

**European parliaments in transnational organisations:
Parliamentary cooperation beyond the European Union**

by Stefan Marschall

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“Fifty years of interparliamentary cooperation” – this picture emerges when we take stock of the forms of networking between the national parliaments within the project of European integration. However, if one turns beyond the European Union, soon it becomes clear that the network building between parliamentary bodies is much older and that the roots of transnational parliamentarism go a longer way back into history. As a matter of fact, the oldest forum of parliamentary cooperation, the Interparliamentary Union (IPU), was founded as early as 1888. Thus, taking into account the IPU we deal with about 120 years of transnational parliamentarism. And as we broaden our perspective, soon we are faced with an abundance of different forms of parliamentary networks that European parliaments and parliaments from all over the world take part in.

In this paper I will address interparliamentary cooperation within and beyond the realm of the EU. In order to do so, I will at the beginning sketch the global picture of a type of organisation, which brings together national parliamentarians within intergovernmental organisations: so-called Parliamentary Assemblies. In a second step, I focus on those parliamentary assemblies where European parliaments are represented in. Therefore I examine three major cases: the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the NATO-Parliamentary Assembly. Last of all, I analyse the findings and try to outline the benefits of a complex system of interparliamentary alliances for strengthening parliamentary democracy within and beyond national borders.¹

1 Parliamentary assemblies – the global dimension

As the increase of regional cooperation has resulted in the emergence of a multitude of transnational organisations, parliamentary cooperation has constantly tried to keep up with this process. There appears to be one salient institutional way for parliamentary cooperation to take shape: this is in form of parliamentary or transnational assemblies.

Parliamentary assemblies (PAs) are a very peculiar type of organisation within the international arena. One of their distinctive features is that they are composed of delegations coming from national parliaments. The PAs’ delegates have a double mandate: They are as well individual full members of a national legislature as well as members of an assembly. The second characteristic is a structural one: These assemblies are more than just sporadic

¹ In the empirical part I largely refer to results of a research project I had the opportunity to conduct at the University of Düsseldorf (cf. Marschall 2005).

meetings of national parliamentarians. Instead, their existence, mode of operation, and competences are based on written statutes or rules of procedure. Typically, they have an organisational backbone in form of a general secretariat. Therefore, these assemblies have to be distinguished from the abundance of ad-hoc forms of transnational parliamentary interaction. Most of the parliamentary assemblies are affiliated to an Intergovernmental Organisation (IGO) and more than a few of them have become an integral part of a transnational organisation's structure.

One example for this type of parliamentary body has already been mentioned at the beginning: the Interparliamentary Union. A second, rather famous case is the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. A third example is the European Parliament before 1979: The parliamentary branch of the European Communities started in the fifties summoning parliamentarians of the member states several times a year in order to discuss the issues on the community's agenda. Back then this organisation was called the "Common Assembly". It altered its name to "European Parliament" as well as it changed its organisational character due to the introduction of the direct elections at the end of the seventies. In consequence it was transformed from an "assembly" into a "parliament".

