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**A renewal of vows? Old and new modes of governance, national parliaments and the
European Union**

Work in Progress

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Introduction

Recent EU-level developments led to the emergence of a patchwork of ways of involving members of national parliaments (MPs) in EU affairs. As a result of the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty and the introduction of New Modes of Governance (NMG) – consisting of information sharing activities between representatives of EU member states – MPs have more tools than before to hold their government accountable for decisions related with national and EU policies (Kiiver 2008). The new tools available to MPs are the following: the right of MPs to send *reasoned opinions* to the European Commission in an early stage of the co-decision procedure, participate in COSAC meetings to exchange best practices on effective scrutiny mechanisms of national parliaments, and use information on the performance of national policies from EU level Open Methods of Coordination (OMCs) to criticise the policy choices of the incumbent government (Rothenberger and Vogt 2007; Raunio 2009; De Ruiter 2010a). Hence, parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs at the national level does not any longer only take place in European Affairs Committees (EACs) through, for example, scrutiny reserves with regard to EU directives (i.e. a harder mode of scrutiny), but has become an hybrid system with softer and harder modes of governance functioning in parallel at the national and EU level, which can be used by MPs to exercise parliamentary scrutiny (Auel and Benz 2005; Benz 2005; Kiiver 2006; Raunio 2009: 322; Senden 2010; Trubek et al 2006). Previous studies showed that the parallel existence on a policy field of softer and harder modes of governance improve the functioning of softer modes of governance because of the shadow of hierarchy caused by the harder modes (Heritier and Lehmkuhl 2011; Borzel 2010). There are also indications that when hybrid modes of EU governance are in function on a policy field scrutinised by national parliaments, the use by MPs of the softer instruments (i.e. OMCs)

increases (De Ruiter 2011). Hence, it seems that a reinforcing effect occurs between soft and hard modes in a hybrid system of governance.

Shedding further light on the mutual reinforcing effects between modes of governance in a parliamentary context is the main goal of this explorative study. The paper is structured as follows. First, attention is paid to the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty and NMGs for the involvement in EU affairs of MPs. In this context one of the most prominent NMGs is discussed – i.e. the Open Method of Coordination – as well as other NMG-inspired information sharing practices and related articles of the Lisbon Treaty. Third, empirical findings are presented on the use by MPs in the Netherlands and the UK of information from OMC reports in parliamentary debates. These data on the use of a soft mode of EU governance are compared with the references made in parliamentary debates in the Netherlands and the UK to EU directives and regulations – as examples of harder modes of EU governance – in the period 1995-2010. The concluding section discusses avenues for future research and the implications of the findings for democratic rule.

National parliaments after the EU governance turn and ‘Lisbon’

The scrutiny of EU affairs by national parliaments has changed in the last decade in two ways: i) MPs of EU member states share information on parliamentary practices and national policies, ultimately resulting in the identification and dissemination of best practices, and ii) the granting of formal rights through the Lisbon treaty to MPs in order to increase their involvement in the EU decision making process. These two points seem at face value unrelated to each other. However, the informal system of information sharing on parliamentary practices put in place by COSAC and national parliaments to facilitate the

working of the treaty provisions introduced by the Lisbon Treaty shares characteristics with NMGs such as the OMC. The two changes are described in detail in this section.

Lisbon treaty

The Lisbon Treaty is the first treaty which acknowledges that ‘national parliaments contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union’ (article 12 Lisbon treaty). Although some scholars remain skeptical with regard to the actual impact of the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty (Fraga 2005; Cooper 2006; Raunio 2009: 325), two articles were introduced to seek to create a direct political relationship between national parliaments and the European institutions. First, the treaty introduces the right for national parliaments to raise objections to Commission proposals on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity. If one third of national parliaments agree that an EU legislative proposal by the European Commission breaches the subsidiarity principle, the European Commission is obliged to reconsider it. This is labeled the ‘yellow card’ procedure. If the Commission maintains its proposal but a simple majority of national parliaments continues to object, the Commission refers the objection to the Council and the European Parliament, which will then decide upon the matter. This is known as the ‘orange card’ procedure. COSAC has organised subsidiarity tests for several legislative dossiers involving chambers of national parliaments, to see whether the procedure works and majorities emerge to give a Commission proposal a yellow or orange card (Kiiver 2006; Rothenberger and Vogt 2007).

Second, the Lisbon Treaty increases the time allowed for national parliaments to scrutinise EU draft law from six to eight weeks. If a parliament objects within that timeframe, it is invited to send a reasoned opinion stating why it considers that the draft in question does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity. In this context it is relevant to mention the

‘Barroso initiative’ or the political dialogue, whereby legislative proposals are systematically sent to national parliaments for inspection at the same time as they are submitted to the EU institutions.

When we look graphically at some of the recent developments in the Dutch and British parliaments with regard to the reasoned opinions issued, the following observations can be made. First, the number of reasoned opinions sent by the chambers of both parliaments is relatively low compared to the EU directives and regulations proposed and completed at the EU level (see figure 1). Second, the number of reasoned opinions issued by the Dutch and British parliaments seem to follow the same trend as the total number of references made in parliamentary debates to EU directives and regulations (see figure 2). Third, there are differences between chambers with regard to the use of reasoned opinions in the two national parliaments under study. In the UK the House of Lords is most active in sifting through proposals for EU directives and regulations and sending reasoned opinions to the Commission. In the Netherlands the distinction between the two chambers is less clear-cut, also because a joint parliamentary committee of representatives from the Upper and Lower House was made responsible for the reasoned opinions. However, membership of this committee seemed to be a too heavy burden for MPs of the Dutch Upper House, which led recently to less joint reasoned opinions, and more reasoned opinions from only the Lower House (see figure 3).

