

EPRS Internal News

5 February 2020



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EPRS holds expert seminar on MFF with key EP negotiators



Velina Lilyanova writes:

On Tuesday, 28 January, the Budgetary Policies Unit (BPOL) of EPRS held an expert seminar on 'EU Budget 2021-27: Challenges and opportunities'. Its purpose, as highlighted by Anthony Teasdale, was to facilitate and stimulate an open discussion on the

negotiation of the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-27 – an important milestone for the future of the EU. The seminar, held under the Chatham House rule, took place at a crucial moment, just after the Council published its first [negotiating box with figures](#) in December 2019, and before the [Special European Council](#) on 20 February, dedicated to the post-2020 MFF. The timeliness of the seminar contributed to a very well-attended, engaged, lively and insightful discussion.

On this occasion, EPRS was privileged to welcome the entire European Parliament [MFF negotiating team](#): Johan Van Overtveldt (ECR, Belgium), Chair of the Committee on Budgets (BUDG); Jan Olbrycht (EPP, Poland), MFF co-rapporteur; Margarida Marques (S&D, Portugal), Vice-Chair of the Budgets Committee and MFF co-rapporteur; José Manuel Fernandes (EPP, Portugal), Own Resources co-rapporteur; Valérie Hayer (Renew, France), Own Resources co-rapporteur; and Rasmus Andresen (Greens/EFA, Germany). The external speakers included three well-known experts in the budgetary field: Jorge Núñez Ferrer, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS); Giacomo Benedetto, Jean Monnet Chair in EU Politics at Royal Holloway, University of London; and Eulalia Rubio, Senior Research Fellow at the Jacques Delors Institute in Paris. The debate also benefited from the expertise of Richard Crowe from the Parliament's Legal Service, and our colleagues, Alessandro D'Alfonso and Magdalena Sapala, both policy analysts with the EPRS Budgetary Policies Unit. Sidonia Mazur, Policy Analyst with the same unit, moderated the debate.

Johan Van Overtveldt, Margarida Marques and Valerie Hayer set the tone for the discussion in their opening remarks, giving an assessment of the state of play of the MFF negotiations and shedding light on a number of related challenges. After these initial interventions, the discussion continued in two expert panels, each analysing different aspects related to the EU's long-term budget. In the first panel, speakers discussed how spending at EU level creates savings at national level and elaborated on the topic of package deals. Alessandro D'Alfonso talked about the possible role of climate action in the next MFF, including its mainstreaming across the EU budget he examined in a recent [in-depth analysis](#). In the second panel, experts looked into the flexibility in the MFF and the legal challenges related to its adoption. Magdalena Sapala presented her [in-depth analysis](#) on the MFF's flexibility instruments.

Members Jan Olbrycht, José Manuel Fernandes and Rasmus Andresen concluded the debate. Several recurring messages emerged throughout the discussion. In brief, the speakers agreed that

the EU finds itself at a turning point, where many things have to be redefined, and that the main question is not so much about money but rather about a shift in policy and defining the level of EU ambition. The debate ended on a positive note, as it became clear that the EP is united and resolved to secure a good MFF that ultimately benefits EU citizens. Special focus was placed on the EP's firm position to only give consent to a MFF package that goes hand in hand with progress on the issue of the EU's own resources. Finally, speakers highlighted the need for better communication and trust at all levels, if quality results are to be achieved.

Throughout the seminar, several of 'Question and Answer' sessions ensured active engagement with the audience and an even more interesting discussion.

Adventures in the war against reality: Lessons from the frontline



Naja Bentzen writes:

On Thursday, 23 January, the EPRS held its first event on disinformation in the new legislature in the Library Reading Room.

