

Report allocation in the European Parliament after eastern enlargement

Steffen Hurka and Michael Kaeding

ABSTRACT

This article identifies factors that have influenced the chances for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to become rapporteurs in the European Parliament after the 2004 eastern enlargement. More specifically, it answers the question of how the MEPs from the new member states were integrated into the report allocation process under different legislative procedures. Controlling for a whole range of alternative explanations such as legislative experience, attendance rates or party group membership, we find that MEPs from the accession countries were at a disadvantage when reports were distributed. Their chances of becoming rapporteurs were lower than those of their peers from the old member states. Most importantly, this pattern still holds when comparing MEPs from the accession countries with first-time MEPs from the old member states.

KEY WORDS

Committees; eastern enlargement; European Parliament; European Union; rapporteur; report allocation.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite its indisputable importance for the legislative process in the European Union (EU), the allocation of rapporteurships in the European Parliament (EP) has received only little scholarly attention. This is the case although there is good reason to suspect that the identity of the rapporteurs might have a tremendous impact on the legislative outcome in the EU (Benedetto 2005; Costello and Thomson 2010; Farrell and Héritier 2004; Høyland 2006; Mamadouh and Raunio 2003; Rasmussen 2008; Ringe 2010). Most fundamentally, their selection ‘determines the range of political opinions that are represented in the policy positions of the European Parliament’ (Hausemer 2006: 512). In addition, rapporteurs are provided with special access to resources unavailable to other Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) (Kaeding 2005: 85). They are guaranteed speaking time in the plenary (Slapin and Proksch 2010: 349), and are given the chance to focus on one specific policy issue and formulate the opinion of the EP as a whole. Accordingly, rapporteurs wield substantial power.

Against the backdrop of the eastern enlargement rounds of 2004 and 2007 and the parallel increase in the size of the EP, the question of how reports are allocated to different MEPs has become even more relevant. So far, the academic literature on the effects of eastern enlargement on the EP has either remained very descriptive (Donnelly and Bigatto 2008; Settembri and Neuhold 2009) or focused exclusively on voting behaviour in the plenary (Hix and Noury 2009). In order to get a fuller picture of the procedures operating at the micro-level of the EP, a closer investigation of the dynamics in the institution’s committees is imperative. Before we examine the way MEPs vote in the plenary on finalized reports, we should first develop a better understanding of the factors that shape them.

Ever since 1979, when the first Parliament was directly elected, coordinators of the parliamentary political groups have been facing various constraints when choosing a rapporteur (Corbett et al. 2003: 117–20). However, as Hausemer (2006: 525) notes, ‘these constraints are likely to increase in importance as the EU continues to enlarge and becomes politically more heterogeneous’. Therefore, we seek to identify the factors that have driven report allocation in the EP after eastern enlargement and assess how the new MEPs from the accession countries have been integrated into the allocation process. The research hypothesis is developed and tested for the sixth legislative term of the EP (2004–2009), which immediately followed the first eastern enlargement. Controlling for various factors, our data show that the new MEPs from the accession countries had significantly lower chances to obtain rapporteurships in their first legislative term than their peers from the old member states. This finding also holds when

comparing the new MEPs from Eastern Europe solely with the newcomer MEPs from the old member states.

The paper is structured as follows: First, the research hypothesis is derived from the literature on report allocation in the EP. The subsequent section briefly describes the data set and how it has been constructed along with some descriptive statistics. The section also contains a description of the methods which are used for testing the hypothesis. Then, we will turn to the data analysis and discuss the results.

THEORY AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Which factors affect the chances of individual legislators in the EP being assigned a report, once this report has been acquired by the MEP's party group? While Høyland (2006) finds that MEPs from governing national parties receive more reports than their peers from opposition parties, Benedetto (2005) identifies a positive correlation between the number of assigned reports and EP party size. In addition, Hausemer (2006) shows that salient reports go to party groups closest to the centre of the political spectrum, and Kaeding (2004) suggests that rapporteurs are preference outliers, i.e. in the Environment Committee, MEPs associated with environmental interest groups receive a disproportionate number of reports. This paper intends to revisit these results and investigate the effect of enlargement: how much has the attribute of coming from one of the accession countries affected the chances of becoming a rapporteur in the sixth EP?

Donnelly and Bigatto (2008) demonstrate that the MEPs from the accession countries exhibit certain attributes: First, they are predominantly well educated and many even hold doctorates. Second, most of them possess considerable experience in politics, both on the national and regional level. According to Bale and Taggart (2006), 11 per cent of the new MEPs from the accession countries (excluding Bulgaria and Romania) even have work experience within EU institutions. The authors even show that the new MEPs in the sixth EP are in many ways more experienced politicians than the newcomers from the old member states. Against this background, there should be no obvious reason as to why the MEPs from the accession countries should be treated differently in the report allocation process. However, integrating newcomer MEPs from the old member states into the EP working procedures might nevertheless be easier for the European party groups than integrating the MEPs from the accession countries. This is because the decisive players in the report allocation process are not the individual MEPs, but their national party delegations (Kreppel 2002). Other than the established national parties from the old member states, the parties from the accession countries

were new and inexperienced at the European level when they joined their EP party groups in 2004. It can be assumed that any national party that chooses to be incorporated within the structures of a European party group will need time to consolidate its position within the group and its long-standing members. Combining this argument with the empirical evidence on the power of national party delegations at the committee level (Kreppel 2002; Kreppel and Grungror 2006; Whitaker 2001, 2005), we hypothesize that new and inexperienced parties from the new member states would have been at a disadvantage in the report allocation process during their first EP term. We argue that MEPs and national parties from the accession countries underwent a ‘learning period’ (Bailer 2008: 194) throughout the first legislative term after the eastern enlargement, which resulted in a lower number of rapporteurships. In order to refine the argument, we also maintain that this relationship should be influenced by the legislative procedures of the respective reports. If our theoretical argument holds, we should expect the hypothesized relationship to be stronger for comparably influential legislative procedures (co-decision, budget, discharge) and less pronounced for procedures with an arguably lower political impact, such as the consultation procedure. The corresponding hypothesis reads as follows:

Research Hypothesis: Ceteris paribus, MEPs from the accession countries should draft fewer reports than MEPs from the old member states. The relationship should be stronger under legislative procedures with a higher political impact.

