

British Political Parties in Europe

Reliable, Ambiguous, Reluctant and Dismissive

By Renaud Thillaye

policy network paper



Policy Network
Third floor
11 Tufton Street
London SW1P 3QB
United Kingdom

t: +44 (0)20 7340 2200
f: +44 (0)20 7340 2211
e: info@policy-network.net

www.policy-network.net



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About the author

Renaud Thillaye is senior researcher at Policy Network. He leads Policy Network's research and analysis on EU affairs. He comments on the UK-EU relationship and on French politics on a regular basis.

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Methodology

This paper is a contribution to the project '15 European Parliament Votes That Shaped EU and National Politics 2009-2014' coordinated by VoteWatch Europe and Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute. All data and graphs used in the votes analysis (pp. 10-20 and Annex 2) were provided by VoteWatch Europe."

Executive summary

The European Parliament generally arouses hostility in Britain and is almost always overlooked as a possible venue for advancing political interests. Yet, its steady rise in power and the growing interaction between EU and national stages mean that it needs to be taken more seriously. Strengthening the role of national parliaments may be a necessary but not a sufficient response to the EU's democratic deficit. The ability to use the power of transnational politics is key to increasing the EU's relevance in the eyes of the public.

In this light, this study analyses the voting patterns of British MEPs during the last mandate (2009-2014). By reviewing how the four main UK delegations (Conservatives, Labour, Lib Dems and UKIP) voted on 15 prominent issues, it assesses their ability to participate in winning coalitions and their impact on the parliament's legislative records. The list of votes includes economically strategic questions such as the Transatlantic free trade agreement, the EU budget, the Single Market for services, and more symbolic ones, such as the location of the European Parliament's seat.

The analysis finds sharp contrasts between political parties in terms of readiness to compromise and perception of sovereignty threats. While Lib Dems come across as a pretty successful and reliable player, Labour appears more ambivalent towards their centre-left European partners. By choosing to step out of the mainstream centre-right group, Conservatives may have gained in political comfort what they have lost in influence. Finally, UKIP's detached and obstructive style shows that they simply disregard EU legislation.

These differences do not only reflect various political options available to voters. They underline the challenge of aligning European and national interests. Scoring points in Brussels may be no recipe for success in London. Conversely, being seen as uncooperative in the European Parliament is not the best way to gain influence. Labour's 'critical engagement from within' signals an attempt to find a balance between the two rationales, but it is likely to come under greater pressure after the European elections.

INTRODUCTION

A few weeks ahead of the European elections, it seems suicidal for any British politician to stand up for Europe. There are well-known historical reasons for this, given the UK's reluctance to embrace the European project wholeheartedly since the 1950s. However, the current malaise cannot be brushed off as yet another upsurge of British 'strangeness'. Doubts over the added-value and the democratic legitimacy of the European Union (EU) have spread to a larger audience beyond the Anglo-Saxon circles of friends. The EU may, indeed, prove poorly effective and overstretch its regulatory arm in a number of cases. David Cameron struck a chord when he said in his 2013 Bloomberg speech: 'People feel that the EU is heading in a direction that they never signed up to'.

It is fashionable among British politicians to argue that national parliamentarians are part of the answer to the EU's democratic deficit. The current sense of disenfranchisement must be combatted by bringing European debates and decisions back to Westminster. Yet, talking down the European Parliament (EP), wishing a return to its pre-1979 format, or calling for its abolition, offer no credible alternatives. The impressive rise in competences and the changes in its working methods support the idea that the EP is here to stay and will continue to play an important role in the future. Its assent is a prerequisite in many cases when UK politicians want to make a change, not only at EU level but also on the domestic stage. Hence the EP needs to be seen increasingly as a pivotal actor in British and EU politics. It is an important means for political ends.

Recognising this implies a need of closer scrutinising UK political parties' performance in the European Parliament and their broader impact on EU debates. It means evaluating the way in which they use existing opportunities to make their voices heard at EU level, and how they conduct transnational politics. The impression that engagement in Brussels or Strasbourg does not make any difference must be combatted: there is much to gain or to lose depending on the ability to form coalitions, frame debates, and intervene in the decision-making process at the right moment.

To that purpose, this study analyses the 2009-2014 performances of the four main UK political parties represented in the EP: Conservatives, Labour, Lib Dems and UKIP. It is a contribution to the '15 European Parliament Votes That Shaped EU and National Politics 2009-2014' coordinated by VoteWatch Europe and Notre Europe Jacques Delors Institute. By reviewing how MEPs from two thirds of EU member states have voted on fifteen important matters, the project aims to raise public awareness about the European election and what is at stake.

The paper starts by presenting the reader with some background facts and figures about the EP and the weight of British MEPs. It then describes the attitudes of the four main UK political parties based their voting patterns: Lib Dems as the 'reliable Europeans', Labour as the 'ambiguous Europeans', Conservatives as the 'reluctant Europeans', and UKIP as the 'dismissive Europeans'. These labels are not meant to form a definitive judgement on the stance of British political forces over Europe, but rather give an indication of their attitude in the last few years.

1. THE EU PARLIAMENT POWER AND BRITAIN'S PLACE IN IT

Except in Brussels and Strasbourg, the European Parliament appears as a remote and abstract institution. Its debates are seldom featured in the media, and very few MEPs are well-known by the public. Although 76% of Europeans think the EP plays an important role 'in running the EU', the EU's assembly arouses, at best, ignorance and indifference, at worse, hostility.

An 'embedded' parliament

Recent Eurobarometer surveys illustrate the gap that still exists between the EP and the public, especially in the UK, although national parliaments' poor records suggest a broader problem affecting representative politics.¹ Trust in the EP is at the lowest in the UK, with only 20%, against an EU average of 39%. A majority of people trust the EP in Scandinavian countries, Belgium and Poland. Only in crisis-hit Spain and Greece, trust is below 30%. Similarly, familiarity with the EP hits a bottom low in the UK: 23% of British people have never heard about the EP, against only 10% in the rest of the EU.

Yet, there is compelling evidence that the EP is closely linked to national politics and plays an important role, both in the EU's decision-making process and in national policy-making.

Between 9% and 80% : a significant but not paralysing impact on national legislation

As the mantra goes, the EP dictates 75 or 80% of national laws. These figures are often quoted by anti-EU politicians who denounce the excessive power of the EP. Yet they come from a misinterpretation of public statements by a few EU personalities. The former European Commission's president Jacques Delors, for instance, predicted (wrongly) in 1988 that 80% of national legislation 'related to economics, maybe also to taxes and social affairs' would come soon from the EU level. In 2009 Hans-Gerhard Poettering, then President of the EP, said: 'If we were not that influential, we would not be the legislator of 75% of all laws in Europe.' By that, he just meant that the EP was the equal co-decider of the Council of the EU in 75% of EU legislative proposals.

Existing studies across the EU reveal a high degree of uncertainty and heterogeneity regarding the shadow of EU law over national legislation.² Depending on the method, the proportion varies between 10 and 40%. In the UK, the House of Commons Library came up with a 15% estimation in 2010. In France, a 2010 report found that 10% of French laws were directly transposing EU directives, while 25% of them included elements of EU origin.³ In Germany the conventional figure is 39%. In all countries, however, there are significant differences between highly integrated sectors such as agriculture, environment and business; and sectors in which the EU's presence is weaker, such as social affairs, education, defence and justice.

Finally, one should not forget that national governments and parliaments are regularly successful at 'uploading' their agenda at the EU level. Some EU laws are the result of a pro-active campaigns aimed at harmonising 28 national legislations along domestic lines. Policy Network's recent research has shown that, contrary to common belief, British policy-makers and MEPs have had a substantial impact on the EU's banking and financial services regulation after the 2008 crisis given their expertise in this field.⁴

1. Eurobarometer Standard 80 (Fall 2013) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb80/eb80_en.htm and EP Eurobarometer 79.5 (Fall 2013) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2013/election3/SyntheseEB795ParlemetreEN.pdf>

2. See for instance A.E. Toeller, 'Claims that 80 per cent of laws adopted in the EU Member States originate in Brussels actually tell us very little about the impact of EU policy-making', EUROPP blog, 13/06/2012, <http://blogs.ise.ac.uk/europpblog/2012/06/13/europeanization-of-public-policy/>

3. M. Fekli, T. Platt, 'Normes européennes, loi française: Le mythe des « 80% »', Terra Nova, January 2010, http://www.tnova.fr/sites/default/files/mythe_0.pdf

4. Policy Network, Britain's Financial Services Industry in a Changing Europe, December 2013, <http://www.policy-network.net/publications/4542/Britains-Financial-Services-Industry-in-a-Changing-Europe>

MEPs staying tuned: interaction with national politics

MEPs are little known by the public and can easily be mixed up with Brussels' infamous 'eurocrats' in people's minds. Yet they are part of the traditional political system and, as a consequence, have the national political interest constantly in mind.