Figure 1, 2, 3

The provisions introduced by the Lisbon Treaty with regard to the reasoned opinions can only be put in practice at the national and EU level when there is coordination between MPs of

different national parliaments with regard to their reasoned opinions and the yellow and orange cards (Neunreither 2005; Fraga 2005: 499). It is shown in the next section that this informal coordination takes the shape of a quasi-OMC, with guidelines adopted by the Conference of Speakers, best parliamentary practices as the object of multilateral surveillance and exchange, and peer learning meetings between MPs of different national parliaments. In the next section attention is paid to how these informal practices are part of a larger shift consisting of the increased use of multilateral surveillance and information exchanges at the EU level.

The governance turn: information sharing and dissemination of best practices

Whereas the introduction of treaty articles on the direct involvement of national parliaments in the EU decision making process can be traced back to a specific decision, the governance turn emerged incrementally and has had many origins, both at the national, European and international level. The changes in governance focused on in this paper are related with information sharing practices between EU member states, and are inspired on the benchmarking exercises first introduced by the OECD. The EU soon after introduced similar tools to track changes in national employment policies and identify best practices through the Essen process, the Luxembourg Job Summit and, ultimately, the European Employment Strategy (Heidenreich and Bischoff 2008; Heidenreich and Zeitlin 2009). This culminated, first, in the adoption of the Open Method of Coordination, a form of transnational target-setting between EU member states on a variety of policy fields related with the knowledge-based society, with guidelines, indicators, benchmarks, reporting and peer learning exercises (Zeitlin 2008; Tholoniati 2010b; De Ruiter 2010b). Second, elements of OMCs are also introduced informally in order to improve the functioning of the Treaty provisions on national

parliaments codified in the Lisbon treaty. These two ways of how the governance turn influences the practices of national parliaments and the cross-national coordination between MPs of different national parliaments are further discussed in this section.

First, through the use of information from OMCs MPs can be involved in information exchange instruments that resulted from the governance turn. There are differences between OMCs adopted on various policy fields, but on a general level OMCs share the following characteristics: guidelines are set by the Council, indicators are developed to rank the performance of national policies on the guidelines, benchmarks and targets are adopted, and reporting takes place through National Action Plans and Joint Reports in order to monitor progress towards the targets set. Ultimately this results in the identification of best policy practices which are disseminated through peer learning sessions in which representatives of national ministries, experts and Commission officials participate. The reports published in the context of OMCs on the performance of national policies can be used by MPs of opposition parties to criticise the incumbent government with regard to the performance of its policies (De Ruiter 2010a). Previous research showed that the use by MPs of information from OMC reports is dependent on how much the incumbent government is informing MPs on the output of OMCs, i.e. the publication of OMC reports by the Council and Commission. Moreover, MPs from opposition parties use more information from OMCs which are adopted on policy fields on which there was already EU level activity previous to the adoption of OMCs.

Second, the added value of the governance turn for national parliaments and their involvement in EU affairs consist also of a stronger emphasis and more necessity – as a result of the Lisbon Treaty – for sharing information on parliamentary practices between MPs from different national parliaments (Raunio 2009). The multilateral surveillance tools – developed by COSAC and national parliaments – to enable the sharing of information on parliamentary

practices are non-binding for its participants and, hence, do not entail any formal shift of competences from the national level to a supranational entity. These information sharing practices have in common that they are aimed at facilitating the working of the provisions on national parliaments introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, such as the yellow and orange card procedures (Fraga 2005; Neunreither 2005).

The instruments used to structure the information exchanges on national parliamentary practices in the context of facilitating the working of the Lisbon treaty are the following: guidelines for Inter-parliamentary Cooperation adopted by the Conference of Speakers of the EU parliaments, the Interparliamentary Information Exchange Database (IPEX), the publication of annual reports by COSAC, and COSAC meetings of representatives of national parliaments aimed at the identification and dissemination of best practices with regard to parliamentary procedures. Together these parts form a quasi-OMC on national parliamentary practices, with COSAC as the platform for the exchange of best parliamentary practices between MPs from different national parliaments, and the ultimate aim to improve the scrutiny of EU affairs by national parliaments through implementing what works best in other national parliaments. In the remaining part of this section attention is paid to each of the elements of this quasi-OMC.

The Conference of the Speakers of the EU parliaments adopted in 2000 Guidelines for inter-parliamentary cooperation, which aim to promote the exchange of information and best practice between national parliaments and the European Parliament (Neunreither 2005: 478-479). The guidelines were amended at the Speakers Conference meeting on 19-21 June 2008 in Lisbon. The guidelines state that objectives of inter-parliamentary cooperation in the EU are to promote the exchange of information and best practices with a view to reinforce

parliamentary scrutiny of European Union matters, monitor the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and exchange information on their monitoring activities.