Control variables

Legislative experience

The relevance of an MEP’s experience as a legislator in the EP with regard to his or her chances of obtaining an influential position within a committee has been questioned and refuted in the past (Bowler and Farrell 1995). Other than the US Senate, which used to uphold a strict seniority system for the assignment of higher committee ranks (Polsby et al. 1969), the EP never had such an explicit system. Also with regard to rapporteurships, Hausemer (2006: 524) claims that neither incumbency status nor work experience in the EU accounts for chances of obtaining a ‘salient’ report. Kaeding (2004), however, comes to the opposite conclusion and finds that work experience at the EU level counts a great deal towards the chances of becoming a rapporteur in the environment committee. Therefore, we will control for the MEP’s experience as a legislator in the EP.

Chairmanship

The rank of an MEP within the committee structure might be important for his chances of becoming a rapporteur. Committee chairs and vice-chairs have a higher probability of drafting a report than regular committee members because ‘it is part of the duty of committee chairs and other office holders to assume responsibility for reports that could not be allocated to other committee members’ (Hausemer 2006: 514; see also Corbett et al. 2003; Kreppel 2002). Accordingly, we will control for chairmanships.

Party group

Also the varying sizes of the European party groups should have an effect on an MEP’s chance to obtain a report. At first glance, the relationship seems straightforward: The larger a party group, the more points the party group has at its disposal in the bidding process, the more reports the party group should get, and the higher the chance of an MEP of that party group becoming rapporteur (Benedetto 2005). As convincing as this relationship may seem in theory, reality is more complicated. Kaeding (2005) shows that party groups pick their reports based on the salience they attach to the particular issue at hand. However, the share of obtained reports does not always mirror the share of seats in the full plenary. Focusing on the environment committee in the EP’s fourth term, Kaeding (2004) demonstrates that the Greens drafted relatively more reports in this committee than what we would have expected based on their seat share. In contrast, the two largest groups, the socialists and the conservatives, produced comparatively fewer reports in this committee. Nevertheless, this effect should cancel out across all standing committees. Accordingly, we expect MEPs from larger groups to obtain relatively more reports than those from smaller groups and will control for this aspect.

Attendance

The level of the MEPs’ attendance in the full plenary varies considerably. This might have ramifications for how the party group treats its members in return. The actual relevance of an MEP’s attendance record for their position within the committee and party group is contested. The literature has identified two mechanisms that link low attendance rates to a lower number of rapporteurships: First, it is conceivable that MEPs with low attendance rates are not motivated to write reports and exclude themselves from the allocation process (Benedetto 2005). Second, Hix et al. (2007: 74) argue that ‘those members of parliament who show up to vote are likely to be rewarded by their party leaderships for “good behaviour”’. This implies

that they can also be punished for ‘bad behaviour’, if they do not show up to vote. One viable way to penalize an MEP with a low attendance rate is to give him fewer or less influential reports. Yet, Kreppel (2002) does not find any empirical evidence to uphold this argument. Thus, since the literature is inconclusive with regard to the relevance of attendance rates and the way they affect the allocation of reports, we include them as a control in our model.

DATA AND METHOD

The dependent variables

When constructing the dependent variables, we had to decide which reports to include. It would be misleading to treat co-decision procedures in isolation from other procedures, under which the EP also exerts significant influence. MEPs who sit in the prestigious budgetary committee (BUDG) and its complement, the budgetary control committee (CONT), rarely draft co-decision reports for those committees. Instead, they often write reports under the budgetary and discharge procedures, which give the EP the power to make influential decisions either by changing appropriations in the EU budget or requiring the Commission to take follow-up action by denying the discharge. Contrary to those comparably influential procedures, under consultation, the EP position must only be heard by the Council and the Commission, but it can also be ignored.

The right to draft an own initiative report on a certain issue must be requested by the committee that claims responsibility for that issue. The Conference of Presidents decides whether the committee may draft the report and the committee then appoints one of its members or substitutes as rapporteur. In reality, requests for own initiative reports are ‘quite often turned down’ (Mamadouh and Raunio 2003: 342) by the Conference of Presidents, which gives reason to suspect that only own initiative reports with a promising political impact are admitted. Given the fact that the draft of an own initiative report is associated with opportunity costs, we argue that the decision to request such a report can be interpreted as a sign that the respective committee places a high value on the issue at hand. In this sense, even though own initiative reports might not have any legislative impact, they can still be important for the EP as a means of signalling its position to the Commission and the Council.

Over the course of the last decade, the EP has drawn up a range of own initiative reports which have clearly found the attention of the other institutions.¹ Also the fact that the plurality

¹ See for example the EP report on the Treaty of Nice (Méndez de Vigo and Séguro 2001), the Treaty of Lisbon (Corbett and Méndez De Vigo 2007), or various reports related to eastern enlargement (Böge 2005; Brok 2003).

of all reports in the sixth EP term were drafted under the own initiative procedure points to the high value the EP places on this procedure. Other than under consultation, the draft of an own initiative report requires a conscious decision by the EP to draft such a report. Therefore, we argue that own initiative reports should be of some value to the EP and that this value might even be higher than for some consultation reports.

Data on report allocation during the sixth EP term were collected from the EP website, which provides detailed information for every individual MEP. The variables specifically refer to the various procedures those reports were subject to. Based on the considerations outlined above, we constructed four different count variables. Table 1 gives an overview about the descriptive statistics of the dependent variables.