First, MEPs are selected within national parties and 34% of them have already had a parliamentary mandate at national level. This figure is steadily declining, a trend which reveals an increasing professionalisation of EU politicians, but also the fact that an EU political mandate now opens access to a national political 'career'.⁵ The procedure of selecting candidates lacks openness and transparency in a number of countries and parties. The use of closed lists in a third of EU member states, including the UK, Germany and France, may have a negative impact in that respect. However, this does not fundamentally differ from numerous national and local ballots.

Secondly, once elected, MEPs are affiliated to their national party delegations, and, in most cases, to an EU political group. Coordination within the national party is often a pre-condition to loyalty to the EU political family. For instance, Labour MEPs are members of the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group, but they coordinate within the European Parliamentary Labour Party (EPLP). Conservative MEPs are member of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group but meet within their own 'Conservatives in the European Parliament' group. Both delegations have offices in London and Brussels. The 'national politics' factor is revealed by the cohesiveness of these delegations when they 'rebel' against the voting instructions of their group.

Thirdly, MEPs and national MPs interact with each other in several venues and increasingly, a trend which says a lot about the imbrication of the EU and national policy agendas.⁶ The Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs (COSAC) brings together six MPs from each country and six MEPs twice a year. On a more spontaneous basis, the European Parliament's committees often organise 'inter-parliamentary committee meetings' in order to discuss draft EU legislation or specific questions. In parallel, the 'Early Warning System' procedure – best known as 'yellow card' procedure – introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon offers national parliaments greater leverage on EU legislation.⁷ All in all, this confirms that the EP and national parliaments form a single sphere of networked national political scenes.

A 'normal' parliament

EU students know that the EP has gained substantial power in the last three decades, since the Single European Act, and not least after the most recent Treaty of Lisbon. This is not yet clear to the public: according to Eurobarometer (79.5, see footnote 1), 32% of Europeans consider that the EP's role within the EU 'has been strengthened' over the last ten years, while the same proportion say that its role 'has stayed the same' (32%).

The different roles of the European Parliament

Starting from a merely consultative assembly composed by national MPs, the EP has steadily become a powerful and autonomous institution. It has been directly elected since 1979, and is equipped with most of the attributes of a modern assembly in parliamentary democracies, such as legislative, budgetary, nomination and scrutiny powers. It only lacks the right of initiative and cannot extend its powers beyond the EU's areas of competence.

As co-legislator, the EP finds itself on an equal footing with the member states' Council in 85 policy areas representing the majority of the EU's areas of competence. The Lisbon treaty almost doubled the remit of 'co-decision', which was rebranded 'ordinary legislative procedure'. According to this

5. Beauvallet, Lepaux, Michon (2012), 'Qui sont les eurodéputés? Analyse statistique des profils des parlementaires européens (2004-2014) et de leurs transformations', *Etudes Européennes*, 27/11/2012, http://hdl.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/78/21/53/PDF/eurodeputes_MISHA-1.pdf

6. For exhaustive list, see Kreiling (2013) <http://www.eng.notre-europe.eu/011-16883-Inter-Parliamentary-Conference-for-ECOFIN-Governance.html> pp. 4-8 and dedicated page on the European Parliament's website: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/webnp/cms/pid/3jsessionid=D3A6AD540F3E6C61B28A95FFE895C6D4>

7. The yellow card has been successfully activated only twice since 2009: on the right to strike in 2012, and on the European Public Prosecutor Office in 2013.

procedure, the EP has the right, not only to approve or reject, but also to amend a Commission’s legislative proposal after the Council’s first reading. If both institutions cannot agree in the first place, a second reading and a conciliation procedure are possible before a third, final reading.

Table 1: Most significant policy areas under co-decision before and after the Lisbon treaty

Before Lisbon	After Lisbon
Customs cooperation	Agriculture and fisheries
Single Market	Structural and cohesion funds
Environment	Common asylum and immigration policy
Social policy	Criminal matters and criminal law
Consumer protection	Police/judicial cooperation
Transport	Intellectual property
Free movement	Cooperation with third countries
Trans-European networks	Humanitarian aid
Regional fund	Measures for the euro
Research	Space policy

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/codecision/procedure/>

Strikingly, even if the UK has opted out from a number of these policies (especially in the field of the euro, police and justice cooperation and immigration), British MEPs still have the right to vote on these issues. Equal voting rights for all MEPs regardless of their countries’ special arrangements enjoy a very large consensus within the EP. Some experts and politicians have nevertheless been increasingly vocal in arguing that only a special chamber bringing together MEPs from the euro area should deal with euro issues.

There are two other main legislative procedures applied to other policy areas. Under the ‘consultation’ procedure, the EP is formally asked its opinion, but the Council has the right not to take the EP’s position and proposed amendments into account. This concerns mainly exemptions from competition law and internal market rules, and international agreements under the Common and Foreign and Security Policy. Under the ‘consent’ procedure, the EP can adopt or reject a text but cannot propose amendments. This applies in particular to international treaties and to the ‘Multiannual Financial Framework’ (MFF, see below).

Regarding budgetary powers, the EP gets to vote every seven years on the MFF regulation, which sets spending ceilings in each policy area. In addition, the EP discusses and adopts the EU’s yearly budget in the very same way national parliaments do with national budgets. The EP also exerts a right of oversight on the way the budget is implemented by the Commission by deciding whether or not to grant a ‘discharge’ on the basis of a report by the Court of Auditors.

Finally, as a scrutiny chamber, the EP exerts supervisory powers vis-à-vis other EU institutions and EU agencies. The EP votes on the candidates proposed by the European Council for the posts of European Commission’s president and EU commissioners after a series of individual hearings. It can dismiss the Commission (as it threatened to do in 1999 over corruption evidence, which propelled the Commission’s resignation). After each ‘EU summit’, the president of the European Council gives an account of the debates to MEPs. The presidents of the European Commission and of the European Central Bank hold an annual speech in the EP, and the head of state or government of the country taking up the EU’s presidency is invited to discuss his or her programme in plenary. All in all, this gives the EP a non-negligible visibility and voice in the most salient political debates.

A trade-off between efficiency and political visibility?

Despite these significant powers and functions, the EP does not seem to enjoy much recognition as a venue for ideological split and political drama. Only the occasional hearing of national leaders sparks excitement in the media. Perhaps part of the answer lies in the EP’s working methods. Statistics show that the extension of co-decision has compelled MEPs to work more intensively with Council officials. The rate of first reading agreements has soared from 28% under the 5th legislature (1999-2004) to 72% between 2004 and 2009. It will end at an even higher level in May 2014 at the end of the 7th legislature.⁸

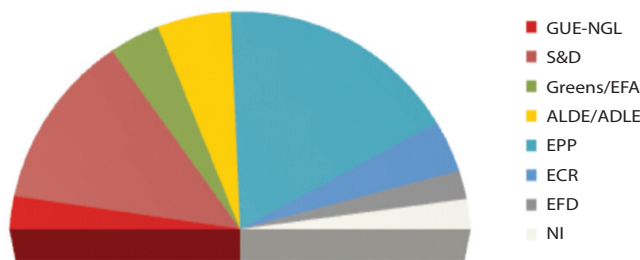
On the positive side, this proves that enlargement from 15 to 28 member states has not crippled the EU’s decision making process. To address greater complexity, a more efficient and professional approach has been put in place, as epitomised by the rise of ‘trialogues’ involving the Commission, the Council and MEPs from the relevant committee (generally one or several rapporteurs). The downside of these informal processes lies in their lack of transparency and in the fact that the democratic debate is pre-empted at committee level, behind closed doors, before plenary session.

The EP’s political balance of power and were UK MEPs stand

UK seems to be the country where one finds the greatest fear of an assembly politicised along EU rather than national lines. Only 43% of British people support the idea that European political parties should present a common candidate for the post of European Commission president, against an EU average of 57%. France is the only other country where support for this idea falls behind 50%.

More significantly, this signals how low public awareness is about the EU’s existing political landscape. The European Parliament is already a highly politicised assembly, with EU-wide groups showing remarkable degrees of internal cohesiveness beyond national lines. As shown on figure 1, only 27 MEPs are not affiliated to any EU political group (‘NI’). The EP is clearly dominated by the centre-right European People’s Party group (EPP). However, for lack of an absolute majority, the EPP needs the support of, either the Socialists and Democrats group (S&D), a situation that has happened in 72% of the votes since 2009; or both the Liberal and Democrats (ALDE) and the Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) groups.