Peter Pomerantsev – a renowned, expert on the subject of information disruption, Director of the Arena Initiative, Senior Fellow at the London School of Economics, and Research Fellow at Johns Hopkins

University – presented his latest book, 'This is not Propaganda'. The book talk was opened by Philipp Schulmeister, Head of the European Parliament's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit, and moderated by Monika Nogaj, Head of the External Policies Unit (XPOL) in Directorate A. As policy analyst in the XPOL Unit, I was the discussant.

Since Pomerantsev's first book, 'Nothing is true and everything is possible', was published in 2014, the pressure on our information ecosystem has increased significantly. Pomerantsev explained that the attempts to manipulate reality and make truth unknowable, which he experienced himself when he was working in Russia as a reality TV producer in 2001-10, has spread to the rest of the world. In his recent book, 'This is not propaganda – adventures in the war against reality', he analyses the different manifestations of emotional influence, disinformation and coercion across the world, including in the Philippines, Mexico and the Balkans. These 'front-lines' involve technological and ideological players, as well as a change in culture: when nostalgia is more important than the future, when emotions trump facts – partly because they bring more revenue for online platforms – real information becomes secondary.

Facing growing pressure on our information ecosystem, the EU's response has evolved rapidly, making Brussels a major global player in the democratic battle against disinformation and election interference. As we are waiting for the Commission to make the final assessment of the behaviour of the online platforms ahead of the 2019 EP elections, and as we are gearing up for a new push to protect our democracies in the new policy cycle, Pomerantsev's book is a must-read for anyone who cares about democracy, reality and facts. Judging by the numerous and enthusiastic audience, which included experts from other institutions – as well as Members of the European Parliament such as

Markéta Gregorová (Pirates, Czechia) and Ivars Ijabs (Renew, Latvia) – Pomerantsev's 'lessons from the frontline' have already made a significant mark on the disinformation debate in Brussels.

EPRS links up with Swedish regions



Klemen Žumer and Fritz Felsenstein write:

Did you know that Sweden is composed of 21 counties (or *län*), stretching over 1 600 km from southern Skåne to the Polar circle? The largest county – Norrbottens län, which is located in the northernmost part of Sweden – covers almost one quarter of the country, an area of about 100 000 km², which is greater than Ireland, or even Belgium and the Netherlands combined.

An EPRS delegation, led by the Linking the Levels Unit (LINK), learned about this and much more at a recent cooperation meeting with the representations of the Swedish regions in Brussels. The meeting took place on the top floor of Nordic House, which used to be the premises of the Swedish Embassy in Brussels, and now holds over 50 different Swedish companies and other organisations.

LINK used this opportunity to present the work of the EPRS and its main achievements over the past six years. After distributing a comprehensive selection of EPRS publications, we explained to the participants where to find and access such documents online. And, of course, we also talked about LINK's approach of systematically connecting the EP with regional governments from across the EU.

Joining the meeting, our Swedish colleague, Sten Ramstedt (Ex-Post Evaluation Unit), aptly illustrated LINK's ambition as a desire to connect various circles of policy-making and to highlight concrete examples and even anecdotal evidence from Europe's regions and cities. Moreover, Sten presented the working method of the Ex-Post Evaluation Unit and convincingly pointed out how input from regional actors could support EPRS colleagues in their daily work.

The Swedish representatives were greatly interested in the work of the EPRS and applauded the efforts to hear and possibly include their voices in a more systematic manner. The meeting concluded with the regions agreeing to systematise their cooperation with the EPRS through a regular exchange of publications and positions on a variety of selected policy topics.

In line with the strategic outreach to governmental organisations at the regional level, LINK is planning to meet with regional representations of Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain later this year. If you would be interested in participating in any of these meetings, please let us know.

How to speak with impact



Irmi Anglmayer, Katharina Eisele and Isabelle Gaudeul-Ehrhart write:

With more and more colleagues asked to take the floor, give presentations, and speak in conferences, the training cycle 'Speak with impact' is designed to meet colleagues' needs. The assessment of the second edition of this cycle of ten two-hour sessions was so positive at individual level and for EPRS collectively that our directors have decided to repeat the sessions this year.

