however, exposed the weakness of this intergovernmental framework and reinforced the need for stronger foreign policy cooperation (Peterson and Helwig, 2018). According to Westlake (2020: 1), the 1992 Maastricht Treaty with its provisions and the establishment of a CFSP as the second pillar of the EU could thus be identified as “the moment when something recognisable as a proper foreign policy started to emerge”. As in the words of Peterson and Helwig (2018: 198), however, there was and still is “no single EU foreign

policy in the sense of one that replaces or eliminates national policies” which, on the contrary, are still very much a prerogative of the individual states, for they are considered as sensitive fields of sovereignty, and a prerogative that the member states are reluctant to share (Diedrichs, 2004; Bajtaj, 2015).

In 1997 the Amsterdam Treaty established, among other things, the institution of the High Representative for the CFSP, which aimed to provide a unified voice and external image for the EU and its CFSP (Peterson and Helwig, 2018). In addition to the CFSP, the creation of a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in 1999 represented an important tool under which member states contributed to humanitarian and rescue missions, as well as peacekeeping and crisis management operations via the sending of troops and operational missions (Peterson and Helwig, 2018). Subsequently, as argued by Peterson and Helwig (2018), the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon expanded the responsibilities of the High Representative who became endowed with new roles, such as serving as vice-president of the Commission, as well as presiding over the meetings of the Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers. Furthermore, the treaty established the European External Action Service (EEAS), which is responsible for aiding the High Representative in carrying out the CFSP and other aspects of EU foreign policy (Peterson and Helwig, 2018). Additionally, the EEAS can also be regarded as the diplomatic service of the European Union and is accountable for carrying out diplomatic tasks on behalf of the EU (Zamfir, 2019).

As of today, the CFSP finds its legal basis in Title V of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), whose Article 24(1) establishes, among other things, that the CFSP “shall be defined and implemented by the European Council and the Council acting unanimously, except where the Treaties provide otherwise” (Treaty on the European Union, 2012: 18). In addition, the CFSP “shall be put into effect by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and by Member States, in accordance with the Treaties [whereas] [t]he specific role of the European Parliament and of the Commission in this area is defined by the Treaties” (Treaty on the European Union, 2012: 18).

As it is possible to observe, a key role is indeed played by the Council of the EU with its foreign affairs ministers and by the European Council, two institutions which share a strong intergovernmental character. In fact, despite an increase in the EP’s formal powers brought about by successive treaties and the consolidation of co-decision as the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, foreign policy has continued to be perceived as an area traditionally dominated by member states, where “the EP’s formal influence remains somewhat limited”, especially for what concerns the key areas of CFSP and CSDP (Immenkamp and Bentzen, 2019: 413) where, since the adoption of the Treaty of Maastricht, there has been little to no substantial expansion of the EP’s prerogatives (Diedrichs, 2004).

As of today, article 36 TEU establishes that the EP should be informed on matters regarding the CFSP, it “may address questions or make recommendations to the Council or the High Representative” and its views and opinions should be taken into duly consideration (Treaty on the European Union, 2012; Bajtaj, 2015). With the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, this responsibility of informing the EP, which was previously falling on the Council, has been given to the High Representative and constitutes indeed one of the main methods through which the EP can ensure a form of executive accountability, democratic control and policy oversight in foreign policy (Herranz-Surrallés, 2011; Goïnard, 2020). In addition, the High Representative takes now part twice a year in parliamentary debates on the progress and implementation of CFSP and CSDP and involves the EP in their fundamental aspects by presenting annual reports (Bajtaj, 2015). Such reference to parliamentary debates indeed highlights how they have also served as crucial platforms, for they offer MEPs and representatives from other EU institutions usually involved in EU foreign policy the opportunity to articulate their stances and discuss the implementation of certain initiatives. The organisation of debates on matters pertaining to foreign policy has indeed played a pivotal role in enhancing the position of the EP and its influence in this area, thereby establishing also a form of parliamentary oversight and control over the other more traditional EU foreign policy actors. Moreover, under the Lisbon Treaty, the EP was also granted a right to be consulted on the main aspects of the CFSP; however, as Herranz-Surrallés (2011) points out, the consultation procedure, despite requiring the Council to ask the EP for its opinions on proposed legislation, does not actually entail an obligation for the former to adhere to them.

This notwithstanding, as already mentioned in the previous chapters, the EP has often been aiming at increasing its influence and impact over different areas and, since the mid-1990s, has been trying to achieve the very same also in the EU foreign policy field (Nitoiu and Sus, 2017). As stated by Bajtaj (2015: 23), “foreign policy and external actions are policy fields primarily of a strategic nature”; hence, the adoption of non-legislative and informal resolutions could represent the only way for the EP to exert a form of influence. To this end, the EP has resorted to the implementation of various non-legislative tools, such as non-binding own-initiative resolutions and recommendations, committee meetings and ad hoc missions through which it engages with foreign actors and expresses its position on different CFSP matters. In particular, various parliamentary bodies and MEPs have also resorted to the use of informal practices in order to increase the EP’s influence beyond the formal competences conferred to it by the treaties (Thym, 2009 in Immenkamp and Bentzen, 2019). All these aspects, according to Diedrichs (2004), have indeed contributed to the reinforcement of the EP’s image as a serious actor in CFSP and, to this day, parliamentary diplomacy could thus be considered a growing and expanding area of parliamentary influence (Immenkamp and Bentzen, 2019).

This chapter aims to shed light on the role played by the EP in the EU foreign policy field, focussing in particular on the area of CFSP where, as underlined in this section, its powers and influence are much more constrained in comparison to other areas in which the EU parliamentary body can instead act as a co-legislator with the Council. In particular, as argued also by Diedrichs (2004), given the treaties' failure to provide it with more powers in this sector, the EP has gradually tried and managed to gain more influence through the adoption of a range of informal and lateral means; hence, the extent of its influence today is also largely "dependent on its own political will" (Goinard, 2020: 109). The main objective of the chapter is thus to investigate whether the EP is actively seeking to expand its influence and assume a more entrepreneurial role also in a field in which it traditionally does not hold much power. Drawing on the concepts of parliamentary diplomacy and agenda-setting, the next sections will first introduce and then try to examine different tools and strategies which have been employed by the EP to enhance its influence and role in the sector. As in the case of the previous chapter and in order to draw the relevant conclusions, a series of hypotheses will be first presented and later examined by making reference to some specific case studies. In fact, this chapter follows on from the previous one, and together they will try to provide a comprehensive analysis of the EP's role as an entrepreneur and political actor.

3.2 Parliamentary diplomacy, mediation and democratic support outside of the EU

In a broad sense, the notion of diplomacy makes reference primarily to the establishment of formalised relations between two independent political entities, usually states, with the main purpose of mutual representation and protection of their respective interests as well as of the interests of their citizens; additionally, the institution of diplomacy aims at negotiating agreements, collecting information, and promoting the establishment of friendly relations (Bajtay, 2015; Gioia, 2015). As of today, however, the range of actors involved in diplomatic relations has considerably expanded and has thus come to comprise also other actors, such as parliaments, international organisations, NGOs, and civil society groups, as well as individuals (Bajtay, 2015). For the purpose of this thesis, the focus will be placed on the notion of parliamentary diplomacy.

In recent years, more and more studies have started to develop a new area of scholarship that concentrates on the EP's direct engagement in external affairs via the use of parliamentary diplomacy and its tools (Redei and Romanyshyn, 2019). Over the years, the term parliamentary diplomacy has been characterized in various ways, an aspect which has led to a lack of accuracy in its definition and conceptualization. Broadly speaking, this concept comprises a wide set of channels and actions, such as consultations with foreign actors, which have the main aim of increasing "mutual understanding between countries and [...] [improving the] scrutiny of government", as well as exercising a form of

influence over non-EU states (Weisglas and de Boer, 2007 in Bajtay, 2015: 10; Goinard, 2020). In addition, in case of conflicts, the exercise of parliamentary diplomacy could also entail the use of mediation practices between the parties involved (Immenkamp and Bentzen, 2019).

Overall, the concept of parliamentary diplomacy is characterised by a series of features which have been duly exemplified by Redei and Romanyshyn (2019) and which distinguish it from the more traditional forms of diplomacy. Some of these unique traits are represented by the direct involvement of parliamentarians, parliamentary groups, political parties or even parliaments acting as institutions. Furthermore, parliamentary diplomacy practices tend to be transparent, in contrast to the confidential nature of governmental diplomacy, a characteristic which is strictly connected to the use of debates, deliberations and voting (Redei and Romanyshyn, 2019).

In recent decades, the EP has unquestionably witnessed a significant rise in its exercise of parliamentary diplomacy and in its engagement in EU foreign policy. Such expansion has eventually come to encompass a wide array of means and actions which are employed and performed by the EP as a parliamentary entity and through which it is both able to exercise a form of control over EU foreign policy institutions and to establish direct interactions with foreign actors (Goinard, 2020; Redei, 2019). According to Redei (2019), in fact, research on EP parliamentary diplomacy has predominantly focused on its formal meetings with other legislative bodies and international parliamentary fora, without taking into much consideration all the more informal and non-institutionalised ways through which the EP engages with non-EU actors, including political mediation.

As argued by Immenkamp and Bentzen (2019: 415), the EP has often been conceived as a “vehicle for consultation” with representatives of third countries, international organizations or non-state actors; in addition, both its delegations and individual members have been playing a very significant role through the carrying out of official bilateral or multilateral meetings, ad-hoc missions and visits to third countries, as well as democracy support initiatives. Of particular importance are also the roles of the EP president, of EP standing committees and intergroups, as well as of a system of EP standing delegations, which are responsible for developing and promoting relations in different non-EU countries or regions mainly through the maintenance of inter-parliamentary relations (Redei, 2015; Gianniti and Lupo, 2017; Delputte, Fasone and Longo (2017)). As stated by Redei (2015: 277), however, MEPs “tend to interpret their mandate more broadly; [hence,] [a]lmost all delegation visits by the EP include encounters with members of the executive branches of the country [...] as well as [with] representatives of civil society groups”.

For what concerns the diplomatic role played by the EP President, this has increased throughout the years in conjunction with the growing role of the EP. According to Gianniti and Lupo (2017), the

increased role of the President of the EP is also confirmed by Article 235(2) TFEU, which introduced the formal right for the President to take part in European Council meetings, as well as to address the latter prior to each meeting. In addition to this right, the President of the EP has the power to carry out official visits to third countries and receive visitors, such as heads of state and heads of government, thereby representing the EU as a whole, enhancing the role of the EP as a political and diplomatic actor and playing a very significant role in EU foreign affairs (Gianniti and Lupo, 2017).

Furthermore, the work carried out by MEPs within the various committees (especially the AFET and SEDE Committees) and intergroups has indeed proved to be fundamental to analyse the position of the EP in external and diplomatic relations, for they play an active role in promoting and establishing the latter as an international actor. Also Redei (2015), while enumerating some of the means through which parliamentary diplomacy can manifest itself, explicitly cited the pivotal role and tasks carried out by the parliamentary committees; in particular, one example is the AFET Committee which extends invitations to members of foreign governments, ambassadors and representatives of foreign states and whose members additionally engage also in international travels to third countries.

The less institutionalized activity of parliamentary mediation, on the other hand, encompasses a more unusual role for a legislative body, namely an active engagement “as a third party [in settling] political differences between political actors in a geographical area outside [its] jurisdiction” (Redei, 2019: 1). Such a parliamentary activity is still at the beginning and rather evolving; however, there have been already examples of successful EP mediation operations, including the Cox-Kwasniewski mission in Ukraine. Furthermore, thanks to the creation of an EP’s Mediation and Support Service, this practice has recently started to become more formalized.

Given the different characteristics described earlier, parliamentary diplomacy provides MEPs with an opportunity to experience freedom of expression in voicing their opinions through the adoption of various means and without being constrained neither by the diplomatic ties and customs that typically govern traditional governmental diplomacy nor by the different positions of member states within the Council (Thym, 2006). This notwithstanding, Goinard (2020) highlights how the use of a form of diplomacy by the EP did not come without obstacles. As a matter of fact, the effectiveness of EP diplomacy is contingent upon its ability to ensure internal coherence, as well as to strategically integrate and combine the various diplomatic instruments mentioned above and, for this reason, it has occasionally been questioned.

Over the past few years, the EP has indeed demonstrated an increasing level of activity and involvement in the field of parliamentary diplomacy, particularly with regard to mediation, conflict resolution, and democracy support (Bentzen and Immenkamp, 2019). In its 2014 resolution on the

EU's comprehensive approach and implications for the coherence of EU external action, the EP stressed the significance of mediation and dialogue, as well as democracy support, in preventing and peacefully resolving conflicts. Moreover, the resolution acknowledged also the involvement of the EP in mediation processes in Ukraine and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, underlining its important role in monitoring CFSP (European Parliament, 2014; Bentzen and Immenkamp, 2019).

Being the EP the only directly and democratically elected EU institution, it follows that this body is strongly committed to supporting and protecting democracies and democratic values all around the world. As argued by Jančić (2017), an important part of this agenda is indeed carried out through the sending of fact-finding and observation missions in third countries which, in the majority of cases, are structured around a country's electoral cycle, as this allows a more effective monitoring of the electoral process, as well as the coordination of other complementary and mediation activities (Bentzen and Immenkamp, 2019). Every year, around ten to twelve short-term election observation delegations are indeed sent by the EP to non-EU countries that are undergoing the process of democratic elections; these short-term missions are integrated into other ongoing long-term ones which are led and organised, instead, by other international organisations (Bentzen and Immenkamp, 2019). In this sense, the cases of Ukraine and Taiwan subsequently analysed provide very good examples of how the EP successfully utilized both its treaty-based and soft powers to establish a unique form of parliamentary diplomacy that would have enabled it to enhance its role and credibility within international and diplomatic relations (Nitoiu and Sus, 2017).

3.3 Parliamentary agenda-setting in EU foreign policy

The introductory section of this chapter already presented two essential and closely related dimensions, namely parliamentary oversight and agenda-setting. These aspects are of utmost significance as they hold direct relevance to the subject matter under examination and are also inherently linked to the concept of parliamentary diplomacy.