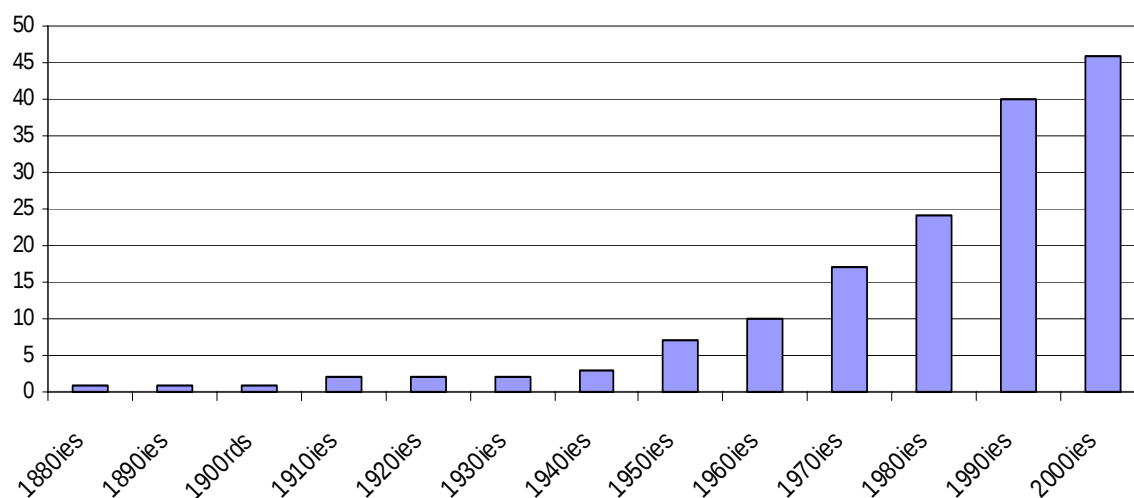
In relation to parliamentary assemblies there are three observations that strike as particularly important:

1. the expansion of this form of interparliamentary cooperation within the last sixty years,
2. the spread of this type of organisation all over the globe,
3. the different extent of assemblies' affiliation to intergovernmental organisations.

1.2 First observation: the expansion of parliamentary assemblies

Parliamentary assemblies have started their story of success essentially after World War II, although the Interparliamentary Union had been founded early at the end of the 19th century (cf. Habegger 2005), and the second parliamentary assembly, the Assembly of the Commonwealth, came into life at the beginning of the 20th century. However, the real "boom" of parliamentary assemblies commenced after 1945 (see fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Spread of Parliamentary Assemblies (PAs) by decades (accumulated, N = 46)



Source: Marschall 2005 and additional data collection.

A notable signal was sent out 1949 by the creation of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. Since then more than 40 parliamentary assemblies have been brought into being. Most of them are closely linked with a transnational organisation (cf. Marschall 2005).

Concerning the creation of parliamentary assemblies, there have been periods of high and low intensity. In the eighties and nineties, we observe a peak in the formation of assemblies, which is closely related to the fact that at this point of time processes of globalisation and initiatives for intergovernmental cooperation arrived at a new stage creating the need for stronger parliamentary backing.

Once they have started to operate, parliamentary assemblies are robust over time. Only if the organisation they are attached to changes its structures or its mission, then an affiliated assembly might vanish. Or if two transnational assemblies merge into one, the organisation type's total might go down. But these situations do not occur very often. Quite in contrary: Parliamentary assemblies seem to have become an obligatory component in the organ structure of international organisations. Whenever an intergovernmental organisation is created, this goes along with discussions about incorporating a parliamentary body into its structure. Already operating international organisations that lack a standing parliamentary assembly like the World Trade Organisation have been heavily criticized for what is supposed to be an institutional deficit (cf. Petrella 2000). Some scholars and politicians have proposed

to fit out the United Nations with a parliamentary branch, supplementing the General Assembly, being a forum of governmental representation, with a body representing the national legislatures (cf. Archibugi 1995; Held 1995). The Interparliamentary Union has advocated itself as the parliamentary branch within a reformed UN structure. Falk and Strauss propose the foundation of a “global democratic forum” as an overreaching parliamentary body offering oversight of IGOs like the IMF, the WTO and the World bank (Falk & Strauss 2001).

Taking the discussion and the institutional reality into account, there are good reasons to expect more parliamentary assemblies to be created within the next years – either serving as an institutional element of newly founded IGOs or amending the structure of already existing IGOs that so far lack parliamentary representation.

1.2 Second observation: global spread of parliamentary assemblies

Parliamentary assemblies are not a European speciality (see fig. 2). Europe certainly was the birthplace of this kind of interparliamentary cooperation and there still is a remarkable European bias, for the relative majority of assemblies is seated here. But in the meantime, transnational parliamentary associations have been brought into being throughout the world. The global dimension might be illustrated by some of the assemblies’ names: for example the “Pan-african Parliament” (being an organ of the African Union), the “Mercusor-Parliament”, the “Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians” or the “ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation”.