The data set and the independent variables

The list of 943 MEPs that builds the foundation for this analysis was obtained partially from a website launched in 2009 (<http://www.votewatch.eu>). The MEPs not listed on the website were added by the authors manually based on information available from the EP website (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu>). Not all MEPs have served the entire sixth term. Some left the EP before the end of the legislative period; others joined it at a later point in time (626 MEPs served the full term, 317 only served a share of the term). The most prominent cases are of course the MEPs from Bulgaria and Romania, whose countries only joined the EU in 2007, but also Italy had an exceptionally high turnover rate during the sixth term of the EP. This turnover must be controlled for, since MEPs who did not serve the entire term in the EP must be expected to have a lower a priori chance of becoming rapporteur. The information was captured by the share of sixth term plenary meetings an MEP could have attended during his time in office.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics (Dependent Variables)*

Variable	Type	Min	Max	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Observations
All reports	Count Variable	0	51	1	2.292	4.382	19.200	943 MEPs (2161 reports)
Codecision Budget Discharge		0	22	0	.755	2.192	4.805	943 MEPs (712 reports)
Own Initiative		0	9	0	.717	1.079	1.165	943 MEPs (676 reports)
Consultation		0	35	0	.644	2.216	4.909	943 MEPs (607 reports)

Note: Codecision reports under second and third reading were only counted if the MEP had taken over the report from another MEP after the previous reading. If two MEPs drafted a report together, the report was counted for both MEPs. 166 reports under comparably rare special procedures were not included as separate models: assent (66), immunity (41 reports), institutional agreements (35), EP Rules of Procedure (23), cooperation (1).

The main independent variable in the empirical analysis is a dummy variable indicating whether an MEP comes from one of the 12 accession states. In total, 29 per cent of all MEPs that served in the sixth EP had been elected in one of those accession states and 71 per cent originated from the old member states.²

Supplementary data on the control variables were collected from the two data sources specified above: Attendance measures the share of plenary days an MEP actually attended in person, based on the theoretical maximum of plenary days they could have attended. In addition, data on the MEPs' party group and committee memberships (full and substitute) were collected. Committee memberships are especially important to control for, because some committees draft more reports under certain procedures and fewer under others. Furthermore, in order to make sure that any possible enlargement effects are not simply an expression of the MEPs' tenure of office, it is also essential to control for EP experience. This experience was captured in a categorical variable, ranging from 1 to 6, indicating whether the 6th EP term is the first, second, etc. term for the given MEP. A total of 597 MEPs served their first term between 2004 and 2009, which corresponds to a share of 63 per cent of all MEPs in the data set. 273 of those new MEPs came from the accession countries, 324 from the old member states. In addition, a dummy variable was used in order to account for MEPs who served as the chairmen or vice-chairmen in one of the EP's standing committees. As a standard control variable, gender was also included. Finally, the relative size of an MEP's national delegation was added as a control variable.³

Methods

Since the dependent variables are count data, the appropriate estimation technique is the negative binomial regression. All dependent variables in the models presented below are overdispersed, that is, their variances are significantly larger than their means. This violates an important assumption of the Poisson model, which is therefore considered inappropriate for the purpose at hand (Long and Freese 2006).

In addition, there is a large amount of zero observations for all MEPs who did not write any reports during the 6th EP term. However, there is no theoretical justification for the use of a zero-inflated count model. One of the assumptions of those models is that there are two separate data-generating processes at work – one for a subgroup whose probability of a zero

² Those figures refer to the EP after the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007.

³ Unfortunately, the descriptive statistics on the independent variables cannot be reported here due to space limitations. However, data set and codebook can be retrieved from the authors.

count is 100 per cent and one for the other subgroup who has a theoretical chance of obtaining a non-zero count (Long and Freese 2006: 394). However, no MEP in the sample would fall into the first group, because every single MEP had a theoretical chance of obtaining a report. Of course, this chance is lower for some MEPs, but it is never zero. Thus, there is no data-generating process that would predict a zero count with a probability of 1, which leads us to use negative binomial regressions instead of a zero-inflated count model.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Four different models are estimated. In order to give a broad overview, the first model takes all 2161 reports drafted during the sixth EP term into account. The second model combines the count of the three procedures under which the EP exerts the most power independent of other EU institutions (co-decision, budget and discharge). Model III tests the hypothesized relationships for own initiative reports, which do not have a pre-defined legislative impact, but might be considered crucial by the EP and its committees in their own right. The last model looks at the allocation of consultation reports, which can be ignored by the other EU institutions most easily. Table 2 presents the results of the data analysis.⁴

The results are very interesting and surprising at the same time. First of all, MEPs from the accession countries have been considerably underrepresented in the report allocation process after eastern enlargement. The estimates display a negative sign and are highly significant for Models I, II and III. Under the co-decision, budgetary and discharge procedures, we observe a significant negative relationship. Representing 29 per cent of the full plenary, the MEPs from the accession countries reported on only 16 per cent of all co-decision, budgetary and discharge reports allocated in the first legislative term after the 2004 enlargement. Furthermore, with regard to the distribution of own initiative reports, MEPs from the accession states were underrepresented. Yet, they were not significantly underrepresented when consultation reports were allocated (Model IV). The relationship is still negative, but it becomes insignificant.