Next to guidelines on which themes information should be exchanged between MPs from different national parliaments, there are other instruments to encourage the exchange of information between national parliaments on the best ways to scrutinise EU affairs. First, the IPEX database is designed for the electronic exchange of EU-related information between parliaments in the Union. IPEX allows national parliaments to publish any relevant documents on a pan-European website, contains a calendar of interparliamentary meetings and exchanges views on subsidiarity control. The latter is crucial to facilitate the working of the provisions of the Lisbon treaty, such as the yellow and orange card procedures. Second, the treaty defines the role of COSAC in EU policy formation by stating that COSAC promotes the exchange of information and best practice between national parliaments and the European Parliament, and may submit any contribution it deems appropriate for the attention of the EU legislator. One of the most important ways COSAC is putting in practice this information sharing task is through the publication of annual reports – in which (best) practices of parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs are described – and presenting it to a meeting of representatives of national parliaments.

Table 1

Table 1 draws a comparison between the elements of the OMC template as included by the European Council in its Lisbon Presidency Conclusions of 2000, and the information sharing scheme on practices of national parliaments in order to facilitate the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty provisions on national parliaments, i.e. the yellow and orange card procedures.

From this comparison it shows that the information sharing on parliamentary practices does not contain all elements of the OMC template and, hence, can be characterised as a quasi-OMC. The *quasi*-nature of the OMC on best parliamentary practices is most obvious from the absence of explicit indicators, benchmarks and targets to score the performance of parliamentary practices with regard to EU affairs across member states.

Theorising hybrid modes of governance and parliamentary scrutiny

Now that the patchwork system of hybrid modes of governance and scrutiny related with EU affairs is described, it can be explored how softer and harder modes of governance within this patchwork structure are related to each other. Because of the short experience with many of the softer instruments, it is not yet possible to provide full insight into the relationship between all information sharing practices described so far in this paper and the scrutiny by MPs of the adoption of EU directives and regulations. For example, the experience of national parliaments with reasoned opinions and yellow and orange card procedures is too short-lived to quantitatively test whether the reasoned opinions issued by national parliaments led to more attention for EU affairs in general in parliamentary debates. In sum, the lack of experience with the Lisbon Treaty provisions seriously limits the possibilities for analyzing the relationship between softer and harder modes of governance in the patchwork structure described earlier. However, because of over a decade of experience with OMCs at the EU level it is possible to analyse the relationship between this governance mode and the EU legislative instruments of the directive and/or regulation. Hence, in the remaining part of the paper it will be assessed to what extent the use by MPs of information from reports published in the context of OMCs in parliamentary debates in the UK and the Netherlands is related to

their scrutiny of EU regulations and directives adopted on the same policy fields as the OMCs are active.

Scholarly work on hybrid modes of governance suggests that there is a reinforcing effect between the soft and hard modes of governance (Heritier and Lehmkuhl 2011; Borzel 2010): a soft mode of governance functioning in the shadow of hierarchy of a harder mode is more effective in reaching its policy goals than a soft mode of governance which is functioning without a direct link with a legislative instrument. This empirical finding on the high likelihood of the existence of an interaction between soft and hard modes of governance forms the point of departure in this paper to study this interaction in a parliamentary context, which has so far remained completely absent from the scholarly literature. The causal mechanism which will be explored in this study is the following: when MPs are scrutinising EU directives/regulations on a policy field on which also an OMC is adopted, MPs can notice during the scrutiny process of the legislative process that other EU policy tools exist, such as OMCs. This spill-over effect from the adoption of directives/regulations at the EU level and their scrutiny by MPs can result in attention by MPs for OMCs which are in function on the same policy field as the directives/regulations. It is not unimaginable that this spill-over effect also works in the reversed direction after a couple of years of experience with OMCs; the use by MPs of information from reports published in the context of an OMC can draw the attention of MPs to EU legislative activity on the broader policy field, leading to more scrutiny by MPs of related EU directives or regulations. This spill-over reasoning from soft to hard modes of governance and vice versa is summarised in the following hypotheses¹:

1 Another way of looking at the relationship between soft and hard modes of governance is to see the former as the stepping stone for the latter, e.g. the OMC preparing the ground for the adoption of an EU directive. After over a decade of experience with OMCs there is very little evidence for the stepping stone thesis and it is fair to say, in my view, that the OMC conquered its own place in the EU policy toolkit. This makes it possible to

1. The more MPs scrutinise directives and/or regulations adopted on policy fields related with OMCs, the more MPs make use of information from reports published in the context of these OMCs and the more information on the functioning of these OMCs is discussed in parliament.
2. The more MPs make use of information from reports published in the context of OMCs and the more information on the functioning of OMCs is discussed in parliament, the more MPs scrutinise directives and/or regulations adopted on policy fields related with these OMCs.

These two hypotheses are tested in the remaining part of this paper. Before the results of the estimation of the regression models can be presented, the data used to test these hypotheses are described first.