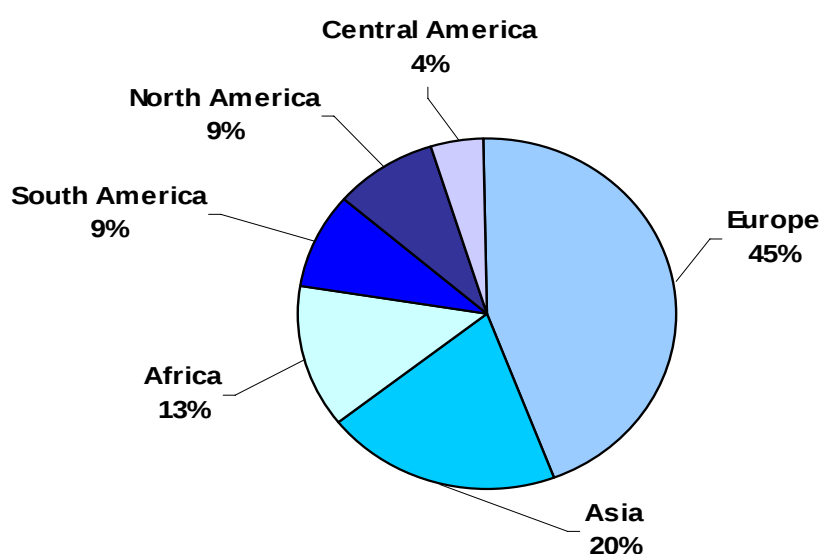
Among the group of transnational assemblies, there are quite a few intercontinental associations, most prominently the “Interparliamentary Union” which brings together delegates from about 145 national legislatures, or the “Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region” assembling MPs from several continents including Europe, Asia and North America.

The global spread of parliamentary assemblies is based on two major developments: On the one hand regional integration triggers the establishment of transnational parliamentary bodies. Therefore, the increase of parliamentary assemblies makes aware that processes of regional cooperation take place in many parts of the world, not only in Europe. On the other hand the existence of legislatures is a prerequisite for the creation of parliamentary assemblies. Therefore, the global expansion of this type of organisation shows that parliamentarism has been established all over the world as a widespread accepted way to

legitimise political decisions. In fact, within the constitutional structures of almost every sovereign country in the world, we can spot a parliamentary body – yet not necessarily turning every political system into a democracy.

Fig. 2: Regional distribution of PAs

(in percent, N = 46, indicator: seat of secretariat)

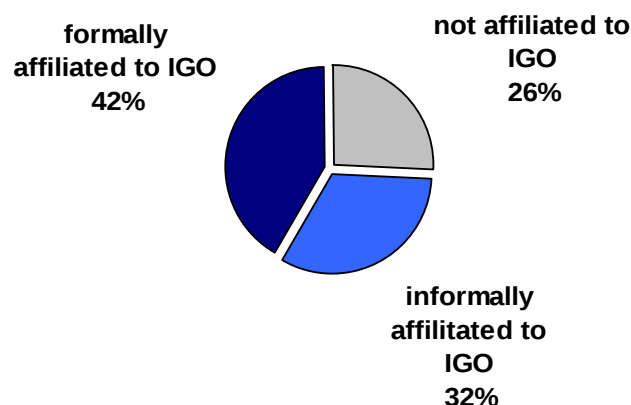


Source: Marschall 2005 and additional data collection.

1.3 Third observation: variation in the assemblies' affiliation to IGOs

The assemblies are affiliated to international organisations to a different extent; some of them even exist without any ties to an IGO. Judged by the character of the relationship between assemblies and intergovernmental organisations there can be distinguished three types of parliamentary assemblies (see fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Degree of affiliation of PAs to Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) – Types (in percent, N = 46)



Source: Marschall 2005 and additional data collection.

