

EPRS European Parliamentary Research Service

EMPOWERING THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

WHO ARE WE?

The European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) is the in-house research service and think tank of the European Parliament.

It provides Members of the European Parliament – and where appropriate, parliamentary committees – with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, policy issues relating to the European Union, in order to assist them in their parliamentary work. It is also designed to increase the capacity of Members and committees to scrutinise and oversee the European Commission and other executive bodies throughout the EU policy and legislative cycle.

EPRS provides a comprehensive range of products and services, backed by specialist internal expertise and knowledge sources in all policy fields, so empowering Members and committees through knowledge, and contributing to the Parliament's effectiveness and influence as an institution. EPRS also supports and promotes parliamentary outreach to the wider public.

HOW DO WE WORK?

The three main components of EPRS work – i) research for Members individually and publications for Members collectively, ii) provision of library services and access to knowledge sources, and iii) support for parliamentary committees in scrutiny and oversight of the executive – are reflected in the roles of the directorate-general's three directorates.

- The **Members' Research Service** answers requests for research and analysis on EU-related policy issues from MEPs and their staff, in order to assist them in their parliamentary work, notably by means of tailored, personalised briefings. It also produces a comprehensive range of pro-active, content-rich, easy-to-read publications on major EU policies, issues and legislation.
- The **Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value** works to strengthen the Parliament's capacity for scrutiny and oversight of the executive at the successive stages of the legislative and policy cycles – from the drawing up of EU law and policy to its implementation, enforcement and effectiveness in practice – so contributing to the quality of law-making itself. The Directorate also undertakes foresight work, both in the fields of science and technology and wider global trends. Although most of these services are addressed to the



Members and staff of the EP for their parliamentary work, all EPRS research is public.

- The **Directorate for the Library and Knowledge Services** operates the Reading Rooms in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg, housing the Parliament's extensive physical and digital collections of books and journals, which it acquires and manages. It provides online access to subscription-based publications for the EP, manages its Historical Archives, and answers enquiries from citizens. It also hosts conferences and other events in the Library Reading Room in Brussels.

WHAT DOES EPRS OFFER?

TAILOR-MADE RESEARCH AND IN-PERSON BRIEFINGS FOR MEMBERS

The Members' Research Service responds to personal requests for research or analysis from Members or their staff. All requests are handled on a strictly confidential basis. A Members' Hotline serves as a point-of-entry for these enquiries. Its purpose is to transmit immediately every request for information, analysis or documentation to EPRS specialists in the policy area which is the subject of the enquiry.

A WIDE RANGE OF RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

EPRS produces a wide range of analytical and factual publications, which are drafted either by internal staff or by external experts. Publications range from short 'at a glance' notes to in-depth studies, which are produced either pro-actively, or at the request of MEPs or parliamentary committees.

All publications are subject to internal editorial quality assurance procedures, including peer review, with a view to ensuring their accuracy and consistency, whether in terms of content, style or language.

A few examples of EPRS' series of publications:

- *Plenary at a glance*: short notes addressing one of the main topics on the agenda of the next plenary session.
- *How the EU budget is spent*: A concise overview of each major EU spending programme and fund, including the role of the EU in the policy area, objectives, budgetary figures, eligible measures, funded projects and assessment of results.
- *EU legislation in progress*: Analysis of the progress of a particular legislative proposal as it passes through the various stages of adoption and application.
- 'Understanding...' certain key concepts or issues in EU or international politics, and the debates around them (from understanding the branches of Islam to understanding electricity markets in the EU).
- *What if...?:* An awareness-raising and thought-provoking overview of current and relevant techno-scientific trends.

All EPRS research publications are available at www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank

EPRS also manages the Legislative Train Schedule, a website that helps tracking the progress of the legislative proposals expected from the European Commission during its current five-year term. Each proposal is presented as the carriage of a train and the state-of-play on its adoption is analysed.

Access the Legislative Train Schedule at www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train

SUPPORT TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES IN THE FIELDS OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND EUROPEAN ADDED VALUE

- Initial appraisals of the quality of **impact assessments** (IAs) which accompany the European Commission's new legislative proposals are routinely supplied to parliamentary committees in advance of their consideration of the proposals. EPRS also offers a range of follow-up services in the field of ex-ante impact assessment, including more detailed appraisals of Commission IAs, substitute or complementary IAs, and IAs on parliamentary amendments.
- On request of parliamentary committees, EPRS analyses the potential benefit of future action by the European Union through '**Cost of Non-Europe Reports**' in policy areas where greater efficiency or a collective public good

could be realised through common action at European level; it provides '**European Added Value Assessments**' to underpin legislative initiative reports put forward by committees; and it identifies the added value of existing EU policies in practice.