This training course will address two key aspects:

- Train staff with skills and techniques to speak with impact; and
- Build a community where each member can turn to trusted and trained colleagues when they need advice or feedback.

These objectives are to be achieved through 10 topical seminars, in which Isabelle will share the theory and best practice of various techniques with the group, and provide concrete tips. Participants are expected to contribute actively during the session with reflection, discussion and action, whereby they will apply what they have just learnt (there will, however, be no 'homework' between sessions).

You will find an indicative programme below (to be fine-tuned according to the participants' needs). The sessions will take place on a monthly basis, mostly on Friday mornings at the end of Strasbourg weeks.

This training is designed for colleagues:

- who want to improve their own (and hence EPRS') performance at public events (in terms of confidence and impact),
- who have regular (or upcoming) speaking assignments at higher level (committees, EPRS events, conferences), and
- who are committed to active participation, going beyond just regular attendance.

The aim is to have a group of 20 participants, with EPRS management making a selection for a balanced composition of the group.

If this triggers your interest, please send your application in an email to all three of us by Friday, 7 February. Please give us some details about your motivation. We are at your disposal should you have any questions and you will be informed about the decision taken on participation. We are looking forward to hearing your motivated replies and to kicking off the 2020 edition of this training.

Draft programme:

1. What you need to know about your audience?
2. What do you want the audience to remember? Define and craft your key message in a way the audience can easily remember after the event.
3. What to select? How to choose examples, figures or visuals that convey your message.
4. How to say it? Language people understand and remember.
5. How to build an argument? Which elements to select and how to order them.
6. How to deal with questions, opposition and difficulties?
7. How to master the performance? Voice, microphone, delivery, standing vs sitting...
8. How to start? Get attention from the start.
9. How to end? Craft a strong ending.
10. Recap, rehearse and ... ready.

EPRS presentation on WTO and climate action



Jana Titievskaja writes:

Following an in-person briefing on trade and sustainability, I was invited to speak at the last event organised by Ellie Chowns (Greens, United Kingdom), in collaboration with Anna Cavazzini (Greens, Germany), on WTO and Climate Action on (Wednesday, 22 January 2020). I was asked to set the scene by presenting the general policy framework, and how trade and climate policy overlap at the bilateral (trade agreement), multilateral (WTO), and unilateral (GSP) levels. This was based on my 'At-a-glance' note on

'Using trade policy to tackle climate change', which was drafted in the aftermath of the Amazon fires.

Mehdi Abbas (University of Grenoble) then gave a presentation with concrete strategic suggestions to integrate climate goals into WTO law and policy. Nick Dearden (Global Justice Now) spoke, in turn, about the need to fundamentally rethink our models of consumption and production, and recognise that more trade exacerbates the climate crisis. The roundtable attracted a full-house at 8:00 am in the morning, including colleagues from the whole spectrum of political groups and the Committee on International Trade (INTA) secretariat. A vibrant, if technical, debate followed during the question and answer session. Questions included, for instance, whether and when can the WTO security exemption be invoked for climate reasons. Anna Cavazzini closed the event with a special thank you to EPRS, which has grown quickly (in comparison to when she worked at the Parliament ten years ago) into an impressive research service providing valuable services to the EP community.

'Briefing on the Hill' on security and defence



Piotr Bakowski writes:

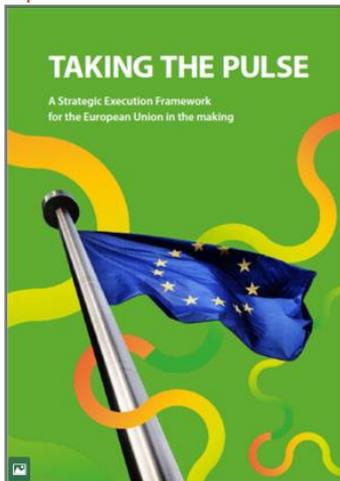
Organising 'briefings on the Hill' is one essential way for the European Parliament Liaison Office (EPLO) in Washington DC to inform Congressional staff about EU policies and legislation. On Friday, 17 January 2000, Tania Latici, an EPRS policy analyst specialising in security and defence, who happened to be visiting Washington, delivered the first such briefing this year in the House of Representatives. Tania talked about 'European

strategic autonomy', reflecting on how the pursuit by the EU of this ambitious goal impacts transatlantic relations.

