

Editorial

About the democratic legitimacy of the EU and the role of EELC

The recent European Parliament elections showed an increased interest of the European citizens in the EU: over 200 million Europeans voted, resulting in a turnout increasing from 42,6% in 2014 to 51% in 2019. The most significant increases were to be found in Poland, Romania and Spain. The post-electoral Eurobarometer survey shows that there was an important growth in ‘young people with a pro-European mind-set’ who casted their vote in these elections.

This is good news for people who are in favour of the EU. It is also good news for the democratic legitimacy of the EU. Having said that, a number of MEPs expressed their concern about the European Council’s decisions when choosing candidates for the EU top posts. This concern relates to the fact that the *Spitzenkandidaten* (lead candidates) process has been disregarded. This process was developed in order to ensure that European citizens could not only elect the European Parliament itself, but could also have a say over who would head the European Commission. In this regard, the democratic legitimacy of the EU has been weakened somewhat. In my view steps are needed to improve transparency and upfront clarity on these processes.

The fact remains that the current European Parliament has been chosen by over 50% of the potential voters. This is important, as the European Parliament is crucial in the legislative process. The ordinary legislative procedure, after all, arranges the adoption of legislation jointly and on an equal footing by the European Parliament and the European Council. And the new European Parliament has some tough legislative nuts to crack. This Parliament, for instance, has to decide on social benefits for EU mobile workers as part of the update of the rules on the coordination of social security systems. This important work was handed over to this new Parliament by the former Parliament.

Proper EU legislation is important for all of us. If that legislation is clear and as unambiguous as possible, it is easier for all of us to apply that legislation. But it is no secret that it is extremely difficult to have Acts with little necessity for interpretation. But fear not: here EELC steps in! Together we can share our national experiences and thoughts on the proper interpretation of EU legislation. In this magazine, for instance, we can see interesting cases on paid leave and gender discrimination. So read and learn, and feel free to join the debate by sending in interesting cases or comments to us.

Zef Even, editor