Access EPRS research publications in this field at www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank

TOOLS FOR SCRUTINY AND OVERSIGHT OF THE EXECUTIVE

- EPRS provides up-to-date information on the implementation and effectiveness of EU law and policies in practice, including 'European Implementation Assessments' to support committees when they undertake implementation reports, and automatic 'implementation appraisals' of the operation of existing legislation in practice, notably whenever a new proposal to update such legislation is planned in the Commission's annual work programme. These appraisals are delivered to the relevant parliamentary committees in advance of their consideration of new legislative proposals.
- EPRS services also monitor and analyse the European Council's delivery of the commitments made in its meetings, and of its various responsibilities either in law or on the basis of intergovernmental agreements. A rolling database of all such commitments and/or responsibilities is updated regularly, and routine briefing notes and research on their degree of attainment within the Council system are provided.

Access the EPRS scrutiny toolbox at www.eptthinktank.eu/scrutiny-toolbox

ASSESSMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OPTIONS

The **Scientific Foresight Unit** (STOA) carries out research and provides strategic advice in **science and technology options assessment and scientific foresight**, and it hosts the **European Science-Media Hub** (ESMH), a platform to promote networking, training and knowledge sharing between the EP, the scientific community and the media. The Unit undertakes studies, organises events under the guidance of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA), composed of 25 MEPs nominated by nine parliamentary committees, and provides the secretariat of that body.

Access the STOA website at www.europarl.europa.eu/stoa

ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL TRENDS

EPRS identifies, tracks and analyses long- and medium-term global trends – especially changes in the international economic, social or political environments – which may affect the European Union, keeping Members informed about such trends and their potential implications through briefings and seminars. It also supports the Parliament's participation in administrative-level dialogue with other EU institutions on such trends, and facilitates contact more widely with outside organisations, notably think tanks and universities, working in this field.

Access EPRS research publications in this field at www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank and the ESPAS website at www.espas.eu

STATISTICAL, GRAPHICAL AND AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTS

- **Graphics warehouse:** EP Members and staff can use visuals from EPRS publications to illustrate their own papers. They are available online, categorised by policy area, with background information on the topic. www.eptthinktank.eu/graphics-warehouse
- **Infographics:** A succinct (one to two pages) visual presentation of useful information and statistics on the subject.
- **Animated infographics:** Most visuals in these infographics offer some sort of interactivity, proposing more detailed textual information and explanations. www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/animatedinfographics
- **Podcasts:** EPRS prepares the regular podcasts on EU policy areas (in-depth EPRS policy podcasts based on objective, authoritative and independent research), on what Europe does for you (short 60 seconds podcasts) and on the latest scientific & technological developments and their potential impact on our lives (Science & Technology podcasts). www.europarl.europa.eu/rss/en/audio-podcasts.html
- **Videos:** some EPRS publications are turned into short videos giving an overview of a particular topic. All are available in [EPRS' YouTube channel](#).

ACCESS TO NEWSWIRES AND DATABASES

All newswires and databases are available to Members and staff on the EPRS intranet at www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu

LIBRARY SERVICES

EPRS operates the five Library Reading Rooms in the European Parliament premises in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg, with access to 1 000 newspapers and journals, a physical collection of over 90 000 books (and more than 90 000 e-books including packages from Springer, the World Bank and OECD) and a Historical Library. Access all Library services on the EPRS intranet at www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu

COMPARATIVE LAW LIBRARY

EPRS aims to develop a hub promoting multilingual research in the comparison of different legal orders. To this end it cooperates with academies and legal bodies such as the Law Library of Congress, the Europäische Rechtsakademie (ERA) and the European Law Institute (ELI), providing a platform for the presentation and discussion of comparative law studies, and also organises a high-level Annual Forum on Comparative Law.

EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

EPRS organises regular events in the spacious Library Reading Room in Brussels, many of which are open to the general public: seminars, book launches and EPRS policy roundtables, often with expert speakers from think tanks and academia. The Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA) organises frequent workshops on scientific and technological issues, and holds an annual lecture with top representatives of the scientific world.

Forthcoming EPRS events can be found in the events section of www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank

EP HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

The Historical Archives and the Library teams manage and preserve the **European Parliament's official public documents** and other archival and library material dating back to the launch of the ECSC in 1952, and operates the Historical Library Reading Room in Luxembourg. It seeks to maintain the historical 'memory' of the Parliament as an institution, by making the archives and the historical books collection publicly accessible, by assisting academic researchers in retrieving them for use, and by publishing historical studies about the Parliament, based on the archives and other sources. It works closely with the EU Historical Archives at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence. Contact: arch-info@ep.europa.eu.

The Historical Archives also offer an archiving service for **Members' personal papers**. Current and former MEPs may, at any time, deposit documents relating to their mandate in the EP, in paper or electronic format. The documents will be analysed, organised, digitised and/or converted to PDF files. An electronic copy is then made available to the depositor. Contact: epgs-historical-archives@ep.europa.eu.

Access the Historical archives website at www.europarl.europa.eu/historicalarchives

ANSWERS TO CITIZENS' ENQUIRIES

The Citizens' Enquiries team answers requests for information on the **Parliament and EU issues** received from members of the public, enhancing the Parliament's interaction with citizens. Citizens may access the service on the EP website at: www.europarl.europa.eu/askEP.

They also produce '**EP answers**' a selection of answers to frequently asked questions. These are available at: www.epthinktank.eu/author/epanswers.

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