As explained also in the first chapter of this thesis, the concept of agenda-setting is a very important one, for it refers to the ability to influence which issues are to be considered important and thus introduced into the political discourse (Princen, 2011). When it comes to the EU foreign policy field, given its limited formal and legislative powers, the EP has sought to exert an influence over the policy agenda through the adoption of various non-legislative means. The area of CFSP, in particular, does not grant the EP a role as a co-legislator, which represented instead its main tool of policy influence and ambition within the other realms, including the environmental one. Hence, the EP has resorted to the implementation of parliamentary own-initiative resolutions, recommendations, hearings and inquiries, in an effort to promote and push for certain specific issues (Goinard, 2020).

As argued by Redei and Romanyshyn (2019), a great number of EP studies have indeed concentrated on the tools available and employed by this legislative body in order to exert influence and new forms of control over other EU institutions. As a matter of fact, according to Goinard (2020), one of the most important and effective instruments has been exemplified by the inclusion, in the EP plenary sittings, of debates regarding foreign policy issues as well as by the participation in these sessions of the High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission (or either a commissioner or the Council President in his/her stead). During these sittings, the executive is thus invited to take a stand on the most pressing foreign policy matters and to respond to MEPs' questions (Goinard, 2020) who, in this way, manage to exercise also a form of parliamentary scrutiny and control over other EU actors.

Another essential tool for exerting influence and setting the agenda has been the use of own-initiative reports (Kreppel and Webb, 2019; Goinard, 2020), the majority of which, in this case, are issued by the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET), but also by the Development and Cooperation Committee (DEVE) and the International Trade Committee (INTA), are later debated and eventually adopted by the EP plenary. Yuchun Lan (2004), in her study on EU-Taiwan relations, identified different types of these resolutions: resolutions under consultation procedure, those issued in response to Commission's reports, and resolutions on MEPs' or committees' own-initiative reports. These reports have been used in order to articulate and convey views on EU foreign policy matters or on emerging issues in relation to third countries, and as a way to wield influence over other EU institutional actors, for they can be employed by the EP in order to ask the Commission to submit a legislative proposal. Such reports are, in fact, very important because they also reflect the opinions of MEPs; however, given their non-binding and non-legislative nature (with the sole exception represented by legislative own-initiative reports), their actual impact is complex and not straightforward; hence, it encourages further investigation and research (Goinard, 2020; Lan, 2004). This notwithstanding, although parliamentary reports on foreign policy matters are not part of the formal legislative procedure, they could still have a significant influence on CFSP and CSDP; moreover, their availability and accessibility might also make them a valuable source of information for various stakeholders, including citizens, national parliamentarians, and journalists (Thym, 2006).

A further type of resolution which needs to be mentioned within the context of EU foreign policy is represented by resolutions on topical subjects (RSP) which, given their ideological and non-binding nature, are usually used to express political opinions and wills (Cheysson and Fraccaroli, 2019). As already mentioned in the first chapter, the Commission is not required to provide a reply to this type of resolutions; hence, they are unlikely to have a high legislative impact and binding effects.

Overall, the role of the AFET committee has indeed proved decisive in carrying out the main tasks and conveying the position of the EP in foreign and security policy. With a current membership of 79 delegates, this committee stands out as one of the largest in the parliamentary landscape and is assisted in its work by two subcommittees: the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) and the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE), which have contributed significantly to the specialization of MEPs in the foreign policy area (Herranz-Surrallés, 2011). However, despite its size and given the policy field it has to manage, AFET actually deviates from traditional parliamentary committees, for it rarely has to deal with legislation (Bajtay, 2015). On the other hand, as discussed earlier, its positions and views are conveyed primarily through debates, the adoption of non-legislative own-initiative reports, and the issuing of recommendations, which complement the work carried out by fact-finding and observation missions. Through its AFET Committee, the EP is in fact able to exercise scrutiny and oversight functions on the CFSP and CSDP fields, as well as on the EU diplomatic service, as established within the treaties.

3.4 Research design

Due to the limited role and powers conferred to the EP in the realm of foreign policy, especially with regard to the CFSP, it is not possible to undertake the same kind of analysis that had been carried out in the previous chapter, where the policy sector analysed involved, instead, the share of co-legislation between the EP and the Council of the EU. Hence, the EP is expected to compensate for this lack of formal powers through the adoption of those informal means and non-legislative instruments which have been illustrated in the previous section. As a matter of fact, given the lack of co-decision powers and, accordingly, the impossibility to amend legislative proposals in this field, we would expect the EP to try to *influence and shape the agenda through the use of parliamentary oversight and agenda-setting powers*, namely through the adoption of own-initiative resolutions and recommendations, and the holding of parliamentary debates, by means of which the EP and its members are able to be informed as well as to express their stance on various foreign policy issues (Redei, 2015).

As previously discussed, the EP's oversight role and powers within the area of foreign policy – and especially within the realms of CFSP and CSDP – are indeed still quite limited. Hence, as argued by Redei (2015: 274), “the EP's oversight role is essentially a communicative one”, for it is primarily concerned with debates and with the issuing of public documents. In this sense, Redei (2015) emphasises that this function involves primarily the interactions among EU institutional bodies, thus ultimately influencing also the development of their inter-institutional connections.

Despite the non-binding nature of these means, EP groups have already demonstrated a strong willingness in sharing their position on different foreign policy matters, often standing in sharp contrast to other EU institutions' stances, as in the case of the Taiwanese issue (Lang, 2015). Moreover, as emphasised by Nitoiu and Sus (2017: 71), the EP has also proved to possess a resolute determination to increase its capacity in shaping EU foreign policy and in setting the policy agenda, eventually becoming "an actor in its own right". Consequently, in order to effectively acquire more influence within this policy field, it is reasonable to anticipate that the EP would adopt more ambitious stances when compared to other EU institutional bodies. Notwithstanding the aforementioned points, given the actual relatively modest role played by the EP in this domain and the use of non-legislative instruments as agenda-setting tools, its capacity to exert influence is definitely not straightforward. As a matter of fact, due to their non-binding nature, these instruments are not actually expected to wield substantial influence. Hence, in order to evaluate these assumptions, we propose the following hypotheses which will be subsequently explored and addressed through the examination of two distinct case studies:

Hypothesis 1: the EP takes more ambitious stances on matters of foreign policy than EU's more traditional foreign policy actors.

Hypothesis 2: EP's agenda-setting tools in foreign policy do not actually manage to exert concrete influence on decision- and policy-making.

To evaluate the validity of the first two hypotheses, the forthcoming section will initially analyse the EP's stance on the situation in *Ukraine and Taiwan*; subsequently, it will investigate whether it undertook diplomatic missions to these two countries and adopted more ambitious positions when compared to other EU institutions. A further section will analyse a selection of *resolutions* autonomously produced and adopted by the EP within the past few years and which make reference to the aforementioned cases of Ukraine and Taiwan. An initial analysis will concern the content of such resolutions and recommendations, as well as the debates previously held; the aim is to determine whether the EP is promoting more ambitious stances than the other EU bodies which are usually more directly involved in foreign policy.

The second purpose of this analysis and of this chapter is to ascertain whether these non-legislative texts ultimately proved influential in shaping the foreign and security policy field. Specifically, in order to evaluate this assumption, the study will investigate whether or not the Commission acknowledged these documents (and consequently the EP's stance) by officially responding to the latter's requests and, eventually, by potentially incorporating them into its legislative proposals. Furthermore, just as for the environmental policy field analysed in the previous chapter, the voting

behaviour of MEPs offers indeed an interesting overview of the ability of the EP to emerge as a solid and cohesive actor. In particular, its willingness to appear as a united body is strictly connected to its determination to broaden its area of influence beyond formal treaty powers and its consequent capacity to have its stances adopted. Hence, when approving its resolutions and recommendations, we would expect the EP to display a high degree of internal cohesion. These considerations result thus in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: when voting for the adoption of a resolution or recommendation, EP groups try to emerge as united and cohesive actors, thus reaching high majority rates.

The other power, namely the exercise of external parliamentary diplomacy, is another means which has been employed by the EP to expand its reach and advocate for its preferred policy objectives in a sector which traditionally has always been placed under the sphere of influence of member states. The main aspect here regards the EP's direct engagement with foreign actors through committee and inter-parliamentary meetings, as well as through diplomatic missions (Redei, 2015). As previously mentioned, according to Redei's (2015) and Goinard's analysis (2020), the EP's impact in this domain is indeed largely dependent on its political determination to engage in concrete and specific initiatives, as well as on its groups' willingness to broaden the scope of its mandate. This aspect represents what could be defined as a "self-empowerment strategy" (Goinard, 2020: 109), a strategy which has long been pursued by the EP in various policy fields. As a consequence, we would expect the EP and its bodies to actively take part in diplomatic missions, especially in countries which are facing conflicts or are experiencing a breach of democracy, and for such missions to represent a much more effective form of influence than the use of non-binding resolutions and recommendations. Such considerations result in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: the EP resorts also to the use of diplomatic missions and delegation visits to third countries in order to exert more influence and stand out as a political actor in the foreign policy field.

So as to evaluate this last hypothesis, the investigation will concentrate on diplomatic missions which have been undertaken under the current parliamentary term. In particular, the study will take into consideration recent diplomatic missions and MEPs' visits to Ukraine and Taiwan and will endeavour to measure their impact by taking into account of their objectives, whether they managed to see them implemented, as well as through the evaluation of whether such missions succeeded in granting the EP a broad media coverage. The aim is thus to assess whether these diplomatic interactions with foreign actors were able to affect the EP's influence within the EU foreign policy

field, as well as whether the EP eventually managed to use diplomacy in order to strengthen its influence and role and display its policy preferences.

3.5 First case study: Ukraine

Given its unstable political situation, Ukraine has long represented an emblematic example of a country in which different diplomatic actors have striven to navigate complex geopolitical dynamics and exert influence. Among these actors, the EP stands out as a political institution whose support, in the past year, has indeed proved to be fundamental for the country, especially in light of the recent dramatic events which have taken place in the region. As a matter of fact, even previous to the current war of aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine, the EP had indeed proved to play a salient role in the country through the exercise of diplomatic missions and mediation initiatives which had been deployed to support Ukraine's political crises and reform processes (Goinard, 2020).

The EP's involvement in the Ukrainian presidential elections of 2010 and 2014 which was achieved through the deployment of observation missions and the establishment of standing and ad hoc delegations are just some indicative examples of the ways through which the EP has been trying to pursue a much greater role within the context of foreign policy affairs (Nitoiu and Sus, 2017). Within this framework, the Cox-Kwasniewski mission represented perhaps the most important tool of EP parliamentary diplomacy within the Ukrainian state. The starting event was the Ukrainian crisis, an occurrence sparked by the elections of pro-Russian President Yanukovich which later paved the way to what is perhaps considered one of the most important EP missions in the country. As noted by Nitoiu and Sus (2017), this diplomatic mission can be viewed as a fundamental part of the EP's broader efforts to increase its influence and prominence in the realm of EU foreign policy and could thus be considered a leading example of EP parliamentary diplomacy.

This notwithstanding, part of the scholarly debate agrees neither on the *success rate* nor on the *nature* of this mission. According to some scholars (Redei and Romanyshyn, 2019; Redei, 2019), in fact, the Cox-Kwasniewski mission seems not to exhibit the typical traits of parliamentary diplomacy, for it was not led by parliamentarians (but rather by two envoys: the former EP President Pat Cox and the former President of Poland Alexander Kwasniewski, who were not accountable to MEPs, either), it did not focus on inter-parliamentary links but rather established relations with members of the executive, and was not characterized by the openness and transparency that usually distinguishes parliamentary diplomatic missions. All these features, however, are also the ones that, according to Redei and Romanyshyn (2019: 71-78), allowed the mission "to move forward", without being "blocked by other EU institutions" and could thus be characterized as "diplomacy by the Parliament, rather than parliamentary diplomacy". An interesting aspect of Redei and Romanyshyn's analysis

(2019: 78) is represented by the idea that through this diplomatic mission and by taking the initiative in place of other EU institutions and EU diplomatic actors, the EP was able to exploit a situation where there was a vacuum of established policies and power, thereby “expanding its role into the traditional, non-parliamentary diplomatic realm”.

On the other hand, Nitoiu and Sus (2017: 78) contended that this mission was “the most salient tool of parliamentary diplomacy, as well as a sign of a particularly active EP approach towards Ukraine”. In these scholars’ view, in fact, although the mission’s envoys were ostensibly independent of the EP, the latter still managed to wield considerable influence over the mission’s technical work and agenda. For what concerns the impact of the mission, Nitoiu and Sus (2017: 81) classified it as “between marginal and considerable”, for although it managed to exert a form of influence on the Ukrainian government and successfully advocate for a set of reforms, the mission ultimately fell short to fulfil its ultimate goal, namely Ukraine’s signature of the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine at the 2013 Vilnius summit. Notwithstanding the previous points, the Cox-Kwasniewski mission reveals the already-mentioned willingness of the EP to act as a political actor and to expand its powers beyond those strictly established within the treaties, thereby assuming also new functions within the diplomatic realm, such as the extension of its parliamentary diplomatic ties as well as the establishment of relations with members of third countries’ executives.

Moving forward to the present days, the recent political and military events which have been taking place in Ukraine in the wake of its invasion on the part of Russia in February 2022 have undoubtedly sparked a significant debate which was already underway within the EU and its institutional bodies. In particular, some scholars (Fiott, 2023; Genschel, Leek and Weyns, 2023) have recently started questioning the role played by this crisis in advancing the process of EU integration further, especially in the area of defence, as well as the implications and outcomes that this could have over the different European institutions acting within the foreign policy field.

After the beginning of the conflict, the European Union almost immediately condemned the military aggression and invasion of Ukraine, as well as the violation of its territorial integrity, while also imposing strict economic sanctions on Russia. Among the EU institutions, the EP stood out for its support to the Ukrainian nation, while exhibiting also a high degree of internal unity. As reported by Borgers and Giraud (2022), the EP’s President Roberta Metsola was indeed the first EU leader to visit Kyiv; moreover, the EP engaged in different diplomacy and oversight functions firmly condemning the Russian invasion through the implementation of various means and acting as a cohesive body. Hence, this crisis raises the question of whether and how the EP could eventually draw on it to enhance its role in foreign and security affairs.