In sum, our findings for the sixth legislative term indicate that the first EP term after the 2004 enlargement round was indeed a learning period for the new MEPs from the accession states. They were rather appointed as rapporteurs when the stakes were low (Model IV), but they were underrepresented when the report could be considered important either in terms of

⁴ Due to space limitations, we cannot report the estimates for the 20 committee dummy variables, which are, however, included in the models.

its political impact (Model II) or with regard to the EP's self-conception as a co-equal institution next to the Commission and the Council (Model III).⁵

Table 2. Negative Binomial Regressions

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Variable	All reports	Codecision Budget Discharge	Own Initiative	Consultation
MEP from accession state	-.481*** (.115)	-.403** (.199)	-.563*** (.134)	-.288 (.233)
Chair or Vice-Chair	.804*** (.102)	.859*** (.172)	.447*** (.103)	1.111*** (.208)
Share of term served	2.505*** (.199)	2.460*** (.343)	2.583*** (.287)	2.515*** (.402)
Attendance	1.783*** (.394)	1.227* (.683)	1.211*** (.448)	2.395*** (.798)
EP experience	.100** (.042)	.126 (.077)	.016 (.043)	.098 (.085)
Female	.124 (.097)	.150 (.168)	.187* (.102)	-.010 (.202)
Size of national delegation	-.001 (.001)	-.002 (.002)	-.001 (.002)	-.001 (.003)
EPP-ED	1.557*** (.282)	.974** (.445)	2.566*** (.717)	3.182*** (.867)
PES	1.457*** (.286)	.846* (.451)	2.582*** (.718)	2.794*** (.873)
ALDE	1.580*** (.295)	.903* (.465)	2.588*** (.723)	3.253*** (.883)
EUL-NGL	1.472*** (.322)	.838 (.522)	2.569*** (.734)	3.199*** (.923)
Greens-EFA	1.009*** (.326)	.211 (.545)	2.541*** (.732)	2.189** (.933)
UEN	.745** (.343)	.436 (.560)	2.037*** (.752)	1.657* (.967)
IND/DEM	.328 (.392)	.140 (.615)	.820 (.880)	1.444 (1.087)
Committee Control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	-4.773*** (.502)	-5.448*** (.842)	-6.323*** (.864)	-8.252*** (1.236)
alpha	.655 (.056)	1.476 (.176)	.152 (.063)	2.302 (.286)
LR Test (alpha=0)	804.30***	432.27***	8.22***	503.85***
Observations	939	939	939	939
Number of Reports	2161	712	676	607
Log-Likelihood	-1597.330	-865.412	-929.846	-752.327

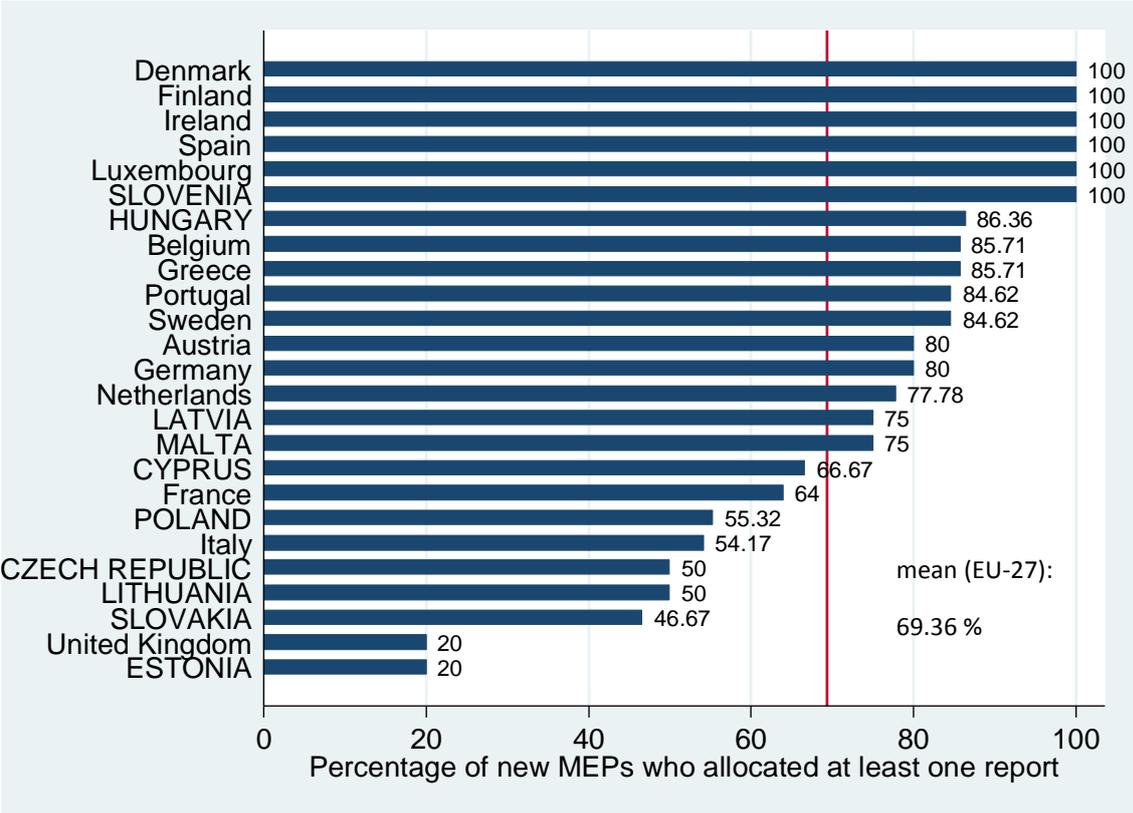
Note: *** significant at 1 %, ** significant at 5 %, * significant at 10 %

⁵ The relationships are robust across different model specifications, which cannot be reported here.