Figure 1: Political composition of the European Parliament (2009-2014)



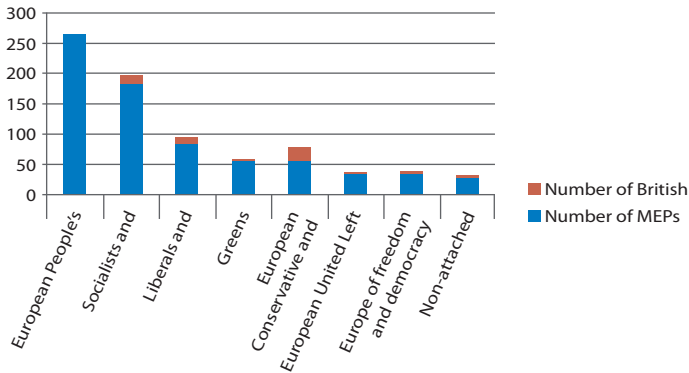
The UK currently holds 73 MEP seats out of 766, i.e. approximately 10% of the European Parliament. This share is proportional to each member state’s population, and will slightly increase after the next European election (73 MEPs out of a total of 751). Figure 2 shows the proportion of British MEPs within each political group. Four aspects stand out:

- The absence of British MEPs in the centre-right EPP group, which, as the largest group, finds itself in winning coalitions most often;

8. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/0081f4b3c7/Law-making-procedures-in-detail.html> and http://www.in-coop.eu/system/files/u3/policy_brief_incoop_interinstitutional_cooperation.pdf

- The overrepresentation of British MEPs in the 'dissident' right-wing ECR group made of British, Czech and Polish MEPs ;
- A share of British MEPs broadly reflecting the country's population in the S&D, ALDE and EFD groups ;
- The relatively weak UK representation in the far-left and green groups.

Figure 2: proportion of British MEPs within political groups in the EP



Finally, table 2 (below) gives an indication of political groups' actual power in the EP. EPP, S&D and ALDE stand out as the three groups participating in winning coalitions in the highest number of cases. They are all characterised by a high 'internal cohesion rates'. For the UK, this means that Labour and Lib-Dem MEPs win a much higher number of votes than Conservatives or UKIP MEPs as long as they respect their group's voting guidelines.

Nevertheless, internal discipline is a necessary but not sufficient condition for success. The ECR and Greens group have a high rate of internal cohesion, but win with the majority in only about 6 out of 10 cases. This suggests that UK Conservatives became relative 'losers' in the EP after they decided to depart from the EPP group in 2009. UKIP's relative power appears to be even weaker as part of the EFD group, which is characterised by only 50% of winning votes (a figure that might still be considered high given the Eurosceptic stance of its member parties) and by a poor internal cohesion rate.

Table 2: Actual power and cohesion of EU political groups and affiliated British parties

EU political groups (number of MEPs in 2014)	Affiliated British political parties (number of MEPs)	Participation rate in a winning coalition*	Internal cohesion rate*
European People's Party (274)	None (0)	99%	92%
Socialists and Democrats (194)	Labour Party (13)	84%	
Liberals and Democrats (85)	Liberal Democrats (14)	87%	88%
Liberals and Democrats (85)	Green Party (3), Scottish National Party	67%	95%
European Conservative and Reformists (57)	Conservatives (23), Ulster Conservatives and Unionists (1), Independant (1)	56%	87%
European United Left	Sinn Fein (1)	52%	79%
Europe of freedom and democracy	UKIP (10 – NB: down from 13 in 2009)	53%	50%
Non-attached	BNP (1), various	n.a.	n.a.

*between 14.07.2009 - 6.02.2014 Source: <http://www.votewatch.eu>

2. HOW BRITISH MEPS HAVE VOTED SINCE 2009

This section analyses the attitudes of the four main UK political parties based on the voting records of their MEPs on 15 key issues in the European Parliament since 2009. The analysis uses the data gathered by Vote Watch Europe on the 15 selected issues and corresponding 18 votes (see list in Annex 1). These votes represent a non-exhaustive sample of the most important debates in the European Parliament over the last few years. Criteria for selecting them have been:

- Their impact on European economies and the EU's institutional landscape, such as transatlantic trade negotiations and the Banking Union ;
- Their intelligibility for the general public, for instance the minimum length of maternity leaves, the place of nuclear energy and the size of the EU budget;
- Their political salience and the resulting controversy in the EP as in the public sphere, such as an EU financial transaction tax, the price of carbon emissions and the liberalisation of services.

Some votes do not concern the UK directly, such as the Schengen Area's arrangements and the Eurozone's fiscal rules. Nevertheless, the analysis refers to them as a way to illustrate how 'cooperative' British MEPs have been towards their fellow members.⁹

A. Liberal Democrats: the 'reliable' Europeans

The analysis provides strong evidence for the overall pro-EU attitude of Liberal Democrats, not only given their constructive role within the ALDE group, but also for their ability to reconcile British and European interests in the European Parliament.

King-makers in Westminster, winners in Brussels

Popular support for Lib Dems may have plummeted in the last few years, but they have played a central role in policy-making both in Westminster and in Brussels. As members of the wider ALDE family, Lib-Dems are the most successful coalition partner in the EP. According to VoteWatch Europe, from 14.07.2009 to 06.02.2014, ALDE have been part of 86% of winning coalitions, a remarkable performance for a group comprising 11% of the total number of MEPs. This score is very close to the one of the largest group, the EPP (89%), and surpasses the S&D's performance. What records also show is that these three parties have very often voted together, thus confirming that the EP is led by an informal 'grand coalition'. When EPP and S&D voted together, ALDE was absent in only 7% of cases. When the EPP and the ALDE voted together, the S&D disagreed in 12% of cases. This figure was much higher for the ECR (31%), the group which Tories belong to.

The central role played by ALDE/Lib Dems is well reflected by the prominence enjoyed by figures such as Sharon Bowls, the chair of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee, arguably the most powerful and important committee in the EP.

Of 15 cases, British ALDE members were on the 'winning side' 12 times, always alongside their group. A loyalty rate of 96% to ALDE signals an unambiguous commitment to group discipline and EU compromising. Out of three 'losing votes', there was only one case of rebellion, when British Lib

9. Conversely some votes which are not part of the selection were of higher significance for the UK, such as the Capital Requirements Directive IV (which entailed the cap on bankers' bonuses), shale gas, or defence and security.

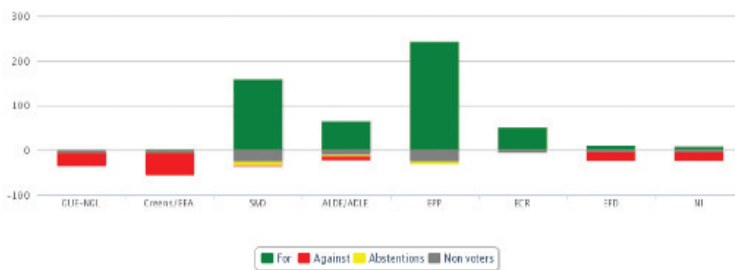
Dems voted in favour of a non-binding amendment tabled by the Greens/EFA group suggesting that nuclear energy should be phased out in the EU.

A pragmatic approach to British interests

By winning so often, have Lib Dems compromised with sister parties within the ALDE to the point of forgetting to defend the British national interest? A careful read of each vote’s significance leads to the conclusion that they have not. Most winning votes were clearly in line with British long-standing preferences, be it for a liberal market economy, such as a 2013 resolution calling to deepen integration in services markets and the opening of negotiations for a Transatlantic, Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

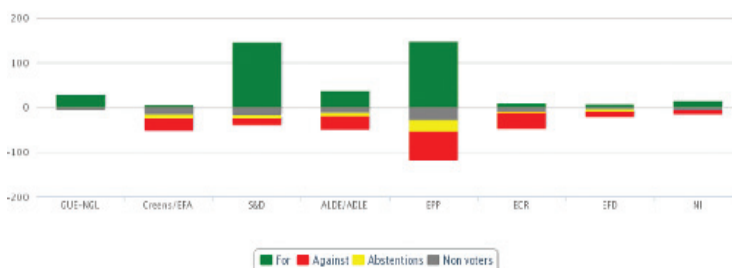
The adoption the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 tells a particularly interesting story in that respect. In November 2013, The EP eventually approved a multiannual budget shrinking in absolute value, an achievement heralded as a British victory. This came after the EP initially rejected the compromise struck by heads of states and governments in February 2013. The EP subsequently obtained some concessions, in particular greater flexibility in the use of annual envelopes and a mid-term revision clause. As the graph below shows, the ALDE was not unanimous in backing the final deal. A minority of MEPs from France and Southern Europe, in particular, rejected it, but they did not manage to convince their colleagues about the MFF’s lack of ambition. With the unanimous support of British MEPs except UKIP, the vote ought to be seen, indeed, as a British victory.