In order to address this question, the following sections will examine the diplomatic role of the 9th EP in relation to the recent difficult political situation in Ukraine, as well as the main tools employed and the degree of internal cohesion displayed when adopting those instruments and advocating for its policy outcomes. This kind of analysis will also allow to test the hypotheses formulated earlier and assess whether the EP has eventually managed to change and enhance its role in EU foreign and security policy, in an attempt to demonstrate that “despite the limitations imposed by the Treaties, the Parliament is actively engaged in this area” (Borgers and Giraud, 2022: 2).

3.5.1 Parliamentary diplomacy: the role of the 9th EP before and during the Russo-Ukrainian conflict

Since the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, the EP has indeed proved to be an active and important interlocutor with Ukraine. However, as argued also by Borgers and Giraud (2022), the European Union and the EP had already established a solid relationship with the Eastern European country prior to the beginning of the war. This was primarily due to Ukraine’s unstable political situation, its participation in the EU’s Eastern Partnership and the signing in 2017 of an EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, which established a Parliamentary Association Committee in which 16 MEPs sit and are “tasked with monitoring and strengthening the relations between the EU and Ukraine” (Borgers and Giraud, 2022: 3).

After the military deployment of Russian troops near Ukraine, as the political and diplomatic crisis in the region intensified, also the EP started to resort to the use of parliamentary diplomacy and diplomatic missions. At the end of January 2022, a delegation comprising nine MEPs and led by the AFET Committee and SEDE Subcommittee travelled to Ukraine in order to conduct a mission of inquiry on the situation in the country and on the possible escalation of the crisis into a conflict (European Parliament, 2022d). During the mission, MEPs met also with members of the executive, including Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, and conveyed the EP’s unwavering support for Ukraine, its national sovereignty and its territorial integrity, the very same principles that will also be at the centre of the EP resolutions analysed in the following section.

As explained by the EP in one of its press releases (2022e), this diplomatic mission “was part of a [more] extensive and coordinated effort to de-escalate tension and avoid [...] a possible armed conflict”. Moreover, this mission played a very significant role in showing, through the use of parliamentary diplomacy and mediation activities, the strong condemnation and unity of the EU against a possible aggression from Russia, as well as the EP’s unquestionable support to Ukraine. Indeed, the president of the AFET Committee underlined, during a speech, the EP’s determination in

playing “its full role through parliamentary diplomacy [and] in communicating a unified European position” (European Parliament, 2022e).

With the Russian aggression on Ukraine and the onset of the war between the two countries, the EP immediately took an official stance in favour of the latter, thereby condemning the Russian attack. As a matter of fact, on 1 April 2022, after a bit more than a month since the beginning of the hostilities, EP President Roberta Metsola paid an official visit to the city of Kyiv to express solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian population on behalf of the EP and of all the EU (European Parliament, 2022f). During her speech to the members of the Ukrainian Parliament Verkhovna Rada, the EP President addressed some of the most pressing matters connected to the conflict, among which the sanctions against Russia, the possibility of a Ukrainian accession to the EU, as well as the issue concerning many Ukrainian refugees, who were seeking refuge in the EU (European Parliament, 2022f). As argued also by Borgers and Giraudo (2022: 2), “her speech was not mere rhetoric”, for some of the topics delivered had already been addressed by the AFET Committee and EP plenary in a non-legislative resolution adopted on 1 March 2022. Overall, through this official visit, the President of the EP undoubtedly contributed to conveying a clear image of the EP as an actor which is willing to take a step forward and adopt a much more relevant role in the field of EU foreign and security policies, thereby addressing issues which are partially outside of its official sphere of influence and activity (Borgers and Giraudo, 2022). As a matter of fact, the EP President was the first European politician to visit Ukraine and to speak to the Ukrainian Parliament after the beginning of the military hostilities, thereby signalling the ambition of the EP’s president and her strong willingness in making the EP stand out as a political actor also in the sector of foreign policy and relations with third countries.

In the months that followed, MEPs displayed a unified stance by adopting a joint motion for a resolution with an overwhelming majority of 513 votes in favour. This united front was primarily aimed at demanding greater support for Ukraine and advocating for stricter sanctions against Russia, thus surpassing the measures already delivered within the existing EU sanctions’ packages (European Parliament, 2022g). Moreover, this first visit to Kyiv on the part of the EP President represented just the first of many diplomatic encounters which have been taking place since the beginning of the conflict, and which have seen the EP on the front line of parliamentary diplomacy and diplomatic actorness. As a matter of fact, on 21 and 22 September 2022, a delegation of the EP Secretary General paid a visit to Ukraine and to the villages of Bucha and Irpin, where serious crimes had been committed by the Russian army. During this visit, the EP Secretary General met also with his Ukrainian counterpart in order to discuss the preparation of the possible accession of Ukraine to the

EU and the ways in which the EP could provide support to the reform process (European Parliament, 2022h).

Three other important events are the following: a committee mission to Kyiv which took place from 20 to 21 February 2023, an official visit paid by Ukrainian President Zelenskyy to the EP in the same month, and a second visit paid by the EP President to Ukraine which, instead, took place less than a month later. The former was a really important event, for it involved an official delegation of six MEPs who were sent by the Special Committee on Foreign Interference with the main purpose of holding “discussions with Ukrainian counterparts on strategies and practices to counter Russian interference” (European Parliament, 2023).

The second occurrence represented instead President Zelenskyy’s first official visit to the EP and through which he was able to directly address the EU parliamentary body during an extraordinary session held in Brussels. During his speech, Zelenskyy stressed the similar ideological values upon which Ukraine and the EU rest upon, and which Ukraine is trying to defend (European Parliament, 2023a). At the same time, the President of the EP, Roberta Metsola, who opened the session, underlined, once again, the necessity to “give Ukraine the fastest possible accession process” to the EU (European Parliament, 2023a).

The third episode came about a few days after the first anniversary of the war and marked also a year since the first visit of the EP President to Ukraine. During her second visit, the President of the EP reaffirmed EU’s firm support of Ukraine and the need to increase sanctions against Russia, a position which the Ukrainian President positively welcomed while applauding also the resolutions adopted by the EP within the previous year.

All these episodes contributed, without doubt, to the strengthening of EU-Ukraine relations, as well as to renovating the EU’s support for Ukraine. Gianniti and Lupo (2017: 49) in their study on the role of the EP President in parliamentary diplomacy highlighted, in fact, how official and diplomatic visits represent pivotal tools for acquiring “first-hand information on sensitive topics, [intervening] on major international events, and [expressing] opinion[s] on any matter that [they] consider important”.

As it is possible to observe, during its ninth term the EP has been consistently undertaking diplomatic missions in Ukraine, thereby engaging with both members of the Ukrainian parliament and of the executive branch; in particular, with the start of the Russo-Ukrainian war, both these activities have considerably intensified, thus demonstrating the EP’s ability to initiate actions which extend also beyond the prescribed scopes outlined within the treaties. In particular, it is reasonable to say that the EP President’s visit to Ukraine in March 2022 and her subsequent address delivered to the Ukrainian parliament were able to send a strong message both internationally as well as to the

other EU institutions, for they represented the first official engagements undertaken by an EU leader after the beginning of the war. The numerous diplomatic missions just described reveal indeed the actorness of the EP in a sector in which intergovernmental institutions and member states usually take the lead; hence, such findings could initially validate the first hypothesis that was posed beforehand. Furthermore, despite not being always successful in seeing its objectives achieved – as in the case of the January 2022 mission which was part of a more extensive effort to de-escalate tensions (European Parliament, 2022e) – all the other diplomatic missions here examined revealed indeed ambitious aims, such as the accession of Ukraine within the EU, for which the EP displayed one of the most determined attitudes among all EU institutions. Additionally, all the above-mentioned diplomatic missions received indeed broad media coverage both through press releases as well as on the major international newspapers and news websites, including Politico, the Brussels and the New York Times and Euractiv.

3.5.2 Parliamentary agenda-setting before and during the Russo-Ukrainian conflict

The sphere of parliamentary diplomacy is closely linked to the functions of EP oversight and agenda-setting, an area which has been complemented by the use of instruments that allow the EP to perform its functions and activism.

Since the beginning of its 9th term, the EP and its various bodies – in particular, the AFET Committee and the SEDE Sub-committee – have produced a significant number of documents and preparatory works relating to the situation in Ukraine. In particular, after the Russian aggression on Ukraine and the start of military conflicts, the EP and its committees have tried to address the issue also through the completion of different kinds of texts, especially non-legislative reports and resolutions (Borgers and Giraudo, 2022).

For the purpose of conducting this analysis, the reports selected have been the ones referring to foreign policy issues and which include the word “Ukraine” either in their title or within the body of the text. The inclusion of the term in the title indicates that these reports are entirely dedicated to addressing a specific issue pertaining to the Ukrainian country. On the other hand, if the term is present solely within the text, this suggests that these documents make references to specific situations concerning Ukraine, albeit without this constituting the main focus of the report or of the resolution at hand. By incorporating both types of reports and resolutions, this analysis aims thus to encompass a comprehensive range of Ukraine-related documents, which will eventually be pivotal in examining the previously stated hypotheses.

	Contain “Ukraine” in their title	Contain “Ukraine” only in text
AFET Committee’s own-initiative reports and mission reports	2	46
Other committees’ own-initiative reports and mission reports	1	83
EP resolutions and recommendations (INI and RSP)	18	120

Table 6: Number of committee reports and EP resolutions referring to Ukraine.

Overall, from the start of the EP’s latest term, the AFET Committee has forwarded 48 non-legislative own-initiative reports (INI) which mention the situation in Ukraine, both before and after the offset of the war. The most recent documents refer to the ongoing conflict caused by the military aggression of Russia and its possible consequences, both in relation to the internal stability of the EU and the balance of power in the region, as well as in relation to third countries (among which Russia), and to the protection of human rights and democracy. Of particular significance are also the annual reports produced by the AFET Committee concerning the implementation of CFSP and CSDP, which were issued in response to the annual reports drafted by the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative and subsequently forwarded to the EP.

Among the abovementioned 48 INI reports, however, only two were entirely focused on Ukraine. One is the report on the implementation of the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine (2019/2202(INI)), which was issued in November 2020 and adopted by the EP plenary as a resolution the following February, the other one is the report on an EP recommendation to the Council and Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative on the EU’s foreign, security and defence policy after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine (2022/2039(INI)), and which was also endorsed by the EP plenary as a recommendation on the 8th of June 2022.

The first resolution covers various areas and issues, including cooperation in the CFSP field, the question of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, human rights, equality and fundamental freedoms, the situation of the media in the country, but also trade and economic cooperation, as well as energy and gas transmission. Overall, the Commission is called on and encouraged by the EP to undertake adequate measures in order to support Ukraine and its citizens and invest in these areas (European Parliament, 2021a).

The other recommendation which was addressed instead to the Council and Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative focuses on the future of the EU’s foreign, security and defence policy, especially after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, and on the implications this

war might have. It calls on the Commission to support Ukraine, both militarily and politically, and to bring forward the EU security and defence as a political priority. As in the previous resolution, references are made to the principle of territorial integrity, national sovereignty, and the protection of fundamental human rights (European Parliament, 2022i). Furthermore, the issue of this recommendation is of particular importance for it is part of the EP treaty powers on matters of CFSP, namely the right established in Article 36 TEU to make recommendations to the Council or the High Representative.

In addition to the work carried out by the ING2 and by the AFET Committee, the EP has also forwarded a significant number of resolutions on topical subjects (RSP) either entirely concerning or just making reference to the situation in Ukraine within their text. Out of a total of 16 RSPs implemented by the ninth EP and fully regarding Ukraine, 14 were adopted between March 2022 and February 2023 and discussed numerous relevant aspects of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict as well as the possibility of Ukraine's accession to the EU. As a matter of fact, these resolutions focus mainly on war trends and outcomes, on the support measures that could be implemented by the EU, as well as on the impact of the conflict on the most vulnerable categories (women, children and internally displaced people among others). This last category, in particular, is of utmost importance, for it also indicates the EP's commitment to the protection of human rights and its willingness to call on other EU institutions and member states to take more ambitious and appropriate actions for the protection of the more affected and fragile groups of Ukraine's population. Moreover, as mentioned above, the EP strongly supported Ukraine's membership application to the EU and used such resolutions in order to invite other EU institutions and member states to set aside their concerns and work towards its realisation.

In order to assess the impact of the aforementioned resolutions, the following analysis will take into consideration whether or not there has been action taken on the part of the European Commission. As indicated in the opening chapter of this thesis, resolutions on topical issues are not legislative and not binding in nature; hence, they could be considered as a not much relevant category, for they also do not require further activity. Own-initiative procedures, on the other hand, and as already highlighted in the course of this dissertation, do require a response by the European Commission, which will indicate whether or not it will take legislative action and address the issues put forward by the EP; hence, this could result in the submission of a legislative proposal and in a higher level of salience (Kreppel and Webb, 2019).

The following table shows the number of EP resolutions and recommendations focusing on the Russo-Ukrainian conflict which have been forwarded by the EP in the course of one year, that is between March 2022 and February 2023, as well as the number of documents which received a formal

response from the Commission. The data presented in Table 7, which was retrieved from the EP Legislative Observatory and from the EP website section containing follow-ups to acts, highlights a significantly positive formal response rate on the part of the Commission, especially with regard to EP resolutions on topical subjects, despite no existing obligation for the latter to formally address them. This notwithstanding, in the majority of the cases here analysed the Commission responded to the EP’s requests by listing the actions and commitments already taken, or which is determined to take, in order to address the matters put forward by the EP.

For what concerns the resolutions which did not obtain a formal reply from the Commission, the latter justified its lack of a formal response by making reference to the fact that those issues had already been comprehensively addressed in plenary either by the Commission President together with the High Representative/Vice President or by a commissioner on the latter’s behalf.

	N° of resolutions adopted	N° of resolutions that obtained a formal response from the EC	N° of resolutions that did not obtain a formal response from the EC
EP resolutions on topical subjects	14	9	5
EP own-initiative resolutions and recommendations	1	/	1

Table 7: EP resolutions passed after the start of the Russo-Ukrainian war and number of Commission’s follow-ups.