Comparing newcomers from old with those from new member states

How successful were MEPs from the new member states in the report allocation process compared to the newcomer MEPs from the old member states?⁶ Figure 1(a–d) provides the respective results. First, the overall share of MEPs from the accession countries who obtained at least one report was lower than the corresponding share among new MEPs from the longer-standing member states, regardless of the procedure. This is noteworthy when we keep in mind that all 346 MEPs in the sample were new to the EP and all of them served for exactly the same time period. Thus, although we only consider MEPs who started under essentially the same conditions in 2004, we observe a significant difference with regard to the share of rapporteurs between the EU-15 and the EU-12 across all procedures.⁷

Figure 1a. Allocation of reports among new MEPs across member states (6th EP term)



⁶ In an effort to underline the significant difference between new MEPs from the EU- 15 and the EU-12, the analysis only considers MEPs who fulfill both of the following criteria: First, in order to control for experience effects, the sixth legislative term of the EP must be their first term as MEPs. Second, they must have served the entire term from the beginning to the end, in order to make the numbers comparable. Those restrictions automatically filter out all Romanian and Bulgarian MEPs and all MEPs who have experience as legislators in the EP. The procedure results in a pool of 346 MEPs, 198 of whom are from the old member states and 148 from the accession countries.

⁷ Please consult Figure 2 for the chi-square statistics.

Figure 1b. Allocation of *Codecision, Budgetary, and Discharge* reports among new MEPs across member states (6th EP term)

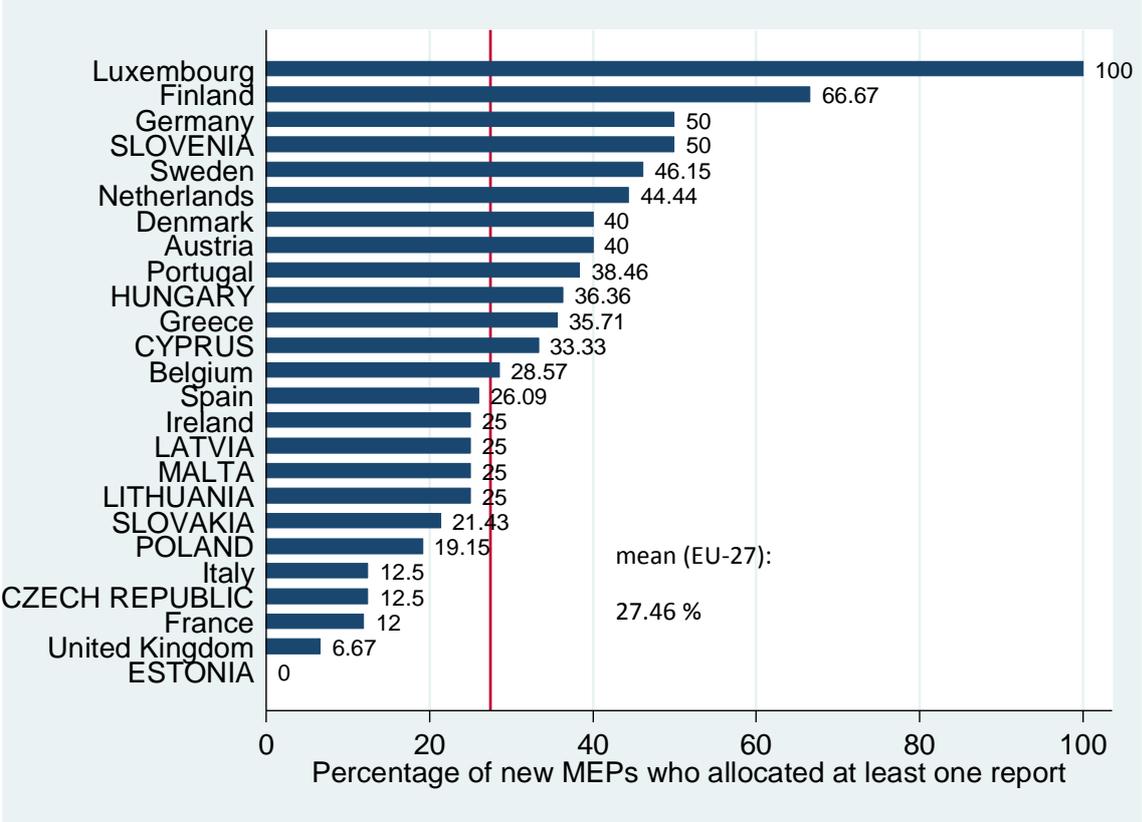


Figure 1c. Allocation of *Own Initiative* reports among new MEPs across member states (6th EP term)