1. The first group is formed by parliamentary assemblies, which have an autonomous status and no formal or informal relations to an intergovernmental institution. Examples for such independent assemblies are the “Central American Parliament” or the “Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas”.
2. Assemblies that are formally independent, but have established informal ties to an IGO make up the second group. For example the Interparliamentary Union has been somewhat successfully trying to deepen its relations to the United Nations. However, formally, the IPU has not yet become the official parliamentary branch of the UN.
3. The third group is composed of assemblies, which are an institutional part of international organisations. Assemblies of this kind are explicitly mentioned in the legal basis of the respective transnational organisation, for example in its treaties or protocols. The formerly mentioned “Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe“ and the “Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation” belong to this group.

Indeed, most of the assemblies have a loose or close affiliation to an IGO, taken together about 75 percent. Why does it matter whether an assembly is part of the institutional structure of a transnational organisation or not? It matters, because the impact and power of a parliamentary body strongly depend on its incorporation in the decision-making processes: the more closely a parliamentary assembly is linked with an IGO, the bigger its impact on the decisions taken by this Intergovernmental Organisation. Thus, parliamentary assemblies being

an organisational component of a IGO usually have better chances to influence policy making than autonomous assemblies.

Yet, the three groups overlap. There are cases of just informally affiliated parliamentary assemblies, which have gained at least as much impact as assemblies formally tied to an Intergovernmental Organisation. A good example for this type is the Assembly of NATO: This parliamentary forum has been founded as a private association of parliamentarians, yet in effect established itself as a consulting body to the NATO Council, although it has never been formally incorporated into the Treaty of Washington.

2. Parliamentary assemblies – the European perspective

Let us now narrow the focus on the European dimension. Apart from the cooperation within the European Union, the 27 national parliaments as well as the European Parliament are embedded in a complex parliamentary network.

Table 4 lists assemblies European parliaments are represented in. The second column mentions the transnational organisation the assemblies are more or less formally tied to. In case of an only informal relationship the IGOs name is set in brackets. The last column indicates how many national parliaments send full membership delegations to the assemblies and whether the European Parliament does so as well.

There are some interparliamentary associations all member states of the European Union appoint parliamentary delegations to. This is the case for the “Interparliamentary Union”, the “Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE” and the “Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe”. In a second cluster of transnational assemblies, like the “Baltic Assembly” or the “Benelux-Parliament”, only a subgroup of the 27 member state parliaments is involved – and no non-EU-parliament. In a third group of assemblies, like the “NATO-Parliamentary Assembly” or the “Assembly of the Baltic Sea Economic Cooperation”, just a portion of the EU members appoints delegates to, but these are joined by delegates sent by parliaments from outside the European Union.