In addition to resolutions on topical subjects, the EP passed also an own-initiative recommendation on the Russo-Ukrainian war, which was tabled by the AFET Committee and subsequently endorsed by the EP plenary. In this case, no documents outlining the Commission’s follow-up measures could be found on the EP Legislative Observatory website; nonetheless, the Commission had actually promptly informed the EP of its decision to not address it formally. In fact, with regard to the recommendation to the Council and High Representative concerning the EU’s foreign, security and defence policy after the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022/2039(INI)), the Commission had punctually communicated to the EP its choice to refrain from providing a formal response to the requests made, for they had already been addressed during the plenary debate (European Commission, 2022).

3.5.3 MEPs' voting behaviour

The following table presents the voting outcomes within the EP regarding the adoption of the resolutions mentioned above and pertaining to the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. As it is possible to infer from the data reported hereafter, while there may be a limited number of resolutions where the exact number of votes could not be deduced, the remaining documents (reported within the table) have all indeed received overwhelming approval from a significantly large majority of MEPs. In particular, noteworthy resolutions which earned large majorities include the resolution on the Russian aggression against Ukraine (2022/2564(RSP)), which was adopted just a few days after the beginning of the hostilities and counts a total of 637 votes in favour, the resolution on the developments of the war against Ukraine and on EU sanctions against Russia (2022/2560(RSP)) and the one on the protection of children and young people fleeing the war (2022/2618(RSP)).

Resolution	Votes in favour (+)	Votes against (-)	Abstained (0)
2022/2851(RSP)	504	26	36
2022/2716(RSP)	529	45	14
2022/2633(RSP)	462	19	89
2022/2560(RSP)	513	22	19
2022/2618(RSP)	509	3	47
2022/2593(RSP)	413	120	49
2022/2564(RSP)	637	13	26
2022/3017(RSP)	472	19	33
2023/2509(RSP)	489	36	49
2023/2558(RSP)	444	26	37
2022/2039(INI)	438	65	94

Table 8: Votes results of adopted EP resolutions.

Such results indeed show a propensity on the part of the MEPs and the different political groups to set aside political disagreements in order to ensure that the EP emerges as a cohesive actor, especially when facing unprecedented times of crisis. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the search for consensus, that is the adoption of acts by broad majorities, appears to have persisted over the years within the EP (Novak et al., 2021).

Despite the opposition or abstention of relatively small numbers of MEPs, all the resolutions displayed in Table 8 present indeed really large majorities that count more than 90% of votes in favour, such as in the case of the above-mentioned resolution on the developments of the war against Ukraine

and on EU sanctions against Russia (2022/2560(RSP)) or in the case of the resolution on the Russian aggression against Ukraine (2022/2564(RSP)), which counts a total of 94% of votes in favour. Furthermore, the documents containing the results of roll-call votes highlight in general a very broad support coming from different, and often Eurosceptic, political forces, thus indicating the willingness to reach compromises, especially in situations of crises.

On the other side, the resolution on the need for an urgent EU action plan to ensure food security inside and outside the EU in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022/2593(RSP)) represents one of the texts with the lowest rate of adoption, for in particular members of the centre-left to left-wing Verts/ALE group, as well as of the Left and S&D groups decided not to support its adoption. This notwithstanding, the resolution was still able to be implemented with a total of approximately 70% of votes in favour.

These findings seem to confirm in part the third hypothesis in connecting MEPs' voting behaviour with their willingness to make the EP appear as a united body as well as with their determination to broaden its area of influence beyond formal treaty powers. As a matter of fact, while such large majorities indicate the commitment of the EP in displaying a cohesive position that might be able to go beyond the ideological differences between the various political groups, such a demonstration of internal cohesiveness allows also the EP political groups to put forward their stance and have more power when relating with the other EU institutional bodies. However, an important element to consider is indeed also the resilience of consensus displayed by the EP and already presented in the analysis carried out in the previous chapter.

Because of the EP's limited powers in this policy field, it follows in fact that such resolutions are adopted by the former in order to be able to convey strong political messages as well as its own political will. This notwithstanding, it is also important to underline how given the non-binding and highly ideological nature of resolutions on topical subjects – which constitute the great majority of the sample – these are usually unlikely to produce binding effects and have a high legislative impact.

3.6 Second case study: Taiwan

The EP's approach to Taiwan sharply contrasts the extremely cautious stance adopted instead by the other EU institutions. According to Lang (2015), the EP and its MEPs have notably been trying to increase their influence by exploiting the freedom of manoeuvre allowed within the realm of this policy field, thus taking a stance in favour of Taiwan in the face of Chinese military threats. Although the EU has never implemented distinct policies towards Taiwan, or acknowledged it as a sovereign state, the attitude of the EP has often been perceived as different from the one displayed by the Council of the EU or the Commission, for on many occasions – and in the realm of the conflict

between Beijing and Taiwan – it often adopted a more favourable stance or even expressed its support towards the latter (Lan, 2004). As a matter of fact, over the years, MEPs have demanded the strengthening of EU-Taiwan relations and the creation of an EU representative office in Taipei (Zanon, 2005); the latter request was eventually partially achieved in 2003 with the establishment of a European Economic and Trade Office in Taiwan. Despite not having an official diplomatic status, nor engaging in political issues (Lan, 2004), the institution of this office represents still an important milestone in the development of closer EU-Taiwan cooperation in a variety of policy fields, including trade, the protection of human rights, research and innovation, and the protection of the environment. On the other side, the Commission and the Council have been expressing more cautious positions with regard to Taiwan and its political situation, for they fear Chinese hostility and its possible consequences (Lan, 2004).

Overall, as argued by Lan (2004), the EP has been trying to influence the standpoints of the other EU institutions by issuing and adopting non-binding and non-legislative resolutions without, however, producing immediate effects. This notwithstanding, the EP was still able to play an important diplomatic role in EU-China-Taiwan relations, and the implementation of such resolutions could be regarded as one of its main tools to enhance its influence and its ability to shape desired policy outcomes (Lan, 2004). In her research on EU-Taiwan relations, in fact, Lan (2004: 134) has been claiming that because of “the relative powerlessness of the EP in external affairs within the EU institutional framework, the EP is exempt from any political responsibility for its provocative stance with regard to the China-Taiwan disputes”; hence, due to this lack of power, the EP might actually be able to adopt more ambitious and controversial positions than the other EU institutions involved.

3.6.1 Parliamentary diplomacy: the diplomatic role of the 9th EP in the EU-Taiwan relationship

In the past few years, parliamentary activities and diplomacy have played a significant role in shaping both interinstitutional and EU-Taiwan relations. Over the years and differently from other EU institutions, the EP has indeed been able to develop an independent and more open approach towards Taiwan (Zanon, 2005); hence, the former has been consistently recognized as an EU actor whose efforts were at the forefront of the adoption of more enhanced ties with the Asian country. As argued by Zanon (2005), the EP has often addressed the concerns of Taiwan regarding its isolation within the international community and its lack of representation within the main international organizations, which came also as a consequence of the adoption of the One-China policy, a policy that was embraced by most of the world community and by the EU as well.

Throughout the years, the EP has indeed promoted informal diplomatic ties with Taiwan through the enactment of various instruments, including exchange visits (most of which were undertaken by MEPs) and the adoption of resolutions. Although there has been a considerable number of visits by members of the EP to Taipei since 1996 – a year which symbolises a milestone in Taiwan’s democratic transformation, as well as a turning point in the establishment of stronger EU-Taiwan relations – the EP has only recently initiated official delegations’ visits to the island, the first of which took place in November 2021.

At the beginning of November 2021, in fact, a delegation of seven members of the Special Committee on Foreign Interference and Disinformation (INGE) took part in the first official visit of the EP to Taiwan, where they met the President of Taiwan Tsai Ing-Wen and other Taiwanese authorities, including the Premier of the executive and the Foreign Affairs Minister. The main aim of this official visit was the discussion of electoral interference and disinformation campaigns; hence, it represented an historical moment in the development of EU-Taiwan relations, for it signalled a strong political support on the part of the European Union while also portraying the EP as a representative of the EU as a whole (European Parliament, 2021c).

A second official EP visit to Taiwan took place in July 2022 when a delegation of MEPs led by EP Vice-President Nicola Beer met with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-Wen. The speech delivered by the EP Vice-President during the meeting is of particular importance, for it not only underlined the role of Taiwan in defending democracy, peace and stability but also made reference to EU-China relations, thereby calling on the People’s Republic of China “to refrain from its threatening gestures”, while also reiterating the willingness of the EU to engage into good and fruitful relations with the country (Office of the President Republic of China (Taiwan), 2022). Moreover, the Vice-President emphasised the EP’s commitment to deepening and consolidating the relations between the EU and Taiwan and the fundamental values upon which both actors rest.

The third EP official visit to the country occurred in December 2022 when a delegation of seven MEPs of the INTA Committee travelled to Taipei to discuss the position and role of Taiwan in international trade and investments. As for the previous diplomatic missions, the delegation met with some important members of the executive, including the President, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Affairs Minister of Taiwan. In addition, the delegation also held meetings with representatives of the Taiwanese Parliament, as well as with non-governmental organizations and members of the civil society. Among the main issues discussed, the development and modernization of EU-Taiwan trade relations played undoubtedly the most significant role. References were made to the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian conflict, to the difficult situation with China and, consequently, to the

importance of sharing democratic values, such as the protection of fundamental human rights, peace, democracy and the rule of law (European Parliament, 2023b).

The diplomatic missions just described reveal indeed the ability of the EP to act as a political actor in a sector in which intergovernmental institutions usually play the most relevant role; hence, such findings could initially validate the first hypothesis that was posed beforehand. A first analysis reveals that these diplomatic visits lacked, for the most part, the nature of inter-parliamentary exchanges. Rather, a significant portion of the EP delegation members was received by counterparts from the executive branch with whom the EP delegates often acted and spoke on behalf of the whole European Union. Such diplomatic missions certainly highlight the powers the EP holds in expressing European concerns and claims, a concept which was indeed also emphasised by Lan (2004) within her study. Furthermore, in EU-Taiwan relations, the EP demonstrated also its ability to exhibit a more ambitious stance in comparison to other EU institutions. The objectives of its missions underlined a strong commitment for the protection of human rights and democratic values and, as for the previous case study, received wide media coverage through the issue of press releases and newspaper articles.

3.6.2 Parliamentary agenda-setting in the EU-Taiwan relationship

The role of the diplomatic missions mentioned in the previous section has been complemented by the formulation of non-legislative reports, resolutions and recommendations. During its ninth term, the EP and some of its committees and organs have indeed been closely involved with the evolving situation in Taiwan and the consequent implications this could have for the relations between the two actors. The main committees involved were the AFET, INTA and INGE Committees, which produced some noteworthy reports and mission reports, the majority of which have been later endorsed by the EP plenary and adopted as resolutions.

For the purpose of our analysis, we first took into consideration reports that either made reference to Taiwan, to its political and economic situation and its ties with the EU or that were entirely focussed on the Asian country and/or EU-Taiwan relations. In order to carry out this research, the analysis was thus limited to reports that include the term “Taiwan” either in their title or within their textual content and whose subject matter regulates the area of EU foreign and security policy. The former subset encompasses reports that entirely concentrate on Taiwan as a subject or on specific circumstances directly related to the country; the latter category, instead, comprises reports where Taiwan is not the primary focus, but which still contain references to its political, economic, or diplomatic situation.

As it is possible to observe from the following table, while the former category comprises only three reports and two EP resolutions, the latter encompasses a total of 52 documents considering both reports and resolutions. These data show indeed how the political and economic issues revolving

around Taiwan, its relations with China, as well as with third countries and international organizations (including the EU) are still very much relevant and part of the current general EU institutional debate.

	Contain “Taiwan” in their title	Contain “Taiwan” only in text
AFET Committee’s own-initiative reports and mission reports	1	18
Other committees’ own-initiative reports and mission reports	2	8
EP resolutions and recommendations (INI and RSP)	2	25

Table 9: Number of committee reports and EP resolutions referring to Taiwan.

Considering the number of reports presented in Table 8, the AFET Committee has indeed played again the most important role in drafting the majority of them, including those referring to the Council’s annual reports on the implementation of the CFSP and CSDP. By restricting the scope of the current analysis to the reports that are exclusively centred on Taiwan, it was found that this category consists of two mission reports and a report on an EP recommendation to the Commission Vice-President and High Representative. On the one hand, mission reports are strictly linked to the exercise of parliamentary diplomacy and to the execution of diplomatic missions. The two mission reports, which were tabled within the timeframe under consideration, were submitted by the INGE and INTA committees and referred to their missions outlined in the preceding section. Their purpose was thus to provide an accurate and objective account of the diplomatic missions conducted, as well as of the situation in the country or region visited.

The other report concerned instead an EP recommendation to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on EU-Taiwan political relations and cooperation (2021/2041(INI)) and was adopted in plenary on 21 October 2021, a month prior to the first official EP mission to Taiwan. With the issuing of this document, the EP was, among other things, calling on the VP/HR, as well as on the Commission as a whole, to work together in order to intensify EU-Taiwan political relations and bilateral economic ties, while strengthening their comprehensive partnership “under the guidance of the EU’s One China Policy” (European Parliament, 2021c). Furthermore, the recommendation wished for the establishment of increased economic, scientific, cultural and political exchanges, while also expressing deep concern about China’s military belligerence and provocations (Bondaz, 2022; European Parliament, 2021c). In November 2021 the Commission forwarded its reply to the EP

informing the latter that, despite the issues raised, it would not have formally responded to its requests, for they had already been addressed in plenary during the debate (European Commission, 2021b).

Own-initiative reports are, in fact, usually followed by a debate in the EP plenary where they are eventually adopted as resolutions or recommendations. As previously defined, these documents are not binding nor entail legislative obligations; however, they still represent an important instrument for the exercise of parliamentary diplomacy and agenda-setting, for they allow parliamentary bodies and MEPs to state their position on different, and often pressing, matters and, as in this case, to call on the Commission or on other EU bodies to take action, thereby possibly influencing the outcome of proposed legislation.