Data collection and analysis

Parliamentary debates are analysed in order to shed light on the interaction in the parliamentary arena at the Member State level between the scrutiny of the EU legislative process and the OMC as an example of a soft mode of EU governance. The content of parliamentary discussions was measured with the use of the databases *parlando* (parlando.sdu.nl/cgi/login/anonymous), *overheid.nl* and <http://www.parliament.uk>, which

analyse the OMC and the EU legislative option as independent policy instruments (in time and structure) and focus on the interaction between the two.

provide access to all documents related with the plenary and public committee debates of the Dutch and British Upper and Lower House. Because of reasons of scope no expectations are formulated on the differences between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. However, including these countries in this study increases its external validity. The UK is a majoritarian democracy with (most of the time) a one-party government, whereas the Netherlands is a consensus democracy with primarily majority coalitions (Lijphart, 1999). When the correlation coefficient shows up as significant in the regression analyses it means that the correlation exists in different settings, which would strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

The OMCs studied in this article are explicitly labeled as OMCs by the European Commission and the Council. Multilateral surveillance tools adopted at the EU level that were in practice never developed as OMCs or only very recently introduced, were not included in the analysis. These criteria resulted in the selection of the following OMCs: employment, social inclusion, pensions, education, R&D, and e-Europe/i2010 (internet). The period under study for the OMC employment runs from 1996 till 2009. Because of the later starting date of the other five OMCs the period studied runs from 1999 till 2009 for these OMCs. The end date of December 2009 is chosen because of the EU2020 strategy launched at the beginning of 2010, which led to a considerable restructuring of the OMCs developed in the period 1996-2009.

To test the two hypotheses formulated in the previous section, several dependent variables are selected. The first dependent variable (see hypothesis 2) is the number of references made in parliamentary debates to EU directives and regulations on policy fields related with the six OMCs. Word searches are conducted with the name of the policy field (i.e. employment, social inclusion, pensions, education, R&D and internet) in combination

with the words 'directives' or 'regulations'. Although this is a rather crude way of measuring the scrutiny of EU regulations/directives by MPs, it suffices for an explorative study which is after assessing whether a *correlation* exists between legislative and non-legislative EU instruments. The second and third dependent variables (see hypothesis 1) are, respectively, the use of information from OMCs by MPs of opposition parties, and the information on the functioning of OMCs discussed in parliaments by government parties, opposition parties and members of government. These variables are measured by coding official parliamentary documents such as letters of ministers to parliament, minutes of public committee meetings, plenary debates and public hearings, and questions of MPs and answers of the ministers. Documents for coding were selected through the use of search strings consisting of references to the European Union and the policy field on which the OMC is adopted. The parliamentary documents collected were sifted for relevance, analysed in detail and subsequently coded along the lines of two categories (i.e. the dependent variables of hypothesis 1): i) the information on the functioning of OMCs discussed in parliament, and ii) the shaming by MPs of opposition parties of policies of the incumbent government with the use of information from OMCs. Each category is measured by the number of statements made per six months (January-June; July-December) by members of the government or MPs of opposition parties. Control variables included in the study were the total number of EU directives/regulations discussed in the national parliament, the total number of directives/regulations completed/proposed at the EU level, the number of directives/regulations completed/proposed at the EU level on policy fields on which the OMCs are adopted, the change in government, and a country dummy. The coding results were used to construct a pooled time-series dataset with time periods of six months. Ordinary Least Square regression models were estimated

with panel corrected standard errors calculated in order to correct for the problems of autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity (Beck and Katz, 1995).

Results

The previous discussion showed that the ways national parliaments are involved in EU affairs form a patchwork of formal and informal rights, legislative procedures, and information sharing practices. In this section the two hypotheses are tested on the use of the OMC by MPs and the references made in the Dutch and the British parliament to EU directives and regulations. The quasi-OMC on the parliamentary practices in the context of the Lisbon Treaty provisions is not further analysed due to the too short experience with the issuing of reasoned opinions by Dutch and British MPs.

From the results of the estimation of the regression models in table 2 it follows that the more information on OMCs is discussed in parliament, the more references are made in parliamentary debates to EU regulations adopted on policy fields on which OMCs are active. One more statement in parliamentary debates on OMCs results in about one more statement per half year on EU regulations adopted on policy fields on which OMCs are active. The information discussed in parliament on OMCs, both in the UK and the Netherlands, is often coming from the national government. The references to EU regulations are also most of the time made by national governments - given that MPs do not have a role to play in the implementation of regulations at the national level and MPs are most of the time only *informed* on the adoption at the EU level of regulations. Hence, national governments respect information rights with regard to EU regulations vis-à-vis MPs more when information on OMCs is discussed in parliament.

Table 2 here

If we shift the focus from EU regulations to directives, we need to take into account that national parliaments play a role in the adoption of national legislation in order to implement directives at the member state level. This point comes clearly to the fore when we look at the empirical findings resulting from the estimation of regression models (see table 3). Most illustrative in this regard is that the more MPs of opposition parties make use of information from OMCs to criticise the performance of policies of national governments, the more references are made in parliamentary debates to EU directives adopted on policy fields on which the OMCs are active. One more shaming statement of MPs of opposition parties goes together with 1.5 more references to EU directives on policy fields related with OMCs in the same half year. In sum, there seems to be a reinforcing effect between the use of OMCs by MPs and their scrutiny of EU directives related with the policy fields on which OMCs are active.

Table 3

Moreover, the empirical findings indicate - in a similar way as with the references to EU regulations adopted on policy fields on which also OMCs are active - that the more information on OMCs is discussed in parliament, the more references are made in parliamentary debates to EU directives adopted on policy fields on which OMCs are active. One more statement in parliamentary debates on OMCs results in about one more statement per half year on EU directives adopted on policy fields on which OMCs are active.

From the results in table 2 and 3 it becomes clear that there is a positive effect of the use of information from OMCs by MPs and the information on OMCs discussed in parliament, on the references in parliamentary debates to related EU regulations and directives. This is in line with the second hypothesis. Whether this effect is *mutual* reinforcing shows from the results of the regression models estimated in table 4 and 5.