Multiannual financial framework 2014-2020 – Draft legislative resolution: vote: consent – consent



Furthermore, a look at the two votes lost by the Lib Dems while staying loyal to the ALDE group suggests that the latter is a de facto defender of British interests. In October 2010, a relatively narrow majority adopted an amendment to the directive proposal on the ‘safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding’. The amendment put forward an extension of the minimum full-paid maternity leave’s length from 14 to 20 weeks, i.e. more generous rights for women. As the graph below shows, almost all political groups split on the issue, not least ALDE. But the group leadership’s guidelines were clearly to reject the amendment.

Improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding – Draft legislative resolution: vote: legislative resolution – ordinary legislative procedure, first reading



British Lib Dems also enjoyed support from two-thirds of the ALDE group when failing to block the launch of an enhanced cooperation on financial transaction taxes (FTT) in May 2012. The fact that the ALDE leadership gave a 'No' vote guideline implies a reasonably high level of Lib-Dem influence within their group.

Happy to help Eurozone friends out

Another dominant feature in Lib-Dem attitudes is their readiness to give in to measures transferring more powers and resources to the European level in the context of the Eurozone crisis as long as the UK is not directly concerned.

A first occurrence was a non-binding resolution on the 'feasibility of introducing stability bonds' in February 2012. The European Parliament reacted positively to the Commission's 'green paper' exploring options to pool sovereign debt and, hence, share risks on financial markets. Mainly German, Swedish and Finnish MEPs from the EPP and ALDE groups either voted against or abstained. As is implicit in the resolution, these 'eurobonds' would concern first and foremost Eurozone member states. Hence, contrary to Conservatives, Lib-Dem MEPs did not see any reason to vote against.

Such open-mindedness was, likewise, manifest on the so-called 'two-pack' measures reinforcing the European Commission's oversight powers on national budgets.¹⁰ The package applies only to Eurozone member states, therefore representing no threat to the UK in terms of national sovereignty. Lib-Dem and Labour MEPs voted in favour.

Finally, the same rationale applied to the inception of an EU Banking Union. The UK government had made clear that they would not join the 'Single Supervisory Mechanism' transferring to the European Central Banks substantial oversight powers of large banks. This raised however the question of the balance of power at the European Banking Authority (EBA) in charge of ensuring consistency between national rulebooks. To ensure fair treatment between the countries participating to the Banking Union (and voting with a single voice under the ECB's umbrella) and the non-participating ones, a system of 'double-majority' was successfully negotiated. This represented an important achievement for the British government. As a consequence, Lib Dems, Labour and Conservatives all signed off the SSM regulation and the amendments to the EBA founding regulation.

The UK's non-official Green party

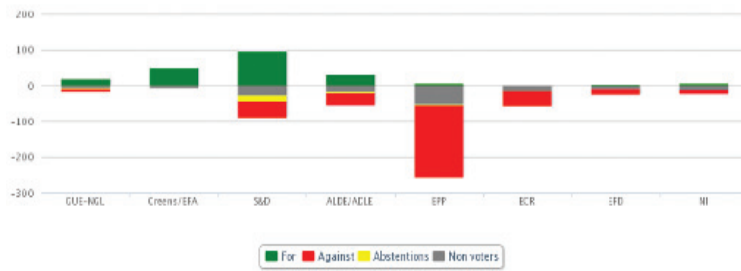
A final striking feature of the Lib Dems is their ecological commitment. Lib Dems were the only British MEPs to vote like the Green group (including the five Green British MEPs) on two significant votes related to climate change and nuclear energy.

The first case concerned the price of CO₂ emissions in the EU's Emissions Trading System (ETS). In order to tackle the problem of persistently low carbon prices, the European Commission proposed to 'backload' the auction of emissions allowances. The initial proposal was rejected in April 2013, but an amended version passed in July 2013. In both cases, a large majority of EPP and ECR MEPs, including British Conservatives, voted against. Both Labour and Lib-Dems MEPs voted for.

The second case highlights the attitude of British parties to nuclear energy. In November 2011, the EP signed off, under the consultation procedure, the 'Framework Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community' (EURATOM) for nuclear research and training activities. An amendment proposed by the Greens suggested that the EU should commit to renouncing nuclear energy in the long run. The amendment was rejected, and British MEPs from Labour and Conservatives voted against. British Lib-Dems, like a majority of their colleagues, rebelled against their group's guidelines and voted for. This signals a strong anti-nuclear commitment, which brings Lib Dems close to the Green Party and the Scottish National Party, both members of the Green group.

10. One of the directives imposes on member states to send their draft budget to the European Commission in October every year, so that the Commission has time to make comments and demand corrections before discussion by national parliaments. The other one strengthens the 'corrective arm' of the Stability and Growth Pact, when a member state deviates from its commitments.

Framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community for nuclear research and training activities – Draft legislative resolution: Annex 1, part II, section 2, paragraph 1, amendment 36 – consultation



To sum up, Lib Dems come across as the dream partner for pro-EU Continentals in the European Parliament. This cannot hide the fact that they face increasing isolation on the British domestic stage, and that they are tipped to be the biggest losers in May 2014. Constructive engagement in Brussels offers no template for successful politics in London.

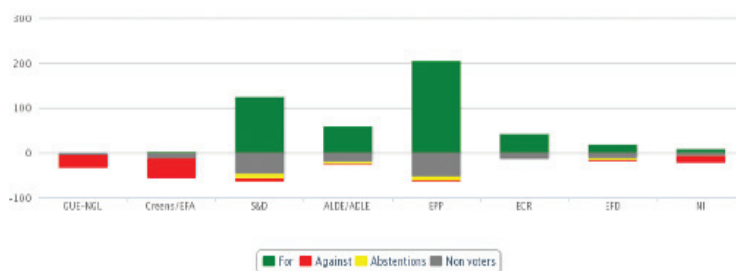
B. Labour: the ‘ambiguous’ Europeans

More than the Lib Dems and any other centre-left party in Europe, Labour has had a patchy relation with the EU. After campaigning for withdrawal until 1983, Labour’s turn to Europe seemed to be well established from the late 1980s onwards. However, as Roger Liddle narrates¹¹ and as the party’s current caution on EU issues shows, this did not prove lasting. Labour’s voting records on the 15 votes analysed in this paper reflects this mixed story of attraction-repulsion. With an overall loyalty rate of 88% to the PES, Labour seems to be well integrated in the European social-democratic family. Yet this figure is amongst the lowest alongside those of the Swedish, Danish and Luxemburgish sister-parties. The French PS and the German SPD respectively score 95% and 96.5%.

An integrated player and frequent winner

As part of the S&D group, Labour MEPs have frequently been successful players in the European Parliament since 2009. They were on the winning side in 10 out of 15 votes, each time being loyal to their group guidelines. A closer look at these 10 issues, nevertheless, shows that this happened with the support of the ALDE and the Conservatives in the vast majority of cases. As evidenced above, Labour and Lib-Dems have the same voting patterns on consensual issues such as the launch of trade negotiations with the US (TTIP), the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the capping of the EU budget. The graph below shows that Labour MEPs had the upper hand in the S&D group on the TTIP against a non-negligible level of abstention and opposition in French and Belgian ranks, and of non-voters among German MEPs.

EU trade and investment agreement negotiations with the US – Motion for resolution: vote: resolution (as a whole)



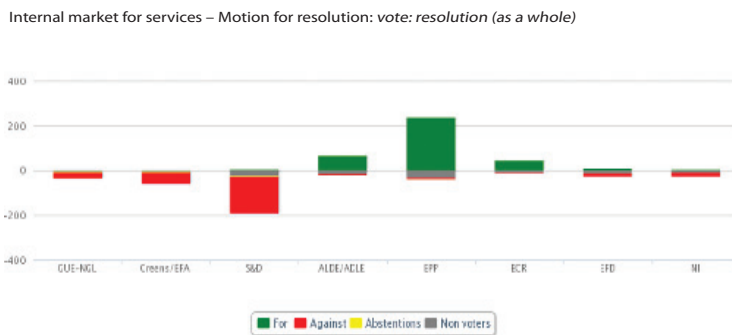
11. R. Liddle, 'The Europe Dilemma: Britain and the Drama of EU Integration', I.B. Tauris, Policy Network, 2014

Moreover, like Lib-Dems, Labour MEPs do not see any reason to oppose votes that affect the UK only to a limited extent, such as the Eurozone’s fiscal surveillance framework, the prospect for ‘eurobonds’, and the Banking Union. An equally constructive stance is noticeable regarding practical aspects of border management under the Schengen agreement, of which the UK is not a signatory. In June 2013, the EP passed a legislative resolution allowing member states to reintroduce temporary border controls in cases of emergency, for security reasons. Labour MEPs backed the proposal alongside the overwhelming majority of S&D, ALDE and EPP members even if Britain had no direct stake in it.