Addressing EU defence initiatives, such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund, requires navigation through a non-negligible range of political controversies. This is because in the USA, the EU quest for stronger military capabilities is often perceived as unnecessary duplication of NATO, and detrimental to transatlantic relations. Recently, specific concerns have been raised over the risk of non-EU countries being excluded from funding under the European Defence Fund and the consequences this would have for the US defence industry.

Tania described the EU efforts as fully complementary to NATO, indicating the benefits for the US-led alliance of EU projects, such as enhancing military mobility (i.e. the ability to move military assets between EU Member States), as well as the wider benefits of having a reliable, responsible ally. Quite importantly – considering the venue – she also stressed that elected assemblies need to be involved, to guarantee transparency and accountability of decision-making in the defence area. Tania therefore pointed to the role the European Parliament could have in scrutinising defence policy implementation throughout the EU. She argued that strengthening the bonds between the Parliament and Congress contributes to a better mutual understanding of perspectives on security and defence on the both of the Atlantic and proposed further options for deepening their cooperation.

Tip of the week



Consult the 'Taking the Pulse' publication online!

The publication '[Taking the Pulse](#)' – prepared for the EP Innovation Day 2020 by EPRS – is now available on the intranet pages of the Secretary General. The document describes in detail the various policy initiatives being taken by the EU institutions in 12 major policy areas. It represents the building-blocks of a 'Strategic Execution Framework' for the EU in the making.

Interview with Anne-Cecile Charlier, Strategy and Coordination Unit (SACU)



Please describe your current role in EPRS. How long have you been in that role?

I arrived in EPRS on 1 October last year, so only four short months now. It was a new Directorate-General and a new job for me; I was a webmaster before. Now, I'm in charge of coordinating the organisation of EPRS events. I manage the branding (online promotion, poster, programme, bios, invitation, etc.) and assist the policy analysts so that they can focus on the topic of the event and the speakers. I work closely with Elensia Dourbeta, who deals with logistics in the Library Reading Room. And I'm happy that I can count on the help of our trainees (not just from the Strategy and Coordination Unit (SACU)) on each 'D-day' for welcoming the external participants who register for the event.

Could you give one highlight of your time at EPRS?

When I decided to take this job, I made a choice, which is to recommence working full-time. I worked for many years at 80 % and my week was cut in two because I did not work on Wednesdays. I thought it would be difficult, but finally there are so many things to do and to think of, that I was quickly at the end of the week without noticing it, and only then did I feel tired :o) I'm really happy to be in SACU; my colleagues are very kind, enthusiastic and invested in their job. It is motivating!

And also a career/professional highlight?

Regarding my career, I don't have a particular highlight. I could just say that I did a lot of very different jobs: starting in the pharmaceutical industry in clinical studies, then becoming an IT trainer and coach, a webmaster and now an events coordinator. And it's not the end...

Could you tell us one unusual fact about yourself that you are willing to share?

I love to change the style and the colour of my hair. Without being too extreme, like red or pink, but going from dark brown in winter to dark blond in summer, or suddenly cutting it short. This often surprises colleagues – 'But... you changed your hair!?' – and this makes me laugh.

Human resources update

Peter Agius has moved from the Comparative Law Library Unit to the Director's team in Directorate C.