Table 4

The regression models estimated with the shaming by MPs with the use of information from OMC reports, and the information on OMCs discussed in parliament as the dependent variables indicate that the reinforcing effect is *not* mutual (see table 4 and 5). The references in parliamentary debates to EU regulations and EU directives on policy fields related with OMCs do not have an effect on the shaming by MPs of policies of the incumbent government with the use of information from OMCs. In the same vain, the references to EU directives and EU regulations on policy fields related with OMCs do not have an effect on the information on the OMCs discussed in parliamentary debates in the UK and the Netherlands.

Table 5

In sum, on the basis of these findings we can reject hypothesis 1; there is no correlation between the scrutiny exercised by MPs over directives or regulations adopted on policy fields related with OMCs, and the use by MPs of information from reports published in the context of OMCs and the information on OMCs discussed in parliament. Hypothesis 2 cannot be rejected, for now. There are indications that the more MPs make use of information from reports published in the context of OMCs and the more information on OMCs is discussed in parliament, the more MPs scrutinise EU directives and/or regulations adopted on policy fields related with OMCs. This positive effect of OMC use by MPs on the scrutiny of EU directives and regulations adopted on policy fields related with OMCs seems potentially to be good news from a democratic viewpoint: the existence of the softer modes of governance and the use of information from these modes of governance by MPs increases the scrutiny exercised by MPs over harder modes of EU governance.

Conclusion

The finding that the co-existence of soft and hard modes of EU governance on a policy field can strengthen the scrutiny exercised over EU legislation by MPs sheds a different light on the democratic quality of the EU multi-level system and OMCs. Many scholars have viewed the participation of MPs in OMCs as too modest to have a positive effect on the scrutiny functions of national parliaments (Armstrong 2005; Duina and Oliver 2005; Raunio 2006; Kroger 2007; Duina and Raunio 2007; Benz 2007; Tsakatika 2007; Buchs 2008a; Buchs 2008b; Smismans 2008; Papadopoulos 2010; Føllesdal 2011; Weale 2011). However, these

scholars analysed the OMC in isolation from other EU activities. When OMCs are viewed in relation to harder modes of governance it shows that OMCs can have a positive effect on the scrutiny exercised by national parliaments over EU affairs in the multi-level EU context. The OMC may not be as open to MPs as was intended by the architects of the method, but when MPs are involved in OMCs a spill-over effect occurs to harder modes of governance adopted on the same policy fields, resulting in an increase in scrutiny of EU directives and regulations by MPs.

Although these tentative findings are encouraging from a democratic viewpoint, some methodological caveats are in order. The scrutiny by MPs of EU directives and regulations adopted on policy fields related with OMCs were measured by word searches in databases using the name of the policy fields in combination with the words 'directives' and/or 'regulations'. In a future study this measurement should be made more fine grained by identifying exactly which directives and regulations adopted at the EU level are related with policy fields on which OMCs are adopted, and assess how the scrutiny of such directives/regulations in national parliaments changes through time. Only this additional coding of directives/regulations, the scrutiny by MPs, and linking these data to the OMC statements made in the parliaments can shed fully light on the relationship between soft and hard modes of EU governance in a parliamentary context at the member state level.

Next to solving this measurement problem, there are also other research avenues related with soft and hard modes of EU governance in a parliamentary context that need to be explored. When in the near future national parliaments gain more experience with reasoned opinions, it becomes possible for scholars to assess quantitatively the relationship between the number of reasoned opinions issued by a parliament and the number of directives and regulations scrutinised by this parliament. It can be expected that the process in national parliaments of selecting legislative dossiers on which reasoned opinions are sent to the

European Commission, increases the overall number of directives and regulations which are scrutinised in European Affairs Committees and plenary debates. To assess this hypothesis a similar research design as proposed in the second part of this paper can be adopted. This assessment would also shed light on the relationship between the quasi-OMC on parliamentary practices and the scrutiny of the adoption of EU regulations and directives by national parliaments.