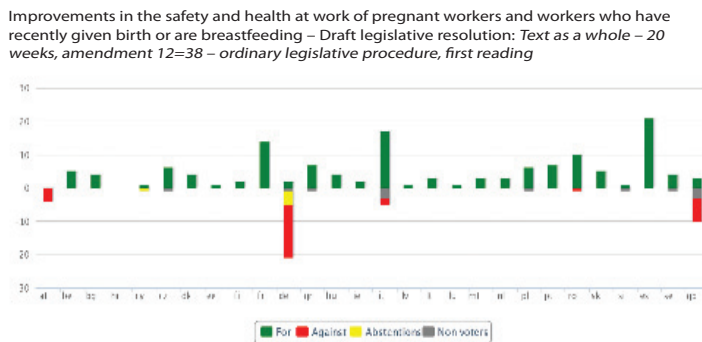
Labour’s unpredictability on the left-right spectrum

A more interesting finding is that Labour MEPs do not always situate on the same side of the left-right divide as their fellow S&D members. One would assume that they are slightly more pro-market than the S&D group average, but nevertheless in favour of greater EU social regulation. Yet voting records evidence the contrary.

On the one hand, Labour rejected a non-binding resolution calling to deepen the internal market for services in September 2013 (see graph below). This was a classical piece of left-right opposition, in which group cohesion was particularly strong. A majority of Liberals and Conservatives, both from EPP and ECR, won against left-wing forces by a short majority. One could have expected Labour to defend a more pro-market attitude, but their 13 MEPs were loyal to the S&D group despite Labour’s broad endorsement of the Single Market agenda.



They were, conversely, one of the few national sub-groups alongside the Germans and the Austrians to rebel against S&D voting guidelines regarding the extension of the minimum period of full-paid maternity leave. This vote might epitomise different expectations regarding what is commonly called ‘Social Europe’ on the European left. In highly regulated countries like France and Nordic countries, the EU is seen as a hugely promising venue for making social standards converge to the top. British and German MEPs are seemingly more wary of regulation burdening businesses further.



Labour also comes across as a pro-environment, but not anti-nuclear, party. Like Lib-Dems, they voted in favour of buttressing the EU’s carbon market by increasing production costs for polluting industries. However, most of them dissented from S&D guidelines alongside their French, Romanian and Swedish colleagues by rejecting nuclear phasing-out. Interestingly, Labour MEPs were not unanimous on this, with 3 non-voters and 2 positive votes.

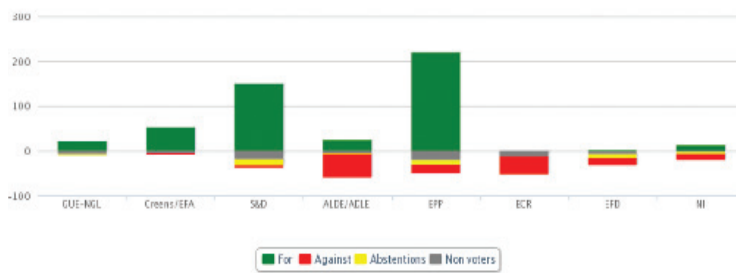
Rebellion against the centre-left does not do them good

The maternity leave example tells a lot about Labour’s ambiguous attitude to EU policy-making and to the logic of collective discipline in the EP. On five lost votes, Labour MEPs ‘rebelled’ four times against the S&D. Leaving aside the maternity case, the three other issues were characterised by a strong national or, perhaps, Northern European logic, and a winning coalition between the centre-right and the centre-left excluding them.

First, Labour rejected the deal on a new Common Agricultural Policy for 2014-2020 that was adopted in November 2013. Despite a significant decrease in subsidies to farmers, and shift of credit towards rural development, a significant minority of S&D MEPs from Northern Europe (UK, Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden) opposed the deal. Such a split was predictable given the fundamental hostility which the CAP has attracted in those countries for a long time. A more substantial reform of the CAP represents a priority for Labour leaders.¹²

A second vote lost against the majority of both the EP and of the S&D group is the enhanced cooperation for a system of financial transaction taxes. In fairness, none of the 13 Labour MEPs voted against the proposal: 3 of them voted for, 9 abstained and one did not vote. Yet this contrasts with the high cohesion among centre-left ranks, whereby only a handful of Danish, Cypriot and Maltese MEPs rebelled against the S&D group. Such a stance also sends a contradictory message, whereby Labour is keen on adopting a strong anti-finance rhetoric in London, but is more cautious when voting in Strasbourg.

Common system for taxing financial transactions – Draft legislative resolution: vote: legislative resolution – consultation



A third clash occurred in March 2013, when the Parliament adopted by a large majority a legislative resolution calling for a revamp of national contributions to the EU budget, with the implicit aim of making the matter less sensitive politically. The Parliament renewed its support for the Commission’s proposed system of ‘own resources’ such as an EU-wide financial transaction tax, or an ‘EU VAT’. Labour MEPs, like Danish and Swedish social-democratic MEPs, dissented from the S&D group again.

To sum up, Labour has been walking a tightrope in the European Parliament. If predictions are right, they will come out as one of the largest delegations in the S&D group after May. With more bargaining power, they may be able to steer the group’s direction a bit more. However, being seen as too ‘ambiguous’ does not do them a favour.

12. Ed Miliband, ‘One Nation in Europe’, speech at the Confederation of British Industry, 19 November 2012; Douglas Alexander, ‘Reform in Europe not exit from Europe...the Right Road for Britain’, Speech at Chatham House, 17 January 2013; ‘Far too much money still goes on agricultural subsidies, instead of on policies to promote growth, cohesion and development or to support the EU’s vital role in international affairs. The CAP is an obstacle to international trade liberalisation, creates too few jobs and introduces distortions so there is not a level playing field.’

C. Conservatives : the 'reluctant' Europeans

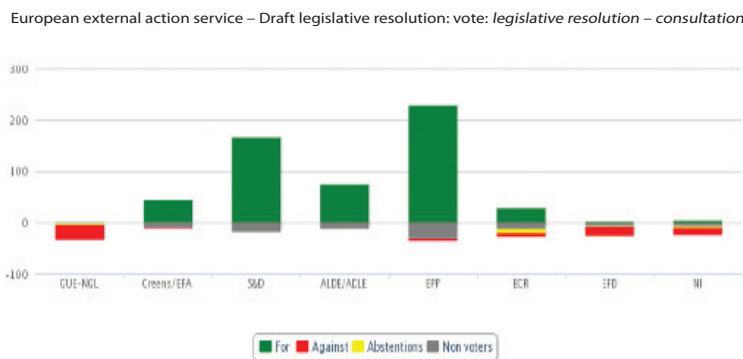
The departure of the British Conservatives from the EPP group in 2009 was a leap into the unknown. Speculation about this development had abounded for years due to the overall strongly pro-EU leanings of the EPP. By the end of their first mandate as the leading force in the independent ECR group, this move appears as neither reasonable nor suicidal. British Conservatives might have earned in 'self-comfort' what they have lost in influence.

Winners when siding with the EPP, UKIP as a losing partner

Out of 15 voting occurrences, Conservative MEPs found themselves eight times in a winning coalition, which systematically included a majority of EPP members. In other words, the ECR group cannot win without the EPP. This may sound obvious given the implausibility of a coalition comprising social-democrats, liberals and conservatives and outvoting the centre-right. Those who view the glass half-empty, however, stress that by staying outside the EPP, British Conservatives have little influence on the texts they sign off.

Data aggregated by VoteWatch Europe over the 2009-2014 mandate show that the convergence rate between the ECR and the EPP is 59%, slightly below the 63% convergence rate with UKIP's EFD. These close figures tend to underpin the idea of a British Conservative exceptionalism. When they did not vote and win with the majority formed around the EPP, ECR MEPs joined the EFD and UKIP on the losers' benches. This happened five times in the 15 cases reviewed in this analysis.

Like Labour, Conservatives voted with the mainstream in favour of consensual proposals: the opening of trade negotiations with the US, the deepening of the internal market for services, the adoption of a capped EU budget, the prospect for a single seat of the European Parliament and, as early as in 2010, the creation of the EEAS. Arguably, the latter position represented a surprisingly positive commitment by the Conservatives for further EU resource pooling, albeit on the basis of coordination between national diplomatic services rather than their fusion. 14 Conservative MEPS voted for the resolution, 2 voted against and 2 abstained. As the graph below shows, the ECR group split on the issue, with most Czech members abstaining or rejecting the resolution.