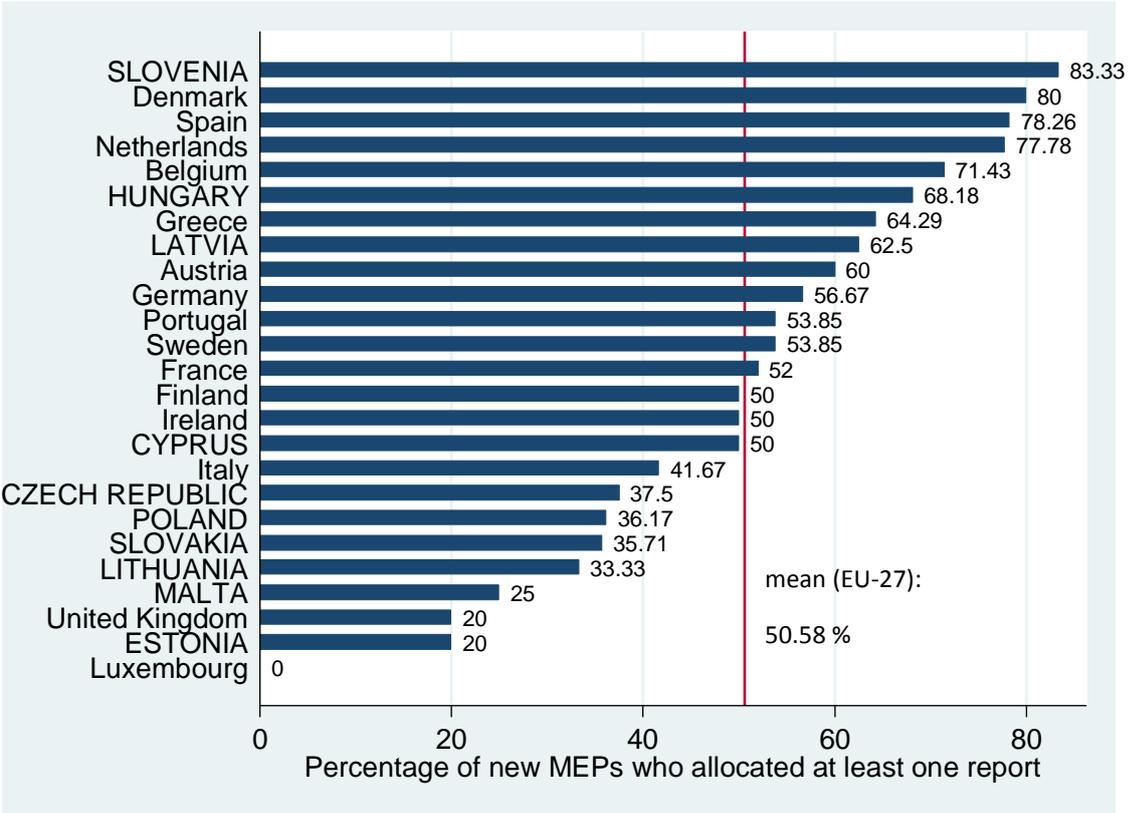
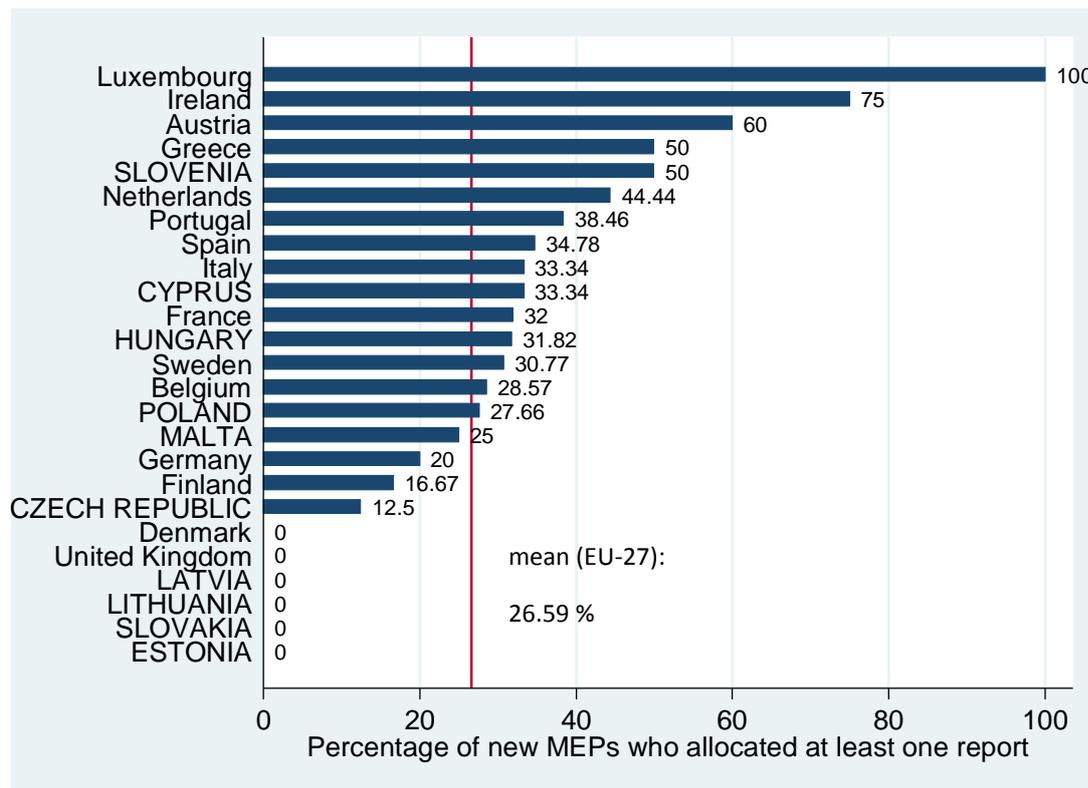


Figure 1d. Allocation of *Consultation* reports among new MEPs across member states (6th EP term)



Second, the MEPs from 12 out of the 15 longer-standing member states performed above average when rapporteurships were allocated – with three notable exceptions: France, Italy and UK. In this context, however, it should be noted that 14 MEPs in the sample were not attached to any political group (NI) and eight of those came from one of those three countries. Since the report allocation process is governed by the political groups, MEPs who are not part of any group have significantly lower chances of obtaining reports. In addition, those MEPs are often not particularly motivated to participate in the political process and therefore exclude themselves when reports are distributed. However, even if we disregard those qualifications, France, Italy and UK still underperformed in the allocation process.

Third, the new MEPs from two accession countries in particular – Hungary and Slovenia – were very successful in becoming rapporteurs when compared to their colleagues from the other accession states. Both countries performed above average under all procedures. The picture is mixed for the rest of the accession countries. In particular, the countries which sent the largest national delegations to Brussels in 2004 (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Lithuania) were underrepresented in the report allocation process.

Comparing newcomers across European party groups

Given the above-mentioned findings, it could be interesting to look into a longstanding argument in the literature. Mamadouh and Raunio (2003) and Raunio (1996) show that national party delegations inside the transnational groups are often key gatekeepers in the division of spoils within the groups. How have different political groups treated their MEPs in the report allocation process? Do the patterns hold for all political groups in the EP to the same extent? In order to answer these questions, we test whether the shares of rapporteurs are significantly different between the new MEPs from the accession states and their colleagues from the old member states within the same political groups.