In addition to own-initiative resolutions, the ninth EP passed also a set of resolutions on topical subjects which either fully regarded the situation in Taiwan or contained references to the topic. Out of a total of 28 texts (encompassing both procedures), 11 pertained to resolutions on topical subjects; notably, it is worth mentioning that only one of these 11 texts was focusing exclusively on Taiwan and, specifically, on a pressing political matter, that is the situation in the Strait of Taiwan and the related question of independence from China. This resolution (2022/2822(RSP)), which was endorsed on 15 September 2022, highlights the strong condemnation by the EP of the Chinese military exercises conducted in the Taiwan Strait. As a matter of fact, with the endorsement of this resolution, the EP explicitly aligned itself with Taiwan once again, while expressing solidarity towards its population (European Parliament, 2022). Notably, the EP expressly called on the Chinese government to refrain from actions that could have destabilised the situation in the Strait and emphasised the need to cease airspace violations, while returning, instead, to more diplomatic norms. In addition to the government of the PRC, the EP invited also the EU and its member states to assume a more robust role in addressing the situation in the Strait and to strengthen the partnership and interactions between the EU and Taiwan (European Parliament, 2022).

Overall, the resolutions reported duly exemplify the ambitious role undertaken by the EP in foreign policy matters; however, as with the case of Ukraine, it is also important to assess whether these resolutions, particularly those exclusively concerning Taiwan and EU-Taiwan relations, have eventually obtained an official response from the Commission. As for the previous case study, the data presented in Table 10 was retrieved either from the EP Legislative Observatory or from the EP website section specifically dedicated to follow-ups to acts. As it is possible to observe from the following table, the majority of EP resolutions did not elicit a formal response; moreover, in certain instances, particularly with regard to some resolutions on topical subjects which do not foresee a response from the Commission, it was not possible to find any form of follow-up documents. Nonetheless, in the majority of cases, despite the absence of official replies containing specific

follow-up measures, the Commission did actually acknowledge these resolutions by elucidating the rationale behind its decision to not formally address the requests of the EP.

	N° of resolutions adopted	N° of resolutions that obtained a formal reply from the EC	N° of resolutions that did not obtain a formal reply from the EC
EP resolutions on topical subjects	7	/	8
EP own-initiative resolutions/recommendations	20	2	18

Table 10: EP resolutions and number of Commission's follow-ups.

Moving on to own-initiative resolutions and recommendations, out of a total of 20 documents adopted, only two received a formal reply from the Commission. These are the resolution on Indo-Pacific Strategy in the area of trade and investment (2021/2200(INI)) and the resolution on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation (2020/2268(INI)). In its response to the former document, the Commission addressed various aspects, including the EP's request to engage in negotiations for a Bilateral Investment Agreement with Taiwan, which was deemed as "not a priority" (European Commission, 2022b). However, the Commission did acknowledge the existence of ongoing concrete initiatives which have been designed to deepen the bilateral relationship and promote investment between the EU and Taiwan. Specifically, these initiatives include the EU-Taiwan annual dialogue on trade and investment and the European Economic Trade Office in Taipei, which is responsible for organizing the Europe Investment Forum (European Commission, 2022b).

The second resolution was a more comprehensive document which analysed, instead, foreign threats posed to the EU and aimed at proposing strategies and recommendations for both the EU and its Member States in order to enhance their efforts in countering foreign interference (European Parliament, 2022m). Notably, the resolution included a specific call from the EP for the EU and its member states "to deepen cooperation with Taiwan in countering interference operations and disinformation campaigns from malign third countries" (European Parliament, 2022m). In response to this resolution, the Commission (2022c) issued a follow-up document wherein it frequently expressed its willingness to intensify its efforts and even prepare legislative proposals in certain areas. However, concerning Taiwan, the Commission emphasised the significance of the forms of cooperation already established in the region, thereby making reference to what had been already expressed in the previous resolution (European Commission, 2022c).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned points, it is worth noting that neither the resolution nor the recommendation entirely concerning EU-Taiwan relations and the situation in the Strait received an official follow-up document from the Commission which, instead, responded to the EP by indicating only that it would not have formally addressed its requests, for they had already been tackled in plenary by the High Representative/Vice-President Borrell (European Commission, 2021b; European Commission, 2022a).

Overall, the limited number of formal replies received by the EP seems to underscore a relatively low level of engagement and attention from the Commission to these particular resolutions and to the EP's stances and concerns expressed through these documents. This observation appears thus to support hypothesis two, which underlined the relatively low impact exerted by EP non-legislative resolutions in the EU foreign and security fields. Nonetheless, such statements indicating the presence of commissioners or of the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission during the holding of EP plenary debates actually denote the EP's powers of engaging in dialogues with other EU institutional bodies, as well as of exercising policy oversight and executive accountability in foreign policy and which had been referred to within the introductory section to this chapter.

3.6.3 MEPs' voting behaviour

As for the previous case study, the voting behaviour of MEPs and the adoption rates of passed documents is particularly important, for it sheds light on the extent to which the EP strives to present a cohesive stance when adopting resolutions and conveying its position on various matters. In particular, valuable insights can be gained into the EP's decision-making process and its ability to effectively communicate its views.

Table 11 provides an overview of the voting outcomes within the EP when endorsing the texts that were previously discussed and analysed. The table reveals that a substantial majority of the scrutinized resolutions were adopted with significant support; in particular, the resolutions on topical subjects, given their ideological nature, were the ones which, on average, tended to garner the largest majorities. Furthermore, also own-initiative resolutions that specifically addressed EU-Taiwan relations (2021/2041(INI)) and foreign policy matters concerning the Indo-Pacific region or EU-Asia relations (2020/2115(INI), including references to the situation in Taiwan, were adopted with a substantial majority of votes. Conversely, own-initiative resolutions related to the annual common foreign and security policy report (such as resolution 2020/2206(INI)) exhibited higher levels of fragmentation in the voting results, for they were not able to secure large majorities and faced considerable opposition along with notable rates of abstention.

Such findings indeed confirm in part the third hypothesis in portraying the EP as a political actor whose groups try to secure large majorities and are eventually able to display a cohesive stance and a shared position on matters of international relations and foreign affairs where it usually does not hold much power. However, the higher levels of fragmentation observed in certain own-initiative resolutions underscore the complexity and the diversity of opinions present within the EP, highlighting the challenges of achieving consensus on certain foreign policy issues, despite general the tendency to vote with broad majorities in all policy fields.

Procedure	Votes in favour (+)	Votes against (-)	Abstained (0)
2021/2041(INI)	580	26	66
2020/2111(INI)	467	80	148
2019/2136(INI)	454	148	102
2019/2135(INI)	364	266	77
2021/2037(INI)	570	61	40
2020/2206(INI)	340	100	245
2020/2207(INI)	387	180	119
2020/2115(INI)	526	43	119
2020/2257(INI)	493	90	103
2021/2038(INI)	550	83	55
2020/2256(INI)	591	65	26
2020/2128(INI)	477	89	127
2021/2232(INI)	474	60	80
2021/2200(INI)	468	51	124
2021/2182(INI)	474	113	102
2021/2183(INI)	369	197	123
2020/2268(INI)	552	81	60
2020/2114(INI)	454	73	112
2022/2048(INI)	407	92	142
2022/2050(INI)	459	93	85
2022/2822(RSP)	469	34	44
2019/2665(RSP)	546	34	62
2021/2505(RSP)	597	17	61
2021/2644(RSP)	599	30	58
2021/2786(RSP)	578	29	73

2021/3000(RSP)	619	25	41
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Table 11: Votes results of adopted EP resolutions.

3.7 Concluding remarks and analysis of the hypotheses

Overall, the case studies examined in this chapter hold significant importance in comprehending the evolving role of the EP in the realm of foreign policy, particularly in the areas of common foreign and defence policy. On the one hand, the case of Ukraine served as a classic example of a country and region where the EP has been directly and actively engaged in recent years, even prior to the ongoing war waged by Russia. As a matter of fact, the EP has consistently sought to increase its influence and power in the field of foreign policy, notwithstanding the traditionally more substantial roles played by member states and by EU intergovernmental bodies. As elucidated in this chapter, the EP's pursuit of parliamentary diplomacy has indeed proved fundamental in advancing its aspirations in this domain. The EP's endeavours, such as the dispatching of diplomatic fact-finding and observation missions and mediation initiatives to Ukraine and Taiwan, have contributed to augmenting its influence well beyond what had been conveyed within the treaties, thus surpassing its established mandate.

The recent Russo-Ukrainian conflict has shown how much the EP and its bodies have evolved into important actors in the fields of diplomacy, mediation and democracy support. As a matter of fact, in order to confront this emergency situation, the EP has been making use of its official treaty powers, exemplified at the beginning of this chapter, as well as of other, non-legislative, means (resolutions, reports, debates and missions); this has allowed the institution to extend its area of influence and present itself as a strong political actor. In this regard, the President of the EP has indeed played a much significant role, especially in dealing with the war in Ukraine and the subsequent crisis and in addressing both members of the Ukrainian parliament as well as of the executive.

The political and diplomatic stances adopted by the EP President, and by the EP as a whole, with regard to Ukraine and Taiwan have often placed them in a diverging position in relation to other traditional foreign policy institutions within the EU. On the one hand, the preceding sections have highlighted a more ambitious attitude on the part of the EP when it comes to EU-Taiwan relations as well as in dealing with the Russo-Ukrainian war. With regard to the former, the EP has oftentimes explicitly adopted a position of support and political closeness, thereby standing in contrast to the other EU institutions, which appear instead to prefer a much more cautious attitude (Lan, 2004). Concerning the hostilities in Ukraine, this chapter has demonstrated a rather determined attitude of the EU parliamentary body in preparing and advancing Ukraine's formal application for EU membership, as well as in demanding more substantial sanctions against Russia and the protection of

more vulnerable groups' rights. All these aspects appear indeed to lend support to the first hypothesis in portraying the EP as a body which tries to appear and act as a more ambitious actor on matters of foreign and security policy; however, as stated previously, it remains crucial to determine whether the EP effectively wields tangible influence in this policy domain.

Upon analysing the resolutions and recommendations adopted, what emerged is that the EP still faces challenges in seeing all its requests implemented. Such findings indeed point out a discrepancy between the EP's activism and attempts to be visible, which can be observed through the adoption of high numbers of resolutions and the resort to own-initiative procedures, and its ability to then exert real impact and influence by seeing its resolutions taken into consideration.

As a matter of fact, a considerable number of own-initiative resolutions and resolutions on topical subjects did not receive a formal reply from the Commission; this indicates a limited capacity to exert concrete influence on decision- and policy-making, thereby initially validating the second hypothesis posited. This notwithstanding, it is also important to highlight that during emergency situations and extraordinary circumstances, such as the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the EP demonstrated its ability to address urgent and significant matters, for it was able to produce an extensive set of resolutions, the majority of which did receive follow-ups from the Commission. Thus, while the EP may encounter obstacles in implementing all its requests, it still was able to showcase its potential to exert influence in times of exceptional urgency.

The third hypothesis has been already partially addressed throughout the chapter, particularly in the sections discussing the voting outcomes of resolutions. The results of the votes pertaining to resolutions on the Russo-Ukrainian war as well as to foreign policy issues concerning Taiwan and its relations with China and the EU indeed confirmed in part the hypothesis of a cohesive EP that strives to achieve compromises among different political groups in order to see its stances endorsed and broaden its area of influence beyond formal treaty powers. Nevertheless, as previously outlined, given the fact that it has been considered vital for the accomplishment of groups' *objectives* and *policy influence* (Raunio and Wagner, 2020), consensus has traditionally come to represent the dominant norm within the EP, which conventionally votes with large majorities in all policy fields (Novak et al., 2021). Hence, it appears unclear to establish for sure whether such a display of consensus is always to be attributed to MEPs' willingness to increase the EP's influence within the foreign policy field, or whether it represents, instead, the resilience of a norm of reaching compromises.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned points, and despite the tendency to vote with broad majorities, certain resolutions, particularly those related to the annual reports on CFSP and CSDP, presented a much more fragmented voting result. This underscores the fact that the domain of security and foreign policy remains contentious and subject to considerable debate within the EP, thereby

emphasising the need for continued efforts to foster greater cohesion and consensus-building among MEPs in this critical field.

From the examined case studies, it becomes evident that parliamentary diplomacy and mediation have emerged as primary tools that are employed by the EP to advocate for increased powers and influence. In particular, as observed also by Redei (2019), through its role as a mediator and diplomatic actor, the EP has been recently fulfilling a function which could be indeed considered unusual for a legislative body. As discussed in this chapter, the recent diplomatic missions and visits conducted by MEPs and by the EP President, especially with regard to Ukraine, have sometimes overshadowed the traditional institutional role usually played by the European Council. In particular, in the wake of the Ukrainian conflict, the President of the EP has in fact taken on a very proactive role in placing the EP at the forefront of political and diplomatic initiatives. These actions have positioned the EP as a key player in the political and diplomatic spheres, surpassing its conventional institutional role. Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that the hypothesis stating the effectiveness of parliamentary diplomacy in expanding the powers and the influence of the EP (hypothesis 4) holds true. The utilization of parliamentary diplomacy has indeed enabled the EU parliamentary institution to extend its reach and impact beyond traditional boundaries and shape policy outcomes, further solidifying its role as a relevant and influential body within the EU.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has tried to analyse the still-evolving role and powers of the EP within the EU institutional framework. In particular, a strong emphasis has been laid on the concepts of political actorhood, policy entrepreneurship and agenda-setting, for in recent years the EP appeared to have taken the lead in different policy fields, not only where it already holds powers to co-decide, but also in all those areas in which it did not traditionally exhibit a wide range of influence. After having introduced the most relevant information regarding the EP, its powers and, in particular, the extension of its prerogatives as a result of the adoption of the different treaties, the first chapter of this thesis has indeed mainly focused on the scientific debate surrounding the emergence of the EP as a new international and political actor as well as a policy entrepreneur.

Overall, the literature review confirmed the EP to be one of the EU institutional bodies which have indeed changed the most; this aspect can be observed in the subsequent changes brought about by the different EU treaties which have been implemented since the establishment of the European Union and which have transformed it into a legislative body which today co-decides together with the Council of the EU on a variety of policy fields. After having assessed the progression of the EP's legislative and non-legislative powers in the EU institutional framework and decision-making process, the main purpose of the thesis was thus to evaluate whether this empowerment had in fact resulted also into an increased assertiveness of this institution within different policy fields.