Less social and less green than the centre-right mainstream

When the ECR group and British Conservatives departed from the coalition formed around the EPP, it was often to denounce their too centrist attitude. Three cases illustrate this.

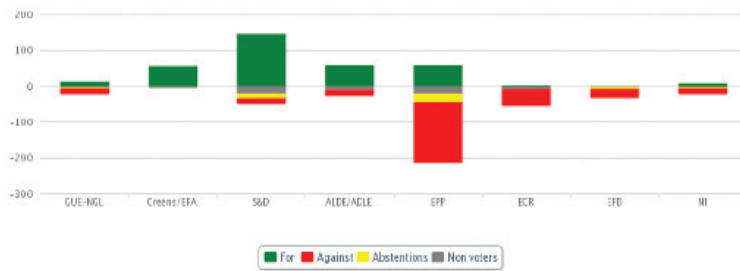
First, Conservatives are unambiguously against any type of new social regulation. On the maternity leave case, the ECR group was almost unanimous in rejecting the proposed extension of full-paid leave from 14 to 20 weeks. The EPP's split on the issue demonstrates that Conservative MEPs are closer to some of their EPP colleagues than others. Like in the S&D, an overrepresentation of

13. See 'ECR matching other European Party Groups on All policy areas (14.07.2009-06.02.2014)', VoteWatch Europe, <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/epg-coalitions.html/#0/0/2009-07-14/2014-07-14/9/9>

Northern European members in the 147 EPP members who rejected the proposal.

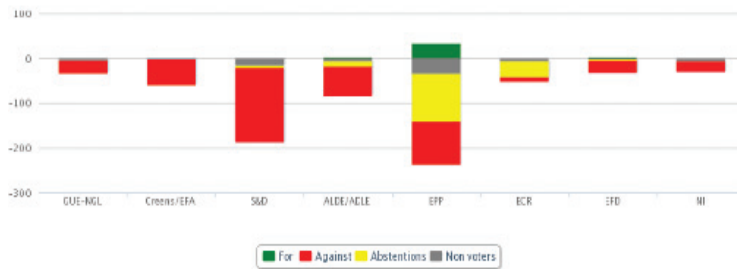
This shows that British Conservatives have cut themselves from very natural allies and lost many occasions to win a greater number of MEPs over their pro-market line if they had stayed in the EPP group. Environmental regulation brought about the same kind of outcome. In July 2013, British Conservative MEPs opposed the proposal to 'backload' CO2 auctions alongside 169 of their EPP colleagues. However, this did not suffice to block the Commission's proposal.

Timing of auctions of greenhouse gas allowances – Draft legislative resolution: vote: amended proposal – ordinary legislative procedure, first reading



Finally, the 'Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement' (ACTA) negotiated by the Commission and rejected by the EP in July 2012 stresses the Tories' commitment to individual freedom and privacy. 478 MEPs, left-wing and liberals in their vast majority, rejected this anti-piracy deal negotiated for four years by the European Commission with a dozen of advanced and developing economies. 165 MEPs abstained, mostly from the EPP and the ECR group, including British Tories. If anything, ACTA reveals that the digital market agenda arouses mixed feelings and breaks up traditional divides, with pro-market voices equally concerned about the impact of online regulation on individual freedoms.

Anti-counterfeiting trade agreement between the EU and its Member States, Australia, Canada, Japan, The Republic of Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and the USA – Draft legislative resolution: vote: consent – consent

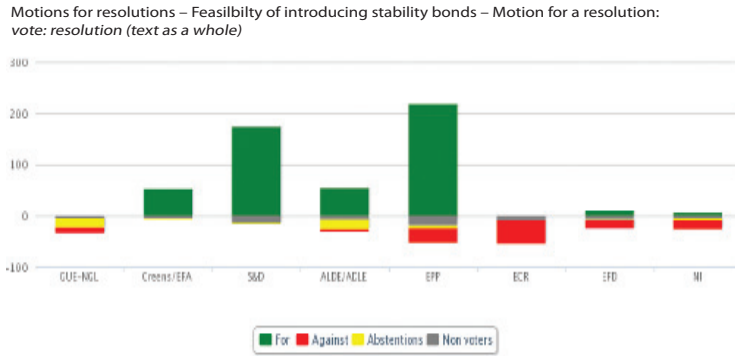


The vagaries of symbolic politics

A final dominant feature of Conservative politics in the European Parliament is their hesitation between a restrictive and a pragmatic approach to national sovereignty. A main difference from UKIP, Tories are no systematic opponents to what the European Commission puts on the table, and display sometimes a surprising level of flexibility. However, to a greater extent than Labour, Conservatives adopt a rigid attitude to legislative proposals that do not necessarily impact on the UK.

A rather uncooperative attitude was manifest on issues such as 'eurobonds', the FTT, 'own resources' for the EU, Schengen arrangements, and fiscal surveillance in the Eurozone. The ECR almost unanimously rejected the first two cases, whereas its British, Polish and Czech members might not be directly concerned. As the graph below shows, although the 2012 'eurobonds' resolution was

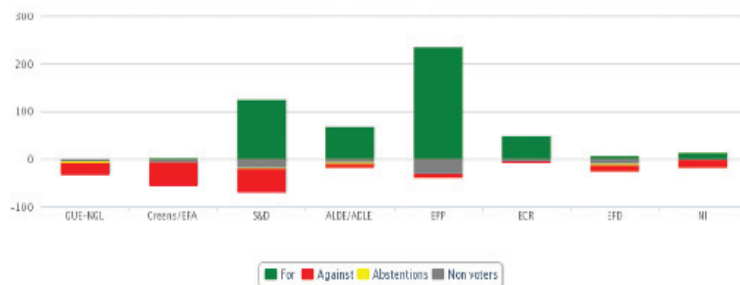
passed by an overwhelming cross-bench majority, the ECR was joined by a minority share of EPP members, in particular from Sweden and Latvia, and other non-euro countries.



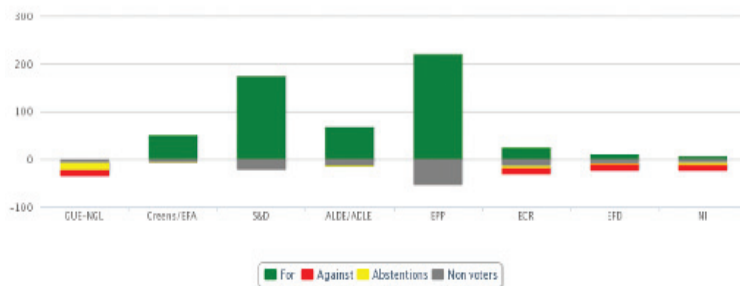
Unsurprisingly, and like Labour, British Tories and the ECR rejected the idea of ‘decoupling’ the link between national revenues and the EU’s budget and opening the way to greater ‘own resources’ through direct taxes. Finally, they preferred abstaining on the proposal to reintroduce border controls in the Schengen area and regarding the reinforcing of fiscal surveillance in the euro area, two issues on which the UK has no direct stake.

Two votes stand out as reflecting a more positive attitude. Firstly, the ECR backed the reform of the CAP adopted in November 2013. This signals an ambivalent Tory attitude towards a long decried EU policy. One hypothesis is that the reform, despite shifting credits further from production to rural development and beefing up environmental requirements, did not put an end to direct payments to farmers, who represent an important Conservative electorate.

Financing, management and financing the cap – Draft legislative resolution: vote: legislative resolution – ordinary legislative procedure, first reading



European banking authority and prudential supervision of credit institutions – Draft legislative resolution: vote: legislative resolution – ordinary legislative procedure, first reading



Secondly, the ECR signed off the launch of the EU’s Banking Union. UK politicians had long warned against the risk of EU regulatory forbearance and its disproportionate impact on non-euro members,

in particular on the City of London. Such thinking was instrumental in the safeguards demanded by David Cameron in December 2011, when Eurozone members were considering an EU treaty change in order to tighten fiscal rules. The 'Banking Union' deal can therefore be seen a landmark in the UK-Eurozone relationship. Conservative MEPs only endorsed the SSM thanks to the concomitant introduction of a 'double majority' voting system at the European Banking Authority under British pressure. Incidentally, the ECR group was not unanimous in accepting the amendments to 2010 EBA regulation: almost all Polish and Czech members opposed it.

To sum up, Conservatives have not lost all their influence and friends after stepping out of the EPP group in 2009. It nevertheless requires much more efforts to make their voice heard within the EPP group, their most natural coalition partner. Being on their own may have the merit of political clarity, but it does not help advance their policy agenda.

