

**EGOV**

ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE AND EMU SCRUTINY UNIT



ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

The outcome of a survey on review of EU economic governance and national parliaments

SCENE SETTER

In mid-March 2023, the EGOV Unit of the European Parliament launched, in close co-operation with staff of national parliaments, an initiative to collect available public information on whether and how EU national parliaments are involved in the economic governance review debate.

Of particular interest was to find out the state-of-play of EU national parliaments' engagement in the debate on the European Economic Governance Review process launched by the European Commission, notably on how national parliaments are kept informed by their respective governments, and whether parliaments have established procedures for the involvement of stakeholders.

Furthermore, the survey tried to determine whether national parliaments have established a specific administrative structures to support and provide expertise on economic and budgetary matters. Additional questions looked at the current level of exchange of information and co-operation among EU parliaments' services (staff-to-staff) on EU economic governance, including the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and on ways to possibly enhance the interaction and mutual capacity building among parliament staff.

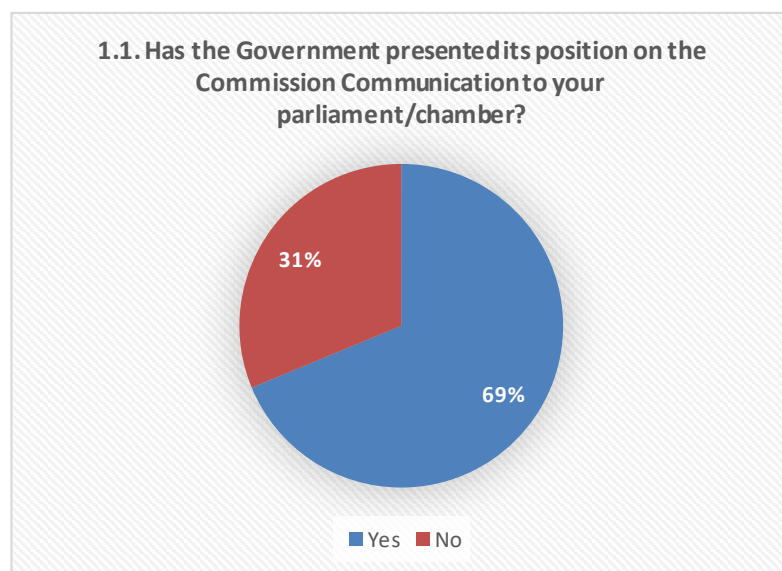
This document provides a snapshot of the state-of-play on EU national parliaments involvement at the early stage (spring 2023) of the current EU economic governance reform debate. This summary is based on replies from 20 parliament chambers from 16 EU member states (AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, HE, IR, IT, LT, LV, LU, NL, PL, SI, ES and SE). The survey aim was to share information among parliaments and facilitate knowledge sharing within the staff-to-staff network of EU and national parliament colleagues on this subject. The cut-off date for the data collection was 21 April 2023.



SUMMARY OUTCOME OF THE SURVEY

Analysis of the results:

Question 1: Has the Government presented its position on the Commission Communication to your parliament/chamber?