Hence, the second and third chapters of the present dissertation have focused on two distinct policy areas, namely environmental and foreign policy, in an attempt to shed light on the behaviour of the EP in fields where it holds power to co-decide vis-à-vis areas where it traditionally has always had limited influence. These chapters have thus endeavoured to investigate not only whether the EP has managed to strengthen its position and role in sectors in which it co-decides, but also whether this institutional body has been acting as a political actor and agenda-setter also in sectors where it has few powers, thereby attempting to absorb more and influence decisions. The second and third chapters have thus tried to present the various strategies and tools which have been employed by the EP during its ninth (and current) term; a comparative analysis between the two above-mentioned sectors will indeed consent to evaluate possible similarities and differences in the EP's behaviour across these two different policy areas.

The decision to focus on the environmental policy field stems primarily from the existence of recent studies which have started raising questions regarding the entrepreneurial role of the European Commission, an institution which traditionally was regarded as a key driver of environmental policy

innovation and entrepreneurship. As of today, this role appeared indeed to have been partially taken over by the EP, a body which had also long been recognized as an environmental champion as well as an advocate for climate issues, thereby actively promoting the establishment of higher environmental protection standards within the EU. When it comes to foreign policy, however, the EP acts in a policy sector which has traditionally been dominated by other EU bodies, such as the European Council and the Council of the EU; hence, institutions with a strong intergovernmental nature. Therefore, while legislative power is a crucial aspect, it is also important to acknowledge the presence of a great variety of other powers and prerogatives that have been accomplished by the EP and which represent today its main source of non-legislative power in all those areas where its legislative influence may be limited.

Overall, both chapters have revealed, in different ways, a willingness of the EP in trying to play a significant role and influence policy outcomes and decisions; however, given the structural differences which lay at the basis of the two sectors object of the present analysis, both the examination undertaken as well as the results produced have indeed displayed distinctive features.

For what concerns the environmental policy sector studied within the second chapter, the analysis carried out has focused on six case studies, namely recent Commission's legislative proposals which had been set forth within the context of the European Green Deal strategy. In order to answer one of the main research questions at the basis of the present dissertation, namely whether it is possible to assert that the EP is acting as a policy entrepreneur, the above-mentioned case studies have indeed mainly concentrated on the amendments presented by the EP. The results pointed out relatively high percentages of EP amendments which could be classified as "ambitious" or even "highly ambitious", for they were expanding the scope of the legislation or suggesting new or more stringent targets than the ones previously presented by the Commission. Such findings indeed emphasised the willingness and the determination of this institution and of its bodies in acting as policy entrepreneurs and in trying to initiate policy changes and influencing their outcomes. As a matter of fact, the data collected through the analysis of these legislative texts seemed also to confirm the assumptions previously formulated by some scholars (Steinebach and Knill, 2017; Knill, Steinebach and Fernández-i-Marín, 2020) who have indeed been questioning the entrepreneurial role of the Commission in environmental and climate legislation.

The third chapter focused on the realm of foreign and security policy, a sector which, as outlined above, has conventionally been controlled by member states and by more intergovernmental institutional bodies, such as the European Council. Hence, being the EP more limited in the exercise of its prerogatives and given the lack of co-decision powers, the case studies utilized for carrying out the analysis within this sector did not consist of legislative proposals, but made use primarily of

information contained in press releases, own-initiative resolutions/recommendations and resolutions on topical subjects. As already exemplified throughout this thesis, such differences in the methods and sources employed lie indeed in the substantial dissimilarities displayed by the two policy fields here examined and, in particular, in the different powers held by the EP in the two sectors.

Apart from the relevant sources employed, another difference is situated in the aspects analysed. While the second chapter focused on the amendments put forward by the EP and their relative degree of ambition displayed, the study carried out in the third chapter took instead into consideration the more recent political role assumed by the EP in the context of parliamentary diplomacy and mediation initiatives. The data collected and presented in the chapter underlined a significant degree of ambition coming from the EP as well as a willingness to increase both its influence and power through the pursuit of parliamentary diplomacy and the undertaking of subsequent diplomatic missions and mediation initiatives – especially in times of crisis – such as the recent Russo-Ukrainian war or the difficult relations between China, Taiwan and the EU.

Also, the findings presented in the third chapter have indeed confirmed the above-mentioned research inquiry, for they have highlighted MEPs' strong motivation and commitment in trying to expand the EP's influence within this realm, even beyond the already-established prerogatives conveyed within the treaties. As a matter of fact, the use of parliamentary diplomacy and diplomatic missions, as well as the adoption of a large number of non-legislative agenda-setting tools, such as own-initiative resolutions, have demonstrated the willingness of MEPs and of the EP President to bring the EP on the front line of foreign and security policy along with the other EU institutions. Consequently, the adoption of such instruments and the carry out of diplomatic relations has allowed the EP to emerge at the forefront of EU diplomacy, sometimes even overshadowing the role played by the more traditional intergovernmental institutions.

Despite the many ambitious stances set forth by the EP through the use of both its legislative and non-legislative instruments, many of its official stances undertaken in relation to the two selected case studies have indeed underlined the importance and the predominance of bargaining aspects with other EU institutions; in particular, with the Council and the Commission. While the EP has proved to be a policy entrepreneur in the environmental policy field, for it has recently been trying to advance more ambitious positions than the ones put forward by the Commission in its legislative proposals, the need to bargain and eventually reach a compromise with the Council – as established by the Ordinary Legislative Procedure – has undoubtedly affected the capacity of the former to be really influential and see its most ambitious stances adopted.

What resulted from the study carried out in the second chapter (see Table 3) was indeed a prevailing trend of unadopted amendments in the majority of case studies analysed; however, what

was also really important to understand was the extent to which the most ambitious amendments were eventually able to be adopted, for this aspect allowed to comprehend the real degree of influence exercised by the EP within the EU policy-making process, as well as its ability to shape the agenda. Overall, the results exhibited low rates of adoption concerning the most ambitious amendments, whereas those falling within the “ambitious” category appeared instead to present a much more diversified distribution, as many of them were also fully and partially adopted. The study seemed indeed to confirm the challenges encountered by the EP in achieving the adoption of its most ambitious amendments, as the majority of finally adopted amendments were the result of compromise agreements reached between the two legislative institutions during the rounds of informal negotiations, where the EP had to negotiate most of its positions.

As in the case of the amendments analysed in the second chapter, the study conducted in the third one has underlined a strong willingness by MEPs and EP political groups to have the EP stand out and be influential also in the foreign and security policy field through the adoption of different non-legislative means.

Given the lack of co-decision powers, the adoption of own-initiative resolutions and resolutions on topical subjects allowed the EP to be less pragmatic and even put forward ideological and political stances. However, the study has also underlined the significant role played by the Commission, as the sole EU institution with the power to initiate legislation, in acknowledging these resolutions, for a high number of resolutions that are able to secure a response from the former serves as an indicator of the EP’s capacity to see its positions adopted and set the agenda. Overall, the EP appears still to be facing challenges in seeing all its requests implemented. As a matter of fact, the analysis conducted underlined how a considerable number of own-initiative resolutions and resolutions on topical subjects did not receive a formal reply from the Commission, an element which appears to indicate a limited ability from the EP to exert concrete influence on decision- and policy-making. Nonetheless, as already exemplified in the previous chapter, the EP demonstrated also a capacity to address urgent and extraordinary circumstances, as in the case of the Russo-Ukrainian war, during which it was able to produce an extensive set of resolutions, the majority of which received follow-ups from the Commission.

In addition to the adoption of resolutions, the extensive use of parliamentary diplomacy and diplomatic missions that have been taking place during its current term has also been employed as a significant tool to exert influence. Overall, EP political groups as well as the President have stood out for their activism and for their attempts to influence significantly foreign policy outcomes. As a result of the many diplomatic missions and institutional visits undertaken, the EP has started to take over a much broader role which, traditionally, was played by the most intergovernmental institutions. The

use of parliamentary diplomacy has thus proved to be fundamental for the progression of this institution and the extension of its powers. The capacity to measure its level of influence in the field, however, remains difficult to assess and subject to debate. The analysis carried out in the third chapter has revealed the presence of often contrasting views in comparison to the other EU institutions as well as the will to advocate for and move forward ambitious objectives, such as the accession of Ukraine to the EU. Nevertheless, while the use of parliamentary diplomacy has allowed the EP to increase its reach and extend its powers beyond its more traditional boundaries, as well as to advance ambitious stances, whether it eventually proved to be influential is not something easy to measure. Overall, the broad media coverage obtained by its missions together with the fact that, during its official visits, the EP also often represented the position of the EU as a whole seem sufficient to validate the effectiveness of parliamentary diplomacy and its role in extending EP's powers and impact also beyond its conventional institutional role.

When comparing MEPs' voting behaviour, what emerges is the display of very similar attitudes, that is the tendency to adopt acts with very large majorities so as to achieve a form of consensus. As stated by Novak et al. (2021), the endurance of consensus in the EP is not only connected to its perception of it as a norm, but also to MEPs' personal interests, to the general use of the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, as in the case of the environmental policy field, and to the capacity to form alliances against anti-EU MEPs. Furthermore, the adoption by large majorities allows the EP to be more influential when standing in front of other institutions.

Overall, because of the dominance of intergovernmental institutions in foreign policy, and specifically in CFSP and CSDP, the EP lacks the legislative competences that can be found in other policy sectors, where the latter co-decides. Hence, the EP's influence in foreign policy is not really comparable to the one it holds in other policy areas, such as the environment, where it can act as an equal co-legislator with the Council of the EU. Notwithstanding the above-mentioned points, the EP appears indeed to be displaying a proactive stance in both areas, albeit through different means. Nevertheless, both sectors revealed what could be considered as an evident discrepancy between the EP's activism and its capacity to exert real impact and influence policy outcomes. Hence, the proactive role often adopted by MEPs and political groups, as well as their willingness to extend the EP's powers and its role as a political actor and policy entrepreneur have not always been able to guarantee also a real ability to change things.

As explained within the first chapter of this thesis, the empowerment of the EP has also contributed to revive, in recent times, the debates between the different schools of thought in the field of European integration studies. Not only intergovernmentalists and neo-functionalists, but also constructivists and institutionalists have indeed endeavoured to account for its increasing powers (Brack and Costa,

2018). The overall ambition displayed by the EP and its ability to increase its powers over time, and in different policy fields, appear to confirm the neo-functional theory in underlining the notion of a “spill-over” as well as the role played by supranational institutions, such as the EP, in advancing the process of European integration further. As a matter of fact, the EP’s capacity to exploit each successive EU treaty in order to increase its powers has also resulted in attempts to do the same also in sectors where its influence is still limited. Nevertheless, the recent Russo-Ukrainian conflict has indeed also sparked a debate on the process of EU integration and on its role in driving integration forward, especially as a result of cooperation in the area of defence, a field which, however, is still largely dominated by member states and intergovernmental institutions. Hence, such findings could also confirm in a way the intergovernmentalist debate in placing national states at the core of international relations and of the integration process.

Overall, the results presented in this thesis seem to confirm the main research question in maintaining that the EP has been trying to stand out, among the other EU institutional bodies, as a policy entrepreneur and political actor. On the one hand, in its capacity as a policy entrepreneur, the EP has assumed a role traditionally attributed to the Commission. On the other hand, the EP has also demonstrated political actorhood, particularly in the realm of foreign policy, where it has leveraged parliamentary diplomacy as a means to assert influence in both political and diplomatic spheres, thereby transcending its conventional institutional role. However, for what concerns the foreign policy field, as already anticipated in the introduction of this thesis, the recent Qatargate scandal will most likely negatively affect the reputation and credibility of the EU and, especially, of the EP within this sector. Hence, despite the recent increasing attempts to increase its visibility within this area, it is possible to expect a lack of progress in the forthcoming years.

To conclude, both policy fields, despite their substantial differences, appear to have been influenced by the EP legislative and institutional empowerment. In spite of the often still current challenges in shaping the agenda and seeing its stances adopted – particularly in certain specific areas – over the years the EP has indeed undergone an incredible process of transformation and development, which has allowed it to continuously increase its impact and power. Whether it will endeavour and eventually manage to extend its influence even further – especially in policy fields where the latter is still limited – will probably be the object of future debates and researches; nevertheless, given the findings herein presented, such a development is most likely expected to occur.

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APPENDIX A

Primary sources used (environmental policy field)

1) European Climate Law (2020/0036(COD))

The four-column document used for this analysis is document No 7772/21, published on 15 April 2021 in view of the sixth trilogue meeting on 20 April 2021. This document is not the final version, but an intermediate and the most recent four-column document that could be found for the present legislative proposal. Hence, given the lack of the final text, or compromise agreement, usually displayed in the last column, in order to compare the amendments and evaluate their adoption rate, the other document used has been the final act (Regulation 2021/1119), which was retrieved from the EP Legislative Observatory.

2) Just Transition Fund (2020/0006(COD))

The four-column document used is the one issued on 9 December 2020, after the third and final trilogue. Hence, the document contains, in addition to the European Parliament's and Council's positions, also a column with the compromise agreement reached, and which was used to compare the legislative proposal and analyse the relative amendments.

3) Social Climate Fund (2021/0206(COD))

The four-column document used for analysing the present legislative text is the draft published on 12 December 2022, still during the rounds on interinstitutional negotiations. It is the most recent, albeit intermediate document that was possible to find, and it contains the Commission proposal, the EP and Council's mandate as well as the "draft agreement" column, which however was mostly empty for the two institutions still had to find a compromise agreement. Therefore, in order to carry out the relevant analysis, the Commission's proposal and the amended texts have been compared with the finally adopted act (Regulation 2023/955), which was retrieved from the EP Legislative Observatory.

4) Effort Sharing Regulation (2021/0200(COD))

The four-column document utilized is the "Table for trilogue on 8 November 2022" which was published on 28 October 2022. As for the majority of the previous case studies, since it was not possible to retrieve the final four-column document containing all the amendments and the final compromise agreements, the documents used for carrying out the analysis have been the above-

mentioned table for trilogue (an intermediate and the most recent document that was possible to find) and the final act (Regulation 2023/857) published on the EP Legislative Observatory.