D. UKIP: the 'dismissive' Europeans

UKIP's attitude in the European Parliament between 2009 and 2014 is indicative of what could become a broader trend after May 2014 if anti-EU populist parties win between 15% and 20% of seats as predicted. A tentative new group formed by the French National Front, the Dutch Freedom Party and the Italian Lega Nord at the right of UKIP's EFD group would be likely to adopt similar voting patterns.

Fully detached

A striking feature is UKIP's absence and non-voting rates. For the 18 votes examined in this study, they cast a ballot 121 times but did not participate in 67 cases, i.e. a non-voting rate of 55%. The website www.mepranking.eu finds that the EFD group had an average participation rate of 78%, thus trailing a ranking topped by the Green group (87%). However, this figure is much lower for British EFD members with an average participation of 68%. Nigel Farage himself was not present when the EP voted on important issues such as the MFF 2014-2020, the CAP reform, the EEAS and the Banking union. www.mepranking.eu reports that he participated in only 46% of roll-call votes (individual votes registered electronically), one of the lowest score in the EP. Press reports find similar low attendance rates to committee meetings by the UKIP leader and his colleagues.¹⁴

This detached attitude is correlated to a low level of group loyalty. According to VoteWatch Europe, UKIP MEPs respected the EFD's voting guidelines in only 52% of cases between June 2009 and February 2014. The EFD's cohesion rate is around 50%, well below all others groups in the EP. On the one hand, this lack of cohesion highlights the pretty artificial character of this political group. Indeed, there is little common ground between UKIP and the two other main delegations, the Catholic and family-oriented Solidarna Polska and the regionalist Lega Nord. On the other hand, low internal cohesion signals UKIP's incapacity or unwillingness to lead the EFD group and to bring about more consistency and efficiency. The party and its representatives are alien to the logic of coalition-building and compromise-making which is key to making an impact in the EP.

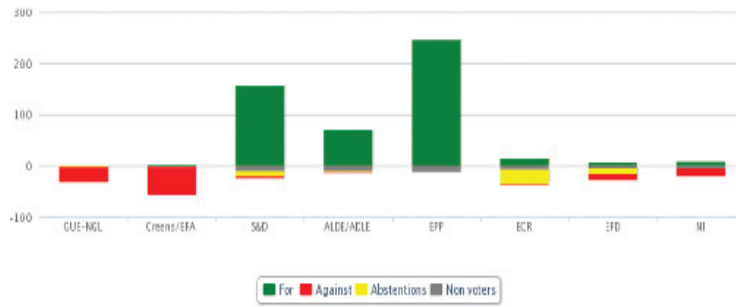
A frankly uncooperative force

UKIP MEPs voted 'No' 16 times in 18 occurrences, with no significant distinction between issues related to the Single Market, the EU-28 and measures designed specifically for the Euro area.

They decided to abstain, however, on the reintroduction of border controls in the Schengen area in June 2013. This vote was marked by a spectacular split in the EFD group, with 6 members voting for the proposal, 12 members opposing it (in particular Italian MEPs) and 10 of them abstaining. This demonstrates that different positions on the European migration map lead to diverging attitudes among anti-immigration forces.

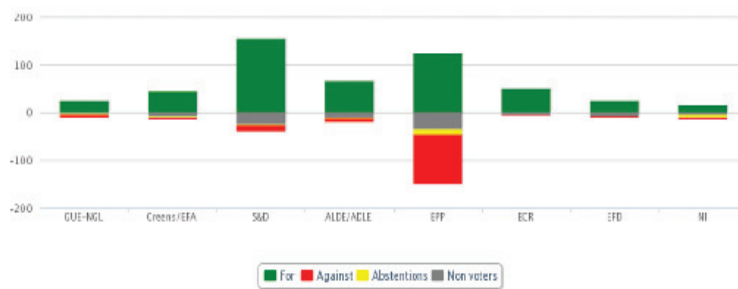
¹⁴ K. Stacey, J. Pickard, A. Barker, 'UKIP accused of failing to protect British interests in Brussels', Financial Times, 11 February 2014

Temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders – Draft legislative resolution: vote: legislative resolution – ordinary legislative procedure, first reading



The only occasion when UKIP MEPs put their thumb up was in November 2013 to support Paragraph 90 in the resolution on the EU’s draft general budget for 2014. This three-line paragraph called the Council to agree with the EP on a ‘roadmap to a single seat’ for the EP ‘in order to create long term savings in the EU budget’. Rejected almost unanimously by French MEPs from all groups as well as by a significant share of EPP members, this was a rare occasion for all British MEPs to adopt the same position.

Draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014 – all sections – Motion for resolution: Paragraph 90



When the anti-EU rationale takes over from the national interest

What follows from the previous findings is that UKIP was partly absent when it could have joined forces with other British MEPs to oppose texts perceived as going against the national interest. This was for instance the case when the EP endorsed the project of FTT enhanced cooperation in May 2012 (2 UKIP non-voters) or when it passed a resolution calling for an increase in the EU’s own resources (3 non-voters).

More significantly, UKIP voted against measures considered as ‘British victories’ or at least going in the right direction from a British perspective. By voting against a resolution calling to deepen the internal market for services and against the launch of TTIP talks, UKIP MEPs turned their back on a pillar of British EU politics, namely the aim to limit the EU to a ‘free-trade area’. By refusing to endorse the 2014-2020 MFF deal, they missed the opportunity to express their satisfaction at seeing the EU budget shrinking. Finally, their opposition to the creation of the EEAS in 2010 may not come as a surprise for a party believing in Britain’s exceptionalism. Yet from an institutional point of view, the new body does not encroach an inch on UK sovereignty and only provides member states with new opportunities to team up on the international stage.

To sum up, UKIP do not take EU policy debates seriously but rather use the resources and visibility they get in the EP as part of the EFD group in order to pursue their anti-EU campaign. Therefore, their

influence on the EU's decision-making is totally insignificant, an attitude that does not reinforce their governing credentials.

CONCLUSION

The attitudes of the four main British political parties in the European Parliament can be sharply contrasted against each other. On a spectrum going from the constructive and reliable Lib Dems to the obstructive UKIP, Labour and Conservatives both cultivate a sense of ambiguity and distance from their natural progressive and conservative partners, albeit to quite different degrees. The analysis of voting patterns conducted in this study has shown that the decision by British Conservatives to pull out of the EPP in 2009 is somewhat justified given the frequency of their disagreements with the mainstream centre-right group. However, they may have lost in influence what they have gained in comfort. Labour MEPs, on the contrary, fight for influence from within the S&D group despite obvious tensions between them and their Continental partners about sensitive issues from a UK perspective such as EU financial resources, the CAP and social regulation.

A common feature of the three mainstream parties, nevertheless, is their struggle to reconcile engagement at EU level and domestic politics. The EU-enthusiastic Lib Dems may come across as too compromising and elitist in Britain (although their expected big losses at the European elections may have more to do with national politics than their actual record in the EP). Conservatives offer the opposite picture of a party which has decided to drop some EU sand to get a lift in the British political sky and counter UKIP's ascent. Yet, by looking as though they have one hand on the exit door, they may be increasingly viewed with suspicion by European partners.

Against this background, Labour's tentative middle way and the ambiguity that goes with it seems almost inevitable. Labour needs to be seen both as a reliable partner in Brussels and tough on the EU in London. It must be critical in a constructive way while avoiding putting EU membership into question. For that reason, any toying with the idea of a referendum would be poisonous. Ed Miliband was right to make clear in March 2014 that he did not envisage holding one unless significant sovereignty shifts happen. At the same time, Labour's reluctance to endorse Martin Schulz as the Socialist candidate to the post of European Commission president did not come down well among its partners. It might complicate its place in the post-election S&D group despite being possibly one of the largest delegations.

Ultimately, in a context when UKIP and similar anti-EU parties are gaining power and influence, those convinced that, despite all its flaws, the EU has the merit to exist will have to work ever more closely together. The dam still separating UKIP's EFD group and the new group countenanced by the French National Front and the Dutch Freedom Party may not last forever. Pro-EU Conservatives will have to raise their profile and win the battle for Europe within their own party if they want the UK to stay in.