We say goodbye and 'thank you' for your contribution, to **Fernando Frechauth** from the Economic Policies Unit (EPOL), who has retired, and **Christian Scheinert**, policy analyst from the same unit, **Jana Cercel** from the Citizens' Policies Unit (CPOL), **Maria Grazia Tanese** from the Facilities Management Unit (FAMA), and **Syndie Cervellin** from the Citizen's Enquiries Unit (AsKEP), who have left EPRS.

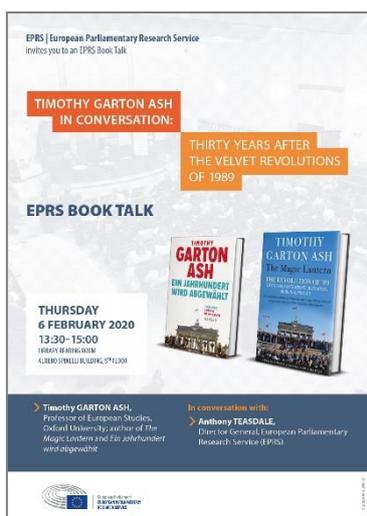
EPRS events this week

The poster features a background image of a road leading towards a horizon with the year '2020' written on the ground. Text on the poster includes: 'EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service invites you to a policy round table', 'ECONOMIC AND BUDGETARY OUTLOOK 2020: UPDATE ON PROSPECTS FOR GROWTH, JOBS AND THE MFF', 'TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2020 13:30-15:00 LIBRARY READING ROOM ALBERTO SPINELLI BUILDING, 5TH FLOOR', and a list of speakers: Monika HOHLMEIER, MEP; Marek BELKA, MEP; Cinzia ALCIDÌ; André SAPIR; and Angeles DELIBORALS.

Economic and Budgetary Outlook 2020: Update on prospects or growth, jobs and the MFF

Tuesday 4 February 2020, 13:30 - 15:00, Library Reading Room

This event launched the fourth annual 'Economic and Budgetary Outlook for the EU' published by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). Policy analysts, academics and think tank experts looked at the major macro-economic trends in Europe today, the international role of the euro, the EU budgetary settlement for 2020 and emerging battle lines over the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).



Timothy Garton Ash in conversation: Thirty years after the Velvet Revolutions of 1989

Thursday 6 February 2020, 13:30 - 15:00, Library Reading Room

In this EPRS Book Talk, Timothy Garton Ash, Professor of European Studies, Oxford University, and winner of the Charlemagne Prize, will present his books 'The Magic Lantern' and 'Ein Jahrhundert wird abgewählt' (published in English as 'The Uses of Adversity'). He will be in conversation with Anthony Teasdale, Director-General of EPRS.

Exchange on the CWP - European Regions and the EPRS

Thursday 6 February 2020, 10:30 - 12:00, ASP 128 D

The process of more systematically connecting the various levels of government, in the multi-level system of EU governance, is designed to make the European Union more integrated and

stronger in its diversity. The EPRS' Linking the Levels Unit (LINK) is inviting representatives of European regional executives to a meeting in order to present its work and exchange views on the Commission's new Annual Work Programme 2020 (CWP).

Upcoming seminars and conferences in the EP

Below is a list of some of the seminars and conferences taking place in the EP in the coming weeks that will be of professional interest to a number of colleagues. Our head of Client Needs, Alec Vuijsteke, seeks to identify EPRS publications related to these events and to pro-actively suggest to the organisers that they make them available to participants. Colleagues specialised in the subject area should not hesitate to contact Alec with any proposals of their own for these or other events of which you might be aware.