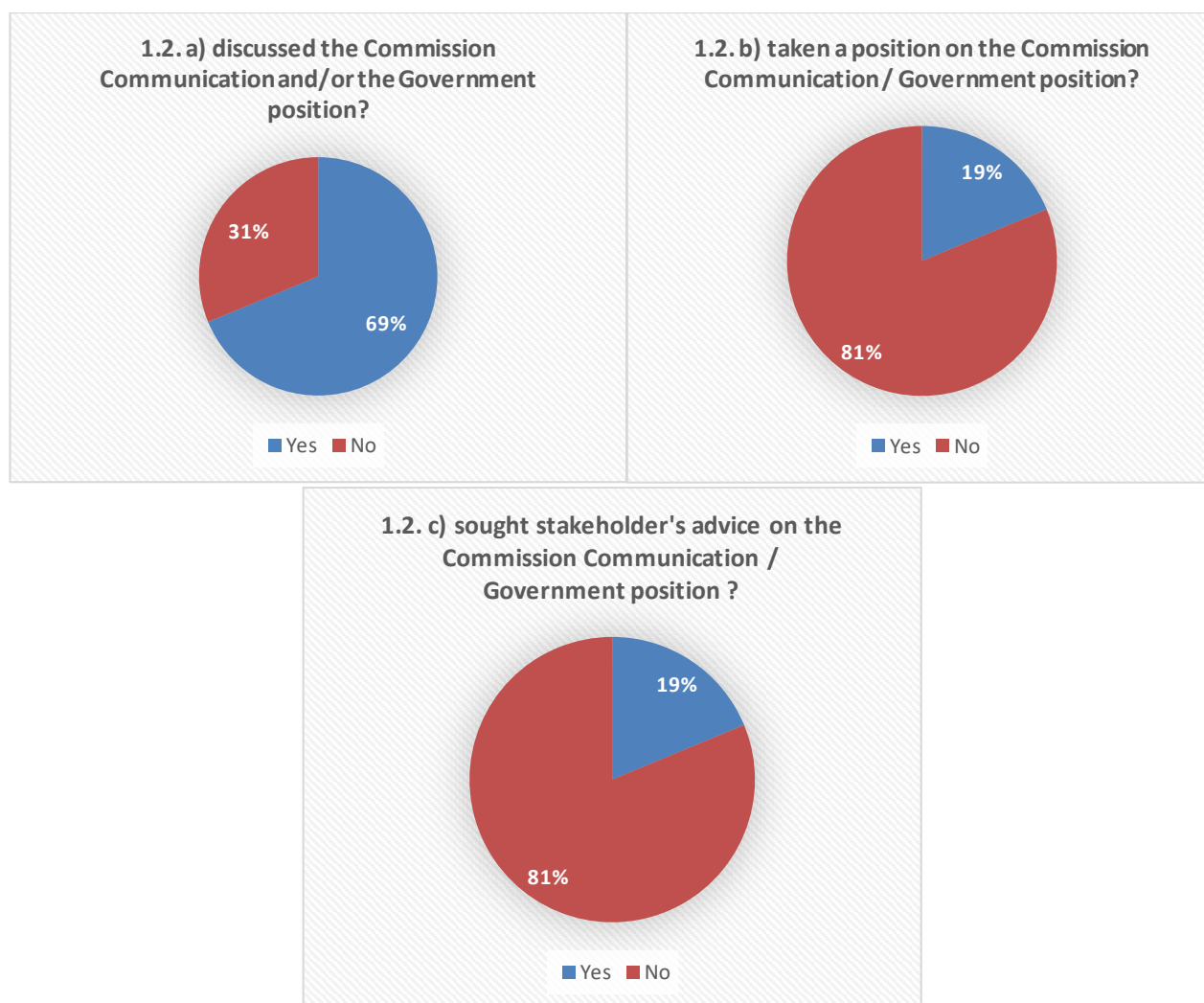


YES AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, IT, LT, LV, NL, SI*

NO HE, LU, PL, ES, SE

Among the 20 chambers that replied to the questionnaire, 13 reported that their government has presented its position on the [Commission communication](#) on orientations for a reform of the EU economic governance framework.

Many reported that once the European Commission tabled concrete legislative proposals, their parliament is expected to scrutinise these legal proposals through their relevant committees. The survey results show that these political discussions occur, in many cases, in more than one committee, mainly in the Budget Committee, Finance Committee and/or in the Committee for European Affairs (LT, IT, DE, CZ). The parliamentary scrutiny may involve consultations and hearings with the government to understand the proposals and the national position. Specific roles mentioned include subsidiarity checks and scrutiny of the legislation, possible adoption of opinions or positions to guide the national negotiating stance and propose amendments to draft legislation, and requests for information and deliberations with the government.



Some parliaments, such as Italy, Ireland, and Latvia, have involved stakeholders in the discussions. However, there seems to be little focus on an enhanced role for national fiscal councils or specific inter-parliamentary cooperation.

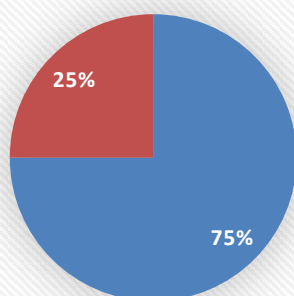
Overall, while their governments have informed most parliaments, only some have proactively developed detailed positions or involved stakeholders so far. However, upon legislative proposals, many expect to play active roles through subsidiarity checks, adopting negotiating positions, amending legislation, and overseeing the national stance. Enhanced inter-parliamentary cooperation is also seen as a potential avenue by some.