Annex 1: 15 issues and 18 votes analysed in the study

1. Should the minimum length of the maternity leave on full pay be extended from 14 to 20 weeks throughout the EU?

5/03/2010 - adopted

Resolution 'on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 92/85/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding'

VoteWatch Europe website: <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/improvements-in-the-safety-and-health-at-work-of-pregnant-workers-and-workers-who-have-recently-give-12.html>

European Parliament website: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2010-0032&language=EN>

2. Should nuclear energy be phased out in the EU?

17/11/2011 - rejected

Resolution on the proposal for a Council decision concerning the Framework Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community for nuclear research and training activities (2012 - 2013)

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/framework-programme-of-the-european-atomic-energy-community-for-nuclear-research-and-training-activi-10.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2011-0360&language=EN>

3. Should the Eurozone Member States pool their public debts by creating Eurobonds?

25/01/2012 - adopted

Motion for a resolution on the feasibility of introducing stability bonds

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/motions-for-resolutions-feasibility-of-introducing-stability-bonds-motion-for-a-resolution-vote-reso.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=B7-2012-0016&language=EN>

4. Should there be a new tax (of between 0.01 and 0.05) on all financial transactions in the EU?

3/05/2012 - adopted

Resolution on the proposal for a Council directive on a common system of financial transaction tax and amending Directive 2008/7/EC

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/common-system-for-taxing-financial-transactions-draft-legislative-resolution-vote-legislative-resolu.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2012-0154&language=EN>

5. Should the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) be adopted?

22/06/2012 - rejected

Resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, Australia, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United Mexican States, the Kingdom of Morocco, New Zealand, the Republic of Singapore, the Swiss Confederation and the United States of America

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/anti-counterfeiting-trade-agreement-between-the-eu-and-its-member-states-australia-canada-japan-the-2.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2012-0204&language=EN>

6. Should the EU budget be increased and be made more flexible?

Resolution on the draft Council regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020

15/11/2013 - adopted

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/multiannual-financial-framework-2014-2020-draft-legislative-resolution-vote-consent-consent.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2013-0389&language=EN>

Resolution on the Council position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014 [NB: single seat]

20/10/2013 - adopted

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/draft-general-budget-of-the-european-union-for-the-financial-year-2014-all-sections-motion-for-resol-29.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2013-0328&language=EN>

7. Should the agricultural subsidies remain a budgetary priority for the EU?

5/11/2013 - adopted

Resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/financing-management-and-monitoring-of-the-cap-draft-legislative-resolution-vote-legislative-resolut.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2013-0363&language=EN>

8. Should the EU increase the costs of economic activities that pollute?

25/02/2013 - adopted

Resolution on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/87/EC clarifying provisions on the timing of auctions of greenhouse gas allowances

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/timing-of-auctions-of-greenhouse-gas-allowances-draft-legislative-resolution-vote->

amended-proposal-o.html

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2013-0046&language=EN>

9. Should the European Commission strengthen the supervision of budgets and economic policies of the Euro-zone Member States?

12/03/2013 – adopted [‘Two-Pack’]

Resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the strengthening of economic and budgetary surveillance of Member States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability in the euro area

[NB: Two-Pack 1]

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/economic-and-budgetary-surveillance-of-member-states-with-serious-difficulties-with-respect-to-their-2.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2012-0172&language=EN>

Resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on common provisions for monitoring and assessing draft budgetary plans and ensuring the correction of excessive deficit of the Member States in the euro area

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/monitoring-and-assessing-draft-budgetary-plans-and-ensuring-the-correction-of-excessive-deficit-of-t-2.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2012-0173&language=EN>

10. Should the EU create a banking Union?

12/09/2013 - adopted

Resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010 establishing a European Supervisory Authority (European Banking Authority) as regards its interaction with Council Regulation (EU) No .../... conferring specific tasks on the European Central Bank concerning policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/european-banking-authority-and-prudential-supervision-of-credit-institutions-draft-legislative-resol-2.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2012-0393&language=EN>

Resolution on the proposal for a Council regulation conferring specific tasks on the European Central Bank concerning policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/specific-tasks-for-the-european-central-bank-concerning-policies-relating-to-the-prudential-supervis.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2012-0392&language=EN>

11. Should the EU strengthen and extend its internal market for services?

19/07/2013 - adopted

Resolution on the Internal Market for Services: State of Play and Next Steps

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/internal-market-for-services-motion-for-resolution-vote-resolution-as-a-whole.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2013-0273&language=EN>

12. Should the EU have its own diplomatic service?

6/07/2010 - adopted

Resolution on the proposal for a Council decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/european-external-action-service-draft-legislative-resolution-vote-legislative-resolution-consultati.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2010-0228&language=EN>

13. Should the EU have a genuine system of own resources for its budget (instead of relying mainly on contributions from Member States)?

13/03/2013 – adopted

Resolution on the general guidelines for the preparation of the 2014 budget, Section III – Commission

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/guidelines-for-the-2014-budget-section-iii-motion-for-a-resolution-paragraph-15.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2013-0043&language=EN>

14. Should the EU create a single market with the United States?

14/05/2013 – adopted

Resolution on EU trade and investment negotiations with the United States of America

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/eu-trade-and-investment-agreement-negotiations-with-the-us-motion-for-resolution-vote-resolution-as-.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=B7-2013-0187&language=EN>

15. Should the EU allow temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders?

12/06/2013 – adopted

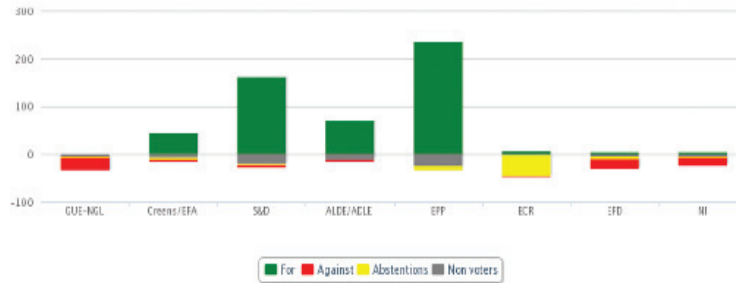
Resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 in order to provide for common rules on the temporary reintroduction of border control at internal borders in exceptional circumstances

<http://www.votewatch.eu/en/temporary-reintroduction-of-border-control-at-internal-borders-draft-legislative-resolution-vote-leg.html>

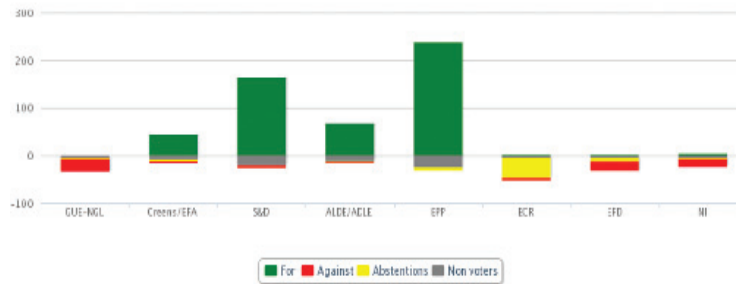
Annex 2: Additional graphs

'Two-Pack'

Economic and budgetary surveillance of member states with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability in the euro area – Draft legislative resolution: vote: *legislative resolution – ordinary legislative procedure, first reading*

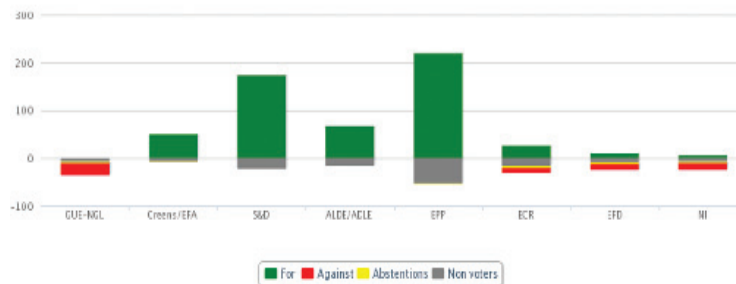


Monitoring and assessing draft budgetary plans and ensuring the correction of excessive deficit of the Member States in the area – Draft legislative resolution: vote: *legislative resolution – ordinary legislative procedure, first reading*

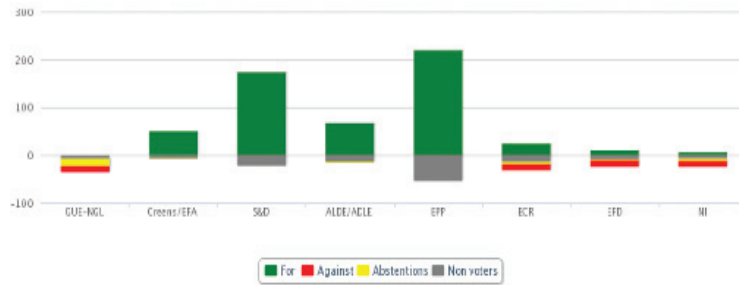


Banking Union

Specific tasks for the European Central Bank concerning policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions – Draft legislative resolution: vote: *legislative resolution – consultation*



European Banking Authority and prudential supervision of credit institutions – Draft legislative resolution: vote: legislative resolution – ordinary legislative procedure, first reading



'Own resources' for the EU
Guidelines for the 2014 budget – Section III – Motion for a resolution: Paragraph 15