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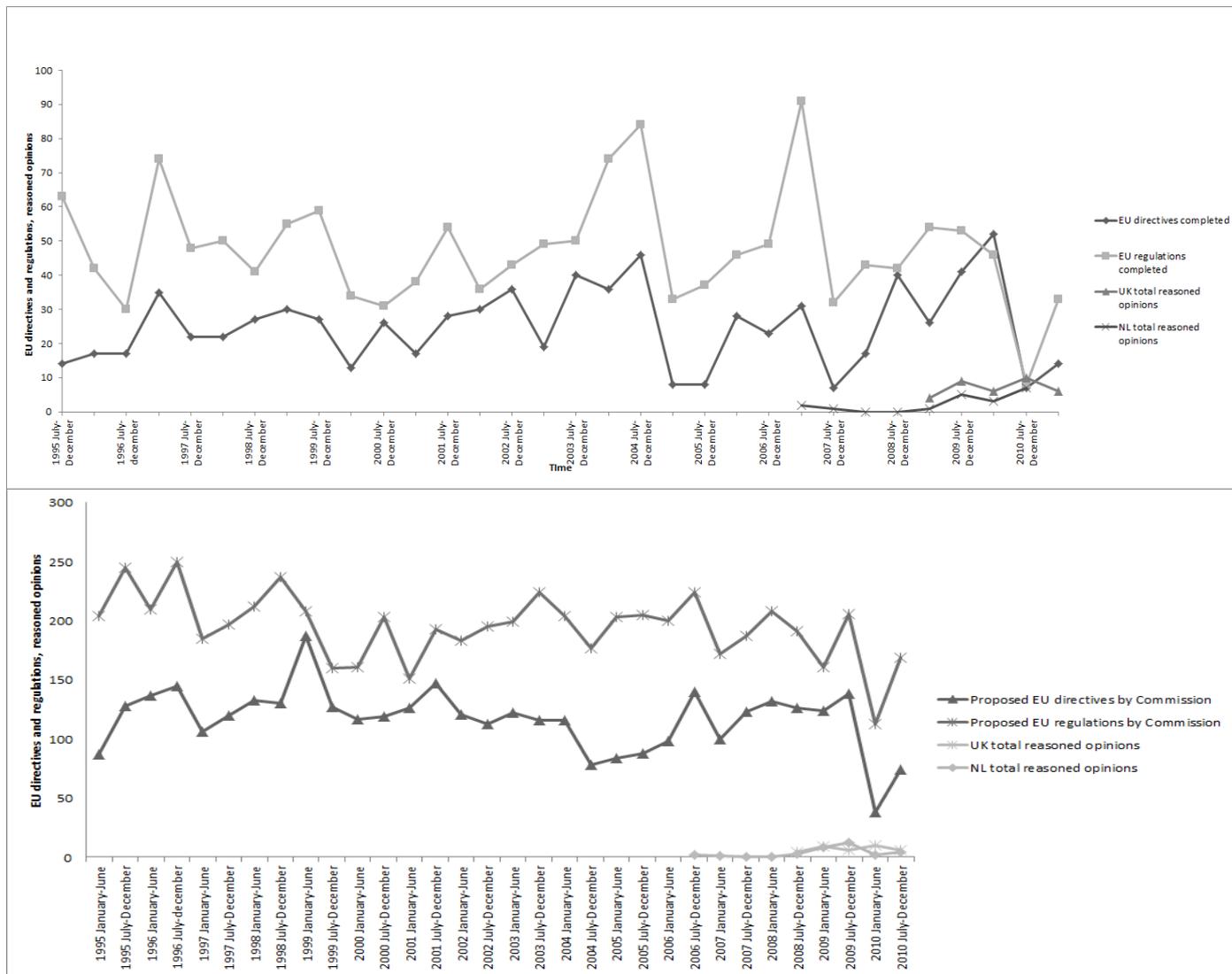


Fig 1. EU directives/regulations completed/proposed at EU level and the number of reasoned opinions issued by NL/UK national parliaments

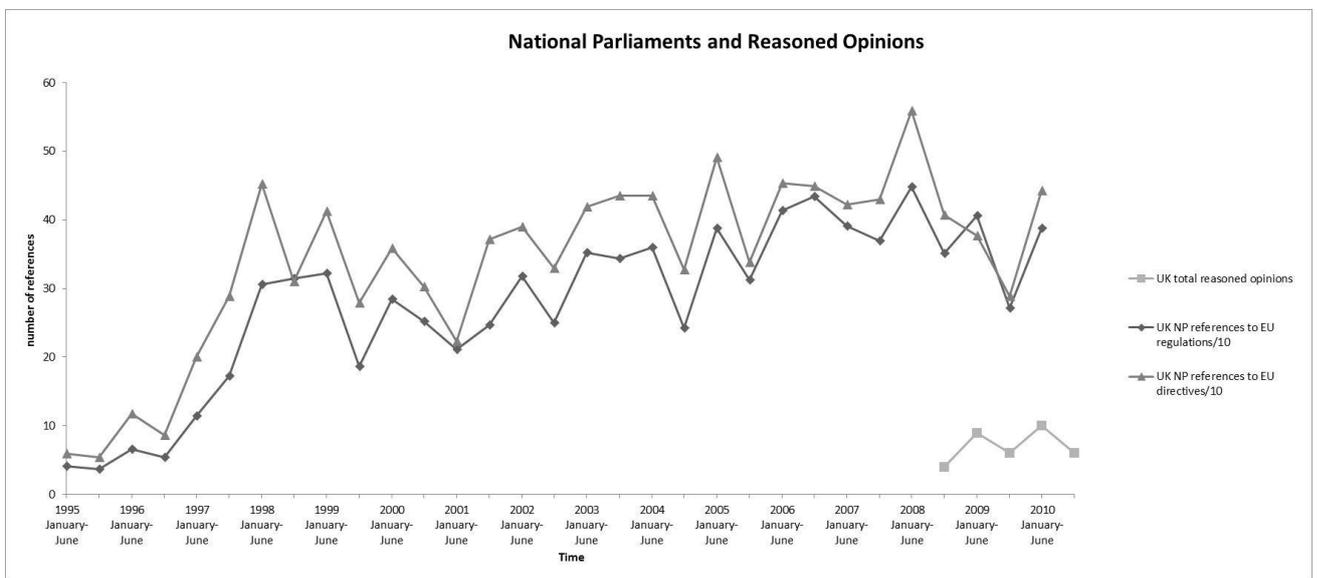
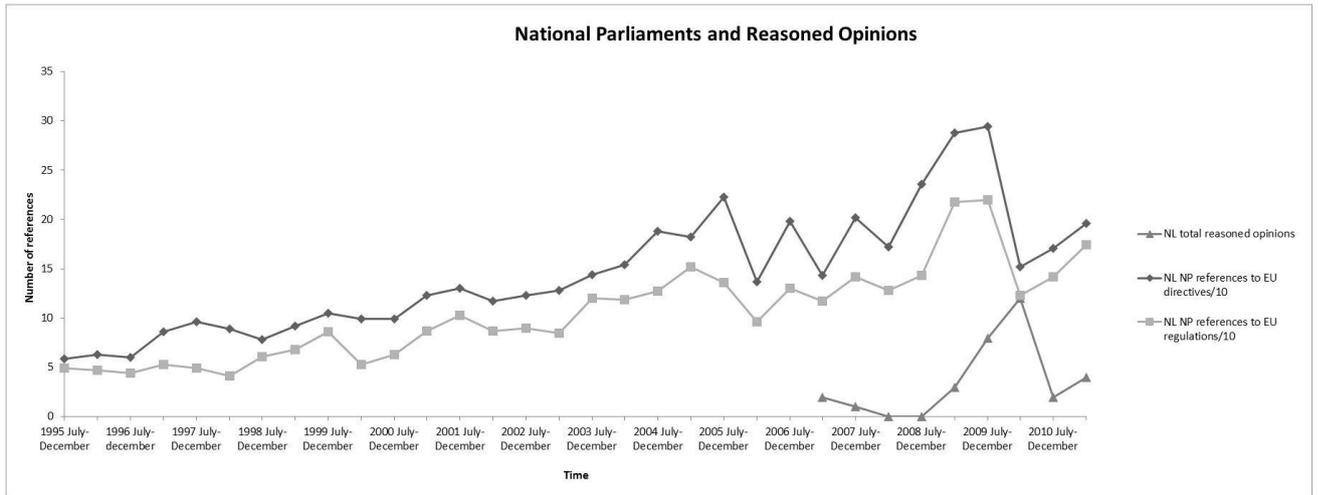