Question 2: Is there currently a specific structure inside your administration in charge of providing expertise support on the economic and budgetary policies?

The vast majority of the responding national parliament chambers (15 out of 20) have established structures or procedures for expertise services on economic and budgetary policies to support parliamentary committees. These include, in some cases, dedicated parliamentary budget offices (PBOs), research units or the use of the expertise provided by independent fiscal institutions (IFIs). An example of building a strong relationship with a national Independent Fiscal Institution (IFI) is the Netherlands' parliament. This liaison aims to improve parliamentary scrutiny by increasing the analytical support basis. However, national parliaments' capacity to cover the continually evolving EU economic governance

framework is often limited and specific additional needs for expertise in this regard have not been identified.

2.1. Is there currently a specific structure inside your administration in charge of providing expertise support on economic and budgetary policies?



■ Yes ■ No

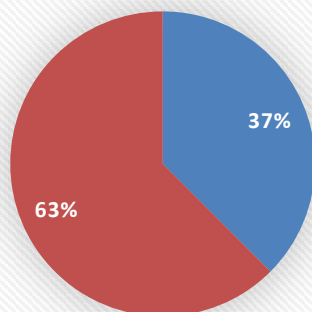
YES

AT, CY, CZ, DE, HE, IR, IT, NL, PL, SI, ES, SE

NO

BE, LV, LT, LU

2.2. Does your Parliament/Chamber consider that additional expertise would be useful in view of the evolving EU economic governance framework?



■ Yes ■ No

YES

AT, BE, DE, IT, LU, NL

NO

CY, CZ, HE, IR, LV, LT, PL, SI, ES, SE

While most parliaments have not explicitly sought to strengthen expertise specifically on EU economic governance reforms, some see potential value in bolstering resources to improve parliamentary scrutiny of reform proposals. A few parliaments point to perceived gaps in economic expertise relating to public finances, debt sustainability analyses and statistical analyses that could inhibit effective evaluation. Others have established Parliamentary Budget Offices with close contact with their Members. Also, how independent fiscal institutions could complement or support parliamentary expertise, particularly on technical issues such as statistical analysis of public finances, was raised.

Question 3.1: Do you think the current level of exchange and cooperation amongst staff is sufficient/appropriate?

Cooperation among parliamentary staff is an important aspect of effective parliamentary functioning. Staff-level cooperation on EU economic governance as well as the Recovery and Resilience Facility between EU parliaments helps support their respective committees' scrutiny function. It increases the flow of information between parliaments. While most parliaments consider the current level of staff cooperation sufficient, some believe it could be improved. They suggest more technical/specialised in-person workshops, seminars, additional communication, more regular contact and staff exchanges with the European Commission, and better sharing of information and best practices, notably through regular surveys.

Regarding in-person versus online formats, most parliaments that envisage in-person meetings prefer holding them semi-annually, while some suggest annually. All parliaments find value in targeted online webinars, particularly for providing timely updates on key topics, stimulating dialogue and exchange of best practices, and reaching a wider group of staff. Valuable examples of targeted webinars include the EU economic governance reform, the European Semester, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its economic impact, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and the economic outlook.

Parliaments consider a balanced approach combining in-person and online cooperation to maximise benefits. Regular webinars throughout the year could keep staff abreast of the latest developments, with workshops every 6-12 months providing opportunities for more profound exchanges.

With the appropriate use of both formats, cooperation among parliamentary staff can enable more effective scrutiny of complex, evolving EU economic governance reforms. Enhanced capacity and coordination at the national level could positively influence the support of national parliaments to their members in their scrutiny activity at the EU level.

Question 3.2. Would you envisage an enhancement of that co-operation? If yes, how? Please specify:

While most parliaments are satisfied with the current level of staff cooperation, some see potential benefits from strengthening exchanges. Collaboration between national parliament staff is seen as very useful, but capacity limitations exist. Parliaments that favour in-person meetings emphasise workshops, seminars, and staff exchanges with the European Commission services. At the same time,

those who value online webinars see them as a practical way to provide updates, knowledge sharing, and discussion on relevant topics.



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