European Union Public Policy

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 8
Policy decision-making 2: decision-making in the European Parliament

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1. Decision-making in the European Parliament;

2. The relationship between the European Parliament and the national Member state parliaments

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- The change in the inter-institutional dimension of the E.U.

- 3 organisational and behavioural aspects of policy decision-making in the European Parliament:

   a) committee work;

   b) the division of labour within political party groups;

   c) the building of majorities

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a) <u>Committee work in the European Parliament</u>

- 1999 to 2004 European Parliament had 17 permanent committees

- 1996 temporary committee of enquiry to examine the transit system

- 1996 temporary committee of enquiry to deal with BSE crisis

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b) The division of labour within the political party groups

- political party groups control the agenda of European Parliament AND its internal organisation

- through Conference of Presidents (President of E. P. and chairmen/women of political party groups)

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c) The building of policy and policy decision-making majorities

- necessity to build majority support between national Member state MEP party groups

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- main political party groups in European Parliament:

- social democrats

- conservatives/Christian Democrats

- liberals

- greens

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- strong incentives for cohesive political party groups and for coalition policy decision-making formations

- growing inter-institutional ambitions and influence

- committee influence

- policy decision-making influence

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2. The relationship between the European Parliament and the national Member state parliaments

- Maastricht (1993) and Amsterdam (1997) Treaties considerably increased status of European Parliament, especially as a policy decision-making body

- particularly in relation to national Member state parliaments

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CONTRADICTION:

- growth in legislative importance of E.U. (and European Parliament)

contradicts with

low public perception of importance of E.U. (and European Parliament)