Fig 2. References in national parliaments to EU directives/regulations and reasoned opinions issued by national parliaments in the Netherlands and the UK

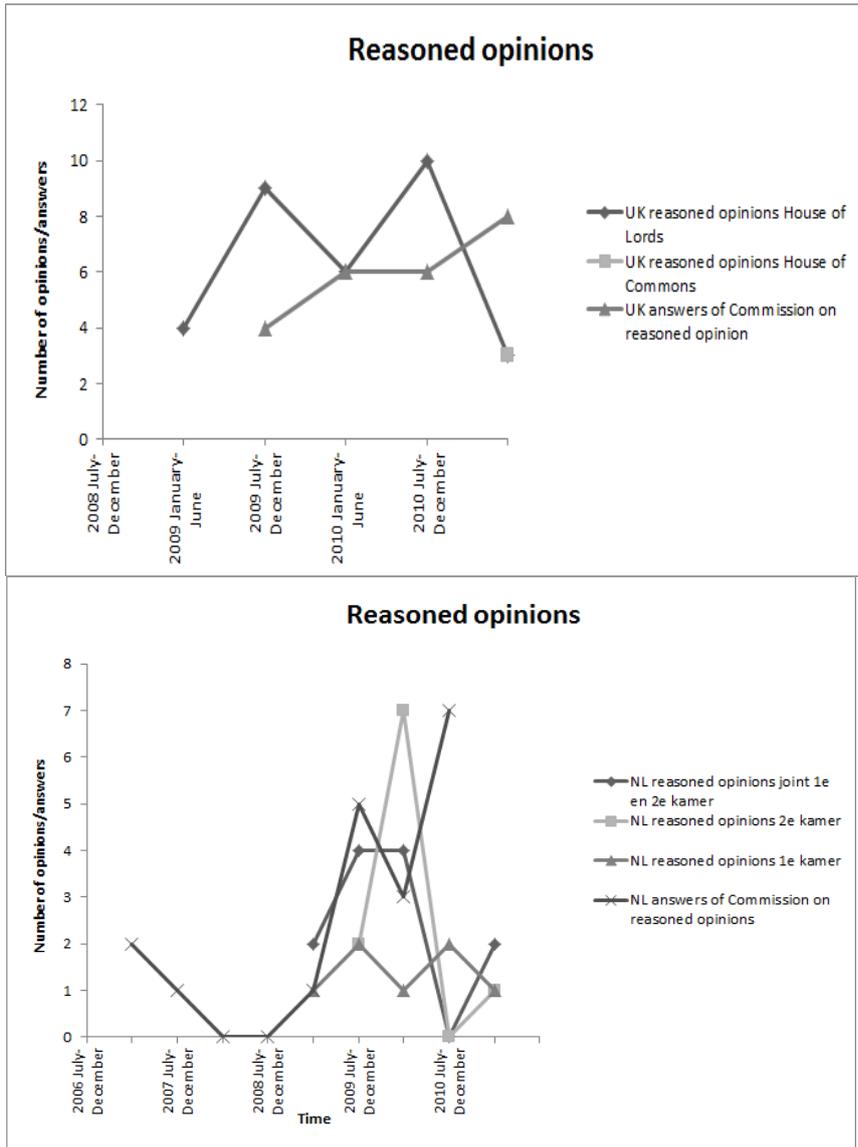


Fig 3. Reasoned opinions issued by the House of Lords/House of Commons (UK) and the Eerste Kamer and Tweede Kamer (NL)

Table 1. Comparing the Lisbon strategy OMC and the quasi-OMC on national parliamentary practices