Figure 2. *The distribution of reports among new MEPs within the different party groups*

		Report allocated?		
		NO	YES	TOTAL
Accession Country?	NO	48 (24.2 %) EPP-ED: 9 (15.5 %) PES: 9 (16.7 %) ALDE: 3 (11.5 %) EUL-NGL: 6 (33.3 %) Greens-EFA: 6 (30.0 %) UEN: 0 (0.0 %) IND/DEM: 7 (77.8 %) NI: 8 (88.9 %)	150 (75.8 %) EPP-ED: 49 (84.5 %) PES: 45 (83.3 %) ALDE: 23 (88.5 %) EUL-NGL: 12 (66.7 %) Greens-EFA: 14 (70.0 %) UEN: 4 (100.0 %) IND/DEM: 2 (22.2 %) NI: 1 (11.1 %)	198 (100 %) EPP-ED: 58 (100 %) PES: 54 (100 %) ALDE: 26 (100 %) EUL-NGL: 18 (100 %) Greens-EFA: 20 (100 %) UEN: 4 (100 %) IND/DEM: 9 (100 %) NI: 9 (100 %)
	YES	58 (39.2 %) EPP-ED: 20 (32.8 %) PES: 8 (27.6 %) ALDE: 9 (47.4 %) EUL-NGL: 1 (12.5 %) Greens-EFA: 0 (0.0 %) UEN: 13 (59.1 %) IND/DEM: 3 (100.0 %) NI: 4 (80.0 %)	90 (60.8 %) EPP-ED: 41 (67.2 %) PES: 21 (72.4 %) ALDE: 10 (52.6 %) EUL-NGL: 7 (87.5 %) Greens-EFA: 1 (100.0 %) UEN: 9 (40.9 %) IND/DEM: 0 (0.0 %) NI: 1 (20.0 %)	148 (100 %) EPP-ED: 61 (100 %) PES: 29 (100 %) ALDE: 19 (100 %) EUL-NGL: 8 (100 %) Greens-EFA: 1 (100 %) UEN: 22 (100 %) IND/DEM: 3 (100 %) NI: 4 (100 %)
	TOTAL	106 (30.8 %) EPP-ED: 29 (24.4 %) PES: 17 (20.5 %) ALDE: 12 (26.7 %) EUL-NGL: 7 (26.9 %) Greens-EFA: 6 (28.6 %) UEN: 13 (50.0 %) IND/DEM: 10 (83.3 %) NI: 12 (85.7 %)	240 (69.2 %) EPP-ED: 90 (75.6 %) PES: 66 (79.5 %) ALDE: 33 (73.3 %) EUL-NGL: 19 (73.1 %) Greens-EFA: 15 (71.4 %) UEN: 13 (50.0 %) IND/DEM: 2 (16.7 %) NI: 2 (14.3 %)	346 (100 %) EPP-ED: 119 (100 %) PES: 83 (100 %) ALDE: 45 (100 %) EUL-NGL: 26 (100 %) Greens-EFA: 21 (100 %) UEN: 26 (100 %) IND/DEM: 12 (100 %) NI: 14 (100 %)

Note: row percentages reported.

H0: Independence of rows and columns

All groups: Pearson $\chi^2 = 9.3990$, $p = 0.002$

EPP-ED: Pearson $\chi^2 = 4.8110$, $p = 0.028$

PES: Pearson $\chi^2 = 1.3813$, $p = 0.240$

ALDE: Pearson $\chi^2 = 7.2067$, $p = 0.007$

EUL-NGL: Pearson $\chi^2 = 1.2218$, $p = 0.269$

UEN: Pearson $\chi^2 = 4.7273$, $p = 0.030$

Figure 2 displays the unequal distribution of rapporteurships, which is confirmed by the highly significant chi-square statistic. In all of the three large party groups in the EP [European People's Party–European Democrats (EPP-ED), Party of European Socialists (PES) and Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)], the share of rapporteurs from the EU-15 was higher than the share of rapporteurs from the EU-12. However, the difference is only statistically significant for the EPP-ED and the ALDE group. In the PES, the null hypothesis of a random distribution cannot be rejected. Within the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (EUL-NGL), we even observe a higher share of rapporteurs from the accession countries than from the longer-standing member states. However, this distribution too cannot be distinguished statistically from randomness.

In the smaller groups, tests for statistical significance are hard to interpret due to the comparably low number of observations and are therefore not reported. For instance, since only one MEP from the accession states joined the Green group, claims about under- or overrepresentation cannot be tested. An interesting picture, however, is provided by the distribution of rapporteurships in the Union for Europe of the Nations (UEN) group. All four new MEPs from the longer-standing member states became rapporteurs, but only a minority of all new UEN MEPs from the accession countries managed to allocate a report. This is notable because 22 out of the 26 MEPs who joined the UEN in 2004 came from the new member states (17 from Poland, 4 from Latvia, and 1 from Lithuania).

Thus, to some extent, the MEPs from the accession states were underrepresented in the report allocation process because they joined comparably small political groups which were either unable or unwilling to obtain reports for their members. Accordingly, self-exclusion effects certainly played a role in the report allocation process. At the same time, MEPs from the accession states were not better off even when they joined the larger political groups, which were able to obtain a much larger share of reports for their members.

Control variables

As for the control variables, there are a range of mechanisms that account for much of the variation in the number of allocated reports. As expected, committee chairs and vice-chairs drafted a comparably large number of reports, because reports that are not 'bought' by a party group are usually assigned to the committee leadership per default. Not surprisingly, the MEPs who did not serve the entire term also drafted fewer reports. The shorter the period the MEP was actually in office between 2004 and 2009, the fewer reports the MEP allocated. In addition, the most active MEPs in terms of plenary attendance allocated more reports than the less active

MEPs. This finding, which is consistent across all models, might point to two different processes, which could be taken up by future studies: on the one hand, it is conceivable that party groups punish those MEPs with a bad attendance record and reward those who show up regularly (Hix et al. 2007: 74). On the other hand, a poor attendance record might also be based on the self-exclusion by unmotivated MEPs. Being absent from the plenary could be interpreted as an indicator that an MEP is not interested in drafting a report and therefore excludes himself from the allocation process altogether (Benedetto 2005). The empirical validity of both arguments should depend on the size and ideology of the respective party groups.