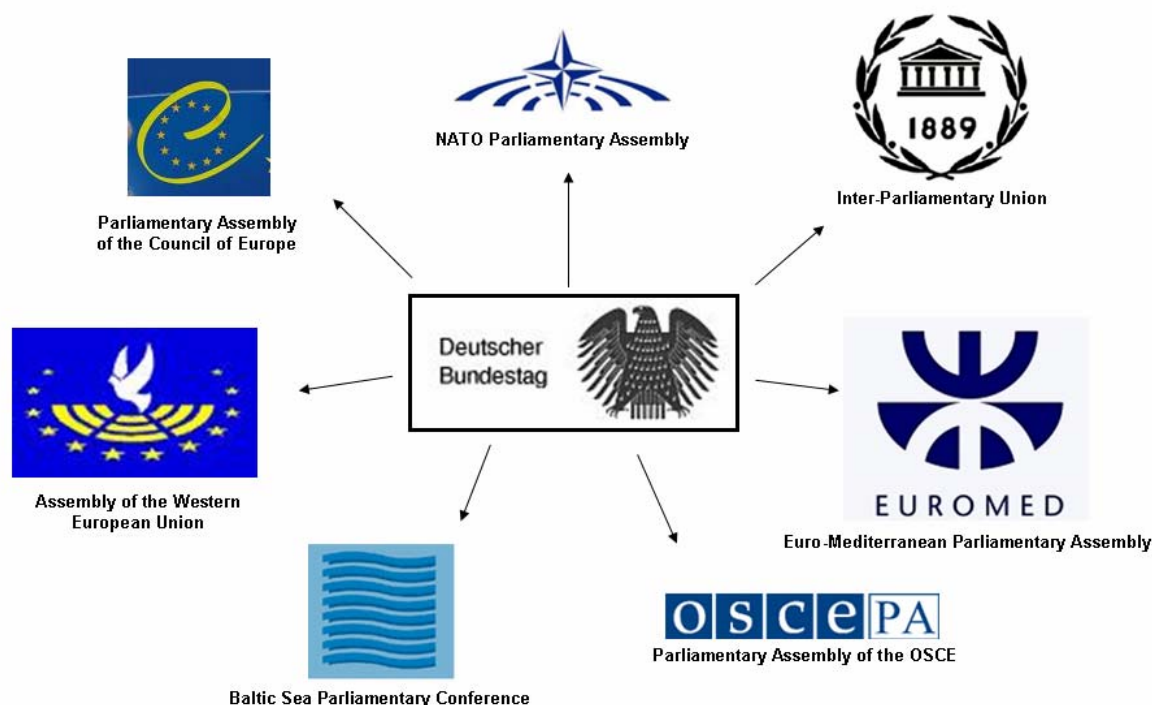
Table 4: List of assemblies European parliamentarians are represented in

Name of the parliamentary assembly	Affiliated to ...	Number of participating European parliaments (full membership)
Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference	Council of Baltic Sea States	8 national parliaments

Benelux Parliament	BENELUX	3 national parliaments
European Economic Area – Joint Parliamentary Committee	EU/EFTA	Members of the European Parliament
Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development	(IPPF)	Members of the European Parliament and national parliaments
Interparliamentary Union	(UNO)	27 national parliaments
Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region	Arctic Council	3 national Parliaments
Nordic Council	Helsinki Treaty	3 national parliaments
Joint Assembly of the Partnership Agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Community and its Member States	Cotonou Agreement	European Parliament
Parliamentarians for Global Action	(UNO)	Members of European Parliament and 27 national parliaments
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association	British Commonwealth	1 national parliament
Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly	Council of Europe	27 national parliaments
L'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie	Francophonie	3 national parliaments
Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Cooperation	Black Sea Economic Cooperation	3 national parliaments
Parliamentary Network on the World Bank	(World Bank)	Members of the European Parliament and members of parliaments of World Bank member states
NATO Parliamentary Assembly	(NATO)	21 national parliaments
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly	OSCE	27 national parliaments
Assembly of the Western European Union	WEU	10 national parliaments
Central European Initiative – Parliamentary Dimension	CEI	10 national parliaments

In assemblies that are closely linked with a specific intergovernmental organisation, only legislatures of those states that hold a membership of the IGO are represented in its parliamentary branch. Therefore, the extent of parliamentary representation in transnational assemblies can serve as an indicator for a country's level of involvement in projects of regional cooperation. Within the group of EU parliaments there are the well-connected bodies like the German Bundestag (see fig. 5). The German parliament is represented with full membership delegations in seven assemblies. Likewise, the Swedish Riksdag sends parliamentary delegations to seven transnational assemblies. And Members of the European Parliament participate in a number of parliamentary associations, too.

Fig.: 5: Interparliamentary network of the Bundestag



Source: www.bundestag.de.

What could be the contribution of these assemblies to the increase of parliamentary power within and beyond the European Union? In order to learn more about the benefits and limitations of the parliamentary cooperation in transnational organisations, I would like to bring the analysis into a sharper focus by looking more deeply at three cases, in which European parliaments participate and which differ from each other in terms of their structure and their mission:

- a) the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe,
- b) the Assembly of the OSCE,
- c) the NATO-Parliamentary Assembly.

a) The Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe²

² See the assembly's website: <http://assembly.coe.int>.