04/02/20	Economic and Budgetary Outlook 2020: State-of-play and future challenges	EPRS
04/02/20	ECR Africa Summit	ECR
04/02/20	Letters from the Cuban civil society	Renew
04/02/20	Whistleblowing for independent journalism	Greens/EFA
04/02/20	Sport vs. homophobia: A must-win game	NI, EPP and S&D
05/02/20	Civil Liability Regime for Artificial Intelligence	S&D
05/02/20	Decent minimum wages across Europe	S&D
05/02/20	Maritime security and the blue economy	ECR
06/02/20	Exchange on the CWP - European Regions and the EPRS	EPRS
06/02/20	Timothy Garton Ash in conversation: Thirty years after the Velvet Revolutions of 1989	EPRS
06/02/20	Social and legal protection of children in the EU: Focus on unaccompanied children	EPP and S&D
06/02/20	Saving crumbling health services: Workers' perspectives	GUE/NGL
06/02/20	Article 7: Institutional and citizens perspectives	Greens/EFA
08/02/20	The true price of meat	Greens/EFA, S&D
18/02/20	Nuclear arms control regimes and security implications for the EU	SEDE

Events at think tanks in Brussels this week

[Calendar compiled by the French Permanent Representation to the EU](#)

EPRS quoted

[EPRS quoted by think tanks and others on the Wiki](#)

Frequently updated by Alec Vuijlsteke, this page contains references to a selection of quotations of, and links to, EPRS publications and other analytical products on external websites and publications. New quotes and references to our work can be sent at all times to the Client Needs Team.

 agence europ	<p>01/02/2020: PARLEMENT; ce qui change au Parlement européen après le départ des députés britanniques</p> <p>Le PPE est le groupe qui profite le plus du départ des députés britanniques. Selon une étude recherche du Parlement européen (EPRS), les rapports de force entre les 7 groupes politiques ont légèrement été modifiés au profit du groupe PPE, qui devrait récupérer 5 députés pour atteindre un nombre de 187, tandis que tous les autres groupes en perdent (hormis ID, qui obtient 3 membres supplémentaires pour se hisser à 76 députés).</p>
 cuartopode	<p>03/02/2020 : Así son las oficinas estratégicas de Europa: los modelos que quiere copiar Sánchez en España</p> <p>También el Parlamento Europeo tiene sus <i>think tanks</i> internos. El más popular es el Servicio de Estudios del Parlamento Europeo (EPRS, por sus siglas en inglés), que centra en realizar estudios para los eurodiputados, además de analizar tendencias mundiales y producir estudios sobre previsiones a largo plazo.</p>
 euronew	<p>30/01/2020: 'Artificial Intelligence may be life or death for you,' says Vestager as MEPs discuss regulation</p> <p>A debate on the future of artificial intelligence (AI) in Europe drew a full house at the European Parliament - with MEPs and Commission leaders keen to find the best way to regulate and make the most of AI, while protecting us against its worst aspects, too.</p> <p>"We want to discuss this because you have to be cautious. Some artificial intelligence is low risk, no risk, but some artificial intelligence may be life or death for you," Vestager, the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission.</p> <p><i>Report from STOA event on Artificial Intelligence.</i></p>

EPRS on social media

- Blog: [Adventures in the war against reality: a veteran expert reports from the frontline](#)
- Blog: [More democratic, transparent and reliable : the next generation social media](#)
- Blog: [A scientist's opinion : Interview with Radu Prodan about the future of Social Media Networks](#)
- Twitter: [Just Transition Mechanism](#)
- Twitter (STOA): The Future of Artificial Intelligence for Europe ([#AIforEU](#))
- LinkedIn: [Agreement on the UK's withdrawal from the EU](#)
- YouTube: [EPRS Short Animations](#)

Operational Meetings

A weekly operational meeting is held every Monday (except Strasbourg weeks) with representatives from all EPRS services. A quick '*tour de table*', chaired by Eschel Alpermann, Head of the Strategy and Coordination Unit, gives colleagues a useful overview of current and upcoming activities across the DG. You can access the minutes of the weekly meetings on the Wiki under: [EPRS Operational Meetings](#).

Archive

You can access past issues of the EPRS internal newsletter [here](#).

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