Elements of OMC	quasi-OMC on national parliamentary practices	
	<i>OMC element present?</i>	<i>In practice</i>
Fixing guidelines combined with specific timetables for achieving the goals which they set in the short, medium and long terms	Present	Guidelines for inter-parliamentary cooperation, Conference of the Speakers of the EU parliaments
Establishing, where appropriate, quantitative indicators and benchmarks against the best in the world, as a means of comparing best practice	Implicit	COSAC annual reports
Translating these European guidelines into national and regional policies by setting targets	Absent	N.A.
Periodic monitoring, evaluation and peer review organized as mutual learning processes	Present	Interparliamentary Information Exchange Database (IPEX), COSAC annual reports, COSAC meetings between representatives of national parliaments EU member states

Source: Lisbon Presidency Conclusions 2000

Table 2. References to EU regulations on policy fields related with OMCs in parliamentary debates in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

	Model I	Model II
Shaming by MPs opposition parties (OMC)	0.76 (.52)	
Information on OMCs discussed in parliament	.75*** (.21)	.87*** (.19)
Country	11.28*** (3.94)	9.51** (3.75)
Change in government	-.59 (1.66)	
EU activity on policy fields related with OMCs	-.29 (.99)	
Total number of regulations completed at EU level	.046 (.03)	
Total number of regulations proposed at EU level	.03 (.03)	
Total number of references in parliamentary debates to EU regulations	.05*** (.02)	.05*** (.02)
Constant	-17.66 (7.38)	-8.59*** (3.16)
N	276	276
F-test	13.42***	35.28***
Adjusted R-squared	.27	.27

*p<0.10, **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. OLS-regression models. Panel Corrected Standard Errors are shown in parentheses.

Source: parlando.sdu.nl/cgi/login/anonymous; <http://www.parliament.uk>.

Table 3. References to EU directives on policy fields related with OMCs in parliamentary debates in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

	Model I	Model II
Shaming by MPs opposition parties (OMC)	1.42** (.70)	1.39* (.71)
Information on OMCs discussed in parliament	.75*** (.25)	.77*** (.24)
Country	12.27*** (4.17)	11.88*** (4.18)
Change in government	-1.64 (2.00)	
EU activity on policy fields related with OMCs	-.60 (1.27)	
Total number of directives completed at EU level	-.03 (.06)	
Total number of directives proposed at EU level	-.04 (.03)	
Total number of references in parliamentary debates to EU directives	.04*** (.02)	.05*** (.02)
Constant	-.71 (5.15)	7.68** (.02)
N	276	276
F-test	8.54***	16.94***
Adjusted R-squared	.18	.18

*p<0.10, **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. OLS-regression models. Panel Corrected Standard Errors are shown in parentheses.

Source: parlando.sdu.nl/cgi/login/anonymous; <http://www.parliament.uk>.

Table 4. Shaming by MPs opposition parties (OMC) in parliamentary debates in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

	Model I	Model II
References in parliamentary debates to EU regulations on policy fields related with OMCs	-.01 (.01)	
References in parliamentary debates to EU directives on policy fields related with OMCs	.01 (.01)	
Country	-.91*** (.29)	-1.06*** (.29)
Change in government	.25 (.24)	
EU activity on policy fields related with OMCs	-.1 (.08)	
Total number of directives completed at EU level	.01 (.01)	
Total number of directives proposed at EU level	-.00 (.00)	
Total number of references in parliamentary debates to EU directives	.01** (.00)	.00** (.00)
Total number of regulations completed at EU level	.01* (.01)	.01** (.01)
Total number of regulations proposed at EU level	-.00 (.00)	
Total number of references in parliamentary debates to EU regulations	-.00 (.00)	
Information on OMCs discussed in parliament	.20*** (.03)	.20*** (.03)
Constant	.33 (.97)	.35 (.48)
N	276	276
F-test	15.1***	42.69***
Adjusted R-squared	.38	.38

*p<0.10, **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. OLS-regression models. Panel Corrected Standard Errors are shown in parentheses.

Source: parlando.sdu.nl/cgi/login/anonymous; <http://www.parliament.uk>.

Table 5. Information on OMCs discussed in parliament in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

	Model I	Model II
References in parliamentary debates to EU regulations on policy fields related with OMCs	.05 (.04)	
References in parliamentary debates to EU directives on policy fields related with OMCs	-.01 (.03)	
Country	-4.28*** (.79)	-3.188*** (.41)
Change in government	.84 (.66)	
EU activity on policy fields related with OMCs	.42* (.24)	.44* (.26)
Total number of directives completed at EU level	.04* (.02)	.04* (.02)
Total number of directives proposed at EU level	-.03*** (.01)	-.04*** (.01)
Total number of references in parliamentary debates to EU directives	-.00 (.01)	
Total number of regulations completed at EU level	-.05** (.02)	-.04** (.02)
Total number of regulations proposed at EU level	.02* (.01)	.02** (.01)
Total number of references in parliamentary debates to EU regulations	.00 (.01)	
Constant	9.45*** (2.63)	9.22*** (2.55)
N	276	276
F-test	7.97***	12.23***
Adjusted R-squared	.22	.20

*p<0.10, **p<0.05; ***p<0.01. OLS-regression models. Panel Corrected Standard Errors are shown in parentheses.

Source: parlando.sdu.nl/cgi/login/anonymous; <http://www.parliament.uk>.