As mentioned before, the foundation of the Council of Europe's Consultative Assembly was a starting point for the PAs' expansion after World War II (cf. Council of Europe 1990). At that time, incorporating a parliamentary assembly into an international organisation was a "complete innovation" (Robertson 1961: 245) in the field of institutional engineering, as up to that moment a transnational parliamentary body was not considered an essential and desirable player in the arena of international relations.

What were the conditions that caused this innovation? The roots of the Consultative Assembly go a long way back in the history of the Council of Europe (Robertson 1966). A few years after World War II the vision evolved that this organisation might become the nucleus of a European federation, which then, in the later run, should be equipped with a real parliamentary body. However, the hopes of the European Movement soon shifted to the European Communities and their "Common Assembly", leaving behind the Council of Europe furnished with a parliamentary institution.

Along with the Committee of Ministers, the Consultative Assembly is one of the two main bodies of the IGO. Its existence and its functions are laid down in the Statute of the Council of Europe. Article 22 reads: "The Consultative Assembly is the deliberative organ of the Council of Europe. It shall debate matters within its competence under this Statute and present its conclusions, in the form of recommendations, to the Committee of Ministers." Today's Assembly of the Council of Europe is composed of parliamentarians out of the 47 member states of the IGO. Additionally, a special guest status and an observer status are granted to parliaments of countries that are not full members of the organisation.

Over the years, the relationship between the meeting of the ministers and the Assembly has gone beyond the pure consultative level. Periodically, the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers furnishes the Assembly with statements of its activities and answers to questions of the parliamentarians that can be posed right after the Chairman's statement. The Assembly has the right to elect the Secretary General of the Council of Europe as well as the judges of the European Court of Human Rights.

b) The Assembly of the OSCE³

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is the youngest body in this short case study (cf. ISFH 1997-2006). It was founded in

³ See the assembly's website: <http://oscepa.org>.

the process of reshaping the objective as well as the institutional structures of what had been formally known as Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe. As requested by their respective Heads of State or Government, 1991 high-level parliamentary leaders from all OSCE participating states adopted the Madrid Declaration, which set forth the basic rules of procedure and working methods of the Assembly. Today, the assembly brings together parliamentarians from the 56 member states of the OSCE.

One purpose of the Assembly is to discuss topics addressed during meetings of the Ministerial Council or the summit meetings. Additionally the OSCE Assembly aims to support the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions in the OSCE area. One of the assembly's most prominent activities in order to foster democracy is the Election Observation Programme. PA-members engage in election monitoring missions especially in member states that are still in the process of democratic transformation.

Similar to what happened in the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, the relations between the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly in the OSCE have grown tighter over the time as well. It has become a customary procedure that the Chairman of the Ministerial Council regularly gives an account of the Council's activities to the assembly.

c) NATO-Parliamentary Assembly⁴

Looking at the third case, the Parliamentary Assembly of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, means looking at one of the most remarkable forums of parliamentary cooperation (cf. Brumter 1986; Charman/Williams 1981; Lunn 2001). It started in 1955 as a private parliamentary club called "Conference of NATO Parliamentarians" and continued its existence in that form until 1967 when the Belgian Parliament granted the Conference special legal status. In that very year it changed its name into "North Atlantic Assembly" until 1999, when it was renamed "NATO Parliamentary Assembly".

The NATO-PA interacts with the organs of Treaty Organisation without having formal ties to them. Although there have been several initiatives over the years, the existence and role of the Assembly have never been incorporated into the legal basis of the Treaty Organisation. The PA still has an autonomous status.

However, more than loose relations between the assembly and the NATO have developed – starting in the seventies, when the leaders of the NATO governments declared, that "the

⁴ See the assembly's website: <http://www.naa.be>.

cohesion of the Alliance has found expression not only in co-operation among their governments, but also in the free exchange of views among the elected representatives of the peoples of the Alliance."⁵ Although not mentioning the NATO-PA directly, this statement is understood as an acknowledgement of the assembly's existence and work.