Then, an MEP's experience as legislator in the EP does not affect the MEP's chances of allocating reports under separate procedures. Curiously, we find that the significant coefficients found in Model I are completely linked to reports under the various special procedures, which the EP often lays into experienced hands. For instance, waivers of immunity, reports on the EP's rules of procedure or institutional agreements are disproportionately often drafted by more senior MEPs. However, legislative experience is not a determining factor for the number of reports an MEP allocates under the more regular procedures of the EP.

As for the relevance of party groups, the nature of the report matters. When reports have little or no legislative impact, party group membership does not seem to be a decisive predictor for the number of reports an MEP allocates. MEPs from the smaller groups in the EP also participate in the allocation of consultation and own initiative reports. However, the chances of obtaining co-decision, budgetary or discharge reports are found to be larger for MEPs in the three party groups that dominate the EP: the EPP-ED, the PES and the ALDE. Thus, the results clearly confirm that the party identification of an MEP is crucial for his chances to draft reports with legislative influence.

CONCLUSION

Rapporteurs are among the most powerful legislative entrepreneurs in EU policy-making. They are normally to be found in parliamentary committees (McElroy 2006; Ringe 2010; Settembri and Neuhold 2009; Yordanova 2009), where much of the detailed legislative work of the EP is carried out and where they play a key role in the inter-institutional negotiations (Farrell and Héritier 2004). Curiously, knowledge about this group of 'legislative entrepreneurs' is relatively scarce (Benedetto 2005; Costello and Thomson 2010; Høyland 2006; Kaeding 2004; Mamadouh and Raunio 2003; Rasmussen 2008). Moreover, one may wonder whether earlier findings still hold true after the 2004 enlargement.

Based on data for the sixth legislative term (2004–2009), we show that MEPs representing the new member states have been significantly underrepresented in the allocation process for committee reports. This pattern appears across all legislative committees and different types of reports. Under the co-decision, budgetary and discharge procedures, we observe a significant negative relationship. Representing 29 per cent of the full plenary, the new MEPs from the accession states reported on only 16 per cent of all co-decision, budgetary and discharge procedures allocated in the first legislative term after the 2004 enlargement. Two Member States (Estonia and Malta) – until now – have not even submitted a single co-decision report between 2004 and 2009. Clearly, ‘fresh input from the East’ is lacking. Moreover, this underrepresentation of rapporteurs from the accession countries questions the integration efforts of the EP after enlargement – striking in a Union where proportionality seems to play such an important role.

However, these results are in line with findings on earlier rounds of enlargement. Based on qualitative data from the relative powers of Parliament during the negotiations of the SOCRATES and the SAVE II programmes, Benedetto (2005: 84) observes similar patterns after the 1995 enlargement for Austrian, Swedish and Finnish MEPs. Surprising, however, is that the overall share of MEPs from the accession countries who obtained at least one report during 2004–2009 was lower than the corresponding share among new MEPs from the longer-standing member states. Our data show that newcomers from the ‘old’ Member States were clearly advantaged in the report allocation process when compared with their first-time peers from the accession countries.

As expected, committee chairs and vice-chairs drafted a comparably large number of reports, because reports that are not ‘bought’ by a party group are usually assigned to the committee leadership per default (Farrell and Héritier 2004). Furthermore, EP experience is not a determining factor for the number of reports an MEP allocates under the more regular procedures of the EP. When reports have little or no legislative impact, also party group membership does not seem to be a decisive predictor for the number of reports an MEP allocates. MEPs from the smaller groups in the EP also participate in the allocation of consultation and own initiative reports. However, the chances of obtaining co-decision, budgetary or discharge reports are found to be larger for MEPs in the three most sizeable party groups that dominate the EP. Thus, party identification of an MEP seems to be crucial for his chances to draft reports with legislative influence, which is in line with Benedetto’s (2005) finding that EP party size and the number of assigned reports correlate positively. To add more nuance to the party group effect, the data shows that MEPs from the accession states were

underrepresented in the report allocation process because they joined comparably small political groups which were either unable or unwilling to obtain reports for their members. Accordingly, self-exclusion certainly played a role in the report allocation process (Mamadouh and Raunio 2003). At the same time, MEPs from the accession states were not better off even when they joined the larger political groups, which were able to obtain a much larger share of reports for their members.

All in all, our findings imply that the first legislative term after the eastern enlargement of 2004 was a learning period for the new MEPs from the accession states. They were underrepresented in the allocation of all EP reports, but the strength of the relationship varies across the different legislative procedures. The findings suggest that the new national parties from the accession states struggled to find their place within the hierarchy of their European party group after 2004. In addition, we have shown that those findings are not simply driven by varying levels of legislative experience and expertise, but do hold if those influences are held constant.

Just like the composition of standing committees in the EP (Yordanova 2009), the group of rapporteurs is clearly no microcosm of the full plenary. This imbalance is astonishing if we acknowledge the evolving dominance of first reading agreements and the growing importance of informal dialogues (Costello and Thomson 2010; Häge and Kaeding 2007; Rasmussen and Shackleton 2005), both in which rapporteurs are the key parliamentary negotiators with essential legislative powers. Combining our findings with evidence that the EP's positions are significantly closer to the positions of the rapporteurs' home countries (Costello and Thomson 2010; Raunio 2000; Whitaker 2005), we might just have paved the way for further research in the field.

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