5) Revision of the Market Stability Reserve for the EU Emissions Trading System (2021/0202(COD))

The four-column document used for this analysis is document No 12846/22, published on 30 September 2022 in preparation for the trilogue scheduled for 10 October 2022. It is an intermediate document and the most recent it was possible to find on the EP public register of documents. Hence, in order to conduct the relevant comparison and evaluate the adoption rate of EP amendments, the final text including all the compromise agreements reached has been retrieved from the EP Legislative Observatory (Regulation 2023/852).

6) Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) (2021/0201(COD))

The four-column document used has been acquired from the EP public register of documents where, however, it was only possible to find the intermediate documents published during the trilogue negotiations. Hence, the one utilized is the “table for trilogue on 10 November 2022”, which is the most recent published. Since the legislative institutions had not yet reached a draft agreement on all proposed amendments, the other document used for carrying out the relevant analysis is the final act published on the EP Legislative Observatory (Regulation 2023/839).

Examples of EP amendments and their categorization

Amendments classified as “highly ambitious”

1) European Climate Law (2020/0036(COD)) – Amendment 48

Amendment modifying final Union goal of reaching climate neutrality to “by 2050 at the latest”, as well as Union 2030 climate target, from “at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels” as put forward by the Commission to “60% compared to 1990 levels”.

Amendment 48 Recital 17			
(17) As announced in its Communication ‘The European Green Deal’, the Commission assessed the Union’s 2030 target for greenhouse gas emission reduction, in its Communication ‘Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition - Investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our people’ ²⁰ , on the basis of a comprehensive impact assessment and taking into account its analysis of the integrated national energy and climate plans submitted to the Commission in	(17) <i>The Commission</i> , in its Communication ‘The European Green Deal’, <i>announced its intention to assess and make proposals for increasing the Union’s greenhouse gas emission reduction target for 2030 to ensure its consistency with the climate-neutrality objective for 2050. In that Communication, the Commission underlined that all Union policies should contribute to the climate-neutrality objective and that all sectors should play their part. Given the Union goal of</i>	(17) As announced in its Communication ‘The European Green Deal’, the Commission assessed the Union’s 2030 target for greenhouse gas emission reduction in its Communication ‘Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition - Investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our people’ ²⁰ , on the basis of a comprehensive impact assessment and taking into account its analysis of the integrated national energy and climate plans submitted to the Commission in accordance with	Wording on the climate neutrality target, references to the 2030 target linked with EP amendment on Article 2a (new) are not acceptable. Retain the factual reference to the EC initial guidance and the broad reference to relevant Union legislation as in the Council position. See compromise proposal in the third column responding in part to AM 19-24 (recitals 9a-9f) and

COMMISSION PROPOSAL	EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 1st reading position of 08/10/2020	COUNCIL POSITION Coreper 14/04/2021	COMMENTS
accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council ²¹ . In light of the 2050 climate-neutrality objective, by 2030 greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced and removals enhanced, so that net greenhouse gas emissions, that is emissions after deduction of removals, are reduced economy-wide and domestically by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. This new 2030 Union climate target is a subsequent target for the purposes of point (11) of Article 2 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999, and therefore replaces the 2030 Union-wide target for greenhouse gas emissions set out in that point. In addition, the Commission should, by 30 June 2021, assess how the relevant Union legislation implementing the 2030 climate target would need to be amended in order to achieve such net emission reductions.;	<i>reaching climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest, it is essential that climate action is further strengthened and particularly that the Union 2030 climate target is raised to a reduction in emissions of 60 % compared with 1990 levels. Consequently, the Commission should, by 30 June 2021, assess how the Union legislation implementing that higher target and other relevant Union legislation contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting the circular economy would need to be amended accordingly.</i>	Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council ²¹ . In light of the 2050 climate-neutrality objective, by 2030 greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced and removals enhanced, so that net greenhouse gas emissions, that is emissions after deduction of removals, are reduced economy-wide and domestically by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. <u>The European Council endorsed this target in its conclusions of 10/11 December 2020. It also provided initial guidance on its implementation.</u> This new 2030 Union climate target is a subsequent target for the purposes of point (11) of Article 2 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999, and therefore replaces the 2030 Union-wide target for greenhouse gas emissions set out in that point. In addition, the Commission should, by 30 June 2021, assess how the relevant Union legislation implementing the 2030 climate target would need to be amended in order to achieve such net emission	AM 158 (recital 23I). Linked to compromise suggested in recital 15 on energy-related aspects.

reductions. In implementation of the new 2030 Union climate target, the Commission has announced a revision of relevant climate and energy legislation which will be adopted in a package covering inter alia renewables, energy efficiency, land use, energy taxation, CO₂ emission performance standards for light-duty vehicles, effort sharing and the emissions trading system.

This amendment was classified as “not adopted” for the final act maintained the original objective set by the Commission and also endorsed by the Council. Furthermore, the final agreed text was closer to the position of the Council, as it contained some amendments put forward by the latter.

(26) As announced in the European Green Deal, the Commission assessed the Union’s 2030 target for greenhouse gas emission reduction, in its communication of 17 September 2020 entitled ‘Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition – Investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our people’. The Commission did so on the basis of a comprehensive impact assessment and taking into account its analysis of the integrated national energy and climate plans submitted to it in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹²⁾. In light of the 2050 climate-neutrality objective, by 2030 greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced and removals enhanced, so that net greenhouse gas emissions, that is emissions after the deduction of removals, are reduced economy-wide and domestically by at least 55 % by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. The European Council endorsed that target in its conclusions of 10 and 11 December 2020. It also provided initial guidance on its implementation. That new Union 2030 climate target is a subsequent target for the purposes of point (11) of Article 2 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999, and therefore replaces the 2030 Union-wide target for greenhouse gas emissions set out in that point. In addition, the Commission should, by 30 June 2021, assess how the relevant Union legislation implementing the Union 2030 climate target would need to be amended in order to achieve such net emission reductions. In view of this, the Commission has announced a revision of the relevant climate and energy legislation which will be adopted in a package covering, inter alia, renewables, energy efficiency, land use, energy taxation, CO₂ emission performance standards for light-duty vehicles, effort sharing and the EU ETS.

The Commission intends to assess the impacts of the introduction of additional Union measures that could complement existing measures, such as market-based measures that include a strong solidarity mechanism.

Figure 1. Regulation 2021/1119

2) LULUCF (2021/0201(COD)) – Amendment 54

Amendment modifying time goals (from “31 December 2015” as stated in Commission proposal to “31 December 2024”) and establishing new objectives and policy instruments, including the submission of a “report to the European Parliament and the Council on progress achieved in the increase of net-removals of greenhouse gases from cropland, grassland and wetlands” and which “should include also an impact assessment exploring options [...] to ensure a fair contribution of each sector and each Member State to the Union’s climate neutrality objective”. Furthermore, the amendment calls on the Commission to submit legislative proposals “where it deems it appropriate to ensure contributions by all sectors in accordance with the Union’s climate neutrality objective”.

The amendment was classified as “not adopted”, for the Council’s provision deleting the section was the one that prevailed.

Article 1, amending provision (Article 4(4), second subparagraph)				
9	The Commission shall, by 31 December 2025 and on the basis of integrated national energy and climate plans submitted by each Member State pursuant to Article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 by 30 June 2024, make proposals for the contribution of each Member State to the net emissions reduction.;	The Commission shall, by 31 December 2025 and 2024 , on the basis of integrated national energy and climate <i>progress reports and of integrated national energy and climate</i> plans submitted by each Member State pursuant to Article 14 <i>Articles 14 and 17</i> of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 by 30 June 2024 , make	The Commission shall, by 31 December 2025 and on the basis of integrated national energy and climate plans submitted by each Member State pursuant to Article 14 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 by 30 June 2024, make proposals for the contribution of each Member State to the net emissions	EP amendment not acceptable. Covered by the provisional agreement on the review clause in Article 17

	" <i>proposals for the contribution of each Member State that date, and taking into account the advice of the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change and the Union greenhouse gas budget set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1119, submit a report to the net emission European Parliament and the Council on progress achieved in the increase of net-removals of greenhouse gases from cropland, grassland and wetlands under the scope of this Regulation and in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture under the scope of Regulation (EU) 2018/842, and assess whether current trends and future projections are consistent with the objective of achieving long-term greenhouse gas emission reductions in all sectors in accordance with the Union's climate-neutrality objective and the Union's intermediary</i>	reduction.;" deleted	"	
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		<u>climate targets set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1119</u> ;			
Article 1, first paragraph, point (3), amending provision (Article 4(4), third subparagraph)					
9 1 a		<u>That report shall include an impact assessment exploring options, including national targets, to ensure a fair contribution of each sector and each Member State to the Union's climate-neutrality objective and the Union's intermediary climate targets set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1119, while taking into account the objectives of the updated Bioeconomy Strategy 2018, sustainable local food production and food security, the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, the forthcoming Sustainable Food System Legislation, assessing the synergies and trade-offs of accelerating the substitution of fossil fuels by bio-based products, and assessing the impacts down to</u>			EP amendment not acceptable. Covered by the provisional agreement on the review clause in Article 17

		<u>farm level.</u>			
Article 1, first paragraph, point (3), amending provision (Article 4(4), fourth subparagraph)					
9 1 b		<u>Following that report, the Commission shall submit legislative proposals where it deems it appropriate to ensure contributions by all sectors in accordance with the Union's climate-neutrality objective and the Union's intermediary climate targets set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1119.</u>			EP amendment not acceptable. Covered by the provisional agreement on the review clause in Article 17

3) LULUCF (2021/0201(COD)) – Amendments 97 and 50cp

This amendment was classified as “highly ambitious” as it calls for an increase of the 2030 Union target for net greenhouse gas removals from “310 million tonnes” as proposed by the Commission, to “at least” 310 million tonnes. Furthermore, it advocates for the introduction of new higher targets, as well as the idea that the targets already established should be “further amplified by additional measures and initiatives at Union level”.

Article 1, amending provision (Article 4(2), first subparagraph)				
8 6	2. The 2030 Union target for net greenhouse gas removals is 310 million tonnes CO ₂ equivalent as a sum of the Member States targets established in accordance with paragraph 3 of this Article, and shall be based on the average of its greenhouse gas inventory data for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.	2. The 2030 Union target for net greenhouse gas removals <i>in the the land, land use change and forestry sector is at least</i> 310 million tonnes CO ₂ equivalent as a sum of the Member States targets established in accordance with paragraph 3 of this Article, and shall be based on the average of its greenhouse gas inventory data for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018. <i>This target shall be further amplified by additional measures and initiatives at Union level to support carbon farming. Such measures and initiatives, as well as methodology for target calculation and distribution between Member States, shall supplement this Regulation one year after the entry into</i>	2. The 2030 Union target for net greenhouse gas removals is 310 million tonnes CO ₂ equivalent as a sum of the values of the greenhouse gas net emissions and removals by Member States targets established in accordance with paragraph 3 of this Article 2030 set out in Column D of Annex IIa , and shall be based on the average of its greenhouse gas inventory data for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 as submitted in 2020 .	EP amendment on "at least" not acceptable. EP amendment on carbon farming not acceptable as such but linked to suggested compromise in Article 17; row 192b (Review clause) and recital 10 (row 20).

<i>force of this legislation.</i>				
Article 1, amending provision (Article 4(2), second subparagraph)				
8 7	Each Member State shall ensure that, taking into account the flexibilities provided for in Articles 12 and 13 and 13b, the annual sum of its greenhouse gas emissions and removals on its territory and in all of the land reporting categories referred to in Article 2(2), points (a) to (j), in each year in the period from 2026 to 2030 does not exceed the limit established by a linear trajectory, ending in 2030 on the target set out for that Member State in Annex IIa. The linear trajectory of a Member State shall start in 2022.	Each Member State shall ensure that, taking into account the flexibilities provided for in Articles 12 and 13 and 13b, the annual sum of its greenhouse gas emissions and removals on its territory and in all of the land reporting categories referred to in Article 2(2), points (a) to (j), in each year in the period from 2026 to 2030 does not exceed the limit established by a linear trajectory, ending in 2030 on the target set out for that Member State in Annex IIa. The linear trajectory of a Member State shall start in 2022.	Each Member State shall ensure that, taking into account the flexibilities provided for in Articles 12 and 13 and 13b 13b, and the application of Article 10 (1a) , the annual sum of its greenhouse gas emissions and removals on its territory and in all of the land reporting categories referred to in Article 2(2), points (a) to (j), in each year in the period from 2026 to 2030 does not exceed the limit established by a linear trajectory, ending in 2030 as compared to the average of its greenhouse gas inventory data for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 as submitted in 2032, does not exceed, for the year 2030, the target set out for that Member State in Annex IIa. The linear trajectory of a Member State	EP amendment not acceptable. Maintain Council text.

The amendment was then classified as “not adopted”, for the EP provisions were deemed as not acceptable by the Council. The final agreed text displays instead the adoption of the Council’s amendments (see the sections highlighted in the following document).

2. The 2030 Union target for net greenhouse gas removals shall be 310 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent as a sum of the values of the greenhouse gas net emissions and removals by Member States in 2030 set out in column D of Annex IIa, and shall be based on the average of its greenhouse gas inventory data for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 as submitted in 2020.

3. Each Member State shall ensure that, taking into account the flexibilities provided for in Articles 12 and 13b, the sum of its greenhouse gas emissions and removals on its territory and in all of the land reporting categories referred to in Article 2(2), points (a) to (j), reported for the year 2030 in its greenhouse gas inventory submitted in 2032, compared to the average of its greenhouse gas inventory data for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 as submitted in 2032, does not exceed the target set out for that Member State in column C of Annex IIa.

Figure 2. Regulation 2023/839

4) Social Climate Fund (2021/0206(COD)) – Amendment 13

The present amendment has been classified as “highly ambitious” because, as exemplified in the fifth column containing comments and suggestions, it tries to widen the scope of the legislation by including in the legislative text reference to the “transition towards climate neutrality, including by carbon pricing”. Additionally, by expanding the categories already put forward in the legislative proposal, the amendment tries to set more stringent standards than the ones set by the Commission.