It is instructive to see how the NATO Assembly changed not only its name, but also its character in the course of time. For it has started out as a club of parliamentarians in favour of the transatlantic idea who tried to promote the US-European partnership within their national legislatures, yet over the years, the club has become a rather "normal" parliamentary assembly having within its membership also representatives of parties being critical towards the Treaty Organisation and its objectives.

If the existence of parliamentary assemblies in the field of intergovernmental regimes is already inherently notable, all the more notable is the formation of an assembly in the sensitive area of security policy, since on the transnational level we can witness the establishment of interparliamentary cooperation within a policy field, over which many national parliaments have almost no control at home. Another example of a transnational parliamentary body in the field of security policy in Europe is the „Interim European Security and Defence Assembly", also known as "Assembly of the Western European Union". Both, the NATO-PA and the Assembly of the Western European Union, demonstrate that interparliamentary cooperation can take place even in this delicate field usually falling within the domain of executive privilege.

3 Discussion: potentials and limitations of parliamentary assemblies

Focussing on these three cases and regarding the whole group of assemblies, what can we learn about the potentials of interparliamentary cooperation? What might be the contributions of these assemblies for strengthening parliamentary democracy?

One striking result is that the assemblies have developed a very peculiar mode of operation – peculiar at least compared to the way other bodies in the realm of international relations work. The assemblies have adopted procedures and structures very similar to those of national parliaments like the division of labour between public plenary sessions and committee meetings, or being chaired by an elected president. The members of the assemblies hold an independent mandate. They are not delegates in the sense of being bound to orders of their

⁵ See NATO 1974 („Ottawa Declaration“).

national parliaments or even their national governments. Once they have been officially delegated, parliamentarians cannot easily be deprived of their membership. The members of the assemblies do not vote “en bloc”. The voting right is an individual privilege.

In all of the three assemblies mentioned, members of a comparable political orientation have formed transnational groups that replicate the traditional political spectrum in their national legislatures. Across nationality, parliamentarians try to find common positions overcoming the national perspectives. The assemblies actively support the genesis of transnational political groups, granting them privileges in the process of decision-making.

Although, party politics does not dominate the assemblies’ work, there have been cases where a cleavage even within a national delegation surfaced. The precondition for this is that in the national parliaments’ delegations not only the government parties are represented. But the national groups of delegates are supposed to reflect the respective party strength in the respective parliaments and to include the parliamentary opposition appropriately. The plurality of the national delegations is questioning the idea of a uniform national interest that governmental delegations usually seem to represent in the international arena (cf. Wolf 2000).

However, the degree of “parliamentarisation” differs between the three cases. Most of all, the Assembly of the Council of Europe has adopted features of national parliamentarism. A reason for this might be that the Consultative Assembly has a formally stable position within the IGO’s framework and that it started as the nucleus of a “real” parliamentary body of – what had been occasionally called – a “United States of Europe”.

In terms of power and competence, the comparison between the assemblies and national parliaments provides another picture. Generally, the assemblies have only a very limited scope of impact. Though they can consult the group of ministers on topics related to the mission of the international organisation, and though they can freely deliberate, they do not have a direct and binding influence on the decision making of the governments’ representatives. Regarding legislative, elective and controlling competences their traditional parliamentary competences are cut short. Having no say in the appropriation of the organisation’s budget, the assemblies do not even possess one of the fundamental powers of parliaments, the “power of the purse”. Out of this angle it seems to be rather inappropriate to call the assemblies “Superparliaments” (Hovey 1966).

Still, the role of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe might illustrate that formal influence is not a precondition for gaining power within an organisational structure. The Consultative Assembly has been frequently described as the “engine” of the organisation.

In many cases, it was the parliamentary organ, which shaped the profile of the IGO and which instigated publicity, for example by depriving the voting rights of the Russian delegation in the wake of the war in Chechnya or just recently by launching an intensively discussed investigation about the existence of secret CIA detention centres in Europe.⁶ A good share of the Council of Europe Agreements and Conventions is based on initiatives of the Consultative Assembly.