Recital 10					
20	(10) The increase in the price for fossil fuels may disproportionately affect vulnerable households, vulnerable micro-enterprises and vulnerable transport users who spend a larger part of their incomes on energy and transport, who, in certain regions, do not have access to alternative, affordable mobility and transport solutions and who may lack the financial capacity to invest into the reduction of fossil fuel	(10) The <u>transition toward climate neutrality, including by carbon pricing is expected to increase in the price for fossil fuels may</u> disproportionately affect vulnerable households, vulnerable micro-enterprises and vulnerable transport users who spend a larger part of their incomes on energy and transport, who, in certain regions, <u>including in rural, insular, mountainous, remote and less accessible areas or for</u>			EP amendment on widening SCF scope unacceptable ; align language on geographic specificities corresponding article - see row 86a

	Commission Proposal	EP Mandate	Council Mandate	Draft Agreement	Pcy comments/suggestions
	consumption.	<u>less developed regions or territories, including less developed peri-urban areas.</u> do not have access to alternative, affordable mobility and transport solutions and who may lack the financial capacity to invest into the reduction of fossil fuel consumption.			

This amendment has been classified as “partially adopted” for the finally agreed legislative text represents a compromise agreement including aspects put forward and contained in the EP amendment. However, it is relevant to underline how the probably most ambitious part of the amendment, which was considered as widening the scope of the Social Climate Fund, was not adopted.

(11) The increase in the price for fossil fuels can disproportionately affect vulnerable households, vulnerable micro-enterprises and vulnerable transport users who spend a larger part of their income on energy and transport, who, in certain regions, do not have access to alternative, affordable mobility and transport solutions, and who may lack the financial capacity to invest in the reduction of fossil fuel consumption. Geographic specificities, such as islands, outermost regions and territories, rural or remote areas, less accessible peripheries, mountainous areas or areas that are lagging behind, can have specific impacts in the context of transport poverty on the vulnerability of households, micro-enterprises and transport users. Therefore, those geographic specificities should be taken into account when preparing measures and investments in support of vulnerable households, vulnerable micro-enterprises and vulnerable transport users, where applicable and relevant.

Amendments classified as “ambitious”

5) Just Transition Fund (2020/0006(COD)) – Amendment 8

This amendment does not significantly alter the scope of the legislative proposal nor sets more specific or higher targets; however, it specifies the areas where the Commission or Member States should act, thereby introducing new categories where financial means should focus on. It was classified as “partially adopted” because some provisions were eventually included in the final common understanding.

<p>(8) Transitioning to a climate-neutral economy is a challenge for all Member States. It will be particularly demanding for those Member States that rely heavily on fossil fuels or greenhouse gas intensive industrial activities which need to be phased out or which need to adapt due to the transition towards climate neutrality and that lack the financial means to do so. The JTF should therefore cover all Member States, but the distribution of its financial means should reflect the capacity of Member States to finance the necessary investments to cope with the transition towards climate neutrality.</p>	<p><u>Amendment 8</u></p> <p>(8) Transitioning to a climate-neutral economy is a challenge for all Member States. It will be particularly demanding for those Member States that rely, <i>or which until recently have relied</i>, heavily on fossil fuels or greenhouse gas intensive industrial activities which need to be phased out or which need to adapt due to the transition towards climate neutrality and that lack the financial means to do so. The JTF should therefore cover all Member States, but the distribution of its financial means should focus on those territories most affected, and reflect the capacity of Member States to finance the necessary investments to cope with the transition towards climate neutrality, with particular attention to least developed regions, outermost regions, mountainous, islands, sparsely populated, rural,</p>	<p><i>Provisional common understanding</i></p> <p>(8) Transitioning to a climate-neutral economy is a challenge for all Member States. It will be particularly demanding for those Member States that rely, or which until recently have relied, heavily on fossil fuels or greenhouse gas intensive industrial activities which need to be phased out or which need to adapt due to the transition towards climate neutrality and that lack the financial means to do so. The JTF should therefore cover all Member States, but the distribution of its financial means should focus on those territories that are the most affected by the climate transition process, and reflect the capacity of Member States to finance the necessary investments to cope with the transition towards climate neutrality.</p>	<p>119</p>
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Commission proposal COM (2020) 22 and 460	European Parliament first reading (plenary mandate 17/09/2020)	Council Position (COREPER partial mandate 24/6/20 and 5/10/20)	Compromise proposal, comments	Rows
	<p><i>remote and geographically disadvantaged areas whose small population make the transition in energy towards climate neutrality more difficult to implement, and taking into account the starting position of each Member State.</i></p>			
<p>(8a)²⁹ Horizontal financial rules adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on the basis of Article 322 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union apply to this Regulation. These rules are laid down in the Financial Regulation and determine in particular the procedure for establishing and implementing the budget through grants, procurement, prizes, indirect implementation, and provide for checks on the responsibility of financial actors. Rules adopted on the basis of Article 322 TFEU also concern the protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States, as the respect for the rule of law is an essential precondition for sound financial management and effective EU funding.</p>	<p>[no change]</p>		<p><i>Provisional common understanding</i></p> <p>(8a) Horizontal financial rules adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on the basis of Article 322 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union apply to this Regulation. These rules are laid down in the Financial Regulation and determine in particular the procedure for establishing and implementing the budget through grants, procurement, prizes, indirect implementation, and provide for checks on the responsibility of financial actors. Rules adopted on the basis of Article 322 TFEU also include a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget concern the protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States, as the respect for the rule of law is an essential precondition for sound financial management and effective EU funding.</p>	<p>120</p>

6) European Climate Law (2020/0036(COD)) – Amendment 51

This amendment was classified as “ambitious” because it suggests a possible area for improvement in environmental and climate legislation where the Commission is called on to act.

COMMISSION PROPOSAL	EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 1st reading position of 08/10/2020	COUNCIL POSITION Coreper 14/04/2021	COMMENTS
Amendment 51 Recital 17c (new)			
	<i>(17c) To signal the importance and weight of climate policy and to give political actors the necessary information in the legislative process, the Commission should assess all future legislation through a new lens, in which climate and the consequences on climate are included, and determine the effect any proposed legislation will have on the climate and environment at the same level that it assesses legal basis, subsidiarity and proportionality.</i>	<u>(17c) Expenditure under the Union budget and the European Union Recovery Instrument contributes to climate objectives, by dedicating at least 30% of the total amount of the expenditure to supporting climate objectives, on the basis of an effective methodology and in accordance with sectoral legislation.</u>	See compromise suggested in the third column.

The amendment was then categorized as “not adopted”, for the final text corresponded to the Council’s position.

- (28) Expenditure under the Union budget and the European Union Recovery Instrument established by Council Regulation (EU) 2020/2094 ⁽¹³⁾ contributes to climate objectives, by dedicating at least 30 % of the total amount of the expenditure to supporting climate objectives, on the basis of an effective methodology and in accordance with sectoral legislation.

7) Social Climate Fund (2021/0206(COD)) – Amendment 32

This amendment was classified as “ambitious” mainly due to the adoption of a more high-reaching language and the establishment of more precise targets and categories. Such aspects can be found in the use of adjectives such as “disproportionately” instead of “particularly”, or in the inclusion of new categories (“single women”, “women with disabilities” “elderly women living alone”).

Recital 19					
29	(19) Women are particularly affected by carbon pricing as they represent 85% of single parent families. Single parent families have a particularly high risk of child poverty. Gender equality and equal opportunities for all, and the mainstreaming of those objectives, as well as questions of accessibility for persons with disabilities should be taken into account	(19) Women are particularly disproportionate ly affected by carbon pricing as they energy poverty and mobility poverty, in particular single mothers, who represent 85% of single parent families, as well as single women, women with disabilities, or elderly women living alone. In addition, women have different and more complex mobility patterns. Single			Open to streamlined parts of EP amendment.

	Commission Proposal	EP Mandate	Council Mandate	Draft Agreement	Pcy comments/suggestions
	and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of Plans to ensure no one is left behind.	parent families with dependent children have a particularly high risk of child poverty. Gender equality and equal opportunities for all, and the mainstreaming of those objectives, as well as questions of accessibility for accessibility rights of persons with disabilities should be taken into account upheld and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of Plans to ensure no one is left behind.			

As it is possible to observe from the final act, this amendment has been classified as “fully adopted” for all the provisions put forward by the EP have eventually been implemented.

(24) Women are **disproportionately** affected by **energy poverty and transport poverty, in particular single mothers, who** represent 85 % of single parent families, **as well as single women, women with disabilities, and elderly women living alone. In addition, women have different and more complex mobility patterns.** Single parent families **with dependent children** have a particularly high risk of child poverty. Gender equality and equal opportunities for all, and the mainstreaming of those objectives, as well as **accessibility rights of persons** with disabilities should be **upheld** and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of Plans to ensure that no one is left behind.

Amendments classified as “not ambitious”

8) European Climate Law (2020/0036(COD)) – Amendment 8

This amendment was classified as “not ambitious” for it forms part of those newly-introduced amendments which only provide more context to the legislative text, without introducing new relevant provisions. In this case, the amendment makes reference to the WHO and its statements concerning the effects of climate change and its expected future consequences. This amendment was eventually not adopted and simply dismissed.

COMMISSION PROPOSAL	EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 1st reading position of 08/10/2020	COUNCIL POSITION Coreper 14/04/2021	COMMENTS
Amendment 8 Recital 3b (new)			
	<i>(3b) According to the WHO, climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health - clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter - and 250 000 additional deaths, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress, are expected every year between 2030 and 2050, with extremely high air temperatures contributing directly to deaths, particularly amongst the elderly and vulnerable individuals. Through flood, heatwaves, drought and fires, climate change has a considerable impact on human health, including undernutrition, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and vector-borne infections.</i>		As above.

9) Social Climate Fund (2021/0206(COD)) – Amendment 65

This amendment was classified as “not ambitious” for it does not bring substantial changes to the legislative text, but only alters the language and introduces reference to an article in addition to the one already put forward in the legislative proposal.

Article 4(1), point (a)					
76	(a) concrete measures and investments in accordance with Article 3 to reduce the effects referred to in point (c) of this paragraph together	(a) concrete measures and investments in accordance with Article 3 to reduce Articles 3 and 6 to address the effects referred to in	(a) concrete measures and investments in accordance with Article 3 to reduce the effects referred to in point (c) of this paragraph together	(a) concrete measures and investments in accordance with Article 3 Articles 3 and 6 to reduce the effects referred to in point (c) of this	

Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing a Social Climate Fund 2021/0206(COD) 12-12-2022 at 16h49 97/232

	Commission Proposal	EP Mandate	Council Mandate	Draft Agreement	Pcy comments/suggestions
	with an explanation of how they would contribute effectively to the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 1 within the overall setting of a Member State’s relevant policies;	point (c) of this paragraph together with an explanation of how they would contribute effectively to the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 1 within the overall setting of a Member State’s relevant policies;	with an explanation of how they would contribute effectively to the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 1 within the overall setting of a Member State’s relevant policies;	paragraph together with an explanation of how they would contribute effectively to the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 1 within the overall setting of a Member State’s relevant policies; <i>Text provisionally agreed at technical level and confirmed at trilogue on 29/11.</i>	

The amendment was eventually classified as “not adopted”. The final text implemented in Regulation 2023/955 displays indeed different provisions than the ones previously put forward by the EP or provisionally agreed in the section “Draft Agreement”.

Article 6

Content of Social Climate Plans

1. The Plan shall set out the following elements:

- (a) concrete measures and investments **in accordance with Articles 4 and 8 to reduce** the effects referred to in point (d) of this paragraph, together with an explanation of how those measures and investments would contribute effectively to the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 3 within the overall setting of a Member State’s relevant policies;

10) Revision of the Market Stability Reserve for the EU Emissions Trading System (2021/0202(COD)) – Amendment 6

	Commission Proposal	EP Mandate	Council Mandate	Commission proposal
Recital 2				
12	(2) Tackling climate and environmental-related challenges and reaching the objectives of the Paris Agreement are at the core of the Communication on “The European Green Deal”, adopted by the Commission on 11 December 2019 ¹ . 1. COM(2019)640 final.	(2) Tackling climate and environmental-related challenges and reaching the objectives of the Paris Agreement are therefore at the core of the Communication on “The European Green Deal”, adopted by the Commission on 11 December 2019 ¹ . 1. COM(2019)640 final.	(2) Tackling climate and environmental-related challenges and reaching the objectives of the Paris Agreement are at the core of the Communication on “The European Green Deal”, adopted by the Commission on 11 December 2019 ¹ . 1. COM(2019)640 final.	Reject for consistency, as not included in the cars proposal or in the general ETS Directive.

This amendment has been classified as “not ambitious”, as it only modifies the language, without bringing substantive changes which would modify the legislative proposals put forward by the Commission. As it is possible to observe from the fourth column displaying “Commission proposal” as well as from the text eventually adopted in Regulation 2023/852, the amendment was not adopted.

- (3) Tackling climate- and environmental-related challenges and reaching the objectives of the Paris Agreement are at the core of the communication of the Commission of 11 December 2019 on ‘The European Green Deal’ (the ‘European Green Deal’).

APPENDIX B

Primary sources used (foreign policy field)

Case study 1: Ukraine

Own-initiative resolutions/recommendations

European Parliament resolution of 11 February 2021 on the implementation of the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine (2019/2202(INI)). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0050_EN.pdf

European Parliament recommendation of 8 June 2022 to the Council and the VicePresident of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine (2022/2039(INI)). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0235_EN.pdf

European Parliament resolution of 8 June 2022 on security in the Eastern Partnership area and the role of the common security and defence policy (2021/2199(INI)). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0236_EN.pdf

European Parliament resolution of 18 January 2023 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2022 (2022/2048(INI)). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0009_EN.pdf

European Parliament resolution of 18 January 2023 on the implementation of the common security and defence policy – annual report 2022 (2022/2050(INI)). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0010_EN.pdf

European Parliament resolution of 15 December 2022 on upscaling the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework: a resilient EU budget fit for new challenges (2022/2046(INI)). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0450_EN.pdf

European Parliament recommendation of 23 November 2022 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning the new EU strategy for enlargement (2022/2064(INI)). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0406_EN.pdf

European Parliament resolution of 7 June 2022 on the EU and the security challenges in the Indo-Pacific (2021/2232(INI)). https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0224_EN.pdf

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Case study 2: Taiwan

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