The Assembly of the OSCE is visible especially via its election monitoring missions. Remarkably, in this context media coverage does not always distinguish between the assembly and the IGO. Even more, the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe has occasionally been confused with the European Parliament by the media.

Looking at the role of the Assembly of the Council of Europe and on the monitoring missions of the OSCE-PA, there are good reasons to contend that these assemblies are more than just “talking shops”, but have become real parliamentary “working forums”. Furthermore, even if there was only “talking” like in the Parliamentary Assembly of NATO, this “talking” still could be a fruitful contribution to mutual understanding.

Nevertheless, comparing the assemblies’ competences with the formal powers of national parliamentary bodies as well as with the powers of the European Parliament, the record is a poor one. Yet interestingly, some of the assemblies seem to track the European Parliament by having started to elect their members by direct suffrage. The citizens of the participating states already elect the Members of the „Andenparliament“, the „Parlamento Andino“. Other assemblies like the “Mercusor-Parliament” or the “Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States” are about to implement the direct election of their members. As the introduction of direct elections in 1979 changed the role of the European Parliament over the years, we might observe a comparable effect on the competences of other assemblies within the decision making of the IGOs.

However, the genuine impact of parliamentary assemblies lies not in their isolated role within the decision making process of transnational organisations, but in their contribution to what has been called a multi-level-parliamentarism.

First, parliamentary assemblies are part of a complex network of cross-national parliamentary cooperation. They are even linked with each other, for the three assemblies mentioned above have developed extensive mutual relations. The NATO-PA and the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe hold official observer status in the OSCE

⁶ See the assembly’s report on the detention camps: Council of Europe 2007.

Parliamentary Assembly, and vice versa. Additionally, the assemblies are members of the Interparliamentary Union.

Second, within the national parliaments, the establishment of a new type of transnational parliamentarian can be observed: Members of parliament engaging in international assemblies establishing formal and informal cross-parliamentary networks. These well-connected parliamentarians might overcome an isolated national orientation and transform into “global” or “European parliamentary players”.

Third, parliamentary assemblies can strengthen national parliaments by supplying them with information otherwise not being easily available. Within a multi-level-parliamentarism two-level-games of the executive players (cf. Putnam 1988) have become more difficult. Members of national parliaments have gained an additional arena to control their governments. They themselves have become two-level players.

Fourth, the transnational assemblies can contribute to the establishment and strengthening of parliamentary democratic cultures, by cross-national learning. These processes of learning are especially fruitful in organisations that include states in which the principles of free and liberal democracy are not really acknowledged. Taking the scope of membership of the OSCE including Central Asian states, a lot must and can be done by interparliamentary cooperation, by the exchange within parliamentary assemblies, to encourage national parliamentarians in transformation states or in defect democracies to find their roles in the system and help democracy prevail.

4 Conclusion: global democratization by transnational parliamentarisation?

When we look beyond the European Union, we find a complex network of parliamentary cooperation connecting European parliaments with each other, with the European Parliament and with parliaments all over the world. However, parliamentary assemblies are only the visible tip of the iceberg. Below the official level of interparliamentary cooperation we find a complex network of bi- and multilateral cooperation between parliaments and between parliamentarians.

This network might contribute to enhance the role of parliaments and of parliamentarians within a multi-level political system. It helps to identify best practise in order to learn appropriate ways for parliamentary bodies to improve their position within and beyond the nation states. By strengthening parliamentary democracy these assemblies and their networks

can contribute to the democratisation of international regimes. Although not being full parliamentary bodies, the parliamentary assemblies import several principles of parliamentary democracy into the realm of intergovernmental interaction. They provide for more transparency, for more discussion, for more accountability and for more control of the decisions made in these organisations.

Indeed, transnational parliamentary cooperation can be seen as one of the faces of globalisation, but certainly not as one of the ugly ones, since there are some striking arguments that the globalisation of parliaments could offer a piece of the global democracy puzzle.

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